

The Bishop's School
7607 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-1968

HABS
CAL,
37-LAJOL,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS
CAL,
37-LAJOL

THE BISHOP'S SCHOOL

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Location: 7601 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, San Diego County, California

Present owner
and occupant: The Bishop's School, a private school

Present use: Co-educational school. From 1909 to 1971 it was a girls' school.

Significance: In addition to the three major buildings having been designed by Irving J. Gill, an important modern architect, the institution has served the community as a first class school with an international reputation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: Building on the site was started in 1909 with Bentham Hall, named after the principal, Mrs. Charles E. Bentham, being the first. The following year Scripps Hall was built for Ellen Browning Scripps in recognition of her contribution to the field of higher education for women. Gilman Hall was finished circa 1917. St. Mary's Chapel was designed and completed in 1917. It was given to the school by the wife of the first Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Johnson, in memory of her mother. The name St. Mary was chosen because it suitably embodied the school's motto--simplicity, serenity and sincerity. A combination gym/auditorium was built in 1925.
2. Architects: Irving J. Gill was the architect of the first three buildings and applied the modified California Mission style which he found to be so compatible to Southern California climate and way of life. Later architects have continued with the Gill style and the whole is compatible with the early buildings. In 1917 the Chapel was designed by Carlton Winslow who came to San Diego in 1915 specifically to design the California Tower in Balboa Park for the 1915 Panama-American Exposition. The gym/auditorium was designed by Louis Gill.
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1909 Miss Virginia Scripps gave a nine acre site in La Jolla to be used by the Right Reverend Joseph H. Johnson, first Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, to establish a boarding school for the higher education of women. Additions have been made, until now the school property covers more than twenty acres. The first three buildings were given to the school by Ellen Browning Scripps.

4. Original plans and construction: The chapel as originally built was one long structure with no side transepts. An interesting feature of the chapel is the baldacchino, with windows with an imitation stained-glass design. Carlton Winslow, the chapel's architect, painted the imitation stained glass himself.

The floor tiles installed in the school buildings are said to have come from an old Spanish mission.

5. Alterations and additions: A tower was built in 1930 in memory of the Bishop of the Diocese, but it has been removed. The tower was designed by Carlton Winslow. At the same time a second story was added to Bentham Hall. Because the chapel was condemned as unsafe after the Long Beach earthquake in 1938, the hollow bricks were replaced with reinforced concrete, and transepts added to enlarge the space.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Irving J. Gill, architect, designed the buildings in the modified California Mission style he developed to be so compatible to the Southern California climate and way of life. Aiken tilted-concrete construction was used to construct these two story buildings. Recent additions and enlargements have been made. The architects have continued with the Gill style and the whole is compatible with the early buildings. The campus is well planned so that the whole--trees, garden, and open spaces create a pleasing compliment to the architecture.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary and published sources:

The Bishop's Schools Bulletin. Winter-Spring 1973.

City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register, circa 1970.

Edited by: Susan McCown
HABS Historian
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