



Preservation House  
2074 West Market Street  
Akron, Ohio 44313-6916

# PROGRESS THROUGH PRESERVATION OF GREATER AKRON

## PTP July Membership Meeting Sunday, July 15, 2018

### *Mr. Hower's Neighborhood: Walking Tour of Fir Hill Area*



View of Fir Street in 1890

PTP, in partnership with Hower House Museum, invites you to step back in time to the Gilded Age of the 1890s for a visit to “Mr. Hower’s Neighborhood” on Sunday, July 15. In 1871 Akron industrialist John Henry Hower and his wife, Susan, built an imposing Italianate Second Empire style Victorian mansion on what was then called Fir street. This 28-room mansion is capped with a distinctive mansard roof and soaring tower. The unusual floor plan, devised by architect Jacob Snyder, was based on the “Akron Sunday School Plan,” created by Snyder and Akron industrialist Lewis Miller as part of the “Sunday School movement” in church construction across the United States starting in the 1870s. Hower’s home was one of the earliest on the street, predated only by General Alvin Coe Voris’ 1860 home across the street, Jeremiah Commins’ country estate at the corner of Middlebury Street (present day Buchtel avenue), and James Christy’s slightly older Second Empire home, also at the corner of Middlebury Street. In the 1890s Fir street was Akron’s prestige address. Homeowners were wealthy businessmen and lawyers and their homes were the latest in Victorian architecture showcasing some of the fanciest Queen Anne architecture to be found in the city. Unfortunately, today almost all of those structures are gone. Happily, a few other Victorian masterpieces have survived on nearby streets for us to enjoy as we pass by.

**Our tour will begin at 1 p.m. with an orientation at the First Congregational Church on the corner of East Market and Union streets.** The presentation will focus on both existing structures and those that have been lost over the passing decades, and will include biographical information on the homeowners. After the orientation, enjoy a stroll around the neighborhood where the locations of lost structures are identified to provide you with a sense of what once was a lovely residential neighborhood of stately homes. **At 2:30 p.m. stop at Hower House Museum for light refreshments and take a self-guided tour of this unusual Victorian masterpiece.** The Museum’s Cellar Door Store will also be open for browsing and shopping.

**This event is free and open to the public so invite your friends to join us as we step out into Akron’s past.** There is ample parking at the First Congregational Church where we will meet to start our journey. Those needing to park closer to Hower House Museum may use the back lot or park in other nearby University lots that afternoon. **Please RSVP to Alice Christie by July 10** at [achristie@malone.edu](mailto:achristie@malone.edu) or 330-864-8364 so that we may plan accordingly.