

ELIZA BATTLE PITTMAN AUDITORIUM

St. Mary's Junior College

Raleigh, North Carolina

(The following statement of significance was prepared by Miss Linda Harris, Raleigh City Planning Department, and Miss Mary Ann Lee, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, and is taken from An Architectural and Historical Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina, 1978.)

During the early part of the twentieth century, St. Mary's was the largest boarding school for women maintained by the Episcopal Church in the United States. Several of the campus's buildings date from this era, such as the Smedes Hall additions and Eliza Battle Pittman Memorial Auditorium.

Constructed in 1906, this Neoclassical Revival two-story brick building was named in memory of Eliza Battle Pittman, who attended St. Mary's in the 1880s. The building plan resembles a Lorraine cross, with the shaft bowing out to either side, maximizing the interior space. The irregular roof line is created by a deck on the hip roof crowned by a squat cupola. The building is ornamented with classical motifs and the main facade is dominated by a full height Ionic portico. Wall surfaces are enlivened by belt courses, rusticated piers, and heavy window cornices. The building's rhythmic contours and shadow-creating ornament add visual interest and animation to the design.

The auditorium is entered through an entrance and stair hall on the south end. The auditorium is skirted by a graceful elliptical gallery supported by slender cast iron Corinthian columns. A handsome oculus, filled with stained glass, pierces the ceiling.

The St. Mary's campus exhibits a variety of architectural styles, from the severity of the Greek Revival to the romanticism of the Gothic Revival. The Eliza Battle Pittman Memorial Auditorium is an intergral part of the historical structures which the college uses, preserving the tradition of the school.