

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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MUNCIE MRA

YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION Owners: YWCA
310 East Charles Street
1925-27

DESCRIPTION: Bldg. #193, Photo #57

Designed by architects Kibele and Girrard, Muncie's YWCA occupies a quarter block at the northeast corner of Jefferson and Charles Street. The three story structure is made of red brick with limestone details.

The building is five bays across and three bays deep with basically a rectangular plan. The main entrance is located on the south facade in the central bay and has two sidelights and a fanlight surrounding the door. At the second story above the entry is a palladian influenced window. The balance of the windows are six over one double hung.

There is a limestone belt course at the third story window line and a cornice line above. The roof is flat and surrounded by a parapet wall.

The building has a swimming pool in the basement, meeting and recreation rooms on the first floor, and two floors of sleeping rooms above.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Muncie YWCA building is significant under criteria A and C. This is the only historic building left in the city which represents the social activities of the YWCA or YMCA in Muncie. Consequently, the building has significance in the area of Social History. The YWCA building is architecturally significant for its restrained Colonial Revival style and as the work of an important local architect, Cuno Kibele.

The YWCA sought to provide a good moral environment in which young working women could live, gain employment skills, participate in exercise programs, fulfill their spiritual needs, and have morally acceptable social activities. The YWCA movement was started in England in 1855, when the Prayer Union and General Female Training

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Institute were formed. The Prayer Union adopted the name "Young Women's Christian Association" in 1859. In America, similar social institutions were formed to care for the increasing population of working and poor single women. The first American group to use the name "YWCA" was formed in Boston in 1866.

The movement gradually spread across the nation. A state-wide YWCA group was formed for Indiana in 1885. In Muncie, local interest in an organization of this sort was first expressed in 1910. A series of meetings were held in private homes, until October 1911, when the Young Women's Social and Betterment Association was formed. In December 1911, a YWCA branch was started in Muncie by interested persons, and it soon became the dominant organization of its type in the city. Space in a furniture store immediately north of the nominated property was secured for the organization. (The furniture store is no longer standing.)

The Muncie branch served a significant social need. In the decades prior to the formation of this branch, the population of Muncie quadrupled, from 5,219 in 1880, to 22,285 in 1895. The swift industrial and commercial development of the city had attracted thousands of people, and with this rapid growth came the many social problems of that period. In 1919, it was estimated that as many as 115 girls (many under age) were working in factories and stores in Muncie. The YWCA met this need and many others.

It was soon obvious that the first location would not be adequate for the YWCA's muncie branch. A drive for a new building was started in 1916, but America's involvement in World War I sidetracked the effort. After the war, even larger quarters were planned. The original goal of \$205,000 had been met, but the Ball Brothers set up an endowment of \$100,000 and others added \$100,000 to this amount. Ground was broken on December 14, 1925, by Mrs. Dan Davis, the first YWCA Board of Directors President. The building was dedicated on Sunday, October 9, 1927. It has remained in continuous use since that time as a symbol and instrument of the ideals of the YWCA in Muncie.

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The Muncie YWCA also has architectural significance. The firm of Kibele and Garrard was retained for this building. Cuno Kibele was the architect, and it is one of his largest local commissions.

Kibele and Garrard were among a handful of local architects who remained in the city for an extended period. (Kibele designed and occupied 800 East Adams Street, in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District.) The firm was the most important local office of the early 20th Century, receiving commissions for the Masonic Temple (listed 1984) and the Wysor Block, demolished 1987. Kibele's works range from Arts and Crafts style residences to large Neo-Classical commercial blocks. The restraint and balance of the YWCA building are hallmarks of his larger works, and it is among the best examples of this style in the city. Charles P. Monroe of Muncie was the contractor for the building.

Geographical Data:

Acreage: Less than one acre

UMT Reference: 16 637 580 4450 020

Boundary: Map #11-15A, Block #107, Parcel #016