



## Toronto Architecture

For a relatively young city, Toronto has a tremendous variety of architecture. What is astonishing is the compatibility among the city's old architecture and the new. There are many restored buildings in Toronto along side the new developments. It is a significant achievement, and it works. Indeed, the city is on the verge of an architectural renaissance that will forever change the way we think about it.

Toronto has emerged as an architectural hotspot with major projects by noted 'starchitects' Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Norman Foster, and Will Alsop.

By the time the construction dust settles, Toronto's cultural infrastructure will have been entirely remade. Some of the city's grandest and most venerable institutions have been and continue to be transformed into 21st-century landmarks. Though most of these projects are additions or expansions to existing buildings, some are brand new, designed and built from the ground up.

Here are a few notable Toronto architectural designs:

### St. James' Cathedral

St. James Cathedral is the oldest congregation in the city. Established in 1797, the current structure was completed in 1844 and was one of the largest buildings in the city. The church is listed as an Ontario Heritage Property and a National Historic Site and is the seat of the Anglican Church of Canada's diocese in Toronto. At 305 feet the Cathedral is the second tallest church in Canada, behind Saint-Joseph du Mont-Royal in Montreal. It was designed by Frederick Cumberland as a prime example of Early English Gothic architecture. It opened for services in 1853, the clocktower being finished in 1874, with the clock being installed a year later. At the turn of the 19th century St. James Cathedral was the tallest building in Toronto, and was often the first thing immigrants noticed when they stepped off the train at Union station.

### St. Lawrence Hall

St. Lawrence Hall is a meeting hall in Toronto, Canada next to the St. Lawrence Market. It was built, alongside the new city hall, in 1850 after a fire destroyed much of the market. The Renaissance Revival style building was designed by William Thomas. It was created to be Toronto's public meeting hall for public gatherings, concerts, and exhibitions. Its main feature was a thousand seat amphitheater. For decades the hall was the centre of Toronto's social life. By the 1870s the growing city had a number of larger and more suitable performance venues and the Hall entered a long decline. It continued to serve a number of roles, including several years as the home of the National Ballet of Canada. It was fully restored in 1967 as the city of Toronto's project to mark Canada's centennial.

### Hockey Hall of Fame

Designed in 1885-86 to replace a building that was not yet thirty years old, because it was not grand enough for the aspirations of the Bank of Montreal, and was the head office of the bank in Toronto. It

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continued in business until 1982, when it closed, and now houses the Hockey Hall of Fame. The building has two fine monumental pedimented facades with a chamfered entrance bay between them. Architects: Darling & Curry

### **Gooderham Building (Flat Iron Building)**

The building was commissioned by George Gooderham to house the head offices of his Gooderham & Worts distilling company. Wedged into the confluence of Wellington and Front Street East, Toronto's "Flatiron Building" pre-dates New York's more famous Flatiron Building by a decade. Architects: David Roberts Jr.

### **CN Tower**

Defining the Toronto skyline, the CN Tower is Canada's most recognizable and celebrated icon. At a height of 553.33m, it is the World's Tallest Building, an important telecommunications hub, and the centre of tourism in Toronto. Each year, approximately 2 million people visit the CN Tower. The CN Tower was built in 1976 by Canadian National (CN) who wanted to demonstrate the strength of Canadian industry by building a tower taller than any other in the world. In 1995, the CN Tower became a public company and ownership of the Tower was transferred to Canada Lands Company, a federal Crown corporation. The construction boom in Toronto in the 1960's transformed the skyline characterized by relatively low buildings into one dotted with skyscrapers. These new buildings caused serious communication problems. With its microwave receptors at 338 m and 553.33m antenna, the CN Tower swiftly solved the communication problems with room to spare.

### **Rogers Centre (formerly Skydome)**

Rogers Centre is the home of the Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club, World Series Champions in 1992 and 1993, and the Toronto Argonauts Football Team. It was considered a breathtaking technological achievement when completed in 1989. It is still one of Toronto's top three tourist attractions and a model for architects of future domed stadiums currently being built around the world. SkyDome was originally constructed at a cost of \$580 million, including the cost of the hotel, a health club, demolishing Toronto's main water pumping station, restructuring a new one across the street, building new streets and bridges, and other area infrastructures. It was sold in late 2004 for 25 million dollars.

### **Sharp Centre for Design**

The Sharp Centre for Design at the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) is held aloft by 12 coloured steel columns — with the horizontal slab hovering 15 storeys above the complex of institutional buildings that comprises the OCAD. It is designed to be extended north if necessary. As Alsop suggests, whole structures such as a pre-fabricated lecture hall or student pub could be hung from the table top, a giant steel cage that measures 83 by 31 by 10 metres. Architects: Will Alsop.

### **The Graduate House**

The Graduate House of the University of Toronto is a student residence specifically for graduate students. The building, with its large sign, marks the main western entrance to the campus. The building is considered one

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of the more important works of architect Thom Mayne, who won the Pritzker Prize in 2005. The building won a number of awards, but its design was not without controversy with a number of students and area residents criticizing its unusual façade and bleak concrete interior. The main entry is recessed, marked by a tall, mustard yellow wall and a curtain wall, and toward Harbord Street to the south, a steel frame, covered in perforated metal with irregular openings, wraps the horizontal metal panels. Even with these features the obvious focus of the exterior is the cantilevered frame and perforated, green metal signage; a contemporary gateway to the campus.

### **Roy Thomson Hall Enhancements**

The auditorium renovation of Roy Thomson Hall was the result of five years of careful study and consultation. Intended primarily to enhance the acoustical performance of the auditorium, the \$24 million project also included modifications to improve audience comfort, increase the auditorium's versatility in presenting a wider range of events, and the building of a new sponsor/donor lounge. All the renovations and upgrades have contributed to making Roy Thomson Hall a more compelling venue for producers, promoters and patrons. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, which performs 110 concerts a year in Roy Thomson Hall, is enjoying significant audience growth with a renovated hall and a charismatic new Music Director, Peter Oundjian.

### **Canada's National Ballet School**

Canada's National Ballet School is a world leader in the training of professional dancers and teachers. Dedicated to advancing the art of ballet, NBS develops dance professionals in a student-centred environment by weaving innovation and evolving practice with the finest teaching traditions. The Jarvis Street Campus, Stage I of NBS's \$106 million capital expansion, opened to public and critical acclaim in November 2005. Designed by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects and Goldsmith Borgal and Company Limited Architects, Architects in Joint Venture, the campus is a superb integration of heritage buildings and contemporary architecture that reflects the traditions of classical ballet while embracing its evolution. "A beacon on Toronto's architectural scene." (Lisa Rochon, The Globe and Mail), the Jarvis Street Campus won a 2007 Institute Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects, only the fourth Canadian building to do so since the AIA first bestowed the awards in 1949. Stage II, the renovation and expansion of the Maitland Street residence, opened in Fall 2007. NBS graduates can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers, and administrators in over 65 dance companies world-wide and even more schools around the globe. NBS will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2009/10.

### **Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)**

The dramatic new wing of Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) designed by Daniel Libeskind opened in 2007. Dubbed the Lee-Chin Crystal, the 175,000 square foot aluminum and glass clad building houses seven collection galleries on two levels, two special exhibition spaces, new retail and dining facilities and a new main entrance and lobby. Libeskind's 'Crystal' is comprised of five interlocking, self-supporting prismatic structures that interface with the historic buildings that embrace it. With hardly a right angle anywhere, its

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sloping walls create unique interior spaces with soaring volumes and such distinctive details as the “Spirit House”, a void at the heart of the building that is traversed by criss-crossing bridges. Slashing windows fill the rooms with natural light and create uniquely framed views of the cityscapes outside.

### **Young Centre for the Performing Arts**

The Young Centre for the Performing Arts, designed by Kuwabara, Payne, McKenna Blumberg Architects, is Canada's most innovative and holistic performing arts and training institution, home to Soulpepper Theatre Company, the George Brown Theatre School and an array of independent theatre, dance and music companies. Soulpepper's triple mandate of performance, outreach and education has been fully realized with year-round performances, extensive outreach opportunities and the launch of the Soulpepper Academy. The 44,000 square foot facility is home to performances by Soulpepper and George Brown, in addition to those of various independent companies year round. Attendance in 2006 was 110,000.

### **Four Seasons Performing Art Centre**

Completed in 2006, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts is the new home for both the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet of Canada. The horseshoe-shaped R. Fraser Elliot Hall was built with superior acoustics as its first priority. Each of the theatre's 2000 seats have been computer-tested for optimal sightlines to ensure an unobstructed view for every member of the audience. Designed by Toronto architect Jack Diamond, the centre features a translucent glass staircase and suspended bridges for the City Room, the glass-enclosed main lobby with an open view of the city. The centre takes up an entire city block.

### **Ontario Science Centre**

The Ontario Science Centre has transformed more than 30 per cent of its public space and created a new outdoor experience. With the transformation, the Centre continues to develop a new way for visitors to engage in science. Participants are exposed to the attitudes, skills, networks and tools that will enable them to become the drivers of a sustainable culture of innovation. The Centre has opened the Weston Family Innovation Centre and Teluscape as part of the \$40 million Agents of Change initiative.

### **Gardiner Museum**

The Gardiner Museum is one of North America's pre-eminent centres for the display and study of ceramics. With a permanent collection of over 2900 objects ranging from contemporary work like Picasso's Large Vase with Veiled Women to Maiolica dishes from the Italian Renaissance and 18th century European tea services, the intimate museum is often referred to as a "jewel box of ceramic treasures." The newly designed Museum is one of Toronto's most outstanding examples of modernist architecture and houses Toronto's "Best Shop" - Vogue USA, and celebrity chef Jamie Kennedy's restaurant, Jamie Kennedy at the Gardiner.

### **Royal Conservatory of Music: TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning**

The TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning is one of the world's greatest arts and education venues. Designed by Kuwabara Payne McKenna and Blumberg Architects, the TELUS Centre is the focus of the

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Conservatory's Building National Dreams Campaign. The campaign restored the Conservatory's historic Victorian-era home at 273 Bloor Street West, expanding it to include a high-calibre performing arts institute, with technologically sophisticated performance venues and professionally equipped academic facilities. With a 1,140-seat concert hall, public café, community events, broadcast facilities and a variety of programming, this stunning facility is a vibrant cultural destination and a wonderful resource for all Canadians. The new concert hall attracts more than attract 200,000 visitors annually. Over 1,500 events are held annually in the TELUS Centre. Art Gallery of Ontario

### **Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)**

Frank Gehry's redesign of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) was completed in November 2008. The new AGO offers a 47 per cent increase in art viewing space welcoming visitors to 110 light-filled galleries featuring more than 4,000 new and perennial art works. The building is surprisingly Gehry's first commission in his native city and contains an interesting array of signature elements such as an iconic sculptural staircase emerging from Walker Court (the historic centre of the AGO), the sweeping glass-and-wood Galleria Italia extending an entire city block along Dundas Street, and the new contemporary tower with its vistas of Grange Park and of a Toronto Skyline never seen from this angle.

### **Toronto International Film Festival Group: Bell Lightbox- Opening: 2010**

Bell Lightbox, located at the corner of King and John Streets in the heart of Toronto's dynamic entertainment district, is set to become a landmark destination that leads the world in creative and cultural discovery through the moving image. This 150,000 sq-ft facility will serve as the new home for the Toronto International Film Festival Group's (TIFFG) year-round programming, including the Toronto International Film Festival, Sprockets Toronto International Film Festival for Children, Cinematheque Ontario, the Film Reference Library, and Film Circuit. Programming by TIFFG will expand significantly with the opening of Bell Lightbox, including new screening programmes in 5 state-of-the-art cinemas; headquarters for other film festivals and cultural activities in partnership with TIFFG; installations and exhibitions in 2 gallery spaces; workshops and panel discussions in 3 learning studios; and expanded youth education programmes, delivering arts curriculum to children. Annual audience numbers are expected to increase from 900,000 to 2,000,000. Designed by world renowned Toronto-based architectural firm Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB), Bell Lightbox is made possible through a relationship between the TIFFG, the Daniels Corporation, and filmmaker Ivan Reitman and the Reitman Family, with essential support from founding sponsor Bell Canada, and the governments of Ontario and Canada.

### **Memorable event:**

Architecture fans look forward to the annual Doors Open weekend in late May. Over 140 buildings are open for public exploration, all free of charge. Many of these buildings are not otherwise open to the public.

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