**A Historic Architectural Walking Tour**

Main Street Mason City continues to expand, preserve, and promote the downtown Mason City area. The walking tour has been designed to give you a flavor of Mason City’s architectural heritage and to encourage you to explore the downtown area. This self-guided walking tour features a selection of historically significant structures.

At a Glance...

1. **CITY CENTER**
2. **CITY NATIONAL BANK**
3. **BRICK & TILE BUILDING**
4. **ORIGINAL POST OFFICE**
5. **I.W. KEER/DECKER HOUSE**
6. **MEREDITH WILLSON BOYHOOD HOME**
7. **MASON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY**
8. **CHARLES H. MACNIDER ART MUSEUM**
9. **DUNCAN RUIE/R.C. WAY HOUSE**
10. **MEREDITH WILLSON FOOTBRIDGE**
11. **CURTIS YELLAND HOUSE**
12. **WILLIAM BARNARD HOUSE**
13. **DUNCAN RULE/B.C. WAY HOUSE**
14. **J.E.E. MARKLEY HOUSE**
15. **FRANKE HOUSE**
16. **DR. VINCENT A. FARRELL HOUSE**
17. **JAMES BLYTHE HOUSE**
18. **TOM MACNIDER HOUSE**
19. **ROCK GLEN/ROCK CREST**
20. **SAMUEL DAVIS DRAKE HOUSE**
21. **GEORGE C. STOCKMAN HOUSE**
22. **EGLOFF HOUSE**
23. **CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING**
24. **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**
25. **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**
26. **PARKER OPERA HOUSE/PARKER PLACE**
27. **CITY PARK SQUARE**
28. **HISTORIC PARK INN/CITY NATIONAL BANK**

**At a Glance**

- The City Center was originally designed (Chicago Style) and built as the First National Bank of Mason City. C.H. MacNider became president of the bank in 1901. He eventually had controlling interest in the NWSPCC and other interests. After C.H.’s death in 1928, his son Handford, better known as the “General” because of his Army rank, assumed control of the family’s interests. The First National Bank is most famous for the 1934 robbery by John Dillinger and his associates.

- In 1916 the Modern Brotherhood of America, a Tipton, IA organization, decided to put their new office (Chicago Style) in Mason City. The construction involved tearing down the north half of the Elks building; what is left is a brown brick structure on the south side of the Brick & Tile. In June 1917 the featured speaker at the dedication was William Howard Taft.

- Built in 1907 (Classical Style) as the post office until 1937 when the new office was completed at 211 North Delaware and City Hall moved in and remained there until 1993. The structure next door to the north was built for La Mars Printing Company in 1908 and purchased by Hans Tofte and his wife. Tofte served OSS during WWII and with the CIA during the Korean War. They sold the building in 1957 and returned to Washington, DC.
This handsome Prairie School home was designed by William Drummond in 1910. Drummond was in Mason City in 1909-1910 supervising the FLL construction of the National Bank & Park Inn Hotel. The open floor plan introduced by FLW and was used in Mason City homes by Prairie School architects with exception of Barry Byrne.

WILLIAM BARNARD HOUSE 49 RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

Built in 1912, this house (Prairie Style) was the residence of Melson. He along with James Blythe, Walter Burley Griffin, J.E.E. Markley and William Halban were responsible for developing Rock Glen. Rock Glen is a street once known for background of Griffin's successful competition in the international contest for a design of Canberra, Australia's projected capital. Today the local residents refer to it as “The Castle House”.

JOSHUA G. MELSON HOUSE 56 RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

Built in 1911, this house (Prairie Style) was the residence of I.W. Keerl. He along with James Blythe, Walter Burley Griffin, J.E.E. Markley and William Halban were responsible for developing Rock Glen. Rock Glen is the house designed to give the background of Griffin's successful competition in the international contest for a design of Canberra, Australia's projected capital. Today, the local residents refer to it as “The Castle House”.

MASON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY 225 2ND STREET SE

This Neo-Classical Revival was the work of Patton and Miller, architects from Chicago, and was built in 1903. It served as the Mason City Bank in 1911 and operated until it was sold in 1920. This area could have described as the Wilkman family compound as relatives lived rent free, across the street and directly behind them.

MEREDITH WILLSON BOYHOOD HOME 114 S. PENNSYLVANIA AVE.

This Victorian, Queen Anne home is notable as the boyhood home of Meredith Willson, well known composer of the “The Music Man” who described it as a rope swing bridge and remembered its side to side sway as he crossed over. Today the bridge is located over Willow Creek and is a 5 foot steel栈, arched bridge with concrete piers and a concrete walking surface.

MASON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY 225 2ND STREET SE

Dr. & Mrs. Stockman met Frank Lloyd Wright on one of his visits to Mason City during the planning of the City National Bank and Park Inn Hotel. For the Stockman’s FLW designed his most elaborate house to date based on the open floor plan described in a 1907 article in Ladies Home Journal “A Fireproof House for $5000. It shows the elements of design used by FW during his Prairie School Period of creativity and his relationship to his middle class client.

CITY PARK SQUARE

Established in 1855, the square was set aside for public use by town properties George Long and George Brentner in a plat filed in 1855. In 1866 a Civil War Memorial was erected and a series of black stone tablets, standing center west in the park commemorate the sacrifice of subsequent generations of our military in the defense of our country.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL 100 E. STATE STREET

The Central Park and Parker Opera House was converted to other purposes of building a new library. Federal funding became part of the effort. In September 1938, the public approved a tax levy that matched the federal money. This building (Colonial Revival) was dedicated in 1939 and opened in January 1946.

MERRITT WILLSON FOOTBRIDGE

Named in honor of Meredith Willson, Mason City native and composer of “The Music Man” who described it as a rope swing bridge and remembered its side to side sway as he crossed over. Today the bridge is located over Willow Creek and is a 5 foot steel栈, arched bridge with concrete piers and a concrete walking surface.

DUNCAN RULE / B.C. WAY HOUSE 321 2ND STREET SE

This was the house was designed for C.E. Franke, who was President of the Franklin Land and Investment Co. and Vice President of the Central Trust Bank. Frankline bought C.E. Franke, lived in Rock Glen and the house on State Street designed by Barry, home, who trained under Wright in Oak Park Studios. This house followed the Prairie School elements of design more clearly than the house of E. S. Franke. This house was built toward the end of the Prairie School period.

J.E.E. MARKLEY HOUSE 121 S. CONNECTICUT AVE.

This house was designed in 1914 by Einar Broaten, a significant regional architect who designed many major houses in North central Iowa. The house was built for Samuel Davis Drake who managed a large insurance agency and was active in farm management. Chris Rye was the contractor who built many of the Prairie School homes.

SAMUEL DAVIS DRAKE HOUSE 28 S. CAROLINA AVE.

This house was designed in 1919 for Karl Jones, an important regional architect and experienced bridge builder. Cane’s design incorporates attributes of three contemporary styles from the period – the Modern, Art Deco and International. The home was substantially damaged by flooding in June 2008 and moved to its current location saving it from demolition.

EGOFF HOUSE 300 BLOCK OF EAST STATE STREET

This house was built in 1911 by Dr. Vincent Farrell, a Mason City man who started his medical practice in 1902. The house appears to be a somewhat simplified reverse image of Willlum Drummond’s Curtis Willson house on River Heights Drive. The exterior siding may be original siding and original color. A simple but handsome house of strong Prairie School influence, it resembles some of the “block” designs prepared by Walter Burley Griffin as economic builders’ houses.

HISTORIC PARK INN HOTEL & CITY NATIONAL BANK 15 S. STATE STREET

Originally designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for lawyers and bank directors in 1910. The bank building was designed with the idea that it was a strong box on a large scale with offices overhead. The Park Inn Hotel was designed with shaped balls between paired rooms. The completed building was pivotal in Wright’s career, coming near the end of his Prairie School period. FLW designed buildings is the only remaining hotel in the world.