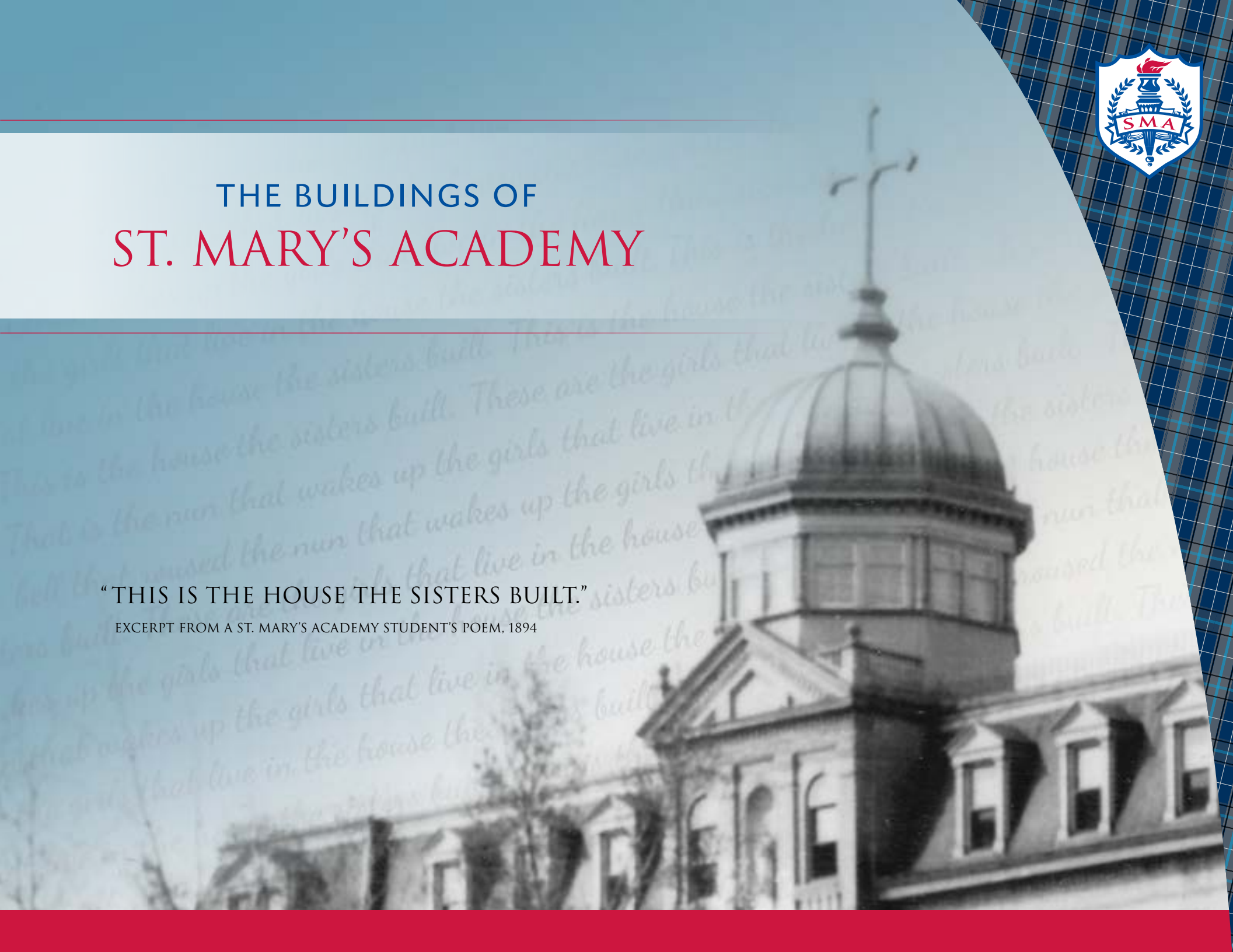




# THE BUILDINGS OF ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

“THIS IS THE HOUSE THE SISTERS BUILT.”

EXCERPT FROM A ST. MARY'S ACADEMY STUDENT'S POEM, 1894



## FOUNDATION PERIOD

On May 1, 1869, two Sisters of Charity of Montreal, Grey Nuns, open the first Catholic school in the Red River Settlement to serve Catholics on the west side of the Red River. The school was named Maison Ste Marie (later renamed St. Mary's Academy). The school building was a rented duplex on Victoria Street (present day Westbrook Street), between the now-famous intersection of Portage and Main and the Forks.



Original Maison Ste Marie, later renamed St. Mary's Academy.

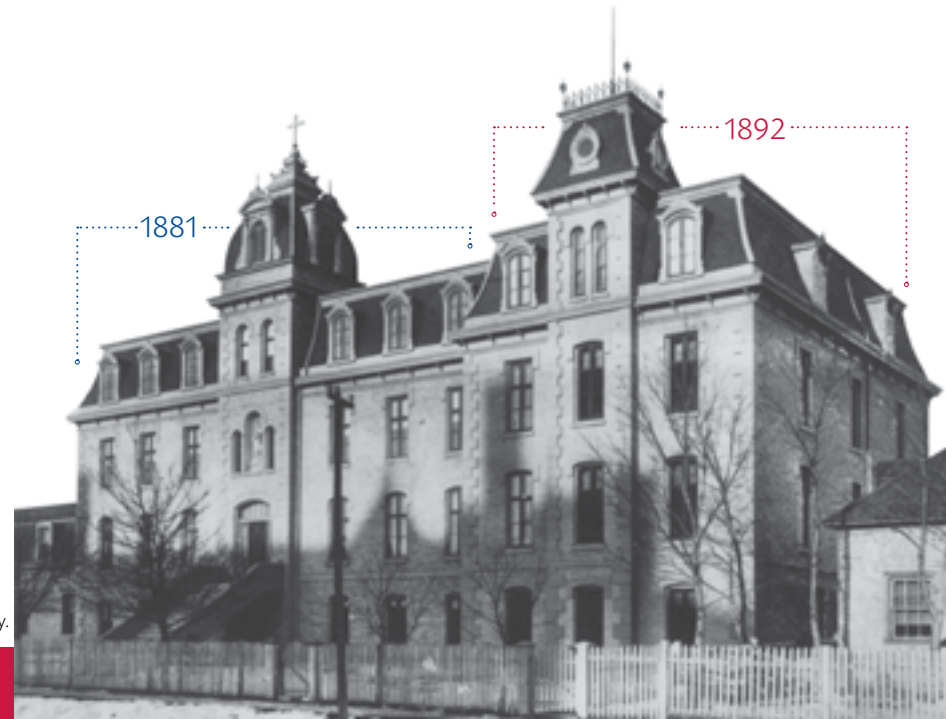


St. Mary's Academy in 1874 (right building), and new building called "The Annex" (on the left).

In 1870 Maison Ste Marie was enlarged to include a chapel and the entrance was moved to face Notre Dame Avenue East. In 1876 a second small building called The Annex was erected to accommodate the ever-growing student population.

## BRICK ACADEMY

In 1881, a new St. Mary's Academy was constructed between the original two structures (Foundation house and The Annex) on Notre Dame Avenue East, to which a new wing was added in 1892. This brick structure, designed by L.A. Desy, consisted of four stories set atop a high stone basement with a mansard roof. This expansion coincided with a period in Manitoba's history known as the "Boom."



The Brick Academy.



## NEW ACADEMY IN CRESCENTWOOD

Early in the 1900's, a fifteen-acre site was purchased in Crescentwood for a new St. Mary's Academy, designed by Samuel Hooper. On August 31, 1902, the cornerstone for the Wellington Crescent Academy was blessed. The Edward Cass Construction Company took the better part of a year to complete the building at a cost of \$81,000. The new Academy, shaped like a "U" was an elaborate structure four stories high with solid brick walls and a mansard roof. The top floor was one large dormitory for students. The Manitoba Free Press questioned why the Sisters would build so far out on the prairies! Some people referred to the building as the "castle on the crescent."

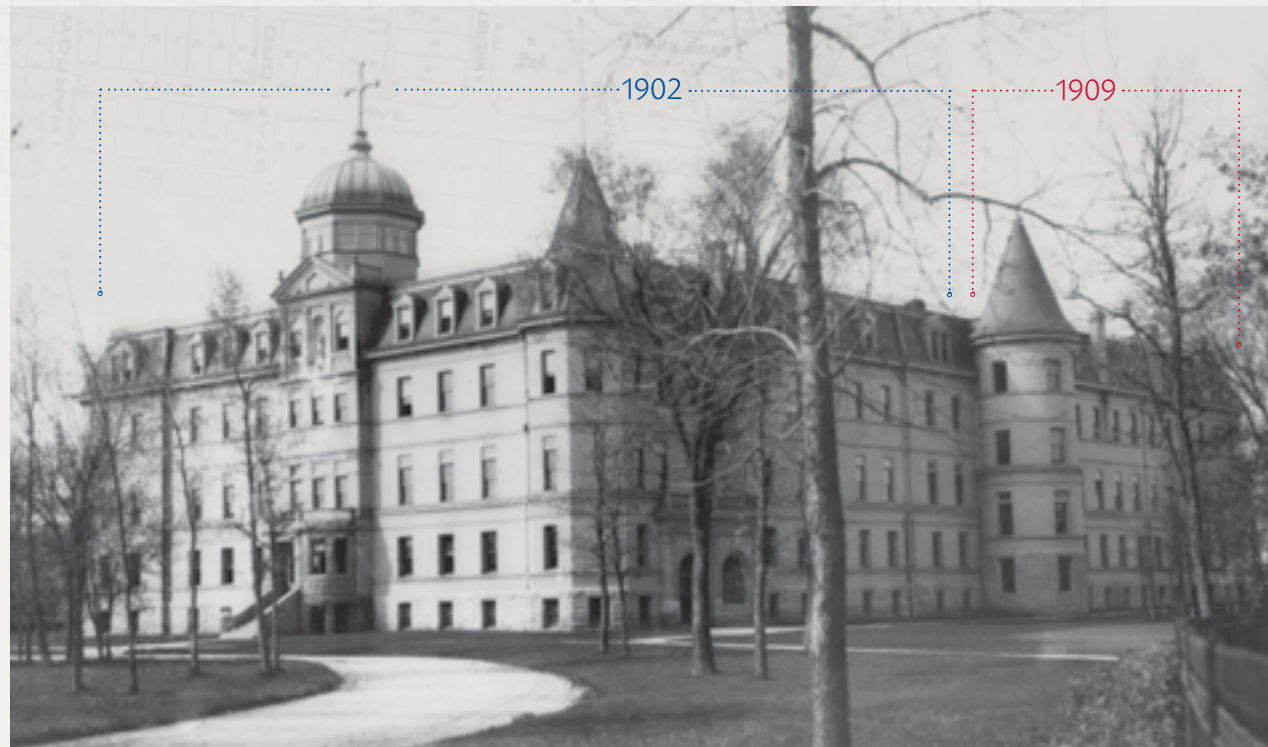
By 1906 land was sold to the city of Winnipeg to extend Stafford Street and to the Winnipeg School Division to construct Kelvin High School. Until that time St. Mary's Academy property was quite extensive and boasted livestock as well as large gardens.



St. Mary's Academy moves to new site in 1902.

## NEW WING

A new four-story wing was added in 1909. This addition was designed by J.A. Senecal and J.A. Hudson and built by Senecal and Smith at a cost of \$99,300. At 66 feet by 120 feet the addition was 18 feet wider than the original building. This change in width was hidden on the Academy Road side by a large tower housing a staircase.



St. Mary's Academy adds new wing in 1909.



Architectural rendering of the proposed 1964 addition.

## ANOTHER EXPANSION

St. Mary's Academy operated as a boarding school with elementary grades and a College until the late 1950's, early 60's, when these were phased out to reduce crowding. Another addition, designed by architect Mel Michener, opened in 1964. This addition was inspired by the desire to culturally enrich the school and it included a theatre, library, fine arts studio, gymnasium and cafeteria. The chapel was extensively remodelled in 1969 to accommodate the liturgical changes of Vatican Council II, and in 2003 it was renamed Holy Names Chapel, to honour the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary closed their residence at the Academy in 1999, resulting in major changes to the 1909 wing. The Richardson Science Wing, with four new science labs, was built on the 4th floor; the basement was converted to foods and nutrition and textile studios; two classrooms were added; and the entire building was upgraded and air-conditioned.

BY WISDOM  
A HOUSE IS BUILT,  
AND BY  
UNDERSTANDING  
IT IS ESTABLISHED.

- PROVERBS 24:3





FOR EVERY HOUSE  
IS BUILT BY SOMEONE,  
BUT THE BUILDER OF  
ALL THINGS IS GOD.

- HEBREWS 3:4



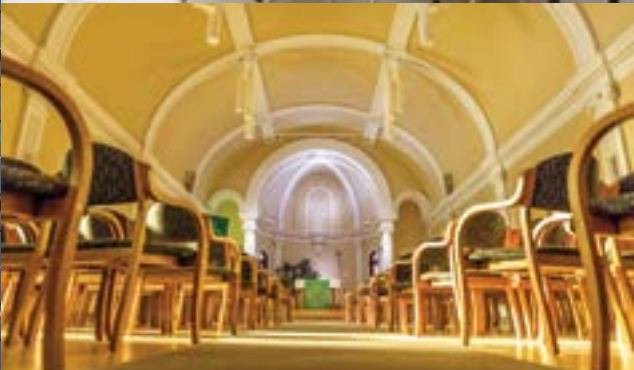


## KEEPING WITH THE TIMES

In 2009, the school began the renovation, upgrade and expansion of the 1964 building. The following years saw the opening of Durocher Library, a new visual arts studio, a fitness room and a uniform shop (Tartan Shop). In 2013, construction of a new addition was completed, which included the Sheila Chipman Atrium, theatre arts/music production wing, sacristy and multi-purpose room. In 2014 Holy Names Chapel was refurbished.



IN 2019 ST. MARY'S ACADEMY CELEBRATES 150 YEARS  
AND REMAINS THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL IN THE PROVINCE.



### ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

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Images - top to bottom: Durocher Library,  
Computer Lab in Durocher Library, Holy Names Chapel,  
Music Studio, Sheila Chipman Atrium,  
Exterior view of Durocher Library.

