

## **The Guild Sculpture Garden**

Perhaps the reason why the Guild Sculpture Garden is so unknown to Torontonians, outside of its immediate neighbours, is the ominous structure that hides it from the public. The Guild Inn was once a place of art and culture and generally happy times. It has been a private residence, a school, a military hospital, a hotel, an arts and crafts centre...a place that hosted many weddings, birthdays and baby showers in recent times.

In 1932, Rosa and Spencer Clark, a socially conscious couple, purchased the home, now referred to as The Guild. It was the heart of the Great Depression and they shared a common belief that arts and crafts were necessary elements for the fullest enjoyment of life. Later, the inn was bought by the city, and as it lost popularity as a vacation spot it declined, until it was closed in 2001. (Very recently, the inn was taken over by Centennial College and will be restored and run as a hotel, restaurant, and conference centre for use in the school's hospitality courses, as well as to act as a location for the college's Cultural and Heritage Institute.)

If you venture past the boarded up buildings, you will find an immaculate garden of 70 architectural sculptures made up of the facades of Toronto buildings that were being torn down between 1950 and 1981, prior to Heritage Preservation Laws. It consists of mostly late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century building fragments and each one has a copper plaque to indicate where it came from, such as the Bank of Toronto or the entranceway to the original Granite Club. Each plaque tells a story and each sculpture emits the energy of its time and place. It is a beautiful graveyard and testament to this period's architecture.

Beyond the sculpture garden you will find another treat, a scenic trail through a forested area atop the Scarborough Bluffs. Bring your camera, a picnic and a blanket – you won't want to leave! Parents, hold on to your children, the short fences between you and the edge have been stepped on and grown over and it is a long way down! The views from the lookout points are like no other in the city. Beautiful Lake Ontario from this vantage point makes you think you are somewhere in the Caribbean, if you imagine the oaks, maples and pines to be palm trees.

It is in this forested area that you will come across lush patches of the floral emblem of Ontario in the early spring, the trillium. You may even see the less common red trillium. These plants can take eleven years before producing a flower so, although some have heard that it is illegal to pick them, it is more a practice that is frowned upon.

Less than half an hour from downtown Toronto, you will find downtown Toronto—well, pieces of it anyway—in the [Guild Sculpture Garden](#).

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