No. 1 Francis Thomas Drive

Unmatched Authenticity



CATEGORY A

Owner:

The Diocese of Singapore

Architect:

DP Architects Pte Ltd

Engineer:

Maunsell Consultants (Singapore) Pte Ltd

Contractor:

SEF Construction Pte Ltd

esigned by Frank Wilmin Brewer in 1939, the old St Andrew's School, was said to be one of his finest and largest completed work in Singapore. Originally a twostorey building before the addition of a third storey in 1952, it is now restored as the new Diocesan Centre.

A Study In Conservation

Counted by many Singaporean luminaries as their alma mater, the old St Andrew's School has a unique place in the architectural landscape of Singapore. Extensive documentation and research of the building's history

and fabric were carried out. The restoration works also benefited from the wealth of photographic records, school annuals and old boys' records of happenings in the school.

During restoration, protective measures were employed to ensure the structural stability and maintenance of important elements of the building like the roof and existing timber floors. With much of the main building structures well preserved, works centered mainly on the roof, the façade and the replacement of stained glass and floor tiles. About 40% of the roof tiles were salvaged, cleaned and reused with new imported tiles of similar design and quality.



Sensitive restoration of school building for new use

A Class of Its Own

The distinctive fish-scale stucco texture walls of the entire school building were restored and repainted to match the original colours, determined through an extensive pigment study and interviews with the old boys of the school. Broken stained glass was replaced with specially sourced matching glass panels while every tile in classroom floors and corridors was checked for hollowness. Hollow or damaged tiles were carefully remortared or

replaced. The original three-storey Restroom Block was converted into a meeting/gathering space. Sensitively proportioned secondary windows were added throughout to enable air-conditioning and noise-insulation. Special features like the queue lines used by the school children along the corridors were also kept.

A New Pulse

The school building has been sensitively adapted to its new use and continues to contribute to the overall sense of place. The outstanding works carried out deserve top marks as an exemplary study in sensitive restoration.





Restored façade repainted to match original colours



Fish-scale stucco texture wall



Stained glass



Distinctive polygonal timber framed windows and balcony kept



Three-storey Restroom Block converted into a meeting/gathering space



"Petal-shaped" beams intentionally exposed



Queue lines and floor tiles along corridor kept



Old primary school hall converted to a function hall



Old secondary school hall converted to a sanctuary



Existing quadrangle retained

The Old St. Andrew's School

1850-1912

The beginning of St. Andrew's School can be traced back to as early as 1850-60 when the private institution was set up in Chin Chew Street, Chinatown by 2 Anglicans - Mr Sim Quee and Mr Tye Kim. As a result of the sermon on a Sunday in 1856, Rev Humphreys and a group of laymen formed themselves into a committee for the spreading of the Gospel in the then 37-year old Singapore.

Seeking a missionary was one of the steps taken and this led to the arrival of Rev. Edward Sherman Venn in 1861. The private institution at Chin Chew Street had no connection with the Anglican Church until it was transfered and adopted by the Church Mission on 8 September 1862 by Rev. Venn.

On 10 September 1863, the School was moved to Upper Hokkien Street as a larger building was needed to cater to the needs of the growing school. Mr Cheok Loy Fatt, then in Hong Kong, was appointed a new Catechist to take charge of the school. In the same year, Rev. Venn reported that a good beginning had been made at Upper Hokkien Street and attendence was "very encouraging".

In 1866, the Mission encountered serious financial difficulties and the school was temporally closed. Mr Cheok, with a sense of service, continued the school on his own for a considerable period of time. The school in this period was known as Sekolah Loy Fatt.

In 1872, the Colonial Chaplain Canon J. A. Beccles successfully applied to the Government for financial aid. Rev. George Frederick Hose succeeded Canon Beccles as Colonial Chaplain the same year, and appointed Rev. William Henry Gomes from Borneo as superintendent (or warden). He would serve the school for thirty years.

In 1873, Rev. Gomes reported the rapid expansion of the school to 120 pupils and the school was moved to Victoria Street. This was temporary, however, as the Government, at the request of Bishop Hose, agreed to make a grant of a 4-acre piece of land on the then Government Hill (today's Fort Canning Hill) with a frontage facing Stamford Road, to the school the same year.

The first building to be erected was the Chapel and on 14 February 1875, the school moved to its new premises. Classes were held in the Chapel, which also became an important centre of public worship.

On 15 October 1887, St. Andrew's House was founded by the committee formed by Mr. C. B. Buckley, a solicitor, consisting of the Bishop, the Archdeacon, Rev. Gomes, Rev. B. Wonnacott and Mr. A. L. Donaldson. It was housed in a rented room in Armenian Street for \$35 a month and Mr. Bicknell was appointed Housemaster of mainly European and Eurasian boys attending Raffles Institution. Prior to this, Mr. Buckley had took in the boys from a fifty years old boarding house - run by Raffles Institution - which had closed down earlier in the same year.

In 1888, Cheok Loy Fatt resigned as Headmaster of St. Andrew's School and he was succeeded by Mr. D. S. Ponniah in 1890.

Meanwhile, a new house was planned on Stamford Road and \$1,600-00 was collected. The Government made a grant of land to the Church in 1890, and with a donation of \$10,000 from the Trustees of the estate of Edward Boustead, the house was completed in 1891.

The school was soon expanding so rapidly that by 1900, there were 216 students, necessitating an additional schoolroom.

In August 1901, the Director of Public Instruction remarked that the 332 pupils in the school was too large for the limited accommodation, so for a period of time, no boys were admitted. During this period, the school provided primary students to feed to Raffles Institution (or Singapore Institution, as it was then called).

From 1902 to 1912, the average attendance continued to be about 250. Rev. Gomes passed away in 1902 after having served the school's Superintendent for 30 years; the Rev. R. Richards who served from 1902 to 1934 succeeded him.

In 1912, Rev. J. Romanis Lee was appointed Principal and was handed an old parsonage (built in 1872) for use as the boarding house of mainly Chinese boys. This house came to be known as Romanis House.

Rev. Lee's term as Principal brought about tremendous change to the school; for a start, enrolment was increased and the number of students reached 630 as a result.

1913-1937

The school's sports and games tradition was initiated with its first Athletic Sports Meet held in 1913. Rev. Lee also raised the school to its secondary status when, in 1914, four boys sat for the Junior Cambridge, and in 1916, three boys sat for the Senior Cambridge for the first time; the school had 100 percent passes in this first exam.

Besides expanding enrolment and elevating the school to first grade, Rev. Lee encouraged and ensured that there were extracurricular activities in the school by initiating the Cadet Corps.

Rev. Lee also instituted the Board of Management in 1921, to replace the old system, which was run by a Saint Andrew's Church Mission Committee. The Old Boys' Association was founded the same year, to foster friendship and give encouragement to the school. Unfortunately, this was also the year Rev. Lee retired due to ill health.

Mr. H. A. L. Orchard was appointed Principal in 1922, followed by Rev. V. Clough in 1923, then Mr. Joseph Lee in 1924.

With Mr. Joseph Lee at the helm, enrolment increased to 800 and the school progressed along the lines started by his predecessor. He successfully instilled into the boys a sense of belonging to the school, as well as establishing John Oxenham's poem 'Up and On' as the School Song. In 1924, the school expanded with the completion of the Upper Elementary School building - which was later converted to the Registration Center - in Stamford Road.

Canon R.K.S. Adam's arrival in 1927 as Geography master marked the start of a series of remarkable changes in Saint Andrew's, including the beginning of a glorious period in the field of sports which lasted for more than a decade.

Mr. Tan Ah Hung (in whose honor the school field - the Tan Ah Hung Oval - is named after) first introduced cricket to the school in 1927 after seeing the visiting Australian Ash Team play on the Padang.

On Saint Andrew's Day in 1928, Canon Adams, together with Mr. H.A. Bassett, started the school magazine which aroused much praise and enthusiasm in the Singapore press, especially a 'Robinson Mystery' written in series by G. Herskovitch, which was read avidly by staff, students and the public alike. In the same year, the Boy Scouts numbered a record 40.

At the same time, the standard of sports had greatly improved and to boost interest and competition, the old system of alphabetically naming the Houses (A, B, C, D and E) was replaced with the naming after prominent figures of the School, namely, Loi Fatt, Venn, Gomes and Richards. (The Board of Governors later changed the last to Romanis.)

Canon Adams initiated a year later on 1st March, the Saint Andrew's first Literary and Debating Society, with the aim of improving the English of the boys in the upper classes.

It was Canon Adams who introduced boxing in 1931 for the first time in the history of Singapore's schools. Fighting for the Aw Boon Haw Shield, Saint Andrew's won twice successively and retained the cup whenever the other schools refused to fight.

In addition to boxing as a traditional sport, came rugger, started in 1933 by G.T. Gurney, another first for the school. The Ferguson and Ross Brothers, and Fam Choo Beng, assisted by teachers like Mr. Tan Lye Whatt, Housemaster of Romanis House, Mr. Kiong Woon Kew, Housemaster of Gomes House, and the late Koh Eng Keang, established St. Andrew's as the rugger-playing school'.

In 1934, badminton was introduced to the school and shortly after Canon Adams' appointment as Principal on 1st October in the same year, plans were drawn up to rebuild the aging school, boarding house and chapel buildings in Stamford Road, By now, the campus had become too crowded - there were scarcely enough classrooms and there was no playing field for the boys which showed so much enthusiasm and aptitude for outdoor games. As a result, Canon Adams started the School Building Fund during this period, with the assistance of the new Board of Governors and the Old Boys' Association, to finance expansion.

Through personal ties between Archdeacon Graham White and the then Chief Secretary of the Government, Sir Andrew Caldecott, the school was offered the choice of 2 new sites for re-location instead. One was along Tanjong Katong Road and the other was on Serangoon Road, next to the then Serangoon Post Office. However, the favoured 12-acre Serangoon site was eventually given up, as it would have involved enormous construction costs revealed in engineering investigations.

In 1937, other schools started playing rugger with Saint Andrew's, and in December the same year, the school was offered a third site, which was the larger 18.5-acre Woodsville Estate.

1938-1951

In early 1938, the trust over the Stamford Road site was surrendered to the Government of the Straits Settlements, in exchange for Woodsville bought at the cost of \$60,000. On 8th April the same year, a thanksgiving ceremony was held at the new site with the entire school led by the Bishop and Archdeacon.

The Vice-Principal, A.C. Parr, instituted the Prefectorial Board in 1938, which was first captained by Reggie Thay, a well known cricketer who later played for England in Test Matches.

On 10th July 1939, His Excellency, Sir Shenton Thomas, laid the Foundation Stone of the new school at Woodsville. The Bishop of Singapore, Mr. H. R. Cheeseman, Deputy Director of Education, Mr. M. R. Holgate, Senior Inspector of Schools, members of the Board of Governors and old boys were present. The same year also saw Seah Eng Hee, one of Saint Andrew's best badminton players, crowned Malayan Champion.

Prior to the relocation to Woodsville where a field was provided, all sports and practices were held in the fields of Saint Joseph's Institution (near Stamford Canal) and Raffles Institution, as there was no space in Stamford Road. Being located near the Y.M.C.A pool in Orchard Road then, the boys were allowed free periods for swimming and had always come out tops.

The 2-storey new school was completed and opened on 29th July 1940 by the Officer Administering the Government, the Honorable Mr. S. W. Jones.

The two boarding houses were then combined, under the management of the school's Board of Governors, and transferred to the bungalow the oldest next to the new school, which was previously used as a cane factory and storehouse. This proximity of location brought about a closer relationship between the boarding house and the school. In reciprocation for their services rendered, the road between the school and the old bungalow was named Old Boys' Drive; the school hall was named after its sponsor, Aw Boon Haw.

The school building was scarcely used when the Japanese invaded Malaya. Following the bombing of Singapore on the 8 December 1941, the British converted it into one of the Volunteer Medical Corp Centers and painted its external facades with black camouflage patches.

When the Japanese occupied Singapore in 1942, they turned the strategically located school into a storehouse for civilian internees. All education

lwas terminated during this period; the British, Eurasian and Jewish staff and pupils were interned in Changi Jail and the Sime Road Camp.

Immediately after the surrender of the Japanese to the British on 12th September 1945, Asian staff members, including Mr. Tan Lye Whatt, Dr. D. D. Chelliah, Mr. Goh Soo Toon, Mr. Kiong Woon Kew, Mr. Dong, Mr. W. H. Ponniah, getting Bishop Wilson to use his good office within the B.M.A., cleared the school on 8 September the same year for immediate enrolment.

With at least 100 pupils in each class, two promotions a year were made. This also caused Dr. Chelliah - acting Principal - to open the Continuation School in 1946 for over-aged pupils.

The Saint Andrew's House was re-opened on 13 January 1947 with Mr. Franis Thomas as Housemaster, when Canon Adams was released from Japanese captivity to resume his post as Principal.

Rehabilitation of the school compound went on at the same time. The septic tank was repaired and Graham White Drive was reconditioned. Robert's Court was restored to its pre-war condition and the playing field was repaired to fulfill its purpose to the students.

In 1949, 7 Saints representing Singapore were sent to fight in Australia against the famous boxing Wally and Webber Brothers. The Junior School also grew rapidly and in 1950, Mr. Dong Chiu Sing was made Principal of the Junior School.

The same year, a special school assembly was held during which Mr. Yee, together with David Adcock, Low Yeow San and Donald Longpoetih planted the raintree in the center of Robert's Court, which was the place of assembly for the thanksgiving service when Woodsville was acquired.

In 1951, the Saint Andrew's School Clinic Club went into Potong Pasir Village and set up a Clinic in a wayang shed outside a Chinese Temple, to give free medical help to the villagers.

1952-1968

In 1952, girls were admitted for the first time to St. Andrew's - which had been previously exclusively male and their numbers subsequently increased when the school opened Post School Certificate Classes in preparation for the university.

At the same time, the School Building Fund was recreated to finance expansions to the school. The Old Boys' Association, with more representation in the Board of Governors, rose to the occasion, as did everyone who did his bit in contributing to the cause.

In 1952, a third floor was added to the school building and the Lim Teck Kin Tower was constructed. The patches of black paint on the school building were also removed.

The Saint Andrew's School Chapel, twice the length and slightly broader than the school's standard classroom, was subsequently moved up one level to the Shaw Hall - donated by the Shaw brothers - from the second storey, in the transept-block (parallel to the present Church of the Ascension building and separated by the Old Boys' Drive).

During the great Potong Pasir Flood in 1954 (and again in 1962) with the waters swelling up to the level of the chool's boxing ring, the hundreds of victims were provided refuge by the school. This was also the year Ms. Beeston succeeded Mr. Dong as the Principal of the Junior School.

A year later, the Junior School was divided into Junior I and Junior II headed by Mr. Goh Soo Toon and Mr. Kiong Woon Kew respectively. Mr. S. K. Bandara succeeded the latter but after his death in 1960, the two Junior Schools came under one Principal - Mr. Goh Soo Toon.

Construction of the new Saint Andrew's House started between 1954-1955 and the retiring Canon Adams opened it in 1956; the first storey of the boarding house was previously the school's tuck shop and the assembly areas for the senior school (now the area from the dining hall to the school bookshop) and the upper primary (the opposite end) occupying both ends. The boarders moved in at the start of the second school

term that same year.

Mr. Tan Lye Whatt succeeded Canon Adams in 1956; by this time, the school community had grown so big and on his shoulders was the heavy responsibility of overseeing the Senior School, the Junior School, the Continuation School and the boarding house. He was thus appointed Warden, in addition to being Principal of the Senior School.

In the late 1950s, Mr. Yee Teck Peng, the Housemaster (1962-1973) foresaw that the Quiet Room would not be able to serve its purpose with the construction of the Jalan Toa Payoh highway, and had air-conditioners installed to provide a conducive environment for the senior boys to study.

In 1962, the Church of the Ascension (previously the Saint Andrew's School Chapel housed in the school building and renamed by Canon Adams in the 1950s), a place of worship for both the school and the boarding house, was completed on the site of the old boarding House with funds raised by the congregation.

The new Science Block was completed in 1963 on the site of the miniature jungle.

The same year, Mr. Tan Lye What retired and was succeeded by his Senior Assistant, Mr. Francis Thomas.

Mr. Quahe Beng Chuan took over as Principal of the Junior School on 1st September 1964. That year saw one of Singapore's worst racial riots, with shouts coming from the Chinese-populated Potong Pasir behind the school and from the Malay Kampong Marican beside the school, vigilantes were formed throughout the nights to protect the boarders.

In 1965, the timber doors to the new boarding house were replaced with metal ones and fitted with metal grilles in a very similar design - by Rev. Oliver Foreshaw - to that installed in the Quiet Room; the design is an incorporation of the Christian Cross, the Cross of Saint Andrew and the Bishop's Mitre.

1968 saw the closure of the 'Bowl' to the boys for its conversion to a car park. The same year, the Warden reported the school's plans for the new Teaching Block: "The proposal is that this should have no classrooms at all. There will be a large lecture theatre for large group teaching of 150 or 200 students simultaneously for some kinds of lessons. At the other end, a large library with self-study area, where students can learn to teach themselves, working independently on assignments and reference work was planned. Between these, small group rooms, where a teacher can take 15-20 students around a conference table was also planned, so that all can share in the learning process in a way not possible in the old 40-seat classrooms." There were also plans for the new Teaching Block to provide a canteen - suitable for the holding of social functions and activity spaces for various purposes.

1974-2004

This was the central proposal for the school's Phase 2 Appeal, which the management hoped would be followed as soon as the \$77,000 Phase 1 concluded. Phase 2 was planned to include a Games Center, including a Rifle Range and Drill Area for the uniformed groups, as well as new fencing for the school's 16-acres grounds.

Mr. Thomas retired on 14 March 1974 and was succeeded by Mr. C. D. Jansen The latter's resignation in June 1976 made way for his Senior Assistant Mr. Ong Soo Kiong as acting Principal, as well as launched the search for a new Warden for Saint Andrew's and a Principal for the Senior School.

Fortunately, the Ministry of Education was prepared to loan Saint Andrew's the services of Mr. Harry Tan Ho Swee, an old boy, with effect from 15 December 1976.

The school continued to grow and if not for the erection of Saint Andrew's Junior College at Malan Road in 1978 and the subsequent removal of the Pre-University classes in Woodsville, there would not have been sufficient accommodations.

Saint Andrew's House started to engage monthly paid Housemaster and Assistant Housemaster in 1980.

With increased intake of both staff and students, the campus at Woodsville was splitting at its seams. Fortunately, Potong Pasir was being developed and a 4.18-hectare site across the Kallang River was earmarked for education facilities. Mr. Chelliah was prompted to make a request in 1981 for the site to be the Senior Wing of the school with the subsequent plan to upgrade the Woodsville site with full facilities for a growing and vibrant Junior School to the Director of Education.

In 1981, Mr. Quahe Beng Chuan retired and was succeeded by another old boy - Mr. Chin Wai Fah.

In the same year, the Matron, the cook and the domestic servants of the boarding house were paid on a revised salary scale and the boarding fees were increased accordingly to meet the more realistic operation costs.

Extensive renovations were carried out in the boarding house in 1984. In the same year on 3 November, construction on the new Secondary School, together with a Chapel-cum-Counseling Center began.

A year later in January, Mr. Tan Cheng Lim was appointed as the successor of the Mr. Chin Wai Fah as Principal of the Junior School.

The new Saint Andrew's Secondary School opened its doors in July 1986 and was blessed in a service on Friday, 1 August.

1987 marked the 100th anniversary of the Saint Andrew's House.

The new secondary school was officially declared opened by the Minister for Education on 17th September 1988 in conjunction with the 126th Founder's Day celebrations.

Mr. Harry Tan left Saint Andrew's on 31st December 1994 to become the Principal of Whitley Secondary School; Mr. Priscilla Krempl succeeded him on 1 January the following year.

In 1996, the new premises of Saint Andrew's Junior School at Francis Thomas Drive were completed.

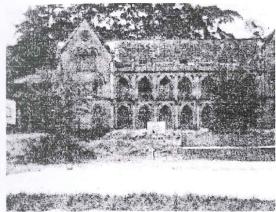
In 2001, the Ministry of Education and the Diocese of Singapore agreed that Saint Andrew's Junior College would be moved back to Woodsville to become part of a unique set-up of educational facilities, and a design competition was held at the nd of the year.

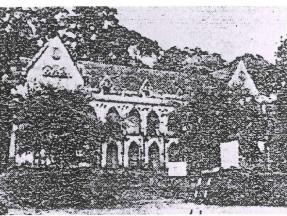
Mrs. Belinda Charles, who had been Principal at Saint Andrew's Junior College since 1990, was succeeded by Mrs. Lim Chye Tin and re-appointed as Principal of Saint Andrew's Secondary School with effect from 15 December 2001.

The Saint Andrew's Village Design Competition concluded with DP Architects' entry selected as the winning scheme in April 2002.

Saint Andrew's Village is scheduled for completion in Dec 2004.

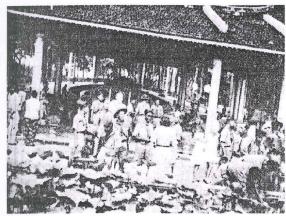
Saint Andrew's School (Stamford Road)



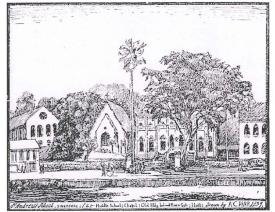


2 photographs taken of the Saint Andrew's House in the late 19th century; it is not clear if this was at the Stamford Road campus

Upper Elementary School, at the Stamford Road campus, completed in 1924



School Jamboree (1934-1935) at unidentified location within Stamford Road campus

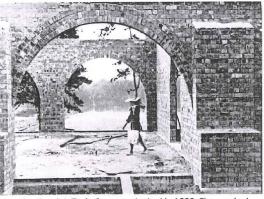


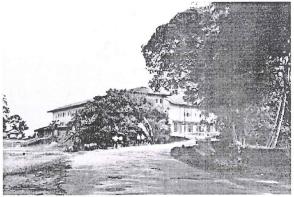
Sketch of Stamford road campus by A.C. Parr in 1939; (L-R) Middle School; Chapel; Old Building behind MainGate; Hall

Saint Andrew's School (Woodsville)









Construction of the 2-storey new school at Woodsville, designed by Frank Wilmin Brewer, started in 1939. These photos show the initial stages of construction. (L-R): view of the first storey classrooms from the quadrangle; view of the linkway towards the single storey wing (school tuckshop and assembly areas) with 3 samsui women at the foot of the staircase; view through the interior of the single-storey wing to the field beyond, with a samsui woman at work

Going up the gentle winding ascent from Graham White Drive, with the Primary School field on the left (now Jalan Toa Payoh) and the smaller 'Bowl' (now a carpark) on the right.







Halfway on the ascent, the school with its imposing tower comes into view. Notice the replacement of the first timber arched door in the 1st photo with a collapsible iron grille in the 2nd photo. The old Boarding House (its roof visible in the 1st photo) to the right of the school had been pulled down when the 2nd photo was taken. Notice that the louvred windows and door on the 5th storey of the tower had not been installed in the first 2 photos- but installed in the the 3rd photo. All the 3 photos show white / beige coloured woodwork.

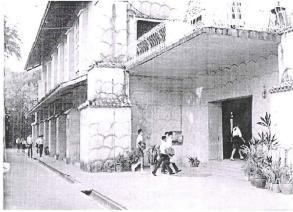
Saint Andrew's School (Woodsville)



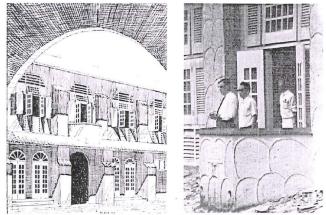
The Graham White Drive ended at an island roundabout (now paved over) on which stood the school bell and flagpole. The school's black camouflage patches from the war, were removed only in 1952



View of the Adams Quadrangle and the transcept-like block which forms a cross with the short end of the school when the 3rd storey addition was completed.

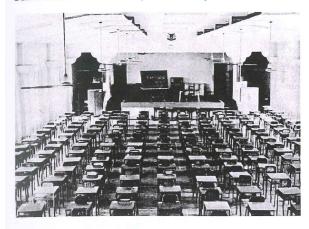


View of the front of the school from the end of Graham White Drive. The main entrance, sheltered by a fiercely canti-levered balcony, is situated at the foot of the 6-storey tower.

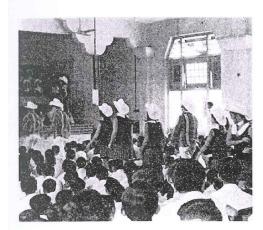


A sketch of the administration block with the hall on the 2nd storey; (R) The Principal, Vice-Principal and the Head Prefect on the balcony overlooking the Quadrangle.

Saint Andrew's School (Woodsville)







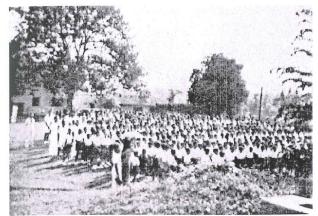
Interior of the Magna Aula (the Great Hall) donated by Aw Boon Haw (clockwise): view from 2nd storey projector room showing furniture arranged in preparation for an examination; students (boys and girls, with prefects in long white paints) in an informal congregation with belongings placed on table-tennis tables near the rear exits; a concert held for the whole school by the Chapel Choir from the First Baptist Church of Texas on 4 August 1970. The hall is well-lit in the day when the grand windows are opened, natural ventilation is aided by ceiling fans.

Saint Andrew's School (Woodsville)

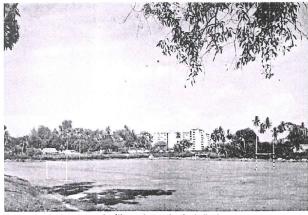


Collage of the range of events and activities held on the Holy Ground / Adams Quadrangle for students, staff, Old Boys and the public alike, while the school building was still in use: (L-R, top to bottom) Speech day; prize-giving ceremony; daily flag-raising ceremony; photo-taking session; boxing competition; National Day celebrations; Old Boys' Association's annual dinners with guests-of-honor.

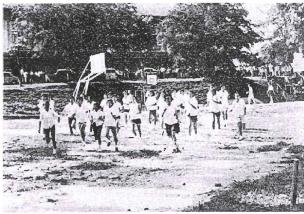
Saint Andrew's School (School Activities 1)



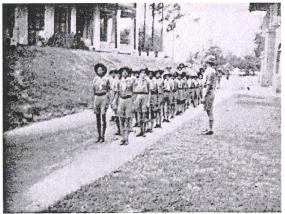
Celebrating Woodsville Day in 1941, a year after the completion of the new school campus: assembly in front of Woodsville House (Principle's Residence).



The school playground with rugby poles installed.



Boys starting on a run from the 'Bowl', with the front of the school building in the background.



Uniformed groups in the marchpost along Old Boys' Drive on Empire Day in 1941. On the left is the old Boarding House; on the right is the school building.

Saint Andrew's School (School Activities 2)



Uniformed groups in the marchpost along Old Boys' Drive on Empire Day in 1941. On the left is the old Boarding House; on the right is the school building.



The grassed island roundabout at the end of Graham White Drive, on which stood the school bell and the flagpole. Boys stand at attention on Empire Day 1947.



Planting of the raintree on Robert's Court in 1950 during a special assembly. The old Boarding House is in the background.



Photo-taking after the Second World War - the black camouflage patches on the school are not yet removed.