

Downing's Trail of Two Cities...

Town of New Windsor:



1 145 Quassaick Avenue
Joel T. Headley Mansion, 1851-53, A Downing/Vaux commission. Downing designed the original landscaping too. This site is not readily accessible from the road but would be amiss not to include here as an important surviving Downing artifact.

City of Newburgh:



2 84 Liberty Street
Washington Headquarters State Historic Site Museum, among it's collections is a red garnet brooch, a gift given to Andrew Downing by Anna Petrovna, Consort Queen of the Netherlands, 1845, in recognition of his contribution to the field of horticulture.



3 Bottom of Broadway, East side
Downing Vaux Park, Stone Staircase built upon the suggestion of Mayor Wilson in 1902, for a place to "repose and enjoy the vistas". The commission and creation went to Downing Vaux, son of Calvert Vaux, named for partner Andrew Downing. The stairs led to Water St., where a thriving commercial district once existed but was completely demolished by the Government Urban Renewal Program of the 1970s.



4 99 Montgomery Street
William C. Hasbrouck House, 1839, possibly the oldest Downing/Niven collaboration. Can be seen from the street, but entrance uses driveway at rear of house off Grand Street.



5 120 Grand Street
Dr. William A. Culbert, home and office, 1852, Downing/Vaux design, a shell left from fire 1981, restoration needed.



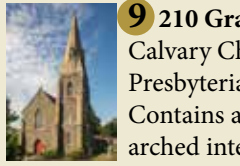
6 123 Grand Street
Court House, 1841, Architect Thornton Niven, originally a Newburgh Stonecutter. Downing was commissioned to landscape the public grounds surrounding the courthouse.



7 132 Grand Street
Dutch Reformed Church, 1835, Architect A.J. Davis (a Downing collaborator) & Russell Warren. Thornton Niven cut stones for the columns.



8 182 Grand Street
Halsey Stevens House, Villa Circa 1850, Architects Vaux/Withers under contract with Downing. Classic details from Downing/Vaux Pattern Books.



9 210 Grand Street
Calvary Church, 1858, originally First Presbyterian, Designed by F.C. Withers, Contains a stunning full-scale wooden gothic arched interior ceiling.



10 264 Grand Street
Eugene Brewster House, 1865, Architect Frederick Clarke Withers, stunning brick villa with Gothic Revival details championed by Downing.



11 189 Montgomery Street,
Captain David Crawford House, 1836, Greek revival, currently home of Historical Society of Hudson Bay and Highlands. In their Collections is a lone finial remaining from AJ Downing's non-extant Villa.



12 201 Montgomery Street
Architect and home of Thornton Niven, 1839, early Italianate, Tuscan Villa, Architect and stone-cutter. Later F.C. Withers lived here while in Newburgh. Apse a later addition.



13 196 Montgomery Street
William E. Warren House, 1854, Architect Calvert Vaux, showcases Classic Gothic Revival features championed by Downing.



14 288 Grand Street
Judge John J. Monell house, 1841-42, An early Downing, designed for his best friend, stonework likely by Thornton Niven. The circular turret is a later addition.



15 296 Grand Street
Brick dwelling house, childhood home of Downing biographer David Schuyler, 1950-2020. "Apostle of Taste", published 1996.



16 333 Grand Street
1857, Clapboard Mansion built for R.L. Case. An early Calvert Vaux. Painstakingly restored by a previous owner in the early 1980s.



17 55 Broad Street
David Moore House, 1852, A rare surviving collaboration of Architects Downing/Vaux, originally built with extensive landscaped garden design by Downing, on 2 1/2 acres that were once part of the Downing Family Nursery lands.



18 87 Broad Street
Dr. George Washington Downing house, Downing scholars believe this was built by Downing for his older brother. He may have enlarged an original one-story in 1843 for that purpose, adding gothic details. The stone rubble foundation and brick basement floor may have been from an original cottage or Weigand's Tavern, a revolutionary war 'committee of safety' meeting place afterwards moved from this location to 326 Liberty Street.



19 355 Grand Street, 1902, (not of Downing's era)
See Marker in front of this Queen Anne Style mansion located about central on what was once Downing's "Highland Gardens", former nursery, villa and botanic gardens, 11 acres between Broad St. on the South, Montgomery on the East and Liberty on the West. Downing's ginkgo tree in this yard, a gate-post on Broad St., some fence and brick foundations remain behind the homes here.



20 330 Powell Avenue
Van Duser/Hull Estate, circa 1850, Large Villa and carriage house with Classic Downing features, on property of Mt. St. Mary College. Entrance was once opposite Downing's Villa on Liberty St. with a former Gate house designed by AJ Davis.



21 181-184 Carpenter Avenue
Downing Park, at the perseverance of Caroline Downing Monell, created by Vaux/Olmstead, the pair who also designed Central Park to honor her husband, their friend and mentor, Andrew Jackson Downing.



22 25 Balmville Road
Andrew Saul's residence, Classic example of small, gothic cottage, from Downing pattern books, built for gardener and overseer of Downing Nurseries. Saul purchased the Nursery business from A.J. Downing in 1847. Downing wanted to concentrate on his many commissions for house and landscape gardens.



23 3 Beech Street
Charles Downing house, 1837, built in the Greek Revival style, originally on 13 acres. Mansard roof added later. Has cupola observatory to view the Hudson River.



24 5468 Route 9W
Cedar Hill Cemetery, Section 26. Andrew and wife Caroline Downing's Casket size gravestones. Also buried here is Charles Downing, biographer David Schuyler (Sec. 27A, plot 34) and Judge Monell.

City of Beacon:



25 145 Sterling Street
Mt. Gulian Historic Site, Recreated home of the Verplank Family, neighbors of the DeWindt's. Their salaried gardener, manumitted slave, the literate James Brown, wrote on his relationship with A.J. Downing in his extensive diary. Site also has exclusive Revolutionary War history.



26 12 Monell Place
Eustasia, Caroline Downing Monell House, 1867, Architect F.C. Withers, for Caroline and her second husband Judge John Monell, on property belonging to her father J. Peter DeWindt.



27 850 Wolcott Ave., Rte 9D
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1869, F.C. Withers, Gothic Revival, currently St. Andrews and St. Lukes.



28 672 Wolcott Ave., Rte 9D
Henry Winthrop Sargent's "Wodenethe", non-extant, Architect Vaux. On a portion of the property now is Gothic home "Tioronda", 1859, by Architect F.C. Withers for Howland family, later known as Craig House Sanatorium, also some extant rare trees, attributed to Sargent and Downing. Weeping Hemlock and Cucumber Magnolia.

Brian Wolfe photos from the Johanna Yaun collection used with permission.



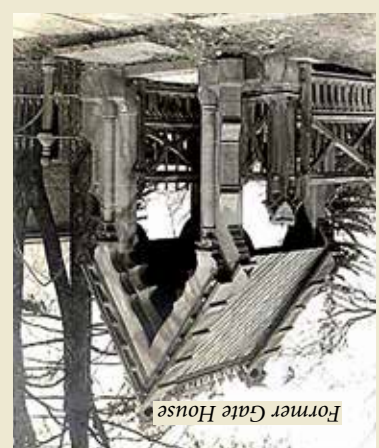


Former Downing Villa 1850, demolished 1920s

Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1882, had a wide impact on American Landscapes and Architecture, which reverberated throughout the entire country long after his untimely death at age 36 in a tragic steamboat accident on the Hudson River. Today many examples of his earliest architectural designs as well as a few horticultural interests can be found in Newburgh, New York, his hometown, as well as Fishkill Landing (now Beacon, NY) his wife's hometown. From Gothic Revival to Italianate, and Tudor, with features championed by Downing such as vergeboard and bracketed roofing, board and batten siding, oriel balconies, verandas, arched and bay windows. Downing also promoted landscaping and gardening for all people and homes. Andrew J. Downing and his brother Charles inherited their 11-acre Newburgh nursery business. Growing up on a garden and orchard overlooking the Hudson River Valley, like the Hudson River Romantic artists of his time, Downing was inspired by the beauty of his natural surroundings. Through his four published books and many articles on the subjects of landscape gardening and architecture "his magnetic personality threw a spell on admirers throughout his country and also Europe". It was his belief and hope for all Americans that living in tasteful homes with beautiful garden surroundings would promote heightened physical and spiritual intellect. "His readers even included the Queen of Holland, who sent him a bejewelled token of her appreciation".

Downing's interest in improving America by "promoting tasteful homes" and "public parks for all classes to mix" led to many associations with other budding architects and gardeners. Downing and his associates can be said to have "cut their teeth" here on their earliest works. He enticed at least two young British trained architects to come to America and work in partnership with him, now famous Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) and Frederick Clarke Withers (1828-1901). He collaborated with Alexander J. Davis (1803-1892), who illustrated and improved the architectural renderings in his books. Downing influenced and was influenced by many

Andrew Jackson Downing Legacy



Former Gate House

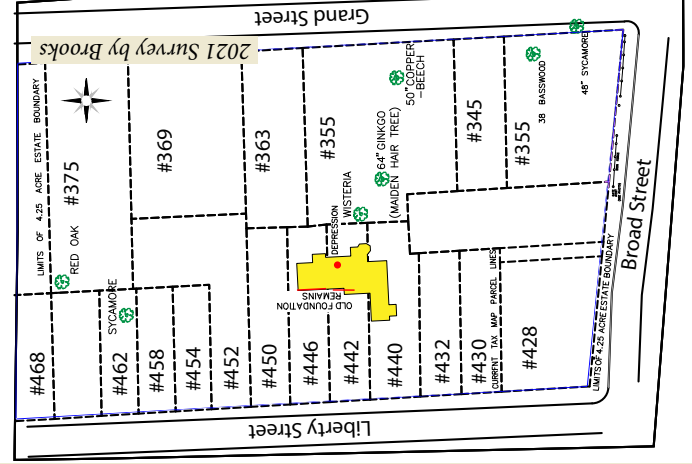
Downing was married to Caroline DeWint. Her father, J. Peter DeWint, was a wealthy landowner and investor in Newburgh and Fishkill Landing (Beacon). In 1860 after Andrew Downing died, Caroline married Judge John Monell, a close friend of the couple and widower whose house in Newburgh was among one of the earliest designs of Downing. In 1867 Withers designed a new house for them on her father's property at Fishkill Landing (Beacon), they named it "Eustata". Both of these still exist. Caroline lived until 1905 and is buried alongside Downing with matching stone coffins designed by Vaux and/or Withers. Two interesting Downing friendships were with Fishkill (Beacon) residents of his time. One with a DeWint family neighbor, an escaped Maryland slave, manumitted in New York, James Brown, who worked as a salaried master gardener for the wealthy Verplank family at their Fishkill (Beacon) home, now known as Mt. Gulian. The literate James Brown kept a diary

Joan Porr showed me the Ginkgo tree that is growing on A. J. Downing's former nursery site. It's an impressive specimen, a male tree nearly 100 feet tall and over 5 feet in diameter. I have been studying Ginkgo trees around the world for over 40 years and can unequivocally say that this is one of the largest specimens I have seen in North America. While I did not take a core sample from the tree, I estimate that it was probably planted by Downing in the 1840s.

Dr. Peter Del Tredici, Senior Research Scientist, Emeritus, from the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

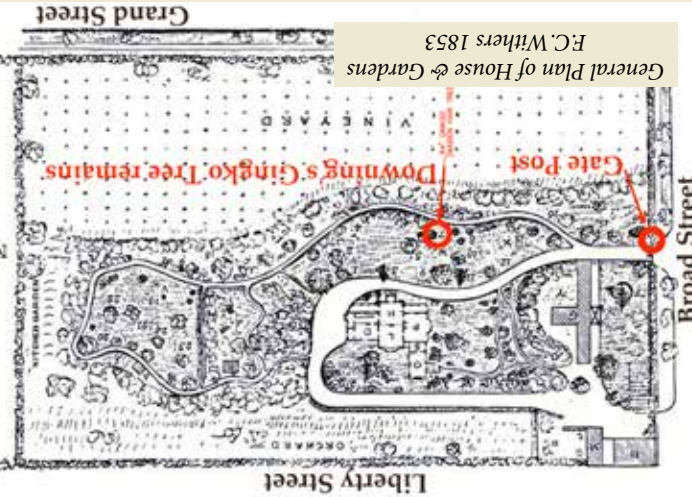
other contemporaries such as Thornton M. Niven (1806-1895), and Frederick Law Olmstead (1822-1903). After Downing's death, these architects, along with his brother Charles Downing (1802-1885) a pomologist of note, continued to be influenced by Andrew J. Downing and carried on their extensive lists of excellent works all over America. Vaux and Withers completed many of his commissions. Vaux and Olmstead created parks in cities throughout the country. They all continued to publish books on horticulture and architecture; building homes, churches, gardens, and parks in the spirit of Downing, their colleague, friend and mentor.

At least one tree, a Ginkgo planted by Downing can be found on the site of his previous villa and garden as well as small remnants of an iron post from the elaborate pedestrian entrance, wrought iron fences and brick footings.



From 1829 to 1860 noting his numerous visits with Downing on specific dates. The second Beacon friendship was with Henry Winthrop Sargent, a noted horticulturist, whose home, Wodeneth, by architect Calvert Vaux in Beacon, no longer exists. Sargent and Downing consulted regarding the landscape gardening at Wodeneth. Extant on the property is a Cucumber Magnolia, and a rare Weeping Hemlock tree. Presently an 1859 Gothic estate, formally known as Tioronda by F.C. Withers, remains on the property.

Downing had the great distinction to be chosen by US President Millard Fillmore to design the mall of the national capital Washington DC. However he didn't live to see those plans put to use. His ideas promoting a Central Park in New York City were well known, and after his death led to his protégés, Vaux and Olmstead, obtaining the commission. He was so admired by his countrymen that upon his death funds were raised and Calvert Vaux designed a marble monument in the shape of a large urn with tributes on all four sides, that was erected in his honor in Washington DC in 1856.



Downing Quotes:

If our ancestors found it wise and necessary to cut down vast forests, it is all the more needful that their descendants should plant trees. We ought not to cease, till every man feels it to be one of his moral duties to become a planter of trees.

Plant spacious parks in your cities and unloose their gates as wide as the gates of morning to the whole people.

On the practice of Horticulture, "it contributes also to the improvement and embellishment of the country generally, tending at the same time to attach us more closely to our homes, and to elevate and refine the character of our population.

We believe in the bettering influence of beautiful cottages and country houses-in the improvement of human nature necessarily resulting to all classes from the possession of lovely gardens and fruitful orchards.

The most expensive and elaborate structure, overlaid with costly ornaments, will fail to give a ray of pleasure to the mind of real taste if it is not appropriate to the purpose in view or to the means or position of its occupant, while the simple farmhouse, rustically and tastefully adorned, and ministering beauty to hearts that answer to the spirit of the beautiful, will weave a spell in the memory not easily forgotten.

The buildings on this map are samples and by no means represent a complete list of Downing, Vaux, Withers, Davis, Niven, and Olmstead works. Many have been altered since their creation. The houses on this tour are privately owned, please view from the street, do not trespass on private property. Thank you.

For info visit:
www.thefullerton.org/projects/downing-in-newburgh

A dual project resulted with this brochure and walking tour. First, to survey and investigate the former property of Andrew Jackson Downing in Newburgh and second, to seek a grant for an historic marker to formally designate the site. It was made possible with help from The Fullerton Center, Newburgh, NY, it's Board, it's Founder **Michael Green** and President **Naomi Hersson-Ringskog** in obtaining a matching grant awarded by the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Hudson River Valley Greenway. Also, help from the Orange County Historian **Johanna Yaun**, assistant **Nicole Nazarro** and student researcher **Steven Baltsas**, in obtaining a Pomeroy Grant for the marker. **Joan Porr**—cover art, research and text.

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Andrew Jackson Downing's Legacy

A Walking Tour of Newburgh

