

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functional 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 Middle School

other names/site number Wilson Junior High School

2. Location

street & number 2000 South Franklin Street not for publication

city or town Muncie 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 36 CFR 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

State of 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

Name of Property

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(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	building
0	0	sites
0	0	structure
0	0	objects
0	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant / Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 18th and 20th Century Revivals:

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1921-1948

Significant Dates

1921, 1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Cuno Kibele and Carl Wave Garrard

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Drawing and Documents Archive
Ball State University
College of Architecture and Planning

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.80

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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 Sean O'Skea; Heather Harrison; Christine Walhstrom -- Students

organization Ball State University date February 28, 1998

street & number College of Architecture and Planning telephone 285-1937

city or town Muncie state Indiana zip code 47306

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Description:

Wilson Middle School, a three story, brick, 1920s public school with classical details, was dedicated in 1921. It is situated in a residential neighborhood at the corner of 13th Street and Franklin Street in Muncie, Indiana. The site is relatively flat, and the building is fronted by a park-like open space on its east side. To the north are private residences. A parking lot and athletic fields are to the west, and an elementary school is to the south. The park space is roughly the size of a city block and is crisscrossed with paths and mature trees.

Wilson Middle School was built in four separate stages. Local architects Cuno Kibele and Carl Wave Garrard designed the original structure, erected in 1921 with an addition built in 1927. The original structure and the 1927 addition make up the historically significant portion of the building. In 1954 a third major addition was added to the south of the building. Indianapolis architects McGuire and Shook designed the 1954 addition. While also built of brick, it is a decidedly modern design, being two stories and lined with ribbon windows. Ten years later a cafeteria was added to the 1954 addition. The following descriptions focus on the historic 1920s structure.

The footprint of the original structure is in the shape of a shallow "U" with the wings projecting to the south. The base of the "U" facing north was the original front facade of the school. The 1927 addition was added to the south of the first structure. On the original 1921 site plan, a dashed line indicated the future location of this addition. With the 1927 addition, a new, larger entrance on the east face became the principal entry. The 1927 addition closed off the mouth of the "U" creating a small light-well, and the building as a whole became roughly rectilinear. Only three of the historic facades are visible, the south facade being obscured by the 1950s wing.

Set on a concrete foundation, the historic portion of the building is made from red and brown brick in a common-bond veneer over hollow clay-block masonry walls. Reinforced concrete is used in the structure for load bearing walls and the floors of the interior corridors.

Kibele and Garrard use stylized classical forms in the architectural detailing. Most of the details are cast in concrete, while simple decorative brick patterns can also be found in various places on the exterior.

The structural frame is articulated on the face of the building by brick pilasters that rise nearly the height of the building between the large bays of windows. The pilasters stretch from the foundation to the cornice, and are capped by concrete scrollwork details. Simple ornamental brickwork delineates the space between the cornice and the parapet. The parapet is capped with a concrete coping.

The most striking exterior feature is the abundance of windows. Roughly half of the wall is made up of tall, multi-light windows to allow the maximum light into the classrooms. Two kinds of windows are original to the historic portion of the building. Surrounding the 1927 entrance are

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Description (continued)

steel-framed, multi-light, fixed windows with hopper and awning openings. Some of the panes have been replaced. Wood, double-hung, four-over-two sash windows make up the remainder. Many of the wood sash windows have been replaced with modern aluminum windows. Most windows have plain concrete sills and lintels. The second and third story windows are separated by concrete spandrels.

The north face of the school was the front facade of the 1921 building. It is symmetrical and is divided into three portions, with a central pavilion stepped forward and slightly taller than the two wings. The wings each contain an entrance. A brick, stylized portico topped by a concrete pediment and brackets, surrounds each entrance. The entrances have three replacement doors under a large, multi-light transom. The parapet peaks in the center of the pavilion with an ornamental crowning, in which is set a concrete date stone, inscribed "1921".

The east facade, facing the park-space, is dominated by the main entrance. This entrance is set into a projecting pavilion which is slightly taller than the remainder of the facade. A concrete stoop of eight steps leads to a pair of double doors and a concrete, classical frontispiece surrounding the doorway. The words "Wilson High School" are inscribed in the frieze. A date stone inscribed with "1927", the year the addition was built, is set into the parapet above the main entrance.

The west side is the rear of the building and is nearly identical with the east. It has a similar projecting section consistent with that on the east facade but lacks any entrance. Centered on the south side, a low projecting utility block connecting the main building with a hundred and twenty foot tall smokestack which serves as a defining element of the building. The rear of the building lacks the cornice that is found on the east and north sides.

The south side of the building is obscured by the 1954 and 1964 additions. The modern style 1954 wing is two stories and made of a brick similar to the historic structure. The 1954 wing is, of course, less than fifty years old and is therefore ineligible for listing.

As recently as the spring of 1995, the 180,000 square foot building was still used as a middle school for the City of Muncie. It has been vacant since then. Because the building has always served as a school most of the interior has remained unaltered. Though the function of several of the rooms have changed from the original use, very few significant alterations to the structure and layout have occurred. Period details representative of 1920s schools are found throughout the historic portion of the interior.

Above the full basement are three stories of classroom and administrative space. The floor plan is common to all three stories. The core of the building contains the gymnasium, light-well, stairwells, and the original location for the student lockers. Those core spaces, rising through all three floors, are bordered on three sides (north, east, and west) by corridors. Classrooms and

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Description (continued)

offices run along the north, east, and west exterior walls.

The ceilings, in both the classrooms and the halls, are twelve feet high. Painted plaster walls line the seventeen-foot wide corridors. The first floor corridors have glazed brick wainscoting below the plaster. Corridors on the third floor are lit by large clearstory windows. The hall floors are made of reinforced concrete.

The classrooms have been altered little over the years. Most have hardwood floors but a few of the rooms have been carpeted. The rooms have plaster walls and simple wood moldings. Some still retain their original slate chalkboards. All classrooms have wood doors with glass view panels. Classroom doors in the 1921 portion are topped with transoms and flanked by glass partition-walls to allow borrowed light into the corridors. All the classrooms are well lit by high windows that fill the majority of the exterior wall. Most of the window sills are of glazed brick but several rooms on the north side have sills of molded concrete. Skylights provide additional light to several of the classrooms on the third floor.

The three sets of stairs contribute significantly to the character of the building. The massive terrazzo stairs, just inside the main entrance on the west side, rise to the second story, west corridor. The stairs are flanked by ramps which descend to the first floor.

There are identical, molded-concrete staircases in the east and west corridors. These graceful, imperial-staircases connect the three stories of classrooms. The stairwells receive natural light from the adjacent light-well.

Half-story mezzanine levels are accessed from the second and third floor landings of the stairwells. Originally housing student lockers, the mezzanines have been enclosed for additional classroom and office space. Their windows open onto the light-well.

The classrooms and corridors surround the massive gymnasium at the core of the building. It features hardwood floors, glazed brick wainscoting, a stage along the south wall, and balcony seating on the north wall. Underneath the balcony, a pair of ramps descend to the locker-rooms. The locker-room walls and the adjacent showers, are entirely covered with glazed brick.

Upon completion of a new middle school on another site, the historic Wilson Middle School was closed. With the exception of minor vandalism and water damage, the building remains as it was on the last day of classes in 1995.

Over the years small changes were made to the building. A portion of one of the first floor corridors was enclosed to make office space. Additional studwalls were added to subdivide larger rooms. Modern lighting fixtures were added. As mentioned previously, the mezzanine levels

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Description (continued)

originally containing lockers and open to the corridors, were enclosed for additional rooms. Some carpeting has been added. All of these changes could be easily reversed. Nearly all of the changes have involved the addition of materials to the building; very little historic fabric has been removed.

Over all, the integrity of historic portion of the Wilson Middle School remains intact. It is an excellent example of a public school of the 1920s. There is no other pre-Second-World-War public school in Muncie displaying anywhere near the amount of historic fabric and remarkable features that are present in the Wilson Middle School.

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Section number 8 Page 1

Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Statement of Significance

Wilson Middle School meets National Register Criterion A with significance in the area of education at the local level. It meets Criterion C as the work of a local master. Although no longer occupied, Wilson Middle School is the best extant example of an early twentieth-century public school in Muncie because the 1921 and 1927 portions retain most of their historic fabric. Its function did not change throughout its period of significance (1921-1948), and it continued to serve as a middle school until 1995. It is a significant part of the history of education in Muncie and represents the work of the well-known local architecture firm of Kibele and Garrard. Wilson Middle School is rated as "outstanding" in the *Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Delaware County Interim Report*.

Wilson Middle School reflects a long-established emphasis on the role of public education in America. The Northwest Land Ordinance of 1785, the Indiana constitution of 1816, and the redrafted constitution of 1852 all contained provision for public education. This emphasis on the importance of education continued through the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. It was believed that knowledge was the greatest asset of a nation, and that the way to maintain this knowledge was to provide public education to the masses. Wilson Middle School, one of two middle schools ever built in Muncie, played a tremendous role in the education of a large segment of Muncie's population. The school opened in 1921 as the first designated middle school and served as such for seventy-four years.

In the early twentieth century, it was believed that the structure of the school building ought to be complementary to the function of public education. 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.¹

¹Warren Richard Briggs, *Modern American School Buildings* (New York: John Wiley and Sons), 1904.

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Statement of Significance (continued)

This ideology translated into the practical aspects of public educational facilities. Wilson Middle School demonstrates this ideology in its design and in its function as a public school in the city of Muncie. Though built to serve the community's needs, the school also boasts some stylized classical detailing on the exterior. Interior features such as simple wood trim in classrooms and glazed brick wainscoting in corridors, combine practicality and aesthetics.

Wilson Middle School was designed as a complex building based on prevailing theories of the day. These theories appear in several publications from the early twentieth century which 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 and employ balustrades of closed construction. The materials needed to be capable of resisting high temperatures and flames, and the closed construction prevented the unnecessary failure of the stairway if children were to press against the balustrades in an emergency situation.² Good lighting was an important consideration for school buildings. Theorists recommended natural and direct lighting throughout the building.³ In Wilson Middle School, clerestory windows and skylights bring light from the exterior directly into corridors and classrooms, while the lightwell lends natural light to the stairwell. Glass partition-walls usher borrowed light into the corridors. Another aspect of school design addressed by the theorists concerned school corridors. Wide corridors with glazed brick wainscoting were recommended to maintain clean, safe hallways.⁴

Concerning Criterion C, Wilson Middle School was designed by local architect, Cuno Kibele. Born in 1866, Kibele was a masonry contractor and established a successful business in Bluffton, Indiana. He 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. Prior to his death in 1927, Kibele designed numerous buildings important to Muncie's historic fabric, several of which are extant. His prolific career

²John J. Donovan, *School Architecture, Principles and Practices*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 312.

³Severance Burrage, *School Sanitation and Decoration*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1899), 59.

⁴Warren Richard Briggs, 115 and John J. Donovan, 307.

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Statement of Significance (continued)

included designs for churches, residences, civic buildings, and commercial buildings, as well as schools. Some of his well-known structures include the Masonic Temple, Ball Gymnasium, and the former science building on the campus of Ball State University. Each of these structures is rated "outstanding" in the *Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Delaware County Interim Report*. Kibele was responsible for providing Muncie with designs for four public schools; only Wilson survives. Within the Muncie public school system, only one other school of the same era remains, Forest Park Elementary (1914). Forest Park has recently been adaptively reused as senior citizen housing, and thus has lost some of its historic fabric.

Wilson Middle School 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. It still stands on its original site, in its original setting. The park-like open space and athletic fields surrounding the school remain unaltered. The residential neighborhood in which Wilson Middle School sits is relatively unchanged, except for the recent construction of an elementary school, which has done little to alter the setting. With the exception of the 1954 addition to the south side of Wilson Middle School, 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 sashes is the only alteration to the exterior historic fabric. The school reflects design theories from the era in which it was built and has not been altered to reflect a later use or aesthetic. The materials and workmanship show a practical consideration to create a structure that was meant to last and not built for ostentation. Wilson Middle School retains integrity of location, setting, design, and materials. These aspects of the school, taken as a whole, give Wilson Middle School integrity of association and feeling.

Bibliography

- Briggs, Warren Richard. *Modern American School Buildings*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1904.
- Bruce, William C. *High School Buildings, vol. II*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1919.

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

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Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1899.

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The Macmillan Company, 1921.

Emerson's Muncie Directory 1923-24. Muncie, IN: Emerson Directory Company, 1923.

Helm, T.B. *History of Delaware County, Indiana*. Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1881.

History of Public Education in Muncie, Indiana, 1850-1990. Muncie, IN: Muncie Community
Schools, 1991.

Kemper, William H., ed. *A Twentieth Century History of Delaware County*.
Chicago: The Lewis P. Publishing Company, 1908.

Lewis, Dorothy F. *The Indiana Story*. Chicago: Wheeler Publishing Company, 1951.

Stoeckel, Althea and Ron S. Johnson, ed. *Delaware County, Indiana 1827-1850 The Pioneer
Period*. Muncie, IN: Ball State University, 1975.

Verbal boundary description

Blocks 61, 62, 63, and part of block 60 of the Heath, Lenon, and Mitchell Addition and part of
block 123 of Aldrich's Addition.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the area roughly bounded by railroad tracks to the west,
Franklin Street to the east, High Street to the south, and Thirteenth Street to the north, including
the public ways of Fourteenth Street and Liberty.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 1

Photograph Identification.

Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Photographers: Sean O'Skea and Heather Harrison

Photos taken February 29 1998.

- #1 Exterior. Front (east) facade, looking west across park space. 1954 addition visible on left.
- #2 Exterior. Front (east) facade, looking west.
- #3 Exterior. Close up of main entrance on east facade, looking west.
- #4 Exterior. North side, original 1921 front, looking south-east.
- #5 Exterior. North side, looking south-west.
- #6 Exterior. North-west entrance on the north side, looking south.
- #7 Exterior. Rear (west side) looking west from athletic field.
- #8 Exterior. Rear, looking north-west.
- #9 Exterior. Park space to the east of the building. View looking north-west from main entrance.
- #10 Exterior. Park space, viewed from second story window of building. Looking south-west.
- #11 Exterior. Light-well in core of building, looking east.
- #12 Exterior. Window close-up. Looking east at first floor, east facade.
- #13 Interior. Typical 1921 classroom. Third floor, looking south-west.
- #14 Interior. Typical 1927 classroom. Second floor, looking south-east.
- #15 Interior. View from second floor corridor, looking west at glass partition wall.
- #16 Interior. Third floor corridor showing clearstory windows. View looking west.
- #17 Interior. First floor corridor looking north.
- #18 Interior. Third floor mezzanine level, showing enclosed locker spaces. Looking south-west.

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Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Photograph Identification (continued)

- #19 Interior. Gymnasium viewed from balcony, looking south, across to stage.
- #20 Interior. Athletic locker room, looking south-west into showers.
- #21 Interior. Third floor bathroom, looking south-east.
- #22 Interior. First floor, west stair, looking east.
- #23 Interior. West stair on the second story, showing access to mezzanine. Looking east.
- #24 Interior. Main terrazzo stairs, looking up to the east.
- #25 Interior. Main stairs, looking down to the main entrance. Looking west.
- #26 Interior. 1921 north-east entrance showing floor tile and radiator bay. Looking north-west.

Additional Information -- Map

Wilson Middle School
Delaware County, IN

Sanbourn Map.

Wilson School is depicted in a 1956 edition of Sanbourn Maps for Muncie, Indiana. Only the building is depicted in a map insert. All three stages of the building can be seen.

Original 1921 Building.

1927 Addition.

1954 and 1964 Additions.

