A Prep’s World: The place up/on/built into the hill
St. Bede’s Hall, ca. 1960 – before the move
From brochure in 79/4 14:6
The school was founded in 1857 by Cornelius Wittmann on the Rothkopp claim near what is now St. Cloud State University. The original five students included Henry Klostermann of Richmond.
A 1961 fundraising brochure states the need
Brochure in 79/2 1:1. Notes (author unknown; Fr. Cuthbert?) in 79/2 2:14 give these stats:
1961-62: 325 students; 108 lay (“Gregites”), 216 priesthood candidates (“Bedites”)
1962-63: 374 students;
1968-69: 348 students; 248 lay, 100 priesthood
“Pressure to admit more students is only a secondary reason [for building in 1961-62].
This move is prompted principally by the demands for adequate facilities for both groups.”
Prep Faculty discuss new school, to go on Observatory Hill
Meeting minutes 1206:7; Observatory photo from Prep World Nov.-Dec. 1961
The new Abbey Church precedes building a new Prep facility
Abbot Baldwin Breaks Ground; New Prep School Underway

By Richard Derins

Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, OEB, broke ground Thursday, Sept. 14, for the new St. John’s Preparatory School.

Construction will begin immediately on a dormitory and a classroom-study hall, designed to accommodate 480. Administrative offices, a library, and a cafeteria will be temporarily situated in these buildings, which will be completed for the 1962-63 school year.

The buildings will be located on the shore of Lake Sagatagan approximately 200 yards east of the present college campus proper. The classroom building, to be located on ground which slopes upward from the lake, will be a three level one-story building. The cost of the two buildings will be $1,074,000.

The second phase of the building program will add a gymnasium, library, a combination auditorium-cafeteria, recreation rooms and administrative and music facilities.

Father Cuthbert Bocskup, OEB, prep dean, stated that, “We would all like to postpone construction for at least a year, but we believe it would be unfortuante, if not tragic, to be forced to turn away half of the priesthood applicants we expect in future years.”

The present enrollment of the prep school is 325. The college and prep school presently use the same classroom and dining facilities and the additions will ease pressure on space needed for college growth.

After the ground breaking ceremonies Abbot Baldwin spoke briefly and stated that, “By the fall of 1962 it would be impossible to accommodate in present quarters the number of students enrolled in the prep school because of the large increase in the number of priesthood students. Faced with this problem, the monastic community acted as it had done so often in the past; it decided to meet what might be called the greatest need of the world today, namely, the need of more effective leadership, clerical and lay. In-...
Groundbreaking ceremony photos show the wall of the Observatory; it is torn down to make room.
Roof removal photo from Ascheman Collection, LP 056.1961.
The site is logged and cleared.
Cement work continues through the winter cold.
The center staircase starts to take shape
(If you’ve only seen the Weber Center and missed the rest of the building, take in the view overlooking the stairs.)
The curved roof segments are put in place, one by one, and coated with cement.
Lots of rebar, lots of cement.
Progress is noted in both The Record and the Prep World
Winter, spring, summer...gradually the buildings take shape.
“Some assembly required...” The dorm is also under construction

“Some assembly required...”
Transporting the form used to cast the 20 dorm roof modules?
A view of the roofs
Photo from 79/2 1:1
Dormitory interior – before and after
The dormitory, ready for students
Modifications are made to the dorm over time (what’s with the net??)
Anticipation builds...
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/CSBArchNews,33445 The Record August 24, 1962, p. 2

The anticipation rises along with the buildings...
but there’s still a lot to be done.
Still more to do: A tunnel connects the academic and dormitory buildings

The Prep World article had noted: "Work on the connecting tunnel will be delayed until a time when it will have something to connect."
...and there was a lot of landscaping!
Landscapers avoid the historic pines overlooking Boniface Bay
And speaking of landscaping...laying sod = summer work for many.
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/CSBArchNews,33445 The Record August 24, 1962, p. 2
The school's reopening is noted in *The Record*
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/SJUArchives,218  *The Record* September 28, 1962, p. 1
The school's dedication is planned.

http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/CSBArchNews,33434 The Record October 26, 1962, p. 1
A good crowd turns out for the dedication on Sunday, October 28, 1962

The dedication is October 28, 1962
Breuer complements Val Michelson, designer of the Prep buildings and a former associate
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u?/CSBArchNews,33396  The Record March 6, 1964, p. 3
Weber Center addition drawing
From Box 2022:1
There have been three major additions to Bede Hall:

- The Weber Center (1998)
- The Meyer expansion for the sciences (2000)
- The Middle School (2008)

There have been three major additions to the academic building.
Credits
Construction and other photos from SJP Buildings Photo collection, unless otherwise noted.