

Central Downtown

20th-century Modern
Architecture, Public Art & Design
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MODERN SURVEY SERIES
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Architecture



An outcome of the City's extensive transformation approaching mid-20th century onward, Downtown boasts a range of former headquarter buildings designed by national firms for U.S. Steel, ALCOA, Mellon Bank and more – but for every extraordinary high-rise structure, a more modest Modernist statement is around the corner and worth a closer look. Take note of parking facilities, storefronts, family-owned eateries, and former galleries.

Public Art



Along plazas, throughout parks, below ground, within atriums, and suspended overhead – Downtown Pittsburgh's instances of public art reflect commissions by leading architects and corporate clients, projects related to past Carnegie International exhibitions, and artists compelled to render their abstract expressions in steel, aluminum, glass, slate, marble, granite & concrete – all in tune with the surrounding modern sites and structures.

Design



Look underfoot, get closer to the facade, step into the interior, peer through the windows if you must. Geometric window patterns across each skyscraper, symmetry throughout the pavers and amenities of public plazas, original signage and lettering reflecting a business or purpose, particular details incorporated to brand the atmosphere of a company headquarter building – welcome to that midcentury time when design excellence was everything.

Moved or Modified

Greyhound Station Downtown



In 1959 a new central bus station was built to replace the aging deco station across the street – a 2008 replacement is used today.

Image courtesy, Brookline Connection

Aaronel deRoy Gruber's *Steelcityscape*



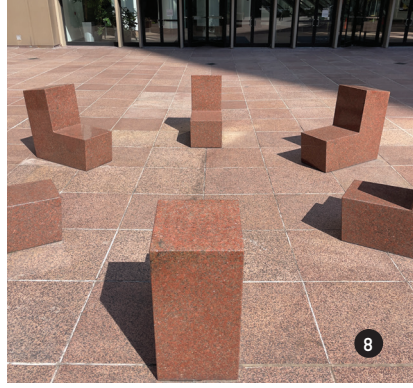
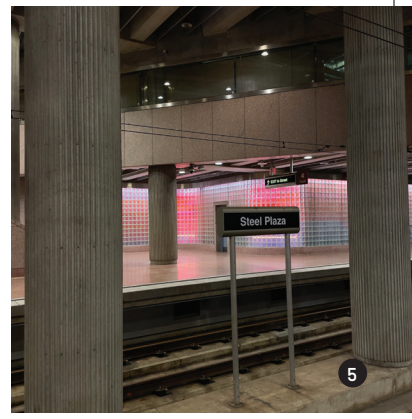
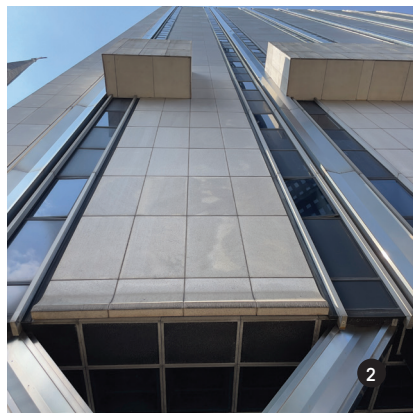
Created in 1976 specifically for the portico of the City-County Building, this solid steel sculpture was ultimately moved to Mellon Park.

Image courtesy, the deRoy Gruber Foundation

Virgil Cantini's *Mosaic Tunnel*



Originally installed in a nearby pedestrian underpass as commissioned by the URA in 1963, two 60-foot lengths of a hand-crafted composition will be relocated to the Steel Plaza Station.



1 [William S. Moorhead] Federal Building
Altenhof & Bown (Pittsburgh), 1964
1000 Liberty Avenue, 23-stories
Steel, Aluminum, Glass, Concrete

2 AT&T Building
Architect Unknown, 1969
635 Grant Street, 16-stories
Granite, Steel, Glass

3 U.S. Steel Tower
Harrison, Abramovitz & Abbe (New York), 1971
600 Grant Street, 64-stories
COR-TEN Steel, Glass

4 The Flow
Louise Pershing (Pittsburgh), 1979
Presented with Schneider Sheet Metal
Sixth Avenue side of U.S. Steel Tower
COR-TEN Steel

5 Steel Plaza Station, Allegheny County Light Rail Transit System
Engineers Parson Brinckerhoff-Gibbs & Hill, 1987
Featuring "Rivers of Light" Jane Haskell (Pittsburgh), 1984
Sixth Avenue and Grant Street
Concrete, Marble / Painted Aluminum, restored LED light, glass block

6 601 Grant Street (Federal Home Loan Bank Building)
Harrison & Abramovitz, 1958
601 Grant Street, 17-stories
Aluminum, Glass

7 BNY Mellon Center
Welton Becket and Associates (Los Angeles, New York), 1984
500 Grant Street, 54-stories
Steel

8 Six-Part Seating
Scott Burton (New York), 1986
Fifth Avenue side of BNY Mellon Center
Granite

9 Chinatown Inn Restaurant
520-22 Third Avenue
1940s modern addition via the Yee family to the historic On Leong Labor and Merchants Association building
Glass, tile, original signage

10 One Oxford Center
Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum (HOK, New York), 1983
One Oxford Center, integrated cluster stretching 300 block of Grant Street, 46-stories
Aluminum, glass, granite

11 The first and original location of OUTLINES gallery,
Founded by Elizabeth Rockwell in 1941
343 Boulevard of the Allies

12 YWCA
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Pietro Belluschi, 1963
305 Wood Street, 20-stories
Glazed brick, Glass

13 525 William Penn Place (U.S. Steel Corporation & Mellon National Bank)
Harrison & Abramovitz, 1951
525 William Penn Place, 41-stories
Stainless steel & Indiana limestone
Brick, metal, paint

14 Mellon Square
Simonds and Simonds, Mitchell and Ritchey, 1955
Bound by Smithfield St, Sixth Ave, William Penn Pl, Oliver Ave
Landscape features with below ground parking garage

15 Regional Enterprise Tower, former ALCOA Headquarters
Harrison & Abramovitz, 1953
425 Sixth Avenue, 31-stories

16 Three Birds In Flight
Mary Callery (Pittsburgh, New York Paris), 1953
Suspended overhead, interior atrium of ALCOA
Aluminum, paint

17 Smithfield Liberty Garage
Altenhof & Bown (Pittsburgh), 1965
629 Smithfield Street, 39 stories
Concrete



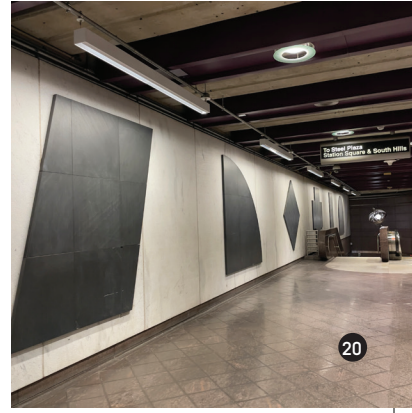
SCAN TO ACCESS MAP!

18 K&L Gates Center (One Oliver Plaza)
William Lescaze (New York), 1968
210 Sixth Avenue
Steel, Glass

20 Thirteen Geometric Figures
Sol Lewitt (New York), 1984
Wood Street Station, lower level platform
Slate on Marble

19 Centre City Tower
Architect Unknown, 1971
650 Smithfield Street, 26 stories

21 Former office of Architect, Walter L. Roberts
100 Forbes Avenue



All photographs by Brittany Reilly, 2022, except where noted. For questions, information & suggestions: info@pittsburghmoderncommittee.org