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Cabell County Architectural Guide, Tour D: Huntington Northeast Section

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CABELL COUNTY
ARCHITECTURAL
GUIDE

TOUR D
HUNTINGTON
NORTHEAST 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 D

Huntington Northeast section

3rd Avenue, between 26th street and 30th Street,
including Highlawn quarter, and St. Mary's Hospital outskirts.

List of buildings

1. Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.
2. Highlawn United Methodist Church
3. Highlawn Presbyterian Church
4. Highlawn Baptist Church
5. St. Mary's Hospital
6. Pallottine Sisters Residence
7. House, 2832 Staunton Road
8. House, 2952 Staunton Road
9. House, 2956 Staunton Road
10. House, 2960 Staunton Road
11. House, 2970 Staunton Road
12. House, 2976 Staunton Road
13. House, 3100 Staunton Road

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section

1 Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.

Location: 9 27th Street

Designer: Unknown

Completed: 1917



Some scholars maintain that certain principles of Modern Architecture, such as its contempt for ornaments and artistic detailing, came from early industrial buildings, which were not considered as *architecture* in an academic sense during the Nineteenth Century. Although this building belongs to the first part of the Twentieth Century, it is a good example of the bare, unemotional, functional and pragmatic architecture designed by civil engineers before Modern Architecture became the preferred option for the young generation of architects. A strong reinforced concrete structure rules the composition, both inside and outside. Brick walls are only used to fill voids, or as mere surrounding for windows. Construction elements are almost of the same size, all standardized, seeking economy in all aspects. Even the sides of concrete columns and beams do not have any kind of stucco or protective rendering. In short, a good case for *industrial archaeologists*.

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section

2 Highlawn United Methodist Church

Location: 28th Street & 3rd Avenue
Designer: Unknown
Completed: Ca. 1960



Even if the main hall of this church is rather conventional, its tower is worthy of note. A huge, massive masonry block stands upright asymmetrically close to the entrance. An abstract cross is inserted in a vertical fracture on the upper side of the tower. Above, a stucco rendered belfry with a cross plan is diagonally placed in relationship to the base, which appears growing and rising from the tower's inner core. Its edges are like receding buttresses. Above this belfry, a very tall pyramidal spire springs upward. It is interesting to see how the almost sculptural cross is inserted between the two flanking masonry pillars, and then how this cross is amalgamated with the belfry, due to a careful, thorough exercise of three dimensional forms.

The same kind of concern appears in the tower of the next example.

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section

3 Highlawn Baptist Church

Location: 28th Street & Collis Avenue

Designer: Dean & Dean; East section, Scott Dadot

Completed: 1970



This design is an interesting example of how modern architects, educated to use abstract, neutral shapes, try to match them with older gothic shapes, attempting to recall traditional Christian architecture. Vertical elements are dominant, from the entrance pillars to the whole system of openings at every side of the building. The medieval tower, which in traditional American churches was replaced by a thin, pointed pyramidal spire, is here modelled to attain gradually increasing sharpness, by a succession of receding telescopic volumes until the top is reached with a cross. The huge walls, rendered in brick, appear bare and lacking any ornament. However, elaborated soft stone finials that recalls an abstract version of older ornaments are located at the top of the entrance pillars and at the top of very narrow walls which separate the continuous vertical slits of openings.

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section

4 Highlawn Presbyterian Church

Location: Collis Avenue, between 28th & 29th Streets
Designer: Sidney L. Day
Completed: 1911



A clear-cut case of an eclectic Neoclassical building, a style in fashion from 1895 to 1950, this church has, in its first floor, a huge, rectangular main hall, preceded by a lobby with a full height pedimented porch, of Ionic style. Four round Ionic columns support the entablature, with thorough brick courses that imitate mouldings. The entire building stands upon a basement for ancillary functions. The main entrance has a monumental staircase flanked by stepped rims. The whole volume is tied with wrap-around belt courses that continue the cornice of the main porch. This proper example of Neoclassical building, full of gravity and solemnity, is linked to other churches at Huntington, especially the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (Tour A, No. 55), although in addition this one has its American patriotic connotation, because it echoes the Virginia State Capitol.

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section

5

St. Mary's Hospital

Location: Collis Avenue, between 28th & 29th Streets
Designer: Several designers
Completed: 1990



Founded in 1924, St. Mary's Hospital is now a great complex. Many buildings have been designed and constructed since then. The compound has classical architecture as well as modern. The photo shows one of the south wing's newest buildings. Hospital design considers functional concern of the utmost importance. Therefore, stylistic considerations are not essential.

However, the building has a strong presence of reinforced concrete, used both as a structural material and as an external skin. Deep set windows show the wall thickness, and the chamfered sills emphasize mass. It is interesting how the vertical and horizontal shuttering grooves create a geometric grid that helps to bring scale to the building. This was a design device mostly used among the architects between 1970-1990, who strove to express control of dimensions and, as well as seeking a prefabrication look, as if the building was merely a sum of separate units assembled in a particular place. Building parts are standardized, looking for fewer variations of dimensions and shapes, a principle fostered by the rationalistic facet of the Modern Architecture movement.

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6 Pallottine Sister's Residence

Location: 2810 Staunton Road
Designer: Unknown
Completed: Ca. 1990



This modern example of eclectic, Neo-Colonial building, is a symmetrical assembly of side-gabled sections. The whole building has two floors and an attic. Its main, central section is the larger one, where an advancing front gabled pavilion houses the main doorway. Two smaller and receding side-gabled sections are connected on both sides. Walls are of red brick, and corners have been emphasized with a set off brick every eight courses, a procedure that visually echoes the effect of quoins. Windows are vertically unified through slightly protruding bays, on the sides, and inset bays in the central and intermediate sections. Here lintels and sills have stucco rendering, including the blind surfaces in between the windows. Two wide chimney stacks and four front-gabled dormers are located above the grey slate roof. The whole building has some elements from Tudor style (the white rendered flanking sections and the tall, narrow proportions of the windows), and a Neoclassical round arched window in the central section.

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7

House, Staunton Road

Location: 2832 Staunton Road
Designer: Unknown
Completed: Ca. 1980



Another interesting variation of the Neo-Eclectic style, this house is related to the previous French Eclectic style, in vogue from 1915 to 1945. Typical is the asymmetrical façade, with a low tower topped by a conical roof that houses the main entrance, a small, round arched doorway with no ornaments. The picturesque plan is mainly an L, covered by a complex hipped roof intersected by several wall dormers, with shed covers. The grey slate roof and the white painted brick correspond well to the style. An asymmetrical chimney stack, with sloped set-offs, add a pleasant detail to the tidy, domestic character of this house.

8

House, Staunton Road

Location: 2952 Staunton Road
Designer: Unknown
Completed: Ca. 1930

This house is difficult to classify, as it has some ambiguous

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section



details, such as the huge, fat round columns that support the eaves in the porch's entrance. However, it may be a particular case of an eclectic Craftsman style, whose identifying features *are low pitched... occasionally hipped roof, with wide, unenclosed eave overhang...and porches, either full or partial width* (4).

Others may call this house *bungalow styled*, often found in Huntington, but its huge size is not common to this type. The plan is clearly symmetrical, with a main square block flanked by two front gabled sections, which are tied by an advancing gallery that houses the main entrance. The red, flat tiled roof has a shed dormer with three windows, emphasizing the axis. As usual in this region, walls are of red brick masonry, set with high craftsmanship.

9 House, Staunton Road

Location: 2956 Staunton Road

Designer: Unknown

Completed: Ca. 1980

This contemporary building may belong to a general trend in American architecture called Neo-Eclectic, in fashion from 1965 onwards. *By the late 1960's, the fashions of domestic architecture were shifting back toward styles based on traditional, rather than modern, architectural shapes and detailing.* (4)

In this particular case, the eclecticism is apparent in the adoption of Gothic features, such as pointed arches, buttresses and

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parapeted gables. The building has a predominant vertical drive (see the tall chimney shaft) as the horizontal elements are reduced, (sills, lintels) and windows proportions are tall and narrow.

Walls are completely in brick, with English bond courses. Pointed arches in some windows have bricks carefully placed, like thin *voussoirs*. The walls, which have gables, have stepped parapets protected by soft stone copings, a typical gothic detail. The roof has natural slate, which adds a touch of vernacular, Old English taste. Ornaments that reflect historical styles are not present, but the general shape is certainly inspired in Gothic vernacular buildings.

Architects that were educated with Modern Architectural

10 House, Staunton Road

Location: 2960 Staunton Road
Designer: Meanor & Handloser
Completed: 1919-1920

The same as the 2970 Staunton Road house, this neighboring example belongs to the eclectic Colonial Revival style. However, different features appear: the red brick masonry; the soft stone flat arches above the windows, with keystones; and a wrap around multifaceted cornice, whose clear colors play a strong contrast

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with the dark red of the walls. A balconied entry porch, of Tuscan order, provides shelter to the main entrance. At each corner of the balcony, above the cornice, sit two pine cones (symbols of hospitality), which play the role of finials, that welcome the visitor.

The hipped roof is now covered by copper plates, and has three gabled dormers with round arched openings. Two tall, elaborated chimney stacks flanks the sides of the main block, with sloped set offs

11 House, Staunton Road

Location: 2970, Staunton Road
Designer: Meanor & Handloser
Completed: 1915-1916

This two-story, side-gabled house is a nice example of Colonial Revival Eclectic style. The façade is divided in five bays, the central one a little wider, where a pedimented porch is placed. The low pitched pediment has raking cornices and a bare tympanum. It is supported by a plain entablature and two Tuscan columns which ends in a pair of pilasters.

The doorway has two sidelights and a fan light on a segmented arch. The windows have double hung sashes, 6x6 panes, with sliding shutters, located in adjacent pairs. The roof-wall junction has an

Tour D — Huntington Northeast Section



elaborate cornice. The roof has three gabled dormers, with a round arched windows with interlaced muntins.

This was a dominant style for domestic buildings throughout the country during the first half of this century...The Georgian and Adam styles form the backbone of the Revival. (4)

12 House, Staunton Road

Location: 2976 Staunton Road
Designer: Unknown
Completed: 1919-1920



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An ambiguous example, this house may be classified as eclectic, undressed Craftsman style with Germanic components. The red tiled roof is dominant, with wide overhanging eaves protecting the windows. The left side has a two-story section with an attic covered by a clipped gable, the aforesaid Germanic detail. The entrance is only marked by an arched eyelid inserted on the roof. Several shed dormers and simple chimney stacks complete the multifaceted roof. The walls are of simple, but well placed brick masonry.

13

House, Staunton Road

Location: 3006 Staunton Road
Designer: C. C. & E. A. Weber of Cincinnati, Ohio
Completed: 1924-1925



This residence is an example of a somewhat stripped version of the eclectic Italian Renaissance style, in fashion from 1890 to 1935. It has a symmetrical rectangular block with a receding central façade, embraced by end pavilions that have hipped roofs and coursed, polished ashlar at each corner.

The tan-colored brick wall is interrupted by wrap around belt cornices continuing the first floor window sills. The receding central section has an imposing doorway covered by a graceful wrought iron canopy, perhaps recycled from an older building. The first floor has three bays limited by classic pilasters, with balconied casement windows, with round arched tops. Flanking

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pavilions have rectangular casement windows and balconied windows inside round arches.

Carved medallions, such as those made by Luca della Robbia, (*Ospedale degli Innocenti*, Florence, 1419), are at both sides of the first floor openings, recalling an early Italian Renaissance feature. The imposing location of this building affirms a solemn character in the area.