

# Convent of the Sacred Heart

*rue de Varenne, Paris, 1820 – 1907  
 now Rodin Museum*



The Senior Boarding School Chapel (architect M. Lisch, 1875) was closed in 1904 and demolished in 1967 except for the small building with rondel windows containing the twin heart crest of The Society of the Sacred Heart.



The Stalls and Pulpit from the Chapel of the Senior Boarding School in Paris were sent to Sydney when all 46 Sacred Heart Convents were confiscated by the French government from 1902-1909. They were installed in the Chapel at Rose Bay in 1905.

**Collage – left to right:**

1. General view of the Property. 2. Chapel of the Mother House. 3. Chapel of the Day School.
4. Chapel of the Senior Boarding School. 5. Vestibule of l'hôtel Biron. 6. Grand Stairway.
7. Refectory. 8. Entrance Area. 9. Recreation ground. 10. Chapel of the Children of Mary.
11. Study room.



The Sacred Heart Convent at rue de Varenne, Paris, showing l'hôtel Biron (architect Jean Aubert, 1728), the main Chapel at left and statue of Our Lady in the centre of the gardens. Probably photographed from the roof of the Mother House.



The Chapel of the Mother House (architect M. Detailleurs, 1858), confiscated in 1907 and now part of the library of a government high school.



The Grand Stairway of l'hôtel Biron with two senior prefects - "Blue Ribbons". Now the entrance to the Rodin Museum

**A Short History**

The Society of the Sacred Heart, founded in France by Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1800, spread worldwide but was centred in Paris until the anti-religious laws of 1901 resulted in the closure of all its 46 French convents. In 1820 Mother Barat bought l'hôtel Biron as both School and Mother House. In 1858 she built a separate Mother House on the property, where she died in 1865. Before the French government began its confiscation of the closed convents (1902-1909) the then Superior-General of the Order, Mother Mabel Digby, preserved their valuable contents by sending them to Sacred Heart schools in other countries.

In Sydney, the Convent of the Sacred Heart had been established at Rose Bay in 1882. The Chapel, designed by John Horbury Hunt and completed in 1900, was beginning to be furnished. Therefore, in 1904, the antique stalls, pulpit and confessional from the Senior Boarding School in Paris, as well as the 1890 Puget organ from the Convent in Bordeaux, were sent to Sydney and installed in the Chapel. These photographs from late 19th Century Archival records show exterior and interior views of the Paris Convent and part of its extensive grounds and include the only known photograph of the interior of the Senior Boarding School Chapel with the stalls and pulpit in situ.