



W.V.M. Robertson House, 1006 19th Street South, c. 1900. A fine and now rare example of high style Queen Anne architecture, frame and shingle with a turret and stained glass window, once part of a row of similar houses but now a survivor.

Its original owner William Vans Murray Robertson was founder and president of the Alabama Home Building and Loan Association.

Five Points Hardware, 1000-04 20th Street South, c. 1923. This building, its commercial-style simplicity relieved by the decorative brickwork typical of the 1920s, originally housed a number of businesses, including a restaurant and dry cleaner. It has for decades been the home of Five Points Hardware, a business that opened at another location in the area in 1941.

Piggly Wiggly, 1016 20th Street South, 1931. Faced in the Art Deco style that the Munger buildings had made the signature of Five Points South, this is the long-time home of the Piggly Wiggly that came to the neighborhood in 1921 and moved into this building in 1934. The smooth limestone facade and sunk-relief floral designs below the parapet are typical characteristics of this 20th-century decorative style.



Medical Arts Building, 1023 20th Street South, 1931, Charles H. McCauley. Maintaining the popular Art Deco style of many of Five Points' commercial buildings, this eight-storey professional office building, now a hotel, is the only "skyscraper" commercial building in the district. Note the characteristic elements of Art Deco styling such as the chevron patterns and pleating in the terra cotta trim and the aluminum spandrel panels beneath the upper-storey windows.

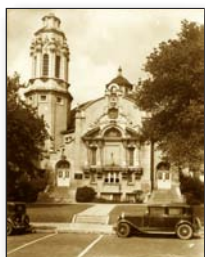
This was the first building in the city designed as a medical arts building, housing offices especially for physicians and surgeons. It was internally remodeled as the Pickwick Hotel (now the Hotel Highland) as part of the mid-1980s revitalization of Five Points.

Coston Shoe Shop, 1026½ 20th Street South, possibly 1898, refaced 1920s. This is possibly a refacing of what would be the earliest commercial building in this area, the shop of African-American shoemaker Pinkey Coston.

Highland Pharmacy/P & S Apothecary, 1032 20th Street South, c. 1910. This little commercial building originally housed the neighborhood's first drug store, which had been in a frame building on this site since 1900. The Pharmacy was here until 1927, and the building has continued in pharmaceutical use to the present.

Ware Building, 1035 20th Street South, 1930, Miller & Martin. The last built of the Art Deco buildings on the circle, this one also relating to the corner as its pier-defined bays angle around and featuring stylized decorative sunbursts below the parapet line. It replaced an earlier frame building of 1893, so it represents the earliest commercial site on the circle. Originally housing a popular drug store with flanking smaller businesses including the Oriental Café, the building was completely remodeled inside

as part of the mid-1980s development of Pickwick Place and has since been home to restaurants. The eponymous Pickwick Club was its immediate neighbor to the east on Magnolia Avenue, a site now occupied by the parking deck.



Highlands Methodist Church, 1045 20th Street South, 1909, P. Thornton Marye. A singular Birmingham church designed by the Atlanta architect who also designed the late, lamented Terminal Station, built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and distinguished by its flamboyant decoration in stone and architectural terra cotta and by its accompanying bell tower, all beneath a clay tile roof. The tower was finished in 1921 under the supervision of architect Bem Price, who also

designed the 1924 educational building on the 21st Street corner. The church's presence on the circle has been described as one of "riotous vigor," enhanced now by the addition of the fountain designed by Frank Fleming that occupies a portion of its front court.



The Spanish Stores, 1101-05 20th Street South, 2001-11 11th Avenue South, 1926 with 1930 addition, Miller & Martin. The first commercial development on the circle by the Munger family interests, this was designed in the Spanish Revival style so popular in the mid-1920s and represented in many Birmingham residential

suburbs, particularly Hollywood. Stuccoed with stone quoining and a clay tile roof, this row also features a first example of a set-back for parking. Distinguished with a two-storey tower and a gabled pavilion at the corner, the Stores were so trend-setting that they were featured in the 1929 *Southern Architect and Building News*. A 1930 addition extended the 11th Avenue wing to accommodate a tea room, space now part of the nationally recognized Highlands Bar & Grill.



LaSalle Apartments, 2020 11th Avenue South, 1926, Gallup & Joy. This nine-storey apartment building joined the earlier Dulion as a stylish accommodation to a housing shortage and a booming economy. Designed in a French Renaissance Revival style, the red brick building has a scored stucco facing on its lower and top storeys and terra cotta medallions above the arched entries. The architect is S. Scott Joy, designer of many Birmingham houses noted for their Prairie Style characteristics; by 1926

he had moved his practice to Chicago.

Dulion Apartments, 2030 11th Avenue South, 1920, Brooke B. Burnham. With one storey fewer than the later LaSalle, the rising grade of 11th Avenue South makes the two buildings appear to be the same height, and they also have a continuous street cornice line. The Dulion is more Classically influenced in decorative detail and features a limestone cornice, sills and lower-level facing. This was the first of the "skyscraper" commercial apartments in the area that were built during the 1920s; both it and the later LaSalle have inviting storefronts along the 11th Avenue sidewalk.

First Church of Christ, Scientist, 2031 11th Avenue South, 1911, Joseph C. Turner. A solitary neighborhood example (and rare in the city) of Jeffersonian Classical Revival architecture, this was the home of the first Chris-

tian Science congregation in Alabama, founded in 1899. Stuccoed with an Ionic portico, the building has in recent decades been remodeled inside for architects and design firms.



Shepherd-Sloss Building, 20th Street South and Highland Avenue, 1928, Charles H. McCauley. Off the circle but visually very present in Five Points, this building is one of Birmingham's two best examples of Italian Revival architecture (the other is the Florentine Building downtown), this one called "Venetian"

and featuring a smooth cream-colored terra cotta face with deep-transomed storefronts under a clay tile roof, a blind arcade at the parapet and pier finials. Elaborate on the exterior, the building originally housed traditional commercial businesses such as a drug store, a meat market and beauty parlor, and also an exclusive dress shop named Patricia's. A large Buffalo Rock sign and clock were erected on the roof, later converted to a Barber Dairy sign; these were taken down in 2004 during repair of the roof and have not reappeared, much to the sorrow of local residents.



Hassinger House, 2028 Highland Avenue, 1898, Thomas U. Walter III. One of two survivors of the time when the lower leg of Highland Avenue was lined with grand residences, this house reflects a transitional Victorian style of asymmetrical massing with Classical details, its most prominent feature being the corner turret and high conical roof. The long-time home of industrialist William H. Hassinger and his family, it has for many years been occupied by Daniels Opticians.



Richmond Apartments, 2030 Highland Avenue, 1912, D.O. Whilldin. A three-storey courtyard apartment building of Beaux Arts symmetry with some Craftsman influence such as glazed tile decoration, the Richmond is distinguished by its fine brickwork and generous projecting front porches. The building

was an early one in the steady commercialization of this lower stretch of Highland Avenue.



South Highland Presbyterian Church, 2035 Highland Avenue, 1893, D.A. Helmich. A fine example of Victorian Gothic ecclesiastical style, built of rusticated limestone in a Greek cross pattern with large pointed-arch rose windows facing both High-

land Avenue and 21st Street South and a corner tower studded with lancet openings and crowned by a pyramidal spire. Like St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands a first-generation suburban congregation, South Highland Presbyterian was built toward the end of the Town of Highland's independence but continued to thrive and grow as Five Points South did. Later additions are the 1925 educational wing by William L. Welton, the 1953-54 chapel by van Keuren & Davis, and the recent educational addition at the rear by Davis Architects.



Temple Emanu-El, 2100 Highland Avenue, 1914, William C. Weston. A great example of Classical Revival architecture by its master William Weston, the Temple was built as Reform Jewish families in this congregation, founded in 1882, began to migrate to the Southside. A domed block of brick and limestone, the shallow but elaborately molded portico is supported by four colossal Corinthian columns. The great dome is said to be the largest in the southeast, built to look like bronze but actually made of wood and canvas. Rabbi Morris Newfield played a major part in the religious life of Birmingham in the first half of the 20th century; a 1956 addition named in his honor was demolished to make way for a new educational wing, completed in 2002.



Southern Life & Health Insurance Co., 2121 Highland Avenue, 1927; Warren, Knight & Davis. A four-storey block in the Renaissance Revival style and faced in limestone on its two street faces, this was the first non-retail building to locate along Highland Avenue, the home of the oldest life insurance company in the state. Classical features include a rusticated ground level, engaged columns with Greek Tower of the Winds capitals, and stone urns capping the piers on the attic level. The primary designer was William T. Warren, a son-in-law of the company president and an apprentice architect at McKim, Mead & White before practicing in Birmingham.

From Ann Burkhardt and the Birmingham Historical Society, *Town Within a City: The Five Points South Neighborhood 1880-1930*; Five Points South National Register nomination, 1982; John Schnorrenberg and the Birmingham Historical Society, *Aspiration: Birmingham's Historic Houses of Worship*; and Mark Shelby's thesis on D.O. Whilldin, being prepared for publication by the Birmingham Historical Society (2008). Historic Photographs from the collection of the Birmingham Public Library, Archives.

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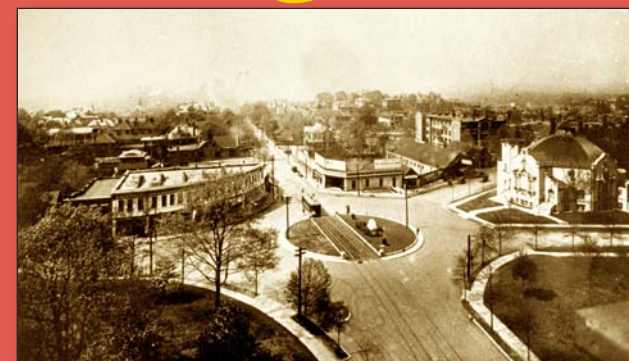


This brochure provided by the Five Points South Neighborhood Association.



Historic Five Points South

Walking Tour



Five Points South is special in Birmingham because of the concentration, variety and quality of its historic buildings. Most date between the 1890s and 1930, from the founding of this streetcar suburb to a time when its boom building years were over. Besides its fine houses, Five Points South saw the development of churches, schools, and commercial properties, creating a neighborhood that was complete, architecturally interesting, commercially self-sufficient and socially stimulating. It began as an independent town, the Town of Highland, in 1887, but national economic conditions shoved it into the arms of the larger city of Birmingham in 1893. Well supplied with street railway lines, it was a classic "streetcar suburb," typical of those around the nation but unusual in its eclectic mix of people, buildings and activities. A walk through Five Points, then, provides not only a look at the neighborhood's history but a chance to learn about early Birmingham and turn-of-the-century suburban development.

Birmingham was founded in 1871 because its promoters could see that it was a prime location for industrial production; it was booming in the 1880s but the proximity of the mills made the city dirty and dangerous. The South Highlands was a more desirable place for many people, and by 1887 there were hundreds of people living in the vicinity of the Five Points Circle intersection. Of their buildings prior to 1893 only a dozen or so survive, such as the McCants House, that remind us of Highland's early reputation as one of Birmingham's most fashionable neighborhoods. Two landmark churches remain from that period, St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands and the South Highland Presbyterian Church.

After annexation to Birmingham in 1893, public transportation continued to improve as electric streetcars replaced the old horse cars and steam dummies. By 1907 when the last line was laid along 15th Street South, Five Points was primed for its greatest residential boom, which lasted for the next eight years (1908-1916).

Houses in Five Points (only a small sample of which are on the tour) provide a look at the architectural styles popular throughout the country between 1880 and 1930, including the Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Classical Revival. As the 20th Century unreeled, however, new economic patterns and a more transient population created a need for an alternative to the house: the apartment building. Some of Birmingham's earliest apartments are here, such as the c. 1905 Fitzgerald Flats on 19th Street and the c. 1909 Levert Apartments on 20th Street. In 1907 the landmark Terrace Court was built, and in the 1920s two more "skyscraper" buildings, the LaSalle and the Dulion, appeared along 11th Avenue.

Although small grocers, vendors and specialty shops were operating around the Five Points Circle as early as 1893, it was not until the 1920s that the heirs of Robert S. Munger, who had lived on the Circle from 1893 to 1902, began the complete transition of the Circle from residential to commercial use by building three Five Points landmarks: the Spanish Stores, the Fred Jones Building, and finally the Munger Building, all with tenants designed to make the area self-sufficient and appealing to residents and visitors alike. Two of these buildings are in the Art Deco style then in vogue in New York and other major urban centers, giving this suburban district an atmosphere of sophistication that helped it become a thriving shopping area and sparked even more development, including the city's first medical arts building in 1931.

Much of the appeal of Five Points was its eclectic social nature, with residents ranging from the household servants to the occupants of Nabob Hill (where Ramsay High School now stands). There was a wide range of social, economic, religious and ethnic populations, all living and working in close proximity to the Circle and the old Town of Highland. Depression and War, however, dealt a major blow to Five Points as to the entire city of Birmingham, and subsequent migration to outlying suburbs left Five Points to inherit a reputation as a down-at-heels and bohemian center, interesting but passed over by the march of time.

Fortunately, an appreciation of the historic qualities of Five Points and a commitment of Birmingham's planners to revitalize the area began the restoration of the commercial district and the addition of Five Points South and its surrounding blocks to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Since then there have been ongoing changes and developments in Five Points and a return to its position as a popular living, shopping and recreational district, particularly influenced by the advent of superb restaurants. It is fortunate that so much of Five Points' interesting history has been retained in its supply of houses, commercial buildings and churches from all the periods of its life.

Historic Walking Tour



Fred Jones Building/Golden Temple Grocery, Birmingham Festival Theatre, 1902 11th Avenue South, 1928, Miller & Martin. This two-storey, limestone-faced building is the first in the Art Deco style built in Five Points by the R.S. Munger family, who had abandoned their house on the circle and undertaken a commercial redevelopment of the area that set the style for subsequent building. This was built for Fred S. Jones, proprietor of a popular delicatessen and ice cream shop, its second floor arranged to accommodate baking, salad-making and ice cream-freezing. The Golden Temple and Festival Theatre are its long-term modern occupants.



Five Points Theatre, 1914 11th Avenue South, c. 1922; remodeled 1936 by Miller & Martin. Addition of air conditioning in the '30s made this popular entertainment venue even more popular; it was also then given its Art Deco-influenced Carrara glass upper face, surviving as the best example of this in Birmingham. Walker Percy, author of *The Moviegoer*, saw his first movie, a Kit Kat cartoon, at this theatre while visiting his grandfather who lived nearby on Arlington Avenue. The Five Points branch of the U.S. Post Office was here until their new location was built in the 1980s. Since then the old theatre building has housed restaurants.

Shropshire & Daniel Building, 1920-22 11th Avenue South, c. 1922. Before the day of the self-service supermarket, Five Points had a variety of specialty grocers, fruit and vegetable vendors, and "creameries" selling baked good and salads in addition to dairy products (as Fred Jones, above). This building was originally a double storefront housing Shropshire & Daniel, a specialty grocery, and Carl Caddell's Highland Creamery. It was the second Five Points location for Shropshire & Daniel, who were replaced in their 20th Street location by, ironically, a new-fangled self-service store named Piggly Wiggly. Shropshire & Daniel remained here until the company was dissolved in 1939.



Five Points Grocery, 1924 11th Avenue South, c. 1913. One of the oldest commercial buildings in the neighborhood, this building features a blind corbelled arcade at the cornice line. It is best known today as the long-time home of Charlemagne Records, maintaining its popular business on the second floor since the 1980s. Scraps of the building's former storefront materials can be seen on the west pier, the original brick masonry revealed by a tear in the later Carrara glass.



Studio Arts Building, 1034-36 20th Street South, 1926-32 11th Avenue South, 1993. Although not historic now, this building is included because it is a modern replacement of the oldest commercial building on the circle, the 1910 Studio Arts Building that burned in 1986. The present building reproduces the curved glazed-brick facade that followed the corner of 20th Street and 11th Avenue South, an accommodation to the existing circle that was honored in the curve of the later Munger building on the other corner across 11th

Avenue. Commercial on the ground floor, the old Studio Arts building upstairs provided studio space for painters, musicians and dance instructors from the 1940s on, contributing to Five Points' enduring reputation as an artistic, somewhat bohemian area.

Munger Building, 1915-33 11th Avenue South, 1928, Miller & Martin. The first of the Munger Realty Company's Art Deco buildings on the circle, it sets an urban standard with its two-storey corner pavilion and monumental arched entry, flanked along 11th Avenue South with a row of one-storey shops. The limestone face is characteristically decorated with sunk-relief patterns of chevrons, rosettes and stylized botanical forms and a shallow fluting of the pier masonry. The 1980s rehabilitation of this significant building inspired the ongoing revitalization of the entire area.



Terrace Court Apartments, 1124 20th Street South, 1907, William C. Weston. This major Five Points landmark was developed by Richard Massey, an energetic and farsighted entrepreneur who lived up Highland Avenue a few blocks away. It was the first large "skyscraper" apartment in Birmingham and an early one in the southeast, a harbinger of the changing nature of Five Points residential patterns and a spacious and elegant alternative to a private house. Designed in the Beaux Arts style and faced in buff brick with terra cotta ornament over a concrete frame, the building is H-shaped with a deep central court and, originally, front-to-back apartments; it also featured a dining room, game rooms on the lower floors, and a roof garden. Internally cut-up in the mid-20th century as Five Points declined, it has been the subject of later rehabilitations that have sought to restore some of its historic features, the most recent in 2006.

Dian Apartments, 1300 20th Street South, 1914, Harry Wheelock. Leo Steiner built this apartment house and named it after his wife Dian. Designed with Tudor Revival decorative features, it incorporates such period touches as trefoil motifs in the window bays, arrow slits in the masonry, and four-centered arches with limestone caps.



Haskins Williams House, 1312 20th Street South, c. 1901, Joseph C. Turner. Home of prominent local industrialist Haskins Williams, this is a well preserved example of a turn-of-the-century house showing both Victorian and Colonial Revival elements in its design. Interior features include period light fixtures, fine woodwork and a stained glass window.



Williams Garages, on Cobb Lane, 1919. After Emily Williams got her first car in 1919, her father Haskins built these garages. Spaces not housing Williams cars were rented to neighbors whose houses had been built before automobiles came on the scene. Emily used the rental income as gasoline money for her new Dodge sedan. Constructed of rubblestone, its four bays were bricked in the 1970s to allow for commercial use, historically restaurants.

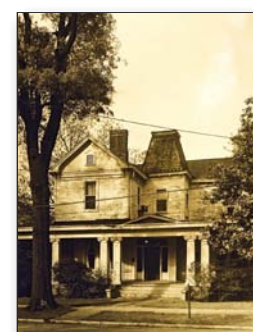
Levert Apartments, (Cobb Lane), 1318 20th Street South, c. 1909, Wheelock, Joy & Wheelock. Built by the Levert family of New Orleans, this is an elegant example of the neighborhood's early apartment houses, this one with Craftsman design elements. Consisting of two long and narrow sections with a connecting bridge part-way back, the building's notable features include the terra cotta ornament on the first-storey cornice, colorful glazed tile designs in the walls, and half-timbered window bays. The building is perhaps best known at the rear, where it has housed the popular local restaurant Cobb Lane, opened by Virginia Cobb in 1959 and still operating.



Lathrop House, 1923 14th Avenue South, 1901 (probably William C. Weston). One of the grandest examples of the Classical Revival style in the city, this was the home that prominent lumberman Frank Lathrop built for his bride, Sallie

Comer Lathrop, daughter of around-the-corner neighbor Alabama Governor Braxton Bragg Comer. (Note the Lathrop name incised on the top step.) Consistent with the subsequent fortune of many of its neighbors to be altered for professional (mostly medical) offices, this house was used as physicians' offices from 1947 to 1976. It sat abandoned and deteriorating for many years until its restoration in the early 1990s.

Robinson-McCoy House, 1900 14th Avenue South, 1892. Another of the surviving Highland-era houses, built for a mining and railroad-building company officer whose widow continued to live there until 1951. Designed in a late Victorian style with transitional Classical features, much of its exterior was obscured in a mid-century conversion to physicians' offices. It was restored in 1994-95 for the Oasis Women's Center. The apartments at the rear were built by the Robinsons in 1914 in what had been their back yard.



McCants House, 1321 19th Street South, 1888. This is one of the eight known houses that survive from the Town of Highland (1887-93), before the area was annexed into Birmingham. It is the sole surviving example of the Second Empire style once popular in the Highlands area, its strongest feature being the mansard tower roof. Built for L.W. McCants, who spent so much money on it that it broke him, it became physicians' offices in the late 1950s and was abandoned in the 1980s. The old separate kitchen house was removed at the time of its 2004-05 restoration.



Bingham-Tarrant House, 1309 19th Street South, c. 1898. Built in 1898 but altered after the turn of the century to its present, more Classical, appearance in keeping with the taste of the times, its Victorian curves squared off and the upstairs porch enclosed with sliding sash windows. It was carefully restored as a bed and breakfast in 2006.

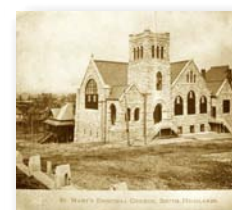


Agee House, 1804 12th Avenue South, c. 1900. Built by General Edmund Winchester Rucker as a wedding present to his daughter Louise and Walter Agee, who lived here until the 1950s and raised five children in it. The sole surviving example of the Shingle Style in Birmingham and originally stained dark brown in keeping with the style, it was converted to a physician's office in the 1950s and painted white. It was restored as a hospitality venue in 2003 and its historic interior features revealed. *National Register of Historic Places, 1986.*



Aldrich House, 1771 13th Avenue South, 1904; Wheelock, Joy & Wheelock. An interesting example of the Craftsman style with its use of natural material, steep sheltering hipped roof and variety of windows: built for industrialist Truman H. Aldrich Jr., it was until recently in original condition but has been renovated and painted.

Erskine Ramsay Technical High School, 1900 block of 13th Avenue South, 1930; Warren, Knight & Davis. Occupying the high lots of Nabob Hill, originally full of elaborate Queen Anne and Second Empire houses of local worthies, this Georgian Revival school building fulfilled a need of the burgeoning population of the Southside. Almost immediately after its construction it was named in honor of Erskine Ramsay, a brilliant engineer, prolific inventor and generous supporter of education.



St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands Episcopal Church, 1892, John Sutcliffe. This is the oldest church in Five Points, designed by John Sutcliffe in the English Parish Church style, part Gothic and part Romanesque, built of Kansas sandstone and with a remarkable timberwork ceiling. Located in the heart of the old town of Highland, it was a convenient walk to church for two of its prominent parishioners, Confederate General E.W. Rucker and Alabama Governor Joseph Forney Johnson, both of whom lived just down the block on "Nabob Hill" where Ramsay High School now stands.

Whitfield Flats/Fitzgerald Apartments, 1110 19th Street South, 1905. Built in the symmetrical style known as Beaux Arts, this is the oldest apartment in Five Points and possibly in the city. Originally named after its owner J.G. Whitfield, it was by 1908 known as the Fitzgerald Flats.



Southside Baptist Church, 1016 19th Street South, 1911, R.H. Hunt. A beautifully sited and strong example of the Classical Revivalism popular in the early years of the last century, a Roman temple decorated with Georgia marble and terra cotta, its six colossal Ionic columns bearing the pedimented gable of the porch. There are later additions of the 1920s and 1961. This is the fifth building to house a historic and vital congregation.