

**200 AVENUE DE LA CATHÉDRALE – UNIVERSITÉ DE SAINT-BONIFACE
(ST. BONIFACE COLLEGE)
*Joseph-Ovide Turgeon, 1910-1912***



One of the most important facets of the development and continuance of the Francophone language and culture in Western Canada was education. Soon after the establishment of the French-speaking settlement at St. Boniface, the community sought to provide education, originally religious and provided by the Roman Catholic church.

In 1871, the *Collège de Saint-Boniface* was incorporated; the first college institution in Western Canada and six years later joined with St. John's and Manitoba colleges to found the University of Manitoba. The next development was the opening of a new school building on Avenue Provencher in 1880, operated by the Jesuits after 1885. With several additions, this structure was home to approximately 300 students by World War I, including 150 boarders.

In 1912, the training of candidates for the priesthood was aided by the opening of *Le Petit Séminaire*, located on the southwest corner of Avenue de la Cathédrale and Rue Aulneau. In

1922, when the College building on Provencher was destroyed by fire, this magnificent building became the new St. Boniface College.

The college building, an excellent example of the Neo-Classical or Classical Revival style, cost \$225,000 to complete in 1912. It stands three-storeys tall and is U-shaped and clad in stone. It features a wealth of classically-based ornamentation including the centre domed metal-clad cupola, smaller towers at the east and west ends of the building, a central entrance set below a pediment supported by unfluted attached and unattached Doric Order columns with plain bases and voluted capitals, complete entablature, dentils, statues and arched and rectilinear window openings.

The east end of the original building is clad in stone and features arched window openings, an ornately treated circular window opening on the upper level, complete entablature and metal clad parapet. Additions and newer construction have hidden much of the rear (south) and west façades. The oldest addition to the facility was completed in 1924 on the south end of the west wing and continues the stone cladding, fenestration and roof treatments on the north and west façades while the rear façade is clad in brick and is much plainer.

On the interior, renovations and re-organization of the space has left little original material. What has remained intact is the chapel with its high ceilings and ornamental plasterwork.

The architect responsible for this building is Montréal designer Joseph-Ovide Turgeon (1875-1933), a well-known practitioner whose work concentrated mostly in the Montréal area. Local building firm Joseph H. Tremblay Company built the school.

The College has seen significant changes since it opened in this building in 1922:

- women entered the classroom in 1959
- continuing education was introduced in the 1960s
- in 1969, the institution transitioned to a secular administration
- in 1975, technical and professional programs were introduced
- high school courses were transferred out of the school in 1982

- in 2011, provincial legislation created the *Université de Saint-Boniface*, giving the institution full university status, independent and continuing its affiliation with the University of Manitoba

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior-

- The three-storey brick and stone structure with its main (north) facade facing Avenue de la Cathédrale, its east facade facing Rue Aulneau, its west facade partially hidden and facing another building and its south facade nearly entirely hidden by additions;
- The main (north) facade with its limestone cladding, pedimented, grand order, centrally-placed entrance with by a wide stairs, oversized bracketing, unfluted attached and unattached Doric Order columns with plain bases and volute capitals, arched openings with keystones on the ground floor, rectilinear openings on the second level and arched openings on the top floor, a complete entablature with frieze with carved lettering and dentilled pediment with carved figures and topped by a statue, the side wings with arched window openings on the ground floor, rectilinear openings on the upper two storeys (with arched pediments above the second floor openings) and slightly projecting sections at either end finished by pediments with carved figures and a complex roof with metal-clad parapet, two ornate towers at the east and west ends and a central, domed metal clad cupola;
- The east facade clad in stone with arched window openings, circular window on the upper level, complete entablature and metal clad parapet;
- Visible portions of the west end with stone cladding, entablature and metal clad parapet and arched and rectilinear window openings; and
- The visible rectilinear window openings and metal clad parapet of the south facade.

Interior-

- Volume of space and original finishes in the chapel, including original finishes found in 3rd floor classroom.