

(1) Wells Fountain – 1890

This picturesque structure (see BHS logo on front page) stands proudly on the northern edge of Brattleboro's downtown shopping district. Designed in 1890 by native architect William Rutherford Mead (cousin to President Rutherford B. Hayes) and funded by William Henry Wells, Brattleboro native and New York businessman, this lovely granite fountain features two fierce lion head medallions on the north and south sides of a large basin.

Wells Fountain was built to mark the spot where Mead's brother Larkin Mead, a nationally known sculptor, created an eight-foot Snow Angel on New Year's Eve 1856. The ephemeral angel caused such a sensation that Larkin later fashioned a marble replica that is currently on view in Brooks Memorial Library.

(2) Municipal Center – 1884

This impressive Gothic Revival building was the home of the local high school until 1951 when it was transformed into the Municipal Center. Built of brick and featuring marble steps and trim, it is crowned with a steep slate roof. A close look at the stone band around the base of the building will show carvings of the years of the various high school classes.



(3) Burnham House – c. 1860

This two-and-a-half story building has the feel of a southern home. It is surrounded on three sides by a deep porch with an intricate metal and wood balustrade. This was the home of Henry Burnham, the owner of a local brass foundry and author of Brattleboro, Early History, with Biographical Sketches of some of its Citizens.

(4) All Souls Unitarian Church – 1875

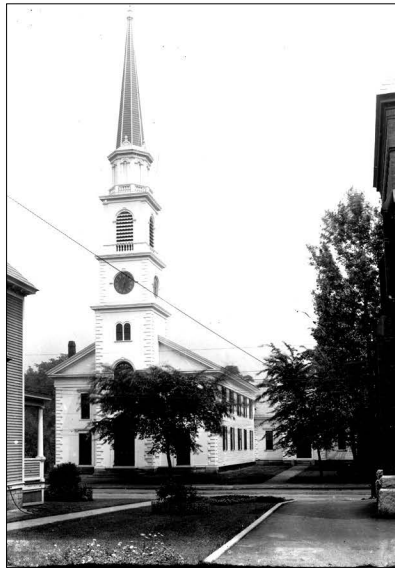
This Gothic Revival style church is built in the shape of a cross, and is almost entirely of stone. The only wood in the building is found on the window sashes. The stone was quarried on Wantastiquet Mountain across the river to the east. The quartzite is trimmed with hand-carved granite. Notice the polished stone columns on the front of the porch and the rose window above it.

In 2007 lightning struck the church steeple. It was repaired, but the Celtic cross that originally crowned the very top has been left standing on the ground in front of the church.

(5) Centre Congregational Church – 1842

This church has a dramatic history. It was originally built in 1816 on the Common north of the village.

By 1842 the church was in disrepair and too far north to be readily accessible to the congregation. It was then taken apart, moved here, and reconstructed. In 1864 the steeple blew down in a violent storm and the tower you see in the front was built to replace it. This tower contains the original town clock, also moved from the Common. In 1927 a fire partly destroyed the tower and the roof but they were rebuilt and replicated.



(6) First Baptist Church – 1870

This is a beautiful example of High Victorian Gothic architecture. It has two entry towers, a high central tower, and pointed arches over the windows and doors. The architect also designed the Brooks House and the All Souls Church.

The central tower facing the street displays a large stained glass window titled "Christ Before the Doctors," a memorial to Jacob Estey, founder of the Estey Organ Co., and his wife Desdemona. The tower also contains a five-foot diameter bell weighing 4,545 lbs., the largest in the state when it was installed in 1868. During regular business hours visitors may enter the church to see the largest Estey Pipe Organ in Brattleboro.

(7) Brooks House – 1872

George Brooks constructed the Brooks House after a catastrophic fire destroyed the previous hotel. Brooks had made a fortune as a dry goods wholesaler during the California Gold Rush and was responsible for something of an urban renewal in Brattleboro at the time.

The 80-room Brooks House was a lavishly furnished, luxury hotel. It had a 40-foot-long two-story cast iron entrance and veranda along Main Street. The architectural style is called Second Empire and is reminiscent of 17th-century French palaces with its heavy quoins, mansard roof, and corner turret.



(Tragically, in 2011, a fire on the top floor of Brooks House resulted in massive water damage to the interior, but efforts are underway to restore this classic downtown landmark.)

As you make your way down this section of Main Street, watch for the Main Street Clock (c. 1908) which is made of cast iron and has a Corinthian or treelike column. The top of the column resembles acacia leaves. The clock was manufactured by the Brown Street Clock Company of Monessen, PA and is listed on the National Historic Register.

(8) Union Block – c. 1861

So named because it was built during the Civil War, this Italianate Revival brick building was owned during the 1920's and 1930's by Amadeo de Angelis. De Angelis, an immigrant shoemaker who made good in this country, is said to have erected the \$12,000 plaque over the second story windows as a memorial to himself. The enormous bronze required multiple teams of oxen to transport it up Main Street from the train station.

(9) Market Block – 1873

Cross Main Street to the right-hand or (north) side of Elliot Street and you will see the town's best examples of 19th century storefronts. This two-story building is brick block with granite trim and cast iron columns. The recessed store entries are above street level and the doors are much taller than those commonly used today.

(10) Methodist Church – 1880

This church is a somewhat unusual example of the High Victorian Gothic style of architecture. It is asymmetrical with two entry towers of different sizes and there is no central tower or spire. The building descends three stories to the level of Flat Street. No longer a church, it is now the home of Hotel Pharmacy.

(11) Peoples National Bank Building - c. 1879/80

This Ruskinian Gothic Revival building has a striking bichrome pattern of brick with white marble trim. The building is not square, but rather follows the angle of the street. Jacob Estey (of the Estey Organ Company) founded the bank in 1875. The bank was located here until the 1920's.

(12) Van Doorn Building – 1851

This Greek Revival style building was originally the home of Anthony Van Doorn, owner of the Van Doorn furniture factory (founded in 1815) on the banks of the Whetstone Brook. It is one of the oldest buildings still standing today.

Furniture from the factory is displayed in the Bennington Museum in Bennington, VT.

(13) Latchis Hotel and Theatre - 1936



Recently restored, this Art Deco building is the only building representative of the Modernistic style in the downtown historic district. It was also the first fireproof building constructed in Brattleboro. The Art Deco style was a result of the entertainment industry; it incorporates symbolism, cubism, futurism, and elements of Egyptian design. Go inside the hotel and theatre lobbies to see the colored terrazzo floor designs and pictures, executed by skilled Italian craftsmen from New York. The lobby and first floor façade are polished gray granite and the upper stories are sheathed in precast concrete panel.

(14) Former Union Station – 1915

The former railroad station is made of local quartzite rubble mined from across the river. It's scale is appropriate to a time when rail transportation was more important than it is today.



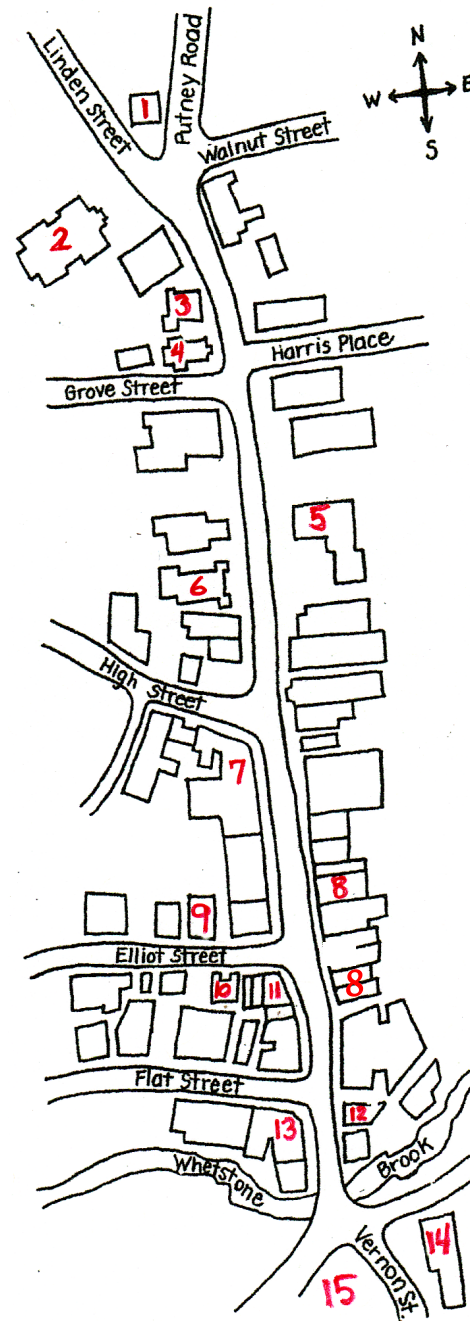
When the first train came to town in 1849, the station was located closer to the river. The current station became the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center in the 1970s.

(15) Plaza Park – 1923

The little park at the foot of Main Street was created to make a more pleasant view for disembarking train passengers. Originally the fountain in the center was crowned with Daniel Chester French's "Spirit of Life" bronze. After it was stolen twice and recovered, the sculpture was housed in the Brooks Memorial Library.



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230 MAIN STREET, #301, BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT 05301

A MAIN STREET WALKING TOUR

OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC SITES



Main Street - Winter 1872

DOWNTOWN BRATTLEBORO reveals a wonderful hodgepodge of 170 years of architectural styles, shapes, and ideas. Brattleboro is unusual in having a short, well-defined Main Street. From Wells Fountain Park at the north, to Plaza Park on the south, a 30-minute stroll will take you past many well-preserved and visually interesting 19th and 20th century buildings. Though the town was settled 200 years ago, buildings at that time were mostly of wood and have since been torn down or destroyed by fire. Brattleboro is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.