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Prep's World

Peggy L. Roske

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, proske@csbsju.edu

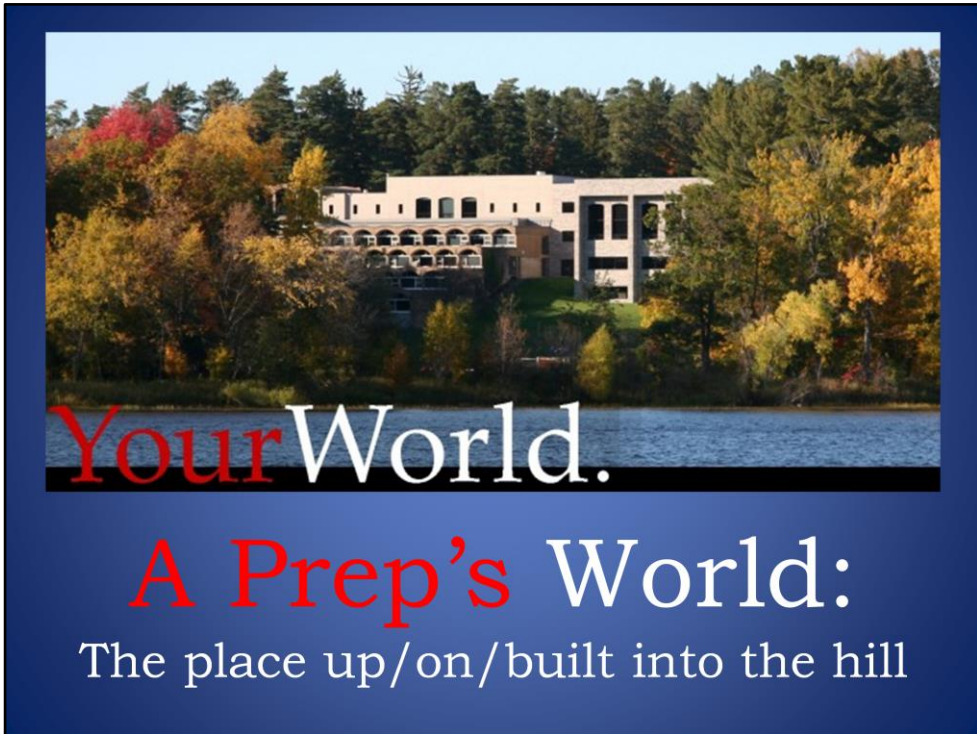
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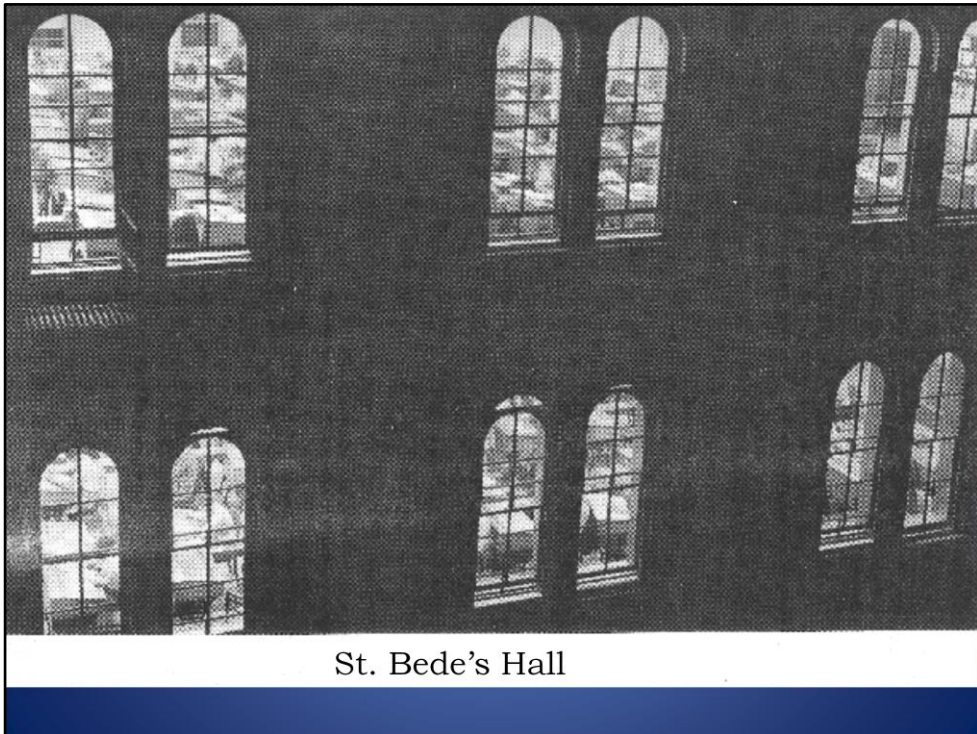
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A Prep's World: The place up/on/built into the hill



St. Bede's Hall

St. Bede's Hall, ca. 1960 – before the move

From brochure in 79/4 14:6

The school was founded in 1857 by Cornelius Wittmann on the Rothkopp claim near what is now St. Cloud State University. The original five students included Henry Klostermann of Richmond.

THE PICTURE TODAY

The present quarters occupied by the prep school, besides being too small, have inadequate facilities and pose a serious fire hazard since our sleeping rooms are located on the top floor of the old quadrangle. Moreover, the school is situated in the center of a growing college population which now numbers over 1200. The 1961-62 record-breaking prep enrollment of 325 boys, with two priesthood students for every lay student, forced us to set up temporary sleeping quarters in the basement of the old church. And one of the classrooms on the third floor serves as an annex to the studyhalls. The situation was a desperate one calling for action. Consequently, when early in the spring of 1961 it became apparent that priesthood applications to St. John's Preparatory had more than doubled in the past two years, Father Abbot Baldwin called for open meetings to discuss the future of the prep school.

FUTURE PLANS

By the end of May the community voted to have an architect make drawings for a completely new prep school with a campus of its own. Three months later the decision was made to begin building at once and the ground breaking ceremony for the first phase of the project took place on September 14. The first two buildings will be a classroom-studyhall building and a dormitory for 480 boys. The second phase will include a gymnasium, combination auditorium and cafeteria, a library, science and music rooms, recreation rooms, and the administration wing. The site of the new school is Observatory Hill, just east of the new abbey and university church. The classroom-studyhall building, with a southern exposure facing Lake Sagatanan, will consist of four tiers set into the natural terrain of the hillside.

HELP NEEDED

Until the money is obtained for the second half of the project, prep students will have to continue sharing certain facilities, such as cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, and science hall, with the college. Our prayerful hope is that our alumni and friends of St. John's, and also all others interested in spreading the gospel of Christ, will recognize the urgent need for helping us to expand our facilities for the training of priesthood candidates. And, following the centuries-old tradition of the Benedictine Order, we shall provide room also for other students who wish to profit from close association with the Benedictine ideal of family worship and work.


THE PICTURE TODAY (1961)

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Consequently, when early in the spring of 1961 it became apparent that priesthood applications to SJP had more than doubled in the past two years, Abbot Baldwin called for open meetings to discuss the future of the prep school."



A 1961 fundraising brochure states the need

Brochure in 79/2 1:1. Notes (author unknown; Fr. Cuthbert?) in 79/2 2:14 give these stats:

1961-62: 325 students; 108 lay ("Gregites"), 216 priesthood candidates ("Bedites")

1962-63: 374 students;

1968-69: 348 students; 248 lay, 100 priesthood

"Pressure to admit more students is only a secondary reason [for building in 1961-62].

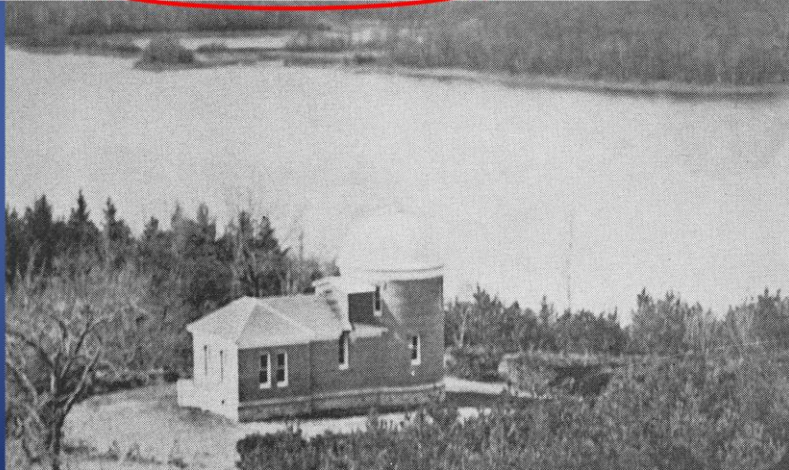
This move is prompted principally by the demands for adequate facilities for both groups."

PREP FACULTY MEETING

January 21, 1961

The Dean next broached the subject of the new Prep school and the changes that this was going to bring about. He told the faculty that a preliminary sketch was in the process of being made. In order to facilitate the planning he asked the departments to get together and decide what they would like to have incorporated and to furnish him with a report as soon as possible. He said there was a possibility that construction of the proposed school to house about 385 boys may begin this summer with a dormitory and studyhall located on the side of Observatory Hill.

Observatory
Hill,
overlooking
Lake
Sagatagan



Prep Faculty discuss new school, to go on Observatory Hill
Meeting minutes 1206:7; Observatory photo from *Prep World* Nov.-Dec. 1961

The Record
 OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
 COLLEGEVILLE, MINNESOTA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 25, 1961 NUMBER 10

tholome Consecrates Abbey Church

Capacity Crowd Present For New Structure's First Ceremony

●The consecration of the new Abbey and University Church here yesterday brought to a close the first phase of the institution's comprehensive 100-year building program.

The church, under construction for 29 months, is the third Marcel Breuse-designed building to be completed on the St. John's campus.

Summer Work Gives Campus New Fall Look

The Most Rev. Peter W. Bartholome, Bishop of the St. Cloud Diocese, officiated at the five-hour consecration ceremony. Following the consecration of the church Bishop Bartholome, in the presence of Archbishop William O. Brady, Archbishop of the St. Paul Archdiocese, and other St. John's church guests of St. John's for the consecration of the church.

Florian said that sinks and lockers are being added in the pew-less lower chapel to provide a dormitory for 30 to 35 Preps.

Meanwhile, outside, while some workers trimmed the campus trees, others blacktopped the paths leading to the football field. Two cement ticket booths have been built and will flank the path behind the concession stand.

With the consecration of the new church, the old one will be modified to provide more classroom and dormitory space. The pews in the upper church will remain temporarily to allow classes to meet regularly there. Plans now have the tailor shop occupying the sacristy in the lower church. The room which the tailor shop is vacating will become an office.

A large Prep school enrollment this year requires additional dormitory space. Father

church possible were invited as special guests of St. John's for the consecration of the church.

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Meanwhile, outside, while some workers trimmed the campus trees, others blacktopped the paths leading to the football field. Two cement ticket booths have been built and will flank the path behind the concession stand.

The new Abbey Church merits the headlines...

...while space in the old Abbey Church is repurposed for the Preps

The new Abbey Church precedes building a new Prep facility
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33214> *The Record* August 25, 1961, p. 1

Abbot Baldwin Breaks Ground; New Prep School Underway

By Richard Devine

● Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, OSB, broke ground Thursday, Sept. 14, for the new St. John's Preparatory School.

Construction will begin immediately on a dormitory and a classroom-study hall, designed to accommodate 480. Administrative offices, a library, and a cafeteria will be temporarily situated in these buildings, which will be completed for the 1962-63 school year.

The buildings will be located on the shore of Lake Sagatagan approximately 200 yards east of the present college campus proper. The classroom building, to be located on ground which slopes upward from the lake, will be a three level one-story building. The cost of the two buildings will be \$1,675,000.

The second phase of the building program will add a gymna-

sium, library, a combination auditorium-cafeteria, recreation rooms and administrative and music facilities.

Father Cuthbert Soukup, OSB, prep dean, stated that, "We would all like to postpone construction for at least a year, but we believe it would be unfortunate, if not tragic, to be forced to turn away half of the priesthood applicants we expect in future years."

The present enrollment of the prep school is 325. The college and prep school presently use the same classroom and dining facilities and the additions will ease pressure on space needed for college growth.

After the ground breaking ceremonies Abbot Baldwin spoke briefly and stated that, "By the fall of 1962 it would be impossible to accommodate in present quarters the number of students enrolled in the prep school because of the large increase in the number of priesthood students. Faced with this problem, the monastic community acted as it had done so often in the past; it decided to meet what might be called the greatest need of the world today, namely, the need of more effective



Prep dean Father Cuthbert Soukup, OSB (left), and chaplain, Father Mark Schneider, OSB, assist Father Abbot as he breaks ground for the new Prep school.

leadership, clerical and lay. Inopportune as it may seem, financially, to begin a new building program, this is nevertheless what St. John's feels it must do to serve the Church in our critical day."

The McGough Construction Company of St. Paul, which recently completed work on the new abbey and university church, has been awarded the general contract for the construction of the new buildings.

The Record
Sept. 29, 1961, p. 1

Groundbreaking takes place Sept. 14, 1961

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33224> Sept. 29, 1961, p. 1



Groundbreaking ceremony photos show the wall of the Observatory; it is torn down to make room.

Roof removal photo from Ascheman Collection, LP 056.1961.



The site is logged and cleared.



Cement work continues through the winter cold.

The center stairs are started

(future nemesis of injured athletes and the ADA, but still a thing of beauty!)



The center staircase starts to take shape
(If you've only seen the Weber Center and missed the rest of the building, take in the view overlooking the stairs.)



The curved roof segments are put in place, one by one, and coated with cement.



Lots of rebar, lots of cement.

Walls Rise on Schedule For New Prep School

By Ken Kirwin

Construction of the dormitory and the classroom building at the new St. John's Preparatory school site is approximately on schedule, according to Father Outhbert Soukup, OSB, Prep school dean.

Despite recent minor difficulties in getting steel deliveries as ordered, he expects these structures to be completed, as scheduled, in time for fall classes.

Erection of the two buildings, ultimately intended to accommodate 480 students, but temporarily being equipped for 360, is part of a projected construction program for the new site.

Creation of the prep athletic field there is scheduled to start this spring and be completed in fall. A gymnasium and a fourth building to house cafeteria, auditorium, library, science, administration and recreation facilities are planned, but no definite dates have been set for these projects.

Facilities ultimately to be housed in the fourth building will temporarily be located in the first and second units. Their removal from the first two buildings will raise the school's enrollment capacity from 360 to its intended 480.

Set into the south slope of observatory hill and facing Lake Sagatan, the site of the new school was described in glowing phrases by Ted Hoffmeyer, Mc-

Gough's construction engineer.

Due to the southern slope catching the sun's rays and the area's protection from the wind, Mr. Hoffmeyer foresaw extremely low heating costs for the buildings and that "the preps will be playing on their athletic field much earlier in the spring and later in the fall than the college men on their unshaded."

Basic structure of the dormitory consists of 20 inverted paraboloids ("HP" made of reinforced concrete and set upon pillars. Each foot square HP resembles the top of an umbrella turned upside down. Its principal advantages are its economy as an extremely low-cost fireproof construction and the large open pillar-free spaces it provides.

The tops of the HP's adjoin each other and form the roof; the walls carry none of the weight of this roof. Three of the HP's are finished and construction engineer Hoffmeyer expects completion of all 20 by Apr. 1.

"Barrel-shell" construction is the term used for the classroom building structure. This name derives from the fact that the reinforced concrete roof resembles a series of half-barrels laid horizontally.

This building is on four levels set into the side of observatory hill. Only three tiers will have "barrel-shell" roofs this fall; the top tier will have a flat roof because plans are to add two stories to it in the future. Presently most of the retaining walls are completed and forms are ready for placing the concrete for the first level of "barrel-shells."



St. John's Preparatory
Volume Two, Number Four

Collegeville, Minnesota
January, 1962

Progress is noted in both *The Record* and the *Prep World*

by Don Lukas

Following the tension of semester exams and a rushed week-end vacation, Preps scurried back to St. John's for a week of classes before plunging into the abnormal peacefulness of the annual retreat. From January 28-31, the Preps didn't even have college men around to disturb them, for the Joes were undergoing their own two-and-a-half days of spiritual check-up.



PREP SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
But one thing leads to another, you know

PAGE 20

Conducting this year's retreat was Reverend Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A., who is presently stationed at the Augustinian Mission House in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This order concentrates mainly on missionary work, laboring predominantly in the Near East.

As well as being author of two books with apostolic themes, *Christians as a Changing World* and *You Are Not Your Own*, Father Geaney has been a contributor to *Novity* and *Faith* magazines and a columnist for other Catholic periodicals. Besides writing, he has had much experience in giving retreats to high school students.

When Preps were not at the conferences, stations of the cross, or rosary in the crypt, they put the club rooms, study halls, and library to good use as reading centers for spiritual literature and meditation. Preps observed the traditional rule of silence as Father Geaney had hoped, and clattering elsewhere rather than raucous voices typified the refectory, and the gym rested peacefully from the ordinary noisy activity of intramurals, varsity practices, and athletic contests.

All's Well

by Mike Fias

Having struggled to the top of a snow covered mound to avoid the controls of a madly churning bulldozer, I took my first look at the unfamiliar surroundings of Observatory Hill. Rumors around Prep school concerning the construction were many and far-reaching. Some optimistically reported progress; other visions were not as keen. So PREP WORLD was sent to dig up the facts.

Here and there among the hay- and snow-lathered frames were miniature workers, dwarfed by the straining cranes and earthmovers.

At first glance, the building of the first stage (dormitory, classrooms, and the passageway) appeared to be in full swing. At least five of the hyperbolic arches forming the dormitory roof were completed and set in their proper positions alongside each other. Work on the connecting tunnel will be delayed until a time when it will have something to connect.

As for the classrooms, the forms of the crescent-shaped roofs on the bottom level are ready to be given the crowning touch, more or less a concrete coronation. The upper tiers however have no forms as yet, but you know how one thing leads to another.

Thus, any optimistic Prep observer will confirm the report that the first stage of the new Prep school, with continued effort on the part of construction crews and the weatherman, will be wound up for the fall term.

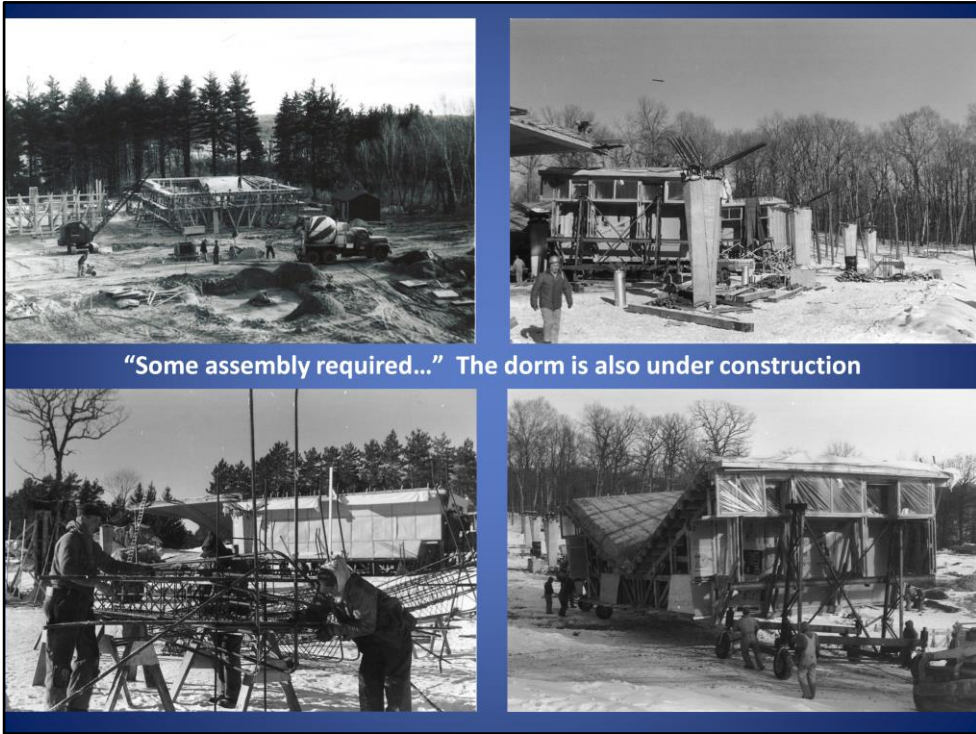
THE PREP WORLD

Progress is noted in both *The Record* and the *Prep World*

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33352> *The Record* January 12, 1962, p. 4 and the *Prep World* January 1962



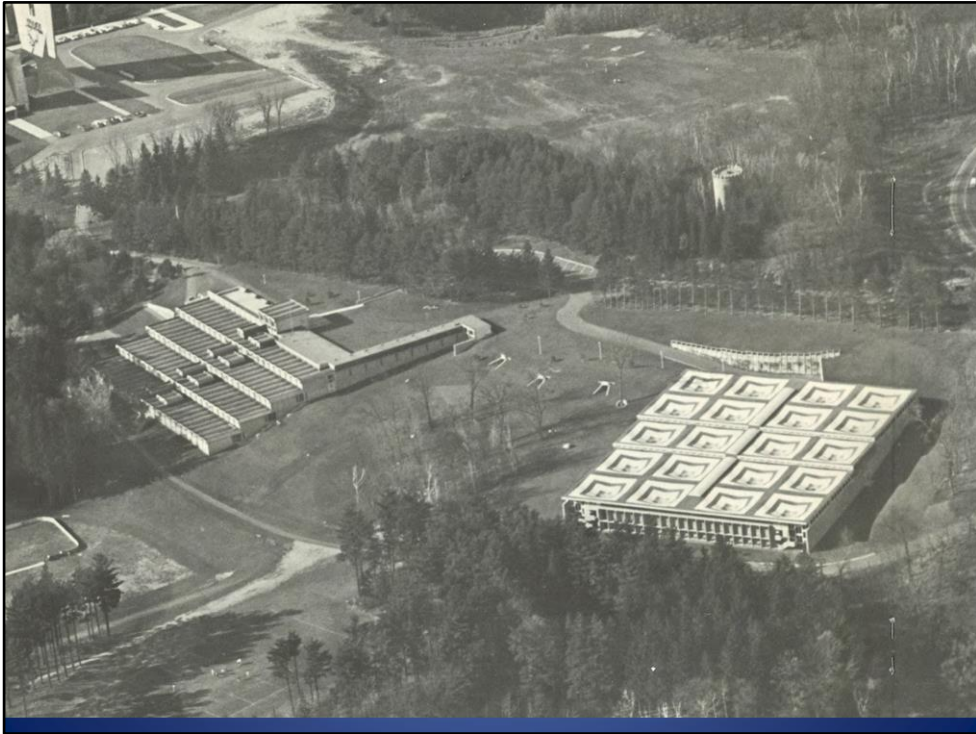
Winter, spring, summer...gradually the buildings take shape



“Some assembly required...”



Transporting the form used to cast the 20 dorm roof modules?



A view of the roofs
Photo from 79/2 1:1



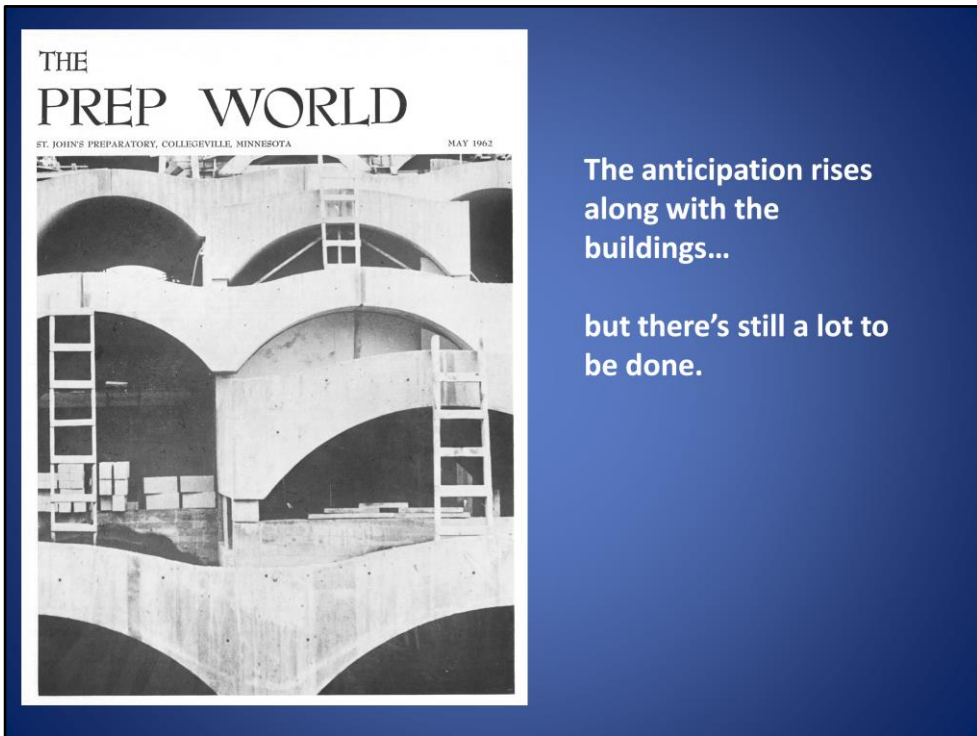
Dormitory interior – before and after



The dormitory, ready for students



Modifications are made to the dorm over time (what's with the net??)

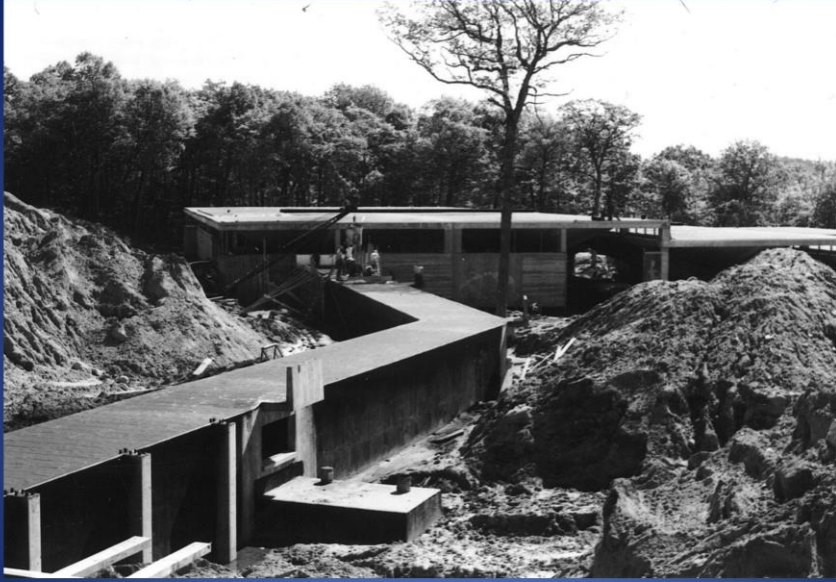


The anticipation rises
along with the
buildings...

but there's still a lot to
be done.

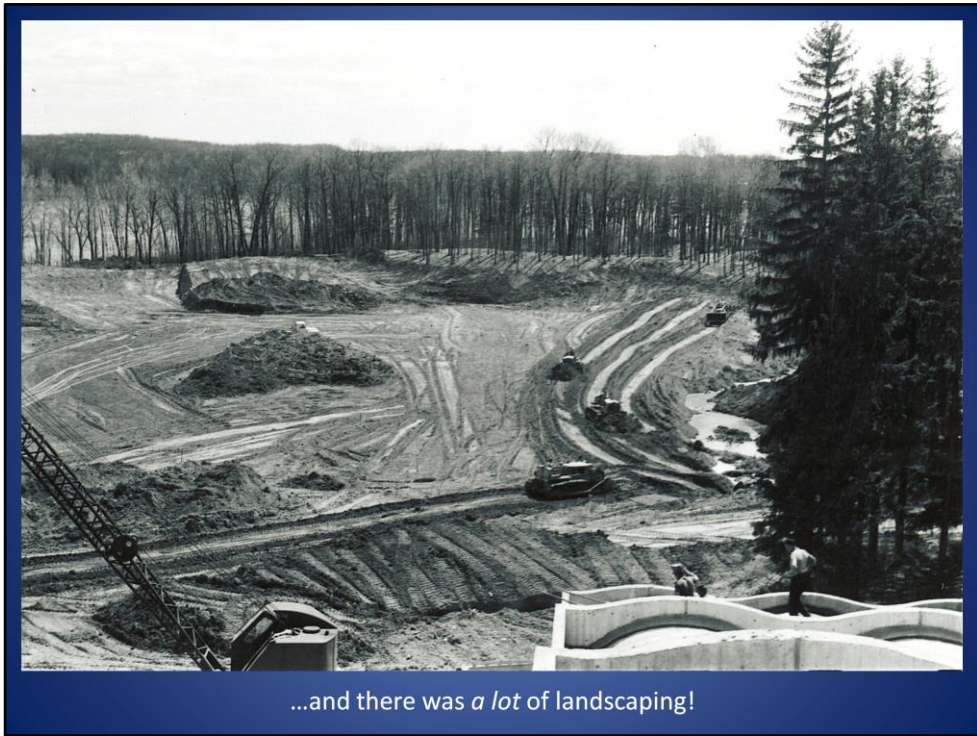
Anticipation builds...

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33445> *The Record* August 24, 1962, p. 2



The *Prep World* article had noted: "Work on the connecting tunnel will be delayed until a time when it will have something to connect."

Still more to do: A tunnel connects the academic and dormitory buildings




...and there was *a lot* of landscaping!

...and there was a lot of landscaping!



Landscapers avoid the historic pines overlooking Boniface Bay



Preps To Start 2 Weeks Late

Father Cuthbert Soukup, OSB, has announced that the beginning of the fall prep school session has been postponed two weeks. The new opening date of Sep. 17 will allow for the completion of the new study hall, classroom and dormitory buildings on observatory hill.

Progress has been steady throughout the summer, and the final work on the main entrance to the study hall-classroom building and the sun shades on the south of the dormitory are the only major projects left.

With the opening of the school a month away, the moving schedule has already begun. The desks from the old prep study halls have been refinished and are now being put in their places in the new building; lockers built at the local carpenter shop are being installed in the dormitory.

During the summer nearly the whole of the seven acres of athletic fields and grounds has been sodded by a crew of priests, clerics, prep students here for the summer and workmen.

"During the summer nearly the whole of the seven acres of athletic fields and grounds has been sodded by a crew of priests, clerics, prep students here for the summer and workmen."

The Record August 24, 1962, p. 2

And speaking of landscaping...laying sod = summer work for many.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33445> *The Record August 24, 1962, p. 2*

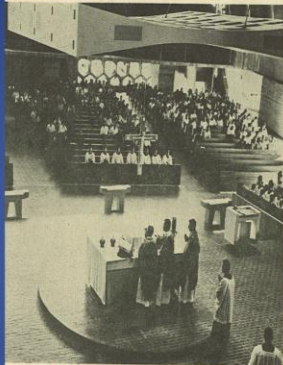
THE RECORD

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Homecoming
BONFIRE
October 5

COLLEGEVILLE, MINNESOTA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1962

NUMBER 11



Prep School Reopens On Observatory Hill

St. John's Preparatory school welcomed 360 students Sept. 18 to a newly completed new complex of buildings which was begun a year ago this month.

Designed by architects Michelson and Hanson of St. Paul, the two concrete structures overlook Lake Sagastagan from the crest of Observatory hill, east of the new abbey-university church.

St. Bede's hall, with its graduated levels, houses three large study halls, 12 classrooms, administrative and faculty offices, a faculty lounge, temporary library facilities, a recreation room and a snack bar.

An underground corridor joins it with St. Michael's hall, a split-

level dormitory with a capacity of 120 partitioned semi-rooms, each containing four beds. At present one-fourth of this building serves as a temporary gymnasium for intramural sports. Later when the school reaches its expected enrollment of 480, this space will be reconverted into a dormitory.

Prep Gen. Father Outthbert Soukup, O.S.B., reports that these two buildings represent half of the projected plan. The completed campus will include two more buildings, one a gymnasium and the other a combination auditorium and cafeteria with science and music facilities and an administrative wing. Until these final additions, the Preps will share the college refectory, gymnasium, auditorium and science hall.

The new Prep School will be dedicated late in October, a tentative date of Oct. 28 having been set. A brochure outlining the future plans and developments of the new school is being printed for the dedication.

Kennedy Lauds Men's Chorus

St. John's University Men's Chorus, under the direction of Mr. Gerhard Trask, captured first place in the International Competition at Wake this summer during its second European tour. As a result, the chorus received a telegram from President John F. Kennedy, Sept. 19, in which the President congratulated the chorus for its successes.

In his telegram President Kennedy said: "Thomas Carlyle once wrote: 'Music is well said to be the speech of the angels.' I know

the opening of the university church. Classes for the approximately 1300 students met for the first time later that morning.

Ben Laymen Announces Faculty

Cornell by a Woodrow Wilson scholarship. Mr. Cronin has written numerous short stories and plays.

Another new language instructor is Mr. Patrick Boyden who is

Benny Reunion

For the third consecutive year St. Ben's will sponsor a reunion for grads who are wives of former Johannes. Grads will meet on Oct. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in St. Benedict's Mary's hall.

The school's reopening is noted in *The Record*

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/SJUArchives,218> *The Record* September 28, 1962, p. 1

Abbot To Dedicate New Prep School Sunday



Father Corwin Collins, O.S.B., conducts a social class in one of the brightly lit prep school classrooms. Each of the well ventilated classrooms, with distinctive barrel vaulted roofs, overlooks woodland and Lake Sagatagan. The abbot will dedicate the new school Sunday.

Two Buildings Completed In Projected \$3 Million Complex

By Tom Super

One September afternoon in 1961, Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B., overturned a spadeful of dirt atop Observatory hill, marking the initial step toward the building of a new \$3,000,000 Prep school complex. Abbot Baldwin will dedicate the completed halls this Sunday, Oct. 28.

Dedication ceremonies for the new Prep school dormitory and assembly building will begin at 1:30 p.m. with an address in the abbey church by Abbot Baldwin.

Following a procession to the school, the abbot will bless the two buildings. An open house, with tours and refreshments, and a 3 p.m. football game with St. Cloud Cathedral will highlight the day's activities.

Classes Overlook Sag

Because high school has been in session since Sept. 16, the prep students have already had a good taste of their new life. The new academic unit, a four-level, concrete structure, faces south over Lake Sagatagan. A 150-desk study hall and three 30-desk classrooms make up each of the bottom three levels, while the top level is occupied by administration offices, recreation rooms and the library.

playful enough for a boys' school."

Michelson also designed a dormitory roof consisting of 80 saucer-shaped hyperbolic paraboloids, each resting on a concrete pillar.

Work on the two structures began immediately after groundbreaking last year, and during the winter the preps themselves gave financial aid to their own cause. In response to a foreman's need for additional intramural field space, they carried on a magazine drive during November and a candy bar sale in spring.

Parents Conduct Fund Drive

The parents of prep students are also working to finance the new school. A committee of parents, the first lay group in St. John's history, has conducted the

The school's dedication is planned.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?CSBArchNews,33434> *The Record* October 26, 1962, p. 1

A good crowd
turns out for the
dedication on
Sunday, October
28, 1962



The dedication is October 28, 1962

A couple of postscripts:

Breuer Updates Plans

Marcel Breuer, internationally famed architect, visited St. John's on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 26-27. Breuer came here to help reconsider and update the 100-Year Building Plan, initiated in 1953, to consult the

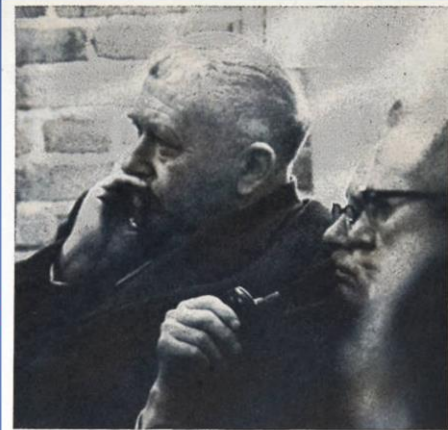
Sophomore Comps

The annual Sophomore Comprehensive Examinations will be given on the afternoons of Thursday and Friday, March 12-13. These tests are administered under the auspices of the National Guidance Testing Program, Princeton, N.J., and include four different sections on writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Scores will be calculated on a nation-wide basis and graded according to percentile norms.

library committee on construction of the new library and to begin preliminary studies for construction of a proposed science hall. Completion of the library is expected in 1966 and the science hall in 1967. Breuer's visit was his first since the dedication of the Abbey church in 1961.

While touring the church, Breuer commented on its excellent construction and praised the contractor responsible for its building. He also had words of praise for Val Michelson, a former associate of Breuer responsible for designing the new Prep school.

On Wednesday evening Breuer met with a group of Anselmites to discuss architectural form and particularly the design for the Abbey church.

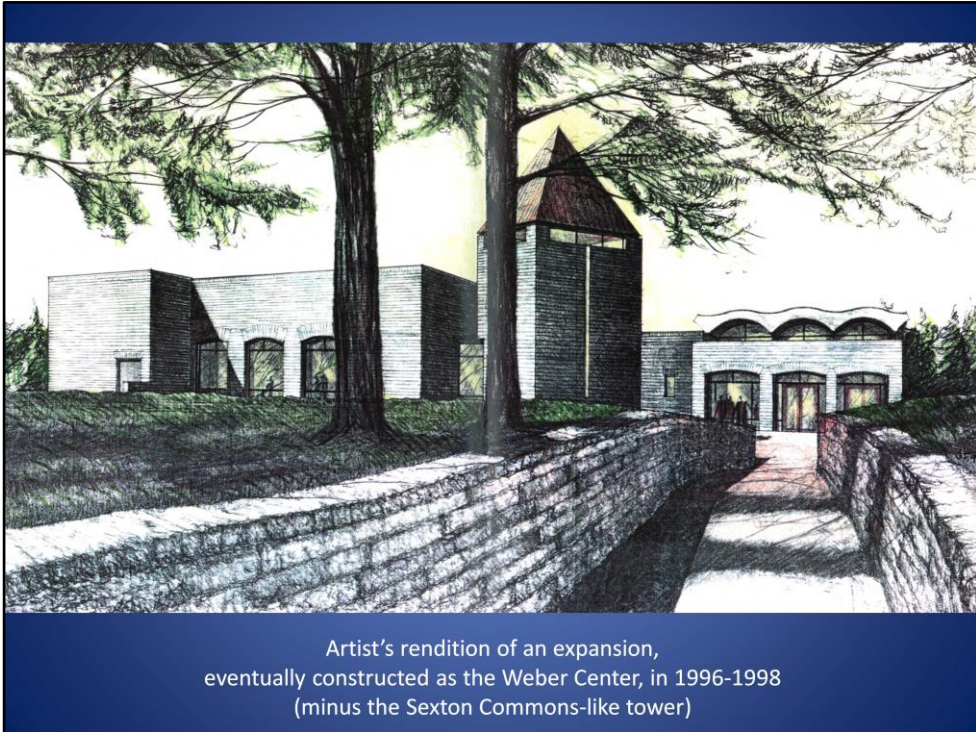


MARCEL BREUER, internationally known architect, meets with the monastic community to discuss plans for the construction of the new library and science hall.

The Record March 6, 1964, p. 3

Breuer complements Val Michelson, designer of the Prep buildings and a former associate

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u?/CSBArchNews,33396> *The Record* March 6, 1964, p. 3



Artist's rendition of an expansion,
eventually constructed as the Weber Center, in 1996-1998
(minus the Sexton Commons-like tower)

Weber Center addition drawing
From Box 2022:1

There have been three major additions to Bede Hall:

The Weber Center (1998)

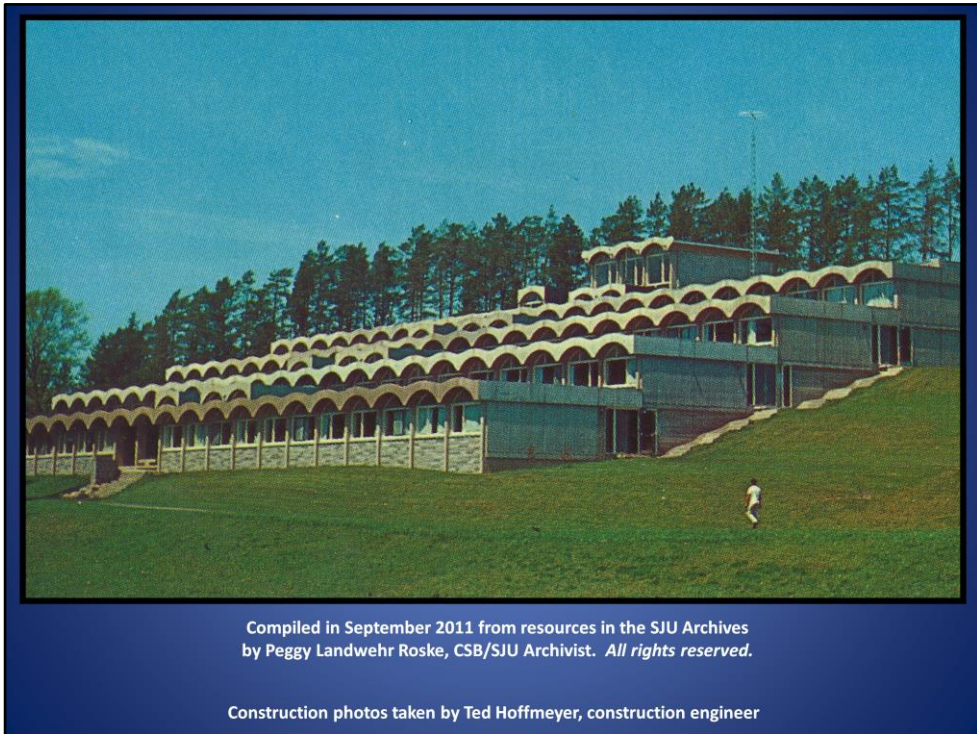
The Meyer expansion for the sciences (2000)



The Middle School (2008)



There have been three major additions to the academic building



Credits

Construction and other photos from SJP Buildings Photo collection, unless otherwise noted.