

2017



Masters of American Architecture

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, Buffalo was the eighth largest city in America and one of the most prosperous cities in the world. Wealthy from commerce (Erie Canal and then railroads) and industry (grain milling, steel manufacturing, and more), the city's leaders hired the best architects in America to come to Buffalo to design landmark buildings. On this *Masters of American Architecture Tour* we will see stellar examples of architecture by nationally and internationally renowned architects including Chicago architects Adler & Sullivan and Daniel Burnham, as well as fine examples of ecclesiastical architecture by prominent architects including Patrick Keeley and Richard Upjohn, and other prime examples of American architecture.

Beginning Location: *Western New York Book Arts Center (WNYBAC), 468 Washington Street*

Stop 1: Old Post Office

- *Walk south on Washington St. past Lafayette Square to South Division St. Walk east one block on South Division to Ellicott St.*

Stop 2: Ellicott Square Building

- *Cross Ellicott St. and turn left to Swan St. Walk one block west on Swan St. to Washington St. and turn right to walk to the entrance of the Ellicott Square Building.*

Stop 3: Pearl Street + The Dun Building

- *Exit the Ellicott Square Building either through the Washington St. or Main St. side and return to Swan St. Walk west on Swan St. to Pearl St.*
- **Check your time!** *If you are already more than 50 minutes in, walk across Main Street and go to St. Paul's Cathedral, then the Guaranty Building, then M&T Plaza – skipping St. Joseph's entirely.*

Stop 4: St. Joseph's Old Cathedral

- *Continue walking on Swan to Franklin Street, cross Franklin Street*

Stop 5: Old Erie County Hall

- *Walk north on Franklin Street to Church Street, and cross Church Street*

Stop 6: Guaranty (Prudential) Building

- *Cross Franklin Street and walk one block east on Church Street. Cross Church Street.*

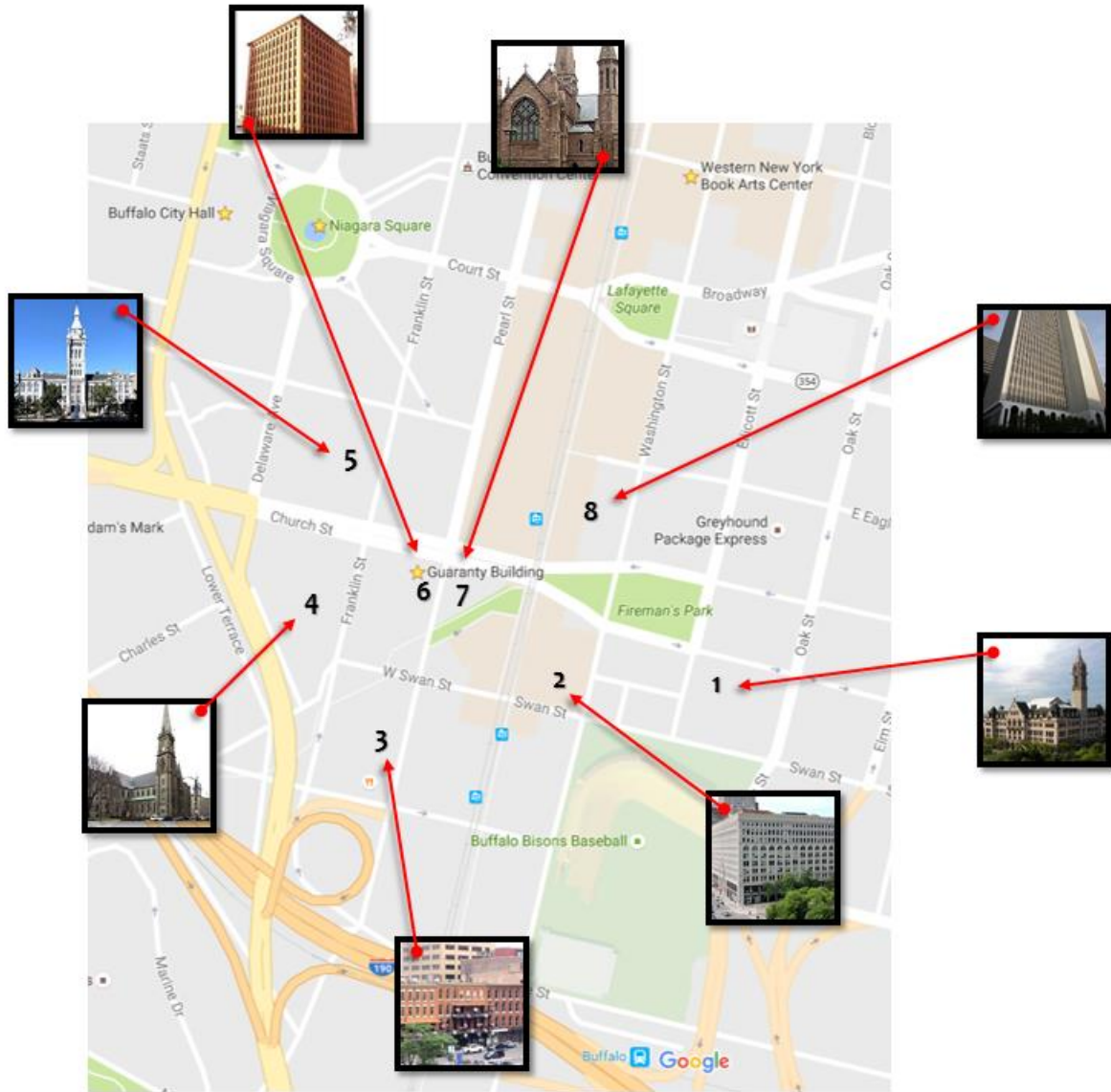
Stop 7: St. Pauls Cathedral

- *Walk across Pearl Street*

Stop 8: One M&T Plaza

- *Exit St. Paul's Cathedral onto Cathedral Place, and walk to Main Street. Cross Main Street diagonally.*

Return to WNYBAC: *Western New York Book Arts Center (WNYBAC), 468 Washington Street*



STOP 1: Old Post Office



OLD POST OFFICE – Erie Community College, City Campus

121 Ellicott Street

1894-1901

Architects: Jeremiah O'Rourke (1894-1897), William Aiken (1897-1901) & James Knox Taylor (1901-1901)

Style: Victorian Gothic/Richardsonian Romanesque

- **History**

- **1893** Tarnsey Act:
 - Required large federal projects be opened to competition
 - Allowed private architectural firms access to lucrative federal contracts
 - These competitions would improve building quality and aid in the elevation of architecture from a trade to a profession
 - This building, however, was still designed by government architects
- At the time the president of the AIA (American Institute of Architects), Daniel Burnham, called the design “inferior and unworthy”
- Note similarities to the Old Post Office in Washington, DC, also designed by James Knox Taylor (who designed the Federal building for the Pan-Am)
- **March 20, 1901** - Building Dedication
 - The first letter mailed went to President McKinley from the Buffalo postal employees who wrote, “It is our Pan-American obligation to show the western world a high standard of postal service.”

- **Architecture – Exterior**

- Exterior is pink granite from Maine
- Pointed arch windows reminiscent of Flemish Gothic with their slight points
- 244-foot square tower with gargoyles and eagles
- Ornamentation: eagles, wolves, lynx, and bison

- **Architecture – Interior**

- First Floor:
 - Gothic colonnade with clustered marble columns
 - Terrazzo floor
 - Mahogany window frames with colonnettes (the capitals match the marble capitals)
 - Groin vaulted ceiling

- President's Office: Located at the end has stained glass windows featuring emblems of federal departments that were once housed in the building (including the Dept. of Justice, Dept. of Interior, Treasury, and Post Office)
- Atrium: Reminiscent of a Venetian palazzo
 - Skylight was originally intended to allowed light onto the mail sorting floor
- **Current Use/Changes to the Building**
 - Building was abandoned when Post Office moved to a more modern facility on William Street
 - Demolition was threatened for the empty 'eyesore'
 - Two Erie County legislators, Joan Bozer and Minnie Gillette, proposed moving Erie Community College's City Campus to the building
 - **1982** - Renovation completed by Cannon Design for under \$15 million
 - More than 2,000 students now call City Campus home

**Optional Information: COCA-COLA FIELD**

- Opened in **1988** with an innovative design by HOK of Kansas City which pioneered a retro-look in baseball stadia [the architects went on to design the new Comiskey Park in Chicago (now called US Cellular Field), Camden Yards in Baltimore, and Cleveland's Progressive Field, among many others] and relocated the baseball park from the suburbs to its traditional downtown location.

STOP 2: Ellicott Square Building



ELLICOTT SQUARE BUILDING

295 Main Street

1895-1896

Architect: Charles Atwood of Daniel Burnham & Co.

Style: Italian Renaissance

- **History**

- Plot of land was originally reserved by Joseph Ellicott for his private estate
- Largest office building in the world when completed
 - Fills an entire city block
- Cost \$3.5 million
- Architects:
 - Charles Atwood had been designer-in-chief of the Columbian Exposition
 - Daniel Burnham: “make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men’s blood, think big”
- It was advertised that a tenant could “do two days of work in one day” at Ellicott Square because of all the amenities present within the building
- Ellsworth Statler began his path to fame and fortune with a restaurant in the lobby
 - He promoted his business by putting gold coins in random dishes of ice cream.
 - He went on to create America’s first hotel chain, including his grand hotel on Niagara Square
- **1896** - One of the world’s first purpose built movie theaters was set up in this building
 - Movies had been shown in theaters, etc. before, but they had been pre-existing buildings constructed for another purpose, not as a movie theater
 - “Edison’s Vitascope Hall” had a Vitascope invented by Thomas Edison and was lavishly decorated.
 - Films cost three cents to watch.
- A scene from “The Natural” was filmed in the lobby (which served as a hotel lobby in the movie)

- **Architecture – Exterior**

- Main Street & Washington Street entrances are identical
 - Minerva - Roman goddess of wisdom & war, also arts and crafts
 - Mercury - Roman god of travel & commerce
 - Messenger to the gods, carries the caduceus that turns anything it touches into gold

- Building has a steel-frame construction underneath the elaborate exterior
- Terra-cotta, granite, iron, and brick façade has been painted a uniform gray
- **1971** - Cornice was removed
 - Medusa heads at the top of the building remain

- **Architecture – Interior**

- (No photography allowed without signing a release form with security)
- Center Court:
 - Building is shaped like a ‘square doughnut’ with a large light well in the center
 - Typical of Burnham office buildings, such as Burnham & Root’s Rookery Building in Chicago
- **1926** - Elevator doors feature scenes of Buffalo history
 - Top 4 panels depict rustic, preindustrial Buffalo while the bottom 4 panels depict modern, industrialized Buffalo
- **1930** - Elaborate mosaic floor was added
 - Compass points in the center of the court
 - 23 million pieces of Italian marble
 - Depictions of sun symbols from civilizations around the globe
 - Symbols near the elevators are the Native American ‘wheel of life’ symbol, *not* swastikas



Optional Information: ONE SENECA TOWER

- One Seneca Tower (formerly HSBC Bank) the tallest skyscraper in Buffalo at 38 stories was designed by internationally prominent firm, Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (S.O.M.) – **1969-1974** (S.O.M. also designed the former Sears Tower in Chicago, the tallest bldg. in the United States)

STOP 3: Pearl Street



- History

- This **two-block section of Pearl Street** provides a fascinating chronological timeline of architectural history from commercial buildings typical of the mid-19th century through the early modern skyscrapers of the late 19th century:
- **1840s** - At the far corner - buildings now occupied by Pearl St. Grill
 - Typical Canal-era Italianate brick buildings
 - Built while Buffalo was a growing city
 - 4-5 stories, load-bearing walls, made of brick or stone
- **1888** - Webb Building (aka Lofts on Pearl)
 - Romanesque Revival style, popularized by H.H Richardson
 - Still load bearing, but taller and in the latest Richardsonian-Romanesque style (popular at that time)
- **1894** - Dun Building: Buffalo's first skyscraper!
- **1895-96** - Guaranty Building (to the right, will come to later in the tour)



DUN BUILDING (1894-1895)

Architect: Green & Wicks

Style: Neoclassical – applied vertically

- Buffalo's 1st high-rise structure (10 stories)
- Steel skeleton
- Load-bearing walls to brace the narrow building against the strong winds coming off Lake Erie
- Façade divided into multi-story bands, stacks one on top of the other
- Lacks what came to be a more typical “skyscraper” appearance
 - **Comparison to Guaranty Building**

STOP 4: St. Joseph's Old Cathedral



ST. JOSEPH'S OLD CATHEDRAL

50 Franklin Street

1851-1855

Architect: Patrick Keely

Style: Gothic Revival

- History

- Bishop John Timon (1797-1897)
 - First Roman Catholic Bishop of Buffalo: Diocese created in **1847**
 - Timon went first to St. Louis, the oldest church in Buffalo; Timon identified with the poor Irish workers and quickly split from the Germans at St. Louis
 - Timon brought many other groups to Buffalo/WNY, including Sisters of Charity (Sisters Hospital, **1848**) and Franciscans (St. Bonaventure University, **1856**)
 - Traveled around the world seeking donations to build a proper cathedral
 - **February 6, 1851** - The cornerstone was laid; Construction completed in 1855
 - Much of the construction done by Irish laborers who came after their day job to work on the cathedral because they didn't have the money to support it financially
 - From 1847 to 1897 (Timon's death), Diocese grew from 16 to 200 churches.
 - Bishop Timon was laid to rest in the crypt at his beloved St. Joseph's Cathedral
- Architect: Patrick Keely (1816-1896)
 - Irish-American architect based in Brooklyn
 - Designed almost 600 Roman Catholic churches across Northeast
- 'Old' Cathedral name:
 - **1912-1915:** A "new" St. Joseph's Cathedral was built on Delaware Ave. at West Utica
 - The architect from Rome did not account for Buffalo's severe weather, and the building quickly began to deteriorate; plaster and marble falling down
 - **1976** - 'New' cathedral demolished & the bishop's seat returned to 'Old' Cathedral

- Architecture – Exterior

- Very symmetrical Gothic design: **Great contrast to St. Pauls Cathedral**
 - Similar to a classic Gothic Cathedral, e.g. Notre Dame in Paris
- French influences: twin towers, rose window, triple portal
 - Two towers were intended to be built, but only the south tower (left side) was completed
- Exterior masonry is limestone from Lockport NY.
- Note the many arches carved over the doorway & the marble statue of St. Joseph over entry

STOP 5: Old Erie County Hall



OLD ERIE COUNTY HALL

92 Franklin Street

1871-1876

Architect: Andrew Jackson Warner

Style: Late Victorian Romanesque

- History

- Architect:
 - A local Rochester, NY architect
 - Supervising architect for HH Richardson's Buffalo State Hospital
- Where Colonel Cyrenius Chapin surrendered the Village of Bflo to British in the **War of 1812**
- Location of one of Buffalo's first burial grounds: Franklin Sq. (bodies moved to Forest Lawn)
- Originally City and County Hall
 - **1932** - City government moved to the new City Hall
 - Grover Cleveland had his office here when he was mayor of Buffalo
- President William McKinley laid in state in the lobby after his assassination
 - There is a plaque on the lobby floor & U.S. flag shows where his body laid in state
 - To this day no one is permitted to walk over the spot as it is cordoned off
- McKinley's assassin, Leon Czolgosz, was tried in the building
 - There is a tunnel from this building to the jail (behind it)
 - Czolgosz sentenced to death by the electric chair (*invented by a Buffalo dentist*)

- Architecture – Exterior

- Romanesque: Rounded arches and windows, tall central tower
- Massively scaled monolithic stones project and recede
 - Forms shadows which define the "architecture" (rather than fine details)
- Romanesque & Gothic architecture is often polychromatic but this building is *monochromatic*
- Building is a double Roman cross in plan
- Clock tower rises to 270 feet & Clock is 9 feet in diameter
- Corner statues: (Justice, Agriculture, Mechanical Arts, Commerce)
 - 16 feet
 - Each cut from a 30-ton granite block
 - Sculptor: Giovanni Sala
- Granite quarried from Clark's Island, Maine (*considered best building stone in the country*)
 - First floor is uncut stone & floors above are bush hammered stone
- 12 dormers in the slate roof with 14 corner turrets each 20 feet high

STOP 6: Guaranty Building



GUARANTY (aka Prudential) BUILDING

28 Church Street

1895-1896

Architects: Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler of the firm Adler & Sullivan

- History

- Original Owner: Intended to be built for Buffalo businessman Hascal Taylor, but he died before construction started
 - Guaranty Construction Company of Chicago finished the project and named it
- Two years later (**1898**) Prudential Insurance refinanced the building and it was renamed “The Prudential”
 - The building was known called the Prudential for many decades until it was restored in **1979** and renamed “Guaranty”
- Architects: Adler & Sullivan
 - Chicago firm credited with refining the design of America’s earliest skyscrapers
 - **1890-1892:** Wainwright Building, St. Louis, was a predecessor to Guaranty
 - Designed the modern first skyscraper
 - **1885** - Home Insurance Building for William LeBaron Jenney in Chicago
 - “Skyscrapers” contain skeletal steel frames, fireproofing (wrapped around the steel), safety elevators, plumbing, and electricity.
 - Sullivan: artistic vision of the building & Adler: engineering to make the building work
- Threatened & Restored:
 - **1974** - Fire in the building & demolition was threatened
 - One of Buffalo’s most notable preservation victories
 - Saved in large part due to the actions of Jack Randall
 - Aided by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan
 - **1982-1983:** Building is restored and reopened for office tenants
- Current Owner & Tenant: Hodgson Russ
 - Has spent millions of dollars on further restoration work
 - Founded in **1817**
 - Oldest and largest law firm in Buffalo
 - Two U.S. presidents practiced law there: Millard Fillmore and Grover Cleveland.
 - They have offices throughout NYS, in Toronto, ON, and Palm Beach, FL.

- Architecture – Exterior

- *Helpful to contrast with the incongruous designs of the floors of the Dun Building*

- The Dun Building exemplifies the technologies that made the skyscraper possible
 - Steel skeletal frame, elevator, etc. but architects were unsure what to make this new building type look like.
 - The Dun Building was a typical response, a mash up of styles
 - Sullivan solved this design problem with the Guaranty Building, by emphasizing the verticality – “every inch a proud and soaring thing”
- Verticality:
 - Slender piers, twice as many as are structurally necessary
 - Upward movement of the piers is not interrupted – spandrels are recessed
 - Even second story cornice is cut back at the corner of the building so as to not interrupt the dominant vertical line.
- Organized like a classical column
 - Base – first two floors
 - Shaft – office floors
 - Capital – projecting cornice with oculus windows
- Terra Cotta: style from nature, seed of life motif
 - Tree of life branches out over the street at corner of projecting cornice
 - Restoration work by Boston Valley Terra Cotta (local firm)
- **Architecture – Interior**
 - Art Nouveau lobby skylight with plant pod motif, now backlit; mosaic ceilings and walls
 - Bronze elevator cages; staircase balustrade – recurring seed pod motif

Interior Access Guidelines

From Hodgson Russ:

- We welcome small groups (no more than 8 guests at a time) to see the new Interpretive Center on the first floor and the first floor in general. The group will be asked to sign in at the security desk.
- We can accommodate small groups for up to 20-25 minutes inside the building.
- The public is not allowed access to floors 2-13 or the lower level.
- Small tour groups are generally more likely to gain access after 10 AM and before noon, or between 2-3:30 PM, Monday-Friday.
- Bringing groups into the building on weekends and holidays is discouraged.
- Subject to the above guidelines, we cannot always guarantee that such are overarching accommodations that can be assumed every day. For instance, if we have an event (internal or client related) going on, at any given time we may have to turn a group away. We have many client related seminars, workshops, and internal training initiatives or large meetings that occur in our multi-purpose room (also located on the first floor) very frequently. Those events cannot be disturbed with the noise of guests that wish to see the building, as the lobby tends to get very noisy with all the glass/tile/hard surfaces.
- Our guards are instructed to use their best judgment to comply with the firm’s needs and requirements alongside the public’s desire to see inside the building. We hope you understand and will work cooperatively with us.

STOP 7: St. Paul's Cathedral



ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

128 Pearl Street

1849-1851

Architect: Richard Upjohn

Style: Gothic Revival

- History

- **1817** – St. Paul's was incorporated
 - One of Buffalo's oldest congregations
 - Oldest is First Presbyterian Church (**1812**)
- **1819** – This triangular plot of land donated by Holland Land Co.
 - Original church was simple wood structure
- **March 12, 1874** - Millard Fillmore's body laid in state
- Architect: Richard Upjohn
 - English architect
 - Emigrated to NYC and designed Trinity Church on Wall Street in Manhattan (**1846**)
 - Known for his picturesque Gothic Revival churches and credited with bringing Gothic Revival to the U.S.
 - **1848** - Committee formed for new St. Paul's Cathedral & immediately engaged Upjohn as architect
- 1888 Explosion & Rebuilding:
 - **1888** - Gas explosion and subsequent fire destroy interior of the church
 - Congregation hired Robert Gibson (w. Cyrus Porter) to redesign the interior of the church
 - Gibson was another English born architect who emigrated to NYC
 - Gibson changed the configuration of the roof to add clerestory windows and two transept-like extensions
 - Not true projecting transepts as in a cruciform plan
 - Hammer-beam ceiling
 - Exterior remains otherwise largely unchanged

- Architecture – Exterior

- Medina sandstone from Medina, NY (transported to Buffalo on the Erie Canal)
- Gothic style: pointed arches, tall spires, lancet windows, rose windows, buttresses

STOP 8: One M&T Plaza



ONE M&T PLAZA

Main at N. Division

1964-1966

Architect: Minoru Yamasaki (with Duane Lyman Associates)

Style: Modern

- **History**

- M & T Bank commissioned Yamasaki to design this sleek, modern office tower to serve as its corporate headquarters, which it still does today
- Yamasaki was working on plans for the twin towers of the World Trade Ctr. in NYC while this building was being completed (you might note some similarities between the bldgs.)

- **Architecture – Exterior**

- Tripartite design with the enormous, open lobby surrounded by large arched windows that alternate in scale
 - The undulating arch pattern continues in a clever visual scheme at both ends of the first floor (facing the front or rear) where the office block appears to spring above and beyond the lobby
- The office block features narrow / narrower piers of concrete aggregate
 - Between the piers are narrow tinted windows with color coordinated spandrels which have a hint of decoration in a split leaf-like pattern
- The building is capped by a predominantly white series of verticals and just the slightest hint of a cornice
- Fountain sculpture designed by Harry Bertoia in coordination with Yamasaki
 - It contrasts the curve against the predominant straight line of the structure.

- **Architecture – Interior**

- **(No photography allowed in lobby because of the bank)**
- The exterior plaza is accessible inside through massive glazing
 - Stone surface of the plaza continues inside with same stone on the floor
 - Undulating marble steps lead up to the banking floor of the lobby
- “Barcelona chairs,” original design by Mies van der Rohe, popular in mid-century modern corporate offices decorate the lobby



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Architectural Elements

- **COLONNADE**: a row of columns supporting a roof, an entablature, or arcade
- **COLONNETTE**: a small, relatively thin column, often used for decoration, or to support an arcade
- **DORMERS**: a vertical window that projects from a sloping roof and usually illuminates a bedroom
- **FLYING BUTTRESS**: a projecting support of stone or brick built against a wall slanting from a separate pier, typically forming an arch with the wall it supports
- **GROIN VAULTED CEILING**: formed by the perpendicular intersection of two vaults with semicircular cross sections
- **HAMMER-BEAM ROOF**: decorative, open timber roof truss typical of English Gothic architecture
- **LOAD-BEARING WALLS**: a wall that bears the weight of the house by conducting the weight to a foundation structure
- **NAVE & CLERESTORY WINDOWS**: windows in the walls of the upper level of the church which rise above the rooflines of the lower aisles
- **PALAZZO**: an impressive public building or private residence, especially in Italy
- **POLYCHROMATIC**: using contrasting colored stone and brick
- **ROSE WINDOW**: a circular window in a church that is made from stained glass with a decorative pattern
- **TERRAZZO**: flooring material consisting of chips of marble or granite set in concrete and polished to give a smooth surface
- **TRIPARTITE DESIGN**: a method of visually organizing the façade of a building by dividing it up into three sections, similar to those found on a classical column: base, shaft, capital
- **TURRETS**: a small tower that projects vertically from the wall of a building