

Déjà View: Louisville's Duplicate Designs

As you drive about the city, you might do a double take and question if what you see is actually real thing. Is that the original Rodin statue at U of L? Didn't I see a building like National City in New York City, or was that Dayton? Well, your eyes aren't deceiving you. It's not a bad case of déjà vu. It seems our city is made up of duplicate construction from other locations. Provided below are some examples of Louisville's "Déjà View" Designs:

Louisville is always rated very high as a desirable place in which to live. And, we have many distinctive houses in which to live in (as noted in my book "Distinctive Houses of Louisville" - shameless plug : -) Here are several notable houses though that are based on the same design built elsewhere:



Colonial Hall (above left, at 1763 Sulgrave), was home to Ann Barret. It was designed by D X Murphy architects in 1902. At the same time, on the other side of Louisville, D X Murphy also designed the same façade for Basil Doerhoefer at 4432 West Broadway (above right).



Lincliff (above left, at 6100 Longview Lane), was home to William R. Belknap. It was designed by architect Charles Platt and based on another of his house designs in Rockville, Conn, for William Maxwell (above right)



Rostrevor (above left, at 6100 Longview Lane), was home to James Ross Todd. It was designed by architect Thomas Hastings and based on his own home design, 'Bagatelle' in Old Westbury, Long Island, NY. (above right)

This information was prepared by Steve Wiser, AIA. He is a Louisville architect and historian, who has written numerous local history and architectural books such as "Louisville Tapestry: People & Places who helped create America's Most Livable City" and 'Distinctive Houses of Louisville'. These are available at Carmichaels & A Reader's Corner bookstores. He can be contacted at WiserAIA@Hotmail.com

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The 800 Building, most would agree, has a different appearance. Its exterior has turquoise skin, balconies, and an angular projecting façade. For 1963, the bowed shape was distinctive – or was it? According to the developer Fritz Drybough, he wanted the 800 to look like a residential high-rise he had seen in Chicago. If you are in the Lincoln Park area, north of Chicago, and pass by a vaguely familiar structure at 2930 North Sheridan Road, then that is the genesis of our own 800.

While the Chicago firm of Lowenberg & Lowenberg was the primary inspiration of this shape, Louisville architect William Arrasmith gave it the distinctive blue color by using porcelain panels. Arrasmith used similar panels in his designs for Greyhound terminals throughout the county.

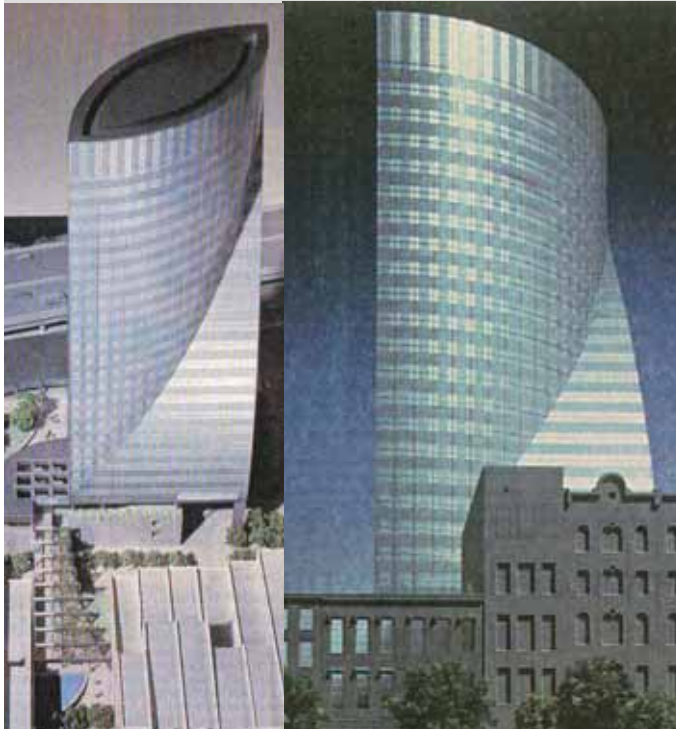
Louisville's 800 Building (below left) is based on a residential high-rise in Chicago (below right)



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The Vencor Tower (left) was proposed in 1996 and while never built here in Louisville, it was ultimately constructed in Madrid Spain (below)



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Actor's Theatre (320 West Main Street) is considered one of Louisville's best designed buildings. Its classical exterior of ionic columns, tapered sides, and elaborate pediment, along with its beautiful domed, sky lit interior, is an aesthetic jewel. Its architect, James Dakin, though duplicated its design from a previous bank building he had built in New York City. And, that design was a descendant of the Treasury Building in ancient Greece; which might have been influenced by an Egyptian temple. In fact, in most major cities, there is a similar design as Actor's Theatre. This appearance might be the most duplicated façade in architectural history. To further complicate matters, in 2009, the Actor's Theater façade was caricatured in a Disney-esque manner as part of the Chamberlain Pointe retail development on Highway 22, south of the Snyder Freeway. Refer to images below for more 'déjà view'



Clockwise from above left: Egyptian Temple of Dendur in NYC's Metropolitan Museum; original Athenian treasury; NYC Bank by James Dakin; Egyptian-styled building in Richmond, Va.; Banks in San Francisco and Bardstown, Ky.



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Millions have ventured to the site of the former World Trade Center Towers. These visitors have also viewed a nearby tall, sleek black high-rise that was designed by the architectural firm of Harrison and Abramovitz. This architectural firm also was responsible for our PNC Tower (formerly First National Tower). Same architects, very similar building design.

And, if you are driving through Dayton Ohio on I-71, you might notice another PNC / First National look-alike in the Kettering Tower.



Above:
Louisville's PNC Tower
(formerly First Nation Tower)



Above:
New York City
building that is near the
World Trade Center site



Above:
Kettering Tower in
Dayton, Ohio

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Museum Plaza was a bold, striking building proposal. When it was unveiled in 2005, there was nothing quite like it anywhere in the world. Though Museum Plaza has since been cancelled due to the economic recession, its unique appearance lives on in new project developments in Kuala Lumpur and South Korea. What once was a fascinating concept of connecting several high-rise towers at mid-height with 'bridging' floors in no longer an innovative aesthetic. Now, other international cities will gain global attention from a creative idea that was born here in Louisville.



Above: Proposed skyscraper in Seoul, South Korea



Above: Proposed high-rise in Kuala Lumpur, which is to be built next to the landmark Petronas Towers.



Below: Several more Museum Plaza look-alikes proposed in China.



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Louisville's Humana Building is such a distinctive shape and style that I thought I'd never see another architect try and duplicate it. Well, while in New York City near the Brooklyn Bridge, the Weiss Federal Building comes very close to mimicking the Humana Building. You decide for yourself in the comparison photos below. The shape, fenestration, etc., of the Weiss is too similar to Humana that the design firm of HOK didn't use it as a reference. HOK designed Weiss in the early 1990s and it opened in 1994 at 290 Broadway. Thus, Humana opened in 1985 and certainly was on the minds of the architects at HOK!



Above Left: The Weiss Federal Building in New York City by HOK in 1994

Above Right: The Humana Building in Louisville, Ky., by Michael Graves in 1985.



Above Top: Weiss

Above : Humana

Far Left: Weiss

Near Left: Humana



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Louisville has a variety of statues throughout the city that are duplicated in some manner. Provided below are a several representative examples of these 'twin' artistic sculptures and memorials.



Above, Left to Right: The Confederate Memorial is an exact copy of one in Richmond, Va., also designed by Michael Muldoon; The Lithgow memorial in Cave Hill is an original, but a duplicate in on the gravesite of Joseph Bond in Macon, Ga.; The Satterwhite memorial, also in Cave Hill, is modeled on Marie Antoinette's 'Temple of Love' in Versailles, France; and the Lincoln statues is one of several duplicates, such as in Cincinnati.

Below, Left to Right: The Thinker statue was created by Rodin, but Rodin created many copies of his famous sculpture—and thus it is not the exact original; The Thomas Jefferson statue in front of the courthouse is original, but a duplicate exists at the University of Virginia; and the Colgate Clock is similar to one on the New Jersey shore, opposite New York City.



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The bank building at Eastern Parkway and Preston Street is a very obvious replication of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. The bank VP in charge of this construction was a big Thomas Jefferson fan, and requested the architect (Louis & Henry) design this branch to mirror Jefferson's home.



Another Thomas Jefferson reference: the University of Louisville administration building, which is a 'twin' to the Rotunda library at the University of Virginia and Jefferson designed.



Barry Bingham Sr. saw this building in Toronto for the newspaper there, and hire the same firm to design the Courier-Journal Building here at Sixth and Broadway. Notice the resemblance?

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