

FOUNDED IN 1767
MAIN STREET
MIDDLETOWN



200 EAST MAIN STREET



312 EAST MAIN STREET



THE TWIN TOWERS

WALKING TOUR EAST MAIN VICTORIAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

In the late 19th century, the town's eastern boundary was today's intersection of Broad and East Main streets. The Coblenz orchard was just inside the limit; just east was the Routzahn farm, and next was the Kefauver property. With the prospect of an electric railroad, or trolley, coming to town, these owners began to subdivide their farms into residential lots.

The Victorian District, built on the former Routzahn property, begins just east of Prospect Street and stretches along East Main Street to Cone Branch. Most of these houses range from 1880 to 1900; two date from 1927 and 1945.

East of Cone Branch is Airview, the Kefauver family's former land and now on the National Register of Historic Places. It dates from 1896, with the last of the original 12 lots being built on in 1930. This development extends from Coblenz Road eastward for about a half mile.



EXPLORE MIDDLETOWN, MD

19 West Main Street
Middletown, MD 21769
301-371-6171 ext. 111
mainstreetmiddletown.org



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VICTORIAN HISTORIC DISTRICT



All three families had financial interests in the trolley and supporting businesses. They pushed for the line to continue into the heart of town instead of terminating farther east at Gray Haven (Airview). To accommodate the track, the new houses had wide front setbacks along the north side of East Main Street, which you can see today.

The trolley line was indeed built through to the heart of Middletown, then north to Myersville, and eventually terminating in Hagerstown, forming the Hagerstown and Frederick Railway. It served the valley until the 1936 rerouting of US 40 from Frederick to Hagerstown. The trolley declined and finally ceased operation in 1947. Its legacy is a string of houses from Broad Street to Gray Haven, a virtual encyclopedia of late-19th and early 20th-century domestic architectural styles.

EAST MAIN STREET VICTORIAN DISTRICT

Most houses in the East Main Street Victorian District were based on four- and five-bay vernacular farmhouses. Local builders incorporated decorative elements ordered from catalogues, lumberyards, and planing mills. This allowed the homeowners to customize their dwellings with towers, decorative shingles, brackets, corbels, columns, pilasters, cornices moldings, and railings—elements of the fashionable Eastlake, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles. Look carefully, and you'll find that many of the houses here have a healthy dose of all four styles.

This house exemplifies the Eastlake style: scrolled bracketing, elaborate window and door cornices, offset decorative porches, multiple cross gables, and asymmetrical massing.

200 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1890)

One of the first built in this neighborhood, this brick house has Gothic Revival detailing on its wide front porch, eaves, and dormers.

204 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1890)

Virtually identical houses, they have side bay windows, a central cross gable over an extended front porch, and canted jerkin head roofs on the end gables. These gables show how homeowners expressed their individual taste through painted shingles.

208 & 212 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1900)

216 East Main Street (c. 1900) is the only house in Middletown with twin conical towers on either end, this Georgian Colonial Revival influence shows in the Palladian style window in the large central dormer.

The Mansard roof and single corner tower of 300 East Main Street (c. 1890) are hallmarks of the Second Empire, based on French architecture during Napoleon II's reign.

216 & 300 EAST MAIN STREET

VICTORIAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

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MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN

Behind the multi-style “window dressing” is a basic five-bay, vernacular farmhouse. Added elements include the central square tower set on the diagonal and rising from the roof (Gothic Revival), two cross gables and an integrated two-story rear bay massing (Queen Anne), and a partial wrap-around porch with decorative turned railings, scrolled brackets, and gable verge boards (Eastlake).

304 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1890)

This typical East Main Street house with wide front porch and classically influenced detailing has another connection. While its face is finished brick, most of the brick used in its construction was salvaged from the old Lutheran Lecture Hall after razed in 1906.

308 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1907)

Another example of the time-honored vernacular farmhouse, this house has six bays and is constructed of brick. The restrained detailing of the cross gables, wrap-around porch, and integrated two-story rear bay creates an elegant composition recalling the Colonial Revival of the early 20th century.

312 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1910)

“Woodmere” was the original farmhouse of the Herman Routzahn family. Its gates are east of Pine Street, which didn’t exist until the mid-20th century. The house, accompanied by a bank barn, wagon shed, dairy house, tenant house, and other farm buildings, stood on the 133-acre farm that is now the Victorian District.

400 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1883)

This large brick Georgian Revival structure, with its sophisticated Classical detailing, was one of the only houses in town designed by an architect in this time period. Note the heavily modeled dentil-work cornice, the tri-partite Palladian-style door assembly over the front porch surmounted by a double-fan light, and the brick quoining framing the central bay and external corners of the house.

401 EAST MAIN STREET (c. 1915)

These houses were the last to be built along the trolley line while it was still in use. No. 405 (1927) reflects the Tudor Revival style popular at the time it was built. The Norman Revival house at No. 409 (1947) was built just two years before the trolley ceased operation.

405 & 409 EAST MAIN STREET