



WILKES-BARRE

— WALKITECTURE —

Stepping Through History



TAKE A SLOW PASS THROUGH THE PAST.

ABOUT



This step-by-step guide takes you on a walking tour through picturesque and historical downtown Wilkes-Barre. Explore the history of Wilkes-Barre on foot and at your own pace. A walking tour through downtown Wilkes-Barre gives you a chance to get some exercise, learn new things about the history of Wilkes-Barre and view the beautiful architecture by stepping back in time through this historical walk.

An app will guide and teach you about Wilkes-Barre from its founding in 1871 to the city as it is today. View the past and the present of Wilkes-Barre by a simple touch and slide of a finger or simply follow the Wilkes-Barre Walkitecture signs along the route.

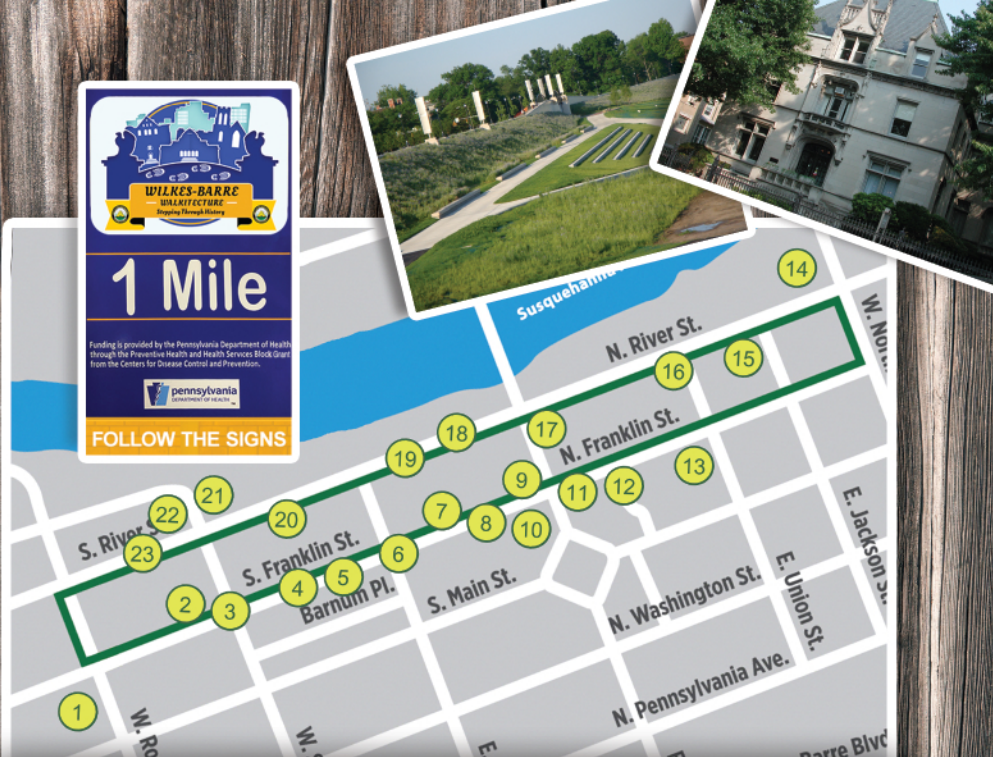
The 2.2 mile walk through history will highlight many of Wilkes-Barre's most beautifully built structures. It starts at the intersection of West Ross Street and South Franklin Street. Head north on South Franklin Street for 3 blocks as you walk through the Wilkes University campus. Move ahead on North Franklin Street for 3 blocks as you traverse the King's College campus to West North Street. Turn left onto West North Street and proceed one block to North River Street.

As you view the Luzerne County Courthouse turn left onto North River Street and head south for 3 blocks. Continue on South River Street for 3 more blocks. On your sojourn you will pass the historic Susquehanna River and its waterfront park as you continue to West Ross Street. A left on West Ross Street returns you to the starting point of your journey through time.

Download the App!

To interact with the booklet, open the AR Booklet Scanner in the app menu, press scan, and scan where the small Wilkes-Barre Walkitecture: Stepping Through History logo is inside this booklet. The front cover is also an AR experience!





Map Key

1 Start Route

1. Frederick Stegmaier Mansion
2. Congregation Ohav Zedek
3. 253 S. Franklin Street
4. Weckesser Hall
5. Mary Stegmaier Mansion
6. Wilkes-Barre YMCA
7. First Presbyterian Church
8. Osterhout Free Library
9. St. Stephen's Church
10. Bank Triangle
11. Spring Brook Water Company
12. Irem Temple
13. Kirby Health Center
14. Luzerne County Courthouse
15. King's College
16. River Common
17. Market St. Bridge
18. LSEO
19. Chapman Hall
20. Rifkin Hall
21. Kirby Hall
22. Dorothy Dickson Darte Center
23. Temple Israel



Frederick Stegmaier Mansion

304 S Franklin ST

Located in the River Street Historic District, the mansion was built by a locally renowned architect and builder named Missouri B. Houpt sometime around 1870. Mr. Houpt's recognition as an architect went beyond Pennsylvania's borders and into New York City, where he studied architecture. During this period, he became acquainted with Bruce Price, whose daughter was Emily Post. Missouri Houpt and Bruce Price worked together on many of Wilkes-Barre's finest buildings. It is a fine example of the High Victorian exuberance which was so popular in America during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and is a vernacular interpretation of the French Chateau style with Gothic Revival and Aesthetic Movement features throughout. Originally owned by Abram Nesbitt, the mansion was purchased by Fredrick Stegmaier in 1906 and remained in the family until the late 1940's.

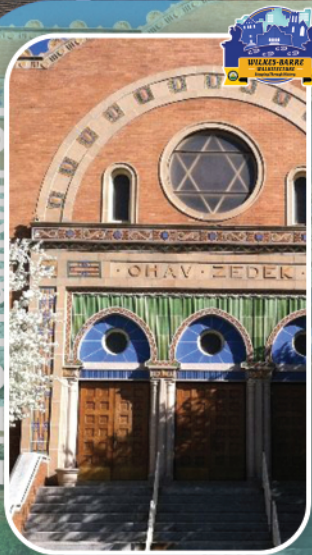


304 S Franklin ST

Congregation Ohav Zedek

242 S Franklin ST

In 1930, ground was broken, eight months later the cornerstone was laid, and on January 24, 1932, the official dedication was held for the present home of Congregation Ohav Zedek. An example of solid architectural simplicity and elegance, the Shul is one of the most beautiful in the United States. The word shul is Yiddish, and is derived from a German word which means "school." The use of shul is meant to remind people of the role of the shul in education, as people of the Jewish faith believe that religious education is an ongoing experience. During the 1972 flood, the Shul at Congregation Ohav Zedek was untouched by the raging river.



242 S Franklin ST

253 S Franklin ST

A Piece of FDR History

The address at 253 South Franklin Street was the residence where President Franklin Delano Roosevelt stopped in the aftermath of the 1936 flood. The home was owned by Clem Perkins, the President of People's National Bank in Kingston and head of the Financial Recovery effort. Perkins, as well as Carl Leighton Senior of Wilkes-Barre, who oversaw the reconstruction of Wilkes-Barre, met with the President in the home. The Financial Recovery effort was the precursor to the Small Business Administration. The home's exterior is the original color, yellow. What is now the conference room was originally the dining room, where the 32nd President met with city leaders. The home formerly housed The Vinsko and Associates Law Office, and currently is the corporate headquarters of The Building Blocks Learning Center.

253 S Franklin ST



Weckesser Hall

170 S Franklin ST

Weckesser Hall was built between 1914 and 1916 as a residence for Frederick J. Weckesser, an associate of F.M Kirby. When Kirby's business merged with the Woolworth Company, Weckesser became a district manager, and at the time of his death in 1953, he was the director of the F.W. Woolworth Company. His success in the business world provided Mr. Weckesser with the means to build his fabulous Beaux-Arts style home, which was popular in the United States prior to World War I. It is one of the few examples of this type of architecture left in Wilkes-Barre. Also included in the property is a large garage, now known as the Weckesser Annex. The Weckesser and Mary Stegmaier families were next door neighbors, with the Stegmaier mansion being built in 1912 and the Weckesser home in 1916. Shortly after the Weckesser home was inhabited, Mary Stegmaier added a Grand Solarium. This grand home was built by Charles H.P. Gilbert of New York, the architect of Frank W. Woolworth's home. Weckesser Hall currently houses the office of the President of Wilkes University.

170 S Franklin ST



Mary Stegmaier Mansion

156 South Franklin Street

This colonial revival mansion was designed by Wilkes-Barre architects Knapp & Bosworth, and constructed by contractors Thomas & Kerr for George J. Stegmaier, scion of the Wilkes-Barre brewing family and Vice President of the Stegmaier Brewing Company. George, in poor health, never lived there, dying before its completion. The scale of the residence, exemplified by its grand portico, is indicative of the success achieved by the brewing industry in the anthracite coal fields. Later, Wilkes-Barre Council 302 of the Knights of Columbus purchased the home for service as its Council home. In 1943, prompted by wartime needs, Mary Costello Stegmaier's children funded the mansion's renovation and presented it to the American Red Cross for use as the organization's Wyoming Valley chapter house. It was dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Stegmaier and remained in that role until 2004.



Wilkes-Barre YMCA

Corner of South Franklin and East Northampton Street

The Wilkes-Barre YMCA was founded in 1871 and operated out of various sites until 1934. The current YMCA building opened at a cost of \$625,000. Constructed on the site of the former George S. Bennett mansion, it was designed by architect Thomas A. Foster and built in a remarkable fifteen months, during the depression, by the A.J. Sordoni contracting company. Wilkes-Barre architect Thomas Foster modeled the exterior after the palaces of medieval Florence, and the result is a fine example of the historical eclecticism popular in the 1920's and 1930's.



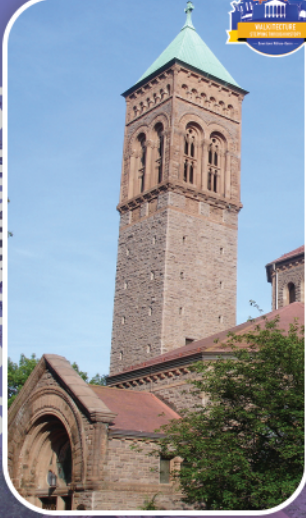
First Presbyterian Church

97 S Franklin ST

The cornerstone of the present church was laid on July 11, 1887. This church was built to accommodate a growing parish with land purchased from a Wyalusing merchant. The old church became the Osterhout Free Library. Meanwhile the new church, replete with electric lights and gas jets, was not dedicated until it was free of debt on March 18, 1894. The stained-glass windows, among which are many Tiffany windows, are a showpiece. The style of architecture is Richardson Romanesque.



97 S Franklin ST



Osterhout Free Library

71 S Franklin ST

When prominent merchant and real estate magnate Isaac Smith Osterhout died in 1882, he willed a substantial portion of his estate for the establishment of a free public library. In 1887, the board of directors hired Melvil Dewey, creator of the Dewey Decimal System, to act as an advisor. Dewey recommended that the board buy the First Presbyterian Church, an edifice built in 1849, and use it for approximately 10 years until permanent arrangements could be made. As it happened, this became the permanent arrangement. The library opened its doors on January 29th, 1889 and was one of the first libraries in Northeastern Pennsylvania.



71 S Franklin ST

St Stephen's Episcopal Church

35 S Franklin ST

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church was built in 1897 and consecrated in 1899. It is the fifth Church edifice built in the same location and was designed by Philadelphia architect Charles Marquedant Burns, Jr., who was a Civil War veteran fighting in the Union Army. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he launched a distinguished architectural career, with a specialty in ecclesiastic buildings, particularly Protestant Episcopal churches. St. Stephen's, which was actually chartered in 1817, has a rich history of worship in the Anglican tradition, having celebrated its Bicentennial in 2017.



35 S Franklin ST

The Bank Triangle

Corner of Franklin and 8 West Market

Historically, the intersection of Market and Franklin Streets has been the financial center of Wilkes-Barre. PNC Bank (1908), Citizens' Bank Building (1911) and Wyoming National Bank (1914) date from the era of the City Beautiful Movement, when American architects inspired by Imperial Rome transformed Victorian industrial centers into "White Cities" reflecting the nation's new-found status as a world power. The three former banks now house downtown apartments and commercial office space.



Franklin & 8 W Market

Spring Brook Water Company

30 N Franklin ST

Former Spring Brook Water Supply Company on 30 North Franklin Street, dates to 1910. The 4-story building is the former headquarters of the Wilkes-Barre Water Company, established in 1851. It was the region's largest water company and is now known as Pennsylvania American Water. Luzerne County officials obtained it as part of a deal to preserve 10,000 acres of watershed land in other parts of the county. The building was put out to bid and sold to King's College where it now houses classrooms and college offices.

30 N Franklin ST



Irem Temple

25 N Franklin ST

The Irem Temple, 25 North Franklin Street in Wilkes-Barre was also known as the Irem Mosque. Built in 1907, it was opened in December 1908. The Irem Temple's Moorish-style architecture was updated in 1931 with auditorium upgrades, construction of balconies, and an extension of the stage. A sloped floor was built bringing the seating capacity to 1,375. Originally built for the rituals, social events and entertainment of the Shriners, it morphed into a gathering place for the surrounding communities of Wilkes-Barre and all of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Weddings, dance recitals, graduation ceremonies, concerts, theater performances, and holiday celebrations were held, building the social fabric of Wilkes-Barre. For decades it was a vital part of Wilkes-Barre's arts scene, when people mostly left their home to be entertained in larger venues like the Irem Shrine. Social changes begat people's taste in...

25 N Franklin ST



entertainment and music concerts by the likes of Tammy Wynette, the Rock group Mountain, circus performers, and a Star Trek Convention were part of its later heritage. Newer and better equipped theatres such as the FM Kirby Center as well as the Arena decreased venue opportunities forcing The Irem to close its doors. It was purchased by the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce in 2005 for just under \$1 million. Today, the Irem Temple Building is listed as part of Wilkes-Barre's Riverfront Historic District on the National Historical Registry; a designation that requires rigorous evaluation to determine historical places that are worthy of preservation. Now, the Irem Temple Restoration Project, in partnership with key community organizations, is offering this exquisite, one of a kind Shriners auditorium a second, and final, chance at restoration. The fate of the once proud Irem avoided sale and the wrecking ball. Currently funds are being raised to restore its rightful place as a community treasure. As many entertainment emcees once proclaimed from the Irem stage, "There's more to come!"



Kirby Health Center

71 N Franklin ST

The Kirby Health Center is a magnificent example of simplified Classical style. Its interiors exhibit a fabulous use of the tiles and colors that were favored in the 1920's and 1930's. The intricate tile work on the underside of the front portico is only a hint of what awaits you inside. A gift from the generous Kirby family, the building was dedicated to the late Angeline Elizabeth Kirby. The purpose of the Kirby Health Center is to promote the health of the people through immunizations and the control of infectious diseases. The Kirby Health Center also houses The Wilkes-Barre Health Department. The medical staff at the facility works to prevent disease and to promote and protect the health of Wilkes-Barre City residents. The Department does so by assessing the needs of the public, offering public health services and creating sound public health policies.



71 N Franklin ST

Luzerne County Courthouse

200 N River ST

Built during the period of Wilkes-Barre's greatest prosperity, the Court House was once the Public Basin of the Wyoming Division of the North Branch Canal. From 1834 to 1881, the canal was a major means of transporting coal and other commodities in and out of the Wyoming Valley. The courthouse lawn highlights memorials to the county's war dead and the anchor of the USS Wilkes-Barre, a World War II cruiser. The nearby cast-iron deer is a relic of the 1850's, when the courthouse sat on Public Square prior to the construction of this edifice in 1909.



200 N River ST

King's College Campus

133 N River ST

Founded in 1946 by the Congregation of the Holy Cross, the Administration Building is the face of the Liberal Arts College. Built as the headquarters of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, it was designed by architect Daniel Burnham, who also designed icons like the Flatiron Building in New York City and was a main character in the book, "The Devil in the White City." King's was founded for the sons of coal miners who were returning from World War II and taking advantage of the GI Bill. The Liberal Arts College curriculum and campus have grown tremendously since its founding. However, the Administration Building, with its statue of Christ the King, was designed by Lawrence Russo. Born in Naples, Italy, he was a seventh generation sculptor who in 1922 made Wyoming Valley his home. In addition to Christ the King, Russo's sculptures adorn churches, public buildings, cemeteries and monuments throughout the Valley, Pennsylvania, New York and beyond.

133 N River ST



The River Common

N River ST

Located along the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River in Wilkes-Barre, the River Common can be found on either side of the Market Street Bridge. It is home to a 750-seat amphitheater, paved walkways, gardens, a fishing pier, and two grand gateways connecting the city to the Susquehanna River. Residents can enjoy the open green space or attend one of the many public events held onsite.



N River ST



The Market Street Bridge

Between Kingston and Wilkes-Barre

The beauty of the bridge and the proud eagles that guard its entrance towers have made it a well-loved landmark; it has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1988. The architects designed four triumphal arches (or pylons) surmounted by limestone eagles with partially spread wings, intended as a memorial to veterans of the First World War. The paired pylons, two at each side of the bridge, are connected by a classical balustrade running the full length of the bridge. The eagles on top of the Market Street Bridge weigh about 12 tons, about as much as two elephants! The landmark bridge cost about \$2.5 million when it was completed in 1929, and is estimated to cost nearly \$30 million today.



Kingston & Wilke-Barre

LSEO

16 S River ST

Formerly The Guard Center, the building was constructed in just ninety days during the winter of 1908 to house the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company. Its imposing granite columns (a Neoclassical Revival structure) signify the important role that the coal companies once played in the life of the city. The evolution of the building, dedicated in 1909, spans the commercial changes from 20th century coal to the 21st century internet connection.



16 S River ST

Chapman Hall

24 South River Street

Coal company president Frederick Huber commissioned Welsh, Sturdevant and Poggi, the same architects to design his home next door in 1911. This Craftsman Style detailing of the three-story mansion hints at the influence of contemporary Prairie School architects like Frank Lloyd Wright. The building currently houses private commercial concerns.



24 S River ST



Rifkin Hall

80-84 S River ST

The High Victorian Gothic Mansion was once the home of Colonel Robert B. Ricketts, a battle of Gettysburg hero and early conservationist, who donated Ricketts Glen State Park to the citizens of Pennsylvania. Currently the historic building serves as on-campus student housing.



80-84 S River ST



Kirby Hall

202 S River ST

The home had remained empty after the passing of its original owner in 1940, until it was presented to Bucknell Junior College on July 1, 1941, by Allan P. Kirby in memory of his parents, Fred Morgan and Jessie Amelia Kirby. The building was officially dedicated as the Kirby Educational Home of Bucknell Junior College on December 2, 1941. The building was renovated in 1992 in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the birth of Allan P. Kirby, the son of F.M. Kirby, a noted businessman. The project transformed the former home to the splendor of its original Victorian style. Currently Kirby Hall houses The Wilkes University English Department.



202 S River ST

Dorothy Dickson Darte Center

239 S River ST

During the Great Depression, Dorothy Dickson Darte made a significant contribution to fund the arts programs at Wilkes University. She requested anonymity for her efforts, but after her death, what had been called the Wilkes College Center for Performing Arts was dedicated in her name. In the basement of this building is the Blackbox Theatre. This area is utilized as a practice room, seats 60 people, and features a piano and lighting control. The main auditorium, the Darling Theatre, was named after Ms. Darte's grandson, Edmund Darling. It is located on the first floor of the Darte Center and can seat 478 people. Its stage contains 3 trap doors and a hydraulic orchestra section. The lowest level is also used as a freight elevator to lift props to the stage. This theatre also has 36 line sets and 300 stage lighting instruments.



239 S River ST

Temple Israel

236 S River ST

Temple Israel was initiated in 1922 when a group of Jewish men met with the intent of forming a conservative congregation in Wilkes-Barre. The completion and dedication of the building occurred in September, 1925. Throughout the years, the Rabbis serving the congregation have been luminaries in the conservative movement. The congregation continues to build upon a rich legacy of tradition and service to the Jewish and general community. The Byzantine copper domed exterior is faced with buff tapestry brick and trimmed with polychrome terra cotta with a domed stain glass ceiling.

236 S River ST



EXPLORE MORE

Want to add a few more steps?

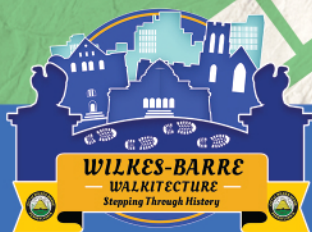
Zebulon Butler House

313 S River ST

This is the homestead of Colonel Zebulon Butler, a historical Wyoming Valley figure. The colonel commanded forces in the Battle of Wyoming on July 3, 1778. He represented the Wyoming Valley when it was part of Connecticut. Eventually, competing land claims were settled in favor of Pennsylvania, but the Connecticut-Yankee influence lived on in the valley's culture and architecture. Colonel Butler built a log cabin in 1773 at River and Northampton Streets. His son, Lord Butler, built what is still called "The Butler House" over the cabin in 1793. Zebulon's great-granddaughter, Sarah Richards Butler, moved the building to its present location at 313 S. River St. three years after the Civil War (1861-1865) to make way for a large mansion.

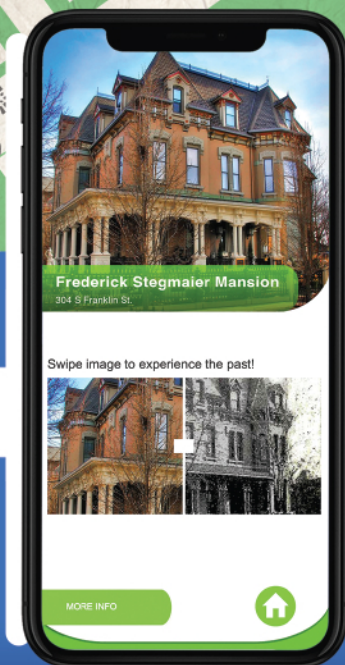
313 S River ST





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vizvibe.com/walkitecture



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