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Brief History of the St. Lawrence Market Complex

Throughout its history, the intersection of Jarvis and Front Streets has continuously been occupied by a public market. Four market buildings have stood there prior to the one that exists today.

1803

Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter established a public market at the present-day intersection of Jarvis and Front Streets so that farmers from adjacent townships could sell their produce to the citizens of the town of York (now Toronto).

1820

The first official market building on the property was constructed.

1831

The North Market building was replaced by a two-storey brick structure with arched entrances that extended to a central court yard and had a town hall at the north end.

1844-45

The City built a City Hall at the southwest corner of Front and Jarvis Street, across from the North Market building.

1849

The Great Fire destroyed part of the North Market building, and thereafter, it was completely demolished.

1850-51

The North Market building was reconstructed. The new building includes a grand public hall at the north end of the property on King Street - the St. Lawrence Hall.

1850s-1860s

St. Lawrence Hall became a grand entertainment facility that hosted concerts, public gatherings and exhibitions.

1899

A "new" Toronto City Hall was constructed at the north-east corner of Bay and Queen Streets. The original City Hall building built in 1844 was substantially renovated and is now forms part of the South Market building that exists today.

1904

The 1850 North Market building was demolished and replaced by a design that matched the newly renovated South Market building. The two buildings were connected by a huge glass and steel canopy that stretched across Front Street.

1954

The canopy was taken down.

1967

The 1904 North Market building was demolished and replaced with the current “brutalist” structure. Market Street (between King and Front Streets) was also closed, and Market Lane Park was created.

Present day

The City of Toronto launches an architectural design competition to find the best design for a new, vibrant North Market building that is more environmentally sustainable, more energy efficient, and more sensitive to the heritage fabric and history of the surrounding neighbourhood.

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