



SMEDES HALL, EAST ROCK AND WEST ROCK

St. Mary's College, founded in 1842, is Raleigh's oldest private educational institute still operating today. The first two buildings of the campus were built between 1834 and 1835, when the institute was an Episcopalian school for boys. Known as East Rock and West Rock, these mirror image two-story buildings are constructed of remnant stone discarded during construction of the second State House. East and West Rock are connected to the main building by curved brick covered ways which were added during an early twentieth century renovation.

The main building, erected between 1835 and 1839, is a three-and-one-half story brick Greek Revival building. But, shortly after its establishment, the boys school, the Episcopal School of North Carolina, closed because of financial difficulties. The property, roughly 160 acres, was sold to Duncan Cameron, who agreed to rent the campus for educational purposes. Judge Cameron, a prominent landowner and politician, helped to reopen the school in 1842 as St. Mary's. The Reverend Aldert

Raleigh Historic Properties

Smedes, St. Mary's first president, served as rector of the school for 35 years. Main Hall was renamed Smedes Hall in his honor.

The building's straightforward appearance reflects its function and characteristic simplicity of the Greek Revival style. Smedes Hall has been a multi-purpose building since the school was founded in 1842. Originally the rectors lived in apartments on the third floor; while the students lived on the second. A large parlor on the first floor has served St. Mary's since 1842, and until recently, the basement contained classrooms, recreation rooms, and the campus post office. Presently, the building is used as a dormitory and reception area.

In the early twentieth century a monumental three-story portico replaced the original one-story pedimented one. A shaped gable dormer crowned by a Bonotee cross was added to the roof during the remodeling, adding an extra note of grandeur to the austere Greek Revival facade.

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Inventory List Coded to the Campus Map (enclosed)

1. Smedes Hall. 1835-1839. A Raleigh Historic Site. Smedes Hall, originally known as Main, is the third oldest building on the St. Mary's campus; it was built by William S. Drummond. The centerpiece of the school, Smedes Hall is a large brick, Greek Revival and Neo-Classical Revival building three-and-one-half stories tall. It presents five bays on its main (south) facade and rests on a high basement. A double door entrance with transom and sidelights occupies the center bay of the north and south facades. Tripartite windows with stone lintels appear in the center bays on the second and third floors, while the remaining bays are filled with twelve over twelve sash windows, except on the third floor, where eight over eight sash windows appear. A mousetooth brick course serves as the transition to a widely overhanging cornice.

In the early twentieth century a monumental three-story portico replaced the original one-story pedimented porch of the main entrance. The replacement was designed by Charles E. Hartge, a prominent architect in Raleigh during the early 1900s. The portico is supported by eight paired Tuscan columns which extend across the three center bays. A shaped gable dormer was added to the hipped roof during the remodeling to update the appearance and to add a note of Neo-Classical Revival grandeur to the austere Greek Revival facade. A Bonotee cross surmounts the peak of the gable, indicating the religious affiliation of the school.

Despite the many interior renovations, elements of the original plan and trim remain. Flat paneled doors with broad flat moldings, and box locks are found in the main parlor. Mantels of late Federal-early Greek Revival character may also be original. Some door and window frames repeat the molding of the doors. The first floor is divided by a wide central hall with a stair to the rear leading to the dormitory above and to offices in the basement. The parlor is east of the hall, and extends the width of the rectangular building. West of the hall are small parlors and offices.

Smedes Hall was renamed in honor of St. Mary's first president, Reverend Aldert Smedes. It has been the focus of the school since 1842, housing faculty, students, the post office, dining room, and classrooms. Smedes Hall now serves as a dormitory and office building, and the parlor is still the main reception room of the school

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1. a,b. East and West Wings. 1909. East and West Wings were joined to Smedes Hall in 1909. They are three-and-one-half story brick buildings, rectangular in shape, and topped by hipped roofs. Each wing is five bays wide with center bay pavilions. The bays are articulated by band rusticated piers with egg and dart masonry caps. The one-over-one sash windows are accented by stone sills and lintels. Second story windows are surmounted by blind arches, and the projecting center bays contain a three part window. The roof line is enlivened by small, ornate gable dormers. A large dormer lit by a Palladianesque window is centered above the center bay. These wings were designed by Charles E. Hartge. While clearly early twentieth century in appearance, these Neo-Classical Revival buildings blend well with the scale, materials, and proportions of Smedes Hall. East and West Wings are dormitories, and while interior improvements have been made, much of the original fabric remains.

- 2., 3. East Rock and West Rock. 1833-34, 1834-35. Raleigh Historic Sites. The first two buildings of St. Mary's College were built when the institute was an Episcopal school for boys. Known as East Rock and West Rock, the mirror-image two-story rectangular buildings were constructed of remnant stone discarded during the construction of the second State Capitol. East and West Rocks are five bays wide and three bays deep. The granite walls are laid in random ashlar and are topped by hipped roofs. Six-over-six sash windows fill the bays. Brick interior end chimneys divide the three bays of the east and west elevations. The east elevation of West Rock and the west elevation of East Rock are fronted by projecting, pedimented brick entrances. East and West Rocks are connected to Smedes Hall by curved, one-story brick passages called "covered ways" which were built in the late nineteenth century. The interiors of East and West Rocks have been thoroughly renovated. The school chapel was located on the first floor of East Rock until 1857. East Rock is now an office building and West is a dormitory.

4. St. Mary's Chapel. 1855. National Register, Raleigh Historic Site. St. Mary's Chapel is a simple, one-story board and batten Gothic Revival building. It is a delightful contribution to the architectural diversity of the campus. It is said that Richard Upjohn designed the Chapel, but it is probably that the plan was copied from one of his patternbooks. Upjohn designed Christ Church (1848-1852) in Raleigh. Originally the building was rectangular in shape, but in 1905 transepts were added to the east and west sides, giving the chapel its present cruciform plan. A steep gable roof clad in imbricated slate covers the building. The south (main) gable end contains a segmental arched portal flanked by narrow lancet windows. Above the entrance is a gable hood supported by curved brackets and ornamented with an openwork trefoil in the peak of the hood. A cartwheel rose window is centered above the door. The peak of the gable end is pierced by a louvered quatrefoil.
- The nave to the crossing is four bays long. Lancet windows filled with stained glass fill the bays. The east transept contains a door leading to West wing, while the west transept is dominated by a large lancet window flanked by two smaller ones filled with stained glass. The rear gable end is pierced by a pointed arched stained glass window which illuminates the altar inside the Chapel. Later board and batten additions have been constructed on the north end.
- The interior features a Latin cross plan. The pews form center aisles in the nave and in the crossings. The walls are plaster above a flat paneled wainscot, and are unadorned. The ceiling is finished in wood sheathing, and rises in two stages to the ridge beam. The bays of the roof are divided by simple rafters which meet at the ridge beam. At the crossing each opening is framed by an arched brace which forms a pointed arch at the peak of the ceiling. The raised chancel contains the altar and an ornately carved reredos.

ST. MARY'S CHAPEL

This small, simple, board-and-batten Gothic Revival chapel was completed in 1855. It was built to fill the growing needs of St. Mary's School for Girls on Hillsborough Street, located west of the city. Religious services for the school were held in Smedes Hall from 1842, the date of its founding, until the chapel was completed.

The design of the chapel was taken from an architectural pattern book authored by Richard Upjohn, the prominent nineteenth century architect who was considered to be an authority on Gothic Revival designs. Pattern books were common sources of information for local Victorian architects and builders. The original chapel was a simple rectangle with a steep gable roof. The south (main) gable contains a pointed segmental-arch portal flanked by narrow lancet windows. Above the entrance is a hood supported by curved brackets with geometric open-work featuring a trefoil in the gable. A cartwheel "rose" window is situated in the center of the gable above the hood, and below a louvered quatrefoil. The roof is terminated by a cruciform finial. The north gable at the end of the sanctuary contains a large lancet stained glass window surmounted by a louvered quatrefoil. The east and west facades of the original building contained triangular headed lancets, each framed by a simple projecting molding resting on small brackets.

In 1905 transepts were added to the east and west facades, giving the chapel its present cruciform plan. The transepts were carefully integrated with the original building in material, scale and decoration. The east transept connects to the main school building with a covered walkway.

St. Mary's Chapel is an extremely important architectural statement in the continuing tradition of St. Mary's School for Girls.

In 1858 Bishop Thomas Atkinson remarked, upon seeing the chapel for the first time, "I was gratified by its beauty, its appropriate arrangements, and its adaptation to its purpose." This is true of St. Mary's Chapel today, as it continues to function for its original purpose and as it adds grace and tradition to St. Mary's campus.

National Register – Raleigh Historic Property

