Founded in 1861, Vassar College is renowned for pioneering achievement in women’s education, for its long history of curricular innovation, and for the beauty of its campus. Over the course of its history, the college has expanded from its original two buildings—Main Building and the Maria Mitchell Observatory, both National Historic Landmarks—to over 100 academic and residential buildings designed by some of the most notable architects of their day.

The Vassar Libraries are extraordinary and rank among the very best at liberal arts colleges in the U.S. The Sparta Riverhead Memorial Library is one of the most exceptional examples of the collegiate gothic style in the United States. The massive stained-glass window that dominates its interior space depicts Elena Lucretia Comstock Paca, the first woman to receive a doctorate in 1872.

Main Building, designed by James Renwick Jr., encompasses more interior space than any other building in the U.S. at the time of its completion in 1861. Originally intended to accommodate residential, academic, and administrative functions under one roof, Main today houses offices, a theater, a computer center, and student organizations.

The Vassar Center for Drama and Film, designed by Cass Gilbert, replaced Avery Hall, a 19th-century building that originally housed a riding school and choral room. In the development of the historical significance of Avery, the arched limestone facade was retained and incorporated into the new building.

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, designed by Cass Gilbert, includes Vassar’s museum and sculpture garden. Matthew Vassar donated the original collection of 400 works including a significant number of Hudson River School paintings. Today the collection comprises over 20,000 works from ancient Egypt to the present day.

The Chapel, completed in 1904, is notable for its Norman-style architecture and its 25 stained-glass windows: six from drawings by John La Farge, five by Robert L. Dodge, and five by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

The Maria Mitchell Observatory, where prominent astronomer Maria Mitchell was born, raised, and conducted research from 1855 to 1888, is now a national historic landmark and home to Vassar’s Education Department.

The Shakespeare Garden was planned by students and faculty and features plants symbolic of the bard’s life. The garden is open to the public.

Belle Skinner Hall of Music houses the Mary Anne MacKay Memorial Recital Hall, one of the finest music libraries in the country, an electronic music studio, practice rooms equipped with Steinway grand pianos, and a collection of rare and antique musical instruments.

Vassar College
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, New York 12604
Main number 845-437-7000
Admissions 437-7300
Alumni House 437-4750
Allcampus Affairs and Development 437-5420
Financial Aid 437-2345
Safety and Security 437-4221
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Designated a National Heritage Area by Congress, the Hudson Valley has more major historic sites per square mile than any other area in the United States. Fabulous mansions of the Gilded Age, quaint river towns, unparalleled hiking and climbing sites in the Catskills and the Shawangunks, world-class art museums— the valley is national treasure. Poughkeepsie, Vassar’s hometown, is half way between Albany, the state capital, and New York City.

Located in the Hudson Valley for over a century, Vassar campus comprises over 100 buildings in architectural styles ranging from modernist to collegiate gothic and 1,020 acres of land ranging from the sweeping lawns of the main campus to the meadows and woodlands of the Vassar Farm. Main Building, designed by James Renwick Jr., and the Maria Mitchell Observatory are both National Historic Landmarks.