



# The Fort Wayne Masonic Temple

Starting with this issue of Fort Wayne Living, we will feature an historic building, business or landmark in northeast Indiana. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to our editor, Amber Recker, at [arecker@businesspeople.com](mailto:arecker@businesspeople.com).

article by Lauren Caggiano • photo by Steve Vorderman

**F**ew organizations in Fort Wayne can claim a consistent meeting place for three generations. That's one of the reasons why the Fort Wayne Masonic Temple, located at 216 East Washington Boulevard in Fort Wayne, is particularly significant.

The cornerstone was laid in 1923, and the Temple was completed three years later. It owes its design to locally renowned architect Charles Weatherhogg, the artistic brain behind local landmarks like Central High School, North Side High School and South Side High School. Architects regard The Temple a classic example of the Neoclassical, or Grecian Classic, style popular in the early 20th century. This style shows a concern for historically accurate detail, but not in overall execution or scale. Characteristically, these buildings use an eclectic mix of classical features, such as domes,

columned porticos, pediments, cornices with dentils, pilasters, keystones and quoins.

All five levels of the historic building are outfitted in intricate detail and stand testimony to the Mason's value. Architecture is one of the Masonic symbols, says Board Vice Chair Terry Webb.

The first floor contains a large ballroom and dining room with nine marble columns, a key element of the Grecian style. Masons and guests have gathered in the second floor social room for almost a century. The third floor, where the Masons spend much of their time, boasts two meeting rooms: the Ionic Room and the Corinthian Room. The fourth-floor's Colonial and Egyptian rooms draw visitors in with their Egyptian architecture.

According to Webb, the fifth floor is a must-see for visitors. The "most beautiful" of

the five, the floor can accommodate a large crowd with auditorium-style, permanent seating. The ceiling is an artistic work in and of itself, adorned with walnut beams and "elaborate and ornate" designs, he says.

With its Bedford Limestone and intricacies, The Temple would be valued at about \$10 million today, according to Webb. That's huge when compared to the estimated \$750,000 invested in the structure at the time.

The architecture alone might be reason enough to attract visitors, but Webb says there's more to it than that.

"I think it's a beautiful building...it's very historic as it has been a meeting place for Masons for over 80 years," he says.

Currently, the Masons have approximately 1,000 local, active members, according to Webb. **FWL**

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