

442 SCOTIA STREET – MARYMOUND (ST. AGNES PRIORY)

George W. Northwood, 1924-1925



Originally known as St. Agnes Priory, this solid clay brick three storey structure rests on a raised foundation and has been an important part of the Marymound complex since its completion in 1925. The new building was made necessary by a fundamental change in the role of the institution, which had been founded in 1911 by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, a Montreal-founded religious order that came to Winnipeg to care for young girls who had gone through the City's new juvenile court system. In the 1920s, as City orphanages closed or tried to alleviate overcrowding, an increasing number of girls were sent to Marymound. As a result, St. Agnes Priory was built (as well as a separate powerhouse and industrial laundry). The institution continued to grow and evolve and with the rise in foster homes, the Priory was converted into a treatment centre for emotionally disturbed girls in the 1940s and renamed St. Agnes School.

The building, through its use of columns, symmetrical façades, smooth surfaces, flat and unadorned rooflines, arched window openings and pediments is an example of the Italianate Style, popular throughout Canada from 1900-1930. It measures 46.1 metres in length (north to south), with a width of 17.2 metres and its raised basement gives it four usable floors.

The school's main entrance, at the south end of the building, is accessed by a set of double stairs, the projecting entrance doors set in an arched opening framed by delicate unfluted stone columns with ornate heads and bases. The arch is accented by brick drip moulding and a stone statue is located in a recessed area above. Upper floor openings on the east and west façades also repeat the arched heads. The west façade includes another entrance, centrally placed and highlighted by a projecting section that rises to above the flat roofline and finishes in a tower. Both the east and west façades also feature brick buttresses with stone heads and bases. The roofline includes arches and corbelled brick at the south end and patterned brick and brick corbelling in the centre section. Little has been altered on the exterior since its construction.

On the interior, changes have been made as the structure's role within the complex and evolved. According to the original plans, the basement of the Priory School held a large kitchen, washrooms and several small dining rooms. The ground floor held a one-bedroom suite, parlours and four classrooms. The second floor held the large chapel, classrooms, infirmaries and Sisters' rooms. The third floor included a large dormitory, banks of toilets and bathtubs and a smaller dormitory and sewing rooms for the girls. Today, the basement still holds kitchen, eating and storage space. The ground floor was renovated in 1974-1975 into meeting rooms and offices. The chapel on the second floor has seen little alteration and much of the original finish and ornamentation is evident. The north portion of this floor was heavily renovated in the 1970s into living space for girls, as was the third floor.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior:

- Large rectangular west-facing Italianate style building with buff brick superstructure;
- West façade with a projecting central tower featuring a recessed-arch entrance;
- South façade with raised, projecting brick entrance flanked by stairs to the east and west, and accented with smooth-cut stone columns, brick drip mould, stone

- Window openings throughout including square-headed main floor windows, paired and arched second floor windows under a decorative brick arch, flanking an engaged stone column with stone sills, simple arched windows on the third floor; and
- Details throughout including patterned brickwork at the cornice, brick buttresses with stone heads and bases, stone belt courses, etc.

Interior:

- Entire front stairwell and wood finishes; and
- Ornamental finishes and stained glass of the second storey chapel area.