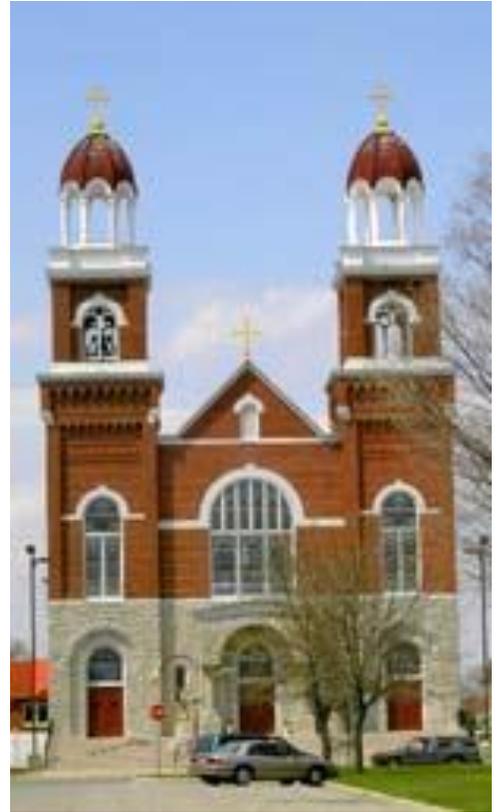


Walk/Drive Guide thru Historic Alpena



Historic Buildings

The Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library - 211 N. First Ave.

The structure, known as the George N. Fletcher Building, was built in 1973 on a site that housed the public library during the early years of this century. The original building burned in 1936. The land was then deeded to the city and remained as a city park until 1972 when the city deeded the property to the county to use as a site for the new library. The new building was dedicated in January, 1974. The structure utilizes cement block and poured cement in its construction and contains 20,000 square feet on two floors. An energy retrofit of the building was done in 1986 making it more energy efficient. The library maintains the largest collection in Northeast Michigan and offers a variety of services for all ages. In 1997 a new computer lab, with a direct connection to the Internet, was added to the library.



The Federal Building - 145 Water Street

This elegant example of Renaissance Revival architecture was constructed during 1911-12. It is one of three public buildings in Alpena's downtown district selected for the National Historic Register. The Federal Building is executed in brick faced with smooth ashlar. A balustrade tops the modillioned cornice. The upper story contains small paired rectangular window openings, the first semicircular arched windows with compound arches, keystones, and Palladian fanlights. The main entrance is approached by a staircase and enriched by elaborate iron pilasters and entablature. The interior, especially the first floor, contains vaulted ceilings, Corinthian pilasters, and iron grill work. The Federal Building housed Alpena's post office from 1913 until the mid 1950's.



Alpena National Guard Armory (Memorial Hall) - 201 Water Street

The Armory, building during 1919-22, is another of the three historic sites in the downtown district. It is a classic example of Renaissance Revival architecture. The massive, seven-bay, two-story, Portland Cement structure has a shallow mansard roof. The full, elegant entablature, with metopes and triglyphs in the frieze, is topped by a modillioned cornice and a crowning balustrade. Although a few window openings are framed by gabled pediments, the majority are housed in recessed, semi-circular arched panels separated by Doric pilasters. New windows and metal sashes now replace the originals. The building, originally Memorial Hall, was the result of tremendous civic cooperation. It was constructed completely from local cement donated by Huron Portland Cement Company, founded in Alpena in 1907 (the world's largest cement plant at the time).



Alpena City Hall - 208 N. First Avenue

City hall is the third building of architectural significance. Located on Government Square, City Hall remains one of Alpena's most prominent structures. In 1904 when the city council chose to construct the building of Bedford (Indiana) limestone rather than local limestone or concrete from Alpena's blossoming cement industry, many people objected. Bay City architects Clark and Munger designed City Hall in the Georgian Revival style. Since its completion in 1908, City Hall has been the center of civic activity in Alpena. A cupola crowned the structure until the 1950s. City Hall represents the work of several Alpena craftsmen. Local contractor Richard Collins supervised construction and the Northern Planning Mill and A.B. Crow did the carpentry and marble work respectively.

Alpena County Courthouse - 720 W. Chisholm Street

"Alpena has blazed a new trail in construction," architect William H. Kuni of Detroit declared at the opening of the Alpena County Courthouse on October 21, 1935. Calling it "the first monolithic building erected in a cold climate," Kuni designed the Art Deco structure to be built of local Portland cement. Cement construction during the winter was believed impossible in Alpena; however cold-weather building projects answered the need for winter employment during the Great Depression. The courthouse financed by local bonds and the Works Progress Administration demonstrated that winter construction with cement was possible. The courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Historic Churches



Trinity Episcopal Church - 120 E. Washington Ave.

This gabled roof Gothic Revival church was built in 1883 of rusticated local limestone and featured a square corner tower with steeple, gothic arched stained glass windows with smooth ashlar architraves, and a segmented arched entryway. The church entryway is virtually intact, complete with original floor, oak pews, pulpit furniture and wainscoting. The stained glass windows came from Exeter, England. The pipe organ is an Aeolian Skinner.

Trinity Episcopal Rectory - 135 S. Fist Ave.

Built in 1923 on the original rectory foundation dating back to 1860, this house is a "Mail Order Catalogue Home" from Sears, Robuck & Co. All components—trusses, lumber, doors, flooring, nails, etc., were shipped to Alpena by rail and assembled at the site. The home has maid's quarters an a servant's staircase (young people from rural areas often worked in Alpena households as maids, gardeners, or handymen to earn room and board in order to attend high school in town). The house also has a composite slate roof, herb garden, oak floors with wide board trim and heavy plaster cornices.



First Congregational Church - 210 S. Second Street

A wooden church was built on this site in 1868 by a group of Alpena Congregationalists who had been holding worship services in various rooms and buildings since 1857. In 1892 the wooden structure was remodeled in brick and stone. It served its members until 1954, and was then torn down to make way for the present church. Influenced by Gothic style architecture and built of Besser concrete blocks, the church was a gift from Jesse Besser, pioneer developer of concrete block technology and founder of Besser Company.

St. Bernard's Catholic Church - 322 W. Chisholm St.

The foundation of the stone structure was laid in 1880, this Gothic style structure was completed by the Irish in 1884, although it has been newly renovated. It was the first Catholic Parish in Alpena and is the oldest catholic parish between Bay City and Cheboygan.



St. Anne Catholic Church - 201 S. Ninth

This is the second St. Anne Catholic Church (the first one was built on Chisholm Street). After 12 years of hard labor and even harder sacrifice, the beautiful stone St. Anne's Church on Ninth Avenue was opened in 1883. Constructed under the supervision of Hillarie Gagnon, the French Romanesque building was open in September and succeeded the old wood-framed structure on Chisholm Street. * Note the church was first built without the towers in the beginning.



St. Mary Church - 520 N. Second Ave.

Founded by Polish immigrants in July 1883. The original Church was destroyed by fire so the Church was rebuilt in brick to help safeguard it from fire. They chose to give it a Romanesque character typified by its barrel-vaulted central nave and rounded windows.

Historic Homes



135 First Ave.

Also:

202 First Ave.
was built in 1906

505 First Ave.
was built in 1959



212 First Ave.

This Queen Anne style home was built in the 1800's.



324 First Ave.

This Richardson Romanesque style home was built in 1907.



The Besser House - 232 First Ave.

This modern style house was built in 1938-39 by Jesse H. Besser. It is also listed in the Michigan Register of Historic Sites.



120 Dunbar St.



121 E. White St.

This modified Queen Anne style home was built in 1885. The exterior red paint is the original color, as well as the gray tones on the trim and porch.

Homes continued

Also:

313 State St.
was built in 1894

322 State St.
was built in 1917

328 State St.
was built in 1919-20

327 State St.
was built in 1939



209 State St.

This two-story Mediterranean style stucco home was built in 1931.



225 State St.

This charming home represents a modified Cape Cod construction. It was built in 1939.



240 State St.

This Victorian style home was built in 1894. It was extensively remodeled in the 1990's.



250 State St.

This lovely Dutch colonial home was built in 1912.



300 State St.

This expansive brick, Italian Renaissance style home was built in 1917.



The Henry House - 303 State St.

This stone house has been an Alpena landmark since its completion in 1904.

Homes Continued



425 Second Ave.

This home, built in 1912, is of Dutch Colonial Revival architecture.



516 Second Ave.



403 Second Ave.

This Craftsman style home was built in 1926 by Herman Besser, father of Jesse.

Here is a list of other historical homes in Alpena:

429 Fourth St. - A Queen Anne design style home.

100 Dunbar St. - A Italian Renaissance style home built in the 1920's.

311 S. Second Ave. - This impressive Victorian style home was built in 1882-83.

120 Hitchcock St. - This home was built between 1874 and 1876.

301 W. Washington Ave. - This lovely Victorian was built in the 1880's.

307 W. Washington Ave. - A Queen Anne Victorian style home was built circa 1884.

315 W. Washington Ave. - Built in the late 1880's, this Victorian home has many gingerbread features.

329 W. Washington Ave. - An elegant Victorian home.

Other historical points of interest are Old Town Alpena, located north on Second Ave. and Holy Cross & Evergreen Cemeteries on the west end of Washington Ave.