Guide to Houses in the Capitol Avenue Historic District

This walking guide takes the visitor on a leisurely and flat 0.7 mile walk around one of Jefferson City’s most historic neighborhoods. The history of East Capitol Avenue has its origins in the first settlements in Jefferson City which was incorporated in 1826. Some of the finest examples of period architecture, as well as some of the oldest structures in Jefferson City, can be found here. It became the street of the elite after 1870 when the state allowed industries to operate factories within the prison walls using cheap prison labor.

Following the dotted walking path on the map, the house descriptions are given in the order in which the dotted path proceeds.

This guide was prepared by the Historic City of Jefferson, a non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of our oral, written and architectural history. For more information or to become a member go to our website at www.historiccityofjefferson.org

429 E. Capitol
John C. Gordon House
This house was built in 1868 with prison labor for John Gordon, a cattle broker who had a contract with the state to supply beef for the Penitentiary. It has been extensively altered from its original Italianate style, first by the McMillan family who added the columns in 1908 then the Buescher family who converted it into a Funeral home in 1933 adding a chapel on the west end.

103 Jackson
Austin Standish House
Lt. Col. Austin Standish built this house in 1850. His wife Mildred Parsons had lived next door at 105 Jackson. Standish was a Confederate sympathizer and was murdered with his brother-in-law, Mosby Parsons, in Mexico after the war. Dismayed by the outcome of the War of the States they were in search of a friendlier place for a resurgence of the Confederacy.

105 Jackson
Gustavus Parsons House
The Parsons house is the oldest house in Jefferson City, built in the early 1830s. Gustavus Parsons had moved his family here from Virginia in 1838 after serving as Thomas Jefferson’s personal secretary. He bought this French Colonial style house from Missouri Treasurer, John Walker. The legend goes that Walker kept the state money in a lock box in the house. The Parsons house served as a hospital during the cholera epidemic of 1849 and then again for both Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War.

601 E. Capitol
Bella Vista Apartments
This jazz-age classic is the lone example of Spanish Revival architecture in the historic district. It was built in 1928 by architect, Nelle Peters, who also designed Kansas City’s Country Club Plaza. The 24 unit apartment building is remarkably preserved with many original features inside and out, notably the tile roof, terra-cotta tiles, arched entryways and beamed foyer ceiling.

611 E. Capitol
James Houchin House
James Houchin was one of the industrialists that profited from cheap prison labor. He owned and operated the Star Clothing Company inside the prison. To build this house he used prison labor to haul some 50,000 truckloads of dirt to fill the existing ravine. The house was famous for its elegant gardens that stretched west to Marshall Street and for the lavish parties that the Houchins hosted. The garden area was later sold to a developer in 1928 to build the Bella Vista apartments. It now houses offices.

700 E. Capitol
The Marmaduke House
This mansion was built by prison labor in 1888 for Col. Darwin W. Marmaduke, warden of the prison. Marmaduke served in Missouri State Guard in the Civil War and was a brother to Governor John Sappington Marmaduke. This brick Queen Anne was designed by prominent Fulton architect, Montgomery Fred Bell. The turret on the east wing was originally crenelated complementing the original limestone guard towers across the street at the prison. The mansion was restored in 1992 by Robert L. Hawkins III. It currently houses the Jefferson City Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Missouri State Penitentiary Museum.

722 E. Capitol
Deputy Warden Residence
This American four-square style brick home was built circa 1900 probably with prison labor. The property was purchased by the Department of Corrections as a residence for the Deputy Warden.

Bella Vista Apartments
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624 E. Capitol
Lester Shepard Parker House
This striking Neo-Classical mansion was built in 1905 using prison labor for Lester Shepard Parker and his wife Missouri "Zue" Gordon. Parker earned his fortune from the L.S. Parker Shoe company which he owned and operated within the prison walls using cheap prison labor. Besides being a successful entrepreneur, Parker was also a true "Renaissance Man" making a name as an author, composer and artist. The house is apartment rentals.

612 E. Capitol
Towles-Buckner House
Major Thomas Towles built this prominent Queen Anne in 1895 for his bride Florence Ewing who once lived at 512 E. Capitol, another house on this walking tour. Towles was an attorney and deputy marshall of the Missouri Supreme Court as well as a Confederate Civil War veteran. In 1989 Chip and Deborah Buckner renovated the mansion returning it back to a single family dwelling. It is home to the Flotron-Inglish LLC law firm.

600 E. Capitol
William Q. Dallmeyer House
This Neo-Classical mansion was built circa 1875 and was originally a Victorian–style house facing west. Owner W. Q. Dallmeyer was a Civil War veteran, and later state treasurer. The house passed through several Dallmeyer generations who later added the columns, porches and moved the entrance to the north side in 1905. Descendants of the Dallmeyer family continued to live on E. Capitol Avenue through 2009. The mansion is home to Burkhead and Associates.

516 E. Capitol
W.C. and Dr. Robert Young House
This house is one of several Italianate Side Hall plan houses, built during the 1870s in this block. These were constructed by William C. Young, a county commissioner and later a building contractor. His son, Robert, served in the Confederate Army and was later a personal physician to Governor Marmaduke. He authored a series of essays, Pioneers of High, Water & Main written in 1900 about life on E. Main (later renamed E. Capitol). It is now home to the Missouri Association of Counties.

512 E. Capitol
Judge Ephriam B. Ewing House
Judge Ewing served as Missouri’s secretary of state, attorney general, circuit court judge and twice as supreme court judge. He actually never lived in the house named for him; however, it was the convention of the day to name a house after the head of the household. His widow Elizabeth Allen Ewing, daughter of Governor Henry Allen Watkins, lived there until her death. Constructed in 1873 by W. C. Young, this house is Vernacular Victorian brick, built in the Italianate Side Hall style. It is home to Communiqué, a public relations firm.

500 E. Capitol
Ivy Terrace
This mansion built in 1893 for Governor Lon Stephens is the most intact Queen Anne representative in Jefferson City. Stephens was elected first as state treasurer in 1892, then governor in 1896. It was built on the site of the 1860 mansion of William C. Bolton. Ivy Terrace was designed by Charles Opel, a prominent local architect. It was later home to druggist G. A. Fischer and wife Jennie Bruns, granddaughter of Dr. Bernard Bruns, founder of Westphalia.