Richmond’s Downtown District

In 1806, President Thomas Jefferson signed the bill that established the National Road (America’s Main Street). It would cross seven states and create a corridor for settlers moving west. By 1827, the National Road had reached Richmond, Indiana. When Richmond was settled in 1805 by Quakers from North Carolina, the commercial trade was largely concentrated on Front Street (now South 4th St.), facing the Whitewater River. The National Road quickly became Richmond’s new Main Street. Retailers relocated their businesses to greet settlers moving west.

Early buildings on Main Street were largely simple, two-story structures of Federal or Greek Revival styles, similar to those that can be seen today in nearby Centerville, Indiana. These soon gave way to a more popular style of the taller Italianate architecture, in vogue during the 1850s to 1890s, such as the first Knollenberg’s building built in 1877. The influence of the Queen Anne style, more common in residential architecture, can be seen in the eastern half of Knollenberg’s building. The façade on Main Street was replaced with a Richardsonian Romanesque aesthetic during the 1910s and 1920s. The influence of the Queen Anne style, more common in residential architecture, can be seen in the eastern half of Knollenberg’s building. The façade on Main Street was replaced with a Richardsonian Romanesque aesthetic during the 1910s and 1920s.

As Richmond grew, becoming a railroad center and the county seat of Wayne County, new commercial and public buildings such as the Courthouse were built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. After the turn-of-the-century, new architectural styles prevailed, and buildings such as Star Bank (then Dickinson Trust Co.) and Hoppe Jewelers (Tivoli Theater) exhibited a Neo-Classical or Beaux Arts influence. Later architectural trends can be seen in the Art Deco building that S.S. Kreegs Co. built at 801 East Main Street.

April 6, 1968 was a tragic day for Richmond, Indiana. A double explosion occurred at 1:47 P.M. EST in downtown Richmond, killing 41 people and injuring more than 150. The first explosion was due to a natural Gas leak from faulty transmission lines under the Marting Arms sporting goods store, located at 6th and Main Streets. A secondary explosion was caused by barrels of gunpowder stored in the basement of the building. Twenty buildings in and around the site were condemned as a direct result of the explosions.

The award-winning design for rebuilding the downtown closed off five blocks of Main Street and became the Promenade. This was a popular trend of modernizing that was influenced by the walking mall and shopping center designs. Another part of competing with emerging shopping centers had merchants “upgrading” their storefronts with metal or glass panels over the front of the buildings that masked the historic architecture.

Today, this trend has largely been reversed. The Promenade was removed in the mid-1990s and Main Street was returned to through traffic. People look at the outstanding collection of historic architecture in Richmond as a resource.

As you walk down Richmond’s Main Street, look up and see the evidence of this community’s rich history as it is displayed in the architecture of its Main Street. Now nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, Downtown’s architectural richness has been nationally recognized.

1. Wayne County Courthouse

401 East Main Street

Richardsonian Romanesque (1893)

Cincinnati Architect James McLaughlin was chosen to design the Wayne County Courthouse. It was constructed by local Architect, William Kaufman. This form of Romanesque Revival architecture was popularized by the Boston architect H.H. Richardson and so became known as Richardsonian Romanesque. Characteristic elements of this style are rock-faced stone walls using a variety of patterns in the stonework, towers, deeply recessed windows, and large expanses of steep hipped roofs. The massive interior stair hall is illuminated from windows on the western façade.

2. Richmond Municipal Building

50 North 5th Street

International Style (1968)

The Municipal Building was designed by the Richmond firm of R.W. Clinton and Associates. This modern structure with its inverted flared columns, dark glass and a flat roof, introduced a new experience of architecture and surrounding space to the downtown. The cost for the new building was two million dollars. This building replaced a Richardsonian Romanesque Municipal Building that was built in 1886 and designed by John A. Hasecoster.

3. Elder-Beerman

Site of former Marting Arms
601 East Main St.

Functional Modern Style (1972)

The 1968 explosion spurred redevelopment of the downtown. The construction of this building by the City of Richmond attracted the Ohio-based retailer, Elder-Beerman. For thirty-four years this major retail anchor has been on Main Street. Designed by Maze Design Group, Inc.

4. Chase Bank

First National Bank
630 East Main St.

Italianate (1873)

In 1863, James E. Reeves, his brother Mark Reeves, and eleven other businessmen, formed the First National Bank. It was the seventeenth such institution chartered in the nation and the second in Indiana. It could have been the first bank chartered in the entire United States, but the train that James Reeves took to Washington, D.C. was overrun in Maryland by Mosby’s guerilla band, Southern raiders carrying the Civil War into the North. The train was delayed long enough to deprive First National Bank of being the first registered in the nation.

James E. Reeves served as President of First National Bank from 1863-1902.

5. Summersault LLC

Vaughn-Dougan Block
708-714 East Main St.

Italianate Style (1878)

The Vaughn family, using income from their paint & hardware store and livery stable, selected John Hasecoster to design this building. Italianate style, 1850 to 1890s, is characterized principally by elaborate windows, cornices, quoins, and large eave brackets. The building displays all of these features. The building was originally capped by a large bracketed cornice, as shown here.

6. Harris Bank

Loan Department

Harrington Bank Loan Bldg.
726 East Main Street

Italianate, (circa 1869)

The first Moving Picture was shown in this building by the inventor, C. Francis Jenkins. He was a Richmond native who later moved to Washington, D.C. He applied for over 400 patents. Second and third floor bay windows make-up the front of this early building with very fine, stained glass panels over the front of the buildings that masked the historic architecture.

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7. Harris Bank

Harrington Bank
Second National Bank Building
22 East Main Street

Renaissance Palazzo Model (1911)

This impressive building was designed by Dayton Architect Albert Pretizinger to closely resemble the Northern Trust Company in Chicago. The original building, as shown here, was covered in an Aluminum curtain wall in modernizing the façade in 1964. Enter the lobby to view the interior with its highly detailed molding and ceiling decoration that are unaltered.

*Design consultation or technical assistance was provided by Center City Development Corporation, formerly Main Street Richmond-Wayne County.
8.*  
**Odd Fellows, I.O.O.F. Building**  
735 East Main Street  
**Italianate (1868)**

The Odd Fellows building was considered one of the finest buildings in Richmond at the time it was completed in 1868. The Italian architectural detail is very fine with corner quoins, iron storefronts, shallow center pavilions and peaked gables. The center pavilions are triple window bays in the second and third stories. The first and second floors are offices, while the third floor is lodge rooms. The South 8th Street addition to the building was completed in 1888.

9.*  
**Lyons Insurance Offices**  
Kelly, Emmons, and Reid Block  
9 South 8th Street  
**Richardsonian Romanesque Style Between (1891-96)**

This building was originally a five-unit limestone town house designed by John A. Hasecoster. Three units on the south of the building were demolished in the 1970s to create a parking lot. The two remaining units are used as offices. The salvage from this building was reassembled on the rear entrance of the former King’s Abstracts, South 7th Street.

10.*  
**U S Bank**  
Star Bank, Second National Bank  
Dickinson Trust Company  
800 East Main Street  
**Beaux Arts Neoclassical (circa 1915)**

This granite and marble structure was constructed to house the Dickinson Trust Company. The front entrance was originally flanked by two-story stone columns. In 1945 this bank closed and the building was occupied by the Second National Bank, which moved from a building across the street. Second National Bank remodeled this structure to its current form. In 1988, it became Star Bank. In 1999, it became Firstar Bank. U.S. Bank has occupied the building since 2002.

11.*  
**ACE Hardware**  
S.S. Kresge Store  
801 East Main Street  
**Art Deco Style (circa 1935)**

This colorful glazed-brick building was constructed for the S.S. Kresge Company. Art Deco style used stepped, flat decorative elements of colored tiles and trim, creating strong surface designs. The high gloss tiles convey a feeling of artful durability. This building replaced the 1887 Richardsonian Romanesque style Kelly-Hutchinson Building. Among its tenants were the Union National Bank and John A. Hasecoster, the architect of the building.

12.*  
**Knollenberg’s Art Gallery**  
Knollenberg’s Department Store  
809-815 East Main Street  
**Italianate (1877) and Queen Anne style (1888)**

The store on the right, 809 East Main, of this landmark store was designed by Architect John A. Hasecoster in 1877. The Italianate, three story building replaced a wooden, two-story building that George Knollenberg had established on this site in 1863. The Knollenberg family migrated to Richmond in 1845 from Astrup, Germany. The dry goods business that they established grew and expanded into the largest retail store in Richmond. The store on the left, 815 East Main, was also designed by Hasecoster in 1888. It is a rare example of commercial Queen Anne style architecture. The Queen Anne style was popular from 1885-1905. The style featured asymmetrical arrangements of towers, balconies, bay windows, and other decorative elements that had an international appeal. A third 8th Street addition, The Annex, was added around 1900, illustrating the sustained growth of the Richmond economy through this period of industrial expansion.

13.*  
**Abilities**  
Karate Shop, Nolands Nook, Julian’s, The Boston Store,  
Hasemeier-Sickmann Building  
819, 821 East Main Street  
**Italianate (1876)**

This structure was built by H.C. Hasemeier Co., a clothing and dry goods manufacturer. From 1888 until 1933, it was The Boston Store, carrying fine goods from the east coast. In 1933, the building was purchased by the Vigran family as Julian’s, a women’s clothing store. The second floor façade was covered with fiberglass panels during the 1960s in an effort to give a more “modern” appearance. In 1990, Center City Development assisted the owner in removing the fiberglass panels to reveal the historic façade visible today.

14.*  
**Tom’s New York Deli**  
Circus Shop  
820 East Main Street  
**Italianate (circa 1868)**

This building is one of the earliest remaining structures on East Main Street. Here it appears in an early photo from about 1870. It is the first three-story building on the block, looking at the left on the photo. For many years the building had been covered with metal sheeting that was added during a “modernization” of downtown. It was removed in 2008 to reveal the original façade which is being restored with the help of Center City Development’s Design Committee.

15.*  
**John’s Custom Framing**  
S.S. Kresge Building  
Jupiter Store  
823-825 East Main Street  
**20th Century Functional**

Originally, the S.S. Kresge Company built this commercial building to house its retail store. The store was an important feature of downtown and became a Jupiter Store after a new Kresge was built at 801 East Main Street. The interior retains the original wooden floors and interior design. Renovation work by Center City Development’s Design Committee.

16.*  
**Omni Home Care**  
System Solutions  
Opti-Vision 2000  
828-832 East Main Street  
**Italianate Style (1878)**

Local realtor, Omar L. Hittle, commissioned Architect John A. Hasecoster to design the three-story Hittle Block. Mr. Hittle and his wife lived in an apartment on the second floor for several years, and old newspapers report lavish Christmas parties held there. The original use of the building was three stores on the first floor, fifteen offices on the second, and rooms for the Masonic Lodge on the third. The smaller two-story storefronts facing N. 9th St. were constructed on the north side in 1884.

17.*  
**Richmond Arts Works**  
Center City Development (formerly Main Street RWC)  
**Personal Finance**  
Peggy Hale Shop  
The Eldorado Steam Laundry and Baths  
829 East Main Street  
**Italianate Style (circa 1872)**

This building is one of the earliest structures still extant on Main Street. The heavy Italianate architecture has remained unchanged on the upper stories. The hooded windows and bracketed cornice are original. In 1905, a steam laundry and public baths occupied the first floor and basement. The two upper floors held apartments with a skylight providing light to the interior space. In 1993, Center City Development purchased the building as their offices. In remodeling the building, the street entrance was returned to its original symmetry.
Richard Jackson built this building a year after Knollenberg’s building. This was a boom time in Richmond’s development. The Daily and Weekly Palladium Newspapers were the first occupants. The Palladium held the largest Book and Job Printing house in the state outside of Indianapolis and had over 35 employees. Later, this building became The Big Store selling children’s and adult clothing. Sander’s Jeweler’s has owned the building for over 30 years and restored the exterior by removing the metal façade to expose the original beauty of the upper stories.

The Leland Hotel was built by Detroit-based Continental-Leland Corporation. It was remodeled in 1963 and became the Leland Motor Inn. In 1986, the Radisson Hotel purchased the property and spent $5.5 million in renovations. It closed in 1990. Today, the Leland Residence is redesigned as apartments for Senior Citizens, in the heart of downtown. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This Beaux Arts architecture features white terra cotta medallions and cornice. It was constructed as the Tivoli Theatre, which featured movies and vaudeville shows and advertised it offerings on a large marquee overhanging the East Main Street entrance. The building has always contained a jewelry store. During the 1970s, Hoppe Jewelers remodeled the front of the building and expanded their store into former lobby.

This building was remodeled to house the showrooms of the Starr Piano Company, which manufactured its instruments in Richmond’s Whitewater Gorge. The fine cast-iron columns of this storefront are by McHose & Lyon of Dayton, Ohio. The second floor was used as music studios for much of its history, and from 1925 to 28 it was occupied by John and Wilbur Crawford’s store selling draperies, rugs, and interior design services. The fine architectural details of this building were revived by the current owner in 1991 with the Indiana Main Street Program and Center City Development providing financial and design assistance.