

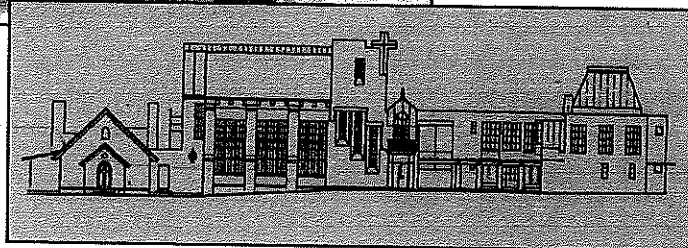
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COFFEE-TALK LEADS TO SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP



Rendering courtesy of the Whiteman School

Chance meeting sparks
unique partnership
between church, school



Rendering courtesy of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Have you heard the story about the church lady who sat down for coffee one day with a school teacher?

Not too long ago, St. Paul's Episcopal church member Sally Howard was chatting with Nancy Spillane, head of The Lowell Whiteman Primary School. They compared symptoms of the two groups' growing pains. Each organization is bursting at the seams, but its budget is challenged by the high cost of construction in a booming town.

The result is a partnership between St. Paul's Episcopal Church and The Lowell Whiteman Primary School that may be unique. Whiteman, a private institution with no religious ties, is teaming up with one of Steamboat Springs' oldest churches to build a new facility that will house both entities. If a similar situation exists elsewhere in the United States, neither group has been able to find it, despite hours of on-line research.

"I truly believe if it weren't for that conversation between Sally and Nancy, none of this would be happening," says Fr. David Henderson of St. Paul's. "It's a wonderful thing for both institutions, and wonderful for the town. It's not about the building, it's about forming a relationship between the church and another community organization."

The church owns the land at Ninth and Oak streets where the new building will be located. The school is leasing its portion of the property from the church, plus paying for construction of the school that both groups will use.

St. Paul's existing chapel is a Steamboat landmark, built in 1913 with stone from nearby Emerald Mountain. It seats about 100 people. "It's a wonderful, wonderful chapel," Fr. David says, "but the facility itself is inadequate. We have room for preschool, but not for Sunday School. We are out of space. Our parish hall can only hold 30 people comfortably."

The old chapel will remain intact, to be used for small services. Similar stone from the Doc Utterback house, which was moved two years ago to the museum at Eighth and Oak, has been set aside for the new sanctuary. And Gloria Gossard, who owns the now-defunct quarry, is letting the church and school salvage rock from Emerald Mountain.

Architect Arthur Andersson of Austin, Texas, met with both groups, first separately and then together, to create a design that is practical and appealing for the school/church.

"The new church will have a similar feeling, the same kind of warmth as the original one," Fr. David says. "It's fairly high, and

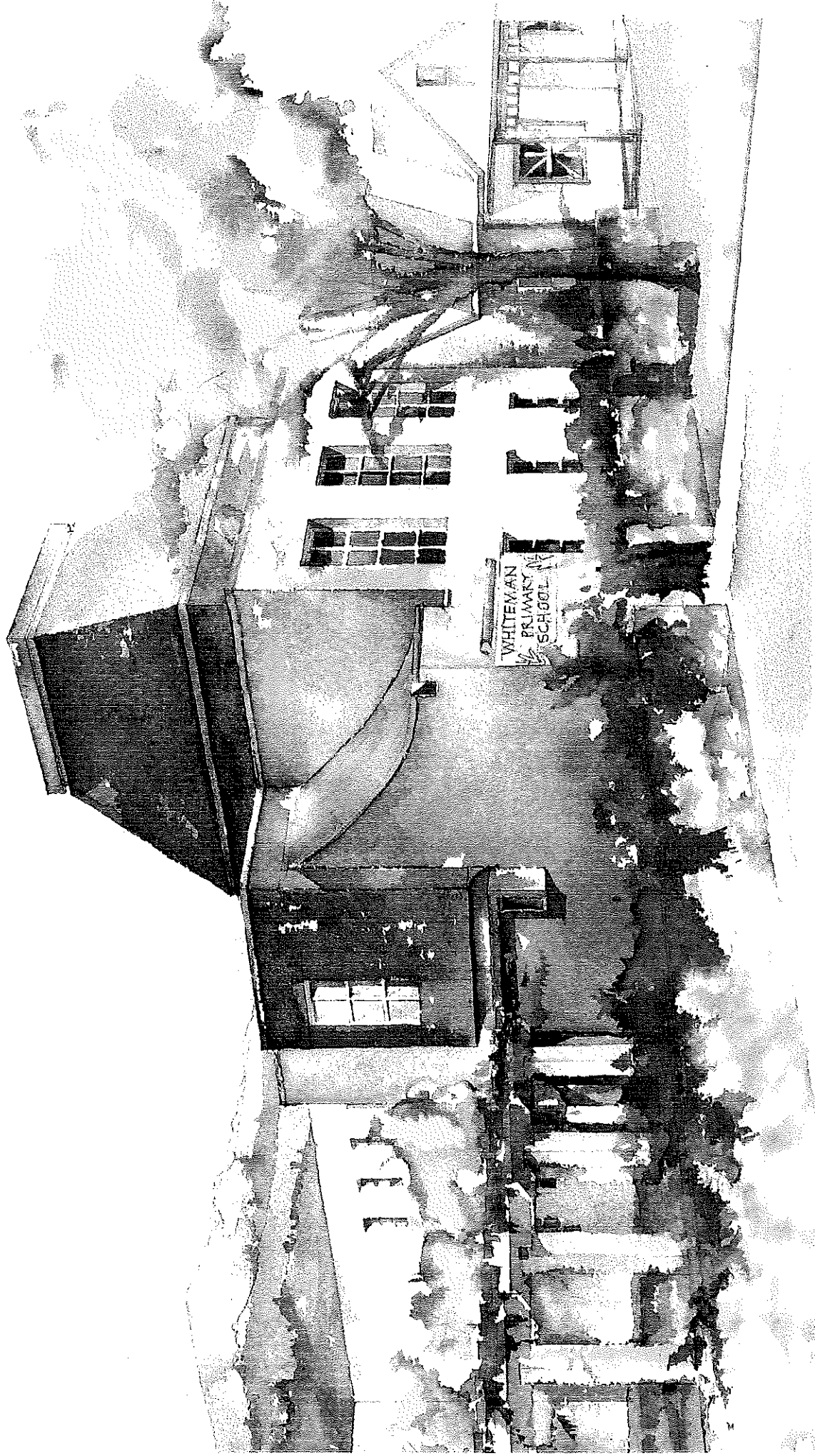
it'll have lots of natural, morning light." Initially, the chapel's seating capacity will more than double that of the existing facility. At a later date, when phase II is

completed, seating will be almost triple what it is today. It could be expanded even more by using the adjacent meeting room for overflow seating.

The new school will be 6,500 square feet, plus a basement and the meeting hall. It will include science, math and computer labs, a music room, a library complete with "Grandma's reading corner," and an auditorium/theater.

"It's a grand enterprise, it's just so beautiful," Nancy exclaims. The school hopes to move from its present, city-owned site in January 2000. Whiteman currently has 43 students and plans to cap enrollment at 50. "One of the highlights of our school is its small student-teacher ratio," Nancy says. "We don't want to change that."

The school received several grants to help offset the cost of the new facility, and the church is conducting a capital campaign. Local contractor Tom Fox is breaking ground on the project this summer. ♦



THE LOWELL WHITEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL