

# **Early School Architecture in British Columbia**

An Architectural History and Inventory  
of Buildings to 1930

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designs. He found both Tudor and Georgian details suitable for school buildings, in contrast to the Gothic Revival which he reserved for his churches in a fairly doctrinaire manner. In terms of construction technology, however, Keith kept abreast of the latest practices. In the Moss Street School, later Sir James Douglas Elementary, Keith employed the Kahn system of reinforced concrete construction.<sup>12</sup>

Another Scot, David C. Frame, was retained by the Victoria Board of School Trustees in this boom period. Little is known of Frame, except that he worked briefly for F.M. Rattenbury and lived in Victoria for many years. He probably designed only one other school, the Chinese Public School (1908), in the city. Frame was also responsible for the Alexandra Club, later the Windermere Building, and the Glenshiel Hotel, both dating from this era. Neither a prolific nor an illustrious architect, Frame did outlive many of his contemporaries and as late as 1949 he was associated with Douglas James in the building of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce situated at the corner of Yates and Government streets.

In 1912 Frame designed the Bank Street School, using a basically rectangular plan and two-storey elevation. The building

can be best described as Late Victorian Eclectic. Here Frame employed various stylistic elements, the most notable being the picturesque chateau roof with bold cresting. With its dentillated window transoms it is a curious but attractive structure, but more significant because its exterior has remained original. Not only is Bank Street School an important neighbourhood landmark, it continues to have a productive life as an institutional building, and is certainly worthy of preservation.

Charles Elwood Watkins was born in Victoria in 1875 and received his early education in the city before attending high school in Ontario. At the age of fifteen he apprenticed to Thomas Hooper and later became a full partner in the firm. Hooper and Watkins were responsible for many joint designs, including the Victoria Public Library (1904), Roman Catholic Bishop's Residence (1907), and St. Joseph's Hospital (1908).

The Chambers Street School (George Jay) represents one of the first examples of Watkins' independent work, and certainly a departure from that of his mentor. Unlike Hooper's approach to the Lampson Street School Watkins eschewed Late Victorian taste and methods, moving instead towards academic revivalism and new building technology.