NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1235

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL: CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE, LITTLE CHAPEL, AND MEMORIAL SCHOOLHOUSE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 372 PURGATORY ROAD not for publication ___

city or town MIDDLETOWN vicinity ___

state RHODE ISLAND code RI county NEWPORT code 005 zip code 02842

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this
_X_ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
_X_ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Theodore C. Williamson SHPO 8 Sep 2004
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_✓_ entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the National Register
____ removed from the National Register
____ other (explain): _____

Carlson Beall for 11/12/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)
- X private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)
- X building(s)
- ___ district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	____	buildings
____	____	sites
____	____	structures
____	____	objects
3	____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Category/Subcategory:

RELIGION/Religious Facility

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Category/Subcategory:

RELIGION/Religious Facility

EDUCATION/School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Tudor Revival

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE; CONCRETE; OTHER/
Cast Stone

roof STONE/Slate; METAL/Copper

walls STONE/Limestone; BRICK

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEETS

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

_X_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

___ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_X_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

_X_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
_X_ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Evaluated in a National context.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE
ART
EDUCATION

Period of Significance
1909-1954

Significant Dates
1910-1911 (Little Chapel)
1921-1923 (Schoolhouse)
1924-1928 (Church)

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
RALPH ADAMS CRAM (Church)
McKIM, MEAD & WHITE (Schoolhouse)
CLARKE, HOWE & HOMER (Little Chapel)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) SEE ATTACHED

Previous documentation on file (NPS) # _____
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
_X_ Other
Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	19	3106400	45955200	3			
2				4			

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title KATHRYN J. CAVANAUGH, PRESERVATION CONSULTANT TO ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

organization _____ date August 30, 2004

street & number 197 SIXTH STREET telephone 401.273.4715

city or town PROVIDENCE state RI zip code 02906

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, ATTN: GAIL G. THACHER, DIRECTOR OF MAJOR GIFTS

street & number P.O. BOX 1910 telephone 401.842.6730

city or town NEWPORT state RI zip code 02840-0190

7. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This nomination covers three attached buildings at St. George's School in Middletown, RI: the Gothic Revival style Church of St. George (1924-1928), historically and architecturally the most significant on campus; and the Tudor Revival style Memorial Schoolhouse (1921-1923) and Little Chapel (1909-1911). All three of these buildings together *(Photo #1)* occupy less than one acre of land within the larger 125-acre campus. They are described herein in order of construction.

St. George's School's main entrance is on the north side of Purgatory Road, which runs east-west and connects to RI Route 138A in adjacent Newport; the town line is less than a mile west of the school. Perched atop a hill, the core campus is surrounded by low-scale, low-density residential development, with large areas of open space to the south and east (much of it also owned by St. George's). "The Hilltop" offers magnificent views of Second Beach, Sachuest Bay, Rhode Island Sound, and the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge.

The core campus is bounded by Purgatory Road on the south, Wolcott Avenue on the west, property belonging to other owners on the north, and Paradise Road on the east. An illustrated map (attached) depicts approximately 50 structures, including classroom buildings, dormitories, faculty residences, dining halls, academic and administrative offices, library, arts center, student center, various athletic facilities, and two chapels. Large expanses of green lawn, many used as athletic fields, separate distinct clusters of campus buildings. Almost half of the existing buildings were constructed between the 1880s and the 1930s, and deserve further study for their potential eligibility for National Register listing. In the west and southwest parts of campus are about half a dozen late 19th century wood-frame single family houses, acquired by the school when it relocated here in 1901 and used as faculty residences. In the center of campus are some nineteen structures built by St. George's School between 1901 and 1931; these exhibit considerable consistency in their heights (1-3 stories), horizontal massing, gabled roofs, use of red brick, and architectural styles in variations on Georgian Revival and Tudor Revival. (Most of these are clustered north and west of the original Old School building, built in 1901; the original campus plan was laid out as a series of quadrangles, but preserving the ocean views to the east and south later became an important consideration. [1]) Standing out among all the red brick is the gray limestone Church of St. George, whose 147-foot tower visually dominates the campus landscape and can also be seen from numerous vantage points several miles away on both land and water.

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1 Price, in *The Architectural Forum*, May 1929, p. 661.

The St. George's School campus has frequently been likened to an English manor estate, and that comparison still holds true, even though at least half of the buildings are of modern (mid 20th century to early 21st century) vintage. Buildings of the 1950s-1980s (some constructed as infill between older structures, some standing alone) tend to be quite different from their earlier neighbors in materials and style, yet are still compatible in height and massing. Around the turn of the 21st century, several large dormitories and arts and athletic facilities were added, but these are confined to the outer edges of the core campus, and their heights, forms, and materials are also compatible with the older structures at the center.

From Purgatory Road, three driveways provide access into the core campus; these connect to several narrow roadways within. The long, straight, tree-lined Main Drive leads north to the original Old School building that stands roughly in the center of campus; the road then wraps around the west side of Old School and the Memorial Schoolhouse, terminating at Campus Drive. Campus Drive is the major cross-campus route, connecting Kane Avenue on the west with Faculty Drive on the east; buildings lining its south side include the library, some dormitories, Memorial Schoolhouse, and the Church of St. George. North of Campus Drive, expansive athletic fields are used for various sports.

The Memorial Schoolhouse, Church of St. George, and Little Chapel, attached to one another in that order from west to east, stand near the center of campus between Old School on the south and Campus Drive on the north. Directly south of the Schoolhouse and the Church are two small landscaped courtyards called Dragon Quadrangle and Wheeler Close, respectively. Both are lined with a mix of historic and modern buildings 1-3 stories in height; a short, covered pedestrian passageway along the north edge connects these two courtyards. On the south side of Dragon Quadrangle is the 3-story Old School, which now houses the Headmaster's office, the admissions office, and the Old School, Red, and Blue Dormitories; to the west is the 3-story Sixth Form House (1903), containing various administrative offices. On the east side of Dragon Quadrangle is the 2-story Hill Student Center (1968); this structure separates Dragon Quadrangle from Wheeler Close, and abuts the Church of St. George above its south transept door (thus forming the aforementioned pedestrian passageway). On the south side of Wheeler Close is a 1-story enclosure connecting Old School to King Hall (1907), which still retains its original function as a dining hall. On the east side of Wheeler Close is a 2-story modern (1968) structure housing the sacristy and choir rooms, which connects both to King Hall and to the Church. Note that the diminutive Little Chapel, at the southeast corner of the Church, is completely out of view from Wheeler Close; it is partially hidden by surrounding structures, and can only be seen from close proximity from the north and east.
West of the Memorial Schoolhouse is Eccles Garden, a small landscaped area surrounded by a low stone wall; Auchincloss Dormitory (1914) stands further west, across Main Drive. East of

the Church and the Little Chapel is a paved parking lot and the Health Center (1975). Just south of the Little Chapel are the kitchens and service areas at the rear of King Hall. Campus Drive runs along the north sides of both the Schoolhouse and the Church, and gives access to the parking lot that abuts the Little Chapel.

The Little Chapel (1909-1911; relocated to its present site in 1924)

The Little Chapel is a one-story, one-room red brick building with an end gable roof of Vermont "Unfading Green" slate and a raised, poured concrete foundation. This is the original school chapel, designed by architects Clarke, Howe & Homer of Providence in a very simple version of the Tudor Revival style. Construction on the Little Chapel began in 1909 and was completed in 1910-1911. When first built, the Little Chapel stood in what is now Wheeler Close, just north of a cloister that connected Old School with King Hall. It was moved in 1924 to make way for the Church of St. George. The northwest corner of the Little Chapel is now attached to the southeast corner of the Church (deliberately placed in the same position that a medieval Gothic church's "Lady Chapel" would occupy [2]); its present location is less than 100 feet from its original site. Sometime between 1924-1928, after it was moved, architect Ralph Adams Cram modified the Little Chapel to make it more consistent with his design for the adjacent Gothic Revival Church of St. George. Character-defining features now include the parapeted gable roof, the Gothic pointed-arch doorway, the diamond-paned leaded casement windows, and the exposed roof beams and trusses that lend an impression of height to the interior.[3]

Although the Little Chapel lacks integrity of location and some of its original features have been modified, it still contributes to the overall historical and architectural significance of this complex of three buildings (and to the larger campus). The decision to move the Little Chapel in 1924 was made not merely for the sake of adjacent new construction but also, quite intentionally, to preserve a historically important building on campus: its first chapel. (To quote Ralph Adams Cram from an essay on the design of the proposed Church of St. George: "Adjoining the Chapel to the east, and entered from the cloister, will be the Old Chapel of the school, removed from its present position and scrupulously preserved for all time practically in its present state." [4]) Moreover, the move effectively enhanced the Little Chapel's own relatively unassuming architectural character by incorporating it into the design of the Church

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2 Doll, "The Little Chapel of St. George's School," p. 11.

3 McAlester, pp. 355-358.

4 Cram, in the *Alumni Bulletin*, December 1922, p. 9.

of St. George and providing it with a much more dramatic entrance than it had had originally. These changes to the Little Chapel have gained significance in their own right over time. Therefore, the Little Chapel is deemed to retain integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building is in generally good condition inside and out; however, both its slate roof and its gutters are failing, and need replacement in kind.[5]

The entire west front of the Little Chapel (its primary façade) is now enclosed by part of the adjacent Church of St. George, so only the north and south sides and the rear (east) elevation are exposed to exterior view. *(Photo #2.)* Both north and south elevations have four regularly spaced brick piers dividing the walls into three bays; the piers are capped and footed in poured concrete. (Only three piers are visible on the north side; the fourth is hidden behind a buttress on the adjacent Church.) At the time the Little Chapel was moved, a secondary entrance in the north elevation was closed off by red brick infill similar to the original wall material. Today all that remains of that former doorway is the plain stone lintel, visible in the left-hand bay of the north elevation; the middle and right-hand bays each have pairs of rectangular casement windows with leaded glass. The south elevation has three pairs of similar windows, one pair in each bay. Each pair of windows is framed in wood, with plain granite lintels and sills, and separated by a narrow brick pier. The east elevation is a plain brick and stone wall, with no fenestration or decorative elements (save the change in materials). The east gable end of the roof has a brick parapet capped in copper; the eaves on the north and south sides of the roof have paired wood brackets underneath. Historic copper gutters and decorative downspouts, similar to features also found on the Church and the Memorial Schoolhouse, survive on the north and south elevations.

The west façade of the Little Chapel is now only accessible from the statio (vestibule) of a 2-story stair tower at the south end of the adjacent Church of St. George. The west façade contains the sole entrance to the Little Chapel: a large, centered, pointed-arch doorway that rises nearly two-thirds the full height of the building and is framed in carved stone moldings. *(Photo #3.)* On either side of the doorway are sculptures by Joseph Coletti (the artist for the adjacent Church) representing The Annunciation, with the Angel Gabriel on the left, and the Virgin Mary on the right. The massive wooden door has a pattern of carved quatrefoils on its outside face and cross-straps on its inside face; the massive ring-shaped door handle and the large wrought iron strap hinges are the work of master smith / metalworker Samuel Yellin (who did all the ironwork for the Church). This doorway was modified after the Little Chapel was moved, during the construction of the Church (1924-1928), at the direction of John Nicholas Brown and Ralph Adams Cram, in order to make the design of the Little Chapel more

5 Durkee Brown etal, p. 12.

consistent with the Gothic character of the Church. The original door to the Little Chapel was apparently rectangular in shape and much more modest in character.

Other than the alterations described above, no additional exterior changes are known to have occurred since 1928.

Inside the Little Chapel *(Photo #4)*, the most striking features are the dark-stained exposed heavy timber roof beams and trusses, all with lamb's tongue chamfering, which evoke a late 16th/early 17th century appearance, as do the diamond-paned casement windows. The beam against the east wall displays a Latin motto in gold lettering: "Facienti quod se est Deus non denegat gratiam" (roughly translated as, "God helps Him who helps Himself." [6]) Otherwise, the interior is almost entirely devoid of decoration. The dark-stained wood ceiling follows the slopes of the gable roof, adding height to the small interior space. The floor is also wood (replaced in 1924-1928); the floor at the east end of the building is raised up about 6 inches, and holds a simple wooden altar. (The surviving stone lintel from the former north entrance is just to the left of the altar.) The brick walls are unfinished; attached to all four walls are thirty-one bronze memorial plaques dedicated to deceased students, faculty, and staff. (The earliest death date on a plaque is 1907, which predates the Little Chapel itself; the next earliest date is April 15, 1912 – the sinking of the *Titanic*. Fully half of the plaques are dedicated to men who died in World War I.) A historic photograph reveals that paneled wood wainscotting some four to five feet tall once graced the altar area; the date of its removal is unknown, but may have occurred when the Little Chapel was moved in 1924, or perhaps even earlier, as the memorial plaques started being installed. [7]

Finished in 1910, the Little Chapel was expanded in 1911 to hold about 40 people. Never intended to be able to accommodate the entire St. George's community, it was originally used for morning communion services, for confirmation classes and services, for Bible study classes, and for form meetings. Until the Church of St. George was completed in September 1927, weekly communion services were held at the Little Chapel every Sunday morning. The relocated Little Chapel was re-consecrated on St. George's Day (April 23), 1928, along with the new Church of St. George, but after the larger Church came into use, the Little Chapel's ecclesiastical function gradually diminished. Presently it is used mostly as a music rehearsal room and to store musical instruments, although on special occasions it may still used for

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6 Doll, "The Little Chapel of St. George's School," p. 9.

7 In Taverner's 1986 history of St. George's School, between pp. 84 and 85, are several unnumbered pages of photographs. One of these, undated, shows the east end of the interior of the Little Chapel, with paneled wood wainscotting on all three sides of the altar area.

religious purposes.

The Memorial Schoolhouse (1921-1923)

Sixteen St. George's men, most of them young alumni barely out of their teens, died in World War I. Shortly after the Armistice in 1918, the school proposed to build a new classroom building as a memorial to its war dead. Fundraising difficulties delayed implementation of the project for several years, but the cornerstone was finally laid in 1921, and the building was put into service in January 1923. Designed by the nationally prominent firm of McKim, Mead & White of New York City, the Memorial Schoolhouse (like the Little Chapel) also exhibits elements of the Tudor Revival style, reflective of the English inspiration for American boarding school campuses. *(Photo #5.)* The Schoolhouse stands 2-1/2 stories tall, and has horizontal massing, red brick walls and foundation, cast stone trim, slate roofing, and a wood-framed cupola; in these design elements, the Schoolhouse somewhat resembles the Neo-Georgian Old School, which stands just to the south. However, the multiple-gabled roof, semi-hexagonal main entrance bay with arched doorway and Renaissance detailing, groupings of windows, decorative multi-flue chimneys, and miniature turret adjacent to the north slype door (adjoining the Church of St. George) all are more evocative of the Tudor Revival.[8] That theme is also carried out in some of the building's interior elements. The Memorial Schoolhouse is in very good condition and despite a number of alterations (most notably the replacement windows) its historic character remains evident. The Schoolhouse contributes to the overall historical and architectural significance of this complex of three buildings (and to the larger campus). It retains partial integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and full integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

The Schoolhouse is oriented on an east-west axis, and its primary façade faces south, toward Dragon Quadrangle and Old School. *(Photo #6.)* The south, west, and north elevations all feature a symmetrical composition (the east elevation directly abuts the Church of St. George, and is almost completely hidden from view). Stone belt courses wrap the three exposed sides of the building just above the basement, first, and second floor windows. All window and door openings are surrounded with cast stone trim, and cast stone mullions divide groups of two, three, and four windows; windows typically align both vertically and horizontally. Historic photos show that the original windows were multi-light double hung sash (they appear to be mostly 12/12, but some 6/6, 8/8, and 9/9 can also be seen) with some 6-light paired casements on the north elevation.[9] However, all existing windows on the first, second and third floor levels

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8 McAlester, pp. 355-371.

9 *The Providence Journal*, April 22, 1928, p. F3; also Price, in *The Architectural Forum*, May 1929, pp. 663 and

are now multi-light vinyl replacements; those on the south façade have exterior and interior applied muntins, while those on the north and west elevations have internal muntin grids. The basement level, which is partially raised above grade, retains mostly wood windows that appear to be historic, if not original.

The south façade is divided into five bays. The first, third, and fifth bays all project slightly from the plane of the façade, and are topped with parapeted gables that feature cast stone caps with ball finials at the peak. In the center of the façade is a 2-story, semi-hexagonal bay of cast stone, with the main entrance at its base: a large arched opening with leaded glass transom over a pair of original paneled wooden doors, accessed by short flight of stone steps extending the full width of this center bay. (A pair of aluminum storm doors with transom panel, all painted dark brown, is installed over the original doors.) To either side of the door at the basement level is a single-light hopper window; and above those at the first floor level, one on each side, are 9/9 double hung windows beneath a 9-light fixed transom sash. Over the doorway is a large, rectangular carved stone panel. Above that panel, at the second floor level, is a group of four 9/9 double-hung windows separated by cast stone mullions, set into the south face of the stone bay; there is a single 9/9 double hung window on each side of the bay. The bay is capped by a parapet featuring five various carved coats of arms, and large ball finials at the corners. Above that parapet at the third floor level are a pair of 8/8 double hung windows under a drip mold, centered within the red brick roof gable.

Elsewhere on the south façade, on the first and second floors, both the first and fifth bays have three pairs of 9/9 double hung windows and on the third floor, in the gables, is a triplet of 8/8 double hung windows under a drip mold. The second and fourth bays have groups of three 9/9 double hung windows at the first and second floor levels. The basement level features three 2/2 double hung windows in the first bay, and three 6/6 double hung windows in the second, fourth, and fifth bays. Each group of basement windows has a large area way in front of it. Note that the fifth bay, which is closest to the east end of the building, is largely obscured at the basement level by a modern concrete stairway that leads from Dragon Quadrangle eastward up to the Church of St. George, the student center, and Wheeler Close.

The west elevation of Memorial Schoolhouse has a similar character to the south. *(Photo #7.)* Divided into three bays, the west elevation has a projecting 2-story center pavilion of brick that contains an arched doorway surrounded by cast stone trim and cornice; the door itself is a single-leaf paneled wooden door with 9 glass lights, underneath an arched multi-light transom. (An aluminum storm door and transom panel, painted dark brown, is installed over the historic

door.) This pavilion has a 9/9 double hung window at the second floor level, and above that, a decorative cast stone parapet with four symmetrically spaced oculi framed by pilaster strips and ball finials at the corners. (This parapet matches two others found on the north elevation.) In the roof slope above the parapet, at the third floor level, is a slate-hip-roofed, wood-framed dormer containing a wood 6/6 double hung sash window. On either side of the center pavilion, the first and third bays both have two square, widely separated, 12-light operable single sash windows at the first and second floor levels; and in the third-floor gables are pairs of 8/8 double hung sash set under drip molds. A metal fire escape (date unknown) attached to the third bay near the southwest corner of the building provides emergency egress from the third floor level to the ground. The west doorway exits into Eccles Garden, a small formally landscaped area of grass, mature trees, and brick walkway, all surrounded by a low stone wall; this garden was installed in 1983 as a memorial to the school's fifth headmaster, Dr. Willet L. Eccles.

The north elevation of Memorial Schoolhouse, which faces extensive athletic fields, also has a similar character to the south and west elevations. *(Photo #8.)* Like the south façade, the north elevation is divided into five bays, with red brick roof gables above the first, third, and fifth bays; but the composition of this elevation is different from that of the primary façade in several ways. The first and fifth bays are treated as mirror images of each other: each is divided vertically, with bands of windows balanced by 2-story projecting brick pavilions offset to align with the junctions between the first/second and fifth/fourth bays.. These bays are capped by decorative cast stone parapets with oculi, pilaster strips, and ball finials at the corners, identical to the pavilion parapet on the west elevation.) Each of the brick pavilions has an entrance partially below grade, reached by a short flight of concrete steps leading down into an area way; both of these rectangular doorways are trimmed in cast stone and feature simple wood and glass doors. (Note that these two doors provide access into and egress from the east and west stairways, between the first floor and the basement levels.) Window treatments are the same on both first and second floor levels: groups of four 12/6 double hung windows in the plane of the wall, and groups of three 6-light casements in the pavilion. (The casements are smaller and shorter than the double hung windows, and at the first floor level, they do not align with the neighboring double hung sash.) Up at the third floor level, centered in a large gable are groups of three double hung sash: 6/6, 8/8, and 6/6, set under drip molds.

The second, third, and fourth bays of the north elevation are all in the same wall plane. The second and fourth bays have groups of four 12/6 double hung windows on both first and second floors. The third bay, in the center of the elevation, features an entryway on the first floor, a group of three 12/6 double hung windows on the second floor, and a pair of 8/8 double hung windows under a drip mold in the gable. The composition of the center entryway follows a Palladian arrangement, with a double-leaf wood and glass door underneath a glass transom

and shallow cast-stone shell hood, flanked on each side by 12/6 double hung windows topped by cast-stone cornices extending from the springers of the door hood. (A pair of aluminum storm doors with transom panel, all painted dark brown, is installed over the original doors.)

At the northeast corner of the Schoolhouse is a 2-story brick, flint, and stone turret with crenellation at the top. This turret abuts the 2-story slype (passageway) that separates Memorial Schoolhouse from the Church of St. George, and was added at the behest of John Nicholas Brown while the Church was being constructed, sometime between 1924-1927. (In 1924, Brown wrote of this turret: "It is to be built of the brick of the Memorial Schoolhouse and the stone of the Chapel combined, thus making a transition both in form and in color between the two buildings."[10]) What little of the east elevation of the Schoolhouse is visible can only be seen from the northeast: part of an east-facing roof gable rises above the turret, capped in stone with a ball finial at the peak, like all other gables on the building.

The Schoolhouse has copper gutters and decorative downspouts (similar in character to those found on the Little Chapel and the Church). On the north roof slope are two large, rectangular, red brick internal chimneys oriented with their longer axes running north-south, one between the first and second bays and the other between the fourth and fifth bays. Both are capped with four decoratively articulated red brick flues. The wooden cupola (which originally contained a bell, removed in 1949) straddles the main ridge of the roof at the center of the building. Open to the weather, the cupola has an octagonal shape and an ogee-curved lead-coated copper roof topped with a weathervane in the image of St. George and the dragon.

The Schoolhouse retains its original floor plan, although modifications have been made to flooring, walls, ceilings, and interior doors in many areas of the building. Entering from the main entrance in the south façade, one comes into a large entrance hall with a fireplace in its east wall. *(Photos #9 and #10.)* All materials in this hall appear to be original: the floor is polished stone; the walls are paneled wood wainscotting up to a height of about 5 feet, with plaster above; and the plaster ceiling has a grid of cross beams. The wainscotting and the ceiling beams give this room a distinctly Tudor feel. The ceiling plasterwork is quite remarkable: each of the beams is covered with copious ornament, and there are medallions in each area of the ceiling between the beams. Two built-in wood and glass display cases stand at the southeast and southwest corners of the hall.

On the east wall, the fireplace is surrounded by cast stone trim. On a large paneled wooden overmantel is the memorial to the school's World War I dead: sixteen panels inscribed with

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10 Brown, "The Chapel," in *Alumni Bulletin*, March 1924, p. 9.

their names, surmounted by a brief elegiac verse also carved into the wood. (Frederick Rhinelander King, Class of 1904, designed this memorial; Leonard Bacon, Class of 1905, wrote the verse.) Across from the fireplace, on the west wall above the wainscotting, is a large Italian marble plaque inscribed with the names of the twenty-nine St. George's men who died in World War II, along with a brief verse; also designed by Frederic Rhinelander King, this memorial was installed in 1949. The north wall of this hall contains a large arched doorway, with four stone steps leading up to a spacious classroom (originally the assistant headmaster's office); the wood and glass double doors are flanked with sidelights of wood and opaque glass, and surmounted by an arched leaded glass transom divided by mullions into three sections. At either side of this doorway are small stone plaques containing the names of the two St. George's alumni who died in Korea, and four in Vietnam. All finishes in the entrance hall appear to be original (save for those memorial plaques added later) and in very good condition, making this among the best preserved interior spaces within the building.

Adjacent and parallel to the north wall of the entrance hall are short flights of stone steps leading up to tall arched openings that frame the east and west corridors, leading to the first floor classrooms and the stairways that provide vertical circulation throughout the building. The east end of the east corridor has a door to the slype between the Schoolhouse and the Church, thus providing direct access between the two buildings. Both the east and west corridors run across the center of the building, with three classrooms on the south side and two classrooms plus a stairway on the north side. These corridors and classrooms exhibit a mix of original and later finishes. Corridor walls appear to be plaster (or at least plaster veneer), with painted wood baseboards, chair rails, and ceiling moldings. Corridor floors are linoleum tile. The west corridor has two interior sets of doors: one, with double doors, located just east of the stairway; the other, with a single door, located between the stairway and the west exterior door; as well as a built-in glass display case near its east end. All original classroom doors have been replaced with modern wood elements; transoms are framed above these doors, originally made of glass but now infilled with a plaster veneer finish. Wood trim around the classroom doorways and windows is simple in character. The classrooms have plaster (or at least plaster veneer) walls, wood baseboards, carpeted floors, and dropped acoustic tile ceilings. Both stairways have double wood doors set within plaster walls trimmed with applied wood strips, giving a "half-timbered" effect that appears to be original; this treatment is repeated at the second and third floor levels. The stairways have their original stone steps, wood handrails, and plaster walls; the landing floors all have linoleum tile.

The layout of the second floor is similar to the first floor: central transverse, double-load east-west corridors leading to a large square space in the middle of the building. Here, however, the corridors have only two classrooms on the south side of the building, and one classroom

plus the stairway on the north side. The east corridor has a door at its east end leading to the triforium gallery in the adjacent Church. Corridor, classroom, and stairway finishes are similar to those found on the first floor (although corridor floors at this level are carpeted). In the center of the second floor is a very large, 2-story lecture hall called the Study Hall, overlooked by a wooden gallery against its east wall at the third floor level. *(Photo #11.)* The Study Hall floor is carpeted; there is wooden bench seating along the north and south walls (including in the semi-hexagonal south bay window), and the wood floor is raised at the south side of the room to a height of perhaps 6-8 inches. The plaster walls have wood wainscotting to a height of perhaps 4 feet on all four sides. Windows and doors are simply trimmed in dark wood. The ceiling arches over the space; its acoustic tiles are not original. Centered near the west wall of the Study Hall is a small raised platform for the teacher's desk, with a blackboard mounted on the wall behind within a large, arched recess. Doors on either side of the blackboard give access to a small foyer, off of which are additional classrooms, an office, and the west stairway. Facing the blackboard, the right-hand doorway contains a pair of wood double doors that appear to be original, while the left-hand doorway contains a single-leaf modern replacement wood door set within an infilled larger opening. The gallery along the east wall is reached by a flight of wooden steps at its south end, rising up from the Study Hall floor; the gallery has a simple wood railing, linoleum tile floor, and carpeted platforms providing a seating area. Centered in the east wall underneath the gallery are double-leaf wood doors, which appear to be replacements set into an infilled larger opening.

The third floor layout is almost identical to that of the second floor, with similar finishes for corridors, classrooms, and stairways. The east and west ends of the building at this level are separated by the upper part of the Study Hall. The east corridor has an interior doorway within it, just east of the stairway, and also a wood single-leaf door leading to the gallery overlooking the Study Hall. The west corridor has a narrow, steep secondary stairway at its east end, leading up to the roof.

Built as a classroom building, the Memorial Schoolhouse continues in its original function.

The Church of St. George (1924-1928) [11]

Constructed between 1924-1927 and officially consecrated on St. George's Day (April 23), 1928, the Gothic Revival style Church of St. George (commonly referred to as "the Chapel") is not only the most visually prominent, but also the most historically and architecturally

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11 This author is gratefully indebted to St. George's School Archivist John G. Doll for his 2003 book, *Heart of the Hilltop*, which gives an exhaustively researched and meticulously detailed description of the Chapel.

significant building on campus. *(Photo #1.)* Designed by the pre-eminent ecclesiastical architect of his day, Ralph Adams Cram of the Boston firm of Cram & Ferguson, in close collaboration with the donor of the building, John Nicholas Brown, it is one of the most unique and extraordinarily beautiful boarding school chapels in America. Much smaller than its medieval counterparts, the Chapel nonetheless presents the same feeling of height and weightlessness so characteristic of the Gothic.[12] Character-defining features include: the stone materials; the buttresses; the rib-vaulted roof; the pointed-arch window and door openings; the stained glass windows outlined with stone tracery; the cloister with its fan-vaulting, pointed arches and stone tracery; the great tower; and the copious ornamentation inside and out, combining both traditional Christian religious and contemporary iconography. The Church of St. George clearly contributes to the overall historical and architectural significance of this complex of three buildings and to the campus as a whole. The alterations that have occurred since 1928 (most notably, the installation of the stained glass windows) have not detracted from the Gothic Revival character of the original design. It is furthermore not only a masterful work of architectural design and artistry, all executed at the highest level of quality, but it also is indelibly stamped with the personality of its donor, John Nicholas Brown, making it a truly unique building whose significance transcends its ecclesiastical purpose. The Chapel retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The following narrative presents a general overall description of the Chapel, followed by more detailed descriptions of iconography, sculpture, stained glass windows, organ screen, and flooring.

The primary building material, gray limestone, was quarried and cut by the J.P. Falt Company in Bedford, Indiana. Other major materials include gray Tennessee marble (the nave floor), pink Westerly granite and white limestone (the Maze in the ante-chapel floor), Rhode Island "Oakland White" granite (in all other areas where granite is used), red brick (on the south elevation around the Bishop's Door, and the exterior of the southeast stair tower), and lead-coated copper (on the roof).

The Chapel is shaped like a T, comprising a long nave running east-west and a short, perpendicular transept at the west end, forming an ante-chapel. (See attached floor plan.) Viewed from the exterior, the Chapel is exposed on its north, east, and south elevations; the west elevation abuts the Memorial Schoolhouse, so the west side of the great tower is visible only above the roof. The north, east, and south elevations all feature buttresses and large,

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12 Savoie, p. 4, notes that the entire Church of St. George, including its tower, could fit inside the immense sanctuary of France's medieval Gothic Cathedral of Beauvais – with room to spare.

pointed-arch windows with stone mullions and tracery; all the windows are surmounted by label molding, with decorated stops. A narrow 1-story cloister, 79 feet long and 8 feet wide, runs along the south side of the nave, and partially obscures the buttresses there. *(Photos #12 and #13.)* The cloister has an elaborate fan-vaulted ceiling decorated with 15 carved and painted heraldic shields, representing various saints; and four pointed-arch openings, one a doorway and the other three windows with stone mullions and tracery (there is no glass in the south cloister windows). Both the nave and the ante-chapel have end gable roofs clad in double layers of batten seam lead-coated copper; gutters and downspouts are also copper, and the downspouts all have decorative tops. The gable ends of the ante-chapel roof are parapeted; on top of the parapet over the south transept is a tall cross made of lead, encircled with thorns (made by W.F. Rose Company).

The building has six major entrances, each with a heavy teak door sporting massive, but decorative, wrought iron hardware (strap hinges, ring-shaped door handles and latch plates) crafted by master blacksmith Samuel Yellin. Three of these doors are in the ante-chapel, and three are in or near the sanctuary.

Of the three major entrances into the ante-chapel, the "Schoolhouse Door" is in the west wall, the "Bishop's Door" in the south wall of the south transept, and the "Donor's Door" in the east wall of the south transept. All of these are double-leaf doors. The Schoolhouse Door is set into a pointed-arch opening of stone framed with groups of slim colonnettes; each leaf of the door has a small diamond-shaped window of leaded glass in it. The interior face of the doors is plain, with decorative wrought iron hardware, but the exterior has a carved pattern of circles inside squares. The pointed-arch shaped opening for the Bishop's Door has carvings of St. George and the dragon, as well as leaves and flowers, on its exterior, while the double door itself is quite simple, with no decoration save the hardware and a door knocker). On the interior, an elaborate carved label molding of stone frames the Bishop's Door. The interior face of the door has diagonal crossbars forming a pattern of diamonds; in the lintel above is a carving of St. George and the dragon by sculptor Joseph Coletti; above that, a memorial to the school's founder, John Byron Diman; and above that, the carved and painted stone coats of arms of St. George's School, and of the Episcopal Bishop and Diocese of Rhode Island. The Donor's Door *(Photo #14)* is the most architecturally (or at least artistically) significant of all the major entrances, with its intricate carvings by Coletti on its inside face, showing images of St. John the Evangelist and St. Nicholas; above its plain lintel is a memorial to Emily Diman, sister of the school's founder. The exterior of the Donor's Door *(Photo #13)* has an elaborate pointed arch surround, with statues of St. John and St. Nicholas to either side and the carved, painted Brown family coat of arms along with a Latin inscription above (all by Coletti; both statues are signed).

The other three doors are all in or adjacent to the sanctuary. The "Priest's Door" is on the south side of the nave under the organ screen; its pointed arch opening is surmounted by a carved stone image of Jubal Cain, with a harp and pan pipes in his hands, and with stone tracery. The door itself is a single-leaf teak wood element; on its inside face are diagonal crossbars forming a pattern of diamonds, each diamond containing an intricately carved medallion. The exterior face of the Priest's door has no carvings, only decorative hardware; above the lintel is a carved stone angel holding a blank scroll, and an empty stone niche. Adjacent to the Priest's Door is the "Altar Door" on the south side of the sanctuary, also a single-leaf teak door, with a glass light protected by a wrought iron grille, set into a rectangular opening. On the inside of the Chapel, the stone door surround is carved with leaves and flowers, and above it are three carved stone angels, each holding a verse of the Lord's Prayer. The exterior of this doorway (both door itself and surround) is very simple and unadorned, except for the typical wrought iron hardware. The rectangular "Architect's Door" on the north side of the nave near the sanctuary is quite prominent on the exterior: reached by a short flight of stone steps, flanked by delicate buttresses on each side, and surmounted by the coat of arms of Cram and Ferguson, a Latin inscription ("Nisi Dominus Aedificaverit Domum, in Vanum Laboraverunt Qui Aedificant Eam," translating as "Unless the Lord Himself built the house, those who built it labored in vain."), and two angels, singing and trumpeting the fame of architecture.[13] Above the inscription are eight lancet windows with pink and white translucent glass, with each group of four enclosed by a pointed arch of stone. Above all of this are a pierced quatrefoil rail with gargoyles and pinnacles, The exterior face of the door is plain wood with ornamental wrought iron hardware. Inside, the Architect's Door has a diamond pattern of crossbars (similar to those on the Priest's Door); and the door is set into a recess whose ceiling has exposed wooden cross beams painted decoratively.

The thirteen principal windows (five on the north side of the nave, four on its south side, one on its east end, and four in the ante-chapel) are all shaped as pointed arches with stone mullions and tracery. The tracery is very English in derivation, with a pattern of vertical rectangles overlaid by quatrefoils. These windows originally held opaque leaded glass, but the largest, in the east wall of the sanctuary, was painted in 1928 to simulate stained glass; and the other twelve have had stained glass installed at various times between 1938-2002 as additional gifts to the Chapel. In addition to these 13 principal windows, the Chapel has another ten secondary windows of plain leaded glass: four in the sanctuary (three on the north side, one on the south) and six in the ante-chapel (one each on the east side of the north and south transepts,

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13 Price, p. 668. Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. 40, attributes the inscription over the Architect's Door to Joseph Rennard, the Senior Prefect of the Class of 1924, who participated in the groundbreaking ceremony on April 23, 1924.

four in the west wall of the ante-chapel). These too are shaped as pointed arches, with stone mullions and tracery. All of the chapel windows have stone label moldings with decorated stops.

Above the buttresses, parallel to and several feet below the roofline, is a continuous line of stone molding decorated with regularly spaced stone bosses, running around the north, east, and south sides of the building. These bosses were designed by Joseph Coletti (in close collaboration with John Nicholas Brown), but carved by others. Three additional (undecorated) stone belt courses encircle the building below the level of the principal windows. Tall stone pinnacles mark the two east corners of the nave; the south pinnacle has a statue of St. Stephanus at its base, while the north pinnacle has a statue of St. John the Baptist at its base. Between the pinnacles, over the large east window, is a statue of Jesus Christ; below this window, looking upwards, are his mother Mary and Mary Magdalene. Joseph Coletti created all five of these statues.

The Chapel has four exterior towers: the square great tower, centered over the roof of the ante-chapel and rising to a height of 147 feet; the hexagonal turret tower at the northwest corner of the ante-chapel, the equivalent of 4 stories tall and containing a spiral stairway that leads up to the great tower; a 2-story rectangular stair tower attached near the southeast corner of the nave, leading up to the organ loft and down to the crypt; and a 2-story hexagonal ventilation tower attached to the southeast corner of the south transept of the ante-chapel.

The great tower rises *(Photo #15)* above the west end of the building; access is provided by means of a spiral stone staircase in the turret tower at the northwest corner of the ante-chapel. At the top of the staircase, a statue of Don Quixote overlooks the entrance to the bell-ringer's chamber at the base of the tower, 55 steps above the triforium gallery. From this enclosed room, an iron spiral staircase leads up to the bell deck. (En route up the stairs are two small doorways on the east and south sides, giving access to the area above the extrados vaulting of the nave, where winches are stationed to raise and lower the Chapel's chandeliers.) The Chapel bell, installed in 1949 and originally rung by ropes, is presently operated by electric motor; this bell replaced one on top of the adjacent Memorial Schoolhouse, and is itself a memorial to a deceased student. The bell deck, 25 steps above the bell-ringer's chamber, is open to the weather, screened by pointed-arch window openings (two on each side of the square tower) outlined with stone mullions and tracery. From here, one can see close-up views of some adjacent decorative elements: the portrait heads and gargoyles on the turret tower to the north; the large lead cross rising over the south parapet of the ante-chapel, and the depiction of the Four Winds at the top of the ventilation tower at the ante-chapel's southeast corner. In the spandrels below the bell deck openings are carvings by William F.

Ross representing the seven liberal arts (philosophy, music, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, rhetoric, and grammar), plus teaching. Underneath the bell deck window openings are carved shields (also by Ross) representing other major Christian churches in the U.S., Britain, Europe, and the Middle East: Connecticut, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Canterbury, and St. Andrew's. Rising up from the bell deck is another iron spiral stairway of 48 steps leading up to the flat roof of the tower, which is surrounded by a parapet of pierced stonework. Four large pinnacles, each flanked by two smaller pinnacles and topped with a large copper weathervane, mark the corners of the tower. (Additional pinnacles once graced the center of each parapet wall; two of these were lost in the Hurricane of 1938, and the other two were subsequently removed out of concern that frequent high winds might do similar damage in future.) From this vantage point one can see the entire St. George's campus and a large expanse of the surrounding area, including Rhode Island Sound and Narragansett Bay. On a clear day, views extending more than 24 miles southwest to Block Island and more than 32 miles east to Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts are possible.

At the northwest corner of the ante-chapel is a hexagonal turret tower, rising up the equivalent of four stories to the level of the bell deck in the adjacent great tower, and containing the stone spiral staircase that provides access to the great tower. Three small recessed multi-light casement windows are set into the north face of the turret tower; those at the 1st and 2nd floor levels are rectangular openings, while the 3rd floor is a pointed arch. Six large pointed arch window openings with recessed, leaded-glass lancet windows, mark the 4th floor level of the turret tower. Below the windows is a carved band of stone decorated with alternating angels and bosses; above the windows are six life-size portrait heads, and above those, six gargoyles. The portrait heads represent John Nicholas Brown, Ralph Adams Cram and Chester Brown of Cram & Ferguson, headmasters Stephen Cabot and Russell Nevins, and the Rev. Dr. Arthur Peaslee, master of literature. *(Photo #16.)*

The 2-story rectangular stair tower near the southeast corner of the Chapel *(Photo #12)* has a limestone and red brick exterior with a buttress at the south end, a parapeted gable slate roof facing south, copper gutters and decorative downspouts. The stair tower abuts the sacristy and choir loft (built 1968) on the south, and the Chapel's organ loft on the north. The ground floor level of this building forms the east cloister, and has a large pointed arch window with stone mullions and tracery, infilled with leaded clear glass. Within the cloister, the west elevation of the stair tower appears to be concrete, painted white. This wall has a square window with an antique Spanish window grille over it (illuminating the stairs down to the crypt), and a pointed-arch doorway (with typical heavy carved teak door and decorative wrought iron hardware) leading into the statio (vestibule) of the stair tower. At the second floor level, the stair tower has small, stone-framed, pointed-arch, leaded-glass casement windows on its east

and west elevations. This stair tower contains two stairways. One, made of wood, rises in three turns up to the organ loft and a small restroom, and also provides access to the choir loft in the adjacent building. The other stairway, made of stone, descends in several turns down to the crypt and treasury rooms underneath the Chapel. These two stairways meet at the ground floor level in a statio that also connects to the Chapel, its cloister, the Little Chapel, and the sacristy. The statio has a beautiful ceiling of exposed crossed beams *(Photo #17)* elaborately painted in red, green, blue, and gold; suspended from that ceiling is a wrought iron chandelier by Samuel Yellin. The Chapel's Altar Door is set into the north wall of the statio. A double-leaf, heavy teak door (with diamond-patterned cross bars on its interior face) in a pointed-arch opening in the statio's west wall leads the east cloister; and a third door in the east wall leads to the Little Chapel. All three of these doors are the same heavy wood with decorative wrought iron hardware found elsewhere in the Chapel. The south side of the statio is open, providing access to the stairway and to the sacristy next door.

The slim, hexagonal ventilation tower attached to the southeast corner of the south transept of the ante-chapel rises just above the transept roofline, and has several stone belt courses matching those on the larger Chapel. Near the top of the ventilation tower is a sculpture of the Four Winds, carved by Andrew Dreselly. *(Photo #15.)*

Inside the Chapel, the simple plan is fairly typical of an ecclesiastical building on a school campus. The 100-foot long, 29-foot wide nave has 3 stepped levels of wooden stall seating along its north and south sides, leaving a narrow aisle about 10 feet wide between. *(Photos #18 and #19.)* These stalls were intended to seat worshippers from the school community, who would sit facing each other, while visitors would sit in the ante-chapel facing the altar at the far end. The ante-chapel is 59 feet long and 25 feet deep; against the east wall of the north transept is a small side altar that has traditionally been used as a baptistry. Soaring 53 feet above the nave, ante-chapel, and sanctuary is a ribbed vaulted ceiling, which in the ante-chapel alone is decorated with carved stone bosses. Clusters of colonnettes against the north and south walls support the transverse ribs in the vault above.

Hanging from the nave ceiling above the stalls are ten Czech crystal chandeliers, each consisting of 760 pieces of glass, made to John Nicholas Brown's specifications by Edward F. Caldwell and Co. of New York.[14] While such chandeliers would not, in fact, have been found in a medieval Gothic church, Brown had found the model for these chandeliers in a church in

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14 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, pp. 122-123, notes that Caldwell and Co. was a nationally prominent manufacturer of lighting fixtures; some of the firm's other early 20th century commissions included the White House and Radio City Music Hall.

Spain, and insisted that it be reproduced for the St. George's School Chapel. The chandeliers can be winched up and down for repair or cleaning. Two other, brass chandeliers grace the ante-chapel; these had in fact been designed to be used throughout the Chapel, until Brown made his trip to Spain.

The sanctuary walls are decorated on all three sides with sculpted tracery; regularly spaced niches within the tracery contain eighteen sculpted stone angels, each holding a scroll carved with a verse of the Lord's Prayer. Above the arched, columned niches are alternating sculptures of cherubs and fauna. East of the altar rail, the sanctuary floor rises up from the nave floor in three broad steps; inset into the floor on either side of the altar are two circular discs of extremely rare Egyptian red imperial porphyry stone. The altar (which is usually covered with a cloth) is ten feet long and made of white Vermont marble, with black Vermont marble panels in each of its sides. Behind the altar, hidden by a cloth wall hanging, is a frame for a reredos, which was intended as part of the original design but has never been created. To the right of the altar, in the southeast corner of the sanctuary, are a credence table (for the vessels for Holy Communion) and a piscina (a stone basin for rinsing the chalice). Along the south wall of the sanctuary are the sedilla (seats for the clergy): these are stalls of carved stone.

Underneath the southeast end of the nave is the crypt, measures 28 by 32 feet; an adjacent treasury room measures 12 feet square. (These are in the same location as they would be in a medieval church. [15]) Twenty-one stone steps lead down (in a double-wind staircase that widens as it descends) from the statio to a large landing, and an additional 7 steps down to the crypt and treasury. Everything at this level of the building is built entirely of stone: walls, floors, and ceilings. This level of the Chapel appears more Norman than English Gothic: the structural elements here are more massive than in the Chapel proper, and the vaulted ceilings have flatter arches, with no decorative ribbing. [16] The crypt was designed to receive burials, with a number of tombs underneath its floor, but chronic water problems (stemming from when the Chapel was first constructed) have precluded any interments here. The crypt door and the treasury door are both massive, crafted of teak, and framed inside and out with carved stone pointed arches. (Behind the treasury door is a second, heavy metal door designed by Hall's Safe Company.) On the crypt door are large wrought iron strap hinges that were once infilled with leather, although the leather has suffered from water damage and is greatly deteriorated. *(Photo #20.)* Sculptures framing the crypt door, inside and out, depict the Biblical tales of

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15 Ibid., p. 93.

16 Brown, "The Chapel," *Alumni Bulletin*, March 1924, p. 10.

Daniel in the Lion's Den and Jonah and the Whale, as well as other allegories of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Inside the crypt is a massive square column whose capital exhibits eight carvings, one on each side and one on each corner. The sculptures on the four sides are images of the four rivers of Paradise, representing the four Gospel writers: the Gihon River (St. Matthew) on the north, the Tigris (St. Mark) on the west, the Euphrates (St. Luke) on the south, and the Pison (St. John) on the east. The corner sculptures are all symbols of the fruits of Paradise: oranges, peaches, pears, plums, grapes, temple oranges, and pomegranates. All of these carvings are the work of Joseph Coletti, who signed several of the pieces.

Cram's 1922 essay in the school's *Alumni Bulletin* noted that he took inspiration for the Chapel cloister from England's Gloucester Cathedral, but he modeled the overall design concept on another, smaller, late 13th century English Gothic church: St. Stephen's Church in the City of Westminster in London. The Chapel echoes that medieval church's dimensions and rectangular character, with its squared-off apse (where the sanctuary is located), its single large apse window, and its seating lining the sides of the nave so that worshippers face each other rather than the altar. St. Stephen's does not have an ante-chapel at the west end, nor a small cloister to the south; Cram added these features.[17]

Furthermore, while the predominant character of the Chapel may be English Gothic, some features are derived from Spanish architecture of the Middle Ages and later periods. Both Cram and John Nicholas Brown had traveled extensively in Spain, and brought back not only design ideas but in Brown's case actual architectural elements for use in this Chapel. (In his autobiography, Cram called the interior of the Cathedral of Seville "the noblest interior of all Gothic cathedrals," and refers to Spanish Gothic architecture in general as "the greatest architectural creation of Catholic Europe." [18]) In addition to the crystal chandeliers described above, other Spanish-inspired features of the Chapel include the turret tower with its spiral staircase in the northwest corner of the ante-chapel. The turret tower's shallow-pointed-arch open doorway with elaborate stone surround is known as the "Spanish Door" or "Traveler's Door," and came from a motif Brown saw at the Cathedral of Zamora. Carrying out the Spanish theme, above the doorway is the painted, carved stone coat of arms of Christopher Columbus, who claimed the New World for Spain. Above that are two narrow lancet window openings, and above those, a statue of St. Christopher (namesake of Columbus, and patron saint of travelers) by Joseph Coletti. At the top of the spiral stairs is a statue of another Spanish wanderer, Don Quixote. Brown also had several pieces of antique Spanish wrought iron

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17 Savoie, p. 4.

18 Cram, *My Life in Architecture*, pp. 140-141.

installed throughout the Church: a 15th century dragon-shaped knocker on his own Donor's Door, a 16th century window grille on the exterior of the Altar Door, and a 17th century window grille on the east wall of the cloister, sheltering a window (designed to fit the grille) that illuminates the crypt stairs below.

Attached to the west end of the ante-chapel is a long, narrow, 2-story stone structure called a slype, that provides a north-south passageway between the Memorial Schoolhouse and the Church of St. George. On its south side, the adjacent Hill Student Center (1968) perpendicularly abuts the slype at the second floor level. Under that is the south slype door, a slightly recessed pointed arch doorway with a heavy wooden door sporting decorative wrought iron hardware, two arched glass lights, and a diamond-shaped pattern of crossbars on its inside face. By contrast, the north slype door is a rounded arch, and the heavy wooden door (which also has decorative hardware, two arched, leaded glass lights, and a diamond-shaped pattern of crossbars on its inside face) is more deeply recessed into the opening. Mounted over this doorway is a 5'-9" stone statue of St. George with the slain dragon at his feet, perhaps the most acclaimed piece of Joseph Coletti's sculpture on this building. *(Photo #21.)* (In 1973, this statue fell to the ground and shattered; it was almost completely restored, minus the lance in St. George's hand, by renowned Rhode Island sculptor Felix deWeldon, who also created the Iwo Jima monument in Washington, D.C.). The label molding surround the upper portion of the north slype doorway has two decorated stops. Above the statue of St. George is a pair of multi-light casement windows. To the right side of the doorway is the small turret abutting the Memorial Schoolhouse; to the left is the Chapel's turret tower.

Inside the slype, the first floor level is entirely enclosed; the floor itself is polished stone tiles, while the walls are of stone. In addition to the north and south doors, the slype also has heavy wooden doors in the center of its east and west walls, leading to the Chapel and the Schoolhouse, respectively. The second floor of the slype is the "triforium gallery," with a large pointed-arch opening (aligning with the Schoolhouse Door below) and two smaller lancet windows in the east wall overlooking the Chapel's ante-chapel and nave. This gallery, which can provide additional seating for visitors, can be reached by climbing the spiral stairway in the turret tower, or by entering from the second floor of the Schoolhouse.

Iconography

In medieval times, when few people other than the clergy were literate, a picture could truly be worth a thousand words. The builders of Gothic churches used sculpture, stained glass, and other works of art and ornament not only to beautify the house of worship, but also to tell stories and convey Christian teachings to those who could not read the Bible for themselves.

Thus, many decorative elements had a dual purpose. For example, animals were fraught with symbolism in both secular and religious medieval art; the myth of the unicorn, filtered though a Christian interpretation, became an allegory of the Incarnation, with the Virgin Mary as the maiden, Jesus Christ as the unicorn, and the Angel Gabriel as the hunter.[19] (Not all of the symbolism in Gothic churches was religious, either. Humor can be quite effective in storytelling, so occasionally one finds comical human figures with silly facial expressions or caricatured physical features, often tucked away in a corner or perched up high so that they are less visible than the religious iconography. Undoubtedly some of these figures represented real people, and so would have been in-jokes to the artists who created them, if not also to the congregation at that time.) Gothic iconography might be readily understood, or it might be deeply obscure, a puzzle for the ages.

At St. George's School, the Chapel's astonishingly extensive, diverse, and imaginative iconography pays homage to the great Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages by evoking both a deep sense of spirituality and a distinctly playful sense of humor, and also by conveying multiple layers of meaning. John Nicholas Brown and Ralph Adams Cram chose the iconography for the Chapel "in the medieval tradition of introducing references to the contemporary world as well as the biblical." [20] As might be expected, the largest, most prominent, and most often repeated images represent the Christian faith: Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Biblical stories, angels, and saints, most notably St. George, who appears several times, as do St. John and St. Nicholas, namesakes of the donor. These images are found all over the Chapel in statuary, stained glass, and carvings. But many of the smaller decorative images fall into five other categories of iconography. Maritime images reference the Chapel's seaside location as well as Rhode Island's and the Brown family's historic ties to the shipping trade. Historical images reference the original 13 American colonies as well as those countries whose peoples have immigrated to the U.S. Naturalistic images of plants and animals abound, often symbolizing human virtues or personality traits. Medieval images include gargoyles, grotesques, coats of arms, and heraldic shields. And finally, real-life images recall people and activities associated with St. George's School and with the era of the late 1920s when the Chapel was constructed. A lengthy article about the Chapel in the May 1929 issue of *The Architectural Forum* expressed the author's "...appreciation of the charming facility of the Gothic manner for telling stories and preserving symbolism ..."[21]

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19 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. 67.

20 Ibid, p. viii.

21 Price, p. 661.

The sheer volume of iconography on this building prevents a detailed description of each and every piece of ornament, but three specific examples are discussed below. Other examples of each of the various categories of iconography are included in the following discussions of sculpture, stained glass, organ screen, and flooring.

An example of real-life images that are not only comical but also have a deeper meaning can be found on the label molding stops on either side of the north slype door, underneath the statue of St. George. Here are two carved grotesques depicting a baseball player and a football player (ostensibly Babe Ruth and Red Granger, two American sports heroes of the early 20th century). The inclusion of these images on a religious building is amusing in and of itself, and their position facing the athletic fields is also a visual pun. They speak to an important part of the St. George's School experience: playing sports and cheering for the home team. Their placement on a doorway that leads to both the Chapel and the Memorial Schoolhouse symbolizes the school's mission to produce healthy minds, bodies, and souls; yet at the same time, their deferential position beneath St. George sends a message that play must sometimes defer to other, more serious pursuits.

The ante-chapel is rife with images of chivalry, representing a code of conduct that St. George's students might be encouraged to emulate and symbolized first and foremost by St. George himself, who appears here in two of the Chapel's major works of art. In the rib-vaulted ceiling over the ante-chapel is a massive (4 feet across, 18 inches deep, 3 tons in weight) circular stone boss representing St. George on horseback killing the dragon with his lance. *(Photo #22.)* Painted in a polychrome scheme of red, white, green, blue, yellow, gray, silver, and gold, this is one of the most striking icons in the building. Nearby, in the north wall of the ante-chapel, is the "Chivalry Window," showing St. George with the slain dragon at his feet in pride of place in the center. *(Photo #23.)* This window also depicts several scenes from the life of St. George, as well as the coats of arms of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and the Holy Grail. Over the Bishop's Door in the south wall of the ante-chapel is another carving of St. George, the maiden, and the dragon. And at the top of the spiral staircase leading up to the great tower is a statue of Don Quixote, whose unique, if somewhat misguided, brand of chivalry adds an unexpected dash of humor to the message.

The Donor's Door in the south transept of the ante-chapel, opening into the cloister, represents the signature of the man whose personality is expressed in nearly every facet of this building: John Nicholas Brown Images of St. John the Evangelist and St. Nicholas are carved into the inside faces of the teak door, and sculpted in stone outside of it. Above the Donor's Door on the cloister side is the Brown family coat of arms, rendered in colors of red, light blue, and black; and in the adjacent cloister ceiling are carved heraldic shields representing St. John, St.

Nicholas, and St. Natalie (this last in memory of Brown's mother).

Sculptures

Most of the Chapel sculptures were designed by Joseph Coletti, in collaboration with Ralph Adams Cram and John Nicholas Brown (This project represented Coletti's first major commission as a sculptor.) Coletti executed both full-scale models and finished pieces for over 50 separate works, including all the major sculptures, in a brief three-year period (1927-1930).

Coletti's major sculptures on the exterior of the Church include nine statues, six portrait heads, and six gargoyles. Probably his most acclaimed work on this building is the statue of St. George mounted over the north slype door *(Photo #21)*. Other notable pieces are the statue of the Madonna and Child on the north wall of the ante-chapel; the statues of St. Stephanus (the first Christian martyr), Jesus Christ, St. John the Baptist, Mary, and Mary Magdalene on the east wall of the sanctuary; and the sculptures that surround the Donor's Door.

Coletti also designed (but did not personally carve) the 189 bosses that punctuate the stone moldings underneath the cornice, as well as the 42 corbels that form label molding stops at the windows. The bosses over the Chivalry Window are the only ones with a purely religious theme: such images as celestial bodies, flowers, and crowns all symbolize the Virgin Mary, whose statue overlooks this window; the window corbels here are symbols of virginity (a unicorn and a burning bush). Elsewhere on the Chapel, bosses depict a variety of flowers, plants, fruits, birds, insects, animals, fish, and objects, many with specific symbolic meanings. (E.g., pine cones represented masculinity; a bulldog, tenacity; an owl, wisdom; a monkey, student pranks and "monkeyshines;" a toad, those students who "toady up" to their teachers; and a parrot in a cage, those students who memorized rather than learned.) Contemporary "real-life" images on bosses include a crossword puzzle (with the words "bug" and "nut"), a "lounge lizard" with teacup, the date of a solar eclipse in 1925, an electrical tower and wires, and a radio transmitter. The baptistry window corbels are a scallop shell (also symbolizing Christian pilgrimage and baptism) and a seahorse, both a nod to the Chapel's seaside location, as is a nearby waterspout shaped as a school of dolphins. On the cloisters are corbels depicting six ships from various historical periods, ranging from a Roman galley and a Viking long ship to the *U.S.S. Colorado,* which in 1928 was the largest warship in the U.S. Navy.

Coletti's major sculptures inside the Church include the painted stone boss depicting St. George situated in the center of the vaulted ceiling of the ante-chapel *(Photo #22),* and four

adjacent unpainted bosses: Fauna (symbolizing creation), a crown and palms (St. George's victory over sin), peacocks (immortality), and birds and grapevines (the conversion of St. George, or the soul partaking of celestial food). Also, the statue of St. Christopher above the Traveler's Door; the carving of St. George, the maiden, and the dragon in the lintel over the Bishop's Door, and the statue of Don Quixote at the top of the tower stairs. In addition, the two angels on either side of the Architect's Door; the eighteen angels in the sanctuary; the angel corbels on both interior and exterior of the east window; and the eight major carvings in the crypt (described above). All of these were done in stone. Coletti also carved the inside face of the teak Donor's Door with images of St. John and St. Nicholas.

Much of the lesser ornamentation throughout the Chapel – vaulting, window tracery, column capitals, corbels, and bosses – was produced by other stone carvers under Coletti's (and Brown's and Cram's) direction. The Easton Studios of Bedford, Indiana, headed by Harry Thomas Easton, supplied dozens of carvers to the St. George's project; much of their work was done in Indiana and shipped to Rhode Island for installation. Two other carvers not associated with Easton Studios also contributed works to the chapel. William F. Ross created the images of the seven liberal arts, plus teaching, on the spandrals of the tower; and the shields of major churches of the world at the base of the tower. Andrew Dreselly did the sculpture of the Four Winds that decorates the ventilation turret at the south side of the chapel.

The Chapel also features numerous carved stone shields and coats of arms. The fan vaulted ceiling of the south cloister has 15 heraldic shields representing various saints, designed by the renowned medieval scholar Pierre de Chagnon LaRose (who had taught John Nicholas Brown at Harvard). LaRose also designed the coat of arms of St. George's School located over the Bishop's Door in the ante-chapel (added in 1939); this includes a red cross on a white field, symbol of St. George, as well as a pattern of black diamonds symbolizing the school's founder, Rev. John Byron Diman. Adjacent to this is another coat of arms, representing the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island and the Bishop of Rhode Island. Over the Traveler's Door in the turret tower is the coat of arms of Christopher Columbus.

Stained Glass

Originally, all of the Chapel windows were made of opaque leaded American Cathedral glass, created by the George W. Wise Company. John Nicholas Brown hoped to encourage other donors to make gifts to the Chapel, and therefore did not plan to install any stained glass as part of the original construction. (He did, however, direct that the north wall of the ante-chapel should contain scenes of St. George and Chivalry; the south side of the nave, scenes from the New Testament; and the north side of the nave, scenes from the Old Testament. Brown

wished these to be specific images, installed in a specific order; in the end, some of the mandated images were indeed installed, but not necessarily in the order that Brown had dictated.) But by the time the Chapel was completed and ready to be consecrated, no other donors had yet stepped forward. So Brown took the unusual step of having the large window in the east wall of the sanctuary painted, in an abstract pattern of red, blue, and green diamonds and elliptical shapes; the Burnham Studios in Boston did the work in 1927-1928. (Although the glass itself is non-representational, the window is divided into three panels at the top, symbolizing the Holy Trinity, and seven panels below symbolizing the seven days of Creation.) Intended as a temporary solution, the painted window was meant only to provide some color behind the altar for the consecration ceremony, but it has remained in place for over 75 years.

The Chapel now contains twelve genuine stained glass windows, installed at various times between 1938 and 2002, many of them as memorials to people with special ties to St. George's School. The Burnham Studios also created all but the two most recent of these windows using the same methods that medieval artisans used, with chemical oxides added to molten glass to create various rich colors.[22] The Burnham windows all have a central theme of a religious nature, often surrounded by medallions or other small images relating to the donor or the person commemorated.

The first of these was the Chivalry Window (so called because Brown mandated its imagery), installed in the north wall of the ante-chapel in 1938 *(Photo #23)*. This window is 31 feet tall and 12 feet wide; its sill is 10 feet above the floor. In the tracery at the top of the window are images of the Holy Grail (in the center), a lily symbolizing purity (on the left), and a lion symbolizing courage (on the right). Below the tracery, the window is divided into three tiers, each with five lancets. Around the edges of the window are the coats of arms of various Knights of the Round Table, including King Arthur at the upper left of the top tier. The top tier has an image of Jesus in the center, flanked by St. Michael the Archangel and St. Gabriel. The middle tier has St. George standing on the dragon (symbol of evil) in the center, flanked by four smaller images from his life. The bottom tier has three scenes of Biblical figures and nine coats of arms representing J. Vaughan Merrick (who was headmaster when this window was dedicated); the United States and its Army and Navy; St. George's School; and four other chivalric figures or saints, including Richard the Lion-Hearted.

Note that underneath the Chivalry Window are a number of carved plaques commemorating various individuals with close ties to St. George's School. Among these is a plaque containing

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22 Savoie, p. 5.

the name of John Nicholas Brown.

Each of the four windows on the north and south sides of the nave is 24 feet tall and 7 feet wide, and divided into three lights. The windows on the south side of the nave were installed between 1940 and 1970; those on the north side, between 1971 and 1990.

The first of the nave windows to be installed (1940) was the Powell Memorial Window, on the south side closest to the ante-chapel. Its subject is the Nativity. At the bottom of the window is a dedication to Thomas Ives Hare Powell, Class of 1905, who had died in 1939. The next window installed (1952) was the Edward Barry Wall Memorial Window, on the south side of the nave closest to the sanctuary. Its subject is the Transfiguration of Christ. A former headmaster, Russell A. Nevins, bequeathed in his will the money for this window, in memory of an alumnus of the Class of 1912 who had died in 1918. (Nevins himself is depicted in one of the portrait heads on the exterior of the turret tower.) The Hill & Dorrance Memorial Window (1969), next to the Powell Window, depicts the Parables and was a gift from Mrs. Stuart Ingersoll, the wife of Nathaniel Hill, Class of 1915. This window is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Hill and of John T. Dorrance, Jr., Class of 1937. The Fergusson Memorial Window (1970), next to the Wall Window, illustrates the Ministry of Christ and was donated by John Nicholas Brown in memory of 1st Lieutenant Robert C.L. Fergusson, Class of 1962, who was killed in Vietnam in 1967. This window includes several images of military qualifications that Fergusson had earned, as well as his Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Distinguished Service Cross honors.

On the north side of the nave, the first window installed was the Glory of God Window (1971), nearest the sanctuary, depicting images of the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. This was given by Mrs. Walter I. Metz. Next to that is the Thornblade Memorial Window (1976), showing Abraham and the Patriarchs. This commemorates Charles G. Thornblade, a master at St. George's from 1947-1965, who bequeathed the money for a Chapel window in his will. Next to that, the Choir of 1967 Window (1981) was given by Mrs. June Guthridge in appreciation of that year's choir. It illustrates Moses and Ten Commandments, as well as other givers of the Law. (One of the original medallions of this window, depicting the Confederate flag, was replaced with the Guthridge coat of arms in 1997 due to the objections of some members of the school community.) Finally, closest to the ante-chapel is the Pease Memorial Window (1990), depicting various scenes from the life of King David; it includes some Jewish iconography including a Star of David, the Torah, and some lettering in Hebrew. (Note that the organ screen also has some Hebrew lettering on it.) Henry H. Pease, Jr. was a member of the Class of 1924.

In addition to the Chivalry Window, three other stained glass windows were installed in the ante-chapel in 1982, 2000, and 2002.

Over the baptistry in the east wall of the north transept is the Buell Memorial Window (1982), whose subject is Christ. It commemorates the sixth headmaster of the school, Rev. William Ackerman Buell (Class of 1914), and in addition to depicting various scenes of Jesus's life also includes images relating to some of Buell's interests, including the masks of comedy and tragedy (theatre) and a harp (music). A fire-breathing dragon in the top of the window is apparently an affectionate family joke about Mrs. Buell.

The two most recent windows, created by artist Lyn Hovey of Boston, are unlike all the other stained glass windows in that the primary images fill the entire window opening. High above the triforium gallery in the west wall of the ante-chapel is the Welsh Memorial Window (2000), given in memory of John Welsh of the Class of 1942, by his family. The theme is the Visit of the Magi, and is unique in Chapel iconography for its depiction of ethnic diversity: the visiting kings and several angels are variously Caucasian, African, Asian, Arabic, and Hispanic. Finally, over the Bishop's Door in the south wall of the south transept is the Smith Window (2002), donated by the Smith family; the father and two sons were all living alumni at that time. This window illustrates the Transfiguration, showing Jesus flanked by Moses and Elijah, with four ethnically diverse angels and the Apostles Peter, John, and James bearing witness.

The remaining ten windows that still have their opaque American Cathedral glass are all potential sites for additional stained glass in the Chapel.

Organ Screen

Above the Priest's Door on the south side of the nave is the organ loft, with a beautiful, intricately carved wooden screen of American white oak, created by Arthur Irving of the firm of Irving and Casson of Boston. *(Photo #24.)* The screen was carved in Irving's Boston studio and installed during the week of October 16-22, 1927.

As he did with so much of the Chapel's iconography, John Nicholas Brown almost completely revised Irving's original design for the organ screen. Its main theme is taken from the words of Psalm 150, which urges the faithful to praise God through music. Thus, the screen contains images of musicians playing lyres, harps, trumpets, strings, pipes, and cymbals, as well as dancers and singers. It also includes images of real people, saints, angels, and figures from Greek mythology, all associated with music. Examples include Guido d'Arezzo, a Benedictine monk who invented the musical scale in the 11th century; St. Cecelia, inventor of the organ and

patron saint of musicians and of sacred music; Apollo, Greek god of poetry and music; and Orpheus, whose playing of the lyre could soothe the savage beast. Also represented are the eight modes of music relating to Gregorian chants from the Middle Ages. Many of the images have Latin inscriptions around them, some of which have been difficult to translate and interpret and thus are not yet fully understood.[23] Near the bottom of the screen is an inscription in Hebrew, rendered in gold leaf: "Alleluia." Under the vaulting at the very bottom of the screen are images of the Creation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Second Coming.

The original organ of the Chapel was a second-hand instrument that John Nicholas Brown had purchased from a Unitarian church in Winchester, Massachusetts; this organ was small enough to be entirely installed within the organ loft on the south side of the nave. In 1939, that organ was replaced with a new pipe organ made by the Ernest M. Skinner Company of Methuen, Massachusetts. Donated by Mrs. Edith de Long as a memorial to her grandson, Richard L. Perry, Class of 1927, this was a massive instrument, the equivalent of two stories tall with 1,996 pipes; its console was installed separately on the north side of the nave across from the organ loft. (In 1963, the Chapel ceiling was sealed with a transparent coating in an attempt to improve the acoustics; another coating was reapplied in 1997.) Twenty-seven years later, in 1966, the old organ was updated with a new console and a rebuild of the Skinner Organ, made by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut. The funding for this work was donated by Mrs. A. Livingston Kelley in memory of her husband, Class of 1906, who had also served on the school's Board of Trustees. This rebuilt organ was designed with five divisions of pipes, three of which fit behind the original organ screen. The other two divisions (positiv and antiphonal), which have never been installed, were intended to be placed, respectively, on the north side of the nave over the organ console, and on the west wall of the ante-chapel on either side of the triforium gallery. The organ underwent a major restoration effort in 1998; restoration of the organ screen is planned for mid-late 2004.

Flooring

A labyrinth or maze was a common feature on the wall or the floor of a medieval Gothic cathedral. (A labyrinth, which twists and turns but has only one pathway that leads into the center and back out again, is distinct from a maze, which is a complicated puzzle of numerous pathways, wrong turns, and dead ends, designed to confuse.[24]) The faithful would laboriously work their way through the labyrinth or maze, often on their knees, to vicariously complete the

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23 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, pp. 109-118.

24 Ibid., p. 77.

difficult pilgrim's journey to Rome or the Holy Land. This experience can be disorienting, even hypnotic: "It temporarily disturbs rational conscious orientation . . . yet in this descent into chaos the inner mind is opened to awareness of a new cosmic dimension of a transcendent nature."[25] Labyrinths and mazes also symbolize the quest for eternal salvation.

Like its medieval prototypes, the Chapel has a maze, designed in 1924 by John Nicholas Brown and located in the floor of the ante-chapel. Measuring 25 feet by 50 feet, this maze uses alternating blocks of pink Westerly granite and white limestone to delineate paths of travel. From any one of four doorways (the Donor's Door, the Bishop's Door, the Schoolhouse Door, and the Traveler's Door), a path leads into the center of the maze, where a large inlaid bronze phoenix (made by W.F. Rose Company) symbolizes the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and eternal life. From the phoenix, an unobstructed path leads straight up the nave to the altar. *(Photo #18.)*

The floor of the nave is three steps below the floor of the ante-chapel and four steps below the floor of the sanctuary. Made of marble and mosaic tile, some of it inlaid with German black cement, this floor also was designed by John Nicholas Brown. The nave floor features seven sections, four of which are a mosaic of green, red, and black marble; and three of which have iconography: one at the west end, one in the middle, and one at the east end. The block closest to the ante-chapel at the west end of the nave depicts the coats of arms of the United States, surrounded by coats of arms from eight European countries whose peoples immigrated to America: Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Holland, Spain, Genoa (in honor of Christopher Columbus), and Prussia. The middle block has a sun surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac, all encircled with a Latin inscription from Psalm 18 ("The heavens declare the Glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. …"); Atlas supporting the heavens appears in each of the four corners. The block nearest the altar at the east end of the nave has the coats of arms of the original thirteen American states. All seven blocks are surrounded by a patterned border of marble and German black cement; within this border, at each corner of the nave aisle, are compasses that illustrate the major points of direction with animals associated with those regions of the earth. The compasses at the northwest and southeast corners of the aisle depict a polar bear (north), a moose (east), an armadillo (south), and a buffalo (west). The compasses at the northeast and southwest corners of the aisle depict a codfish (northeast), an alligator (southeast), a prairie dog (southwest), and an eagle (northwest); however these were installed incorrectly (turned 90 degrees east), so the points are not accurate relative to actual compass direction.

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25 Ibid.

As noted earlier, the floor of the sanctuary contains no iconography, only non-representative decorative patterns of marble and mosaic, inset with two discs of Egyptian Red Imperial Poryphyry.

Current Conditions

A 2002 conditions survey of the Chapel by the Providence firm of Durkee, Brown, Vivieros & Werenfels Architects indicates that since shortly after its consecration in 1928, the Chapel has been plagued by a number of masonry and water infiltration problems. Some of these problems stem from the use of new and sometimes unproven building materials and technology in the original construction. To paraphrase from the Executive Summary of the DBVW report:

- The lead coated copper batten seam roofing may have been one of the first uses of that material in the United States, and as a result much of the lead has worn off and the much of the detailing has failed. A network of cracks in the concrete slab of the roof substrate allows substantial water penetration into the building. All of the copper roofing needs replacement.

- The mortar joints, inside and out, appear to be very hard and impervious to water transmission, which has caused cracking in the limestone and entrapment of moisture within the walls. The mortar needs to be replaced with softer mortar that will allow joints to breathe.

- Early waterproofing treatments applied to the exterior walls appear to have allowed moisture to enter the building, but not to escape. This has caused effluorescence, staining, and cracking on the inside faces of the walls. The masonry needs to be cleaned and repaired without affecting the patina of age.

- The Chapel foundation's depth and dimensions were limited by the building's proximity to the Memorial Schoolhouse, and therefore the portion of the foundation which supports the great tower has settled differently from that which supports the rest of the ante-chapel. This has resulted in significant cracking in the Chapel's west wall. Both the foundation and the cracked walls need to be addressed.

- The existing subsurface drywells that were intended to accommodate water run-off from the roof may be too small, which seems to be contributing to a build-up of excess ground water at the east end of the Chapel. Much of this water finds its way into the crypt, and has

caused substantial damage there. The drywells need to be enlarged and the water damage repaired.

The DBVW report notes that while many of these problems cannot be eliminated, they can be managed; it lays out a phased 15-year plan of repairs and improvements, addressing the most urgent issues first. The goal of this plan is to preserve as much of the historic material as is practicable, replacing in kind only where needed.

[End Section 7.]

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Founded in 1896 as an Episcopal boarding school for boys, St. George's School in Middletown, Rhode Island is today one of the top private co-ed college preparatory schools in the United States, serving some 330 students.[1] This nomination includes three buildings on the St. George's campus: the school chapel formally known as the Church of St. George (1924-1928), commonly referred to as the Chapel, which is the most architecturally and historically significant building on campus; and two other attached structures: the Little Chapel (1909-1911), the original school chapel; and the Memorial Schoolhouse (1921-1923), built to honor the school's World War I dead. Situated in the heart of the campus, near the athletic fields, these three purposefully conjoined buildings illustrate the mission of St. George's: to provide its students with a well-rounded academic, physical, and religious education, intending to make them healthy in mind, body, and soul. The three buildings have different levels of integrity, but all amply meet Criteria A and C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Under Criterion A, the Church of St. George, the Little Chapel, and the Memorial Schoolhouse reflect the rise of faith-based private education in America, particularly of Episcopal boarding schools in New England, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Under Criterion C, the Little Chapel and the Memorial Schoolhouse both represent the Tudor Revival style; the Little Chapel was designed by the Providence firm of Clarke, Howe, and Homer of Providence, and the Schoolhouse by the nationally prominent New York firm of McKim Mead & White. The Church of St. George is a masterpiece of English Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, representing the work of one of the major church architects of his generation, Ralph Adams Cram of the Boston firm of Cram & Ferguson. The chapel also highlights the artistry of the renowned sculptor Joseph Coletti and master metalworker Samuel A. Yellin. Together with patron John Nicholas Brown, their collective vision produced one of the most distinctive and beautiful religious buildings in Rhode Island, if not America.

Protestant-Affiliated Boarding Schools in the 19th Century

Until the mid-18th century, American society was relatively homogeneous culturally and religiously, in the sense that most settlers came from the British Isles and espoused some form of the Protestant faith (granted the existence of many distinct denominations). In Colonial New

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1 St. George's is often mistakenly described as being located in Newport, R.I.; it was indeed originally founded in Newport in 1896, but has been located in Middletown, Newport's next door neighbor, since 1901. St. George's went co-ed in 1972.

England especially, religion and civic life were intimately intertwined: typically the first public building erected in a new settlement would be a meetinghouse, built both for worship and for town meetings. (Rhode Island, founded on the principle of religious freedom, proved the exception to this rule.) Religion was also intrinsic to education: indeed, the earliest institutions of higher learning in America were founded specifically to train the clergy of various Protestant sects, and in many communities, the local minister did double duty as teacher. (The Bible was often used as a textbook, as reading it was considered a worthwhile activity for all citizens.) The quality of formal education varied widely, but it was taken for granted that all children, including those who attended local schools supported by taxpayers, would be instructed in the common religious beliefs and moral values of American society. "From earliest Colonial times until well into the nineteenth century Americans commonly assumed that religion was the fundament of a complete education." [2]

Formal education was not compulsory during this period, nor expected to continue for at least a dozen years, as it is today. Childhood itself was very different in Colonial times: around the age of 12 or 13, most young people started working to help support their families. Acquiring adult responsibilities at such an early age meant that very few children had the time, the resources, or even the opportunity to continue their education beyond the elementary level. The concepts of "middle school" and "high school" were virtually unknown, and a college education was only available to the sons of the wealthy, who grew up to become "gentlemen" of property and affluence, or to those intending to enter the clergy or other professions. But although young men of the upper classes had the advantage of access to higher education, they had limited opportunities to prepare themselves for it. They could work with a private tutor; in urban areas they could enroll in a "Latin grammar school" offering a classical and mathematics curriculum; or they could apply to the "preparatory department" (if one existed) at their chosen college. Alternatively, they could go abroad; European secondary schools (and universities) were notably superior to American ones in this period.

The dearth of secondary educational opportunities in America led to the "age of the academies," beginning in the late 18th century and lasting well into the 19th. Leaders of the academy movement such as Benjamin Franklin argued that the newborn, all-men-are-created-equal United States needed an innovative system of secondary education to prepare its young men for "a host of unprecedented opportunities for new and as yet undefined careers for which traditional schooling was irrelevant."[3] The academies offered a well-rounded general

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2 Kraushaar, p. 19.

3 Ibid., p. 60.

education, including the classics, mathematics, art, music, history, philosophy, literature, modern languages, and general sciences. Some also offered practical courses such as navigation and land surveying, to prepare non-college-bound students for the working world. Among the first of these new schools were Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass. (1778) and Philips Exeter Academy in Exeter, N.H. (1781/1783).[4]

In Rhode Island, three academy schools were established before 1800. The first was the University Grammar School, founded in Warren in 1764 by the Rev. James Manning and affiliated with the colony's first institution of higher learning, Rhode Island College (later Brown University). The University Grammar School's curriculum included the classics, grammar and spelling, reading, and "speaking English with propriety." [5] Both school and college relocated to Providence in 1770. In 1780 the first Quaker school, the Friends School in Portsmouth, opened its doors; and in 1781 the Kingston Academy was established in North Kingstown. All three of these academies predated the establishment of the statewide system of public education in Rhode Island, between 1800-1828. (Not until the latter half of the 19th century did public education in Rhode Island became free to all, and compulsory for all children aged 6 to 16.) Despite the increasing availability of public schools in the early years of the 19th century, additional private schools were founded during this period in Wickford (North Kingstown), East Greenwich, Westerly, Bristol, Warwick, Woonsocket, North Providence, and Coventry, and at least half a dozen were established in Providence alone. Furthermore, seminaries for women opened in Warren and in Providence in 1828. An 1832 report on state education in Rhode Island indicated that 17,034 students were enrolled in 323 public schools, and another 3,403 pupils in 269 private schools.[6]

Academies often attracted students from distant locales, who would lodge with local families (students' ages varied widely, ranging from children as young as six to grown men in their 20s and 30s). The concept of the boarding school developed some forty years after the first academies were established. The idea that students derived specific benefits from living and learning under the same roof evolved from the educational philosophies of Joseph Greer Cogswell and George Bancroft, who established the short-lived but extremely influential Round Hill School in Northampton, Mass. in 1823. Inspired by examples in England, Germany, and

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4 Ibid., p. 59. Note Kraushaar says Philips Exeter was founded 1781; McLachlan says 1783 (p. 9).

5 Bicknell, p. 667.

6 Bicknell, pp. 668-679. The category "private schools" includes those offering elementary as well as secondary instruction.

Switzerland, "Round Hill marked the practical inception in the United States of ... a carefully contrived learning environment combined with the isolation of the young in a unique boarding school subculture under the watchful eye of concerned tutors." [7] Round Hill lasted only twelve years, closing in 1834 due to financial difficulties, but its heyday coincided with a time of increasing industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and social and political upheaval in America that was to continue throughout the 19th century. In this era, "...belief in the benign moral and aesthetic influence of bringing up children in secluded innocence amid the beauties of unspoiled nature held a strong appeal for upper class city-dwelling parents." [8]

Many academies, whether they boarded students or not, affiliated themselves with a religious institution and stressed the teaching of piety and moral virtues in addition to academic subjects. This dovetailed with the evolution, during the early to mid-19th century, of public education into a more institutionalized and secular system. States began to require all children to attend school, and gradually standardized curriculum requirements, teacher qualifications, and the length of the school year. In response, local communities began to seek state aid to finance their public education systems, and a fierce debate about the place of religion in public schools ensued (a debate that continues even today). Inevitably, religion disappeared from public education, to the disappointment of many Americans who wanted their faith to play a prominent role in their children's education. This desire sharpened in the 1830s and 1840s with the first waves of what would become an enormous influx of foreign immigrants of diverse faiths. As a result, by the mid-19th century many groups began to assert their own ethnic, cultural, and religious identities. "And so the unsolvable issue of religion in the public schools became an added incentive for Protestants, Catholics, and later, for Jews to build their own schools in which the true faith could be transmitted."[9]

Unlike the dissenting Protestant sects that had broken from the Church of England, the Episcopalians (who first settled in the Chesapeake Bay colonies of Maryland and Virginia) had retained their ties with the mother church. The Revolution adversely affected the status of the Anglican Church in America, and finally, in 1789, the American Episcopal Church established

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7 Kraushaar, pp. 64-65.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid, pp. 21-22. These private religious schools met with considerable resistance from those who believed that the public schools represented bedrock American ideals of democracy, patriotism, and manifest destiny; and indeed some states outlawed denominational private schools in the 1870s and 1880s. Finally in 1925, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the right of parents to send their children to any religious or other private school of their choice, while reaffirming the right of states to supervise all non-public schools.

itself as a separate entity from the Church of England and adopted its own constitution (partly in an effort to escape its Tory image). By 1830, the Episcopal Church had become "predominantly an urban and upper-class denomination," a fact that undoubtedly influenced its forays into education. [10]

The Episcopal Church founded its first theological seminary in 1817 (the General Theological Seminary, New York City), and its first college in 1824 (Hobart College in Geneva, New York). In 1828, William Augustus Muhlenberg, himself an Episcopal clergyman, established the first Episcopal secondary school, the Flushing Institute on Long Island, New York. Muhlenberg took the Round Hill School concept one step further: while Round Hill's mission was "the development of gentlemen and scholars," the Flushing Institute's mission was "to educate *Christian* gentlemen and scholars" (emphasis added), by providing religious instruction and emphasizing character development.[11] Muhlenberg also promoted the concept of his school as a family, consistent with the popular notion (still current today) that "family values" create social stability. The headmaster played the role of father, and his wife (or other female relative) the role of mother; the faculty and staff also provided familial guidance to young pupils. The Flushing Institute survived only sixteen years, until 1844, but together with the Round Hill School it set the bar for future college preparatory boarding schools affiliated with the Episcopal Church.

Most Episcopal boarding schools established after the Civil War, specifically for the education of boys, were started by groups of Episcopal clergy and laymen and affiliated with a diocese rather than a specific parish church. An alumnus of Round Hill, George Shattuck, founded St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H. (1856); its first rector, Henry Augustus Coit, had attended the Flushing Institute. Coit served St. Paul's for 40 years and never varied from his belief that "the Christian religion, backed by home influences and the manly compulsions of physical sports, is all that is necessary for the proper training of the young."[12] Coit's influence spread well beyond St. Paul's; during his lifetime he was credited with influencing the establishment of St. Mark's School in Southborough, Mass. (1865) and the Groton School in Groton, Mass. (1884).[13] St. Mark's was founded by Joseph Burnett, a successful businessman whose son had attended

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10 McLachlan, p. 109.

11 Ibid., p. 106 and 113.

12 Ibid., p. 161.

13 Ibid., pp. 156 and 179-180.

St. Paul's. Groton was founded by Endicott Peabody, who had attended school at Cheltenham in England as a youth, and much admired its combination of classical curriculum, organized athletics, and Christian worship rooted in the Anglican tradition. English public schools like Cheltenham aimed to produce the ideal British gentleman, strong in mind, body, and soul, and ready to take his rightful place as a future leader of society.[14] Endicott Peabody proposed to do much the same thing at Groton: to prepare students not only for college, but also for life, by engendering qualities such as maturity, integrity, modesty, honor, self-restraint, manliness, Christian character, and leadership. Peabody's vision had particular appeal in New England, whose cultural and intellectual center of Boston was distinctly Anglophile at this time.

Meanwhile, during the last half of the 19th century, many Americans worried about the increasing immorality of society, and sought to protect their innocent young from its evil influences as long as possible. An idealized view of childhood developed, extending into the newly defined period of adolescence, and the amount of time that an American youth might be encouraged to spend in school likewise extended, to at least the age of 17 or 18. As American colleges and universities elevated their academic standards, many becoming at least the equal of the foreign universities they emulated, reformers set about improving public secondary education and making it available to as many young people as possible, whether they intended to go on to college or not. Furthermore, attending college came to be seen as necessary for success in business as it was for the professions.

Around the turn of the 20th century, both the public high school and the private boarding school showed tremendous growth. Nationwide, between 1895 and 1910 the percentage of college students who came from public high schools increased dramatically, from 41% to 89%.[15] But during this same period, half of the top private boarding schools in the country were either founded or reorganized: Lawrenceville School (Lawrenceville, N.J.) in 1883; Groton School (Groton, N.H.) in 1884; Woodbury Forest School (Woodbury Forest, Va.) in 1889; Taft School (Waterbury, Conn.) in 1890; Hotchkiss School (Lakeville, Conn.) in 1892; Choate School (Wallingford, Conn.) and St. George's School (Middletown, R.I.), both in 1896; Middlesex School (Concord, Mass.) in 1901; Deerfield Academy (Deerfield, Mass.) in 1903; and Kent School (Kent, Conn.) in 1906. Together these became known as the "St. Grottlesex" schools, a cadre of about 16 elite institutions that also includes St. Paul's and Phillips Exeter in New Hampshire, St. Mark's and Phillips Andover in Massachusetts, and others in Pennsylvania and

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14 Then, as now, the term "public school" in England referred to an institution with exclusive admissions standards and high tuition fees.

15 McLachlan, p. 193.

Virginia.[16] Of these, St. George's School is the only one located in Rhode Island.

One of the most common, and architecturally prominent, features of a "St. Grottlesex" campus was its chapel. The English architect Henry Vaughan, who designed the chapels at both St. Paul's and Groton Schools, introduced and popularized the English Gothic Revival style for ecclesiastical buildings on boarding school campuses.

Ecclesiastical Architecture and the Gothic Revival

The 19th century was a period of rapid population growth, of industrialization and urbanization, of military conflict, and of scientific, mechanical, and technical advancements: all of which combined to engender profound social, economic, political, and cultural changes. One of the consequences of this upheaval was a widespread and determined effort to defend, strengthen, and promote the Christian faith (in all its variations) as a means of coping with the myriad problems of the modern world. Another result was a renewed intellectual interest in ancient cultures, which were seen to represent important values such as order, faith, truth, and beauty. It was in this context that the medieval Gothic church came to be seen as the perfect expression of Christian ideals, and the style was enthusiastically resurrected for ecclesiastical buildings of the 19th and early 20th centuries, first in England and then in America. The English Gothic Revival style of the Church of St. George at St. George's School epitomizes this trend.

The medieval Gothic style had its heyday from the 12th to the 15th centuries, a period when Roman Catholicism was the dominant religion throughout Europe.[17] For ecclesiastical architecture – parish churches, cathedrals, abbeys, convents, and monasteries – the immediate stylistic predecessor of the Gothic was the Romanesque. The two modes actually shared many characteristics, including stone materials, cruciform plan, regular proportions,

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16 Ibid., pp. 10-12. McLachlan takes exception to the characterization of these schools as "elitist" in the sense of "aristocratic" or "upper class." He notes that while their students were usually the children of the rich, the schools themselves were typically run by "middle-income intellectuals, moralists, and clergymen," who "consciously educated their students to avoid, abjure, and despise most of what are traditionally thought to be aristocratic or upper class values and styles of life." In this respect the American private school was quite distinct from the English public school of the late 19th and early 20th century.

17 Clark, pp. 16-17: The term "Gothic" was not used in the Middle Ages; in fact, the style itself remained unnamed for centuries, being understood not so much as an architectural fashion as, simply, the correct way to build a church. The term appears to have been coined in Italy during the Renaissance as a slur against the pointed arch, which was mistakenly attributed to invention by the Goths and therefore dismissed by Palladio and other classicists as unrefined, even barbaric.

arched fenestration, many columns, one or more towers, a vaulted roof, rich ornamentation, and an underground crypt for burials and the display of holy relics.[18] However, the Romanesque church's distinctive rounded arches supported by massive walls and columns conveyed a ponderous appearance, while the Gothic church (despite its considerable size) had nothing like that sense of weight and bulk.

The transition from Romanesque to Gothic occurred not because of a change in religious doctrine or ritual, but rather because of two major refinements in the builders' arts: the pointed arch and the buttress, both mastered by stonemasons by the mid-12th century. Unlike the rounded arch, the pointed arch's height did not depend on its span; furthermore, the pointed arch could distribute the weight of the stone above it by concentrating loads at specific points and directing the thrust to the ground by means of buttresses built against the outside walls. These techniques in turn enabled the development of ribbed vaulting for ceilings, in which the weight-bearing ribs were enriched with molded profiles and stone bosses that made them an integral part of the overall decorative scheme of the interior. Ribbed vaulting also relieved the loads on walls and columns, so that large expanses of windows could be introduced into walls, and interior columns could be slimmed down.

The hallmarks of the Gothic style all served a spiritual as well as a structural or artistic purpose. The pointed arch, the buttress, and the ribbed vaulted ceiling all conveyed a strong sense of verticality that drew the eye upward toward God in His heaven. Pinnacles, towers, and spires rising above the roof further reinforced that sense, and also ensured that the church building visually dominated its surroundings, much as the Catholic Church dominated the lives of the people. The walls seemed almost ethereal, with their large expanses of glass supported by delicate stone tracery, while the roof supported by slender columns appeared to float over the nave, conveying a sense of weightlessness that spoke to the Christian promise of forgiveness and salvation. Large windows brought light, also a symbol of God, into the interior; wrought in colored glass that told stories of both the Old and New Testaments, and of the miracles and martyrdom of the saints, these windows evoked "a sense of a jeweled casket to house the treasures of spirituality …"[19] Plentiful stone sculptures and carvings held images of Jesus, the Holy Family, the apostles, other Biblical characters, the saints, and angels, as well

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18 Norman, pp. 115-135: Of course, not every Middle Ages religious building in Western Christendom conformed to the Romanesque or Gothic styles. Some monastic orders, such as the Benedictines, the Cistercians, and the Franciscans, built very simple functional structures, reflecting their renunciation of worldly wealth and their focus on the early, basic principles of the faith.

19 Ibid., p. 154.

as common folk, animals, and plants. ("As plants grow upwards toward the light, so the perfect decorative device of a Gothic building, with its upward thrust, is foliage."[20]). Intricate decorative ribbing in the vaulted ceiling might be patterned after a star, a flower, or a fan; carved stone bosses at the intersection of two or more ribs reminded the faithful that God watched over them from above.

The Gothic style expressed religious exultation and transcendence, and by the end of the 12th century had become *de rigeur* for religious buildings all over Europe. The English soon developed their own version of the style, which evolved in three distinct phases: the "lancet" or "Early English" (late 12th century), the "Decorated" (mid 13th - early 14th centuries), and the very ornate "Perpendicular" (mid 14th - early 16th centuries), which innovated the beautiful, delicate fan vaulting seen, for example, at King's College Chapel at Cambridge University. Neither the Renaissance nor the Protestant Reformation managed to completely eradicate the Gothic style in England, especially outside of London. Although the various Protestant sects renounced all forms of ecclesiastical ornament in their crusade to cleanse the institutional Catholic Church of idolatry, excess, and corruption, medieval structural design and construction techniques remained the traditional way of church building well into the 17th century. The basic Gothic forms were thus adapted, in much simplified guise, for new Protestant churches.

One of the earliest and most influential advocates of reviving the full-blown Gothic style for religious buildings was the architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852). A devout Catholic, Pugin was among those who saw the Middle Ages as "the Age of Faith," when Christianity was pure and strong (before being undermined by the succeeding Ages of Humanism, Reason, and Industry). Pugin published several books in the 1830s and 1840s contending "that Gothic was not a mere style but the very embodiment of religious truth."[21] He also insisted "that every feature of a building should be essential to its construction, and that every element of construction should be frankly shown," and he introduced the concept that artistic value equals moral worth, a notion later taken up by the Pre-Raphaelites.[22]

Meanwhile, some leaders of the Church of England in the 1830s worried that the Protestant liturgy, having long suppressed any suggestion of symbolism, emotion, or ritual as too "papist,"

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20 Ibid, p. 162.

21 Ibid., p. 174. Pugin's books included *Contrasts: or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and the Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day* (1836), *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841), and *Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture* (1843). See also Clark, pp. 171-172.

22 Clark, p. 200-201.

had become dour, grim, and uninspiring. A group at Oxford University called the Tractarians began advocating a return to old forms of worship predating the 17th century, before the Puritans came to prominence. The traditional Gothic church's spatial arrangements and use of symbolism in its architectural elements were seen as appropriate to these old rituals.

Pugin and the Tractarians found common cause with the new science of ecclesiology, which was first advanced by the Camden Society, founded in 1839 by two students at Cambridge University with a mission to define and promote the relationship between theological meaning, liturgical practice, and actual church structure and ornamentation.[23] The Camden Society insisted upon strictly authentic interpretations of medieval Gothic architectural principles and religious symbolism in ornamentation.

All of this had a huge influence on succeeding generations of church architects: "In England, something like half the existing churches were built in the 19th century, and a very high proportion of these were Gothic." [24] The cause was also taken up by the Pre-Raphaelites of the late 19th century. Proponents like John Ruskin, Dante Gabriel Rosetti, and William Morris sought inspiration in the hand-crafted, "pure" art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in reaction against the machine-made, mass-produced, "soullessness" of the industrial age; and they too equated aesthetic excellence with moral goodness.

The Gothic Revival style for ecclesiastical buildings began to appear in America in the early 19th century. Some of the first examples include Maximilian Godefroy's chapel for the Sulpician Academy of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore (1806—08), and Benjamin Latrobe's designs for Christ Church in Washington, D.C. (1808) and St. Paul's Church in Alexandria, Va. (1816). "Thereafter Gothic was increasingly used for churches and also for new collegiate buildings ... By 1835 to 1840 Gothic was nearly as well established as Greek as a major style..." [25] Important examples included James Renwick's Grace Church (1843-46) in Manhattan and Minard Lefever's Church of the Savior (1842-44) in Brooklyn; and on college campuses, the New York University chapel, by Alexander Jackson Davis (1832-37) and the Yale University library, now Dwight Chapel, by Henry Austin (1842-46), both modeled after King's College Chapel at Cambridge. But much of the credit for the widespread popularity in

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23 Norman, p. 268.

24 Ibid, p. 267.

25 Roth, p. 171.

the mid-19th century of the Gothic Revival style can be attributed to architect Richard Upjohn, whose masterpiece Trinity Church (1839-46) in Manhattan set the gold standard for Episcopal churches nationwide. Upjohn, an Englishman who came to America in 1829, was strongly influenced by Pugin's books on Gothic architecture, although Upjohn's Episcopal faith inclined him more toward architectural symbolism rather than a pure reproduction of medieval (Catholic) prototypes.[26] Upjohn's impact in America was certainly as significant as Pugin's in England: during his long career he wrote several books (including the widely popular *Rural Architecture,* published 1852) and designed some 150 churches.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the vogue for Gothic Revival churches briefly took a backseat to H.H. Richardson's interpretation of the Romanesque style, but by the mid-1880s the Gothic had begun to enjoy its second revival in this country, both for churches and on academic campuses. Again, it was a British architect who spearheaded an American architectural trend: Henry Vaughan. Vaughan arrived in Boston in 1882 steeped in the Gothic tradition, having worked closely with its premier British practitioner of the time, G.F. Bodley (the two would later collaborate on the design of Washington D.C.'s National Cathedral). Vaughan's design for St. Paul's School Chapel in Concord, N.H. (1886-1894) earned him other commissions for Episcopal churches at prestigious private boarding schools, notably Groton. Significantly, Henry Vaughan was both neighbor and mentor to the young Ralph Adams Cram, who met him in the mid-1880s while an architectural apprentice in Boston. Forty years later, having become the premier American practitioner of "a scholarly yet modern Gothic Revival," Cram designed the Church of St. George at St. George's School in Rhode Island. [27]

St. George's School

When St. George's School was founded, Rhode Island did not yet have a system of state-supported public high schools. Not until 1898 did the State begin to provide financial support for high schools, and not until 1909 was every city and town required to maintain a public high school or to provide that level of education elsewhere at town expense.[28] Meanwhile, by the turn of the 20th century Rhode Island had lost a significant percentage of its private secondary schools: a 1902 statewide survey found only 28 private schools at all grade levels, 20 of them in Providence, 4 in Newport, and 4 in other communities.[29] St. George's clearly filled a need,

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26 Ibid., p. 175.

27 Ibid., p. 355.
28 Bicknell, p. 690.

29 Field, pp. 384-385.

especially for well-to-do college-bound young men from Protestant families.

On April 24, 1896, a small advertisement appeared in the *Newport Daily News*: "Mr. John B. Diman will open a small boarding school for boys in Newport, in September 1896. For information, address 300 Angell Street, Providence, R.I." [30] Four months was not much time to equip, staff, and enroll students in a brand new college preparatory boarding school for grades 7 through 12 (Forms I through VI). But despite some initial difficulties, "Mr. Diman's School for Boys" opened only one month behind schedule, on October 1, 1896, with a dozen students, in rented quarters on what is now Hunter Avenue in Newport. The rigorous curriculum included Latin, Greek, literature, history, sciences, mathematics, geology, music, and French, all taught by two full-time teachers (Headmaster Diman himself taught the classics and English) and two part-time teachers.

John Byron Diman (1863-1949) had an extensive academic background (B.A. from Brown University; M.Div. from the Cambridge (Mass.) Theological School; and M.A. from Harvard University) and three years of teaching experience when he founded St. George's School. He was also a Deacon in the Episcopal Church, and in 1888 he had been assigned to the Berkeley Memorial Chapel, later known as St. Columba's Episcopal Church, on Vaucluse Avenue in Middletown. This experience influenced Diman's choice of Newport, and later Middletown, as the site of his new school.[31] Diman's association with St. Columba's Church continued long after he founded St. George's School, and students attended worship services there for over 30 years.

Within a short time, Mr. Diman's School for Boys changed its name to St. George's School. [32]

30 Taverner, p. 1.

31 Ibid., pp. 7-8: at the time St. George's was founded, Newport had another college preparatory boarding school, Cloyne House, established in 1895 and also affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Cloyne House closed in 1917.

32 Taverner's book does not explain when (or why) the name changed, but it seems to have happened sometime before 1899, when the school's literary magazine was first published (p. 14): its name, *The Dragon*, is a clear reference to the legend of St. George. Born in Palestine at the end of the third century, the son of a Christian who was also an important local official in the government of the Roman Empire, George grew up to become an officer in the Roman army. Legend has it that one day he came upon a city (now Beirut, Lebanon) being menaced by a monstrous dragon; the king had offered up his daughter as a sacrifice, but George rescued the princess and killed the dragon in return for the king and all the citizens converting to Christianity. When the Roman Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians, George resigned his army commission in protest. Imprisoned and tortured for his faith, George miraculously remained unharmed and performed numerous other miracles during his seven-year incarceration. Eventually he was beheaded, and for his martyrdom he was beatified as a saint. Over

Initially owned solely by Diman, St. George's School faced considerable financial challenges in the early years, and in 1900 Diman obtained a formal charter from the State of Rhode Island that established the school as a corporation offering common stock to investors. The first president of the Board of Trustees was the Right Reverend William N. McVickar, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island. Diman himself was the largest stockholder and retained control of the school's day-to-day operations.

For the years 1897-1901, St. George's leased Swann Villa on Seaview Avenue near First Beach in Newport. From the east veranda of Swann Villa, Diman could look out across First Beach Bay to a spacious and commanding hilltop site in Middletown, about two miles away, overlooking Easton's Point and Second (Sachuest) Beach. Diman found the rural, naturalistic qualities and extensive ocean views of this site to be ideal for a boarding school and, ambitious to grow St. George's, he convinced his Board of Trustees to assume the financial risk of constructing a new campus. In 1901 St. George's School relocated to its present, gorgeous setting on "The Hilltop." The first building constructed was a Georgian Revival-style manor house designed by Diman's cousin, Prescott O. Clarke, of the Providence architectural firm Clarke, Spaulding & Howe. "Its exterior offered the presence found at St. George's older sister schools, St. Paul's, St. Mark's, and Groton. Its interior was, for the most part, much more Spartan. Specifically designed to house a boarding school community, it was crammed with classrooms, dormitories, the dining room and kitchen, offices and servants' rooms." [33] This building was immediately dubbed "Old School."

As he recruited more faculty, Diman retreated from teaching to focus on his administrative duties (although he continued to offer a course in Sacred Studies). The Headmaster's sister, Emily Diman (1873-1949), came to live on campus in 1904, and for the next 24 years she acted as a surrogate wife to her bachelor brother, and as surrogate mother to the student body, especially the younger boys. ("Admired by all," Emily Diman is the only woman memorialized in the school chapel, in recognition of her many contributions to St. George's.[34])

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time his cult spread across all of Christendom, from the Middle East to the British Isles; he is the patron saint of England, among many other entities. In art, St. George is usually shown as a youth in armor, often mounted on a horse, either in the act of killing a dragon or with a slain dragon at his feet. His shield and lance pennant show a red cross on a white ground. At St. George's School, the literary magazine is called *The Dragon*; the newspaper, *The Red and White*; and the yearbook, *The Lance*. Images of dragons and of St. George himself also abound all over campus, and the red cross/white ground is featured in the school coat of arms.

33 Taverner, p. 21.

34 Ibid., pp. 25-26 and 72. Note that since the arrival of Headmaster J. Vaughan Merrick in 1928, all St. George's headmasters have been married men; their wives unquestionably also made many contributions to the life of the

St. George's School attracted considerable loyalty and support from its earliest alumni, many of whom enrolled their own sons at St. George's and encouraged friends and acquaintances to do the same. While the student body initially came mostly from well-to-do New England families, it was not long before boys from up and down the Eastern Seaboard, the Midwest, and even overseas, sought admission. By 1906 the school had 88 students, all but two of them boarders. The first decade of the 20th century passed in a flurry of new construction on campus: classroom buildings, dormitories and faculty residences, a dining hall, a gymnasium, a boathouse, fire safety buildings, and a power plant.[35]

In 1907, St. George's was re-chartered as a private non-profit educational institution formally affiliated with the Episcopal Church, and "there was a sense of the School's finally having arrived in league with Groton, St. Paul's, St. Mark's, and other better known Episcopal Schools." [36] But the campus still lacked a chapel of its own. Headmaster Diman certainly intended to build a chapel, but funding was scarce enough for the other buildings necessary to a proper school. Nonetheless, attendance at Sunday worship services was expected, so every week the students and many of the resident faculty walked five miles to and from the nearest Episcopal church, St. Columba's in Middletown (coincidentally, Diman's former pastorate). In very bad weather, worship services were held in the school gymnasium.

The Little Chapel (1909-1911)

Finally, in 1909, Headmaster Diman donated some funds out of his own pocket to construct a school chapel. He commissioned architects Clarke, Howe & Homer of Providence (again utilizing the talents of his cousin, Prescott O. Clarke) to design a small brick building sited just north of the cloister that connected Old School with King Hall.[37]

Prescott O. Clarke (1858-1935) was born in Providence and educated at Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He began his architectural practice in 1895 and was principal in a succession of firms, all based in Providence: Clarke & Spaulding (1895-1901), Clarke, Spaulding & Howe (1901-1903), Clarke & Howe (1903-1910), Clarke, Howe &

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school over the years.

35 Several of these early buildings still survive and merit study for their eligibility for National Register listing, including Old School (1901); Sixth Form House (1903); Arden Hall (1907); and King Hall (1907).

36 Taverner, p. 44.

37 Doll, "The Little Chapel of St. George's School," p. 8.

Homer (1910-1913), and Clarke & Howe (1913-1928). Clarke's latter partners were Wallis Eastburn Howe (1868-1960) and Eleazer B. Homer (1864-1929), both M.I.T. alumni like Clarke. Much of these firms' work was done in Providence, including the U.S. Post Office, Court House and Custom House (1903-1907), and the New England Telephone Exchange Building (1910), which are listed on the National Register. They also designed five buildings at St. George's School (1901-1924). [38]

As construction on the Little Chapel proceeded, the project began to run short of money. Headmaster Diman solicited additional financial assistance from Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Newbold of Philadelphia, whose sons Arthur and Eugene were members of the Classes of 1905 and 1911, respectively. The Newbolds' gift of $2,000 (a very generous sum in 1910) allowed the Little Chapel to be expanded and completed. The June 1910 issue of the school magazine, *The Dragon*, reported: "The chapel is about the size of the chancel at St. Columba's, and will accommodate a congregation of forty. The walls are of brick, built on simple and dignified lines. The interior specifications give the effect of height which is so important in a place of worship. The roof is of open timber work, and the east end is wainscotted to a considerable height." [39] The Little Chapel is quite modest both in size and in design; its leaded glass casement windows and exposed timber roof beams and trusses that "give the effect of height" evoke the Tudor Revival, while its large pointed arch entryway (modified in 1924-1928) evokes the Gothic Revival spirit of the adjacent Church of St. George.

The Little Chapel hosted its first worship service in March 1910, and was finally completed in 1911. While it could not, and was never intended to be able to, accommodate the entire St. George's community, the Little Chapel did provide an on-campus location for morning communion services, for confirmation classes and services, for Bible study classes, and for form meetings. Several donors offered gifts to the new chapel, such as altar cloths, altar books, and a fine chalice designed by Frank E. Cleveland of Cram and Ferguson. (As noted above, Ralph Adams Cram later collaborated on the design of the Church of St. George.) In addition, thirty-one bronze memorial plaques to deceased students, faculty, staff, and parents grace the interior walls; sixteen of these individuals died in World War I and are also commemorated in the Memorial Schoolhouse, which was built in 1921-1923 as a monument to them.

When the design for a new, much larger and grander school chapel was unveiled in 1922, the

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38 Withey, pp. 123-124; also Jordy, pp. 216-217.

39 Doll, "The Little Chapel of St. George's School, p. 3.

Little Chapel stood on part of the new building's proposed footprint. To make way for the new construction, the Little Chapel was raised up from its foundation, placed on rollers, and moved four times over a period of six months, finally coming to rest at the southeast corner of the new chapel: "...the normal position that would be occupied by the Lady Chapel in any Gothic cathedral."[40] This new location, specifically chosen by Ralph Adams Cram and John Nicholas Brown, design collaborators for the new chapel, was less than 100 feet from its original site.

Until the new church building was completed in September 1927, weekly communion services were held at the Little Chapel every Sunday morning. On St. George's Day 1928, the Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island formally consecrated both the new Church of St. George and the relocated Little Chapel.

Memorial Schoolhouse (1921-1923)

World War I inspired many Americans to heights of patriotic fervor, and St. George's School was no different. The school formed a Battalion of Infantry shortly after hostilities began in Europe in the summer of 1914 (three years before the United States entered the war), and students regularly took part in military exercises, both during the school year and at a summer training camp. Students also rolled bandages for the Red Cross, grew vegetables on the school's lawns, and donated their allowances to the war effort. By the time the war ended, "287 men connected with St. George's (80% of the Alumni) were in some form of war service."[41] Sixteen St. George's men died in the Great War, fifteen alumni (some still in their teens) and one faculty member.

In 1918, shortly after the war ended, St. George's School proposed to build a much-needed new classroom building as a memorial to its war dead. Raising the necessary funds proved more time-consuming than originally hoped (despite a very generous donation of $109,000 from Vincent Astor, Class of 1910), and this difficulty hampered both the start and the completion of the project. The cornerstone was laid in June 1921, and the Memorial Schoolhouse was finally completed and dedicated on January 13, 1923, at a cost of $290,000.

Like the Little Chapel, the Memorial Schoolhouse is designed in the Tudor Revival style. The architects were the nationally prominent New York firm of McKim, Mead & White. Among their masterworks are the Boston Public Library (1887-1895), the Church of the Ascension in New

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40 Ibid., p. 11.

41 Taverner, pp. 53-54.

York City (1886-1887), and the Agriculture Building and New York State Building for the 1892 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. They also did at least 40 projects in Rhode Island, including some of the most important buildings in the state: the Newport Casino (1881), the Narraganset Pier Casino (1883-1886; since demolished), and the State House (1896-1904). [42] However, the Memorial Schoolhouse cannot be attributed to any of the three original founders of the firm: Stanford White died in 1906, Charles F. McKim died in 1909, and William R. Mead had left the firm by 1919.

The garden at the west end of the Memorial Schoolhouse, a green space with paved pathways and several trees surrounded by a low stone wall, was added in 1983 as a memorial to St. George's fifth Headmaster, Dr. Willet L. Eccles. Eccles served from 1943-1950, a period when enrollment declined and the school faced continuous financial difficulties. Among his achievements was to facilitate the admission of students from low/moderate income families, making the St. George's population more economically and culturally diverse than it had been in the past. An alumnus from the "Eccles Years," William Bayne (Class of 1948) donated the funds for a garden west of Memorial Schoolhouse "in appreciation of the Headmaster who had given him, and others, the chance they might otherwise not have had to attend St. George's School." [43]

Church of St. George (1924-1928)

On Prize Day (at the end of the school year) in 1922, Headmaster Stephen P. Cabot announced that an anonymous donor wished to give St. George's School a new chapel. Resounding approval greeted this news, from the boys who would no longer have to walk the five mile round trip every Sunday to St. Columba's Church, and from all those who had long wanted a chapel on campus that could accommodate the entire school community. (In 1922, St. George's had 171 students, plus faculty and staff, many of whom lived on campus with their families.[44]) At the express wish of the donor, the new chapel would abut the Memorial Schoolhouse, so that it would be well integrated amongst the school buildings, rather than stand alone in some isolated part of the campus. As the intellectual and spiritual life of the school were intimately connected, so too the new chapel was to be literally connected to a classroom building (and to other new construction envisioned for the future).

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42 Withey, pp. 409-412 and 652-653; also Jordy, pp. 111-118 and 224-225.

43 Taverner, p. 117.

44 Ibid., p. 82.

In December 1922 the school's *Alumni Bulletin* published an illustrated essay about its design written by Ralph Adams Cram. While many details changed during the course of planning and construction, Cram's essay still provides an accurate overall description of the church. An excerpt:

> "The style of the building is, generally speaking, what is known as English Perpendicular, but of a rather early type and approaching that of the antecedent epoch, which is known as Decorated. The mass of the building is simple, the richness of ornament, so far as the exterior is concerned, being confined to the belfry stages of the central tower, the north transept fronting on the athletic field, and the north bay. That portion of the cloister now to be constructed is a pretty close replica of the famous cloister at Gloucester, one of the masterpieces of 15th century architecture. It will be covered by rich fan-vaulting and each will have traceried windows opening out into the cloister garth. It is not intended that this rich type of cloister should be continued all around the central area, but rather that it should form a special, and in a sense separated, space, of the utmost beauty and dignity, where memorials may be placed from time to time recording the lives and deeds of masters and pupils.
>
> "In the interior also the richness of ornament is to be concentrated around the High Altar and the shrine in the Ante-Chapel, although the woodwork of the screens and stalls will contain much carved ornament and probably many little statues of significance and teaching value. Probably a good deal of color and gold will be used in the interior decorations ... "[45]

The mystery donor turned out to be John Nicholas Brown (1900-1979), St. George's Class of 1918. The only son of John Nicholas Brown and Natalie Bayard Dresser Brown of Providence, he had been born into one of Rhode Island's wealthiest and most prominent families, which had a long tradition of educational philanthropy.[46] When John Nicholas was just three months

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45 Cram, "The New Chapel," in *Alumni Bulletin*, December 1922, pp. 4, 6, and 7-12.

46 John Nicholas Brown (although named for his father, he never used the suffix "Jr.") was a 9th generation descendant of one of the original settlers of Providence, Chad Brown, who arrived in 1637. His great-great-grandfather and great-great-great uncle, Nicholas and John Brown, facilitated the location of what is now Brown University in Providence in 1770; the institution was renamed in 1804 for Nicholas Brown's son, also Nicholas, upon occasion of a significant financial gift. In 1819, another great-great-great uncle, Moses Brown, donated money and land for a Quaker school in Providence that was later named for him. The John Carter Brown Library

old, his father and his uncle Harold Brown both died unexpectedly, leaving their extensive estates in trust to the infant heir. Soon afterwards, Natalie Brown commissioned Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram to design two buildings in Newport: the first, Emmanuel Church, was to be a memorial to her late husband; and the second was to be a new home for herself and her son, called Harbor Court. Cram, who had been a friend of both the senior John Nicholas Brown and Harold Brown, became a frequent visitor to Harbor Court, a close confidante of Natalie Brown, and a father figure to her young son.[47]

John Nicholas Brown enrolled at St. George's School in the First Form (seventh grade) in 1912. He graduated in 1918 and went on to Harvard University, where he created his own major in medieval studies. (Brown met the sculptor Joseph Coletti at Harvard; the two were classmates, and both studied with several renowned medievalists, including A. Kingsley Porter and Pierre de Chagnon LaRose, who would later contribute to the design of some decorative elements in the Church of St. George.) In earning both bachelor's and master's degrees, Brown developed an extraordinary knowledge of, and lifelong passion for, the great Gothic churches and Christian iconography of the Middle Ages. (He later founded the Medieval Academy of America, which continues to publish the influential journal *Speculum*.) Brown also had a deep religious faith, even as a young man, and adhered to the "Oxford Movement" of the Episcopal Church, which attempted to return church ritual closer to its pre-Puritan roots. These two interests converged during Brown's sophomore year at Harvard, when he began to talk with Ralph Adams Cram about designing a Gothic chapel for St. George's School. (Cram shared Brown's religious faith, which undoubtedly enhanced their collaboration.) Two years later, just after graduating from Harvard, he offered to donate all of the funding for a new chapel at St. George's. He was 22 years old.

Writing in the *Alumni Bulletin* of June 1922, the Rt. Rev. James deWolf Perry, Jr., President of the Board of Trustees at St. George's and Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island, noted: "The unnamed donor is offering more than a substantial and beautiful addition to the fabric of St. George's. He is making a dream come true, giving outward and visible form to his vision of the School, crowned and dominated by the Chapel tower which will bear witness to the world of

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at Brown University holds the collections of John Carter Brown, son of Nicholas Brown II; the library building itself was commissioned by John Nicholas Brown (senior), father of the donor of the chapel at St. George's.

47 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, introduction by John Carter Brown (son of the younger John Nicholas Brown), p. ix. Harbor Court, located on Newport's Halidon Avenue overlooking Narragansett Bay, remained in the Brown family until 1987; it is now owned by the New York Yacht Club.

spiritual purpose for which the school shall stand." Brown himself later wrote that the new chapel should embody "the true spirit of the religious life of the school and would thus impart to the boys the real meaning of the Church." [48]

Brown's identity as the donor was soon revealed, and both he and Cram later wrote articles for the school's *Alumni Bulletin* explaining their vision for the new chapel. Artist's renderings of the building and photographs of a wooden architectural model were also published. Finally on St. George's Day (April 23) in 1924, a groundbreaking ceremony was held, with all the students standing in formation outlining the chapel's footprint. A few months later, the cornerstone was laid, inscribed in both Latin and English: "This Stone has been placed in The Corner of The Church of St. George on the thirteenth Day of the Month of June in the Twenty-Eighth Year of the School of Saint George and in the year of our Lord nineteen-hundred and twenty-four." (All capital letters verbatim.) Thus the new chapel was officially named the Church of St. George. The cornerstone can be found at the west end of the cloister, just outside the Donor's Door.

John Nicholas Brown was not himself a trained architect, but he certainly deserves equal credit with Ralph Adams Cram for both the creative vision and the execution of the new chapel. Cram himself later wrote in his autobiography, "John was in actuality a vital element in the architectural operations. He joined with my associates and myself in studying and determining the design in all its details, working out the symbolism, criticizing and passing on the decorative elements, even designing portions of the pavement, particularly the Maze in the ante-chapel." Far from viewing such continuous input from the donor as interference, Cram welcomed the close collaboration, acknowledging that Brown's "interest and enthusiasm were both inspiring and directive … [he was] one of the greatest educational influences in my life..." [49] Brown was indeed intimately involved in every aspect of the project, from initial design concept to the smallest construction details. He made countless design suggestions, particularly for the iconographic elements. He insisted on the highest quality materials, furnishings, fixtures, and workmanship. He vetted the qualifications of the contractors and artisans, and he visited the campus regularly to review work samples and to evaluate the overall progress of the construction. Surviving correspondence between the two men confirms that when Brown and Cram differed on a design issue, Brown usually prevailed.[50]

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48 Ibid., pp. 8 and 10.

49 Cram, *My Life in Architecture*, p. 244.

50 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. 11.

Cram & Ferguson, in the persons of Cram himself and architect Chester Brown, supervised the construction (as did Brown). The general contractor was L.D. Wilcutt & Sons of Boston. The major subcontractors were Buerkel & Co. of Boston (heating and ventilation); Lincoln & Tilly of Newport (plumbing); and Scanneven & Potter of Newport (electrical wiring). Among a host of highly skilled artists and artisans contributing to the project were sculptor Joseph Coletti of Boston, stone carvers from the Easton Studios of Bedford, Indiana, and master metalsmith Samuel Yellin of Philadelphia. During the three years of construction, the St. George's community avidly followed its progress in the various school publications, most frequently in *The Red and White* newspaper, but also occasionally in the literary magazine, *The Dragon*. *The Lance*, the school yearbook, also published photographs of the construction between 1924-1928.

Headmaster Stephen P. Cabot resigned his position in 1926, while the chapel was under construction. Cabot's replacement was Russell H. Nevins, a member of the faculty; he served as Acting Headmaster for two years. Portrait heads of both Cabot and Nevins grace the turret tower of the chapel, as do likenesses of John Nicholas Brown, Ralph Adams Cram, Chester Brown, and the Rev. Dr. Arthur Peaslee, master of literature (one of Brown's former teachers).

On September 28, 1927, the Church of St. George hosted its first worship service, although it was not yet completed insofar as its interior decoration was concerned. A few weeks later, the *Providence Journal* newspaper praised the new chapel as "...one more in that series of architectural landmarks which from the time of perhaps the Vikings have characterized the City-by-the-Sea [Newport]. ... [it] dominates the landscape for miles around and is a striking object from points as far separated as Jamestown and Sakonnet. ... The wealth of detail and ornament lavished upon every portion of this building is amazing. ... the impression it creates is lasting and profound." [51]

The new chapel was formally consecrated on St. George's Day 1928 (still not completely finished on the interior); John Nicholas Brown planned the elaborate ceremonies, presided over by Bishop Perry. A student writer describing the "long and magnificent service" in the June 1928 issue of *The Dragon* commented: "It seems but fitting that such a service should consecrate forever the crystalization of John Brown's vision. May our Chapel inspire others who shall come to this hill top long after we, who saw his dream realized, have passed away

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51 *Providence Journal*, October 12, 1927, p. 15.

and are forgotten." [52] The day before the consecration, the *Providence Journal* again published an effusive article, this time occupying almost an entire page and including several large photographs, headlined "Gem of Church Architecture Adorns St. George's Campus … One of America's Unique and Finest Buildings:"

> "Many experts believe the gem of ecclesiastical architecture in Rhode Island to be the new chapel at St. George's School in Middletown…a small but flawlessly perfect jewel of the designer's and builder's art…in it are strangely, effectively, and strikingly combined the sacred and the temporal; exemplifying the best of ancient and modern church construction and ornamentation. … There are many larger structures. It is merely a chapel. It would be insignificant in size beside the cathedrals of Europe or even America. But in the perfection of its beauty, the striking, purposeful effectiveness of its every feature, it is considered by many to be unrivaled on any continent."[53]

The new chapel "…was meant to be a bold statement of St. George's full fledged maturity in the Episcopal School league. …. during the Summer of 1928 some 2,500 people came to view the edifice, further communicating its fame beyond the Hilltop." [54] In 1929 *The Architectural Forum*, a professional journal with a national circulation, published a copiously illustrated 30-page article on the Chapel, calling it "…not only an important addition to the distinguished achievements of Cram & Ferguson, but is, further, a monument to a perfect accord and unity in ideals and the working out of every detail as between the architects and …the donor of the chapel."[55]

John Nicholas Brown hoped that other donors would come forward to add to the new chapel's magnificence, and he provided opportunities for that to happen: for example, all the original chapel windows were plain glass, intended to be replaced over time with stained glass as befitting a Gothic church. But with the crash of the stock market in October 1929, further improvements to the new chapel came slowly. Not until 1938 was the first stained glass window, the "Chivalry Window," installed in the north wall of the Ante-Chapel. A new pipe

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52 Taverner, p. 85.

53 *Providence Sunday Journal*, April 27, 1928, p. F3.

54 Taverner, p. 86.

55 Price, pp. 661-662.

organ was installed in 1940, and replaced again in 1966 (both as memorials). Other stained glass windows and additional decorative items came in over time. Meanwhile, after the U.S. entered World War II in December 1941, the chapel's tower became a station for spotting and monitoring aircraft flying overhead, and ships in nearby waters. Installed in the open air at the top of the tower, this Spotter Station was staffed entirely by volunteers from the ranks of students, faculty and their wives, and local residents. It operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week until October 1943, and thereafter on a part time basis until near the end of the war. No enemy sightings were recorded (although apparently at least one German submarine spotted the distinctive chapel tower through its periscope). [56]

John Nicholas Brown lent his support to St. George's in other ways besides donating the chapel. In 1935, Brown was among those who donated funds toward the school's acquisition of 280 acres of land at Sachuest Point, just below "The Hilltop;" this purchase, made in response to a proposed amusement park at nearby Second Beach, permanently protected views from campus to the south and east. Brown also served on the Board of Trustees from 1939-1971, and then as an honorary board member until his death in 1979.

In August 1972, *Town and Country* magazine observed that St George's School "resembles an English estate with its own magnificent chapel," a comment echoed by many who have visited "The Hilltop." [57]

Ralph Adams Cram

When John Nicholas Brown formally asked Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) to design the new chapel at St. George's School, he was not simply trading on a long friendship. By the 1920s, Cram had established himself as one of America's leading designers of Gothic Revival style ecclesiastical buildings. [58] Cram and Brown shared strong convictions in their architectural philosophy and their religious faith. In his 1917 book, *The Substance of Gothic*, Cram wrote: "Mediaevalism is the study of a lifetime, for it is that great cycle of five centuries wherein Christianity created for itself a world as nearly as possible made in its own image, a world that in spite of the wars and desecrations, the ignorance and the barbarism and the 'restorations' of modernism has left us monuments and records and traditions of a power and a beauty and

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56 Taverner, p. 99.

57 Ibid., p. 155.

58 Withey, p. 145.

nobility without parallel in history." [59] To Cram, the English Perpendicular Gothic style of the 14th century expressed Christian ideals most perfectly, and he used that as inspiration for his work at the Church of St. George.

Cram's interest in the Gothic began in his youth in the early 1880s, while serving a five-year apprenticeship at the Boston architectural firm of Rotch and Tilden. At the time, Cram lived on Beacon Hill's Pinckney Street, which was then a bohemian enclave of artists, writers, and aesthetes. One of his immediate neighbors was the English architect Henry Vaughan, whose chapels of the 1880s at St. Paul's School in New Hampshire and the Groton School in Massachusetts created the vogue for English Gothic Revival churches on American boarding school campuses. Vaughan became a mentor to young Cram, and undoubtedly fostered Cram's own taste for Gothic architecture.[60]

Cram served out his apprenticeship but, unhappy with his experience, he quit architecture and became an art critic. (He continued to write and lecture extensively about both art and architecture for the rest of his life.) In 1886 and again in 1887, Cram took extensive tours abroad, where he had two life-altering epiphanies. Favorably impressed by the great medieval Catholic churches of Europe, as well as by contemporary Gothic Revival works in England designed by George Bodley (Henry Vaughan's own mentor) and others, Cram rediscovered his enthusiasm for architecture as a career. Equally significantly, while in Italy Cram found himself drawn to the Oxford Movement of the Anglican faith, and he decided to convert. These professional and religious interests entwined to create a passion for ecclesiastical building design that persisted throughout Cram's life, and eventually brought him to international prominence as an architect. [61]

Returning from Europe to Boston in 1889, Cram started his own architectural practice with partner Charles Francis Wentworth. The business flourished, and in 1892 Cram & Wentworth took on a third partner, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, changing the firm name to Cram, Wentworth & Goodhue. (Cram and Goodhue had met through a mutual acquaintance in Boston's bohemian circles, Daniel Berkeley Updike, who knew the elder John Nicholas Brown through his brother Harold Brown, and thus also gave Cram his introduction to Rhode Island's

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59 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, pp. 15-16.

60 Shand-Tucci, pp. 45-49.

61 Shand-Tucci., p. 79.

prominent Brown family.[62] Updike went on to become a celebrated typographer; much later, in 1928, he printed the program for the consecration ceremonies for the Church of St. George.[63]) After Charles Wentworth died in 1897, the surviving partners took on a new colleague, Frank Ferguson, and the firm name changed yet again to Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson. Bertram Goodhue left the firm in 1913, but Cram & Ferguson endured until Cram's death in 1942. Together they designed educational, public, and religious buildings, including at least five school chapels and eighteen major churches all over the United States during their 40 year partnership, an accomplishment that indeed made the firm world famous.

Like Richard Upjohn before him, Cram wrote (and lectured) extensively about his passion; his approach to the Gothic Revival was likewise to interpret and adapt rather than merely to copy medieval precedents.[64] "The Gothic he wished to see reestablished was not to be a dry replication but instead a vigorously resurgent Gothic architecture, adapted to the changing needs of modern society. … For the first three decades of the twentieth century, with his persuasive arguments presented in numerous addresses, articles, and books, Cram's modernized but authoritatively correct neo-Gothic was widely popular for ecclesiastical and collegiate building." [65] One of Cram's greatest accomplishments, epitomizing his trademark combination of scholarship and modernism, was his design to finish the enormous nave of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City (1915-41), for which he used sexpartite roof vaulting and an innovative system of paired exterior buttresses. Among his many other notable Gothic Revival works were All Saints Church, Ashmont, in the Dorchester suburb of Boston (1892); St. Thomas's Church on 5th Avenue in Manhattan (1906-16, finished by Goodhue after the partners split); the Euclid Avenue Church in Cleveland (1907-41); the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago (1911-37); and the Cathedral Church of the New Jerusalem in the Philadelphia suburb of Bryn Athyn (1913-17). Cram also designed numerous chapels on academic campuses, including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (1904); Princeton University (1911-1929); Mercersberg Academy in Pennsylvania (1916-31), and, of

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62 Ibid., p. 287-288.

63 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. ix.

64 Cram himself seems to have been rather dismissive of Upjohn: in his autobiography he notes, "the work of Upjohn, Renwick, Congdon and Haight is not to be disregarded, but this had been largely tentative and generally archaeological, while whatever influence it had, had been pretty well dissipated by the Richardsonian episode." He cites Henry Vaughan's chapel at St. Paul's School as "really, in itself, the beginnings of the Gothic revival – or rather, initiation – in America." Cram, *My Life in Architecture*, p. 36.

65 Roth, p. 355.

course, St. George's School in Rhode Island.

Joseph Coletti

Joseph Arthur Coletti (1898-1973), born in Italy, emigrated with his family to the U.S. in 1901. They settled in Quincy, Mass., where his father worked in the granite quarries as a stone polisher; thus, at a very young age, Joseph began to learn about the properties and treatments of stone. He enrolled in the Quincy Art School at nine, and later studied at the Massachusetts Art School; in 1914, he apprenticed at the studio of the sculptor John Evans. During his time with Evans, Coletti earned the notice of the painter John Singer Sargent, who was preparing his murals for the Boston Public Library and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In 1916-1917, Sargent engaged the teenaged Coletti to execute the sculptured ceilings in the library's great hall; and a couple of years later, in 1919-1921, the reliefs in the museum's rotunda. Sargent also encouraged Coletti to continue his academic studies at Harvard University, where Coletti enrolled in 1919. It was at Harvard that Coletti gained a comprehensive education both in studio art and art history. It was also at Harvard that Coletti met fellow student John Nicholas Brown, in a class on medieval sculpture taught by Professor A. Kingsley Porter. (Coincidentally, Coletti had already been introduced to the architect Ralph Adams Cram: in 1916, Cram had commissioned Coletti to sculpt the model for an elaborate Celtic cross granite funerary monument in Albany, N.Y.[66]) After graduating from Harvard in 1923, Coletti won two prestigious fellowships to continue his studies abroad. He traveled in Europe for a few months in the summer of 1923, and in 1924 he moved to Rome, where he spent eighteen months at the American Academy.

In 1924, before Coletti went to Rome, John Nicholas Brown commissioned him to create approximately 50 stone sculptures for the new chapel at St. George's School. Coletti began work on the project while still in Rome, returned to Boston in 1926, and finished in 1930. Coletti's productivity during this time was truly remarkable, especially considering that he created a fully detailed model of every single piece for final approval by Brown and Cram, before the actual carving began. Works in stone include bosses, gargoyles, portrait heads, waterspouts, column capitals, corbels, panels, and statuary. Standing out amidst all this stone is the magnificently carved teak Donor's Door.

The common interests and artistic sensibilities shared by Coletti, Brown, and Cram undoubtedly enhanced their collaboration on this project, especially in choosing the

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66 Ibid., p. 135: "Horrigan Cross."

iconography of the new chapel: "a perfect accord and unity of ideals between the sculptor, the architect, and the donor."[67] Creative inspiration came not only from typical Christian and medieval Gothic themes but also from such diverse sources as the legend of St. George, the campus's seaside setting and Rhode Island's maritime history, contemporary life in the late 1920s, and St. George's school itself. Portrait heads of all the major figures involved in constructing the new chapel keep watch over the entire campus from their perches on the turret tower. Other sculptures are decidedly playful, such as a statue of Don Quixote on the newel post at the top of the turret stairway ("...a symbol of idealistic but impractical vision" [68]); a school of dolphins on a waterspout; bosses depicting a football player, a baseball player, and a crossword puzzle. This combination of spirituality, real life, and whimsicality makes the sculpture at St. George's unique among chapels at other private Episcopal boarding schools.

Some of Coletti's work for St. George's was exhibited in a one-man show at Harvard's Fogg Museum in 1928. A glowing review written by the eminent Harvard art historian Chandler R. Post, published in the *Boston Evening Transcript,* praised Coletti for achieving the "...maximum of possible originality by an iconographical inventiveness that is quite in the mediaeval spirit and yet individual in conception." [69] Post characterized Coletti's statue of St. George with the slain dragon at his feet (executed in limestone over the main entrance to the chapel, copied in bronze for the Fogg exhibit) as "the most noble creation of the first three decades in American sculpture of this century," and compared it favorably to a statue of St. George by the great Renaissance sculptor Donatello: high praise indeed for an emerging artist.[70] Thirty years later, in 1958, the Italian government acquired Coletti's bronze of St. George for the permanent collection of the Pitti Palace in Florence: a first for an American sculptor in any Italian museum at that time. In 1961 he was awarded an Order of Merit by the President of Italy.

The chapel at St. George's School gave Coletti a national (and later international) reputation as a sculptor, jump-starting an illustrious career that lasted for 45 years, until his death in 1973. Working with equal facility in stone, bronze, and wood, he executed both secular commissions – portrait statuary, abstract nudes, medals, public art, memorials and monuments, fountains –

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67 Coletti, p. 136.

68 Ibid., p. xiii.

69 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. 32.

70 Coletti, p. xiv and xix-xx.

and religious ones. Much of Coletti's secular work was done for public and private clients in Massachusetts, but his best known religious works are at the chapel at St. George's School in Rhode Island, and at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore. (Historian Samuel Eliot Morison, in *The Oxford History of the American People* (1965), cites Coletti's work in Baltimore, done in 1958-1959, as among the very few notable pieces of American sculpture of the mid-20th century.[71]) Coletti also participated in numerous invitational exhibitions of contemporary American and international sculpture: at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco; the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; the 1939 World's Fair in New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; the Philadephia Museum of Art; and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, to name a few. He was published in both American and foreign art journals, including *Art & Archeology*, *Town & Country*, *Contemporary American Sculpture*, *L'Artisan Liturgique: Revue trimestrielle d'art religieux* (Belguim), *Die Christliche Kunst* (Germany), *American Art Today* and *American Artist*. His sculptures are found in numerous private and museum collections across the United States, and also in the Museum of Treasures in Cracow, Poland, the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, and the Vatican Library in Rome.

Samuel Yellin

Wrought iron was used for hardware (strap hinges, latches, knockers) and other decoration on twelve doors throughout the chapel, as well as for window grilles, chandeliers in the statio and the crypt, and a lectern in the pulpit. John Nicholas Brown purchased a few of these elements specifically for St. George's: for example, the dragon knocker on the Donor's Door is Spanish, 15th century, while the window grilles in the sanctuary door and in the crypt stairway are also Spanish antiques. All new ironwork created for the chapel, however, was the work of Samuel Alexander Yellin of Philadelphia.

Born and raised in Poland, Yellin (1885-1940) trained as a blacksmith and received his master's certificate in 1902, at the age of 17. He came to America in 1906, enrolled at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, and soon was appointed an instructor there, teaching a course in wrought iron until 1919. He started his own business in Philadelphia in 1909. By the time the St. George's project came along, Ralph Adams Cram had already used Yellin on several other church projects; but again, John Nicholas Brown made the final decision to hire him. Yellin had a reputation for high quality design, excellent craftsmanship, and ensuring a harmonious relationship between the ironwork and other architectural elements

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71 Ibid., p. 154.

in a given project (qualities that likely endeared him to the notoriously detail-oriented Brown). Yellin spent two years working on the St. George's School chapel.

The Samuel Yellin Metalworkers Co. prospered, and eventually employed some 300 people. When Yellin died suddenly in 1940, at age 55, he was eulogized as follows: "It is doubtful if America has ever had an artist whose name more completely identifies himself with a particular type of creative work than the name of Samuel Yellin, the metalworker…Merely the words "wrought iron" are sufficient to call up the name of Yellin. No man in America came near him in scale of work and robustness of design."[72]

[End Section 8.]

72 Doll, *Heart of the Hilltop*, p. 38.

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[End Section 9.]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary begins at the southeast corner of the Little Chapel and moves west along the south wall of the Little Chapel, along the wall separating the Church stairway from the modern sacristy and robing room; continues west along a line drawn from the cloister of the church (and passing under the aerial hyphen which joins the Student Center to the Schoolhouse) to a point six feet due southwest of the southwest corner of the Memorial Schoolhouse; then runs due north to the southern edge of Campus Drive, located north of the Schoolhouse and the Church; then following the southern edge of Campus Drive to a point directly due north of the northeast corner of the Little Chapel, then along the east wall of the Little Chapel to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is drawn to provide an appropriate and historic setting for the nominated resource. Lot lines and plat lines are not available to describe the boundary. The line drawn in the Boundary Description includes the land separating the north side of the resource from Campus Drive and the school's athletic fields. On the south and west sides, the boundary separates the resource from the modern Sacristy and Student Center. The east bound provides a grassy setting for the east end of the Church. Part of the west bound is drawn at the wall of the Little Chapel; in this location the Little Chapel is hemmed in by service entrances to the school's dining hall. The entire boundary is, of necessity, closely drawn, as several buildings are located nearly adjacent to the nominated resource.

[End Section 10]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs were taken by preservation consultant Kathryn J. Cavanaugh on April 20, 2004. Negatives are on file with the R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

Photo #1: From left, the Little Chapel, Church of St. George, and Memorial Schoolhouse. Exteriors, east and north elevations, looking southwest. (Negative #1-16.)

Photo #2: Little Chapel, exterior, east and north elevations, looking southwest. (Negative #1-10.)

Photo #3: Little Chapel, west façade, main entrance, looking east. (Negative #3-23.)

Photo #4: Little Chapel, interior, looking east from main entrance. Windows are in south wall. (Negative #3-22.)

Photo #5: Memorial Schoolhouse and Church of St. George, north and west elevations, looking southeast. (Negative #1-22.)

Photo #6: Memorial Schoolhouse, exterior, south façade, looking north from Dragon Quadrangle. (Negative #1-34.)

Photo #7: Memorial Schoolhouse, west elevation, and Eccles Garden, looking east. (Negative #3-33.)

Photo #8: Memorial Schoolhouse, north elevation, looking southwest. (Negative #1-17.)

Photo #9: Memorial Schoolhouse, interior, entrance foyer, looking southeast at east wall with fireplace surmounted by World War I memorials. (Negative #3-36.)

Photo #10: Memorial Schoolhouse, interior, entrance foyer, looking north from south doorway. (Negative #3-34.)

Photo #11: Memorial Schoolhouse, interior, second floor, large classroom, looking northeast. (Negative #2-2.)

Photo #12: Church of St. George, exterior, south elevation, looking northeast from Wheeler Close at cloisters, organ loft, and stair tower. (Negative #1-33.)

Photo #13: Church of St. George, exterior, south cloister, looking west toward Donor's Door. (Negative #1-24.)

Photo #14: Church of St. George, interior face of Donor's Door (in east wall of South Transept), looking northeast. Carving by Joseph Coletti and wrought iron hardware by Samuel Yellin. (Negative #2-18.)

Photo #15: Church of St. George, exterior, south elevation, looking northwest and up from Wheeler Close at great tower. (Negative #1-31.)

Photo #16: Church of St. George, north elevation, looking southeast and up at turret tower gargoyles and portrait heads. (Negative #1-19.)

Photo #17: Church of St. George, interior of statio, looking north and up at ceiling. (Negative #3-24.)

Photo #18: Church of St. George, interior, nave, looking east from ante-chapel toward altar. (Negative #1-3.)

Photo #19: Church of St. George, interior, nave, looking southwest from sanctuary toward ante-chapel. (Negative #2-20.)

Photo #20: Church of St. George, crypt, looking northeast, door to crypt. (Negative #3-11.)

Photo #21: Church of St. George, north elevation, statue of St. George by Joseph Coletti mounted over north slype door. (Negative #1-20.)

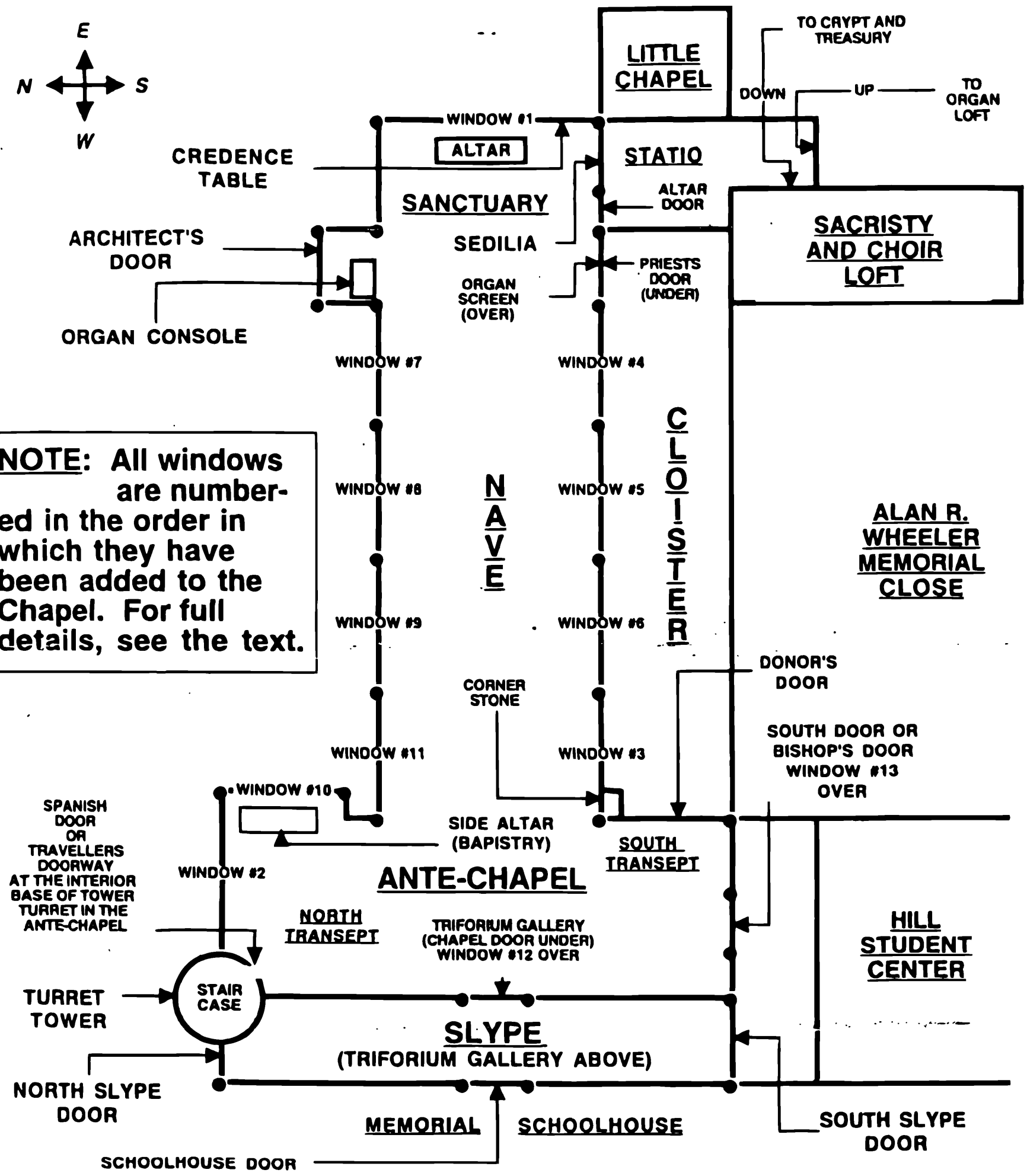
Photo #22: Church of St. George, interior, ceiling of ante-chapel, looking up at boss of St. George slaying the dragon. (Negative #1-1.)

Photo #23: Church of St. George, interior, north transept of ante-chapel, looking north-northwest at "Chivalry Window" in north wall and "Traveler's Door" in northwest corner. (Negative #1-4.)

Photo #24: Church of St. George, interior, organ screen in south wall near sanctuary, looking south and up. (Negative #2-24.)

[End.]

CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE FLOOR PLAN
Source: "Heart of the Hilltop: The St. George's School Chapel," by John G. Doll (2003), p. 71.



NOTE: All windows are numbered in the order in which they have been added to the Chapel. For full details, see the text.

This diagram is not drawn to scale and has been prepared simply to help visitors find their way through the Chapel as described in the text.

Chart A: Chapel Diagram