

The Honourable Edith Dumont,
Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario,
Vice-Regal Offices/Suites,
Ontario Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON, M7A 1A1

CC'd:

Mayor Olivia Chow (City of Toronto)
Councillor Dianne Saxe (Ward 11: University-Rosedale, Toronto)
Executive Committee, City of Toronto
Governing Council, University of Toronto
Weston Family Foundation

Failure of Province of Ontario, City of Toronto, and University of Toronto to Maintain Toronto's Oldest Public Free-Standing Monument (Canadian Volunteer's Monument / Fenian Raids Monument / Lime Ridge Monument / Ridgeway Monument) at Queen's Park (Re: EX29.3 - Update on Weston Foundation Donation for Queen's Park North Revitalization)

The Hon. Edith Dumont; Mayor Olivia Chow; Councillor Dianne Saxe; the Executive Committee, City of Toronto; the Governing Council, University of Toronto, and the Weston Foundation:

I am writing to your offices in regard to a severely deteriorated public monument located in close proximity to the Ontario Legislative Building at Queen's Park and is specifically in proximity to the Vice-Regal Offices/Suites (less than 75 meters west from the entrance). Despite the proximity to the Vice Regal Suites, the monument has been entirely omitted from all public guides to the memorials and monuments of Queen's Park. The state of disrepair of this monument was first flagged by the City of Toronto's Parks Commissioner in 1929 and some emergency stabilization work was undertaken in 2006. Today, 10 March 2026, the City of Toronto's Executive Committee is reviewing the up to \$50 million donation from the Weston Foundation for significant renovations and alterations to Queen's Park North (110 Wellesley Street West, Toronto) with an additional \$43 million proposed for long-term maintenance based on the Hon. Hilary Weston's long-standing connection to Queen's Park, including her term as Lieutenant-Governor from 1997 to 2002. Please note that copies of this correspondence were sent to the former Lieutenant-Governor the Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell in 2020 and to the City of Toronto and University of Toronto at multiple points between 2020 and 2026, albeit there has been virtually zero action on the public monument since that point in time and it remains in a state of severe deterioration, covered in grime and animal feces, and almost entirely inaccessible. There remain no plans towards better incorporation, maintenance, or protection of this monument, despite this sizable potential philanthropic donation for the surrounding park spaces.

The monument in question has several names, including the Fenian Raids Monument; the Limeridge / Lime Ridge Monument, the Ridgeway Monument; the Soldiers' Monument, the Veterans' Monument, and/or the (Canadian) Volunteers'

Monument. This monument was designed by Montréal-based sculptor Robert Reid¹ of *Mavor & Co / Mavor & Reid* during the late 1860s and was publicly dedicated and unveiled on 1 July 1870. This monument is the oldest free-standing public monument in Toronto, Ontario other than Tabor Hill, which is a Huron-Wyandot (First Nations) ossuary in Scarborough, Ontario dating to the 14th century.

This 1866/1870 monument is considered historically comparable and as nationally significant as the monuments and sites at Queenston Heights (Queenston, Ontario) and the Plains of Abraham (Québec City, Québec). As noted above, this monument is located less than 75 meters west of the Vice-Regal Offices/Suites at the Ontario Legislative Building at Queen’s Park, though is in a poor state of repair, is presently inaccessible and poorly integrated into its adjacent urban spaces and its surrounding environments, and is notably absent from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario’s *Explore Queen’s Park* website² - which lists information about and the locations of monuments in proximity to the Queen’s Park buildings — and from interpretive plaques present on the grounds of Queens Park North and South, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and University of Toronto. Appendices with maps, photographs, and reference sources have been attached to this document from page 8 onwards.

The monument is situated at the top of embankments that originally constituted the edge of Taddle Creek, which was buried in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The monument was originally part of the Queen’s Park North Park space, but was severed from the rest of the park with the creation of the Queen’s Park Crescent West roadway bypass realignment during the early 20th century and Wellesley Street West during the mid-20th century underpass leading to the University of Toronto. The monument is in close proximity to the sidewalks on Queen’s Park Crescent West, though the monument and sidewalk are presently separated by a fence (see Appendix A Figures 29-30). Professor Larry Wayne Richards – a Professor Emeritus and the former Dean (1997-2004) of the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto – offers an architectural and historical contextualization of the monument in the 2nd Edition of the *University of Toronto: An Architectural Tour (Campus Guide)* (2019). Richards (2019) notes that this is a major monument that “commemorates Canadians lost in the June 1866 skirmish with the Fenians [who were] Irish Americans who sought to revenge the accumulated wrongs to their native Ireland at the Battle of Ridgway in Canada West (present day Ontario)” (77) where an estimated 800 to 1300 Fenians (Richards 2019, 77, Niagara Parks 2020) crossed the Niagara River in force into Canada during the early morning of 1 June 1866. The monument additionally has links to the American Civil War (1861-1865), which ended

¹ Reid additionally designed other public monuments in Canada, such as the *Little Black Devils Volunteer Monument* (1886) at 555 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

² Reference Link: <https://www.ola.org/en/visit-learn/parliament-government/queens-park/explore-queens-park>

approximately 1 year before the Fenian Raids (1866), with the monument originating “during a crisis in British American relations, where the threat of an American attack on Canada emerged” (77).

Of further significance to the proximity of the monument to the University of Toronto, is that these political crises saw the formation of volunteer rifle companies (service militia), including one established at University College in 1862 (Richards 2019, 77). This group of volunteers joined the K Company of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada during the 1866 skirmishes (Richards 2019, 77). Several plaques attached to the base of the monument commemorate and offer a memorial to members of University College (University of Toronto) and others who were killed in action during these skirmishes (1866) – which notably occurred only 1 year prior to the Confederation of Canada (1867). As such, this monument was historically referred to as the “Soldiers’ Monument” or “The Veterans’ Monument”³ (Adam, Mulvany and Robinson 1885, 323, Toronto Public Library: Toronto Star Photo Archive 1929/2020) and was the site of many veterans-related events and gatherings (see Appendix A, Figure 29) between the mid-19th and early-to-mid 20th centuries. These same individuals are commemorated in the grand stained-glass window at nearby University College.

Physically, the monument is 36 feet (approximately 11 meters) tall and of the Italian Renaissance style (Adam, Mulvany and Robinson 1885, 323, Richards 2019, 78, Spencer R. Higgins 2020). The monument “stands on a terrace of earthwork four feet high and consists of a three-storied structure of Nova Scotia sandstone, surmounted by a figure of Britannia in white-veined Italian marble [...] the steps⁴ and base are of Montréal limestone” (Adam, Mulvany and Robinson 1885, 323-324). 4 other marble figures are located within niches of the sandstone structure, including: a representation of *Faith* on the western side; a representation of *Grief* on the eastern side; and 2 representations of riflemen on the north and south sides (Adam, Mulvany and Robinson 1885, 323-324). Several carvings exist on the sandstone components, including military insignia, as well as the Coat of Arms of Queen Victoria and the United Kingdom; the former Coat of Arms of the City of Toronto; and the former Coat of Arms of the City of Hamilton (Patterson 2019). Presently, all of the marble figures are missing various components and the sandstone carvings are very eroded. Stabilization work was undertaken in 2006/2007, albeit the monument continues to deteriorate. At present, multiple components of the monument are covered in layers of animal feces, grime, and decaying vegetation. The steps at the base of the monument have begun to shift and are being propped up by bricks installed under the sinking steps.

³ Another monument with a similar name – known as the *Ontario Veterans’ Memorial* – was unveiled on 16 September 2006 on the neighbouring south lawn of Queen’s Park. This 2006 monument was designed by Allan Harding Mackay and Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg – with insight from poet Jane Urquhart and military historian Professor Jack Granatstein - and “commemorates the participation of the province’s citizens in military campaigns from - Canadian Confederation (1860s) to recent peacekeeping missions” (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2020).

⁴ These steps are only for the base of the monument itself and do not connect to any pathways/walkways, nor extend to the sidewalks adjacent to (east of) and/or below (north of) the monument.

Metal plaques have been installed on the monument – including memorial text along its base for members of University College and others killed in action during the 1866 skirmishes and another, larger plaque on the northwest elevation stating:

*CANADA ERECTED THIS MONUMENT AS A MEMORIAL OF HER BRAVE SONS,
THE VOLUNTEERS, WHO FELL AT LIMERIDGE, OR DIED FROM WOUNDS
RECEIVED IN ACTION, OR FROM DISEASE CONTRACTED IN SERVICE, WHILST
DEFENDING HER FRONTIER IN JUNE, 1866.*

An ornate, metal fence – visible in historical photographs (see Appendix A, Figures 28-30) – consisting of “a grouping of piled rifles, bayonets, and sabres” (Adam, Mulvany and Robinson 1885, 324) previously surrounded the monument, though has since been removed and replaced with the extant, plainer metal fence.

The initial funding for the creation of this monument in the mid-to-late 1860s was via public subscriptions, with each donor contributing \$1 (Richards 2019, 77). In 1869, William George Storm – an architect involved with the design of several prominent Toronto buildings, including nearby University College (1856-1859) and Victoria University (1892) – advocated for a more intensive design that included “a brick caretaker’s lodge, trees, and elaborate walkways leading to and surrounding the monument” (Richards 2019, 77).

Despite its location near prominent institutions, the lack of walkways to and surrounding the monument – initially noted by Storm in 1869 – is still apparent as of January 2025. The monument originally overlooked Taddle Creek, however this waterway was buried around the turn of the 20th century due to pollution and other environmental challenges. The shift of use of Queen’s Park Crescent West from a sylvan park street to a major vehicular thoroughfare throughout the 20th century, including a creation of a vehicle bypass and underpass, further increased the isolation and peripheralization of the monument in regard to its connection to adjacent urban spaces.

In 1929, the City of Toronto Parks Commissioner Charles Chambers reported that this monument was in serious need of repair (Toronto Public Library: Toronto Star Photo Archive 1929/2020). Chambers estimated that \$25 000 would be needed to rebuild it, of which only \$500 was allocated for by the Toronto Board of Control for temporary repairs (Toronto Public Library: Toronto Star Photo Archive 1929/2020). Per historical photographs, multiple components of the monument – including Britannia’s trident, decorative urns on the monument’s 4 corners, and various parts of the other marble figures and sandstone carvings – went missing during the 20th century. The architectural firm of Spencer R. Higgins undertook stabilization-oriented restoration work on the monument (Spencer R. Higgins 2020) between 2006-2007. Though of note is that many of the monument’s elements – while having undergone emergency stabilization twenty years ago – are still in an eroded state and/or missing components (hands, fingers, facial features, etc.) and continue to deteriorate.

In April 2019, I corresponded with City of Toronto Public Art Officer Clara Hargittay who indicated that “radical restoration is difficult as its stones and sculptures are extremely delicate” (Hargittay 2019). Ms. Hargittay additionally advised that “the monument is owned by the City of Toronto, but is on land leased to the City by the University of Toronto” (Hargittay 2019). This is the same as the Queen’s Park North Lease dated 1859 and referenced throughout the Weston Family Foundation Donation for Queen’s Park North Revitalization Documents.

At present, the only way to access this Monument is via:

- 1) Climbing up embankments (constituting part of the Taddle Creek Ravine), located in proximity to the southwest corner of the Wellesley Street West Underpass⁵;
- 2) Climbing over the short fence running parallel to the sidewalk on Queen’s Park Crescent West.
- 3) Walking north approximately 100 meters from the entrance of the Canadiana Gallery (14 Queen’s Park Crescent West, Toronto) through the top (eastern edge) of the ravine greenspace, which is parallel to the Queen’s Park Crescent West sidewalk. Note that no accessible and/or marked pathway exists as of March 2026.

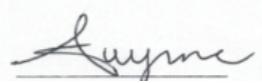
The creation of walkways to and surrounding the monument was initially recommended by William George Storm in 1869, though none have been constructed as of March 2026. This could further revitalize and help restore this section of the Taddle Creek Ravine which runs between the Canadiana Gallery (14 Queen’s Park Crescent West) and Wellesley Street West

Less than 80 meters north of the Monument and situated along the former site of the Taddle Creek is the University of Toronto’s Ziibiing Project undertaken as part of their commitment to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Unfortunately, the Monument was left out of this landscape plan despite the Monument: 1) representing Canadians, including many Indigenous Canadians, who died of disease or wounds received defending Canada; and 2) via the original City of Toronto Coat of Arms which contains depictions of an Indigenous warrior and Britannia standing side by side.

⁵ Of additional note: Within the Wellesley Street West underpass, there are 2 large murals, including one of Gaasyendietha, the Lake Ontario Meteor Dragon / Serpent from Seneca mythology. Several sections of these murals could benefit from maintenance and repair work. I have reached out to 311, City of Toronto Street Art, the Public Relations Branch of the Ontario Legislative Assembly at Queen’s Park, the University of Toronto, and the University of Student Union to inquire as to who installed and/or is responsible for these murals, though no one appears to be certain at present.

It is alarming that this monument – which is of historic and national significance, being comparable to monuments at Queenston Heights (Queenston, Ontario) and the Plains of Abraham (Québec City, Québec) – is in such poor state of repair, remains largely inaccessible, is poorly integrated with its surrounding environments, and has been on the peripheries of prominent urban spaces for decades. Given this monument’s immediate proximity to Queen’s Park and that it was originally part of Queen’s Park North, I am hoping that you, your office, and the parties cc’d to this correspondence can examine the situation and encourage: improvements to the overall accessibility and integration of the monument site regarding its adjacent urban spaces and its surrounding environments (first identified as a concern in 1869); commit to more intensive restoration alongside a commitment to ongoing maintenance (first identified as a concern in 1929); and encourage further daylighting (interpretative or physical) and restoration of the Taddle Creek Ravine ecosystem along the west side of Queen’s Park.

Thank-you for your consideration in these matters,

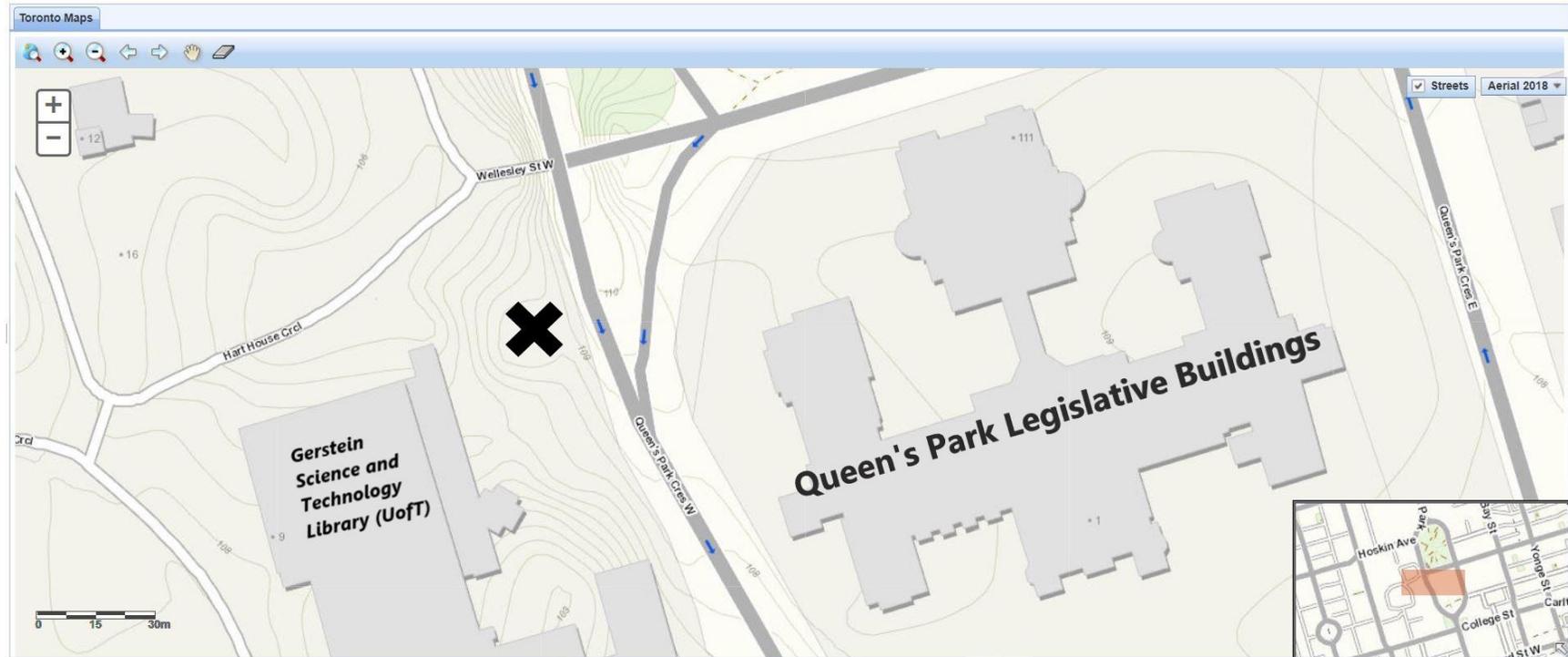


Adam Wynne

Chair, Toronto and East York Community Preservation Panel

416-676-2441 | adam.g.wynne@gmail.com

Appendix A – Maps and Photographs



Appendix A, Figure 1

Above: Location of the 1866/1870 Monument (Marked by the Black X).

Source: City of Toronto Interactive Map (annotated by Adam Wynne).



Appendix A, Figure 2

Above: 1894 Fire Insurance Plan (annotated by Adam Wynne) showing general area around monument. The monument site is marked with a Green X.

Source: Goad's Atlas of Toronto: Fire Insurance Plans (1894).



Appendix A, Figure 3

Above: 1866/1870 Monument Site Overview, Looking North.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 4

Above: 1866/1870 Monument Site Overview, Looking East Towards Queen's Park.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 5

Above: 1866/1870 Monument looking northwest depicting *Brittania, Grief, and Rifleman*.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken 8 March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 6

Above: Southwest elevation of base of monument, depicting the City of Toronto's former Coat of Arms.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken 8 March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 7

Above: Southwest elevation of base of monument, depicting the City of Toronto's former Coat of Arms.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 8

Above: The City of Toronto former Coat of Arms on the 1866/1870 Monument. Note the eroded state.
Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 9

Above: The City of Toronto's (Former) Coat of Arms, prior to its change during amalgamation in 1998.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Appendix A, Figure 10

Above: East Elevation of 1866/1870 Monument, depicting Queen Victoria's Coat of Arms / Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom. Note the eroded state. Additionally, of note is that these Coat of Arms face the entrance to the Vice-Regal Offices/Suites, which is only 75 meters east of the monument.

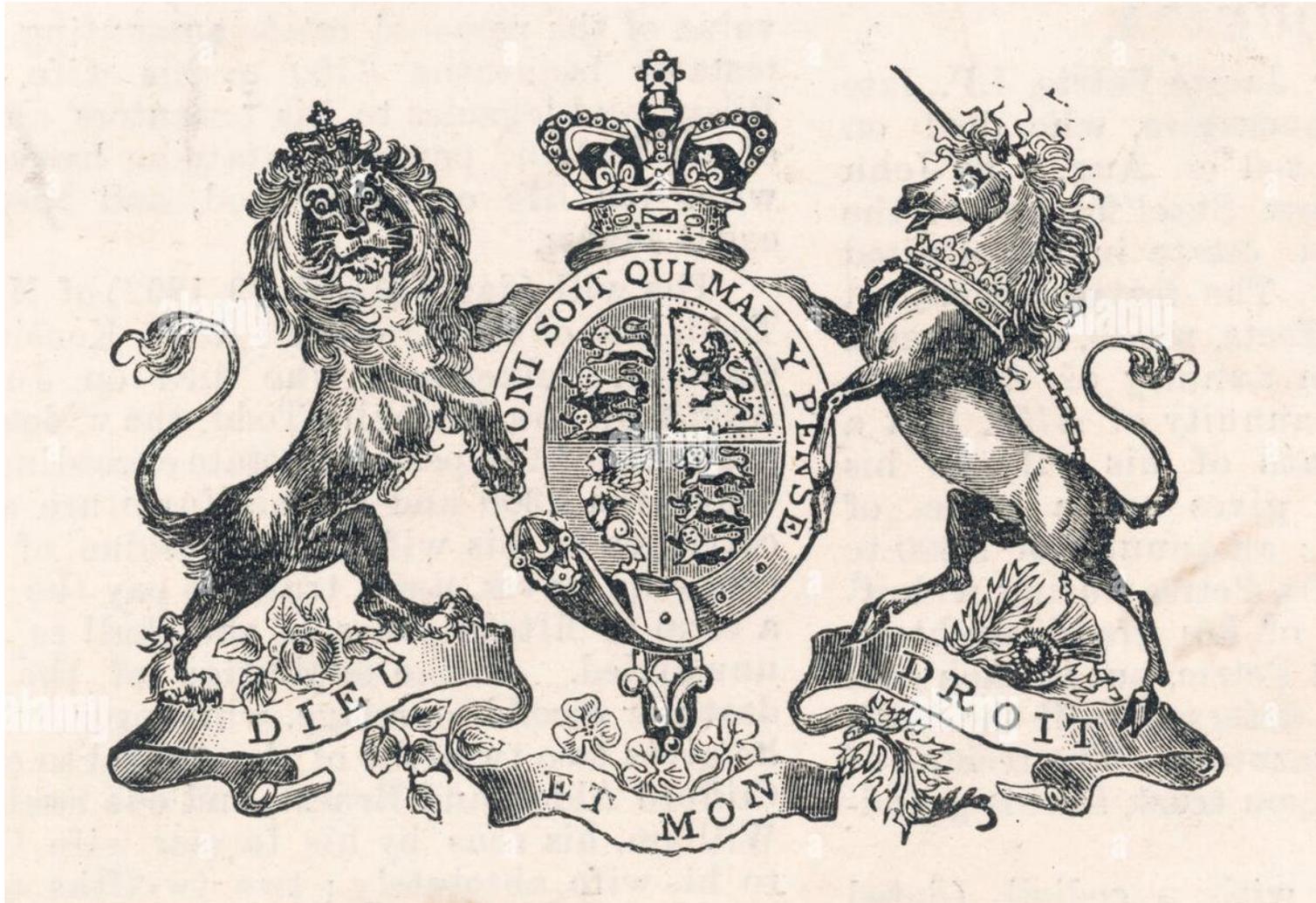
Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 11

Above: East Elevation of 1866/1870 Monument, depicting Queen Victoria's Coat of Arms / Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom. Note the eroded state. Additionally, of note is that these Coat of Arms face the entrance to the Vice-Regal Offices/Suites, which is only 75 meters east of the monument.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 12

Above: Coat of Arms of United Kingdom during Queen Victoria's Reign, circa. 1851



Appendix A, Figure 13

Above: City of Hamilton's former Coat of Arms on the 1866/1870 Monument.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 14

Above: City of Hamilton's former Coat of Arms on the 1866/1870 Monument.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 15

Above: City of Hamilton's former Coat of Arms.

Source: Courtesy of the Chief Herald of Canada, Canadian Heraldic Authority, Governor General's Office.



Appendix A, Figure 16

Above: Metal plaque inscription on southwest elevation of 1866/1870 Monument.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 17

Above: 1866/1870 Monument: Looking southeast from part of Taddle Creek Ravine (near Wellesley Street West) towards the Ontario Legislative Buildings at Queen's Park.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 18

Above: 1866/1870 Monument: Looking southeast from part of Taddle Creek Ravine (near Wellesley Street West) towards the Ontario Legislative Buildings at Queen's Park.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 19

Above: 1866/1870 Monument: Looking east from part of Taddle Creek Ravine (near Wellesley Street West) towards the Queen's Park North and the Ontario Legislative Buildings at Queen's Park.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 20

Above: 1866/1870 Monument: Looking south from part of Taddle Creek Ravine (near Wellesley Street West).

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 21

Above: 1866/1870 Monument visible looking northwest from Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Garden at Vice Regal Suites, Queen's Park

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken 8 March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 22

Above: Marble figures depicting *Grief* and a *Rifleman* visible from the southeastern elevation of the 1866/1870 Monument. Note the eroded state and missing components.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019. Monument has further deteriorated as of 2026.).



Appendix A, Figure 23

Above: Marble figures depicting *Grief* visible from the southeastern elevation of the 1866/1870 Monument. Note the eroded state and missing components.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken on 8 March 2026.).



Appendix A, Figure 24

Above: Marble figure depicting *Faith* on the western elevation of the 1866/1870 Monument.
Note the missing components.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken on 8 March 2026).



Appendix A, Figure 25

Above: Marble figure depicting *Faith* on the western elevation of the 1866/1870 Monument.
Note the missing components.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 26

Above: Details on *Britannia*, the marble figure on the top of the 1866/1870 Monument. Note the missing components.

Source: Photograph by Adam Wynne (Photograph taken in Spring 2019. Monument has further deteriorated as of March 2026.).



Appendix A, Figure 27

Above: 1866/1870 Monument in 1921. Note the extant components and details, many of which are now missing.

Source: Photograph by Melvin Ormond Hammond (M. O. Hammond), via collections held at Toronto Public Library. Photograph is from 1921.



Appendix A, Figure 28

Above: 1866/1870 Monument per City of Toronto Park Commissioner Charles Chamber's 1929 Report requesting funds for repair.

Source: Toronto Public Library: Toronto Star Photo Archive.



Appendix A, Figure 29

Above: Veterans of 1866 (Toronto) Meeting at 1866/1870 Monument in 1934.

Source: Toronto Public Library.



Appendix A, Figure 30

Above: Google Streetview Imagery of Site: Queen's Park Crescent West Looking South. Note the fence, separating the 1866/1870 Monument from City of Toronto's sidewalk, and the proximity of the monument to the Ontario Legislative Buildings at Queen's Park.

Source: Google Streetview (September 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 31

Above: Google Streetview Imagery of Site: Queen's Park Crescent West Looking South. Note the fence, separating the 1866/1870 Monument from City of Toronto's sidewalk, and the proximity of the monument to the Ontario Legislative Buildings at Queen's Park.

Source: Google Streetview (May 2019).



Appendix A, Figure 32

Above: Google Streetview Imagery of Site: Queen's Park Crescent West Looking West. Note the fence, separating the 1866/1870 Monument from City of Toronto's sidewalk.

Source: Google Streetview (September 2019).



Appendix B – Sources:

References:

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