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Editor's note: Exterior image available [here](#).

Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square and Lancaster County Convention Center Opens with Unrivaled Features

LANCASTER, Pa. – The brand new Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square and Lancaster County Convention Center is now open for business after less than two years of construction. The landmark \$177-million integrated facility, anchoring historic Penn Square in Downtown Lancaster, Pa., boldly incorporates the 110-year-old *Beaux Arts* façade of the former Watt & Shand department store.

The state-of-the-art, 299-room Marriott is a wonderful new addition for the many millions of leisure travelers who enjoy Lancaster's inviting mix of rural beauty and urban hip every year. The property is close to all of the city's dining, shopping, and artistic offerings, while still right in the midst of the historic sites, surrounding farmlands, and Amish heritage for which Lancaster County is famous.

Moreover, for the area's rising number of meeting and convention visitors, one appeal of this world-class facility's smaller, less expensive urban destination is that it's centrally-located to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and New York. The hotel and convention center offer a combined 90,000 square feet of meeting space and the latest technology for conventions, events, and trade shows, with space for groups up to 5,000, including a convention and exhibition hall, two grand ballrooms, and finely appointed meeting and board rooms.

Décor and amenities

Interiors are distinctive and exude a warm cosmopolitan feel, including fresh colors and rich mahogany accents. Expansive windows offer an infusion of natural light and remarkable views onto the downtown. In the 299-room hotel portion of this integrated facility, guests will find all the amenities commanded by the Marriott name, including 37-inch LCD high-def screens, smart plug-and-play system for connecting laptops to TVs, and luxurious pillow-top bedding.

Presenting the compelling historical importance of its region

Paying remarkable homage to regional and American history, the facility incorporates historic structures and narratives within and around its own new architecture. The venue offers significant historical and cultural context, including being a key site of Pennsylvania's Quest for Freedom trail, which honors the sites and stories of the African American journey to freedom from the time of the

Underground Railroad and Civil War to the present day. Eventually the overall project, which from inception held a vision of incorporating the unique historical fabric of Lancaster, will offer a 20,000-square-foot, \$20-million interactive museum, the Stevens & Smith Historic Site (see www.stevensandsmith.org for additional compelling background).

Under the leadership of the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County, a water-collection cistern was unearthed and preserved during construction that had once been part of the Kleiss Tavern owned by influential Congressman and abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens. In the Vine Street entrance area to the facility, guests will behold a view of the preserved cistern, believed by scholars and archeologists to have been a hiding place used by Stevens and business partner Lydia Hamilton Smith to assist Americans escaping slavery along the Underground Railroad.

Lancaster as a destination

From bustling farmers markets to scenic rural landscapes populated by the nation's oldest Amish community, Lancaster offers a range of family-oriented activities and "country-life" experiences. But there's another side as well – a sophisticated urban center that offers dozens of well-respected art galleries and exquisite fine dining and shopping. And as one of the largest National Historic Register Districts in the country, it offers hundreds of well-preserved historical landmarks. Visiting architects and planners, in fact, have been favorable in their assessment of the sense of place it offers, noting that Lancaster "is the kind of environment other communities are trying to create."

Ownership and Management of the integrated facility

The Lancaster County Convention Center is a publicly owned entity under the direction of the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority. The Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square is owned by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Lancaster and leased to Penn Square Partners, the private company that holds the Marriott franchise. Interstate Hotels & Resorts manages the entire integrated facility, and is the nation's largest independent hotel management company.

Booking/reservation information

For more information, visit www.lancasterconventioncenter.com & www.marriottlancaster.com.

Lancaster County is a wonderful blend of urban style and rural splendor, and the PA Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau is dedicated to promoting its many rich cultures, from the Amish to the arts. Travelers can take in our vibrant downtown city life – featuring galleries, great dining, specialty shops, and live music – or explore some of the surrounding towns and villages to get a sampling of the heritage, food, craftsmanship, and hands-on activities for which Lancaster is famous. Visit us at www.discoverlancasterpa.com. Lancaster is also part of Pennsylvania's [Dutch Country Roads](#) region, a true vacation destination where country meets city and the past lives side-by-side with the present.