



Bridgewater Academy

Though a central school existed on Pleasant Street, beside the Catholic Church, it became overcrowded around the turn of the century, and land was bought by the new Town of Bridgewater between Queen and York Streets in 1909 for the construction of a new school. The cornerstone was laid in 1913, and it opened to students in November 1914.

The building was an excellent example of Edwardian Classical architecture, derived from the grandiose English Baroque style of Christopher Wren in the late 1600s, and first cousin to the French and American Beaux Arts movement. With wings protruding on each end, the entrance was from a cour d'honneur just as with Baroque château, and its scale was kept rather small compared to the immense buildings; the door was only surrounded by a small portico, and had a semi-circular fanlight with tracery over it. In the central section, lower storey windows had transom lights over them, and the upper storey ones each have a large fanlight^, with a contrasting belt course running in between. The prominent eaves are decorated with a cornice and

dentils, and the roof has a small row of gabled dormers, each with decorative bargeboards. Even the end wings had semi-circular windows in the peaks of their gables.

The crowning feature of the Academy was, however, the octagonal cupola, very much resembling the designs of Christopher Wren used in colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. The lower portion of it is crowned with a balustrade, and the upper part has a window on each face. The cap adds an air of refinement to the entire building. The bell that once rung here is now stored in the library of Bridgewater Elementary School.

This building, originally the high school, was soon complimented by an Annex built across the street, at 92 Queen Street, in 1925. In 1952, a high school was constructed facing York Street, beside it, the Annex became the Junior High School, and the Academy became the Elementary School. In 1980, the Annex and the Academy having proved too small and outdated for an Elementary School (in 1967 the Junior High moved to a new wing added on to F. R. Davis memorial High School along Dominion Street), and a new Bridgewater Elementary School was built. The Academy was wantonly demolished that year, making way for an expanse of asphalt playground.

