



DOWNTOWN **ARCHITECTURAL** **WALKING TOUR**

NEW BRITAIN, CT



PART OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTRY

Civil War Memorial (Sailors and Soldiers Monument)

Central Park

Displayed in Central Park, this monument holds historical significance as a symbol of honor and respect from the community to its Civil War veterans. The idea was first proposed in 1868, but due to economic difficulties, it faced delays in construction. Interest resurfaced in 1884 with a donation pledge and construction began in 1897 at a cost of around \$28,000. Ernest Flagg was tasked with designing a Civil War Memorial in New Britain's Central Park.

The community sought to pay tribute to those who served in the "War of the Rebellion" through a Soldiers and Sailors Monument. The dedication ceremony featured a grand parade with bands and marching units, including the Governor's Foot Guard, Putnam Phalanx, and Knights of the Golden Eagle. Governor George E. Lounsbury and General Joseph R. Hawley delivered speeches, acknowledging the soldiers' memory and emphasizing the monument's importance for the present community and its progress.



Gates Building

272 Main Street

The Gates Building, formerly known as the New Britain National Bank, has a rich history that dates back to 1860 when it was established as a bank. In 1906, the bank constructed a new building at the corner of West Main and Main Streets, which was designed in the Beaux Arts architectural style by the firm Davis & Brooks. The Beaux Arts style was characterized by grandiose and elaborate details, making it a notable and impressive addition to the city's architecture.

The building served as the headquarters for the New Britain National Bank until the 1930s. At that point, it underwent a change of ownership and was acquired by Florence Judd Gates. The Gates family had amassed their wealth from the barbed wire industry.

The building was recently renewed and was transformed into the New Britain Board of Education. There they focus on assisting students with reaching their fullest potential.



City Hall

27 West Main Street

The New Britain City Hall building was originally a prominent hotel, Hotel Russwin, named after its financiers, Henry E. Russell and Cornelius B. Erwin. Over the years, the hotel thrived as a bustling and elegant place, hosting visitors from various backgrounds. As the city of New Britain grew, Hotel Russwin played a significant role in accommodating travelers, businessmen, and tourists, contributing to the city's social and economic life. Over the years, the hotel thrived as a bustling and elegant place, hosting visitors from various backgrounds. As the city of New Britain grew, Hotel Russwin played a significant role in accommodating travelers, businessmen, and tourists, contributing to the city's social and economic life. However, as the dynamics of the hospitality industry changed, and with the growth of more modern accommodations, the hotel eventually faced declining fortunes. This led to a crucial turning point in its history when, in 1907, the decision was made to repurpose the Hotel Russwin building – transforming it into New Britain's City Hall.



New Britain National Bank Building

55 West Main Street

The New Britain National Bank building in Connecticut, located on West Main Street next to the buildings serving as New Britain's City Hall, was constructed for the Commercial Trust Company in 1927. During the Great Depression, the Commercial Trust Company failed, and it was later acquired by the New Britain National Bank in the 1930s. The building's exterior features bronze doors adorned with designs of beehives and Mercury and Buffalo coins. Inside, the lobby showcases elegant marble and bronze elements and boasts a stunning 30-foot ceiling. However, despite its historical significance and grandeur, the structure has faced challenges since 1996, remaining mostly vacant and experiencing deferred maintenance.

In recent years, plans to restore and repurpose the bank building for commercial and residential purposes were set in motion. However, progress was halted by an economic downturn. For the latest updates on the restoration efforts and potential future uses of the New Britain National Bank building, it is advisable to consult local news sources, the city's official website, or relevant preservation organizations.



Burritt Hotel (Burritt House)

67 West Main Street

The historic Burritt Hotel stood on the corner of West Main Street and Washington St. Erected during the 1920s to cater to business travelers, it was renowned as the city's most luxurious hotel of its time. However, as years passed, the hotel evolved, and it was repurposed into an affordable housing complex, now known as Burritt House.

This architectural gem once boasted 130 lavish hotel rooms but has since transformed into a cherished residence for the elderly. Its birth was made possible through the visionary efforts of the City's Chamber of Commerce, which recognized a pressing demand for a top-notch hotel experience.

This impressive building showcases the elegant Georgian Colonial style, proudly standing with a mix of red brick and concrete. Take a moment to admire the beautiful architectural details on its front, like the eye-catching rectangular swag design panels. And don't forget to look up in wonder at the grand main pediment adorning the roofline, inviting you to step into a world of grace and allure.

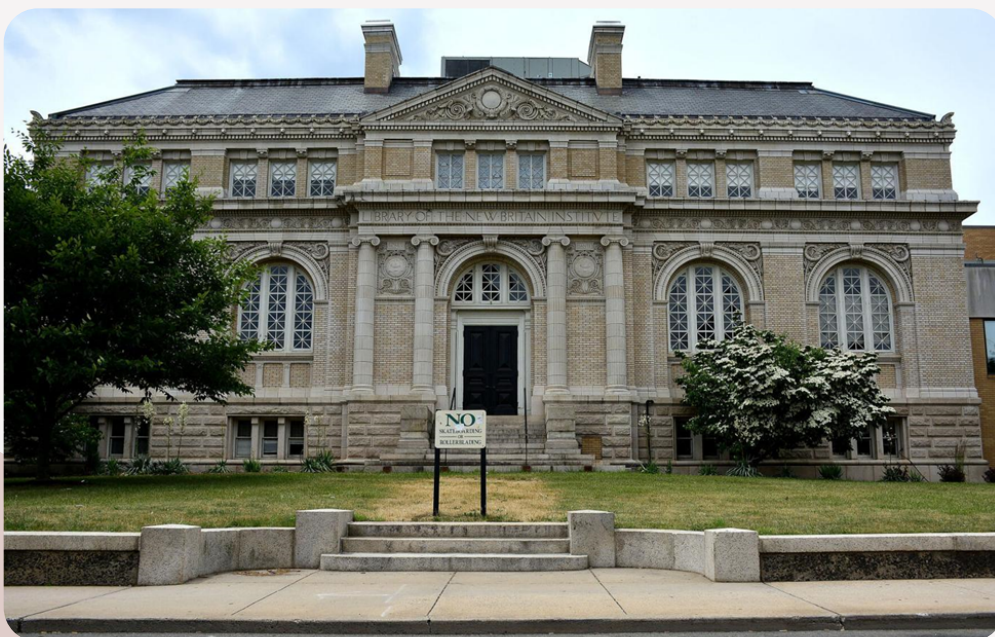


New Britain Public Library

20 High Street

In 1900-1901, architect William F. Brooks designed the New Britain Institute library building, which later became the New Britain Public Library. The New Britain Institute, established in 1853, had the mission of promoting lectures and creating a library and reading room. Initially, the library operated from rented spaces, including the Russwin Hotel, which is now New Britain's City Hall. However, thanks to generous bequests from Dr. Lucius B. Woodruff and Cornelius B. Erwin, the present-day library building was constructed at the corner of High and West Main streets.

Constructed from yellow brick, the library showcases intricate terra-cotta reliefs, adding to its architectural splendor. In the past, this building also housed the New Britain Institute's art collection. However, in 1937, the art collection was relocated to a house on Lexington Street, and it eventually evolved into what is now the New Britain Museum of American Art.



Cadwell House

130 West Main Street

Designed by New Britain's renowned architect, William Cadwell, this Victorian building stands as a graceful gift from the architect to his beloved wife. The use of yellow brick, limestone, and Portland brownstone in its construction gives it a timeless charm. Serving as a prominent anchor at the western edge of the city's downtown, this splendid structure was completed in 1891 and currently houses the esteemed law firm Camp, Williams, and Richardson.

Its architectural beauty is truly captivating, featuring elegant fluted Ionic columns with exquisite floriated capitals, arched windows, dentil molding, and an imposing main turret. The structure's intricate keystones, steeply vaulted slate roof, and granite cornerstones add to its impressive appeal. Venturing inside, one will find a wealth of interior elements that further enhance the building's allure. Hand-carved moldings crafted from oak, mahogany, and birds-eye maple exhibit skilled craftsmanship. The main oak staircase, stained glass windows, and a vaulted library ceiling all contribute to the building's grandeur, creating a captivating and inviting ambiance.



Old Post Office

114 W. Main Street

The Neo Classical Building was designed by architect Frank S. Watmaugh of Worcester, MA and was completed in 1910. Home to the New Britain Post Office for more than seventy years, the structure was built of limestone with copper and bronze lighting fixtures. Interior highlights included terrazzo flooring, fluted plaster ceilings, marble flooring and wainscoting, skylights, and mahogany trim. Exterior architectural details include a large sweeping granite staircase, fluted iconic columns, and the hand carved eagle statue symbolic of the Federal Postal Service with other elegantly carved quatrefoils and dentilation.

The building was used until the mid 1970s and later used as office space. The building went through a restoration in 2023 to refurbish many of the original details that made this building iconic.



Eastman House

33-35 High Street

Constructed in 1878 for Mrs. Mary Eastman, this exquisite English Tudor style building underwent a transformation in 1935 when Dr. B.C. Peck acquired it after a period of vacancy. Dr. Peck updated the exterior by "siding" it with brick and brownstone materials. A notable feature of the building is the symbol of the American Medical Association proudly displayed in the main gable, signifying Dr. Peck's affiliation with the medical profession.

Architecturally, the building boasts an arched ground level entryway, a charming second-floor bay window, and elegant concrete sills along the roofline. As a local landmark, the building is renowned for its vibrant red doors and window sashes, making it easily identifiable and adding to its allure. The presence of heavy brownstone moldings beautifully accentuates the doorways and window openings, elevating the building's overall architectural appeal. With its historical significance, stunning aesthetics, and connection to the medical field, this English Tudor style building holds a special place in the heart of the local community.



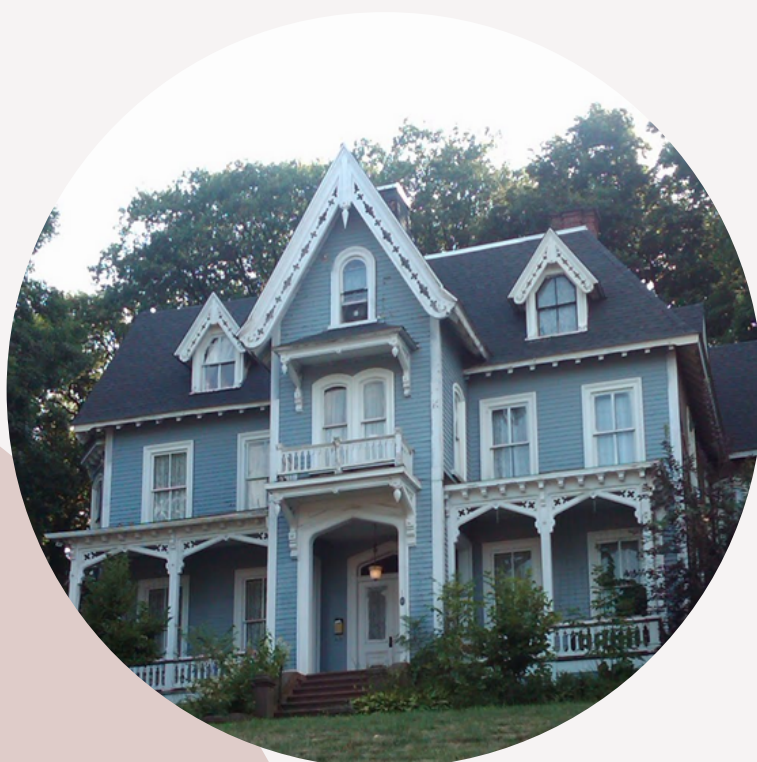
Stanley Mansion

1 Hillside Place

The Gothic Revival mansion located at 1 Hillside Place in New Britain was constructed between 1859 and 1860 for Timothy Wadsworth Stanley, a successful businessman and state legislator. Alongside his three brothers, Stanley was a co-founder of the Stanley Rule and Level Company in the 1850s, which eventually became part of the Stanley Tool Works, founded by another brother. In 1866, Stanley assumed the role of the first president of the Union Manufacturing Company. Additionally, he held positions as vice-president and later president of the New Britain Savings Bank.

The mansion's original estate spanned four acres and was meticulously designed by the landscape architect Jacob Weidenmann, further enhancing its appeal and grandeur. The property's architectural style follows the Gothic Revival, characterized by its ornate details, pointed arches, and overall picturesque appearance.

Timothy Wadsworth Stanley's residence holds historical significance not only due to his successful business ventures but also because of his contributions to various industries and institutions in New Britain. The house, surrounded by its beautifully landscaped grounds, stands as a testament to the city's rich history and the accomplishments of its notable residents.



State Normal School

27 Hillside Place

In 1849, it was known as the New Britain Normal School, making it the sixth normal school in the United States and the oldest public university in Connecticut. Initially focused on training teachers, the school faced temporary closure in 1867 due to opposition in the Connecticut General Assembly but resumed its services two years later, continuing until the 1930s.

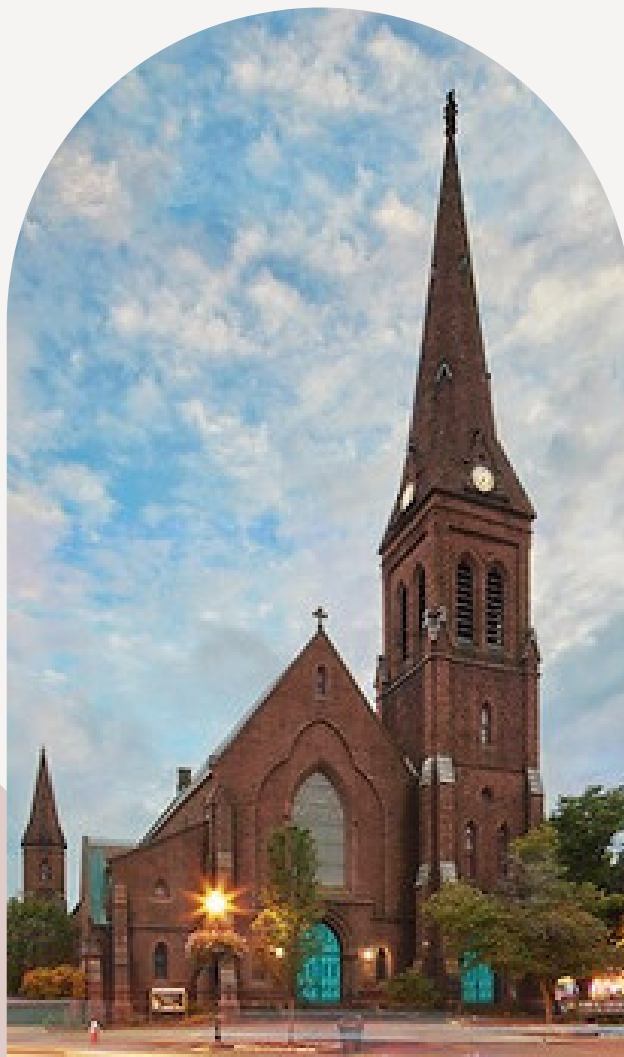
In 1933, the Connecticut General Assembly created the Teachers College of Connecticut, granting the first bachelor's degrees. In 1922, the campus was relocated to its present location on Stanley Street. In 1959, the institution's name was changed to Central Connecticut State College, and in 1983, it transitioned from a college to a regional university, becoming Central Connecticut State University.



South Church

90 Main Street

The South Church, a splendid creation envisioned by George F. Meacham, was erected in 1865 using Portland brownstone. Embodying the New England Gothic style, it has stood as a cherished landmark "in the heart of the city, for the heart of the city" for more than 150 years. In 1899, the adjacent brownstone parish house was completed and dedicated, adhering to the timeless charm of old New England ecclesiastical architecture with its simple yet captivating design. Robust buttresses support the steeply gabled roof and the towering steeple that reaches over 170 feet above Main Street. The entrance is graced with attached columns featuring exquisite floriated capitals, adding to the building's allure. Inside, the church exudes elegance, adorned with intricate stained-glass patterns. Recognizing its historical and architectural significance, the South Church has earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places, safeguarding its legacy for generations to come.



Trinity Methodist Church

69 Main Street

The former Trinity Church stands proudly in downtown New Britain, situated at the southeast corner of Main and Chestnut Streets. This imposing stone structure follows the Akron Plan design and showcases the remarkable Richardsonian Romanesque style. Notably, it is distinguished by its skillful use of polychrome, combining both granite and slate to create captivating visual effects. As one faces the Main Street facade, they are greeted by a rounded apse on the left and a square tower on the right, adorned with corner turrets and a pyramidal roof, adding to its architectural charm.

In its prime, membership reached its pinnacle in the early 1950s. However, the congregation faced challenges due to the city's urban renewal initiatives, which led to the destruction of surrounding residential areas. As a result, maintaining the large building became unsustainable, prompting the congregation's decision to demolish it in 2000. Thankfully, local preservationists stepped in to save the historic structure from its imminent fate. Subsequently, the building was transformed into a vibrant performing arts space, serving as a testament to the city's cultural heritage and history called Trinity on Main.



Andrews Building

136 Main Street

The prominent Andrews Building was designed by Caldwell and constructed in 1903. The building features stained-glass windows in the arches at the top, a heavily adorned cornice with intricate keystones, medallions, and dentillation. There is also a small cornice under the third-floor windows, and the date and name of the company are set into the pediment of the building.

The Andrews Building was constructed using a combination of materials, including yellow brick, marble, limestone, and terra cotta. It was originally built as the home of the John Andrews Furniture Store, known for its extensive use of ample window space on all levels for store displays. The Andrews Furniture Company was considered one of the finest purveyors of furniture in the region. Overall, the Andrews Building is a notable example of Beaux Arts architecture with its intricate design elements and use of various high-quality materials. It currently functions as residential apartment units with a ground floor restaurant.



Platt Mansion:

25 Court Street

Constructed in 1886, this unique residence was commissioned by Frederick G. Platt. Notable for its High Victorian Gothic style, the house features an eye-catching tower embellished with intricate terracotta designs. Platt held the presidency of the New Britain Lumber and Coal Company, established in 1871, and also managed the Railroad Block Company. This latter entity, formed in 1881, aimed to construct the Railroad Block business building on Main Street, with H. P. Strong as president and F. G. Platt as secretary-treasurer.

Platt was additionally at the helm of the New Britain Machine Company. In 1895, he sold the Court Street house to build a Colonial Revival-style residence on Grove Hill. The house later passed to Harriet H. Merwin, widow of Charles P. Merwin, linked to the Berlin Steam Brick Works. After years tied to a hardware store, the house was renovated in 1987 and now serves as an office space, preserving its historic allure while contributing to the architectural legacy of New Britain.

