

Amazing Architecture

Detroit has so many examples of amazing architecture that stand tall and grand. Some are even designated National Historic Landmarks. Look up, look around, even look down and be wowed.

**MULTI-DAY | 3-12
HOURS**

FEATURES

Architecture, Art & Culture

DESTINATIONS

Detroit, Wayne, Beyond
Detroit

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SKYSCRAPERS



Art Deco, Tall Towers and Iconic Structures

The Penobscot Building

Named in honor of the Penobscot, a Native American tribe from Maine, this art deco masterpiece was built in 1928 in the heart of the Financial District and features Native American motifs. Don't miss its four-story arched entrance on Griswold Street.

Guardian Building

Art deco architecture at its finest, the Guardian Building was once promoted as "the Cathedral of Finance." Blending Native American, Aztec and Arts and Crafts styles, 40 artisans created the building's many painted murals and ceilings, mosaics, marble fixtures, tiles and other artistic details.

Wirt C. Rowland

Architect Wirt C. Rowland: One of Detroit's most renowned architects, Rowland designed both the Penobscot and Guardian buildings. Born in Clinton, Michigan, he studied architecture at Harvard Graduate School of



Design in Cambridge, and was recruited by Albert Kahn to join his Detroit firm.

Fisher Building

This landmark skyscraper in the New Center area is constructed of limestone, granite and marble and was designed by Albert Kahn Associates. Finished in 1928, it's considered Detroit's largest art object and is home to the iconic Fisher Theatre.

Albert Kahn

Architect Albert Kahn: A well-known industrial architect, Kahn was born in Germany and came to Detroit in 1880 at the age of 11. In addition to the Fisher Building, he designed Cranbrook House and The Dearborn Inn in Dearborn.



The GM Renaissance Center

This impressive grouping of seven interconnected tall towers is a centerpiece of the Detroit riverfront. Designed by architect John Portman, who also imagined the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, the "Ren Cen" is featured in dozens of movies — This is Spinal Tap, Breathless, Hancock — and TV series.

One Detroit Center

Admire the spires of this post-modern Neo-Gothic style, which has the distinction of being the tallest office building in the state. Architect Phillip Johnson's only architectural contribution in Michigan.

One Woodward Avenue

Opened 10 years before the World Trade Center, the most notable structure designed by Minoru Yamasaki, One Woodward Avenue is one of few Detroit buildings that came from the modern era.

Minoru Yamasaki

Architect Minoru Yamasaki: Moving to Detroit in 1945, Japanese-American architect Minoru Yamasaki joined the firm Smith, Hinchman and Grylls, which sheltered him internment during World War II. Along with designing One Woodward Avenue, he also designed Temple Beth El in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills.

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AUTO BARON HOMES



Where the Automotive Industry's Royalty Once Lived

Meadow Brook Hall

This former auto baron's home was recently designated a National Historic Landmark. Built by one of the automotive aristocracy's most remarkable women, Matilda Dodge Wilson, widow of automobile pioneer John Dodge, and her second husband, lumber broker Alfred Wilson. Constructed between 1926 and 1929, Meadow Brook represents one of the finest examples of Tudor-revival architecture in America.

Edsel & Eleanor Ford House

Wander 87 acres of sumptuous gardens or tour the inner workings of this 60-room Cotswold mansion where Henry Ford's only son, Edsel, and his wife Eleanor once lived.



Fair Lane

The home of Henry and Clara Ford in Dearborn is currently closed to the public for restoration, but visitors are still encouraged to walk the grounds on weekdays. The Fords built the 31,000-square-foot Fair Lane as their dream home, a unique blend of Midwestern Prairie School and English country manor styles. Famed architect Jens Jensen designed the gardens.

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PLACES TO STAY & PLAY



Hotels, Theaters and The D's Miscellaneous with Architectural Significance

The Henry Ford

See early homesteads, cottages, farms and shops in Greenfield Village and/or experience the utter architectural awe of a manufacturing plant at its productive best during the Ford Rouge Factory Tour.

Lafayette Park

With 26 buildings, this community is the largest collection of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's work, and one of his greatest achievements. Lafayette Park was called "one of the nation's most beautiful and obscure residential developments" by the Wall Street Journal.



Westin Book Cadillac

Recently returned to its former glory and now a hotel, look up at copper-covered roof elements and the sculptures of notable figures from Detroit's history – General Anthony Wayne, Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, Chief Pontiac and Robert Navarre along the ornate Michigan Avenue façade. By Louis Kemper in the Neo-Renaissance style.

Fox Theatre

Classic and lavish, one of the last surviving movie palaces of the 1920s. Architect [C. Howard Crane](#) designed the Fox with a lavish interior featuring a blend of Burmese, Chinese, Indian and Persian motifs.



Detroit Opera House

A first in a series of palatial vaudeville and moving picture houses built in Detroit in the 1920s, this opera house was designed by renowned Detroit architect C. Howard Crane. It is resplendently decorated in the Italian Renaissance style with lavish crystal chandeliers, frescoes, brass fixtures, marble stairways and drinking fountains.

Orchestra Hall at the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center

The prized and historic Orchestra Hall was built in 1919. The home of the renowned Detroit Symphony Orchestra was designed by noted theater architect, C. Howard Crane.

Cranbrook House & Gardens

Designed by Detroit architect Albert Kahn in 1908 for the founders of Cranbrook, George Gough Booth and Ellen Scripps Booth. This Arts and Crafts-style dwelling is the oldest surviving manor home in metro Detroit. The estate is now the centerpiece of the Cranbrook Educational Community campus.

Eliel Saarinen: Famed Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen was asked to design the Cranbrook Educational Community campus in 1925 by George Booth. Saarinen's aesthetic is imprinted on Cranbrook and to this day students there continue to study his work.

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AMAZING VACANT BUILDINGS



Structures That Once Bustled with Activity; Still Architectural Eye Candy

Book Tower and adjacent Book Building

Italian Renaissance style built in 1917. A copper roof and outside fire escape make this towering ruin distinctive.

Michigan Central Station

Built in 1913 by Warren and Wetmore and Reed and Stem in the Beaux-Arts style. Popular location for Michigan's film industry.



Wayne County Building

A beautifully ornate example of Beaux-Arts architecture, 1897-1902.

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BEAUTIFUL CHURCHES IN DETROIT



Places of Worship Worth Seeing

First Congregational Church of Detroit

A powerful combination of Romanesque and Byzantine architecture.

Mariners' Church

This Gothic-inspired church was founded in 1842. Singer Gordon Lightfoot mentions this place of worship in his tribute song to the sunken Edmund Fitzgerald and once played the famous tune for parishioners during a memorial honoring the sailors lost in the Great Lakes tragedy.

Saint Florian Roman Catholic Church

Designed by Ralph Adams Cram to serve the area's Polish community.

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ARCHITECTURAL TOURS



Detroit-based community organizations and groups offer a variety of architecture-themed tours that can be taken by foot or by bus.

Detroit Urban Adventures

Boasting “day tours with a local,” a guide will take you through two program options: The D You Must See and Detroit’s Rise, Fall & Renewal. Both are \$26 and include architectural information.

Feet on the Street Tours + Events

Planned tours are usually designed around a historic theme that incorporates food, art, architecture, music and unique neighborhoods.

Preservation Detroit

Walking tours, which run Saturdays from May to September, cover the cultural center and Midtown, downtown and Eastern Market, and cost \$12 to \$15.

Detroit Experience Factory

D:hive’s touring arm, the Detroit Experience Factory, offers a free walking tour every Saturday at 11 a.m. On the first and third Saturday of every month, it hosts a bus tour for \$15 for the first seven people; \$20 for the rest. Private architecture tours for groups may also be booked.

Detroit Historical Society

The Historic Houses of Worship Tour Series departs from the Detroit Historical Museum and typically features five area churches. Make your reservations well in advance as these tours sell out fast.

Multilingual Detroit Motown Tour Co.

This tour company offers tours in dozens of different languages. Book a two hour walking tour to see some of Detroit’s greatest architecture, or work with the tour company to create a customized experience.

