

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Wilson Junior High School

Other names/site number 035-442-45287

2. Location

Street & number 2000 S. Franklin Street N/A  not for publication

City or town Muncie N/A  vicinity

State Indiana code IN county Delaware code 035 zip code 47302

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Wilson Junior High School  
Name of Property

Delaware IN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Indiana's Public Common and High Schools

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof ASPHALT

other CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1921-1950

Significant Dates

1921

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kibebe, Cuno

Garrard, Carl Wave

Smenner, Herbert

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.80 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 637180 4448400  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margo Warminski  
organization Cincinnati Preservation Association date August 21, 2000  
street & number 342 West Fourth Street telephone 513-721-4506  
city or town Cincinnati state OH zip code 45202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

BRIDGES/Wilson School Apartments LP  
c/o David Lies, Director  
Commercial Development  
Mansur Real Estate Services, Inc  
700 Market Tower  
10 W. Market St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-464-8255

Muncie Public Library  
c/o Virginia Nilles, Director  
221 E. Jackson St.  
Muncie, IN 47305  
765-747-8209

Muncie Community Schools  
c/o Bill Reiter, Director  
Facilities and Operations  
2501 N. Oakwood Ave.  
Muncie, IN 47304  
765-917-747-5480

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Wilson Junior High School  
Delaware County, Indiana

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## 7. Description

The Wilson Junior High School is a public school building constructed in the 1920s and expanded in the 1950s and 60s. It is located at the corner of Thirteenth and Franklin Streets in Muncie, Indiana, approximately one-and-a-half miles south of the central business district. The surrounding residential neighborhood, known as the Southside, was developed for the most part in the 1910s, 20s and 30s and is characterized by modest dwellings on small lots. Rows of frame bungalows face the school on the north and east.

The school complex occupies a level lot containing 8.80 acres. To the east of the school building is a broad lawn shaded by mature oaks and tulip poplars and bisected by diagonal walkways. Large spirea bushes stand at the corners. Foundation plantings at the base of the school building have become overgrown with volunteer species. (Photo 1.) Athletic fields and a paved parking area adjoin the building on the west. To the south stands a modern one-story elementary school built in 1973.

The school is a brick edifice with restrained Neo-Classical Revival detailing, standing three stories high with a flat roof. It was constructed in four stages. The building's historic core, constructed in 1921, consisted of a shallow "U"-shaped structure that faced Thirteenth Street, with wings projecting to the south. In 1927 a large addition was appended to the south, approximately doubling the size of the building. (On the original 1921 site plan, a dashed line indicated the future location of this addition.) The addition closed off the mouth of the "U," creating a small light well, and the building became approximately rectangular in form. A new, larger entrance on the east face then became the building's principal entry. In 1954 a two-story addition of rectangular footprint was appended to the south side of the building, largely obscuring its south-facing wall. (See 1954 Sanborn map.) Ten years later the building achieved its present form when a cafeteria was added to the 1954 wing.

The main facade of the Wilson Junior High School is asymmetrical in form. It is dominated by a slightly taller, projecting pavilion, three bays wide. A broad flight of eight steps approaches the main entry, which is centered in the first story. The entrance is set in a pedimented stone frontispiece inscribed with the name, "Wilson High School." The doorway is recessed and contains two sets of wooden doors; the transom is covered over. Wings of unequal size, containing one and three bays respectively, flank the central pavilion. (Photo 2.)

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The north elevation of the building (which served as the main facade of the 1921 building) is symmetrical in plan. It is divided into three sections, with a central, five-bay pavilion stepped forward from and slightly taller than the remainder of the facade. The entrance, which is treated more simply than that of the east elevation, is contained in a brick frontispiece bearing stylized corbels and a low pediment. It features wooden triple doors and two four-pane transoms. (Photo 8.) The west elevation of the building is eight bays wide; the 1921 and 1927 sections are clearly differentiated by differences in setback and window type. Centered on the west wall is a one-story, flat-roofed utility wing of functional design, adjoined by a tall brick smokestack. (Photo 9.) The south side of the building is concealed by the 1954 addition, a modern, two-story brick structure with flat roof and ribbon windows. (Photo 2.)

The Wilson Junior High School's structural frame consists of hollow clay-block masonry walls. Reinforced concrete is used for load-bearing walls and the floors of the interior corridors. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The exterior walls of the school building are articulated by pier and spandrel construction. They are faced with reddish-brown, common-bond brick veneer, with stylized classical details executed in concrete. Brick pilasters rise nearly the height of the building, with groups of windows set into the intervening spandrels. A simple limestone cornice at third-story level adds horizontal definition to the east and north walls. Above it is a square pediment, embellished by geometrical brickwork and a concrete coping, that conceals the building's flat roof. Shaped pediments with datestones grace the east and north elevations. (Photos 3, 8.)

The school building has an abundance of large windows. Two distinct types are original to the building: double-hung wood sashes containing four over two lights, and multi-light, steel-framed, fixed units with hopper and awning openings. The former were utilized in the original 1921 structure, while the latter were employed in the 1927 building campaign. Most windows have simple concrete lintels and sills, and the second- and third-story units are separated by concrete spandrels. Many of the windows have been replaced by modern aluminum units that fill the original openings. Vandals have broken numerous panes of glass, and the first-story windows are boarded over to guard against further damage. (Photos 2, 4, 8, 9.)

The building's interior floor plan is common to all three stories. It features two north-south corridors that run the length of the building, connected by a short east-west hall



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toward the north end. Classrooms are located along the outside walls. The interior wall (the wall facing the interior of the "U") of the east-west corridor houses a home economics unit on the first floor and locker decks on the second and third floors.

The corridors are 17 feet wide. They feature plaster walls, glazed brick wainscoting, and wood doors with multi-pane windows. (Photo 13.) In the 1921 building, the doorways are surrounded by multi-pane, metal-frame windows with machine-rolled glass panes, providing additional light to classrooms while ensuring privacy and minimizing distractions. (Photo 14.) Clerestory windows are located on exterior walls, opening onto the interior of the "U," in the third-floor east and west wing corridors. (Photo 26.) The hallway ceilings rise to 12 feet.

The school building's three sets of staircases are important elements of its design. The main entrance opens to a massive gray terrazzo staircase that rises to the second floor, with ramps that ascend to the first-floor east hallway. (Photo 10.) The east and west corridors feature molded-concrete staircases of identical design, including closed balustrades with decorative geometrical panels. (Photo 12.) The stairwells receive natural light from adjacent light wells.

Classrooms are generally rectangular or nearly square in form; they vary somewhat in size depending on their original use and their placement in the building. They have plaster walls and ceilings and simple wood moldings. They feature ample windows, some of which rise nearly to ceiling height. Some of the third-floor classrooms receive additional light from skylights of wire-cut glass, a few of which have been partly covered over. Many classroom interiors include original slate chalkboards with wood frames. Chalkboards are typically found on front and rear walls, although some are also located on the long walls opposite the windows. The majority of the classrooms retain wood floors, covered with carpeting or linoleum. (Photos 15, 16.) A few rooms have been partitioned to meet changing needs; in a few cases, adjacent rooms have been combined by cutting new openings into dividing walls. Some classrooms have adjoining storage rooms at front or rear: small, functional spaces devoid of detailing. The classroom ceilings, like those of the corridors, are 12 feet high.

Occupying the core of the school building (the hollow of the "U") is a combination auditorium and gymnasium, three stories in height. A network of steel trusses concealed in the ceiling supports the clear span. The auditorium features a stage with curtain, a central court and gallery bleachers. Floors are polished hardwood. Underneath the

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balcony, a pair of ramps descends to the locker-rooms. The locker-rooms and the adjacent showers are covered entirely with glazed brick.

Also contained in the building's core are half-story mezzanine levels, known as "decks," which are accessible from the second- and third-floor landings of the stairwells. Built to house student lockers, these low-ceilinged, rectangular spaces, functional in nature, originally were open to the corridors. They have since been converted to classrooms and ancillary uses such as audio-visual rooms. (Photo 13.)

A suite of rooms on the school's second floor housed the offices of the principal and guidance counselors. These connected offices are simple, unadorned spaces to which some partition walls have been added recently. (Photo 18.) Restrooms, located on each floor, feature glazed brick walls and wall-hung porcelain sinks. Floors are terrazzo or unglazed hexagonal tile. (Photo 17.)

One of the most distinctive features of the school building is a three-room apartment used for home economics instruction, which is located along the inside of the first floor's north corridor. It is not indicated on either the 1921 or 1927 plans and likely was a somewhat later addition, perhaps c. 1935. Designed to emulate a middle-class suburban residence of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it contains a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bath, with decorative brick fireplace. (Photo 11.) A brick wall with an angled bay, containing metal casement sash, faces the corridor. (Photos 27, 28, 29.)



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## 8. Significance

**Summary.** The Wilson Junior High School meets Criterion C for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places as established in the 1998 "National Register Statement of Historic Contexts for Indiana's Public and Common High Schools, 1816-1945." It is a notable example of a public secondary school of the 1920s, distinguished by Neo-Classical Revival detailing and ornamental brickwork. The building's layout exemplifies trends in multi-room school planning that evolved in the 1920s. Its construction reflects theories of school design, influenced by health and safety issues, that came to prominence during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The school building is significant for its association with two important local architectural firms: Kibele and Garrard and Houck and Smenner. It is a rare surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century public school building in Muncie. The Wilson Junior High School is well preserved and retains a high degree of integrity.

**Architectural development.** The plan of the Wilson Junior High School follows a prototype that achieved great popularity for urban public school buildings in the 1920s and 30s. These buildings typically had flat roofs; horizontal form, with the long side oriented toward the street; large banks of windows; a central entry pavilion enhanced by architectural detail; and double-loaded internal corridors. The building's restrained design, graced by simple classically inspired ornamentation and decorative brickwork, reflects an emphasis on practical and cost-effective, yet aesthetically pleasing, school design during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As an author from the period stated:

school buildings...are not monumental in character; and, as they are erected by the taxation of the people for the use of their children, it is obvious that no more money should be expended upon them than is necessary to secure a perfect building inside and a pleasing one outside. (Warren Richard Briggs, *Modern American School Buildings* [New York: John Wiley and Sons], 1904.)

While not ostentatious, school buildings like Wilson Junior High School were well built, using durable materials and often incorporating innovations in plan, sanitation and organization. They were often the grandest public buildings in their immediate environments. Many, like Wilson, were designed by prominent local architects. (See Paul C. Diebold, "Indiana's Public Common and High Schools," p. F 21.)

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The construction of the Wilson Junior High School building reflects theories of school design prevalent in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These theories appear in several publications of the era that concern themselves with the architecture of public school buildings. Recommendations focus on health and safety issues. Stairways were to be constructed of slow-burning materials capable of resisting high temperatures and flames. They needed to employ sturdy balustrades of closed construction that would prevent the unnecessary failure of the stairway if children were to press against the balustrades in an emergency situation. The sturdy and fire-resistant terrazzo and concrete staircases of the Wilson Junior High School put these recommendations into practice. Wide corridors with glazed brick wainscoting, such as those of the Wilson School, were recommended to maintain clean, safe hallways. Good lighting was an important consideration for school buildings: theorists recommended natural and direct lighting throughout the building. In the Wilson School, large windows, clerestories and skylights bring natural light to corridors and classrooms, while the lightwell lends natural light to the stairwell. Glass partition-walls usher borrowed light into the hallways.

Sanborn fire insurance maps of Muncie illustrate the development of the Wilson Junior High School and the surrounding Southside neighborhood, and show how the two evolved in unison. The 1911 map (issued ten years before the school was built) indicated that the neighborhood was still in the process of development: although its street grid was already in place, many lots were still vacant. The block bounded by 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, Walnut and Mulberry, for example, was largely empty. Beyond the city's corporate boundary, then at 16<sup>th</sup> Street, lay open land. By 1934 the streets around the Wilson School were lined with frame houses of small to medium scale; only a few lots remained vacant. The map also illustrated both the 1921 and 1927 stages of the school building, which used "fireproof construction except for wood sheathing and exposed steel in roof." It noted that the walls were of brick, tile or gypsum block, and the floors and roof were constructed of reinforced concrete. The boiler room that now adjoins the west side of the building was labeled "from plans," indicating that it had not yet been built. It too would utilize fireproof construction with brick walls, concrete floors and roof. By 1954 the neighborhood was solidly built up with houses. The school's 1954 south addition, standing two stories high and 170 feet long, was clearly indicated on the map. Like the original structure, it was labeled "noncombustible." It featured concrete floors and a gypsum slab roof on metal joists. The wing contained specialized classrooms, and a spacious gymnasium adjoined its north end. Curiously, the boiler room wing was still noted "from plans."

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Archival plans of the building illustrate how its interior spaces were used originally. The north corridor of the 1921 building housed two kitchens, with a dining room in between; a cafeteria, long and narrow in form, adjoined them on the south. To the east were classrooms devoted to sewing and millinery instruction; to the west, manual training rooms. The upper floors housed classrooms of equal size, each of which included a clock and telephone on the wall facing the corridor. At the north ends of the second and third floors were study halls. The blueprints included molding profiles and a door schedule, with 16 different doors illustrated; most featured nine-pane windows above one or two wood panels, although some had single lights and others featured four horizontal panels. The glass partitions in the classrooms and the glazed brick wainscoting in the halls also were noted on the plans. The blueprints include finely executed elevations of the building, which reveal that it was built exactly as designed. (See copy.) The 1927 addition called for a music room on the first-floor east corridor, to the south of the main staircase, and a manual arts shop on the west. On the second floor, the east corridor housed a new cafeteria, kitchen and pantry; on the west were offices and library. The third-floor plan called for lecture rooms and laboratories on the west side and an assembly room on the east.

The Wilson Junior High School meets the registration requirements for two- or more room consolidated rural and urban schools in Indiana, retaining its integrity of design. The overall massing, form, traffic-flow and opening patterns of the 1920s building have remained intact. Neither the 1954 nor the 1964 addition obscures the main facade; both are connected to the rear elevation. Interiors retain their original circulation patterns and volumes. Evidence of educational use such as original chalkboards and drinking fountains remains intact.

As an intact public school building of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wilson Junior High School represents an uncommon resource in the local context. Within the Muncie public school system, only two other school buildings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century remain. Harrison Elementary School, located at 1300 South Liberty Street, is a Neo-Classical Revival edifice built c. 1915. Forest Park Elementary, built in 1914, recently has been adaptively reused as senior citizen housing and thus has lost some of its historic fabric. Both Wilson and Harrison are rated "outstanding" in the *Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Delaware County Interim Report*; this rating is applied to surveyed structures of particular significance that likely would meet criteria for National Register listing. No public school buildings in Muncie presently are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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The Wilson Junior High School is also noteworthy for its association with two significant local architectural firms. The original 1921 building was designed by Cuno Kibele (1866-1927), a prominent and prolific architect of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose body of work demonstrates that he was proficient in the revival styles of the period. Kibele was a masonry contractor who established a successful business in Bluffton, Indiana, and moved to Muncie in 1904 upon receiving the commission for the Wysor Building. Carl Wave Garrard entered Kibele's office as a draftsman apprentice in 1911, and the two men became partners in 1923. Kibele is listed as an architect in the 1921-22 Muncie city directory. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Kibele designed numerous buildings important to Muncie's historic fabric, including civic, commercial, residential and educational buildings. Some of his better-known works include the Masonic Temple, in Tudor Gothic style (1923; National Register), and Ball Gymnasium (1925) and Science Hall (1922--presently known as the Burkhardt Building), both located on the campus of Ball State University. Each of these buildings was rated "outstanding" by the *Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*. Ball Gymnasium and Science Hall are potentially eligible for National Register listing as part of the Old Quadrangle Historic District on the Ball State campus.

Kibele designed several significant buildings in downtown Muncie. The Mitchell Building, a Neo-Classical Revival commercial structure from 1908, was listed in the National Register in 1988 as part of the Walnut Street Historic District in the Downtown Muncie Multiple Resource Area. The previously noted Wysor Block (demolished) was a 1906 Neo-Classical Revival edifice located on South Walnut Street in the Walnut Street Historic District. The W.W. Shirk Building (c. 1906), also known as the Canopic Building, is a Renaissance Revival apartment house on East Jackson Street; it is listed individually in the Register as part of the Downtown Muncie Multiple Resource Area. The architect also designed the First Church of Christ Scientist (built 1929), located on West Charles Street; it is part of the Old West End Historic District, which was listed in the Register in 1986.

Kibele's residential commissions included several residences in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District: the P.K. Morrison House (1914) on East Washington Street, in the Arts and Crafts style; the Penzol House (1915), an American Foursquare on East Jackson Street; and Kibele's own residence (c. 1914), a Foursquare on East Adams Street. Kibele was also responsible for the Kitselman House (c. 1920; National Register) on University Avenue, a high-style Colonial Revival dwelling with Neo-Classical Revival portico.



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Kiebele's oeuvre also included industrial buildings; he was responsible for the American Lawn Mower Company Building (1900-1927) on East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Functional building with 20<sup>th</sup>-century additions. Kiebele designed four public schools in Muncie; only Wilson survives.

Kiebele died in 1927. Following his death, Carl Wave Garrard formed a partnership with an architect named James T. Keely; the two are listed in the 1934 Muncie directory.

The 1927 addition to Wilson School was designed by the architectural firm of Charles H. Houck and Herbert F. Smenner, with mechanical systems, including heating, ventilating, plumbing and electrical wiring, devised by Bevington-Williams, Inc., Engineers, of Indianapolis. Houck and Smenner achieved prominence in Muncie during the 1920s. The firm designed Muncie's City Hall, a Classical Revival monument of 1925 (demolished). Another highly visible commission was the Temple Beth-El, a Neo-Classical Revival synagogue built in 1922, which is now part of the Old West End Historic District. The firm designed the High Street Methodist Episcopal Church (1929), a Late Gothic Revival house of worship listed in the Indiana state register. They were also responsible for the Grace Keiser Maring Branch Library (1929-1930), a Georgian Revival edifice on South Madison Street. All three buildings were rated "outstanding" by the state inventory.

The firm of Houck and Smenner is included in the 1921-22 directory; by 1934 Smenner is listed alone. Smenner achieved recognition on his own with a number of commissions. He designed the Kitselman Brothers Wire Company (c. 1926) on South Council Street, as well as the Karl E. and Ada E. Nutting House on Warwick Road, a 1928 Tudor Revival dwelling. The Nutting House is listed in the Register as part of the Westwood Historic District (1992).

**Historical development.** During the first five decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Muncie was a small, unincorporated community with limited educational facilities: at first, subscription schools housed in primitive buildings, then private academies with limited enrollment. In 1851 railroads were built through the town, and three years later it was incorporated as a city. These factors led to increased population growth, and to ever-growing numbers of school-age children. Following statewide trends, the first public schools were established in 1856, and over the next two decades the system was expanded and upgraded (General William H. Kemper, ed., *A Twentieth Century History of Delaware County* [The Lewis Publishing Company, 1908], pp. 245, 259-260). The school term was extended to ten months or 200 days, additional teachers were hired, and new buildings were constructed.

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In 1868 a secondary school was established in the basement of a church; in 1880 the district built its first dedicated high school building. (See Kemper, p. 263.) "During the decade from 1870 to 1880 notable progress was made in every department. The number of school buildings increased from two to four; the number of teachers from ten to fourteen; the enrollment from about nine hundred to nearly thirteen hundred..." (Kemper, p. 263). These improvements coincided with an era of great progress for education in Indiana (1870-1890), sometimes referred to as "The Great Awakening" of public education in the state. (See Diebold, p. E 7.)

During the 1880s and 90s the discovery of natural gas fields near Muncie attracted new industries to the town, and it enjoyed unprecedented growth and prosperity. School enrollment jumped from 616 in 1855, to approximately 1,300 by 1880, to 2,170 by 1895 (*History of Public Education in Muncie, Indiana, 1850-1990* [Muncie Community Schools, 1991], p. 9). The state also passed its first compulsory attendance law in 1897, requiring that children between eight and fourteen attend school for 12 weeks per year. (See Richardson.) The result was a flurry of school construction. "[I]t became necessary, as a result of wealth and population, to erect a large new schoolhouse every few years" (Kemper, p. 266). While stylistic interpretations differed, these multi-story masonry buildings shared common characteristics: approximately cubical form, sometimes with projecting wings that gave them an asymmetrical footprint; steep signature roofs with dormers and tall chimneys; and groups of tall windows.

Beginning in the 1880s and 90s, school officials, architects, and builders developed a new generation of educational structures designed to handle the concept of consolidating and grading schools.... These buildings were nearly always solid brick, could be one or two stories in height, and often had architectural elaborations like bell towers with steeples. Architects incorporated educators' new ideas about lighting and ventilation into these often cubical massed buildings. (Diebold, p. F 19)

Characteristic of these new buildings were Washington Elementary School (1889), a Romanesque Revival brick edifice with high hipped roof, steep wall dormers and stone arched entrance, and Muncie High School, a Second Empire work with central tower, mansard roof with dormers, and segmentally arched windows. (Both school buildings have been demolished.)



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By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two trends were well established in the Muncie schools: the near-universality of high school education, and the expansion of outer neighborhoods, including the Southside. In 1913 compulsory education was extended to age 16 in Indiana, which gave new impetus to the construction of secondary schools (Diebold, p. E 10). Muncie public school enrollment climbed to 4,476 by 1915 (History, p. 9). Over the next decade the school system continued to replace older buildings and construct new ones, including a new Central High School (1914) and junior high schools as well as elementary facilities. As sociologists Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd noted in *Middletown*, their landmark study of life in Muncie at mid-century, "[M]ost of Middletown's children now extend their education past the elementary school into grades nine to twelve" (Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* [Harcourt Brace and Company, 1929], p. 183). Wilson Junior High School was built in 1921 to serve the burgeoning Southside neighborhood, where industries employed thousands. A study of the Muncie school system conducted in 1949 noted that the "major concentration of the student population was located in the central and southern sections of the district. This is supported by the fact that in those sections, between 1934 and 1948, 1,437 new dwellings and apartments were built," in close proximity to places of employment (T.C. Holy and J.O. Neiderhauser, in Ronald Richardson, "The Development of Public Schools in Muncie, Indiana" [1976], p. 12). (This would soon begin to change, as the city's population started to shift to the north and northwest.) "Working class children go to the Junior High School on the South Side until they have finished the ninth grade" (Lynd, p. 186).

Most of school buildings built in the 1900s followed the same cubical form as their counterparts of the 1800s, albeit with flatter, more symmetrical facades, and classical garb. By the 1910s, however, a new silhouette emerged: more horizontal in form, with flat roofs and ranks of large windows. Setbacks and projections enlivened facades, and belt courses and parapets provided horizontal emphasis. "Schools of the 'teens and twenties were less vertical in plan, tending to have a central entry pavilion and wings extending away on either side. Windows filled entire walls of these later schools" (Diebold, p. F 19). Typical of these new buildings were Harrison Elementary School (1909), a three-story building of symmetrical design with large triple windows and stone entry frontispiece, embellished with muted Neo-Classical Revival details, and Wilson Junior High School. "The Wilson (junior) High School on Thirteenth Street between Franklin and Liberty Streets, has three floors and in proportion to its capacity is equipped on a scale equal to that of the Central [high] school..." (Haimbaugh, pp. 322-323).

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Throughout the 1920s and 30s, Muncie public school enrollment continued to grow, albeit at a slower rate; it reached 8,495 by 1935 (History, p. 9). Only three buildings, including Wilson, were built in the 1920s; a fourth was added in the 1930s. During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a comprehensive study of Muncie schools conducted by T.C. Holy and J.O. Niederhauser established benchmarks for school facilities. School buildings of small to medium size, with expansive grounds, were given high marks. The authors also specified that maximum walking distances for junior high school students should be one and one-quarter miles. Secondary schools should provide a "minimum site of ten acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils" (Holy and Niederhauser, in Richardson, p. 13). (These walking distances were codified in *Standards for the Evaluation of School Buildings*, by T.C. Holy and W.E. Arnold. See Richardson, p. 13.) Most of Muncie's elementary schools met the standard; among the city's secondary schools, only Wilson did so (*ibid.*). School buildings also were evaluated on the condition of their academic classrooms, special classrooms, general service rooms, administration rooms and service systems. Wilson's site was rated "excellent," its building and academic rooms and service systems "good," its special rooms "fair," and its general service and special rooms "poor." Overall the building was rated "fair." (See Holy-Niederhauser data, in Richardson, p. 44.) The results of this study influenced school construction and development over the next two decades.

In the "baby boom" years after World War II, Muncie's school population again increased rapidly, giving rise to another wave of school construction and expansion. The decidedly modern buildings constructed in the 1950s were horizontal in orientation, with flat roofs, planar facades and ribbon windows. Wilson was expanded in 1954; a new wing added to the south end of the building contained a new gym and additional space for specialized classrooms. (See photos 2, 7, 25.) A new cafeteria was added in 1964.

Citywide school enrollment peaked at 19,808 in 1967 and then began to decline, reflecting the end of the post-World War II "baby boom" as well as population decline in the community (History, p. 9). During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century many of Muncie's extant older school buildings were closed; several were replaced with new facilities, and a few were adapted for new uses such as training centers or administrative offices. Wilson School remained in service until 1995, when a new facility was constructed on another site in the Southside neighborhood. Plans are underway to convert the 1921 and 1927 portions of the school building into apartments for senior citizens, utilizing the historic preservation tax incentives; the 1954 wing will house a new public library.

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**Integrity.** The Wilson Junior High School building retains a large part of its historic integrity and nearly all of the physical features that made up its character and appearance during its period of significance. The park-like open space and the athletic fields surrounding the school remain unaltered. With the exception of the 1954 and 1964 additions to the south side of the school building, the design integrity of the building has been preserved. In the historic portion, there has been no alteration of structure, massing, spatial arrangement, fenestration or surface materials. The replacement of some wood sash windows with aluminum units is the only alteration to the exterior historic fabric. This change does not significantly affect integrity since the new units fill the original openings, preserving the rhythm of the façade and its original proportions.

As noted earlier, the building has also seen minor changes to its interior plan, such as the conversion of part of a corridor to office space and minor alterations to classrooms. These are for the most part superficial changes that are readily reversible. Most of the alterations to the school involve the addition of materials to the building; little historic fabric has been removed.

The school reflects design theories from the era in which it was built and has not been altered to reflect a later aesthetic. It has remained in use as a school since its construction and clearly reflects its original use and purpose. With the exception of vandalism and water damage, the building remains as it was prior to its closing in 1995. The Wilson School therefore retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association.

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## 10. Geographical data

### Verbal boundary description

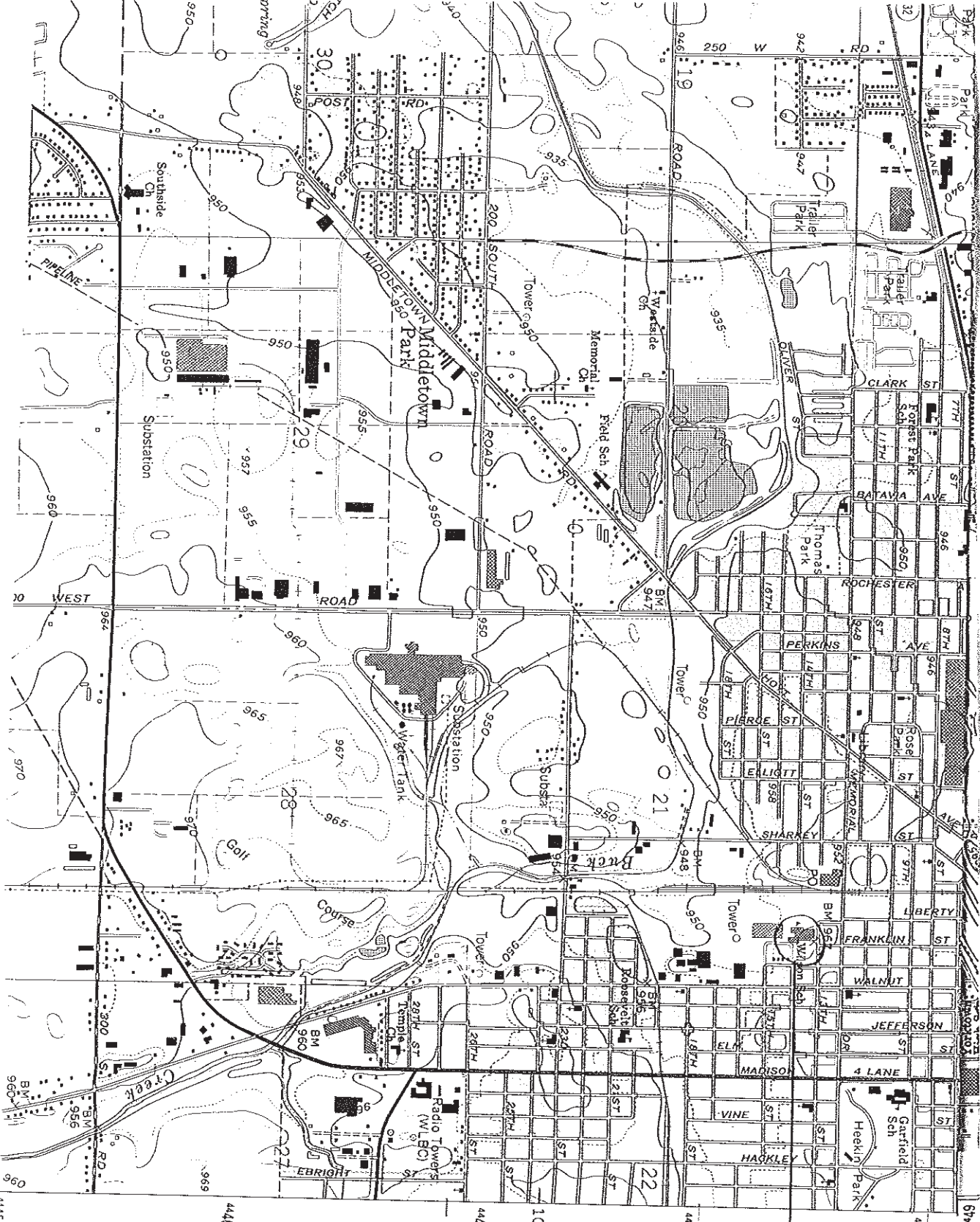
The nominated property is located within the corporate limits of Muncie. It includes Blocks 61, 62, 63 and part of 60 of the Heath, Lenon and Mitchell Addition and part of Block 123 of Aldrich's Addition. Please refer to map with boundary line drawn.

### Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the area roughly bounded by Thirteenth Street on the north, High Street on the east, Fourteenth Street to the south, and railroad tracks to the west.

This boundary includes all the property visually and historically associated with the property. It includes sufficient acreage to include the 1921 school building with its 1927 and 1954 additions, while excluding areas of lesser integrity or different use. It excludes the modern school building located to the south of the historic building, and its adjacent parking lot.





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