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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

AGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount St. Gertrude Academy
other names/site number 5BL1471

2. Location

street & number 970 Aurora Street not for publication
city, town Boulder vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Boulder code 013 zip code 80302

3. Classification

Ownership of Property <input type="checkbox"/> private <input type="checkbox"/> public-local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	Category of Property <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> structure <input type="checkbox"/> object	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
			_____ sites
			_____ structures
			_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James Edward Hartman September 12, 1994
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Boh Poland 11/3/94

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education; School; Academy

Education; Education-related Housing;

Housing at Boarding School

Religion; Religious Structure

Domestic; Institutional Housing; Staff Housing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian; Romanesque; Richardsonian

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone; Sandstone

walls Brick

Stone; Sandstone

roof N/A

other Stone; Sandstone

Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

THE MOUNT ST. GERTRUDE ACADEMY SITE

The Mount St. Gertrude Academy includes three structures on approximately one-half a city block in the University Hill neighborhood of Boulder, Colorado. The property lies along Aurora Avenue, flanked by Lincoln and 10th Streets. The "Main Building" spans the full width of the block and faces on Aurora Avenue. The main building is a collection of four components or wings. A second building, the "Conservatory," is located to the southeast of the main building. A third structure, a "storage building," lies to the southwest corner of the main building. A line of trees running east-west across the block defines the approximate southern limits of the site.

The grounds of the Academy contain a mix of elements, including a variety of trees and shrubs on all four sides of the property. A concrete service yard is located to the south of the main building. A central walk leads to the grand steps of the main building on the north side. The perimeter of the site is framed by a low stone wall and a chain link fence is mounted on the wall for the northern half of the site and encloses the immediate building grounds.

A master plan for the site, drawn by W. E. Cullen (landscape architect from Pueblo, Colorado) dated 1921, indicates the Sisters' intent to develop a formal plan for the site. A formal garden with lily pond was designed to be located to the southwest of the main building, with a lawn and pergola beyond. Curvilinear plant beds were to be installed around the conservatory to the southeast of the main building. Plant beds were also to be symmetrically placed on either side of the stairs leading to the main entrance. The plans also called for the removal the storage building. Few of the features of this plan were ever implemented. Records indicate that the site was not landscaped until the 1930s, and even then in a much simpler design.

THE MAIN BUILDING

Plan/Arrangement

The Main Building is essentially an H-shaped form. It consists of four components, the first constructed in 1892 and the other three completed in 1920. The four components are: (1) the central building, which was the original structure (designed by Alexander Cazin of Denver), (2) an east wing, (3) a west wing, and (4) the Chapel wing, (all designed by George H. Williamson of Denver).

The central building and the east and west wings each have four floors. The chapel wing contains three floors: (1) a half-basement, (2) a ground floor, and (3) an upper level. The main building is aligned along an east-west axis. A central, double-loaded corridor runs through the central building and the flanking wings. Stairs rise at the east and west limits of the wings. A vestibule connects the chapel with the west wing. The central building and the east and west wings form a H-shaped plan. Each of the wings projects approximately twenty feet beyond the front and rear facades of the central building.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance

1892-1941

1892

1892-1941

Significant Dates

1892, 1915,

1919, 1920,

1921

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cazin, Alexander/Hixon, Luther - 1892

Williamson, George Hebard - 1919

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Mount St. Gertrude Academy meets criterion A for its historic role in education in Boulder, being an early institution and one that has contributed significantly to this important theme as described in the city's historic context. The theme of education in Boulder is an important one in the context of the history of education in the state and therefore the Academy's significance is statewide as well as local. It is also significant in the context of community planning because it served as a focus of development for the University Hill neighborhood. The Academy also meets criterion C for its Richardsonian Romanesque institutional design of the main building, which contains fine workmanship and skillful design, including sensitive additions. The building was designed and later altered by noted Denver architects whose work is already recognized on the National Register.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE THEME OF EDUCATION IN BOULDER

The Mount Saint Gertrude Academy was the first major private educational facility in Boulder and was only the fourth school to be located here. In this respect, it contributes to the long-standing prominence of Boulder in educational development in the state: Boulder was the site of the first public school in Colorado and also was the first site of the University of Colorado. It also is the home of the first Chautauqua in Colorado. Boulder's contribution to the education theme in the state is therefore especially important and the Academy contributes to that significance.

In particular, the University of Colorado, The Boulder Chautauqua and Mount St. Gertrude were three physically prominent educational facilities that were all located on University Hill. They dominated the scene, preceding most houses in the area. The relationship of these major institutions in the context of the theme of education in Boulder is therefore relevant to present here:

In 1863 the first public school district in Boulder was organized and later, in 1876, Boulder boasted to have graduated the first high school class in Colorado. Two years earlier, in 1874, the legislature approved locating a university in Boulder. Anthony Arnett, George Andrews and Marinus Smith contributed land for the campus. (Another portion of Arnett's land later became the Academy site as well.) Construction was begun on Old Main in 1875 and the University of Colorado opened in 1877. By 1892, the University had eight buildings: Old Main, science hall, men's dormitory, women's dormitory, medical hall, medical dormitory, hospital, and president's house.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Boulder County Herald. Articles: February 10, 1892; May 1989.

Boulder Daily Camera articles: August 20, 1892; December 10, 1915; July 26, 1919; May 20, 1920; August 6, 1937; July 14, 1941; May 27, 1942; December 16, 1955; September 8, 1958; May 23, 1965; April 19, 1969; September 9, 1969; August 15, 1971; October 27, 1980.

Boulder Daily Camera archives, Boulder, Colorado.

Brettell, Richard R. *Historical Denver, The Architects and the Architecture 1858-1898*. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver, Inc., 1979.

City of Boulder Memorandum to Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board re Mount Saint Gertrude Landmark designation, February 22, 1984. Source: City of Boulder Central Files.

The Daily News, Denver, Colorado, February 2, 1892.

Denver Post, November 14, 1982.

See continuation sheet

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
- Other

Specify repository:

_____ Carnegie Library & City Landmarks Board

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.5 acres

UTM References

A 13 476020 4428000
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Academy site consists of lots 1 through 10 and 39 through 48 of Block 27 in the University Place Addition in Boulder, Colorado. The site contains 1.5 acres. It is bounded by Aurora Avenue on the north, Lincoln Place on the west, 10th Street on the east and by the southern edge of the property lines of lots 10 and 48.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The site boundary is the approximate northern half of the block. A row of trees bisects the site at this point and defines the southern limits of what the Sisters considered to be the immediate Academy Campus. This area includes all of the site that is immediately adjacent to the buildings and includes the grounds most traditionally associated with the buildings. This boundary also corresponds to the area included in the local City of Boulder landmark designation.

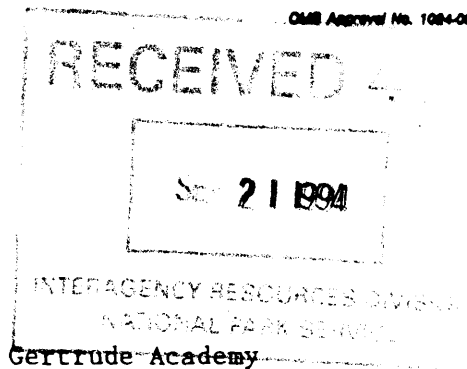
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nore V. Winter/Owner
 organization Winter & Company date May 31, 1991
 street & number 775 Poplar Avenue telephone (303) 440-8445
 city or town Boulder, state Colorado zip code 80304

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

Exterior Description (Historic condition)

When first constructed, the central building was a simple rectangular structure in plan, with the main entrance located (as it is today) facing Aurora Avenue on the north. The exterior materials of the first floor are rusticated sandstone while the upper floors are of locally-made brick and sandstone trim.

The building contained four floors, with the fourth floor tucked into a steeply sloping mansard-like roof. A large stone stair led from the front to the second (main) floor, and the entrance was framed by a rusticated stone arch (still surviving), which supported a three-story tower. The tower included a dormer with a pair of double-hung windows. Other dormers pierced the roof as part of the fourth floor, which was set into the roof. A large wood frame porch extended across the east elevation at the second floor. A molded cornice ran around the base of the roof on all sides of the structure.

The exterior masonry, central stair and cornice were retained in later remodeling work, but the roof and tower were altered. When wings were added to the central building in 1920, the roof was modified to a gentler slope; hipped roofs were constructed on the new east and west wings, and a flat roof was installed over the central building, which was screened by sloping shed roofs that gave the impression of a hip roof as seen from below. The tower was increased in height and three masonry arched windows replaced the dormer windows. The architect's drawings for the additions specified that these roofs were to be shingled. The large porch on the east elevation was also removed at this time to provide room for the east wing. Some of these exterior features were lost in a fire in 1980: The roof was destroyed and the upper portion of the tower dismantled (although stone trim survives in storage). Portions of the cornice molding were also lost.

Exterior Description (Current condition)

The main building predominantly represents a simplified interpretation of Richardsonian Romanesque styling. The central, older portion and flanking wings feature a rusticated stone ground level, composed of ashlar cut sandstone. Upper floors are of red brick. The brick on the additions was specified to be "pressed brick, same as old." Presently, all exterior brick surfaces are painted in a brick red color.

Windows are rectangular, with double hung sash. Most window sills are rough-cut sandstone. The windows in the central building are configured in evenly spaced pairs. Those of the east and west wings are single windows, also evenly spaced. All windows align vertically throughout all four floors. Most windows have flat arches, which are also in stone. Window lights are in a one-over-one configuration. In the original, central portion of the building, however, windows on the south façade have a shallow, rounded arch, which is of brick. Lights in this portion are in a two-over-one configuration. Windows on the fourth floor are damaged as a result of the fire. Most glass at this level is missing, and many frames are burned, but sufficient material survives to determine the original character. All window frames on other levels remain intact, although some glass is broken. Aluminum frame storm windows are installed over original windows in many locations. Some windows on the east and west elevations of the central wing were filled in when the east and west wings were added. Architect's drawings suggest that some of the windows from these openings were relocated for reuse in the new additions.

The primary entrance to the main building is located on the north façade and is identified by a massive two-story stone archway, which is ornamented with carved vines in a motif familiar in many Richardsonian Romanesque structures. A brick tower rises from the arch for the third and fourth floors. A brick belt course defines the floor between these two levels. The roof of the tower is missing. The historic condition of the tower is well-documented in surviving original architect's drawings and early photographs.

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The exterior materials of the upper three floors of each façade are of red brick. Each level is articulated by a brick string course that wraps entirely around the central building and its wings. This course aligns with the stone window sills.

A secondary entrance on the east façade is defined by stone steps. A wood molded cornice caps the fourth floor of the main building, and runs continuously around. The south facade is more utilitarian, as it originally faced service yards. A one-story heating plant and laundry, attached to the central building, have undergone moderate changes over time.

Interior of the Main Building

A central hall runs the full length of the east-west axis of the main building along the east, central, and main wings on the ground level as well as the first and second floors. A stair connects all floors at the east end of the hall. A second set of stairs is also located at the west end of the west wing, in the connecting hall between the west wing and the chapel wing. Portions of the balusters are missing at each stair, but sufficient material remains to interpret the historic character.

Most floors are wood, although some have been covered by vinyl tile. Interior wood work remains in relatively good condition on all levels. Interior walls are plaster finish, although some have been covered with wood paneling in more recent years. Most walls are trimmed with molded wood base boards and a picture mold. Some rooms have ceiling moldings as well.

Interior window frames remain in relatively good condition throughout. Most retain a clear varnish finish. Base boards are wood with a molded profile. Interior door frames also remain intact, although some door locations have been altered over time. Most frames have bulls-eye corners.

Interior floor plan

In general, each floor is organized around a double-loaded corridor, with rooms arranged in simple "modules." A module typically consisted of a single large room, which either served as a class room or support function, such as a laundry or dining room. In most cases, these rooms connect directly to the central hall, while some also have interconnecting doors between rooms. In some cases, however a module included a vestibule that then led to two or more smaller rooms. These appeared to have functioned as suites, often serving as teacher's offices or providing smaller rooms for music instruction.

The First Floor

The central hall is flanked by two plaster-finished walls that are masonry load bearing construction. All other walls are wood frame with lath and plaster. Doors along the hall lead into a variety of rooms on both sides of the corridor. Most doors are trimmed in molded wood frames and include an operable transom. Doors are wood panel and most retain original hardware. Original drawings indicate that a central stair was located in the main corridor, which led to the second floor hall. That stair is now removed. Two other stairs survive at the east and west ends of the corridor. These have birch rails and turned balusters. Many components of the stair rails are damaged. Floors are tongue-and groove maple boards. Functions on this level included dining, a kitchen, laundry, recreation room, pantry, laboratory and domestic science class room.

The Second Floor

Administrative rooms were located near the main entrance on this level and these appeared to have received a higher level of finish. Fire places survive in many rooms, including ceramic tile surrounds. A molded arch divides one large room into two subordinate spaces.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

Double doors at the main entrance are flanked by full-height side lights. Wood molding surrounding the doors is more decorative than in other locations and survives in relatively good condition. A hexagonal mosaic tile floor also is found here in the entry vestibule. Early photographs show this floor in place at the time that the building was operated by the Sisters.

Most rooms on this level were assigned as school rooms, although a reception room, sitting room and some offices were also located here.

The Third Floor

The central corridor arrangement continues on this floor. In the central building, additional class rooms were provided, along with a "studio," "commercial" class room and infirmary. The east and west wings provided sleeping rooms. Some modules were organized as a cluster of private bed rooms. Others were open "dormitories." Bath rooms were also provided. Pine floors were installed throughout, except in the bath rooms, which were tiled. This floor plan arrangement survives relatively intact.

The third floor has suffered some water damage from the leaking temporary roof that was installed after the 1980 fire. Some plaster finishes on ceiling and walls have failed and some floors have buckled, but most trim appears to remain in place.

The Fourth Floor

The interior of the fourth floor was destroyed in the 1980 fire. The fourth floor at the time of the 1920 alteration was designed as a dormitory and early photographs show that the plan was much simpler than that of lower levels, being configured in an open arrangement with few subdividing walls. Floor and ceiling moldings and trim materials and door frames were also simple flat wood members.

The exterior perimeter walls of the fourth floor survive, although damaged. Most window frames are in place. These are simple in profile and smaller in scale than those of the lower floors. The ceiling materials are missing, as a result of the 1980 fire. Floor materials are obscured by the temporary roof that was installed after the fire. Adequate information exists on-site and in archival material to define the character of this floor.

The Chapel Wing

Of particular note is the chapel wing, which connects to the west wing of the main building through a "hyphen" or small connector wing. The chapel is rectangular in plan and contains three levels: (1) a partial basement, designed for trunk storage (2) a ground level, designed as a gymnasium, and (3) an upper level, designed as a chapel. The wing is rectangular in plan and is oriented along an east-west axis that aligns with the corridor of the central wing.

The exterior walls of the chapel wing are red brick and these are articulated with tall, round-arched windows at the upper floor level. Elaborate corbelling at the eave line is formed into a series of rounded Romanesque arches that wrap around the wing. A circular window is centered in the west facade. A stained glass window (now missing) once served as a focus above an altar in the chapel. An arched niche is located above this window on the exterior.

The building is covered with a gabled roof of terra cotta tiles. The ridge is oriented east-west. A one-story loggia runs the length of the south elevation. The loggia has a shed roof, which is also clad in tile, and is supported on a colonnade of brick arches. Galvanized iron gutters and downspouts are installed along the cornices and at the corners of the wing. These are supported on decorative brackets.

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The Chapel Interior

The upper level, designed as the chapel, is distinguished by tall leaded glass windows. Specified by the architect as "leaded cathedral glass," these are triple-hung, with the lower element being an operable casement. The glass is composed of small textured components in clear and pale yellow colors that create simple geometric patterns. A wreath design is centered in many of the windows. Original correspondence indicates that these were provided by the John J. Kinsella Company of Chicago.

In plan, the chapel is one large room, with an altar at the west end. It is framed by a shallow-arched proscenium, which is flanked on either side by tall, arched niches. Anterooms connect to either side of the stage. At the rear of the chapel is a row of built-in confessionals.

A hardwood floor covers the entire chapel area. Originally specified as "Texas flooring," this was resurfaced in later alterations made by the University of Colorado. A plaster ceiling slopes upward to a central ridge line of the gable roof and is decorated with boxed beams and purlins. The walls are plastered and are trimmed with a wood chair rail and base board. A wood cornice runs around the entire chapel space.

A small balcony projects into the chapel from its west wall and is accessed by two stairs that are screened by enclosed plaster walls. A low stem wall serves as a railing to the balcony. It is decorated with a raised panel design.

The ground level, was designed as a gymnasium, and consists of one large rectangular space, with a raised stage at the west end. It includes plaster walls throughout which are trimmed with wood base board, chair rail and cornice. Wood floors were specified to be maple.

Windows are a simple rectangular, double-hung design. The gymnasium is accessed from the connecting hall through double doors that are surrounded by fixed glass windows and a transom. A decorative wood molding frames the entry. The proscenium arch of the stage is framed in molded plaster. Panel doors lead to the anterooms on either side of the stage.

The basement runs under only a portion of the chapel and contains service rooms, including rest rooms and storage.

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THE CONSERVATORY

The conservatory is a two-story, brick and wood frame structure, located at the southeast corner of the site. The building was originally constructed to house elder sisters of the order and was later used for a music conservatory and then administrative offices. The building appears on Sanborn maps of 1918 and records suggest it may have been constructed as early as 1915. Undated architectural drawings include the name of Lawrence & Nolty, local builders in Boulder at the time.

The structure stands on a random ashlar stone foundation. The stone foundation is painted. The predominant exterior material is painted horizontal wood lap siding. Some surfaces are unpainted brick. The building is approximately square in plan. An enclosed porch wraps around the west, east and south sides. The building has a hip roof, which is covered with asphalt shingles. Exposed rafter ends extend under the eaves on each façade. This detail conveys a sense of the Craftsman Style to the building.

The main entrance to the conservatory is located on the north façade. The first floor is raised above grade approximately three feet. Steps lead to a door, which is flanked with sidelights. The door leads to a small portico, which opens into a two-story central hall. The first floor plan is organized around the central hall.

A distinctive feature of this space is a skylight located at the apex of the roof. Glass panels are located in a pyramidal configuration, matching the form of the hip roof itself. These are in turn supported on a square frame of vertical windows, much like a monitor. These windows are operable, and thereby facilitate natural ventilation through the building. Original window operating equipment is intact. Another distinctive feature of the central hall is a wood grid frame that is suspended between the first and second floors. Its position corresponds to the floor framing of the upper floor. This also conveys a sense of the Craftsman Style.

At the first floor level in the central hall, a blond, flecked-finish brick fireplace stands in the center of the north wall. Rooms open from the hall in all four directions. Rooms are finished in plaster walls with simple flat wood baseboards, window frames and door casings. A narrow profile ceiling molding is used throughout. Windows are operable and double-hung, with a six-over-one configuration of most lights. Floors are carpeted throughout.

A stair wraps around the south and east walls of the hall and leads to the second floor. The stair contains hardwood treads and is enclosed with a balustrade composed of simple cylindrical balusters. The stair leads to an upper landing which provides access to the second floor rooms. Upper floor rooms are finished similarly to those of the first floor. It is proposed that the conservatory is significant.

THE STORAGE BUILDING

The storage building is a small wood frame structure located to the south of the main building. The building is rectangular in plan, oriented along an east-west axis. It has a gable roof, with subordinate shed roofs over the enclosed porches.

This building sits on a raised, rubble stone foundation. A stair leads to an enclosed porch on the south façade. Rooms interconnect; there is no hallway. Interior partitions are drywall. Openings are cased in simple flat wood trim. No ceiling molding exists.

Early Sanborn maps indicate a dwelling structure in this vicinity. The proportions of the building as shown in plan on these early documents are not the same as those of the existing building, however. It appears to have been altered significantly over time. The structure may include portions from the original building, but many features have been altered, perhaps by the University of Colorado when it took possession of the property in 1969. Maintenance records of the University refer to numerous actions, including construction of partitions, shelves and doorways in this building. It is proposed that this structure does not contribute to the historic significance of the property.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

In 1897, five years after Mount St. Gertrude opened, a committee led by Dr. G.F. Winston, president of the University of Texas, came to Boulder in search of a location for a summer educational retreat, or Chautauqua, for Texas school teachers. The Chautauqua movement, born in 1874 in New York, grew out of the tradition of religious revival meetings, combining education and entertainment, and spread throughout the nation, with some 700 communities establishing such retreats by the beginning of the twentieth century. The 75-acre Bathchelder ranch was acquired as the city's first permanent park land, first known as Texado Park, and the auditorium and dining hall were built, with the opening of Chautauqua on July 4, 1898. The following year Boulder's electric street railway went into service to convey people to Texado Park past the Academy. By 1927, over 45,000 people had attended programs at Boulder's Chautauqua. It is now one of the few still in operation in the country.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION OF MOUNT ST. GERTRUDE IN BOULDER

The Mount Saint Gertrude Academy was founded by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, headquartered in Dubuque, Iowa. In the summer of 1891, Sister Mary Theodore O'Conner, ill with tuberculosis, travelled to Denver to see her brother, Dr. Walter O'Conner, Surgeon General of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Sister Mary Theodore and her two traveling companions, Sisters Mary Faustina Kirk and Mary Loyola, visited Boulder and were impressed with the open hills and clean environment of the area. Reporting the favorable conditions in Boulder, the three sisters were authorized by Mother Gertrude, the Superior at the Motherhouse in Dubuque, to investigate establishing a house in Boulder.

The search for a site appropriate for the Catholic academy uncovered two possibilities. One site was available in the Newland's Addition in north Boulder and another site was available in the University Place Addition, south of downtown. The site in University Place was donated to the sisters by Warren Hollingsworth McLeod. The land was originally owned by Anthony Arnett, one of Boulder's first settlers. Mr. McLeod purchased the land and platted the University Place Addition in residential lots. He gave the north half of Block 27, University Place, to the sisters for their academy. The lots in the University Place Addition were advertised for \$50 to \$200, so the gift of the land was a substantial donation to the sisters and their academy.

Construction was started in February, 1892. A Denver architect, Alexander Cazin, designed the building, and a Boulder contractor, Luther Hixon, was the builder. Local brick and sandstone were used in the construction. The construction was completed in less than a year at a cost of \$30,000. The building construction was financed entirely from the Motherhouse in Dubuque, Iowa. However, when the Sisters were short on funds to complete the furnishings of the Academy, Boulder citizens responded with their support since "the Sisters are doing noble work and are deserving of all the assistance they can get." (*Herald*, October 1892) The Sisters had an opportunity to repay the generosity in May 1894 when they presented a performance in downtown Boulder to raise funds for victims of a flood.

The Academy was the Boulder community's fourth school. The first class was co-educational (although it soon was decided to maintain an all-girl campus), with a total of 30 pupils enrolled. Of note is that in this first class was Eugene O'Brien, who went on to star in silent films. An additional sixty students enrolled for music lessons. Throughout its history, the Academy followed a policy of admitting students of various religious faiths.

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The original concept of the school had been a remarkably holistic approach to education. The idea was to create a health resort, where pneumonia and tuberculosis could be treated. Pupils afflicted with such diseases were to be cared for in special wards, and it was considered to be an ideal location for recuperation. There was also a separate infirmary for "eastern pupils who are of delicate disposition." With this approach to education, the sisters had hoped to attract students from near and far, with the ability to provide room and board as a primary consideration. The building itself had been designed with a dormitory on the top floor. Unfortunately the Bishop of Denver, Nicholas C. Matz, had denied the Sisters' request to operate Mount Saint Gertrude as a boarding school. This was because Bishop Matz felt the Loretto Heights Catholic School, which had been established outside Denver in 1890, needed a chance to establish itself as a boarding school and there should be no other boarding school in the diocese. The dormitory was not used for some twenty years. The school, however, managed to attract enough local students to keep it viable. The completion of the streetcar line in the early 1900's made the school more accessible.

By 1917, the Mount Saint Gertrude Academy was gaining in success. It was no longer an isolated bastion of civilization on University Hill. Houses had sprung up on the surrounding residential lots, streets had been laid and completed and access to the institution vastly improved. Sister Mary Oswald, the Superior at that time, decided to expand the institution, and with the help of enthusiastic Boulder citizens, was successful in raising enough money to build two wings and a chapel. The chapel also housed an auditorium. The total project cost \$172,470.40 and was completed in 1920. George H. Williamson of Denver was the architect.

The Academy, which taught elementary through twelfth grades until 1950 and seventh through twelfth grades thereafter, had a curriculum which included courses in English, foreign language, history, mathematics, physical training, commercial/business training, music and drawing and a variety of electives. The institute also had a separate conservatory of music. In 1920, the school had an enrollment of 170 students, including 45 who lived at the Academy, and students who graduated from the Academic Department entered the State University without the requirement of taking an entrance exam..

The Loyola (the rest home for the sisters built in 1915) was closed in 1944 and converted to house the Conservatory of Music. In 1950, the Academy hosted the eighteenth Biennial Convention of the Federation of Blessed Virgin Mary Alumnae.

The school continued to be successful through the 1950's expanding its curricula, and community and social events. The school had an enrollment of 147 students in 1958. Academy pupils were honored scholastically, obtaining scholarships, placement in music contests, and National Honor Society recognition. However, the 1960's brought economic hardship to the Sisters of Charity. In March of 1969, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dubuque, Iowa, decided to sell the Mount Saint Gertrude Academy. The final commencement exercises were held June 5, 1969, with 27 graduates participating. The school's enrollment at its close was 48 resident students and 43 day students, with a staff of 11 sisters and three lay teachers. In its 77 year history, the Academy had graduated some 1,200 students. Its enrollment was never greater than 200 pupils, with an average of 50 as boarding students. Mount St. Gertrude was the last of the boarding academies under the jurisdiction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The decision to sell the Academy was one of economic necessity. The sisters could not afford to maintain and repair the buildings. The organization found the cost of needed capital improvements prohibitive and was experiencing a shortage of personnel. The University of Colorado purchased the buildings and grounds in April, 1969 for \$150,000 and took possession in August of that year. Excluded from the transaction were the stained glass window, organ and altar from the chapel.

The University purchased the property to relieve a shortage of office space for the university. The plan was to move agencies not requiring a central campus location to the Academy in order to free critically need space on the main campus. The Academy housed the University's division of continuing education, as well as, at various times, the bureau of conferences and real estate. Dance, intensive English and continuing education courses were also conducted in the building.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

On October 27, 1980, the Academy Building caught fire, in a blaze that was believed to be arson. Over 30 fire fighters battled the fire which burned through the fourth floor and bell tower of the building. The original Academy building and two wing additions were badly damaged and have not been in use since the blaze. The chapel, connected to the main building, was unharmed. The University continued to hold dance classes in the chapel building until 1983, when it was decided to sell the property for development. Since that time, the University has attempted to negotiate a sales or lease agreement with a developer to adapt the property to a new use. A preliminary lease agreement has presently been negotiated with Tom Surgine and partners (The Academy Development Group). Development as a congregate housing facility is contemplated.

Throughout its operations, the Academy distinguished itself in the arts. Newspapers frequently reported presentations of plays and concerts and some graduates went on to achieve local prominence and sometimes national recognition. Some distinguished graduates included:

Eugene O'Brien: Actor, born November 14, 1880 or 1882 in Boulder, CO; died, April 29, 1966, in Los Angeles, CA.

Eugene O'Brien attended Mount St. Gertrude in the early years before the Academy accepted only girls. After graduating from the Academy, he attended the University of Colorado in Boulder where he began studying medicine. He quit his university studies and went to Broadway to pursue an acting career. One of his earliest stage appearances was in a 1904 musical comedy, "Fantana" by Richard Hubbell with Julie Sanderson and Adele Ritchie. He went on to become a leading juvenile under Charles Frohman in a *Builder of Bridges*, *Trelawney of the Wells* and *A Celebrated Case*. He made his first film in 1915 for World Co., *The Moonstone*. When he teamed with Norma Talmadge, he became the silent movies most sought after leading man overnight. He worked with the Selznick and Pathe Studios and made films with Mary Pickford, Gloria Swanson, Ethel Barrymore, Norma Shearer, Marguerite Clark and Mary Astor. After retiring in the early 30's at about age 40, he had made over 51 films including *The Thief*, *Brown of Harvard*, *the Faithless Lover* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farms*. He died in Hollywood of bronchial pneumonia and is buried in Boulder.

Mary Stryker: Educator, born January 27, 1882, in Boulder, CO; died February 1968.

A 1903 graduate from Mount Saint Gertrude Academy, Miss Stryker taught school for several years before attending the Colorado Teachers College in Greeley. Returning to Boulder, she taught at the Washington Elementary school for four years, then was granted a two-year leave of absence to attend the University of Colorado, graduating with two degrees in 1914. Miss Stryker helped organize the first PTA in Boulder in 1919. She served for almost 25 years as the principal of the Lincoln School in Boulder.

Therese Stengal Westermeier: Folklorist, born November 6, 1902 in Boulder, CO; died March 19, 1986, in Boulder, CO.

Therese Stengal Westermeier, born to a Boulder pioneer family, graduated from Mount St. Gertrude in 1921. She attended the University of Colorado, receiving her bachelor of arts degree in 1926. While working on her master's degree, she taught German part-time at the University. At the completion of her M.A. in 1928, she began teaching full-time and continued as a faculty member in modern languages until her resignation in 1954. Mrs. Westermeier was considered a national expert on community celebrations. Her papers on festivals, "Festivals of the Nations," "Faith and Folklore," and "Food Festivals in Colorado" were published in Colorado Magazine during the early 1950's. She was a frequent speaker at the Western Folklore Conferences, speaking on patent medicines popular in the West from 1880 to 1890, a subject on which she had published several articles. Mrs. Westermeier published the following books: Women Too at CU in 1976, Mount St. Gertrude Ave Atque Vale in 1969 and Centennial of a Country Church in 1973.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

Eileen Brennan: Actress, born September 3, 1935, in Los Angeles, CA. Eileen Brennan came to Mount St. Gertrude's in September 1948 as a sophomore from Western High School, Washington, DC. She was a boarder at the Academy though her aunt and uncle lived in Boulder. Ms. Brennan credits her experiences while at Mount St. Gertrude and the encouragement of Amaryllis Poth, who came from Denver to teach dramatics, with inspiring her career as an actress. The variety of roles and statewide competitions gave her theatrical experience. Brennan said: "I had to play men's parts since there were no boys at the Academy. I always wanted an acting career, but it took form at the Mount because of the curriculum we had. We were fortunate, not many other schools afforded such opportunities." While at the Academy she was president of the National Forensic League, vice president of the student body, and active in the Glee Club. She took first place in the Denver Archdiocesan High School Speech Contest at Loretta Heights College in Denver in 1951, portraying King Lear and all three of his daughters. After graduating from the Mount in June 1951, she attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. Her first major starring role was in "Little Mary Sunshine" in 1959 for which she received the Newspaper Guild Award, Theatre World Award and the Obie Award. In 1981 she won an Emmy and a Golden Globe Award for the television role of Captain Lewis in *Private Benjamin*, a role she created for the film version for which she was nominated for an Academy Award. Other films include *Divorce*, *American Style*, *The Last Picture Show*, *Daisy Miller*, *At Long Last Love*, *Murder by Death*, *The Cheap Detective* and *Clue*.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Academy Building is significant in the theme of Community Development and Social History, as this theme is defined in the Boulder Historic Context document. It identifies the development period of 1898 to 1947 as that of the "Youthful City," in which neighborhoods became well established and urban transit systems facilitated development.

The earliest settlements in Boulder were along Boulder Creek and to the north. The area that later developed as University Hill remained open fields, until the development of the University of Colorado, the Chautauqua and the Academy Building. Early photographs clearly show that these institutions served as magnets for residential development. The context document states that "in conjunction with the opening of the Chautauqua, Boulder got its first electric street railroad. The trolley allowed the city to expand, and the area south of Boulder Creek, on 'the hill' adjacent to the university, was developed."

While serving as magnets for development, these sites themselves retained institutional characteristics, those of large building masses on sites with substantial open space. In this manner, the Academy property remained a "contrast" to the building massing and site development patterns of the residential blocks that typified subsequent development on University Hill. When referring to historic photographs of the city's development, researchers today continue to use the Academy as a reference point because of its prominence.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The main building of the Academy is one of the best examples of modified Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in Boulder. Approximately six such buildings survive in the community, most of the others being associated with the University of Colorado.

Quality of construction and design

The imposing scale and quality of design and craftsmanship contribute to the significance of the Academy building. Especially noteworthy is the decorative sandstone arched entranceway on the north facade. Described as having Richardsonian Romanesque characteristics blended with "Tuscan" revival images, the construction quality, especially the tool work and mortar joints, is some of the best in the city. It was finished by local craftsman using Lyons sandstone from the county. Of special significance is the design of the additions, which blends sympathetically with the original central building. The use of similar materials, windows and moldings blends the additions with the core structure; the basic elements of the original style are respected, and yet new elements of the Italianate style are introduced. These stylistic features become more prominent in the chapel addition, which is more distanced from the Richardsonian flavor of the main entrance and conveys a more "Tuscan" character of Romanesque Revival styles. In this respect, the 1920 additions were a successful blending of "old and new" in their time.

The initial design character developed by architect Alexander Cazin blended Second Empire roof details with Romanesque stone work. Cazin was the architect of the original building at the Mount St. Gertrude Academy, and the building retains significant demonstrations of his skill as a designer. Cazin (1857-194?) was a member of an illustrious family of mining engineers, printers, and inventors who lived in Denver in the late 1800s. His father, the black sheep of the family, came to Denver after abandoning his first wife in Germany. His children, Otto, Franz, Maria, Carl and Alex, came later after their mother died.

Alex, the youngest, was an architect before moving to the United States. His first listing in the Denver Directory was in 1882 as a draftsman with J.C. Casper. In 1883 Alex was listed as a draftsman for Robert Roeschlaub, and in 1884 as an architect. He practiced architecture in Denver until 1894. In Denver, Cazin's work included the Buerger Block (1890) at 1436-40 Larimer in the Larimer Square Historic District, and the house at 1632 Humboldt (1889). In 1886 he was in partnership with Ezra M. Cornell and in 1887 and 1888 with Henry Dozier, before moving back to Germany.

Cazin was a charter member of the Colorado Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. After his return to Germany, he practiced architecture for many years in Munster, Westfalen. He died in a nursing home after World War II. Cazin and Dozier designed the first building at Regis College, and family sources say Cazin helped build the Richthofen Castle. His name appears frequently in the Denver Building Permits.

The predominant design character for the main building was established by George Williamson's designs for major additions. George Hebard Williamson designed the east, west and Chapel wings addition in 1919. Williamson (1872-1936) was born August 15, 1872, in Brighton, Colorado. Early in his childhood, Williamson's family moved to Denver where he attended the Denver public schools. In 1893 Williamson graduated from the old East High School. Nearly a third of a century later, Williamson entered a competition to design a new school to replace his old high school. Upon being awarded the design contract, Williamson sentimentally promised a school that would reflect the era and perpetuate the grand old East building legacy. He did so with his magnificent East High School (1924) at East Colfax and Detroit.

In 1888, when but 16 years of age, Williamson entered the office of Fred A. Hale, as an apprentice architect. In 1890 he continued his apprenticeship under the tutelage of Ernest Varian and Frederick Sterner, one of the leading architectural firms in the West, where he was promoted to draftsman by 1896. Earlier, Varian had designed the President's house at the University in Boulder. That structure is now a part of the Norlin Quadrangle National Historic District.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

Frederick J. Sterner groomed George Williamson to work with him on many of his special projects. Williamson was made chief draftsman of Sterner's architectural firm in 1904 and a full partner in 1905. The firm name became Sterner and Williamson, Associated Architects. During his association with Sterner, the firm designed the Daniels & Fisher Tower, the Oakes Home, the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs, and many other notable buildings, including additions to the Glen Eyrie country estate near Colorado Springs for General William J. Palmer known as "the poem written in stone." Sterner and Williamson also designed the handsome Colonial Revival home of Governor William Sweet at 1075 Humboldt in 1906. That house is now in the Humboldt Street Historic District, which is listed on the National Register.

As Frederick Sterner was in New York City much of the time, Williamson increasingly ran the firm, renamed Williamson and Sterner, Associated Architects. The design of East High School won George Williamson numerous accolades including the selection of its model by the Harvard University architectural school as a unique design. In an era noted for fine school designs, George Williamson planned Smiley Junior High School (1928) and Teller Elementary School, as well as the now-demolished Metropolitan Building. Williamson served as treasurer of the Allied Architects who designed and planned construction of the City and County Building. When the Public Works Art Administration was created, George Williamson, a great supporter of the arts, was appointed regional director of the five-state region including Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Fellow architects chose George Williamson as the president of the Colorado A.I.A. in 1914 and again in 1932-36. When the Federal Housing Administration was created under the National Housing Act in June of 1934, George H. Williamson was appointed Chief Architectural Supervisor for Colorado. Williamson was granted in 1934 an honorary fellowship in the the Colorado Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, one of the few in the history of Colorado architecture. He was vice-president of the Denver City and County Zoning Board, a board he had served since its organization and also served on the State Board of Architectural Examiners

With regards to Williamson's design for Mount St. Gertrude, his blending of styles with Cazin's earlier work and his experimentation with the "Tuscan" characteristics of the chapel wing are particularly interesting. Details used here are different from those generally associated with him on other structures in the region and they demonstrate the diversity of his stylistic skills. Another feature contributing to the architectural significance of the Academy is the quality of masonry construction. Evenly-laid brick courses with butter joints are accented with rough-cut sandstone belt courses.

The builder of the original Academy structure, Luther Hixson was born in Ohio in 1843. Mr. Hixson fought in the Battle of Shiloh, as well as several other Civil War confrontations. After being discharged from the army in 1865, Mr. Hixson migrated west through Iowa, Nebraska and Montana, arriving in Caribou, Colorado, the scene of a mining boom, in late 1870's. He was taken with Boulder and decided to stay. He married Eveline Louise, who was a descendant of Oliver Wolcott, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, in 1873. Mr. Hixson ran a contracting business and built the Mount Saint Gertrude Academy, the First Methodist Church, the first Masonic Hall at 14th and Pearl, as well as several of the buildings at the University. He later worked as a superintendent of the contracting department of the Public Service company. Mr. Hixson died in 1911.

The builder/contractor of the Conservatory was the firm of Lawrence & Nortz. Albert Lawrence and John Nortz were in partnership as building contractors for seventeen years in Boulder. Albert Lawrence arrived in Boulder in March 1893. His first work upon coming to Colorado was as the carpenter for the Livingston Mine at Sugar Loaf. Lawrence and Nortz built many homes in Boulder, including 2013 Spruce, and some of the business blocks downtown, as well as the "Loyola" rest home at the Academy (later known as the Conservatory). Lawrence designed the Sacred Heart of Mary Church in South Boulder which he and his partner constructed. Mr. Lawrence was a city councilman from 1907 to 1909.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

A brief development history of the Mount St. Gertrude Academy is presented below. It is assembled from various sources mentioned in the bibliography.

- 1891 The Sisters of Charity acquire south half of the city block bounded by 10th, Aurora, Lincoln and Cascade Streets. Warren Hollingsworth McLeod donates the north half of block to the Sisters, and thus the entire block is assembled for the Academy.
- 1892 The central building is constructed. (The top floor is used for storage only.)
- 1914 Boarding is allowed at the Academy; gables are removed from the 4th story.
- 1915 "Loyola," the Sisters' rest home is constructed by the Boulder construction firm of Lawrence & Nortz. (Original drawings survive.)
- 1920 The major expansion occurs. Wings are added to the east and west; gables are removed. The fourth story is enlarged. The tower is raised and the design is modified from a Second Empire appearance to an Italianate design. St. Joseph Chapel is constructed to the west wing. Architect: George Hebard Williamson.
- 1930's The grounds receive their first landscaping.
- 1937 A "remodeling" is reported by the Sisters in local reports. New class rooms and a social room are created.
- 1941 The Sisters report "improvements" being made. These include carpeting, window repairs, landscaping, and tennis courts. The kitchen is redecorated.
- 1942 The Sisters report a 50th Anniversary "remodeling." The Chapel is repainted, the floor replaced, and indirect lighting is installed. The oval window is simplified.
- 1944 "Loyola" is converted to the Music Conservatory.
- 1969 The University of Colorado purchases the Academy. It houses the Division of Continuing Education, Bureau of Conferences and Real Estate, Dance, intensive English, and continuing education courses.
- 1980 The third floor and bell tower burn. The main building is abandoned; the Chapel continues in use.
- 1983 The Chapel is evacuated.
- 1984 Local City of Boulder landmark designation is approved.
- 1983-88 Six attempts by the University to negotiate with developers fail. Historic Boulder attempts to negotiate preservation covenants.
- 1989 The University selects Academy Development Group (Tom Surgine et. al.) to negotiate for development.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

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Gray, William E. *Mount Saint Gertrude Academy - Historic Inventory and Evaluation*. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, October 10, 1977. Source: Carnegie Library.

Jones, William H. *History of Catholic Education in the State of Colorado*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955.

Noel, Thomas J. and Norgren, Barbara S. *Denver The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941*. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Prospectus, Mount Saint Gertrude Academy, 1920-1921. Source: Carnegie Library.

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Archives, Mount Carmel BVM Center, Dubuque Iowa.

Tobin, Sister Louis Claire Interview. Boulder, Colorado, April 29, 1991. 1941 Graduate of Mount St. Gertrude Academy.

Westermeier, Therese Stengel. *Mount Saint Gertrude 1892-1969 Ave Atque Vale!*. Boulder, Colorado: Empire Reproduction and Printing Company, 1969.

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy
Boulder County, CO

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information applies to photos nos. 1 - 10:

Mount St. Gertrude Academy
Boulder County, CO
Noré Winter, photographer
December, 1990
Negatives - Winter & Company

List of Photographs

1. Chapel wing, view to north
2. View to northeast
3. Storage building, view to northwest
4. Chapel connector, view to northwest
5. View to southwest
6. Main entry, view to south
7. Conservancy, view to west
8. Interior, typical window detail
9. Interior, typical door detail
10. Conservancy, interior skylight

The following information applies to photos nos. 11 - 16:

Mount St. Gertrude Academy
Boulder County, CO
Dale Heckendorn, photographer
June 11, 1994
Negatives - S.H.P.O.

List of Photographs

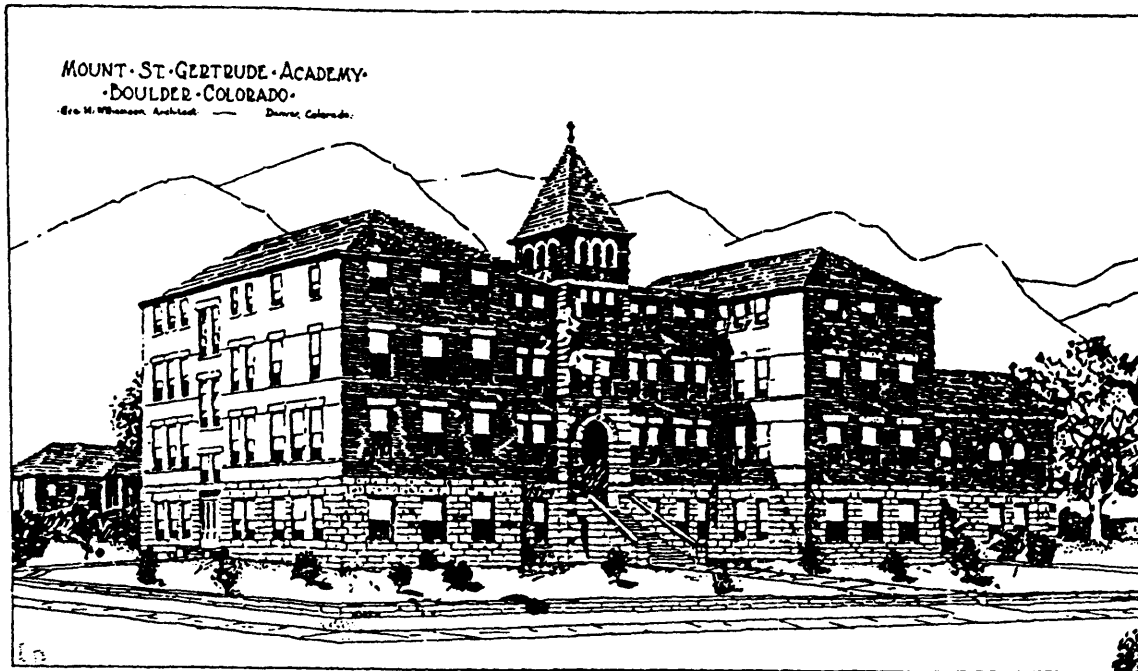
11. Main Building, view to north
12. Chapel wing, view to north
13. Conservancy, view to northwest
14. Main Building, view to the northwest
15. Main Building, view to the south
16. Main Building, view to the south

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Mount St. Gertrude Academy

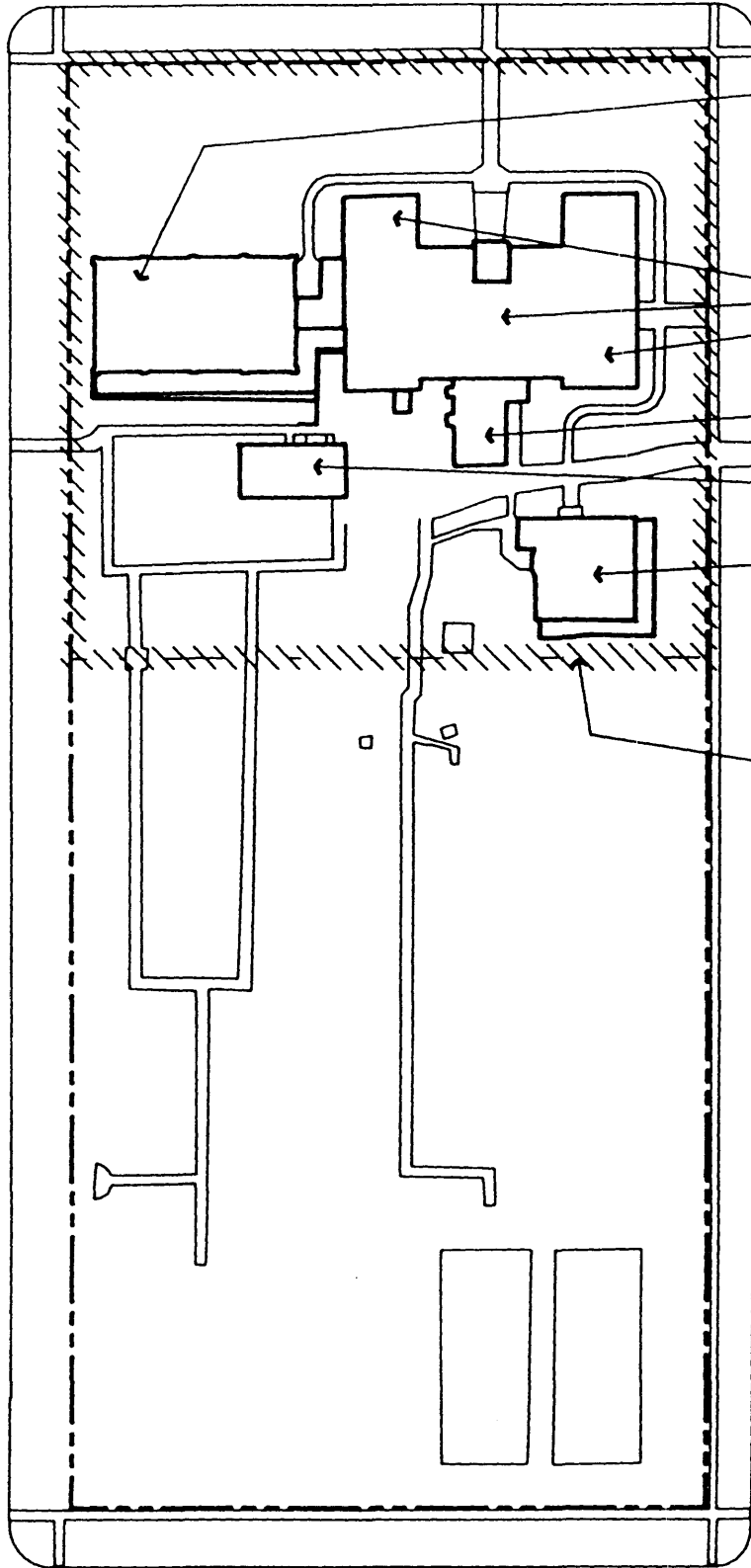


PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

This rendering, produced by George H. Williamson, architect ca. 1919, illustrates the character of the Main Building at the Mount St. Gertrude Academy as it appeared from 1921 to 1980. Source: Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO

AURORA AVE

LINCOLN PLACE



CHAPEL WING (1920)
(CONTRIBUTING)

MAIN BUILDING
(CONTRIBUTING)

WEST WING (1920)
CENTRAL BUILDING (1892)
EAST WING (1920)

BOILER WING (?)
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

STORAGE BUILDING (?)
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

CONSERVATORY (1920)
(CONTRIBUTING)

PROPOSED HISTORIC
PROPERTY BOUNDARY

10TH STREET

NORTH



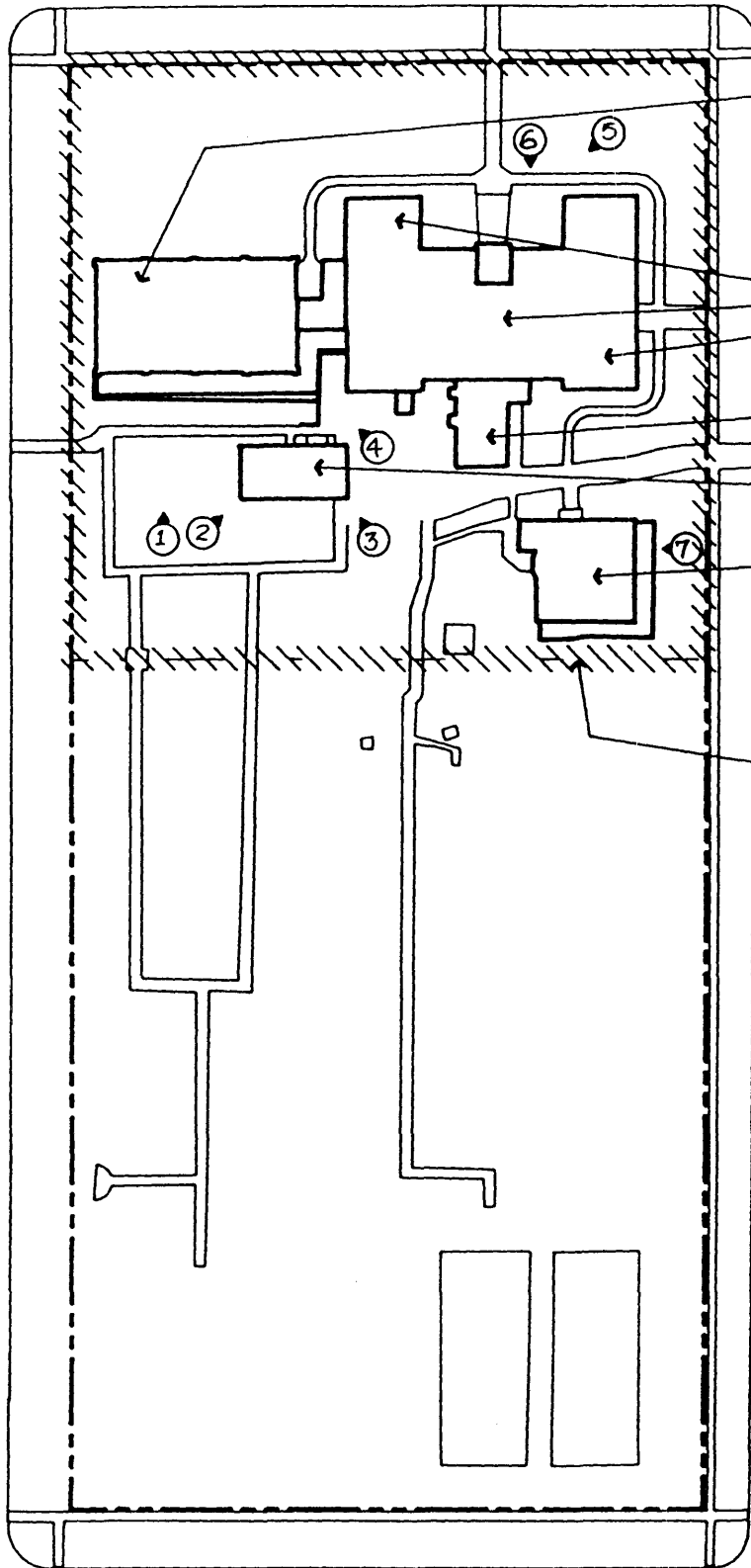
MOUNT ST.
GERTRUDE
ACADEMY
BOULDER, COLORADO

CASCADE AVE

MAP #2

AURORA AVE

LINCOLN PLACE



CHAPEL WING (1920)
(CONTRIBUTING)

MAIN BUILDING
(CONTRIBUTING)

WEST WING (1920)
CENTRAL BUILDING (1892)
EAST WING (1920)

BOILER WING (?)
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

STORAGE BUILDING (?)
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

CONSERVATORY (1920)
(CONTRIBUTING)

PROPOSED HISTORIC
PROPERTY BOUNDARY

10TH STREET

NORTH



MOUNT ST.
GERTRUDE
ACADEMY
BOULDER, COLORADO

CASCADE AVE

PHOTO MAP

MAP #3