



## DOWNTOWN ORLANDO HISTORIC DISTRICT

### WALKING TOUR

#### DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Designated in 1980 by the City of Orlando, the district is a cohesive collection of buildings that reflects the commercial and governmental history of Orlando. It encompasses eight blocks of buildings constructed from the 1880s until the early 1940s. Surrounded by modern skyscrapers, approximately 60 historic buildings in this district offer a glimpse into the city's dynamic past. The historic district designation has helped preserve buildings that might otherwise have been demolished due to the rapid rate of growth and demand for commercial space in downtown.

Because most of the district was specially certified by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, many property owners have pursued Federal Investment Tax Credits for their renovations. In addition, the City of Orlando offers a Property Tax Abatement for owners who renovate their historic properties.

Orlando's first historic district demonstrates the economic and political growth of the city for over six decades. The district contains historic structures such as the depot, the courthouse, banking, office and retail buildings. The variety of building styles and sizes reflects the evolution of architecture and construction in downtown. The styles represented in the district are Queen Anne, Twentieth Century Commercial Style, the Beaux-Arts, Mediterranean Revival, Art Deco and Art Moderne. Nearly all of the buildings are of masonry construction due to a series of fires in the late 1800s that destroyed many wood structures and prompted the City to pass new building standards.

By the 1920s, when Orlando was experiencing the Florida Land Boom that consumed investors with dreams of big money and lured new citizens on each new train, the architecture had changed. Stuccoed Mediterranean facades sprouted up across downtown. Classically detailed high-rise

buildings housed the most fashionable hotels, stores and offices. After the collapse of the Florida Land Boom in the late 1920s and through the 1940s, the pace of development slowed. A more austere, streamlined feeling was found in buildings constructed downtown during that period.

#### OTHER HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The Downtown Historic District contains the bulk of the historic structures in the downtown core, but other buildings outside of the district have also been designated as historic. Some are Orlando Historic Landmarks (OHL) and they enjoy all the same protections found in the historic district. Others have been included on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

## Taking the Tour

Feel free to explore the wonders of the historic district and nearby historic buildings at random, or follow the tour route in whole or part; the whole tour is approximately 2.5 miles. Each number on the map is keyed to the properties described below. Please respect private property when viewing these sites. Enjoy!

### 1. Well'sbuilt Hotel

*511 West South Street*

Dr. William Monroe Wells constructed this hotel in 1926. It provided lodging to African Americans during segregation when rooms were not available to them in other areas. Many famous entertainers and athletes stayed here. Next-door was Dr. Wells' South Street Casino, where many of the entertainers performed for the African American community. The Well'sbuilt Museum of African American History is located here now. NRHP, OHL



### 2. Dr. William Monroe Wells House

*519 West South Street*

Dr. William Monroe Wells built this Foursquare style house on a lot one block to the east in 1924. He was known as one of Orlando's longest practicing African American doctors and was involved in the commercial and cultural life of the community with the Well'sbuilt Hotel and the South Street Casino. OHL

### 3. Victorian House & Cottage

*541 West South Street*

The Victorian House and Cottage are among the only remaining Folk Victorian structures left in the city. The level of detail found in the original turned columns, railings and carved fretwork is not found on any other buildings in Orlando. OHL

### 4. Hankins Building

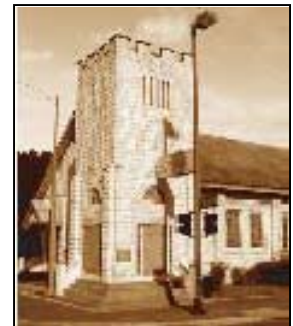
*647 West South Street*

Dr. I.S. Hankins constructed this Art Deco commercial building in 1947. Hankins was an early African American physician and civic leader. He was an active participant in the Washington Shores development, which provided opportunities for new home ownership for Orlando's African Americans.

### 5. Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

*701 West South Street*

This African American church was organized in 1919 and met in various locations until land was finally purchased. Church members made the rusticated concrete blocks that were used for construction of the walls. The Gothic style church opened in 1921.



### 6. Ebenezer Methodist Church

*596 West Church Street*

As early as 1892, this congregation had a wooden church on this site. It was the first African American Methodist church in Orlando. Starting in 1922, the members built this Gothic style brick church. OHL

### 7. Slemons Department Store

*129 West Church Street*

This dry goods store was constructed in 1924 for William Slemons. He first came to Orlando in 1886. Slemons and his sons owned a number of stores in downtown Orlando from the 1880's well into the middle of the twentieth century. OHL

### 8. Bumby Hardware Building

*102-110 West Church Street*

Joseph Bumby, Sr. came from England in 1873. He started selling hay, grain and fertilizer from a warehouse on Church Street when the railroad came in 1880. In 1886, Bumby built this structure and started a successful hardware business. OHL

### 9. Old Orlando Railroad Depot

76 West Church Street



The railroad came to Orlando from Sanford in 1880. The first depot was run from the Bumby warehouse and during the 1880s two wooden stations were constructed here. Because of Orlando's expanding role in regional commerce, especially citrus, the South Florida Railroad constructed this depot in 1890. NRHP, OHL

### 10. Nicholson-Colyer Building

29 West Church Street

This late Victorian structure was built in 1911 for J.A. Colyer, an African American and J.E. Nicholson, who came here from Canada. Colyer was a tailor and Nicholson was a baker. This is one of few properties outside the traditional African American neighborhoods that was owned and operated by African Americans. OHL

### 11. Kress Building

15 West Church Street

The S.H. Kress Company adopted a new architectural model in 1930, moving from traditional to modern designs. Architect Edward F. Sibbert was the impetus behind the use of decorative terra cotta and the Art Deco styling of this and many other Kress stores. The Kress store opened in 1936. OHL



### 12. First National Bank

190 South Orange Avenue

The People's National Bank was founded in 1911 and in 1920 it became the First National Bank. Before the Great Depression, the bank planned a new building, designed by Orlando architect Howard M. Reynolds. This Egyptian-influenced Art Deco building opened in 1930 and the bank failed soon after. OHL

### 13. Orlando Bank & Trust Company

100 South Orange Avenue

Dedicated in 1924, this Twentieth Century Commercial style skyscraper was constructed for the Orlando Bank & Trust Company. The building was one of the most fashionable business addresses in the city. In 1930, at the height of the Depression, investor H.W. Metcalf purchased the building.

### 14. Tinker Building

18 West Pine Street



Joe Tinker constructed this building in 1925 to house his real estate offices. Tinker played shortstop for the Chicago Cubs during their most prolific period, when they won four pennants in 1906-8 and 1910 and back-to back World Series in 1907 and 1908. He moved to Orlando in 1920 to manage the Orlando Tigers, a baseball team in the Florida State League. NRHP

### **15. Elijah Hand Building**

*15-17 West Pine Street*

Elijah Hand came to Orlando from Shelbyville, Indiana in 1885. He constructed the building in 1905 after moving his funeral business from across the street. Hand is noted for being the first funeral director in the area to use embalming.

### **16. Carey Hand Building**

*36 West Pine Street*

Carey Hand came to Orlando to join his father in the funeral business. In 1920, he constructed this brick funeral home, which local architect F.H. Trimble designed. The funeral home was the first in Florida to have a chapel. The 1925 crematorium was the first constructed in the South.

### **17. Yowell-Duckworth Building**

*1 South Orange Avenue*

Newton Yowell and Eugene Duckworth operated a store and in 1913 commissioned Orlando architect Murry S. King to design a 4-story department store. Benjamin Drew bought out Duckworth and the building was expanded over the years, including adding a fifth story. The business survived into the 1960s.

### **18. Dickson-Ives Company**

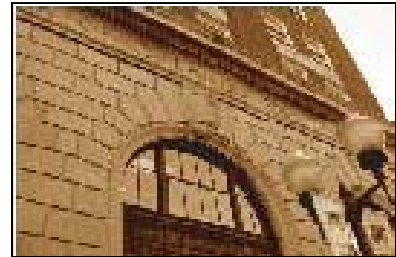
*2 South Orange Avenue*

In the 1880s, H.H. Dickson and Sidney Ives, Sr. arrived in Orlando independently of each other. They both opened mercantile establishments and eventually they purchased this property and opened a feed store and grocery. In 1920, they demolished their store, temporarily scattering the various departments around downtown and constructed this brick structure to house their growing business.

### **19. The State Bank of Orlando & Trust Company**

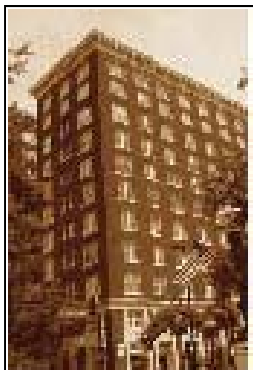
*1 North Orange Avenue*

The State Bank of Orlando and Trust Company formed in 1893. The bank hired W.L. Stoddart, a New York architect, to design this Twentieth Century Commercial style structure, which was completed in 1924.



### **20. Angebilt Hotel**

*37 North Orange Avenue*



The Angebilt Hotel is an example of Twentieth Century Commercial style by Murry S. King, the first registered architect in Florida. The hotel was completed in 1923 for Joseph Ange at a cost of one million dollars. The Angebilt and the San Juan Hotel, which was across the street, had the reputation as the two best hotels in the city.

### **21. Rose Building**

*49 North Orange Avenue*

This 1924 structure was designed by Murry S. King for Walter Rose, a local developer and later a state senator. King planned for this building to be the base of a 10-story office building. Rose never constructed the upper floors, as the economy during the Depression could not support the project.

## 22. Rutland's

63 North Orange Avenue

F. Earl Deloe, a local architect, designed this Art Moderne structure for Joseph Rutland's menswear store. Originally constructed as a two-story structure around 1941, three additional stories were added in 1952. In the late 1960s, Rutland's closed its downtown location, but remained open in the suburban Colonial Plaza Shopping Center.

## 23. U.S. Post Office & Courthouse

46 East Robinson Street

Orlando's earliest post offices were located in homes, then in businesses. The first post office building was erected in 1917 on Central Boulevard. The federal government bought this land from the Catholic Church. Architect Louis A. Simon, of the Public Buildings Administration, is credited with the restrained classical design of the building, which opened in 1941. [OHL](#)



## 24. Cathedral of St. Luke

140 North Magnolia Avenue

A frame church was constructed on this site in the mid 1880s and was used until it was outgrown in the 1920s. The firm of Frohman, Robb and Little of Boston, the architects of the National Cathedral, designed this Gothic Revival church for the congregation. Dedication of this church took place on Easter of 1926.

## 25. First Church of Christ Scientist

24 North Rosalind Avenue



A Christian Science Church was established in Orlando around 1917. It met at the Lucerne Theater until this structure was completed in 1928. Architect George Foote Dunham, himself a Christian Scientist, designed 50 churches from Orlando to British Columbia. The congregation remained here until 1975 when the St. George Orthodox Church purchased the building. [NRHP](#), [OHL](#)

## 26. Old Orange County Courthouse

65 East Central Boulevard

Orlando architect Murry S. King designed the sixth Orange County Courthouse, completed in 1927. The "Million Dollar Courthouse" is the finest example of Beaux Arts architecture in the city. The Orange County Regional History Center is located here now.



## 27. Rogers Building

37 South Magnolia Avenue



Englishman Gordon Rogers came to Orlando in 1886 and constructed this Queen Anne style building. The second story English Club sponsored dances, theater and other events for the large British community. Reportedly, the pressed metal siding, which is virtually unheard of in Florida, was shipped from England. [NRHP](#), [OHL](#)

## **28. Ellis Building**

*35 East Pine Street*

J.L. and N.B. Giles built this structure in 1885 or 1886 as a speculative venture. J.L. Giles was Mayor of Orlando in 1916-1919, 1924-1925 and yet again in 1928-1931. It has been said that this building was completely remodeled or demolished and rebuilt in 1925 by William Ellis, a local investor.

**Buddy Dyer, Mayor**

**Orlando City Hall**

Economic Development Department

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**For more information on historic districts and landmarks in Orlando, visit our web site:  
[www.cityoforlando.net/historic](http://www.cityoforlando.net/historic)**

**For more information on Downtown Orlando, visit:  
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The Downtown Orlando Historic District has been officially designated by the Orlando City Council and the City of Orlando Historic Preservation Board. The Historic Preservation Board consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Board and its committees review all projects and development within the City's six historic districts and all landmarked properties.

*Cover art includes, "Souvenir of Orlando, Florida, The City Beautiful" booklet, part of the Florida Collection of the Orange County Library System.*

Orlando's Active Living Initiative

*This walking tour is an "Orlando Active Living Initiative", part of the Active Living by Design program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.*

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

# DOWNTOWN ORLANDO HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY & SELECTED LANDMARKS



- |                    |                                      |                            |                         |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| HISTORIC BUILDING  | LYMMO ROUTE<br>(FREE BUS CIRCULATOR) | DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT | WEST LOOP<br>1.27 MILES |
| PARKS/PUBLIC SPACE | LYMMO STOP                           | PARKING                    | EAST LOOP<br>1.23 MILES |