

GRACE KEISER MARING LIBRARY  
1808 South Madison Street  
Muncie  
Delaware County  
Indiana

HABS IN-303  
*IN-303*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### GRACE KEISER MARING LIBRARY

HABS IN-303

- Location: 1808 South Madison Street on the northeast Corner of the Madison Street and Memorial Drive intersection in Heekin Park in Muncie, Delaware County, Indiana.
- Present Owner: City of Muncie, 300 North High Street, Muncie, Indiana 47305
- Present Use: Vacant since 1999
- Significance: The Grace Keiser Maring Library was the first branch library in Muncie and was an integral part of the development of the Muncie Public Library system. It was also an influential building on the south side, serving as an educational resource and social/civic meeting place for residents. The library is an excellent example of a Georgian Revival civil building.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Planning for the library began October of 1926 after Grace Keiser Maring gave the city money that would allow for the building to be constructed. The library was then built in 1930.
2. Architect: The local architecture firm of Houck and Smenner designed the library. The firm was well known locally and was responsible for many civic buildings in Muncie, IN. The Maring Library was the only library designed by the firm, which dissolved in 1931.
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: The Maring Library was originally owned by the Muncie Public Library and is now owned by the City of Muncie. The Muncie Public Library was the occupant, but the building was more than a library. It was equipped with facilities such as a community room and a kitchenette, which allowed it to be a community, cultural, education and recreational center.
4. Builder, contractor: Contractor A.J. Glazer built the library.

5. Original plans and construction: The one story library is in the Georgian Revival style and has a symmetrical design that sits on a concrete foundation/basement. The red brick exterior has limestone detailing and side gabled slate roof. The interior boasts three primary rooms as well as a circulation desk on the first floor with a large open room and smaller support spaces in the basement.
  6. Alterations and additions: A few minor alterations have been made to the library. Two basement windows had the glass removed in order to install exhaust fans and the east facade door opening now has a hollow metal door and frame that are a more contemporary style. The interior shows evidence of built-in bookshelves that have since been removed and in the 1960s the original light fixtures were removed and replaced with strip fluorescent light fixtures. A new boiler was put in the basement, as were new toilets, sinks and partitions in the bathroom.
- B. Historical Context: The Grace Keiser Maring Branch Library played an important role in the development of Muncie Public Library system and influenced the south side of Muncie. In 1930, it was constructed as the first branch library in Muncie. Since the building's dedication, it served the residence of the south side of Muncie as an educational resource and a social/civic meeting place. The small, but architecturally stylistic structure is an excellent example of Georgian Revival civic building in the city. The building was designed by Houck and Smenner, a respected local architecture firm.

The public library movement's initial emphasis was to construct central or main libraries. But a need for more facilities was becoming evident in the middle 1920s. Resources were required to satisfy the needs of the residents rapidly growing cities and outlying rural areas. The branch library was the solution to this need. The goal of the branch library system was "to bring people and books together." The branch libraries were not as formal as the main library. They were designed to be more comfortable for the local citizens because the buildings were neither as large nor as formal as the main library.

Muncie, like other cities, was growing and had a need for a new branch library on the south side of the city. In 1923 a petition to the library board containing five hundred signatures of south side residents verified this need. Unfortunately money constraints did not allow for the construction of a branch library in 1923. A bequest from Grace Keiser Maring in October of 1926 gave the city the money needed to begin the planning and construction of the library.

Grace Keiser Maring and her husband Joel Madison Maring were prominent, philanthropic residents of the city of Muncie. Joel benefited from the great gas boom by founding Maring, Hart, and Cole Glass Factory and was the Director of the local Merchants National Bank. As the wife of a prominent businessman, Grace was able to spend her time as a member and leader of several social organizations. Her death came unexpectedly at age 61, but her will carried out the work she began in life. In the will, Maring stated that would “like to give a sufficient amount to build, or at least to help build a branch library building providing the city will support and equip it.”

Mrs. Maring’s estate provided \$2500 for this purpose. Mrs. Maring’s heirs and the Library Board of Trustees agreed that Heekin Park would be the ideal location for this first branch library. The location within the park was at the intersection of two major streets on Muncie’s south side, 12<sup>th</sup> Street (now Memorial Drive) and Madison Street. Additionally, it was conveniently located between Garfield Elementary School and Wilson Junior High School. In 1999, due to the small size and the maintenance upkeep of the building, the Muncie Public Library decided to vacate the building and turn it over to the building’s control to the city of Muncie.

The library helped serve the educational needs of Muncie’s south side, the industrial side of Muncie. It served the residential areas along the electric streetcar line. The library was located near Wilson Junior High and Garfield Elementary and was used as the main library for these schools. The branch library was planned to meet a previously unmet need for a community cultural, education and recreational center on the city’s south side. In addition to the usual facilities for adult and children’s reading services, the Maring Branch was equipped with a community room and kitchenette which could be for social and civic meetings. The community room became one of the most successful library services.

As the library aged, residents continued to use the building in progressively larger numbers and with a greater frequency. By 1951, Garfield Elementary School modernized due to increasing enrollments, the city relocated the Muncie Boys’ Club adjacent to the library, Madison Street YMCA was constructed, and new developments of housing were being constructed in the area. These changes increased the level of patrons in the library and the library board decided to increase the level of programming to accommodate the new population. The library became a part of a large block of community buildings in close proximity to one another along South Madison St.

Programs developed for as a result of increased number included Children’s Summer Reading programs, Adult Book Talks, Classic Film Series, and After School Enrichment. The programs changed over time due to the educational need of the patrons. According to the library’s 1961 annual report attendance

during the summer at Maring functions was higher than attendance at Carnegie, the main library. The library staffed personnel to develop programs for children and adults. In 1993, the children's library planned and carried out programs including three overnight lock-ins, a series of programs for Cub Scouts groups to earn badges, an Appalachian music and toy program, visits from Pet Jungle, and a Mexican Christmas Party. There were two after school programs per week that consisted of crafts, stories, films, games and guest. The library also provided several art programs including cartooning, paper mache, watercolor prints and clothes designing. For adults there were workshops for parents and teachers of the students in the local area.

The library played an important role in education especially with their outreach programs to enrich the lives of all ages on the south side of Muncie. Although these programs were available at other library branches, the location of the Maring Library and the availability of community meeting facilities proved conducive to the success of other organizations in the area. With the neighboring buildings as Garfield Elementary and the Boys and Girls Club, the library completed an educational block on the south side of the city.

Local architects Houck and Smenner were commissioned to design the library and it was constructed by contractor A.J. Glaser. The firm of Houck and Smenner was already responsible for the design of numerous civic buildings throughout the city, including City Hall (demolished 1995), Beth El Temple, and High Street Methodist Church. According to "A Hundred Year Succession of Indiana Architects and Their Work, 1888-1988" compiled by Fredrick Graham, the architectural firm of Houck and Smenner began in 1920 and was dissolved in 1931. During this period, the Grace Keiser Maring Library was the only library designed by the firm. While a number of residential projects were designed in the colonial revival style, this is the only example of a civic or commercial building designed by the firm in the Georgian Revival Style.

The style of the building is generally referred to as Colonial Revival, which was extremely popular in Muncie during the erection of the library. Specifically the structure falls into the stylistic category of Georgian Revival, a variation of Colonial Revival. According to the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory on Delaware County, conducted in 1985, there are only four residential examples of the Georgian Revival style and Grace Keiser Maring Library is the only civic building in that style. The rating in the inventory for the library is "O" for outstanding which means that the property has enough historic or architectural significance to be considered for an individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural Character:** The Grace Keiser Maring Library is brick masonry building that exemplifies the Georgian Revival style. It has remained architecturally unaltered since its dedication thus maintaining a high level of historic integrity.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** Overall, building is in good condition. The building is intact and was well maintained while functioning as an active library. There are minor areas of concern including areas of minor mortar deterioration, roof flashing and missing gutters and downspouts. On the interior. On the building interior, the major areas of concern are antiquated electrical and plumbing systems. The steam boiler and radiator system (c. 1960's) is antiquated and obsolete. There is no artificial cooling system. The basement has many water infiltration problems and related mold/mildew issues.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The main block is rectangular, symmetrical, five-bay structure measuring 61'-6" by 32'-0". A rear ell measuring 19'-8" x 9'-6", centered on the main structure, extends to the east.
2. **Foundations:** The building sits on a concrete foundation that extends 2/3 up from the basement floor, approximately to the exterior grade.
3. **Walls:** The exterior walls are red brick with limestone trim around doors and windows as well as a limestone belt course that divides the first floor from the basement.
4. **Structural system, framing:** The structure is a load bearing, brick masonry wall. The first floor is a concrete slab on steel construction; however, the thickness of the slab is undetermined. The basement ceiling is constructed out of plaster on wire lath, tied off to furring strips that are tied directly to the floor structure. These beams change direction and size from room to room. The diagram below shows the sizing and spacing of structural members.

The first floor is an open plan with no structural walls in the interior. In the attic, there are three large trusses that span east to west at equal intervals across the building. The trusses consist of (5) 2" x 12" bolted together. The middle truss rests on the steel beam on the east side and

the masonry wall on the west side. The two outside trusses are notched in the masonry walls on both sides. Two tie rods hold the east and west walls in place. The ceiling over the main level is a suspended plaster/lath ceiling.

The roof is side gabled with a cross gable intersecting on the east side. The roof is frames with a common rafter system spanning between and exterior walls and ridge supported midway by a perlin resting on the main trusses.

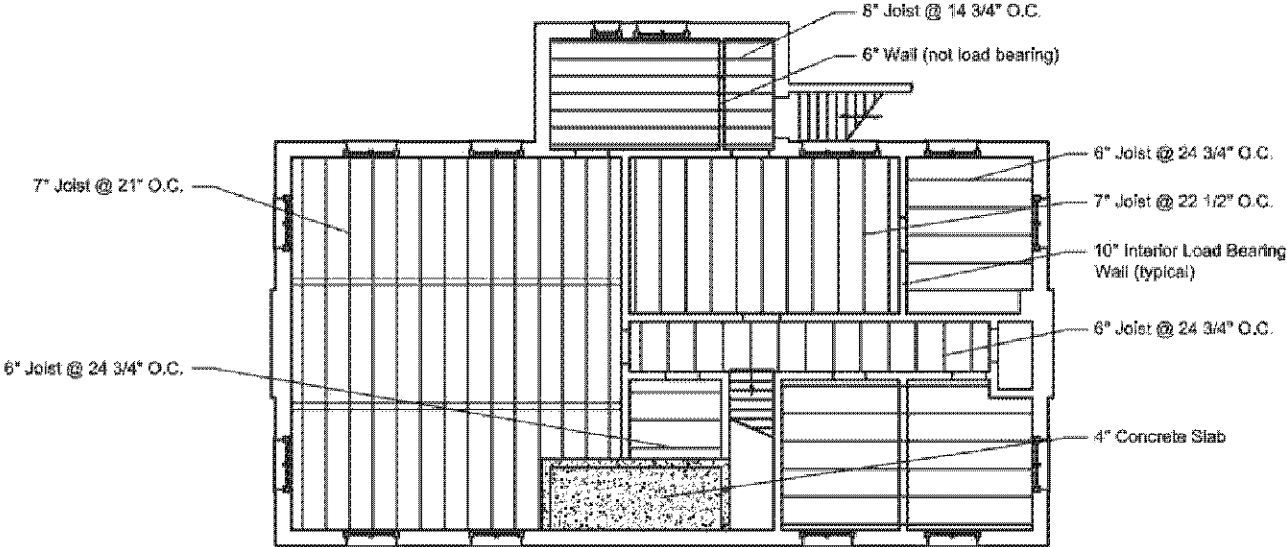


Figure 2: First Floor Framing System

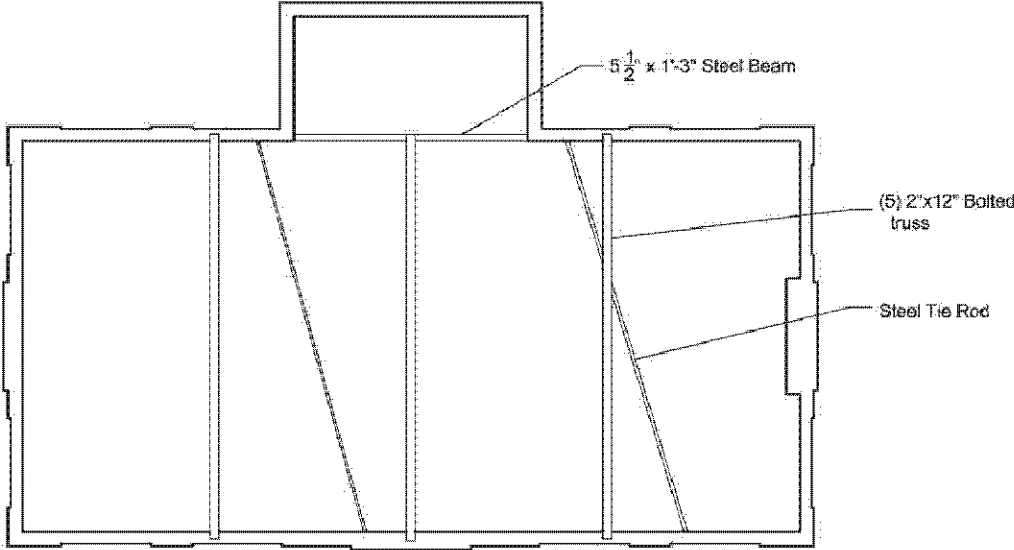


Figure 1: Roof Truss and Tie-rods

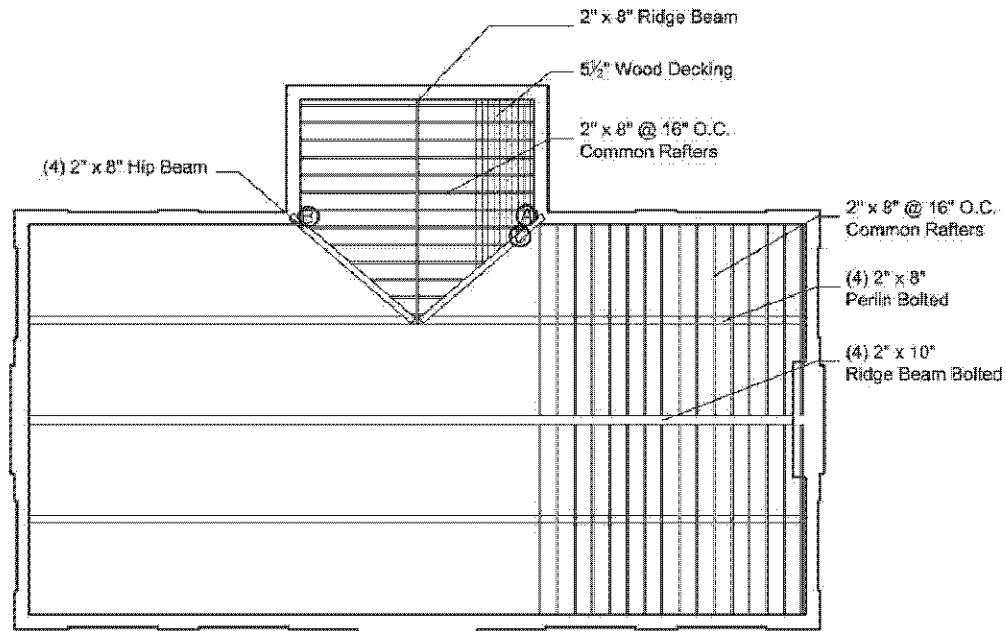


Figure 3: Roof Framing Diagram

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads: A concrete stoop, steps and main entrance are centered on the West/Main façade. Six concrete steps lead up to the wooden six paneled door with a fan light above. The door surround is limestone with a pediment above the entry flanked by decorative pilasters. The name of the library is carved into the frieze and an urn and vine design is located in the pediment.
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys are located on the north and south gable end facades. The south chimney is active with a flu serving the boiler and a fireplace. The north chimney is decorative without a flu.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is located on the west facade and is a wooden six-paneled door. It features a limestone door surround with a pediment above the door. On the east facade (rear) is a basement entrance that is original to the building. The hollow metal door and frame have replaced the original door and trim.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The west facade features two narrow wooden three light windows that flank the entrance. On the first floor of this facade are four twelve-over-twelve wood windows, evenly placed and topped by a limestone jack arch with keystone



and limestone sill. Just below each of these windows in the raised foundation are sets of paired casement windows. The symmetry of the west facade is echoed on the east facade, but features a Palladian window on the central axis of the rear projection. The Palladian window has a fan light over the main fifteen-over-fifteen window with tall, narrow, six-over-six light windows on either side. There is a limestone surround with an arch, a decorative sill and small pilasters that flank the small windows. A round six light circular window is located above the Palladian window and is accented by four limestone keys and brick rowlock surround. The north and south facades are identical and feature two wooden eight-over-eight double hung windows that flank the chimney. The limestone details are similar to the other facades, as well as the blind arches that windows are set in. Below these windows are double casement windows that are also seen on the east and west facades.

8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The building has a gable end, slate roof. The gable ends have parapet walls extending above the roof and aligning with the slope of the roof. These parapet walls are capped with a limestone coping.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: The roof has a wood cornice and copper gutters.
  - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: The main entrance to the library is through a small vestibule centrally placed on the west side of the building at a level half way between the first floor and the basement. The vestibule acts as an enlarged landing to the stairs connecting the first floor and the basement. To the south side of the vestibule is a half-flight of stairs to the basement. To the north side of the vestibule is a half-flight of stairs to the first floor. The half-flight of stairs to the first floor wrap around a glass enclosed library office on the first floor. Between these stairs in the vestibule are the casement windows of the first floor library office.

The first floor is simply organized with central reading room flanked on each side by two evenly size reading rooms. The three primary spaces of the first floor are divided by partial walls capped by walnut windows. A semi-circular circulation desk is centrally located at the west end of the main reading room. Behind this desk is a small office.

The 14-foot tall ceilings are accented by a run-in-place plaster cove at the ceiling and stain finished walnut trim throughout the first floor. The south reading room has a centrally placed fireplace with a walnut mantel with Georgian urn detailing. All of the original dark stain walnut trim is still intact on the first floor windows and doors. The concrete floor is covered with contemporary glue down carpet. The walls are simply painted. The walls of each of the three reading rooms once had built-in book shelves. They are still extant on the northern most and southern most walls. However, only the paint ghosts of these built-in shelves are evident on the other walls. A small corner sink, original to the design, is still extant in the northeast corner of the south reading room. The originally lighting has been replaced with 1960's style fluorescent light fixtures.

The basement has no formal organization. The primary space is the Community Room taking up the northern 3<sup>rd</sup> of the level. The remaining spaces include a kitchen, toilet rooms, storage rooms and a mechanical room. The basement is utilitarian in nature with not significant detailing or ornament. Changes to the basement have only included fixtures and equipment. The steam boiler dates from the 1960's, the kitchen sink has been removed, and new toilets, sinks and partitions have been added to the bathroom

2. Stairways: The buildings only stairway winds around the library office. The main entry of the building is at the midpoint landing between the first floor and the basement.
3. Flooring: The entry vestibule has ceramic tile. The first floor is contemporary carpet over composite tile. The basement is a mix of utilitarian composite tile and exposed concrete flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: On the first floor, the 14 foot ceilings feature a run-in-place plaster cove with flat plaster walls and ceiling. The basement has flat plaster walls and ceiling. All of these surfaces are painted
5. Openings: Door and window surrounds have typical colonial revival style 2-part surrounds.
6. Decorative features and trim: The first floor contains a semicircular circulation desk that is centrally located near the entrance in the main reading room. Throughout this level, the original dark stain walnut trim can be found along the walls as well on all the windows and doors. In the south room there is a central fireplace featuring a walnut mantel with Georgian Urn detailing. The three reading rooms once

had built in bookshelves, but only remain on the northern and southern most walls. A small, original sink is located in the northeast corner of the south reading room. The basement has no significant detailing or ornament.

7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building has an obsolete and non-functioning steam heat system. There is no air-conditioning system
  - b. Lighting: No original lighting exists. The first floor has suspended strip fluorescent lights. The basement has a variety of surface mounted fluorescent fixtures.
  - c. Plumbing: The first floor features a single sink and the basement has a kitchen as well as toilet rooms.
9. Original furnishings: A semi-circular circulation desk is located just off the entrance on the first floor.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: Located within Heekin Park, which is considered a "natural park," the library is set within sporadically placed landscape features. There is a parking lot behind the rear of the building, as well as a sidewalk from the south side of the building to the west entrance.
2. Outbuildings: none.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: The original drawings for the Maring Library are located in the Drawings and Documents Archive, College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana and are part of the Houck and Smenner Collection.
- B. Bibliography:

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Gowans, Alan. *Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Function and Cultural Expression*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.

Howard, Cecilia. Maring Branch Library Annual Report, 1993. Library Records Box, History and Genealogy Center, Muncie, Indiana.

Lowe, John Adams. "The Rural Library Building," *The Architectural Record* 1919. p. 451.

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Middleton, Elizabeth Hinkley. "The First Seventy-Five Years: A Sketch of the Muncie Public Library, 1847-1949." June 1949. History and Genealogy Center, Muncie, Indiana.

Mortimore, Arthur D. *Branch Libraries*. London: A Grafton Book, 1966.

Naylor, Lewis C. "Grace Keiser Maring Branch Library," April 20, 1952, Library Records Box, History and Genealogy Center, Muncie, Indiana.

"Social Worker Dies Suddenly," *Muncie Morning News*. October 13, 1926. p.1, c.4.

Toshack, Mary. "The Heritage of Grace Keiser Maring." Rededication of the Grace Keiser Maring Branch Library. October 20, 1980. History and Genealogy Center.

C. Supplemental Material:

Department of Natural Resources, *Delaware County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory*. Indianapolis: Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1985.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS Documentation was completed by students at Ball State University's College of Architecture and Planning under the supervision of Associate Professor Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA. The participating students were Emily Bechler, Eileen Booth, Brian Bugajski, Scott Drake, Matthew Farragher, Natalie Loukianoff, Lisa McConahy, Katie Molnar, Ross Nelson, Kimberly Robinson, Chad Slider, Christopher Patten, Jennifer Taylor.