Driving Tour of A.J. Davis Buildings in the Hudson Valley

Plumb-Bronson House
Worth Ave (Route 9), Hudson. Open Sunday July 27 Only, 10-5.
From the North: South of Columbia St; bear left past the hospital; bear left onto Worth; enter at right.
From the South (Route 9): Route 9 north becomes Worth Ave; enter at gatehouse on the left.
From the South (Route 9G): In Hudson, Route 9G becomes Third St; at 2nd light, turn right onto Union; turn right on Worth Ave; enter at gatehouse on the right.

Montgomery Place
River Road (Route 103), Annandale-on-Hudson
Open April-Oct (closed Tuesdays), 10-5. Adults $7.
From I-87: Route 200/199 across bridge; left on Route 9G, go 3 miles; left on Annandale Road; bear left onto River Road; enter on right.
From the South: Route 9 north to Red Hook; left onto Route 9G; left on Annandale Road; bear left onto River Road; enter on right.

Locust Grove
2683 South Road (Route 9), Poughkeepsie.
Open May-Oct, 10-5. Adults $7.
From the North: Follow Route 9 south past the bridge; enter on right.
From the West: Cross the bridge; turn right on Route 9; go south; enter on right.
From the South: Take Route 9 north; enter on left.

Dutch Reformed Church
120 Grand St, Newburgh. Open Sunday, July 27 Only, 10-5.
From the North: Take 9W south into the city; left on Broadway; left on Grand St. Church is on the right.
From the East: I-87 to Route 9 Tarrytown exit; south on Route 9; enter on right.

Lyndhurst
635 S. Broadway, Tarrytown.
Open April-Oct, Tues-Sun, 10-5. Adults $10.
From the North: Route 9 south past I-287; enter on right.
From the West: I-287 across Tappan Zee Bridge; first exit to Route 9 south; enter at right.
From the East: I-287 to Route 9 Tarrytown exit; south on Route 9; enter on right.

The Temple and the Villa
A Weekend Celebration of Alexander Jackson Davis in his 200th Year
Map-brochure by Jim Hoekema/HDE
Plumb-Bronson House, Hudson
In 1839 Dr. Oliver Bronson hired A.J. Davis to "refit" the 1812 house he had bought the year before, which Davis did in the style of which he is considered the inventor, the "Hudson River Bracketed." Ten years later Davis was again commissioned to expand the house, adding the west façade, with a three-story tower, in the Italianate style. Now located on the grounds of a state prison, the house is seldom open to the public. Last occupied in the 1970s, the house is listed in the National Register and may soon be declared a National Historic Landmark.

Montgomery Place, Annandale
Begun about 1805 by Janet Livingston Montgomery, this grand estate was expanded over time by successive members of the Livingston family. Alexander Jackson Davis renovated the structure in 1842 and again in the 1860s to produce the present chateau-like effect. (Davis also designed several less formal outbuildings.) For the 450-acre estate, the owners also consulted tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing, who declared it "...nowhere surpassed in America in point of location, natural beauty, or landscape gardening charms." A National Historic Landmark, the property is owned by Historic Hudson Valley. [www.hudsonvalley.org]

Locust Grove, Poughkeepsie
Samuel F.B. Morse, the painter and inventor of the telegraph, purchased this property in 1847. His friend A. J. Davis provided designs to transform the house into a Tuscan villa, adding two wings to the north and south, creating the octagon, porte-cochère and billiards room to the east, and a four-story tower, forming a picturesque accent in a Downing-inspired 100-acre landscape. An extensive collection of paintings & furnishings, as well as a state-of-the-art visitor's center, makes Locust Grove well worth a visit. [www.morsehistoricsite.org]

Dutch Reformed Church, Newburgh
The earliest Davis building on the tour, the former Dutch Reformed Church is also one of the best-preserved specimens of his aesthetic. Designed in 1835, the monumental Greek Revival structure has been called "the greatest surviving ecclesiastical commission of America's greatest architect of the era." Deconsecrated in 1967, the exterior has deteriorated, but the inspiring interior is remarkably intact. Owned by the City of Newburgh, the DRC became a National Historic Landmark in 2001. This year, Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects completed a Historic Structure Report, sponsored by the Newburgh Preservation Association, hosts of today's “open house.” [www.newburghdrc.org]

Lyndhurst, Tarrytown
All Davis lovers know of Lyndhurst, the splendid Gothic Revival mansion Davis designed in 1838 for one owner and greatly enlarged in 1867 for another. Retaining much of the furniture Davis designed expressly for the mansion, Lyndhurst may be the purest and most complete Davis home extant. The house is currently being refitted after a major renovation of the mechanical systems, allowing visitors to see behind doors that will not be open again for years! A National Historic Landmark, the house is owned and operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. [www.lyndhurst@nthp.org]