

Statement of Significance



4 Merrymeeting Rd - Mount St. Francis Monastery

Formal Recognition Type

City of St. John's Heritage Building, Structure, Land or Area

Description of Historic Place

Mount St. Francis Monastery is a two-and-one-half storey stone building built in the Gothic Revival style. Built between 1877 and 1880, Mount St. Francis Monastery is located on Merrymeeting Road in the Ecclesiastical District of St. John's, Newfoundland. This designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

Mount St. Francis Monastery is designated because of its historic and aesthetic values.

Mount St. Francis Monastery, built between 1877 and 1880 to house the Irish Christian Brothers, is historically valuable for its association with this Roman Catholic community of religious brothers. Founded in 1802 in Ireland by Brother Edmund Rice, the Irish Christian Brothers proceeded with the objective of, "To do and to teach." In 1875, the Irish Christian Brothers accepted an invitation from the Benevolent Irish Society to assume responsibility for Roman Catholic education in St. John's. This decision to come to St. John's was crucial to the development of Roman Catholic education in Newfoundland. The contributions of the Irish Christian Brothers to education in Newfoundland were great and Mount St. Francis Monastery stands as a testament to this influence and contribution. This Monastery is also historically valuable as the first Irish Christian Brothers Monastery in Newfoundland.

Mount St. Francis Monastery is architecturally valuable as an example of Gothic Revival architecture in an institutional building. This style of architecture was common for monasteries built during this period. According to local tradition, Mount St. Francis Monastery is modelled after a monastery in Wexford, Ireland. The Monastery employs many Gothic elements including steeply peaked dormers, arched windows and doors, and quoining on the corners. The double bay windows topped with a steep gable roof flanking each side of the main entrance create a turret-like look for the front façade of the building.

Mount St. Francis Monastery is environmentally valuable for its location in St. John's. The

Monastery is located in the centre of the city and is one of a larger number of buildings that create a complex of ecclesiastical buildings in this area.

Source: City of St. John's Council Meeting, 2000/04/17

Character Defining Elements

All those elements that are representative of the Gothic Revival style of architecture, including:

- pointed arch windows, quoining etc.
- window style and placement;
- stone construction;
- building height, two-and-one-half storey construction, roof shape and dimensions; and,
- bay windows with steep gabled roof on front façade.

All those features which speak to the environmental values of the historic place, including:

- building setback on the lot; and,
- positioning of the building within the St. John's Ecclesiastical District.

Location and History

Community	St. John's
Municipality	City of St. John's
Civic Address	4 Merrymeeting Road
Construction	1877 - 1880
Style	Gothic Revival
Building Plan	Rectangular Long Façade
Website Link	http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/irish_christian_brothers.html

Additional Photos

