

17 Gulf Tower

*Trowbridge & Livingston (New York), architects;
E. P. Mellon, associate architect, 1932*

This 44-story tower, originally constructed for the Gulf Oil Corporation, was the tallest in Pittsburgh until 1970. The architects went down 90 feet to find a proper footing for their great tower, then raised it in a sober Modernistic manner that began and ended with allusions to Classical architecture: a colossal doorway with a 50-ton granite entablature on Seventh Avenue and a limestone stepped-back pyramidal top that recalled the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.

18 Federal Courthouse and Post Office

*Trowbridge & Livingston (New York), architects, with
James A. Wetmore (Washington, D.C.), 1932*

During a \$68 million renovation in 2004-05, the exterior stonework was cleaned, six new courtrooms were added in the original building light wells, and an atrium was constructed to allow natural light to illuminate the new third-floor lobby space and historic fourth-floor courtrooms.

19 U.S. Steel Tower

Harrison & Abramovitz (New York), architects, 1971

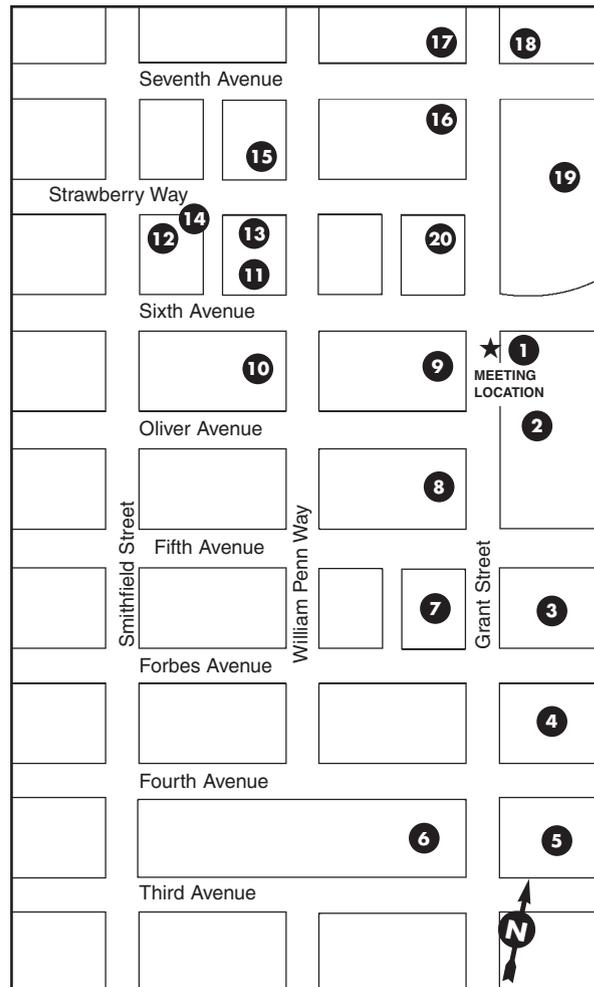
At 841 feet high, U.S. Steel Tower was the tallest building between New York and Chicago when completed. (In 1987 Philadelphia's One Liberty Place Building at 945 feet became the first to surpass it.) It has an exposed frame of Cor-Ten weathering steel (a U.S. Steel patent). Some facts include the following:

- The 18 exterior columns that run the full height of the building are filled with a mixture of water, anti-freeze, and an anti-corrosive. The purpose of the fluid is to maintain a column temperature below a dangerous level during a fire.
- There is an acre of space on each floor.
- Approximately 9,000 people work in U.S. Steel Tower.
- There are 54 elevator cars and 11,000 windows.
- UPMC occupies five floors, including the 62nd floor, the top.

20 First Lutheran Church

Andrew Peebles, architect, 1888

When this church was built, Grant Street still had the air of a small-town main street, with Henry Hobson Richardson's new Courthouse and St. Paul's Cathedral (now demolished) by far its most imposing objects. The graceful dimensions of First Lutheran Church complement the massive Courthouse, and details of the church (such as the red mortar) echo Richardson's buildings.



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|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mellon Green | 12. Smithfield United Church |
| 2. One Mellon Bank Center | 13. Allegheny HYP Club |
| 3. Allegheny County Courthouse | 14. Strawberry Way houses |
| 4. City-County Building | 15. Bell Atlantic Building |
| 5. Grant Building | 16. Koppers Building |
| 6. One Oxford Centre | 17. Gulf Tower |
| 7. Frick Building | 18. Federal Courthouse and Post Office |
| 8. Union Trust Building | 19. U.S. Steel Tower |
| 9. Omni William Penn Hotel | 20. First Lutheran Church |
| 10. Mellon Square | |
| 11. Regional Enterprise Tower | |

“In postindustrial Pittsburgh, smoke did not get in our eyes, but an abundance of stunning architecture did. The density of fine buildings—many by celebrated designers, many not—could be tops in the nation.”

—Arnold Berke, Executive Editor
“Preservation” (January/February 2007)

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GRANT STREET WALK

Pittsburgh especially is a city of monuments to its great industrialists who left behind them not only steel mills, factories and banks, but also a number of huge buildings which perpetuate their names. Frick, Carnegie, Oliver and Phipps resound in the city's architectural as well as its financial annals. Like the princes of the Renaissance, the masters of these great fortunes loved to build. In steel, marble and granite is memorialized much of the history of Pittsburgh's Age of the Moguls.

—James D. Van Trump, “The Skyscraper as Monument”
(*The Charette*; 43:4, April 1963)

With its concentration of major historic buildings and modern skyscrapers, Grant Street is downtown Pittsburgh's showcase thoroughfare. A section of Grant Street, between Forbes and Seventh Avenues, is part of the *Pittsburgh Central Downtown National Register Historic District*, which also includes significant buildings west of Grant Street. This tour will visit some of these buildings and a unique urban garden located in the Historic District.

Two hundred fifty years ago Grant's Hill was the outer limit of Pittsburgh, founded by the British on November 25, 1758 and named for British statesman William Pitt the Elder. (Just two months earlier, in September 1758, British Major James Grant had been defeated by the French and Indians on the hill that would bear his name.)

Grant's Hill formed a natural eastern boundary to downtown Pittsburgh, but its height was an impediment to development. In the late 1830s, in order to accommodate construction of a new County jail and courthouse and provide access for fire equipment and public transit, the top of the hill—“the Hump”—was lowered; by 1911 some 45 feet of earth had been removed, and by 1913 the remaining 15 feet had been excavated.

The oldest surviving buildings on Grant Street are the present Allegheny County Courthouse (1884-88) and the First Lutheran Church (1887-88). They would be joined in the first decades of the 20th century by “monumental” buildings devoted to industrial management, commercial activity, banking, hospitality, and government.

Grant Street was widened in 1929, and in 1990 an end-to-end scheme of paving, planting, and lighting was completed.

- 1 Mellon Green**
Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann, architects, and MTR Landscape Architects, 2002

This public park gives a campus feel to the Mellon Financial Center complex and provides an amenity for Pittsburgh's central business district. The fountain was designed by Geoffrey L. Rausch. The granite monoliths symbolize the strength and stability of Pittsburgh. A tree-lined promenade of rustic terrazzo and granite paving leads to one of four downtown “T” (transit) stations.

- 2 One Mellon Bank Center**
Welton Becket Associates (Los Angeles, later New York), architects, 1983

The steel-plate walls help brace the frame of this 54-story skyscraper.

- 3 Allegheny County Courthouse**
Henry Hobson Richardson (Brookline, Mass.), architect, 1884–88; alterations

The Allegheny County Courthouse and former Jail are among Pittsburgh's most famous buildings. Richardson died in 1886, two years before the Courthouse was finished. On his deathbed Richardson is reported to have said: “If they honor me for the pigmy things I have already done, what will they say when they see Pittsburgh finished.”

At times both the Courthouse and the Jail have been threatened, but their most visible features have always been ardently defended. The Jail was renovated in the year 2000 to house the Allegheny County Family and Juvenile Courts.

- 4 City-County Building**
Edward B. Lee, with Palmer, Hornbostel & Jones, architects, 1917

Henry Hornbostel is responsible for this visionary design. The style feels Classical—vaulted, columned, measured—though the detailing is very largely original.

The ground-floor corridor is one of Pittsburgh's great interior spaces. The 43-foot-tall by 150-foot-long passage is lined with bronze-encased columns. Elevator doors show figures holding the three Allegheny County courthouses and the three Pittsburgh city halls.

- 5 Grant Building**
Henry Hornbostel and Eric Fisher Wood, architects, 1930

This building has lost some exterior detailing and inner space, but its neon beacon continues to flash P-I-T-T-S-B-U-R-G-H in Morse code, as it did in 1930.

- 6 One Oxford Centre**
Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum (New York), architects, 1983

This 46-story skyscraper was built as a cluster of octagons to maximize the number of corner offices.

- 7 Frick Building**
D. H. Burnham & Co. (Chicago), architects, 1902

Henry Clay Frick made a number of major real-estate investments that resulted in construction of a close-set group of buildings in the Grant Street area: the Frick Building, Frick Annex (now the Allegheny Building), Union Arcade, and the first part of the William Penn Hotel. In the Frick Building, the earliest of these, he created a personal monument and the location of his own office. The tall new building that was finished in 1902 put an end to the 14-year dominance of the Pittsburgh skyline by the Courthouse directly across the street.

Look inside for a marble bust of Frick by Malvina Hoffman, bronze lions by A. Phimister Proctor, and *Fortune*, in glass, by John LaFarge.

- 8 Union Trust Building**
Frederick John Osterling, architect, 1917

Note the roof: Flemish Gothic realized in virtuoso terra cotta work. Originally called the Union Arcade, it had space inside for 240 shops, facing two four-story open arcade spaces, and about 700 offices. The office floors were built with a strength remarkable today, since tenants were apt to bring in massive iron safes and locate them as they pleased. Four street entrances, now as originally, meet at a dramatic interior space beneath a stained-glass dome.

- 9 Omni William Penn Hotel**
Janssen & Abbott, architects, 1916; Janssen & Cocken, architects, 1929; Urban Room, Joseph Urban, 1929

This classic big-city hotel is distinguished by the Art Deco Urban Room on the 17th floor. Deep light courts (easily noticed from Mellon Square) allow the maximum number of guest rooms to have natural ventilation and outdoor views. During a \$22 million renovation in 2004, many of the building's original elements were restored.

- 10 Mellon Square**
Mitchell & Ritchey, architects, 1955

The Mellon family donated a block of downtown real estate in 1949 to create this one-acre park with terrazzo walks, fountain cascades, and granite benches above a six-level underground parking garage. Mellon Square serves as a fine architecture-viewing platform. Notice the old Gimbel's department store, now Heinz 57 Center (Starrett & Van Vleck, 1914); the Henry W. Oliver Building (D. H. Burnham & Co., 1910) that terminates in a pilastered arcade; the Park Building (George B. Post, 1896) with crouching figures of Atlas beneath its cornice; and the former Mellon Bank building (Trowbridge & Livingston, 1924) whose magnificent interior was destroyed for the short-lived Lord & Taylor's department store.

- 11 Regional Enterprise Tower**
Harrison & Abramovitz (New York), architects, 1953

Originally constructed for Alcoa, this corporate headquarters building was intended to show off as many applications of aluminum as possible. Here, aluminum siding made its debut in high-style construction. In 1998, Alcoa constructed a new building on the North Shore along the Allegheny River and donated this building to serve as the headquarters for various nonprofit organizations serving the region.

- 12 Smithfield United Church**
Henry Hornbostel, architect, 1925

Hornbostel finished off an eclectic Gothic composition with an openwork spire that represents a very early architectural use of aluminum.

- 13 Allegheny HYP Club**
Edward B. Lee, architect, 1930

1890-period workers' houses were remodeled to provide a gracious courtyard and cozy interiors for what was originally the Harvard-Yale-Princeton Club. The club membership is now open to graduates from any college or university. The rose window of the Smithfield United Church makes an impressive backdrop ornament to this picturesque scene.

- 14 Strawberry Way houses**
C. 1850

This alley is a remarkable medley of plain and fancy, tiny and colossal, thrown together by the whimsy of change.

- 15 Bell Atlantic Building**
Alden & Harlow, 1905 addition; James T. Windrim (Philadelphia), 1915, 1923, 1931 additions

On our tour this is the most visible element of a building complex begun in c. 1890 by Frederick John Osterling and completed in 1931 for the Bell Telephone Company.

A one-story covered walk, with shallow vaults in green-and-cream Guastavino tile and limestone piers, is not only a handsome space in itself but frames the view of the old and tiny houses opposite.

- 16 Koppers Building**
Graham, Anderson, Probst & White (Chicago), architects, 1929

The successor firm to D. H. Burnham & Co. designed a suave Art Deco headquarters for a progressive industrial firm. The limestone facing of the building, like the tall lobby spaces inside with their colored marbles and ornamented bronzework, suggests a cool urbanity remote from industrial toil. The crowning chateau roof, being made of copper, can be taken as a pun, while the lobby mailbox is a doll's house version of the whole building, roof included.