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## **Cabell County Architectural Guide, Tour C: Huntington West Section**

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CABELL COUNTY  
ARCHITECTURAL  
GUIDE

TOUR C  
HUNTINGTON WEST SECTION

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## Some Suggestions for Using this Guide

The Architectural Guide of Cabell County is divided in the following tours (or sections):

- A. Huntington Downtown Section.
- B. Huntington Central Section.
- C. Huntington West Section.
- D. Huntington Northeast Section
- E. Huntington Southeast Section
- F. Guyandotte
- G. Barboursville
- H. Milton

If you are visiting for the city of Huntington for the first time, you probably would like to get a short, initial tour that would enable you to see the main downtown buildings. In that case, choose Tour A. This tour has a predetermined route, explained in the attached Map 1. It is designed to be a walking-tour that should take no more than two hours.

Then, you may be interested in visiting either all, or some other selected buildings that are scattered throughout the rest of the city. For this a longer, second tour is recommended, Tour B. This tour does have not a predetermined route, and it must be taken by car, since distances are long, and some locations are on hills too steep to walk comfortably. This same criteria has been adopted for Tours C, D and E.

The buildings of other Cabell County communities are included in Tours F, G and H.

If you are interested in a particular building, please consult the alphabetical table of entries for each tour, where you will find the page giving the location of its description.

Last, but not least, please do not trespass on the owners' property, no matter how eager you are to see and appreciate the architectural, historic, and artistic value of the buildings described here.

## Main Sources

The author recognizes that he owes much of the information in this Guide to several scholars that were interested in Huntington and Cabell County buildings. Their work constitutes thorough antecedents to this Guide, and he desires to acknowledge each of them in a clear, explicit manner.

In the Guide quotes from the following works are placed in italics, followed by a number between brackets that correspond to the following sources:

- (1) D. Daniel McMillian, IV, *Spaces of Splendour*, Folio edition, 100th Anniversary Commemorative Edition, 1997.
- (2) Dr. Mack H. Gillenwater, (editor), *et al.*, *A Survey of Downtown Huntington, West Virginia*, Phase II, a report submitted to The Cabell County Landmarks Commission. Edited by the Department of Geography, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia, 1985.
- (3) Kathryn Davis, Tom Davis, S. Allen Chambers, Jr. and Susan M. Pierce, editors, *Historic West Virginia*, The National Register of Historic Places, Charleston, WV, 2000
- (4) Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1984 and 1996.

# **Tour C**

## **Huntington west section**

1st Street west to 15th street west.

### **List of buildings**

1. BB&T Bank
2. Johnson house
3. Johnston school
4. Johnson farm house
5. Sidney L. Day House
6. Foster Memorial Home
7. Second Presbyterian Church
8. Parsons Abbott Mosser House
9. Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church
10. Central United Methodist Church
11. D. E. Abbott Factory
12. Old Central City district
13. Shop and offices building
14. Duncan Box & Lumber Factory
15. Memorial Arch
16. Caldwell House, North Boulevard 210 W
17. House, North Boulevard 214 W
18. House, North Boulevard 104 W
19. Hager House
20. Chilton Oxley House

## Tour C — Huntington West Section

### 1 **BB&T Bank**

Location: 6th Avenue & 1st Street  
Designer: Unknown  
Completed: 1965



With its unusual shape, this building is mainly the compound of two rectangular boxes. The upper is a regular prism with a wrap-around curtain wall with mirrored surfaces. This upper block has overhanging edges in relation to the lower one, which clearly shows its structure through square columns that are embedded in the lower box. This bold management of the masses tends to understate the expression of gravitational forces, and to favor transparency and lightness. This building is inspired in several modern architecture precedents of the 1950's, from Mies Van der Rohe (the well known German master) to Skidmore Owings & Merrill (one of the greatest U.S. architectural firms)

### 2 **Johnson House**

Location: 305 6th Avenue West  
Designer: Unknown  
Completed: 1905

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The style of this building could be considered mainly an asymmetrical version of a Colonial Revival type.

An important center of social life in the early days of Huntington, this building is mainly a two-story square block with a flat topped hipped roof, and an L-shaped gabled pavilion that embraces the plan of the first floor. A partial porch, inset in an L-shape, completes the complex volume. The roof has shed dormers, with a curious type of scaled down Palladian windows. The red brick masonry is very well done, and other building details—such as sills, lintels and discontinu-



ous cornices at the gable ends—are accurately rendered.



## Tour C — Huntington West Section

### 3 Johnston School

Location: 7th Avenue West & Gill Street

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1937



School building design of the 1910's is depicted in the Johnston School. The building may be considered a timid Tudor revival style, with the strongly functional-industrial elements of that time, when natural light for classrooms and a clear, pragmatic layout were the concern of most educational building designers. The south façade has a protruding pavilion with chamfered edges, like a bow window, housing the main entrance. The two huge masonry surfaces, on either side, have a subtle rectangular molding, made of slightly recessed and advanced bricks. The doorway has small tabs of cut stone projecting into the surrounding brickwork, giving a quoin-like effect. A label mold is above a flat lintel, with a rectangular stone-pane mullioned with stone moldings. Just above this, a continuous sill supports a three-section window, two narrow ones at each side and a big one in the central pane. Above it, a continuous simple cornice runs all around the building's perimeter. A simple parapet, rendered in brick, ends the building. This building is now in process of being refurbished.

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### 4 Johnson Farm

Location: 705 Jefferson Avenue

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1830-1835



An almost unique survival of a folk house in Huntington, this building was the main dwelling of the Johnson family, of old Cabell County ancestry. The style could be loosely attributed to National, which occurred between 1850 and 1890. It has a massed plan (more than one room depth). It is a two story, timber framed block, with a full height porch of three bays of square timber pillars with Tuscan capitals.

The house reminds one, although in an unpretentious manner, of a luxurious plantation residence of the South. Moreover, some French Colonial rural house influences this example. During pre-railroad times, when this house was built, timber was available near its location (provided that there already existed a saw mill). Otherwise, timber was shipped along the Ohio River.

## Tour C — Huntington West Section

### 5 Sidney L. Day's House

Location: 710 Jefferson Avenue  
Designer: Robert L. Day, Architect  
Completed: 1926



The Tudor style contains several subtypes—this one features stone wall cladding of rough-cut irregular courses, and a single dominant side gable with an extended side that ends in a deep porch.

The front gable wall has a typical double hung window composed of three sections of 9x12 panes, and an important oriel window with a tent shaped copper top. The roof is coarse slate, and there are overlapping gables and tall chimney stacks that emphasize a picturesque effect. The house shows a charming low-scale domesticity, a type of attribute especially popular among upper-middle class families in the 1930's.

Tudor styles *show endless variation in overall shape and roof form, and are most conveniently subdivided on the basis of their dominant façade materials (brick, stone, stucco or wood)*. (4)

## Tour C — Huntington West Section

### 6 Foster Memorial Home

Location: 700 Madison Avenue  
Designer: Sidney L. Day, Architect  
Completed: Ca.1935



This rather extended building has been conceived in the Georgian Revival style, featuring a symmetrical composition resolved with classical details. The volume is composed by one central, side-gabled section, higher than its sides, and a cross-gabled section at each extreme. A classical balconied entry porch, which covers two stories, emphasizes the entrance, with its three-bay colonnade. The roof has regularly placed gabled dormers, with round arched windows. The main entrance, under the porch, has a typical Georgian doorway which extends through both stories and has complex decorative surrounds. The absence of structures in its front, allows a thorough perspective of the façade, a condition seldom seen in many cities.

### 7 Second Presbyterian Church

Location: Jefferson Avenue & 9th Street West  
Designer: Levi J. Dean, Architect  
Completed: 1924-1925

## Tour C — Huntington West Section



This classical revival building has several interesting features. Over a three-story rectangular plan, a huge copper clad cupola, with a tall lantern in its top, dominates the center of the building. The cupola's drum is divided into twenty bays, which are defined by pairs of columns, with a round arch window between them. The cupola itself is a depressed one (not hemispherical), and therefore appears to be short or stumpy. This is why an observer near the building finds it difficult to see the cupola.

The building is clad in red brick masonry, with stucco rendered decorative details in the entablature, pediments and dividing bands. The main building is symmetrically divided into one central colonnaded block and two pedimented blocks on each side.

The central block has two strong masonry piers at each side of a three-bay colonnade. The building has two entrances, at either side of the colonnaded block. The side blocks are treated with Ionic pilasters rendered in brick.

The sides of the building have a slightly protruded central section with three bays divided by pilasters as well. Note that each section ends with a pair of pilasters, which define the reinforcement of the corners, a typical Renaissance feature.

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# 8 Parsons Abbott Mosser House

Location: 725 9th Street West

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1870

National Register of Historic Places (11.28.1980)

(Included in St. Cloud, 9th Street West Historic District)



This house may be classified as Folk Victorian, a style that flourished between 1870 and 1910. It is also known as Gingerbread folk architecture, with its highly decorative woodwork. It is a two-story, side-gabled house with a front-gabled central wing. It is known as well as an I-house (one room deep). The upper covered balcony, which is supported by the first floor porch, has turned spindles and lace-like spandrels. The balustrades have railings and wood lattice-work, appearing with shamrock patterns. The side bays of the main entrance are reinforced by diagonal girt of St. Andrew's crosses. The roof has wide eaves—overhanging, not boxed—and bargeboards with acroteria, a Greek archaic and classical decorative finishing.

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### 9 Jefferson Ave. Baptist Church

Location: 305 6th Avenue & 3rd Street West

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1920's



A quite simple composition, this church takes advantage of its location at the corner of a street. The building has a tall pedestal, its main entrance having a huge flight of stairs, which emphasizes this important characteristic. Due to the slope of the street, the building at its rear houses both a full-height story and a basement. The mass outline is mainly the intersection of two gabled pavilions. The greater mass has two stories and a pediment supported by two sections of protruding masses, at each side of the main entrance. This pair of vertical sections are differentiated by a slight difference of levels of wall surface, also echoed by the discontinued frieze. The small mass has also a pediment, and is similar to the typical intercross section of the Christian basilical plan.

The walls are rendered in masonry, with two brown-colored brick, irregularly scattered. The fenestration of the church hall is accomplished by tall, round arched windows divided into several translucent panes. The low pitched slate roof is supported by a simple, undecorated cornice and frieze. Behind the church is a section for ancillary functions, rendered in the same manner. Access to the basement is through a side entrance with a gabled porch—an addition that does not fit with the building's original design. In short, this is flat

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restrained version of a classical building.

# 10 Central United Methodist Church

Location: 1047 Jefferson Avenue



This church has been designed with well known features of the Gothic Revival style, such as pointed arched windows, tracery windows and battlemented parapets. The main entrance, at the right side, is a projecting pavilion coated with stone.

The tower-like belfry plays an important role in the whole design, as all remaining parts surround it. This belfry-tower is divided in four sections: a basement, three stories with windows, and a battlemented top. Each corner has buttresses that diminish its size as they ascend. The first floor, near the main entrance, has a large pointed-arched window with tracery, and a smaller one on the left side. A pair of pointed-arched windows are on each side of the second story, while the third floor has a wide pointed arched opening with very short jambs, and a large stone and red brick sill.



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All windows have hooded crowns. A big tracery window is set below a gable at the far right side. This gable has a parapet which stands upon a corbel table, made of red brick. The special location of this church, on a street corner, is the highlight of a predominantly unpretentious neighborhood of family dwellings.

### 11 D.E. Abbott Factory

Location: Washington Avenue & 14th Street West

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1891



Huntington's early builders had a strong fondness for the use of brick. In fact, brick factories were very important to the city. This old factory is a simple, but well-rendered example of functional and industrial architecture. It is mainly a brick masonry box, front-gabled with a low pitch. It has a raking cornice with a series of brackets rendered in their simplest form: four successive set-off bricks which overhang the wall.

Windows are regularly spaced, with double-hung sliding sash, and are topped by segmental relieving arches.

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# 12 Old Central City District

Location: 14th Street West & Madison Avenue

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1910-1920



This part of Huntington was recently refurbished in order to concentrate antiques stores, a farmers market, and several commercial activities, all recalling city's early history. Many commercial buildings, even of modest architectural features, show the spirit of the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Flea markets, specialty shop sales, entertainment, and historic tours are part of a festival that takes place each June. A huge gazebo, built for multiple uses, provides shelter to music groups and a popular art exhibition. The main interest of this site lies in its mix of old buildings, advertising signs, urban furnishings



(lighting poles, benches), covered pedestrian spaces, all infrequently seen in Huntington now. Seeing and being seen, when people join together, is the area's major attraction.

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### 13

### Shop and Office Building

Location: 703 14th Avenue, Old Central City District  
Designer: Levi J. Dean, Architect  
Completed: 1925



This correct, straightforward commercial edifice was recently refurbished, having an overall unity that seldom appears in this type. The first floor has wide and tall showcases with regular shapes. Signs are discreet and harmonious. The main entrance is asymmetrically placed, having a doorway with a round arch. The second floor has two pairs of windows in the center, and four windows regularly spaced at each side. Windows are all regular, with double-hung sliding sash. Lintels are straight, with small label stops. The walls have running courses, a bonding system that provides an air chamber inside the wall, to offer further insulation. The building's top has a wrap-around cornice made of brick, lacking any stone or stucco rendering.

The fine craftsmanship of Huntington's builders can be seen in the wall surface with its set-off and set-back courses that mimic classical moldings.

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### 14 Duncan Box & Lumber Factory

Location: 1034 14th Street West  
Designer: Unknown  
Completed: Circa 1890



A fine example of early industrial architecture, this two-story building was used for mere utilitarian purposes. However, it shows a few architectural rules. The red brick masonry is divided into bays rendered by a trim done through three recessed courses. These bays establish a rhythm that brings order in the building volume.

Windows are double hung, 6x 6 panes, inscribed into segmental arches. Due to the unadorned character of the building, there are no decorative or ornamental details. The roof is almost flat, with a very low pitch. This building is a witness to the beginnings of Huntington as an industrial center.

### 15 Memorial Arch

Location: 11th Avenue & Memorial Boulevard  
Designer: Meanor & Handloser, Architects  
Jerry S. De Young, designer  
Completed: 1924. Dedication November 11, 1929  
National Register of Historic Places (4.15.1982)

The triumphal arch is a traditional type of monument introduced by Ancient Rome. It has been adopted as a classical piece of urban design in western European cities since the Renaissance, and then

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commonly adopted by American cities as well. This monument has a single bay, a shape that echos the first triumphal arches of the Roman Republican era, and is rendered in Indiana limestone. The arch soffit is decorated with square coffers with medallions. *This unique and highly significant architectural landmark of the Neo Classical Revival possesses among the finest large scale bas-relief stone carvings in the country.* (1) *The design is neoclassical and resembles a scaled-down*

*version of the Arch de Triomphe in Paris. Surfaces of the 42 foot high monument are expertly carved in bas relief depicting military and state insignia on seals.* (3) In short, it is a fine piece of the universal language of Classical Architecture in Huntington, conveying a sense of community dignity and patriotic pride.

## 16 Caldwell House

Location: 210 North Boulevard West  
Designer: Unknown  
Completed: 1920's

As noted elsewhere (Tour B, No. 41, 700 North Boulevard), Spanish styled houses are rare in Huntington. This is another fine example of a Spanish Eclectic residence, of symmetrical plan, with a protruding two-story cubic volume covered by a low pitch hipped roof. Ornamental details are sparse: only a small,

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segmented shaped parapet helps the union of the central volume with the wings. Because of this, very simple shapes acquire great importance, such as the balconied window of the second floor, just above the round arched main entrance. Chimney tops are elaborated, with small tiles roof, and walls are rendered with stucco and have decorative vents.



A southwestern, Mediterranean style challenged by Nordic weather conditions: an almost contradictory landscape.

Photo: Carlos Lopez

### 17 House, North Blvd. West

Location: 214 North Boulevard West

Designer: F. L. Wright

Completed: 1956

A rare case of contemporary American architecture inspired in the Prairie style, this house has a predominantly horizontal drive. The roof is hipped, with a very low pitch, and wide overhanging boxed eaves. Windows are big and wide. In the second floor a window is located between narrow belt mouldings, and

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wide white stucco stripes. The building conveys the impression of a multilayered volume, with cantilevered parts over basement walls. Some of the corners have blunt angles, following a plan often used by Frank Lloyd Wright. The building appears smoothly inserted into the landscape, as the famous Prairie houses. *...they lack the stark white stucco wall surfaces, which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick or stone. Landscaping and integration into landscape are also stressed, unlike the pristine white International house that was to meant to be set upon the landscape as a piece of sculpture.* (4)

### **18**                      **House, North Blvd West**

Location:            104 North Boulevard West  
Designer:            Sidney L. Day  
Completed:          1925

A very particular example of Tudor style, this thatched roof, stucco-walled building, was carefully designed with a spontaneous, picturesque composition. It is asymmetrical in all its sides, and tries to mimic with modern materials the picturesque buildings of rural England.

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It has multiple front gables: at its left, a hipped roof block which covers a wide porch, and at its right, an asymmetrical gable capped by a hip that suggest Continental, rather than British precedents. The stucco wall cladding is alternated with the brick tabbed doors and windows surrounds, in some places with irregular patterns, as in the lower part of entrance door. The second floor fenestration has mainly paired rectangular windows, while the first floor has wide rectangular windows, a modern influence alien to the Tudor Style. The huge vertical rectangular window at the left of the round arched entrance brings natural light to the staircase. However, some features are original contributions of the designer, such as the white painted stucco walls, which give a loose Mediterranean look to this otherwise vernacular English house.





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### 19 Hager House

Location: 401 South Boulevard West (Whitaker Rd)  
Designer: J. B. Stewart (1897); Edwin Alger (1907)  
Completed: Original 1897; addition 1907



A very original attempt to revive the pre-railroad rural architecture from the Allegheny region, but with an extended and complex plan instead of its smaller, simpler antecedents, this house is a remarkable example. The main plan recalls a Swiss chalet, or a more complex dwelling, but with features coming from American vernacular architecture.

When professional architects receive a commission like this, where the main aim is to revive a certain kind of vernacular, non-professional architecture, they try to explore the past with accuracy and thoroughness, but they act as modern professionals, and their design shows sophisticated requirements that are alien to the primitive log cabin.

A huge, low pitch gable is intersected by the vertical shaft of a chimney, made of rough stones, irregularly coursed. A two story small pavilion stands at left, and a porch protects the entrance. This is a masterly management of picturesque forms.

The woods that embraces this house fosters the rural, spontaneous character appreciated by the owners and pursued by the designer.

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### Chilton Oxley House

Location: 331 South Boulevard West  
Designer: Levi J. Dean, Architect  
Completed: 1925



The design of this house shows a concern widely adopted by architects from 1930 to 1950. The question was how to design without using the accepted, customary styles that were dominant in previous decades, and blending them with local materials and regional forms. In this case, Levi J. Dean intended to save the order that was inherent in Colonial or Neoclassical houses (symmetry, proportions, rational layout) but adding a vernacular touch, thus intending to turn out a newer composition.

The house is a rectangular block, of irregular coursed stones, with a hipped roof, with false thatch. The main entrance is located in a slightly advanced balconied pavilion, and its doorway is small, with a round arched top. Windows are regularly spaced, and are composed by casement openings, with many panes. The total absence of classical detailing confirms the search for a new, national expression for domestic American architecture, which was furthered by the Prairie and Craftsman style, from 1900 to 1920.