



Main Street Mason City's mission is to enhance, promote, and preserve downtown Mason City as a diverse business, cultural, and residential destination for the benefit of the entire community. They are a volunteer based organization that works with our downtown businesses to ensure a strong and healthy community core.

Visit Mason City serves as the community concierge providing visitors with a variety of resources and information about our award-winning, unique destination. From famous puppets to prairie school architectural and musical heritage, Mason City also boasts savory restaurants, fabulous specialty shops and a vibrant downtown scene.

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LONI DIRKSEN, BERGLAND + GRAM

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2021 4th Street SW | Mason City, Iowa 50401  
641.422.1663  
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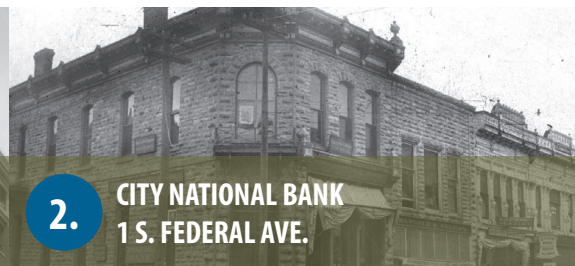
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1. CITY CENTER  
5 N. FEDERAL AVE.

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 CH'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.



2. CITY NATIONAL BANK  
1 S. FEDERAL AVE.

The oldest "City National Bank" (Italianate) was built by Thomas and Mary Emsley in 1884. it's been said Owen Denison peronsally chose the stone for the building. Mary came to Mason City in the 1860's. She met Tom after the Civil War and the two wed. They combined their economic resources and started the City Bank. Tom died leaving her in control of the bank which became City National Bank in 1896, later moving to a new location across the street in 1910.



3. BRICK & TILE BUILDING  
103 E. STATE STREET

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 Elk's 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.



4. ORIGINAL POST OFFICE  
19 S. DELAWARE AVE.

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.



A Historic Architectural Walking Tour



Experience the art of hospitality



NOTICE: Please be respectful of the historic homes and properties on this tour as they are private residences. Do not enter private drives.



5.

**I.W. KEERL / THE DECKER HOUSE**  
119 2ND STREET SE

I.W. Keerl was the original owner of this E.R. Bogardus (Classical Revival) designed house. He was born in Mason Twp in 1866. He was a county clerk, an organizer of and cashier at the Iowa State Bank, and was on the board of directors of the Colby Car Co., which started in 1910. Jay Decker, the son of Jacob Decker, later lived in the house after 1920.

6.

**MEREDITH WILLSON BOYHOOD HOME**  
314 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”. John Willson bought the family home in 1896 and built the Mason City Bakery in 1911 and operated it until 1920. This area could have described as the Willson family compound as relatives lived next door, across the street and directly behind them.

7.

**MASON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
225 2ND STREET SE

in 1938 the people of Mason City had decided to add on to the existing Carnegie library on State & Pennsylvania however the MacNider family offered this property to the city for the 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 buiding (Colonial Revival) was dedicated in 1939 and opened in January 1940.

8.

**CHARLES H. MACNIDER ART MUSEUM**  
303 2ND STREET SE

B.C. Keeler built this Englis Tudor Revival house in 1920. His interest in Mason City was in the brick & tile industry and was a prominent partner in a local law firm. After the house became vacant in 1965, General Hanford MacNider family purchased it and gave it to the city and was named in honor the General’s father. The roof has rounded ridges and eave returns to imitate the thatched roofs of an English Cottage.

9.

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

Duncan Rule was a Mason City attorney and also mayor of the city in the 1890’s. This house built in 1908-09 (Shingle Style) is better known for its second owner, B. (Bayard) C. Way who was responsible for bringing the office of the Western Electric Telephone Company to Mason City from Britt in 1901.

10.

**MEREDITH WILLSON FOOTBRIDGE**

Named in honor of Meredith Willson, Mason City native and composer of “The Music Man” who described it as a rope suspension bridge and remembered its side to side sway as he crossed over it. Today the bidge is located over Willow Creek and is a 3-bay steel-truss, arched bridge with concrete piers and a concrete walking surface.

11.

**CURTIS YELLAND HOUSE**  
7 RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

This handsome Prairie School home was designed by William Drummond in 1910. Drummond was in Mason City in 1909-1910 supervising the FLW 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.

12.

**WILLIAM BARNARD HOUSE**  
49 RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

Located in the J.G. Melson’s River Heights development, this small bungalow was built and designed by Joshua Melson in 1909 for William Barnard, a bookkeeper at the First National Bank. This home captures the spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement and makes a very coherent and unified statement of the principal of this period.

13.

**JOSHUA G. MELSON HOUSE**  
56 RIVER HEIGHTS DRIVE

Built in 1912, this house (Prairie Style) was the residence of Melson. He along with James Blythe, Walter Burley Griffin, JEE Markley and WJ Holahan were responsible for developing Rock Glen/Rock Crest . The house was done against 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 at “The Castle House”.

14.

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

Built in 1901 (“Stoneyacre” Neo-Classical Revival) designed by James Moore. The commanding feature of this side-grabled is the full-height porch with two story fluted ionic columns and pilasters. J.E.E. Markly, an attorney and prominent citizen of Mason City bought the home in 1908.

15.

**FRANKE HOUSE**  
320 1ST STREET SE

This house was built for Carl F. Franke, who was President of the Franke Land and Investment Co. and Vice President of the Central Trust Bank. Franke’s brother, E.V. Franke, lived in Rock Glen in the house on State Street designed by Barry Byrne, who trained under Wright in Oak Park Studio. This house followed the Prairie School elements of design more closely than the house of E.V. Franke. This house was built toward the end of the Prairie School period.

16.

**DR. VINCENT A. FARRELL HOUSE**  
416 1ST STREET SE

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 William Drummond’s Curtis Yelland house on River Heights Drive. The exterior siding may be the original siding and original color. A simple but handsome house of strong Prairie School influence, it resembles some of the “stock” designs prepared by Walter Burley Griffin as economic builders’ houses.

17.

**JAMES BLYTHE HOUSE**  
431 1ST STREET SE

The third house in Rock Glen designed by Walter Burley Griffin in 1913 and the second Prairie School Houses commissioned by James Blythe. It is Rock Glen’s first split level. Truly a concrete house and the first Prairie School house making a Meso American (Maya) influence.

18.

**TOM MACNIDER HOUSE**  
15 ROCK GLEN

This masterpiece of Usonian understatement was designed by Curtis Besinger in 1959. Besinger was twice an apprentice at FLW’s Taillesin. The house was designed for Tom MacNider, vice-president of the Northwestern States Portland Cement Company which may have been a factor in the choice of oversized concrete blocks as its building material.

19.

**ROCK GLEN**  
MULTIPLE ADDRESSES  
PLEASE DO NOT ENTER PRIVATE DRIVES

11 Rock Glen, Arthur Rule House (1912)  
21 Rock Glen, Harry D. Page House (1912)  
22 South Carolina, Carl Henkel House (1939)  
525 East State Street, Sam Schneider House (1915)  
511 East State Street, Hugh Gilmore House (1915).

20.

**SAMUEL DAVIS DRAKE HOUSE**  
28 S. CAROLINA AVE.

This house was designed in 1914 by Einar Broaten, a significant regional architect who designed many major houses in north central Iowa. The home 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.

21.

**GEORGE C. STOCKMAN HOUSE**  
430 1ST STREET NE

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 FLW during his Prairie School Period of creativity and his relationship to his middle class client.

22.

**EGLOFF HOUSE**  
300 BLOCK OF EAST STATE STREET

Designed by Earle Richare Cone in 1938 and built by Care “Arne” Holvik, an important contractor and experienced bridge builder. Cone’s design incorporates attributes of three contemporary styles from the period – the Moderne, Art Deco & International. The home was substantially damaged by flooding in June 2008 and moved to its current location saving it from demolition.

23.

**CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING**  
208 E. STATE STREET

This Neo-Classical Revival was the work of Patton and Miller, architects from Chicago, and was built in 1903. The building was made possible by a gift from Andrew Carnegie while local subscription completed the balance of the funds to meet the \$30,000 total cost. The “Carnegie Building” opened in as the library in 1905 and served the city until 1939.

24.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
125 E. STATE STREET

Designed by Orff and Joralemon, architects from Minneapolis, in 1896. An eclectic design, it combined elements of Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles. The beautiful stained glass windows have to be seen from within to be fully appreciated and the sanctuary pews are arranged in a semicircle, giving the congregation a feeling of comfortable interrelatedness.

25.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
100 1ST STREET NE

The chapel was the first church built in Cerro Gordo County in 1858 and is still standing at the right side of the church building. This Italian Romanesque was designed by Joshua Melson in 1898 adding a tower with limestone base stood centered directly in front of the church.

26.

**PARKER OPERA HOUSE/PARKER PLACE**  
23 N. FEDERAL AVE.

The opera house was an early Mason City landmark. Developed by Horace and A.T. Parker the building housed the opera theater on the second floor with 700 folding chairs. In 1903 the Wilson Opera House was built on the west edge of Central Park and Parker Opera House was converted to other uses and was renamed Parker Place.

27.

**CITY PARK SQUARE**  
2 N. FEDERAL AVE.

Established in 1855, the square was set aside for public use by town proprietors George Long and George Brentner in a plat filed in 1855. In 1884 a Civil War Memorial was erected and a series on black stone tablets, standing center west in the park commemorate the sacrifice of subsequent generations of our military in the defense of our country.

28.

**HISTORIC PARK INN HOTEL & CITY NATIONAL BANK-15 W. STATE ST.**

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 shared baths between paired rooms. The completed building was pivotal in Wright’s career, coming near the end of his Prairie School period. This FLW designed building is the only remaining hotel in the world.