

Suffield Walking Tour

High Street

Suffield Academy (1833)

The Suffield Academy was founded to train Baptist ministers. The school was located in Suffield because the town was the first in Connecticut to provide \$5,000 to build it. Not long after it was founded, the school became secular and changed its name to the Connecticut Literary Institute. In 1916 the name changed to the Suffield School, and finally in 1937 it became the Suffield Academy. Suffield Academy served as the high school for the town until 1939 when the McAlister School was built.

#119 The Kent Legare Library – Beaux Arts (1899)

Suffield's first library building was erected in 1899 on land owned by the Kent family who were original settlers of the town. The building was funded by Sidney A. Kent as a memorial to his parents, Albert and Lucinda Gillett Kent. Daniel Burnham designed the building. He was a friend of Sidney Kent and an architectural giant who designed many buildings including the Flatiron building in New York, the Chicago World's Fair buildings in 1893, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and Kent's home in Chicago. In 1972, the town sold the building to the Suffield Academy.

The building's restrained, classical character is typical of the Beaux Arts style. Its exterior is a smooth, tan, granite masonry, fronted with a portico containing two Ionic columns. The dome is placed in a copper clad roof. Classical details abound on the interior of the building as well.

#99 The Mather House - Georgian (1793)

Joseph Howard (1736-1810) built this house for Timothy Swan (1758-1842). Swan married May (Polly) Gay (1764-1841), the daughter of Ebenezer Gay, the minister of the Congregational Church next door. Timothy and Mary had 14 children, although four died young. Timothy was a hatmaker and a prominent American composer of hymns and secular music.



Timothy Swan



Mary Gay Swan

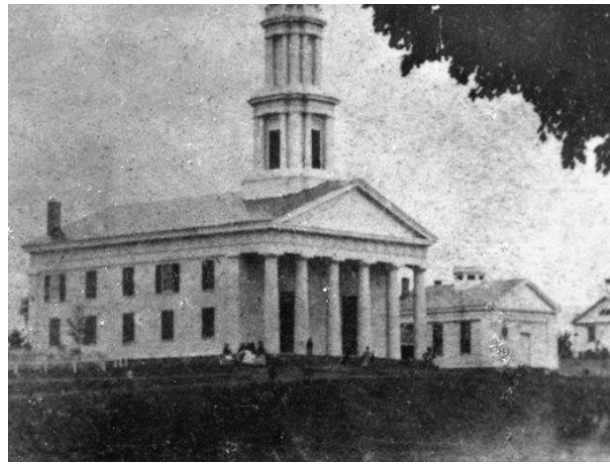
#81 First Church of Christ Congregational – Romanesque Revival (1869)

Suffield's first Congregational Church building was built around 1680. The Congregational Church was the official church of the colony; it even oversaw local schools until 1795. All residents were expected to pay taxes to their local Congregational Church, whether or not they worshiped there. It was not until 1818 that the Connecticut Constitution officially separated church and state. Asahel Morse, a minister at Suffield's First Baptist Church, was the member of the Connecticut Constitutional Convention who wrote the Connecticut provision separating church and state.

This is the fifth building for the church. John C. Mead (1840-1889), its architect, was a Suffield native who designed numerous churches throughout Connecticut. Mead's church replaced an 1835 church which was built by Henry A. Sykes (1810-1860). This red brick church in the Romanesque Revival style has tall, round-headed windows, and round arched entrances. Buttresses strengthened the southeast tower to support a tall steeple which was destroyed in the 1938 hurricane and was never replaced.



1st Meeting House 1680



Congregational Church built by Henry Sykes in 1835

#15 The James Hall House - Cape Cod (1786)

Although the house is named for James Hall, nothing is known about James. A later owner Joel Atwater (1811-1904) worked as a harness-maker. Joel's daughter Mary (1851-1936) was a dressmaker. The English bank barn in back, built into a bank with a brick foundation to facilitate two levels, is on the Historic Register. The lower level housed the animals/manure and the upper one with three bays provided room for threshing, storage and animals.