505 S. Main: Economical Pharmacy Building, 1910

Note the stepped roofline and the interesting square-patterned brickwork decorating the upper part. In 1892 L.B. McCartor and a partner opened a drug store here in a wooden building. After 1910, in this brick building Charles Bolles and Albert Lindquist installed in their drug store the first soda fountain in Moscow. Later, in the 1920s the Varsity Cafe became the first of a succession of restaurants in this building.

521 S. Main: Sterner’s Studio, 1926

This building with its central arched entrance, ornamental wrought iron and stone work, and sloping red tile roof is unusual for Main Street. John J. Sterner built this for the photographic studio he had operated since 1904. He, and later his son, continued the business here until 1958.

525 S. Main: Odd Fellows Hall, 1926

The Odd Fellows emblem, inset on the upper façade, and the sunburst design of the transom window seen through the arched entrance to the stairway are decorative features of this building. They contrast with the more ornate Masonic Temple next door, indicating the changes in taste that took place in fifteen years.

531 S. Main: Masonic Temple, 1911

Except that the arched keystoned windows have been filled in with brick, the upper façade is unchanged. Note the frieze of brickwork, the heavy cornice, and the pediment bearing the Masonic emblem. Paradise Lodge #17 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons was organized in 1875, with this building built 26 years later.

516 S. Main: NuArt Theatre, 1935

When Milburn Kenworthy erected this building on the site of the Zumhof & Collins blacksmith shop, it replaced a business begun in 1885. Both Fred Zumhof and Marion M. (Major) Collins, who joined Zumhof as a partner in 1900, were important in developing the town’s fire department, which still exists as an outstanding volunteer group.

508 South Main: Kenworthy Theatre, 1926

A concrete block building constructed in 1909 at this location housed the Crystal Theatre. Opening in 1909 in a wooden shack on the corner, it was the first to show moving pictures in Moscow. In 1926 Milburn Kenworthy built the present theatre, enlarged in 1928, incorporating part of the Crystal Theatre building into his new structure.

402 to 414 S. Main: Shields Block, 1891

On the Fourth Street corner M.J. Shields built the first three-story building in town. Shields was the leading entrepreneur of early Moscow. He operated a flourishing hardware business, a construction company, and a planing mill where he began generating Moscow’s first electricity. Later in 1891 he built a one-story addition extending south to Fifth Street. Much of this part of the block was occupied by Williamson’s store before moving to the McConnell-Maguire Building.

310 to 318 S. Main: McCartor Block, 1891

Like the Browne Block, this was built in two sections. On the Fourth Street side, note the arched windows and the band of ornamental brickwork near the top. The corner was first occupied by the Farmers Bank, of which L.B. McCartor was a director (note the corner entrance). Later the telephone company occupied the street floor, followed by the City Hall. The northern part of the buildings housed at various times a movie theater and a drug store.

302 S. Main: Denham & Kaufmann Building, 1889*

Henry Denham and William Kaufmann built this for the department store they had founded in 1881. In the late 1890s the building was purchased by Park David and Wellington Ely. Thus began a department store operated by David and his three sons until 1959. Modernization has greatly altered the exterior of the building, which now houses a complex of shops and offices.

113–117 E. Third: Cornwall Block, 1890

When Mason Cornwall erected this building, it was a three-story structure. Following a fire, it became a two-story building with part of the arched keystoned windows on the front facade. The date and the name of the owner are visible high above the corner entrance. The Bank of Moscow, of which Cornwall was president, was at 113 East Third on the alley; the corner entrance characteristic of the banks of the period survives today, as do the bars on the alley windows. Beginning about 1909, the Casino, one of the very early movie houses, was at No. 115.

Walking tour content is from A Great, Good Country, by Lillian Woodward Otness. Based on a design by Leah Baird, Melissa Barajas, and Jeffrey Williams for Advanced Composition & Design, Digital Technology & Culture Program, English Department, WSU, Fall 2015
The first permanent home of Moscow’s post office was this fine example of Federal architecture. Note the multi-paned windows of the first story and of the south and west doorways, all of them topped with round arches. After Federal offices moved from the building in 1974, it was purchased by the City of Moscow and reopened as a community center in 1981.

Sometime after 1915 this building took shape between the walls of existing neighboring buildings. Architectural interest depends on the decorative patterning of light-colored bricks in more than one shade. Occupying an early movie house called the Straud, Milburn Kenworthy opened the Vandal Theatre here, operating it until 1926, when he moved into his new theater at 508 South Main.

The ornate bank of projecting brickwork high on the front continues round the corner and along the alley side. Note the arched and keystoned windows. David Urquhart came to this area in 1880 and after some years opened a brickyard. About 1905 he built this brick structure, replacing wooden buildings housing a saloon and a restaurant.

In 1890 Robert S. Browne erected a building on the corner of Second Street, then a year later extended it north to the McConnell-Maguire Building. It first housed the Moscow National Bank and S.L. Willis’ drug store, which continued here until the Chicago Bargain House, later Creighton’s store. In 1978 General Telephone Co. renovated the building, a most successful adaptive use of a distinguished structure.

Despite the removal of some of its ornamentation, this remains one of Moscow’s most elaborately decorated buildings, with cast iron supports, medallions of pressed tin and—on the First Street side—half-moon windows of colored glass. Built by W.J. McConnell, Idaho’s first two-term governor, it first housed a large department store. A later occupant was Nathaniel Williamson, one of Moscow’s most flamboyant merchants. Remodeled in 1928, the two upper floors contain apartments.