

150 College Street (Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall - 27 and 31 King's College Circle) - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: July 8, 2026

To: Toronto Preservation Board

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: 11 - University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the properties located at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle and Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for their cultural heritage value according to the Statements of Significance which include a description of heritage attributes found in Attachments 1 and 2.

For much of the city's history, the University of Toronto's St. George Campus has existed as a distinct area at the centre of the city. It is part of an institutional urban landscape that encompasses the University, its federated universities and colleges, and Ontario's seat of government, among other institutions. Its early establishment and patterns of land ownership have shaped the distinctive urban structure of the richly layered campus, which includes some of Toronto's most prominent buildings and complexes and significant open spaces.

The subject properties, which comprise the distinctive rotunda form of Convocation Hall and the adjoining Simcoe Hall, are located at the southwest corner of King's College Circle, a defining open space around which other landmark buildings on the campus are constructed and many of which are recognized on the City's Heritage Register.

Together, Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall, which function as the University's main administrative centre and primary public gathering and ceremonial space respectively, also form a symbolic processional route for administrators and graduating students during graduation events. These properties are part of a collection of buildings designed by prominent Toronto architects Darling & Pearson that brought a cohesive Edwardian

design sensibility to the formerly picturesque setting of the Front Campus. A location map and current photographs of Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall are found in Attachment 3.

Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall have been listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register since 1973.

In 2018, the subject properties were identified as landmark properties through the work to advance a new Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines for the University of Toronto St. George Campus that were adopted by City Council in July 2022.

As stewards of some of the city's most iconic architecture, the University of Toronto owns several landmark properties and has worked collaboratively with Heritage Planning staff to advance landmark listed properties to Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. Designation will inform the understanding of a property's cultural heritage value prior to planning for any subsequent change and considering interventions.

To advance this work, the University of Toronto engaged ERA Architects (the "Consultant") to research and evaluate their landmark listed properties. In the Consultant's opinion, the physically adjoined and programmatically related buildings known as Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall exceed the provincial criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Consultant's research on the subject properties is contained in Attachments 4 and 5 of this report.

The research, analysis, and evaluation contained within Attachments 4 and 5 reflects the Consultant's professional expertise and opinions, which staff have reviewed and independently concur. In collaboration with the Consultant, a Statement of Significance for each building was finalized. Both Heritage Planning and the Consultant are of the opinion that the properties at 27 and 31 King's College Circle known as Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall, respectively, have cultural heritage value and meet 7 of the 9 Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets 2 or more of the 9 criteria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle) (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to the report, July 8, 2026, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

2. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 150 College Street (Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 150 College Street (Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 2 to the report, July 8, 2026, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

3. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bills in Council designating the properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

In 1973, City Council included the property parcel at 150 College Street on the Heritage Register, including the buildings located at the following convenience addresses:

- 164 College Street (formerly 4 Taddle Creek Road (Electrical Building)
- 12 Hart House Circle (Observatory)
- 7 King's College Circle (University of Toronto Library)
- 9 King's College Circle (Sigmund Samuel Library)
- 15 King's College Circle (University College)
- **27 King's College Circle (Simcoe Hall)**
- **31 King's College Circle (Convocation Hall)**
- 5 King's College Road (Mechanical Engineering Building)
- 6 Queen's Park Crescent West (Botany Building and Greenhouse)
- 12 Queen's Park Crescent West (Anatomy Building)
- 14 Queen's Park Crescent West (Canadiana Gallery)
- Queen's Park Crescent West, south of Hart House Circle (Canadian Volunteers Memorial)

In 1976, City Council designated the property at 150 College Street (convenience address 170 College Street, Mining Building) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 1977, City Council designated the property at 150 College Street (convenience address 10 King's College Road, Sandford Fleming Laboratory) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 1990, City Council designated the property at 150 College Street (convenience address 7 Hart House Circle, Hart House and Soldiers' Tower) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 2007, City Council designated the property at 150 College Street (Hygiene Building, also known as the Fitzgerald Building) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 2018, City Council endorsed a set of principles for the University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan area, including the principle to conserve built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. The subject properties are identified as landmarks within the Historic/Central Campus Character Area.

[TE34.88 - University of Toronto St. George Campus - Official Plan Amendment Application - Status Report](#)

In July 2022, City Council adopted the Official Plan Amendment, University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan, with amendments, and the University of Toronto St. George Campus Urban Design Guidelines, respectively included as Attachments 7 and 8 to the report (June 13, 2022) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District. Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall are both identified as landmarks within the Central Campus Character Area.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE34.8>

On December 13, 14, and 15, 2023, City Council adopted a report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, updating Council on the City's phase one implementation of the Bill 23 changes to the Act and described the approach staff were undertaking to implement phase two. Council directed that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, report back to the Planning and Housing Committee with an update on phase two work in the second quarter of 2024. City Council's decision may be found here: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH8.18>

On October 30, 2024, the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning provided the Planning and Housing Committee with an update on the City's ongoing implementation of the Bill 23 Changes to the Ontario Heritage Act. This update can be found here: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.9#>

On November 12, 2025, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 150 College Street (Medical Sciences Building, 1 King's College Circle) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH25.13>

On March 25 and 26, 2026, City Council stated its intention to designate the property at 150 College Street (University College - 15 King's College Circle) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.PH28.13>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Plans and Policies

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.

[Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act and Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act

Through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 ("Bill 23") and again through Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 ("Bill 200"), the Province of Ontario made amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. These amendments have had implications for non-designated ("Listed Properties") included on the City's Heritage Register. Listed

Properties may now only remain on the Register for two years. Properties that were listed prior to January 1, 2023, must be either designated or removed from the Register by January 1, 2027. Once removed, Council may not relist a property for five years. Further, Council is prohibited from designating a property that is subject to specified Planning Act applications once the Clerk has provided notice that the City has received a complete application.

The City is currently implementing the Bill 23 and Bill 200 changes to the Act and an update on implementation was provided to the Planning and Housing Committee at their October 30, 2024 meeting.

COMMENTS

University of Toronto's Legacy Listed Properties

Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (the "Act") under Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, were proclaimed into force on January 1, 2023. The changes to the Act have immediate and long-term implications for the conservation of heritage properties in the Province, including the deemed removal of the approximately 3,700 Listed Properties from the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on January 1, 2027.

In response to Bill 23, Heritage Planning established a series of prioritization principles to guide the designation of some listed properties prior to their deemed removal. Included in the prioritization recommendations was consideration for properties with "Outstanding Cultural Heritage Value and Integrity". Some of the city's most prominent landmarks have never been designated under the OHA and therefore only have listed status. This is largely because there was no pressing reason to pursue that degree of legal protection, and existing mechanisms to respond to demolition notices remained in place without Register time limits. With this no longer the case, City staff will prioritize Listed Properties with outstanding cultural heritage value and integrity for research and evaluation and will recommend priority designations for properties that have citywide importance, and those that are local landmarks that meet more than one of the provincially prescribed criteria under O. Reg 9/06.

In continuation of their excellent stewardship of some of Toronto's most important heritage properties, the University of Toronto is working with the City of Toronto to prepare Statements of Significance for other legacy listed landmarks.

University of Toronto's Property Parcel at 150 College Street

Simcoe Hall, Convocation Hall and ten other buildings located on the property parcel at 150 College Street are included on the City's Heritage Register. 150 College Street is a larger property that encompasses many other buildings identified as part of the broader University of Toronto St. George campus landscape. Additionally, some buildings on the property parcel at 150 College Street have been designated under Part IV of the Ontario
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Heritage Act, including the Mining Building, the Sandford Fleming Library, Hart House (including Soldiers' Tower), the Hygiene Building and University College.

Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall have been recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register since the first lists in 1973.

In 2018, City Council endorsed a set of principles for the University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan Area, including the principle to conserve built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. In 2022 Council adopted the Official Plan Amendment, University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan and associated Urban Design Guidelines, which identify Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall as landmarks.

For the purpose of this collaborative approach initiated by Heritage Planning staff with the University of Toronto to designate landmark listed properties on the St. George campus, ERA Architects, acting as the Heritage Consultant for the University of Toronto, submitted Supporting Documentation packages containing historical research for Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall, evaluation using provincial criteria (including a draft Statement of Significance and heritage attributes for each), and visual resources. The consultant reports recommend that both subject properties (convenience addresses at 27 and 31 King's College Circle) be added to the Part IV designated properties located on the property parcel at 150 College Street. Heritage Planning staff concur with this recommendation.

Evaluation Analyses

The following two evaluation analyses are based on the comprehensive research conducted on the property parcel at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle and Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circles) (see Attachments 4 and 5) and provide the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle

The property at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle) meets the following 7 out of 9 criteria:

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

Simcoe Hall has design and physical value as a fine representative example of interwar classicism in the Grand Manner tradition. Designed as a harmonious extension of the earlier Convocation Hall (1907), Simcoe Hall establishes a formal presence through a distinguished main entrance that is set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle. The building's façade is a refined example of interwar classicism within the long Grand Manner tradition, as exemplified by its classical proportions and robustly detailed

architectural elements. The features that reflect the Neo-Classical style include the prominent, double door entry with a fanlight and arched hood supported by Corinthian Columns, the Palladian window above the entrance, and the paired, engaged pilasters with Ionic capitals flanking the main entrance that support a dentilled cornice and pediment featuring a carved tympanum.

The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit

Simcoe Hall also displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. This is evident in the carved details on both the exterior and interior of the property, including the limestone embellishment at the main entrance and the walnut millwork in the second-floor Council Chamber. The spatial arrangement of the floor plan also shows a skillful integration of "front-of-house" public and ceremonial uses with "back-of-house" administrative functions. This relationship is manifest in the formal arrangement of its entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and main staircase on the first floor, which together create a Classically-inspired, symbolic processional route.

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community

Named after Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), an early advocate for a university, the property is valued for its potential to yield information about the establishment of post-secondary education in what was then Upper Canada.

Simcoe Hall also has associative value for its role as the University's administrative centre, housing the offices of the Provost, President, and senior administration since its construction in 1924. Alongside the adjoining Convocation Hall, Simcoe Hall has historically played an important role in annual convocation ceremonies, forming part of the procession route for administrators and graduating students.

The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community

The property is valued for its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, known for their significant contributions to architecture at a local, provincial, and national level. Partners Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Pearson (1867-1940) served as the University's architects during the first two decades of the 20th century. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including Convocation Hall (1907), the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), and the Roseburgh Building (1920). While Darling & Pearson designed primarily in the Classical tradition, many of their projects for the University of Toronto skillfully integrated details reflecting other architectural styles to complement the Romanesque character

exhibited by the earlier buildings on campus. For Simcoe Hall, Classical elements are found throughout the interior and exterior of the property, while the arcade in the entrance foyer display a notable Romanesque influence. Individually, Frank Darling was the first Canadian to receive a Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1915 and John Pearson was the first Canadian to receive a honorary Doctor of Architecture from the University of Toronto in 1932. Both Darling and Pearson are listed on the Ontario Association of Architects' Honour Roll.

The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

Contextually, Simcoe Hall is valued for its role in supporting and maintaining the collegiate character and landscape of King's College Circle through its location on the southwest "corner" of King's College Circle. From this location, Simcoe Hall's distinguished main entrance helps define the boundary of this portion of campus and reinforces the role of University College at the north end of the circle as the symbolic centre of the larger institutional setting of the St. George Campus.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

Through its scale and massing, Simcoe Hall functionally and visually extends Convocation Hall to bound the southwest portion of King's College Circle. The property also provides a Classically inspired architectural contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through interwar classicism (Simcoe Hall) and Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to Modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which, together, represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark

Simcoe Hall occupies a prominent site within the historic Front Campus. Although not a physically imposing structure, the property's principal entrance, which is set at an angle to its elongated floor plan, is prominently visible from throughout King's College Circle and is considered to be a landmark. Further, Simcoe Hall's historic role in the University's convocation ceremonies has established it as a place of symbolic importance within the St. George Campus.

Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle

The property at 150 College Street (Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) meets the following 7 out of 9 criteria:

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

Convocation Hall has design and physical value as a unique example of a rotunda-form structure within Toronto, and as a representative example of the Beaux-Arts style on the University of Toronto Campus. Designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, Convocation Hall was completed in 1907 and represented a significant expansion of the University's assembly space. The structure was intended by Darling and Pearson to form the central node of a revised axial plan for the St. George Campus that was to be anchored at the intersection of King's College Circle and King's College Road.

The circular form of the auditorium space and semi-circular form of the galleries satisfied acoustic requirements, conveyed symbolic importance as an egalitarian gathering space, and established the design principle for the interior and exterior configuration of the building. Defining characteristics of the Classically-rooted Beaux-Arts style evidenced at Convocation Hall include the monumental scale of its exterior Ionic colonnade, the strict symmetry of the layout and design elements, and the grandeur of the soaring auditorium interior culminating in a massive, circular glass laylight.

The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit

Also typical of Beaux-Arts style architecture, the property displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit through the skillful execution of its carved masonry details on all exterior elevations and the interior glass laylight at the apex of the domed ceiling.

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community

Convocation Hall has significant associative value through its historic and ongoing use as a ceremonial gathering space for the University of Toronto, as well as a space for instructional and public events, and is therefore deeply embedded within the institutional history of the University of Toronto. The property also has value through its association with the University's Alumni Association fundraising efforts to commemorate alumni who had perished in the Fenian raids and the Boer War.

The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community

The property is further valued for its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, known for their significant contributions to architecture at a local, provincial, and national level. Partners Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Pearson (1867-1940) served as the University's architects during the first two decades of the 20th

century. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including Convocation Hall (1907), the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), and the Roseburgh Building (1920). The Classical detailing of Convocation Hall's Beaux-Arts design represented an Edwardian shift for the University's architectural program under Darling's leadership.

Individually, Frank Darling was the first Canadian to receive a Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1915 and John Pearson was the first Canadian to receive an honorary Doctor of Architecture degree from the University of Toronto in 1932. Both Darling and Pearson are listed on the Ontario Association of Architects' Honour Roll.

The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

Convocation Hall has contextual value in defining a gateway to King's College Circle from King's College Road. Through this role it defines, maintains, and supports the institutional character and landscape of the front campus with the adjoining Simcoe Hall. The placement of the property on the site was carefully considered to frame an axial view to University College from College Street, maintaining and supporting the prominence of University College as the symbolic heart of the St. George Campus.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

The subject property represents the early-20th century Edwardian expansion of the University of Toronto campus under the guidance of University Architect, Frank Darling. As such, it is visually and historically linked to other properties that comprised this expansion scheme, including the Sanford Fleming Building (1907) and Simcoe Hall (1924). The property also provides a Beaux-Arts contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through interwar classicism (Simcoe Hall) and Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to Modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which, together, represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark

Convocation Hall provides a significant visual presence on the St. George Campus. Given its remarkable architectural detailing and prominent location at the north terminus of King's College Road where it meets King's College Circle, the building, along with University College to the north, is one of the most recognized structures in Toronto. Its copper dome and half-round Beaux-Arts façade are visible from many vantages within the historic park-like setting, as well as on approach from King's College Road, making it a physical and cultural landmark on the St. George Campus.

See Attachments 1 - 5 of this report for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Current Photographs; and Supporting Documentation pertaining to the properties at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle and Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle), as all of these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

CONCLUSION

Through Heritage Planning's independent review of the Consultant's research and evaluation of the subject properties, included as Attachments 4 and 5 to this report, independent research by Heritage Planning staff, and through ongoing collaboration between the Consultant, University of Toronto and Heritage Planning staff, it has been determined that the subject properties at 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle and Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) each meet 7 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. As such, the properties merit designation and staff recommend that Council support the designation of these properties.

The Statements of Significance: 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle and Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) attached as Attachments 1 and 2 to this report comprise the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 150 College Street (Simcoe Hall - 27 King's College Circle) - Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)

Attachment 2 – 150 College Street (Convocation Hall - 31 King's College Circle) - Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)

Attachment 3 – Location Map and Current Photographs

Attachment 4 – Supporting Documentation - Simcoe Hall, 27 King's College Circle:

Supporting Materials for Part IV Designation Report (prepared by ERA Architects, October 23, 2025)

Attachment 5 – Supporting Documentation - Convocation Hall, 31 King's College Circle:

Supporting Materials for Part IV Designation Report (prepared by ERA Architects, October 23, 2025)

(SIMCOE HALL - 27 KING'S COLLEGE CIRCLE)**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)****Description**

The subject property is defined to include Simcoe Hall, a two-storey building with buff brick walls and limestone embellishment, representative of interwar classicism in the Grand Manner. The property was named after Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), an early advocate for a university in what was then Upper Canada.

Constructed as an extension of Convocation Hall (1907), Simcoe Hall (1924) serves as the administrative centre for the University, complementing the public and ceremonial functions of the adjoining Convocation Hall and is also designed by the prominent Toronto firm of Darling & Pearson. Simcoe Hall occupies a prominent site on the University of Toronto's St. George Campus. The building is configured with the principal entrance located on the northeast elevation, which is set at an angle to fully address and engage with the curve of King's College Circle.

The property has not been substantially altered since its original construction, although some interior alterations, including the installation of an elevator, have been made for accessibility purposes. In the early 1970s, a stairwell was added to the north end of the west elevation, which was later removed to construct an elevated bridgeway linking Simcoe Hall with the adjacent Myhal Centre to the west.

Simcoe Hall has long been recognized for its cultural heritage value, having been included on Toronto's inaugural Inventory of Heritage Properties adopted by City Council on June 20th, 1973.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design and Physical Value**

Simcoe Hall has design and physical value as a fine representative example of interwar classicism in the Grand Manner tradition. Designed as a harmonious extension of the earlier Convocation Hall (1907), Simcoe Hall establishes a formal presence through a distinguished main entrance that is set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle. The building's façade is a refined example of interwar classicism within the long Grand Manner tradition, as exemplified by its classical proportions and robustly detailed architectural elements. The features that reflect the Neo-Classical style include the prominent, double door entry with a fanlight and arched hood supported by Corinthian Columns, the Palladian window above the entrance, and the paired, engaged pilasters

with Ionic capitals flanking the main entrance that support a dentilled cornice and pediment featuring a carved tympanum.

Simcoe Hall also displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. This is evident in the carved details on both the exterior and interior of the property, including the limestone embellishment at the main entrance and the walnut millwork in the second-floor Council Chamber. The spatial arrangement of the floor plan also shows a skillful integration of “front-of-house” public and ceremonial uses with “back-of-house” administrative functions. This relationship is manifest in the formal arrangement of its entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and main staircase on the first floor, which together create a Classically-inspired, symbolic processional route.

Historical and Associative Value

Named after Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), an early advocate for a university, the property is valued for its potential to yield information about the establishment of post-secondary education in what was then Upper Canada.

Simcoe Hall also has associative value for its role as the University's administrative centre, housing the offices of the Provost, President, and senior administration since its construction in 1924. Alongside the adjoining Convocation Hall, Simcoe Hall has historically played an important role in annual convocation ceremonies, forming part of the procession route for administrators and graduating students.

The property is valued for its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, known for their significant contributions to architecture at a local, provincial, and national level. Partners Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Pearson (1867-1940) served as the University's architects during the first two decades of the 20th century. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including Convocation Hall (1907), the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), and the Roseburgh Building (1920). While Darling & Pearson designed primarily in the Classical tradition, many of their projects for the University of Toronto skillfully integrated details reflecting other architectural styles to complement the Romanesque character exhibited by the earlier buildings on campus. For Simcoe Hall, Classical elements are found throughout the interior and exterior of the property, while the arcade in the entrance foyer display a notable Romanesque influence. Individually, Frank Darling was the first Canadian to receive a Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1915 and John Pearson was the first Canadian to receive a honorary Doctor of Architecture from the University of Toronto in 1932. Both Darling and Pearson are listed on the Ontario Association of Architects' Honour Roll.

Contextual Value

Contextually, Simcoe Hall is valued for its role in supporting and maintaining the collegiate character and landscape of King's College Circle through its location on the southwest

"corner" of King's College Circle. From this location, Simcoe Hall's distinguished main entrance helps define the boundary of this portion of campus and reinforces the role of University College at the north end of the circle as the symbolic centre of the larger institutional setting of the St. George Campus.

Through its scale and massing, Simcoe Hall functionally and visually extends Convocation Hall to bound the southwest portion of King's College Circle. The property also provides a Classically inspired architectural contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through interwar classicism (Simcoe Hall) and Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to Modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which, together, represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.

Simcoe Hall occupies a prominent site within the historic Front Campus. Although not a physically imposing structure, the property's principal entrance, which is set at an angle to its elongated floor plan, is prominently visible from throughout King's College Circle and is considered to be a landmark. Further, Simcoe Hall's historic role in the University's convocation ceremonies has established it as a place of symbolic importance within the St. George Campus.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as being a fine representative example of interwar classicism in the Grand Manner tradition with a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit:

Exterior:

- The engaged pilasters with ionic capitals, which frame the primary entrance on the northeast elevation, and support a dentilled cornice and pediment with a carved tympanum
- The main entrance on the northeast elevation, with a double door and fanlight set within an arched hood with Corinthian columns
- The Palladian window above the main entrance featured above the hood
- The existing arrangement of window openings including round arched and flat headed
- The fenestration, with the existing combination of fanlites and multi-pane sash windows including six-over-nine and eight-over-twelve
- The dome skylight in the Chair's Boardroom
- The brick construction and detailing, including the brick quoining, string coursing and dentils
- The limestone embellishments, including the masonry carvings on the principal (northeast) elevation, the limestone entablature, and the limestone window opening surrounds

Interior:

- The sequential arrangement of the entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and main staircase, which together create a Classically-inspired, symbolic processional route
- In the second-floor Council Chamber:
 - The walnut millwork, consisting of panelled wainscoting surmounted by fluted pilasters, carved capitals, and a denticulated entablature
 - The walnut pediment and trim surrounding the set of double doors on the south wall
 - The walnut arcaded portico enclosing a carving of the Simcoe family crest on the north wall
- In the Chair's Boardroom, the window surround and plasterwork on the ceiling

Historical and Associative Value

Attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of Simcoe Hall as being the administrative centre of the University:

Exterior:

- The restrained Classical detailing of the principal elevation

Interior:

- The restrained Classical detailing of the interior
- The Romanesque arcade in the entrance foyer that typifies the hybrid style characteristic of Darling & Pearson's portfolio
- The carved crest with ceremonial inscription set into the southwest wall of the entrance rotunda, which is a stylized reproduction of the Simcoe family crest

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the King's College Circle; as being visually and historically linked to its surroundings; and, as being a landmark:

- The principal entrance set at an angle to fully engage King's College Circle from the southwest
- The two-storey height of the structure and its north-south orientation, which together function as an extension of Convocation Hall to define the southwest portion of King's College Circle
- The placement and orientation of Simcoe Hall relative to the other architecturally significant heritage buildings surrounding King's College Circle, which together create a gallery of architectural styles representing the institutional growth and ongoing evolution of the University of Toronto

(CONVOCATION HALL - 31 KING'S COLLEGE CIRCLE)**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)****Description**

The subject property is defined to include "Convocation Hall", a three-storey rotunda form building completed in 1907 and designed in the Beaux-Arts style. The design is characterized by a repetition of circular and semicircular elements which fulfil practical acoustic requirements and have symbolic meaning. The building is symmetrical along a central axis and adjoins Simcoe Hall (1924) to the west. Along the north, east, and south elevations, three semi-circular apses are separated by a pair of two-storey entrance loggias with ionic colonnades. The third floor is set back behind a heavy entablature and supports a wide, shallow copper dome with vertical ribbing and a glazed skylight. The building exterior is primarily buff-coloured brick, and the columns, entablature, and trim at doors and windows are stone. The brick is rusticated at the first floor and portions of the third floor, and rusticated brick pilasters bookend the apses. Each loggia includes five entries with wooden double doors. Three of the doors centred on each side have arched door hoods. The loggias also include four-over-four wood sash windows at the second storey, while the apses hold multi-pane wood sash windows with prominent surrounds. The third storey features roundel windows within scrolled stone surrounds, as well as additional relief sculptural ornamentation.

Convocation Hall has long been recognized for its cultural heritage value, having been included on Toronto's inaugural Inventory of Heritage Properties adopted by City Council on June 20th, 1973.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design and Physical Value**

Convocation Hall has design and physical value as a unique example of a rotunda-form structure within Toronto, and as a representative example of the Beaux-Arts style on the University of Toronto Campus. Designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, Convocation Hall was completed in 1907 and represented a significant expansion of the University's assembly space. The structure was intended by Darling and Pearson to form the central node of a revised axial plan for the St. George Campus that was to be anchored at the intersection of King's College Circle and King's College Road. The circular form of the auditorium space and semi-circular form of the galleries satisfied acoustic requirements, conveyed symbolic importance as an egalitarian gathering space, and established the design principle for the interior and exterior configuration of the building. Defining characteristics of the Classically-rooted Beaux-Arts style evidenced at Convocation Hall include the monumental scale of its exterior Ionic colonnade, the strict

symmetry of the layout and design elements, and the grandeur of the soaring auditorium interior culminating in a massive, circular glass laylight.

Also typical of Beaux-Arts style architecture, the property displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit through the skillful execution of its carved masonry details on all exterior elevations and the interior glass laylight at the apex of the domed ceiling.

Historical and Associative Value

Convocation Hall has significant associative value through its historic and ongoing use as a ceremonial gathering space for the University of Toronto, as well as a space for instructional and public events, and is therefore deeply embedded within the institutional history of the University of Toronto. The property also has value through its association with the University's Alumni Association fundraising efforts to commemorate alumni who had perished in the Fenian raids and the Boer War.

The property is further valued for its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, known for their significant contributions to architecture at a local, provincial, and national level. Partners Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Pearson (1867-1940) served as the University's architects during the first two decades of the 20th century. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including Convocation Hall (1907), the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), and the Roseburgh Building (1920). The Classical detailing of Convocation Hall's Beaux-Arts design represented an Edwardian shift for the University's architectural program under Darling's leadership. Individually, Frank Darling was the first Canadian to receive a Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1915 and John Pearson was the first Canadian to receive an honorary Doctor of Architecture degree from the University of Toronto in 1932. Both Darling and Pearson are listed on the Ontario Association of Architects' Honour Roll.

Contextual Value

Convocation Hall has contextual value in defining a gateway to King's College Circle from King's College Road. Through this role it defines, maintains, and supports the institutional character and landscape of the front campus with the adjoining Simcoe Hall. The placement of the property on the site was carefully considered to frame an axial view to University College from College Street, maintaining and supporting the prominence of University College as the symbolic heart of the St. George Campus.

The subject property represents the early-20th century Edwardian expansion of the University of Toronto campus under the guidance of University Architect, Frank Darling. As such, it is visually and historically linked to other properties that comprised this expansion scheme, including the Sanford Fleming Building (1907) and Simcoe Hall (1924). The property also provides a Beaux-Arts contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through interwar classicism (Simcoe Hall) and

Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to Modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which, together, represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.

Convocation Hall provides a significant visual presence on the St. George Campus. Given its remarkable architectural detailing and prominent location at the north terminus of King's College Road where it meets King's College Circle, the building, along with University College to the north, is one of the most recognized structures in Toronto. Its copper dome and half-round Beaux-Arts façade are visible from many vantages within the historic park-like setting, as well as on approach from King's College Road, making it a physical and cultural landmark on the St. George Campus.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as being a unique example of a rotunda-form structure in Toronto, representative of the Beaux-Arts style, and as having a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit:

Exterior:

- The scale, form and massing of the building with its rotunda form with shallow dome and composition of circular and semi-circular design elements, including colonnaded entrance loggias and the three apses arranged symmetrically around a central axis
- The pair of two-storey entrance loggias with Ionic colonnades, with door and window openings trimmed with limestone
- The limestone entablature below the third storey
- The third-storey roundel windows within scrolled stone surrounds
- The shallow copper dome roof and large glazed skylight
- The brick construction
- The limestone embellishments, including the masonry carvings of the loggia columns, the limestone entablature, and the limestone window surrounds

Interior:

- In the auditorium:
 - The circular, full-height volume with semi-circular gallery balconies at the second- and third storeys
 - The circular, coloured glass laylight comprising the apex of the domed ceiling
 - The Casavant Brothers organ pipes in the gallery above the stage
- In the ground floor perimeter circulation corridor, the terrazzo flooring with inlaid mosaic banding

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as defining, supporting, and maintaining the character of King's College Circle; as being visually and historically linked to its surroundings; and, as being a landmark:

- The three-storey height of the building that, together with the adjoined Simcoe Hall, bound the southwest portion of King's College Circle
- The prominent location at the northwest terminus of King's College Road, where it intersects with King's College Circle, establishing a gateway relationship to the Front Campus
- The buff brick and limestone material palette, shared by several other nearby buildings designed by Darling & Pearson for the St. George Campus

LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 3

150 COLLEGE STREET

(SIMCOE HALL & CONVOCATION HALL - 27 & 31 KING'S COLLEGE CIRCLE)



The physically adjoined Convocation Hall (31 King's College Circle) and Simcoe Hall (27 King's College Circle) are outlined in red. Note: This location map is for information purposes only; the boundaries of the properties are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall, as viewed from the northeast (City of Toronto, 2025)



East elevation of Convocation Hall, showing both loggias. Simcoe Hall is visible to the rear of Convocation Hall (City of Toronto, 2025)



The south elevations of Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall (City of Toronto, 2025)



Looking southwest from above Hart House across King's College Circle to Simcoe Hall and Convocation Hall (City of Toronto, 2025)

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
SIMCOE HALL
27 KING'S COLLEGE CIRCLE**

ATTACHMENT 4

**Simcoe Hall: 27 King's College Circle
Supporting Materials for Part IV Designation Report**

Prepared by ERA Architects (GS/ SH/ HC/ BN)

October 23, 2025

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Property Location and Description

The property is municipally known as 27 King's College Circle and is located on the southwest "corner" of King's College Circle and immediately west of Convocation Hall (the "Property").

The Property contains the University of Toronto's Simcoe Hall, a two-storey Classically inspired building constructed in 1924 on an I-shaped floor plan with the primary entrance located on the northeast elevation, which is set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle. Simcoe Hall was constructed as an extension of the earlier Convocation Hall (1907) and serves as the University's administrative centre, containing offices of the provost and president, as well as board rooms in which the University's governance bodies convene. The first floor features a Classically inspired entrance rotunda and a Romanesque arcade, which historically served as a processional route for administrators and graduating students assembling in the adjoining Convocation Hall.

The Property is bounded on the east by Convocation Hall, to which it is physically adjoined, on the west by the Myhal Centre, to which it is connected via a skywalk at the second-storey, to the south by Galbraith Road, and to the north by the Nona Macdonald Walkway.

The surrounding context comprises a mix of building types associated with institutional uses within the University of Toronto St. George Campus.

The Property was listed on the City of Toronto Heritage Register on June 20, 1973, with the following description:

"Simcoe Hall: 1923-1924; Darling and Pearson – identified for convenience purposes as 27 King's College Circle - adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973."

Policy Context

Provincial Plans and Policies

As a post-secondary institution in Ontario, the University of Toronto is exempt from certain Planning Act provisions. However, the Ontario Heritage Act ("OHA") remains fully applicable and, as such, the following assessment conforms to the OHA.

Under the OHA, municipal governments are required to keep a current register of properties that are of cultural heritage value or interest. Registers are official lists of all properties that have been designated either individually or within a heritage conservation district. Since 2005, municipalities also have the authority to list properties of potential cultural heritage value or interest on their register that have not been designated.

Under Part IV of the OHA, municipalities may pass by-laws to designate individual properties that are of cultural heritage value. Property designated under Part IV must be

added to the register with a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the property's heritage attributes. Designation provides a means of ensuring that alterations to properties are carried out in a manner that sustains or enhances cultural heritage value. It also provides for demolition control.

The criteria for determining a property's cultural heritage value or interest are defined under Ontario Regulation 9/06 ("O.Reg. 9/06"). These criteria, grouped according to categories of design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value, are a framework established to assist municipalities with the process of evaluating properties as candidates for protection under the OHA. According to provincial guidelines, the better a property's characteristics under the criteria, the greater its cultural heritage value or interest, and the stronger the argument for its long-term protection under the OHA. O.Reg. 9/06 requires that, in order to be designated, a property must meet two or more of these criteria.

Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act) and Bill 200 (Homeowner Protection Act)

Through Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022) and Bill 200 (Homeowner Protection Act, 2024), the Province of Ontario amended the OHA. These amendments have implications for non-designated ("Listed Properties"), such as the Property, that are included on the City's Heritage Register. Listed Properties may now only remain on the Register for two years.

Properties that were listed prior to January 1, 2023, must be either designated or removed from the Register by January 1, 2027. Once removed, Council may not relist a property for five years. Further, Council is prohibited from designating a property that is subject to specified Planning Act applications once the Clerk has provided notice that the City has received a complete application.

Draft Statement of Significance

Description of Property

Simcoe Hall is a two-storey, Classically inspired building with buff brick walls and limestone embellishment. It is constructed on an I-shaped floor plan with the primary entrance located on the northeast elevation, which is set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle. Contributing to the prominence of this entry, the double door has a fanlight and an arched hood with Corinthian columns. A Palladian window is featured above the hood. Flanking the entrance are paired, engaged pilasters with ionic capitals that support a dentilled cornice and pediment featuring a carved tympanum. The remainder of the building is distinguished by a prominent limestone entablature, six-over-six and six-over-nine windows, and brick quoining. Constructed as a physical extension of Convocation Hall (1907), Simcoe Hall serves as the administrative centre for the University, complementing the public and ceremonial functions of the adjacent Convocation Hall.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Simcoe Hall has design, associative, and contextual significance.

Designed by the prominent Toronto firm of Darling & Pearson and completed in 1924, Simcoe Hall has design value as a representative example of Classically inspired architecture on the University of Toronto's King's College Circle, as well as for the fine craftsmanship displayed in its exterior carved limestone and interior carved millwork in the second-floor Council Chamber. Simcoe Hall also displays design value in the skillful integration of "front-of-house" public and ceremonial uses with "back-of-house" administrative functions. This relationship is manifest in the formal arrangement of its entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and primary staircase on the first floor, which together create a Classically inspired symbolic processional route.

Named after Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), an early advocate for a university in what was then Upper Canada, the Property has associative significance as the University's administrative centre, housing the offices of the provost, president, and senior administration. It is also significant for its association with the firm of Darling & Pearson, which contributed numerous notable buildings to the campus in the early decades of the 20th century.

Simcoe Hall occupies a prominent site within the historic front campus. The building's primary entrance fully engages with King's College Circle and is prominently visible from throughout this portion of campus. Simcoe Hall also plays a significant contextual role by physically and visually extending Convocation Hall to the northwest and defining the boundary of this portion of campus.

Heritage Attributes

Attributes that Convey Design or Physical Value: Exterior Attributes:

- The engaged pilasters with ionic capitals, which frame the primary entrance on the northeast elevation, and support a dentilled cornice and pediment with a carved tympanum
- The primary entrance on the northeast elevation, with a double door and fanlight set within an arched hood with Corinthian columns
- The Palladian window above the primary entrance featured above the hood
- The rounded arch window openings on the east, north, west, and south elevations
- The six-over-nine windows with fanlites on the east, north, and west elevations
- The dome skylight in the Chair's Boardroom
- The building's brick construction with limestone embellishments, including the masonry carvings on the primary northeast elevation, the limestone entablature, and the limestone window opening surrounds

Interior Attributes:

- The walnut millwork in the second-floor Council Chamber, consisting of panelled wainscoting surmounted by fluted pilasters, carved capitals, and a dentilated entablature
- The walnut pediment and trim in the second-floor Council Chamber surrounding the set of double doors on the south wall
- The walnut arcaded portico in the second-floor Council Chamber enclosing a carving of the Simcoe family crest on the north wall

Attributes that Convey Historical or Associative Value:

Interior Attributes:

- The sequential arrangement of the entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and primary staircase, which together create a Classically inspired symbolic processional route
- The carved crest with ceremonial inscription set into the southwest wall of the entrance rotunda, and which is a stylized reproduction of the Simcoe family crest

Attributes that Convey Contextual Value:

- The primary entrance set at an angle to fully engage King's College Circle from the southwest
- The two-storey height of the structure and its north-south orientation, which together function as an extension of Convocation Hall to define the southwest portion of King's College Circle

Evaluation Against O. Reg. 9/06

The Property has been evaluated against O.Reg. 9/06, "Criteria For Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest" under the OHA, to determine its potential for designation under Part IV of the OHA. The evaluation found that the Property meets multiple criteria across design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value, as summarized in the tables on the following pages.

Criteria Relating to Design or Physical Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS
1) The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	Y	The Property has design and physical value as a representative example of a classically detailed institutional structure. Designed as a harmonious extension of the earlier Convocation Hall (1907), Simcoe Hall establishes a formal presence through a distinguished primary entrance that is set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle. The Property also has design value through the thoughtful integration of public and ceremonial functions with administrative functions through the entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and primary staircase on the first-floor.
2) The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	Y	The Property has design and physical value through the skillful execution of its carved masonry details at the primary entrance and the carved millwork in the Council Chamber that reflects the Classical detailing of the exterior entranceway.
3) The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N	Simcoe Hall was constructed using methods common at the time. The Property is therefore not considered to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

Criteria Relating to Historical or Associative Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS

4) The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	Y	As the University of Toronto's administrative centre since its construction in 1924, Simcoe Hall has established significant associative value within the institutional history of the University. Additionally, the structure has historically played an important role in annual convocation ceremonies as part of the procession of administrators and graduating students.
5) The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	N	While all buildings on the University of Toronto St. George Campus have the potential to provide valuable insights into the institutional and community history of the University, research does not indicate that the Property holds significant individual value in its potential to yield an understanding of a community or culture.
6) The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	Y	The Property has value through its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including Convocation Hall (1907), the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), and the Roseburgh Building (1920).

Criteria Relating to Contextual Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS
7) The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Y	The Property has contextual value in defining the southwest "corner" of King's College Circle. From this location, Simcoe Hall's distinguished primary entrance and supports the institutional character of the St. George Campus.

8) The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Y	Through its scale and massing, Simcoe Hall functionally and visually extends Convocation Hall to bound the southwest portion of King's College Circle. The Property also provides a Classically inspired architectural contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through neo- classicism (Simcoe Hall) and Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to mid-century modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.
9) The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	Y	Although not a physically imposing structure, the Property's primary entrance, which is set at an angle to its elongated floor plan, is prominently visible from throughout King's College Circle and is considered to be a landmark. Further, Simcoe Hall's historic role in the University's convocation ceremonies has established it as a place of symbolic importance within the St. George Campus.

Historical Background Information

Site Context

The land occupied by the St. George Campus is the byproduct of the original 1828 land assembly for King's College. Totalling 150 acres, it comprised the northern portions of Park Lots # 11, 12 and 13 with allowances for road access to Yonge Street in the east and Queen Street in the south. These university-owned roads would later become College Street and University Avenue. Following the dissolution of King's College, the University intended to build on the land occupied by the defunct college, but the Province, having expropriated the land in 1853 for the site of a new legislature, refused to return the property, thereby pushing the site of the university westward.

At the time that the first university building, University College, was constructed in 1859, the surrounding area was largely rural. Although the boundaries of the City of Toronto extended north to Bloor Street, there was only sparse development on the land adjacent to the University of Toronto. The absence of surrounding development, a marked contrast with present conditions, was accompanied by a varied topography. Although the land directly to the south, west and north was flat, access to the university lands from the east and south was influenced by Taddle Creek and its ravine. Allowance for the creek created a treed, meandering approach to campus that complemented the bucolic nature of the siting of the early university buildings. The creek was dammed in 1859 to create a small pond known as McCaul's Pond. Sewage and industrial waste discharged upstream by residents of the Village of Yorkville polluted the pond, leading to its removal in 1879. Taddle Creek was buried soon afterwards, redirected into the sewer system in 1884.

As the university expanded in the late nineteenth century, growth was directed to the south of University College, framing what would later become King's College Road. This institutional expansion included an array of buildings constructed to the southeast and southwest of University College, and which created a monumental axis that framed University College.

As the university expanded in the early twentieth century, development largely concentrated east of St. George Street. However, a significant increase in enrollment beginning in the 1950's prompted the campus's westward expansion toward Spadina Avenue. Discussion around campus expansion began as early as 1948, when the Board of Governors established a Planning Committee. James Murray, an urban planner and member of the committee, created a guiding principle that it should take no longer than 10 minutes to walk from one part of the campus to another (the length of time between lectures). With Hart House as the central reference point, this time frame meant that Spadina Avenue would form the new western perimeter for the campus. By the early 1950s, a slow migration of university facilities west of St. George Street had already started, confirming the logic of further westward growth.

Design and Integrity

By the end of the First World War, the University had made substantial progress expanding its teaching and research facilities, many of which filled in vacant areas around and to the south of King's College Circle. While the primary teaching functions of the University were well served by this expansion, suitable space for the growing administration and governance bodies remained lacking. A new purpose-built administrative building, with offices for the president, provost, and governing council was therefore required.

A desire to have the new administration building constructed in an expedient and cost-effective fashion limited possible sites. At the same time, the project presented an opportunity to rectify the aesthetic dilemma created by the 1909 multi-purpose assembly hall addition to Convocation Hall, which was constructed in a utilitarian fashion and visually and functionally disengaged from King's College Circle. The new administrative building was therefore proposed to be attached to the west of Convocation Hall, integrating and disguising the addition while establishing a harmonious relationship with King's College Circle. The building's primary entrance, set at an angle to fully engage with King's College Circle, is prominently visible from throughout front campus; while the massing of the structure physically and visually extends Convocation Hall to the northwest, defining the boundary of this portion of campus.

Named after Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), an early advocate for a university in what was then Upper Canada, Simcoe Hall was designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling and Pearson and completed in 1924. The building is a two-storey, Classically inspired structure with buff brick walls and limestone embellishment. The building adjoins Convocation Hall to the east via an infill wing.

An expression of the relationship between the administrative functions of Simcoe Hall and the ceremonial and assembly functions of Convocation Hall is the skillful integration of “front-of-house” public and ceremonial uses with “back-of-house” administrative functions. This relationship is successfully accomplished through the arrangement of Simcoe Hall's entrance rotunda, Romanesque arcade, and primary staircase on the first floor, which function as a Classically inspired symbolic processional route and as transitional spaces between the public ground floor and the administrative second floor. In addition to offices for the principal and provost, the administrative functions of the second floor also include two primary interior spaces: the Council Chamber, with elaborate walnut millwork; and the Chair's Boardroom, with axial view to University College. The principal interior spaces of Simcoe Hall have remained largely intact since its construction in 1925, although interior office spaces have been modernized over time. The interior of Simcoe Hall, and the adjacent Convocation Hall underwent a cosmetic refresh in 2008 and again in 2019.

Architects

The architecture practice formed by Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Andrew Pearson (1867-1940) operated between 1895 and 1923, although the name was in use until Pearson retired in 1935. The practice became prominent at a time of economic and cultural expansion for Toronto. Its consistent and longstanding patronage by a network of influential Toronto industrialists and financiers contributed to its success as a leading early 20th century practice.

The firm is credited with designing over 300 buildings from St. Johns in the east and Victoria in the west, no other architectural firm matched this number of commissions during this period. Darling formed several partnerships during his long and successful career: MacDougall & Darling (1873-1874); Darling & Curry (1880-1890); Darling, Curry & Co. (1891); Darling, Curry, Sproatt & Pearson (1892); Darling, Sproatt & Pearson (1892-1895). His work with Pearson became a dual partnership in 1885 as Darling & Pearson. After Darling's death in 1923, Pearson would continue the practice under the name Darling & Pearson with staff person Jules Wegman (1865-1931) made full partner in 1924.

The designs by Darling & Pearson were primarily in the Classical tradition, although they built in the hybrid Romanesque style for their university projects. This demanded novel approaches to meet the demands of modern buildings. For example, the Dominion Bank Building (1 King Street West, 1914) and the Canadian Pacific Building (69 Yonge Street, 1913) were built as modern high rises and yet employed the Classical plinth, shaft, and crown arrangement, as well as Edwardian Baroque ornamentation.

Apart from their individual commissions, the practice was responsible for dozens of bank branches across Canada from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Victoria, British Columbia. In addition, the firm designed residences for many of Toronto's elites, including those who had commissioned them for their institutional and corporate buildings. Darling and Pearson's projects at the University of Toronto included important campus defining buildings and facilities, as well as a plan for Trinity College.

In addition to Simcoe Hall, notable work by Darling & Pearson includes Convocation Hall (1907), the Toronto General Hospital (200 Elizabeth Street, 1911), the Royal Ontario Museum (100 Queens Park, 1914), and the CPR's North Toronto Station (10 Scrivener Square, 1916).

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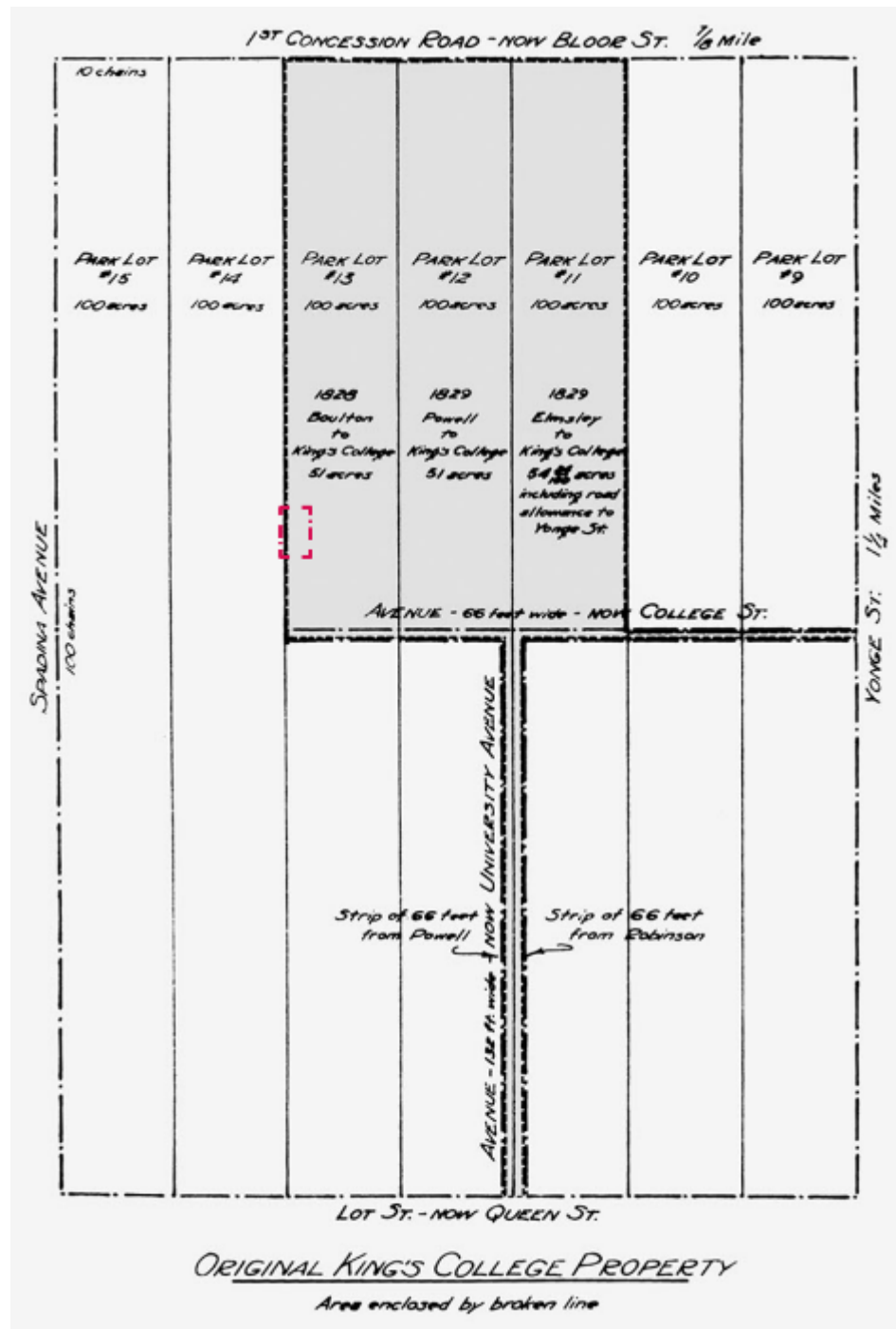
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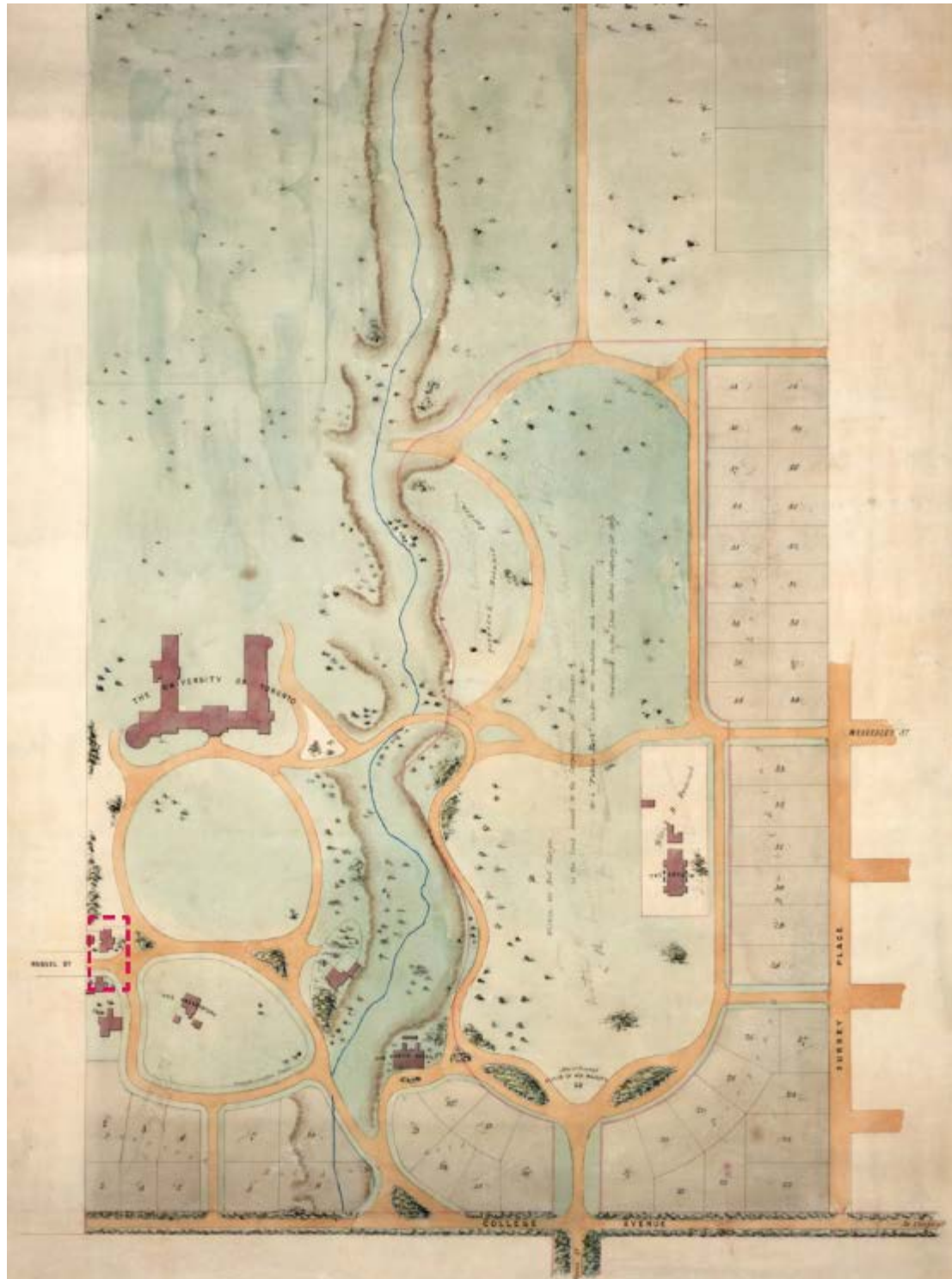
Select Historical Visual Resources



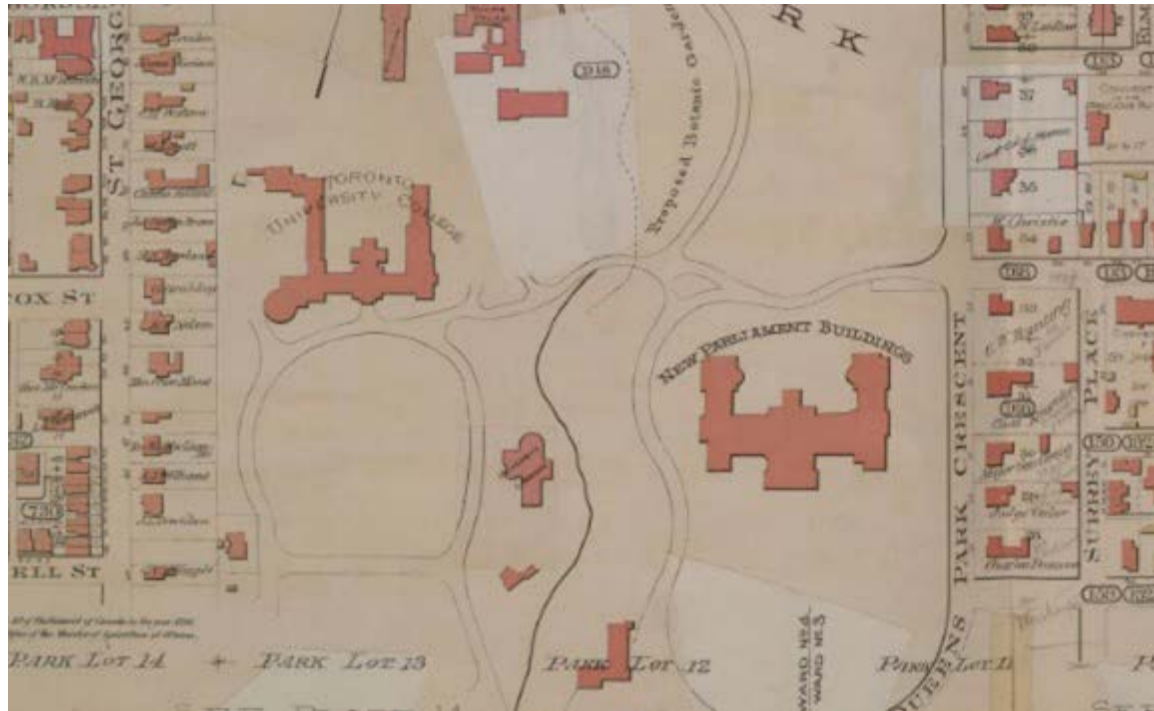
1828 land assembly for King's College showing the approximate location of Simcoe Hall (dashed red line) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



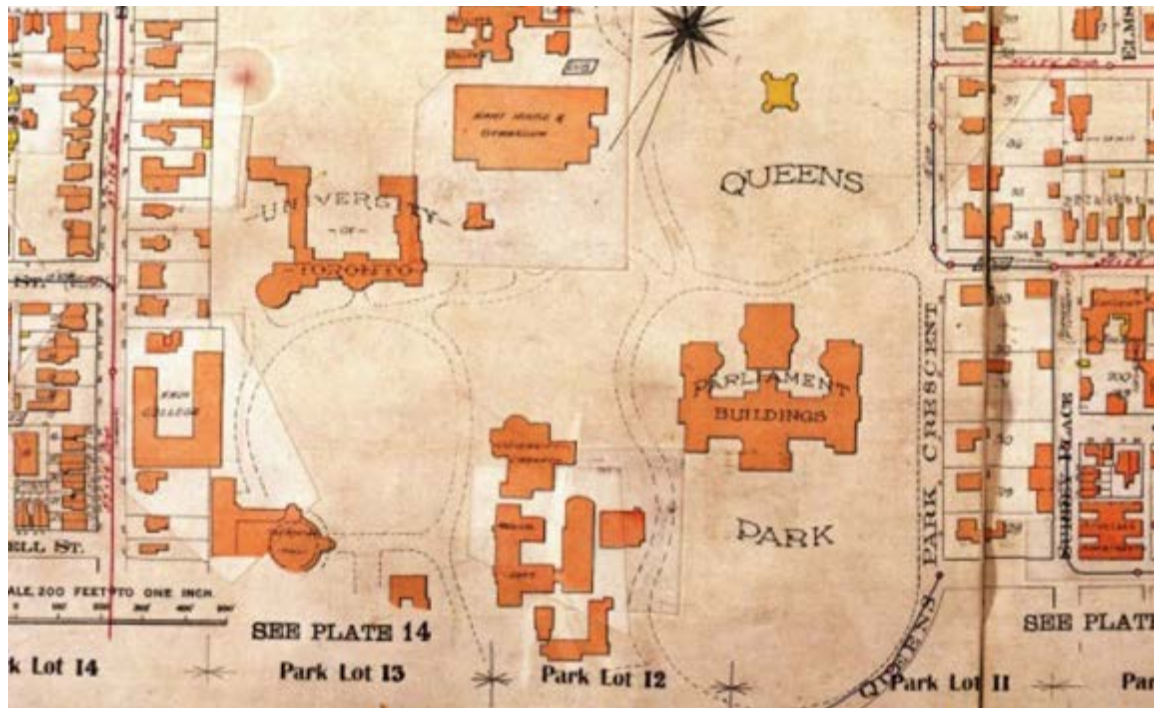
1842 Cane Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, showing the approximate location of Simcoe Hall (dashed red line) (Source: Toronto Public Library).



1850 map of Queen's Park and the University of Toronto, showing the approximate location of Simcoe Hall (dashed red line) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



1903 Goad's Fire Insurance Map showing the approximate location of Simcoe Hall (dashed red line) (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects).



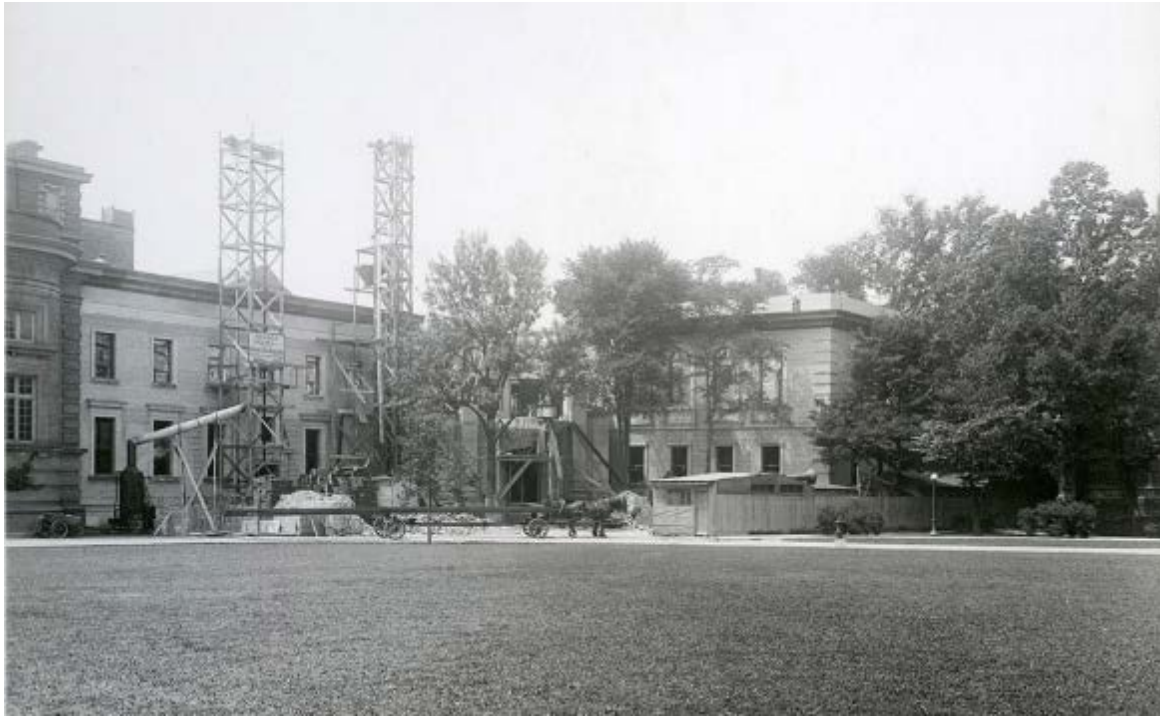
1924 Goad's Fire Insurance Map showing the location of Simcoe Hall immediately adjacent to Convocation Hall (dashed red line) (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects).



Initial site preparation during the construction of Simcoe Hall (c. April 1923). The northernmost apse of Convocation Hall is visible at far left (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



View of the west elevation of Simcoe Hall under construction in May 1923 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Northeast elevation of Simcoe Hall under construction in June 1923. The new infill wing adjoining Convocation Hall is nearly complete and visible centre left (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Northeast elevation, including primary entrance, during construction in October 1923 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



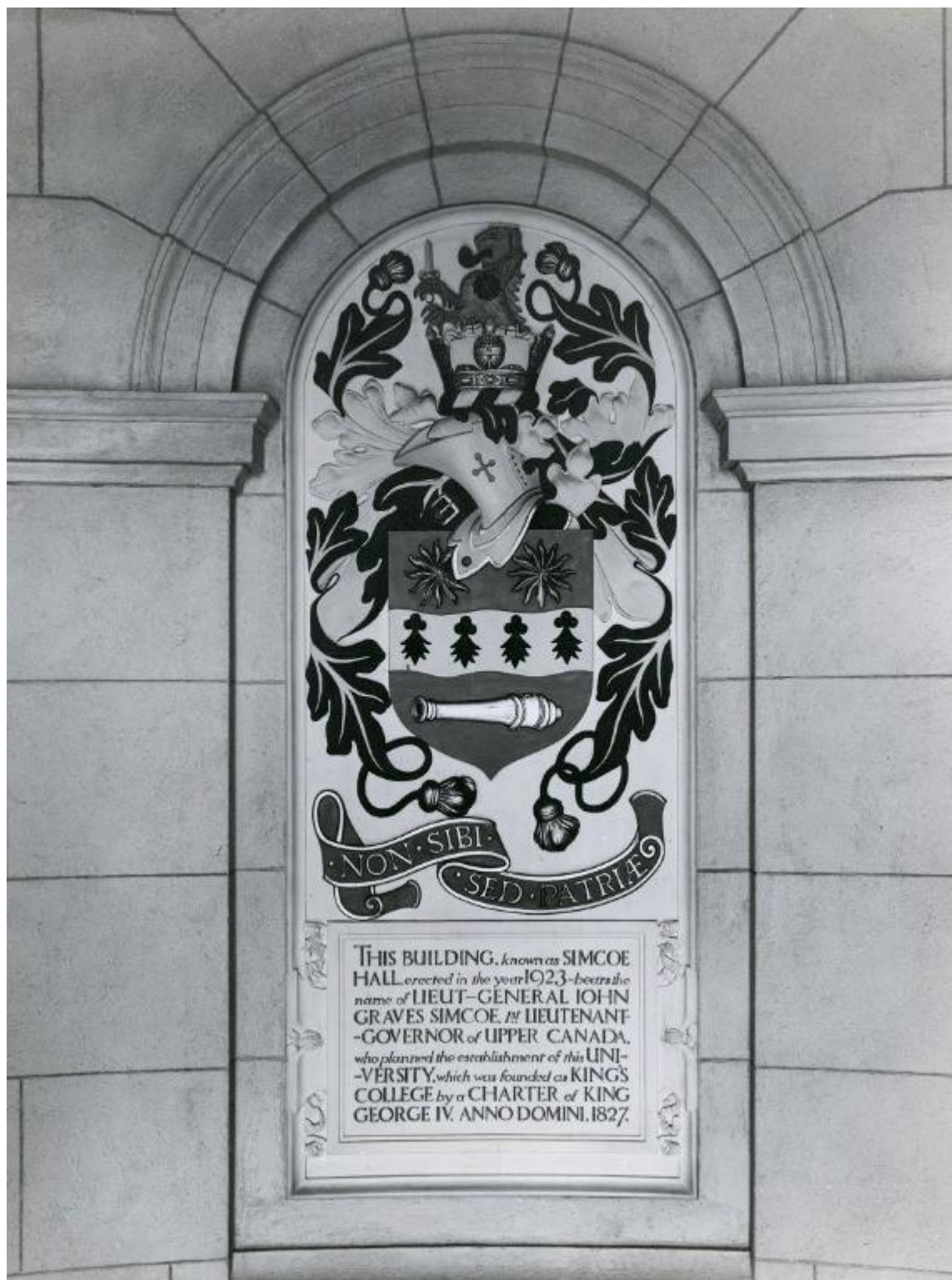
The north and east elevations shown completed in November 1923 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



South and west elevations of Simcoe Hall and the Superintendent's Office (centre) photographed in 1927. The weathered brick structure to the right is the multi-purpose hall addition to Convocation Hall (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Primary entrance on the northeast elevation, photographed 1933 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



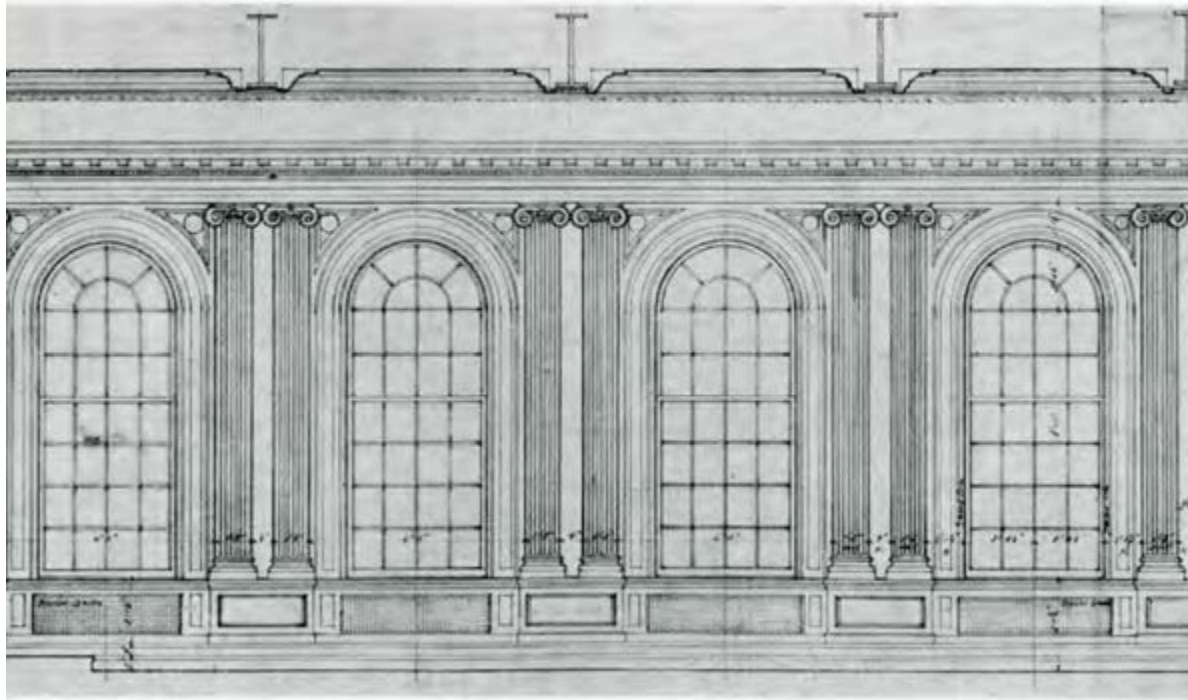
A stylized version of the Simcoe family crest installed in the first-floor rotunda at the primary entrance (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Main stairway and first-floor foyer space (1924) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



First-floor corridor space, photographed 1924 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Darling & Pearson drawing of the west elevation of the interior of the Council Chamber showing millwork detailing (c. 1922) (Source: JRAIC)



Interior of Council Chamber (or Senate Chamber), photographed in 1924 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



A meeting of the Educational Congress in the Council Chamber of Simcoe Hall (c. 1926) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



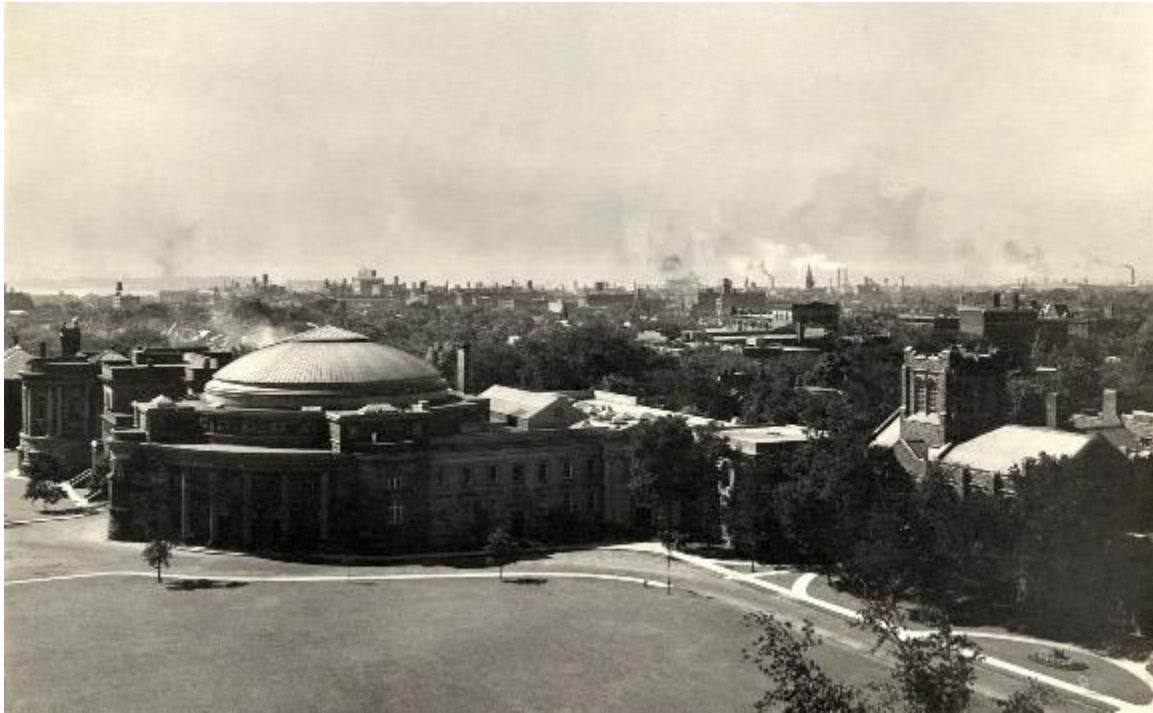
Interior of the Chair's Boardroom, photographed shortly after completion in 1924 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



First-floor Registrar's Office, photographed 1924 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



University President Claude Bissell presenting a diorama of the university with proposed west campus expansion. Photographed in the Chair's Boardroom c. 1959 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Aerial view of the southwest portion of King's College Circle, showing Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall. Photographed c. 1925 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Convocation procession from the steps of Simcoe Hall (c. 1925) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Posters placed in the windows of the Council Chamber by students protesting the exclusion of undergraduates from the proposed Social Sciences and Humanities Library (1972) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Students occupying the Council Chamber during the “Open the Stacks” protest against the exclusion of undergraduates from the proposed Social Sciences and Humanities Library (1972) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).

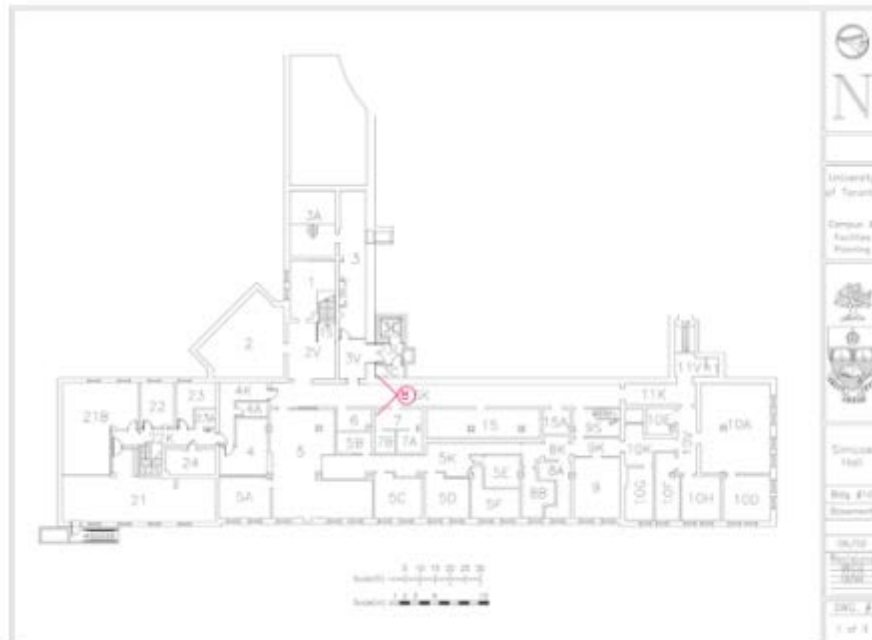


View of the west elevation of Simcoe Hall prior to the construction of the Myhal Centre and the replacement of the 1972 two-storey egress structure with an elevated bridgeway linking Simcoe Hall with the Myhal Centre. Photographed c. 1990 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).

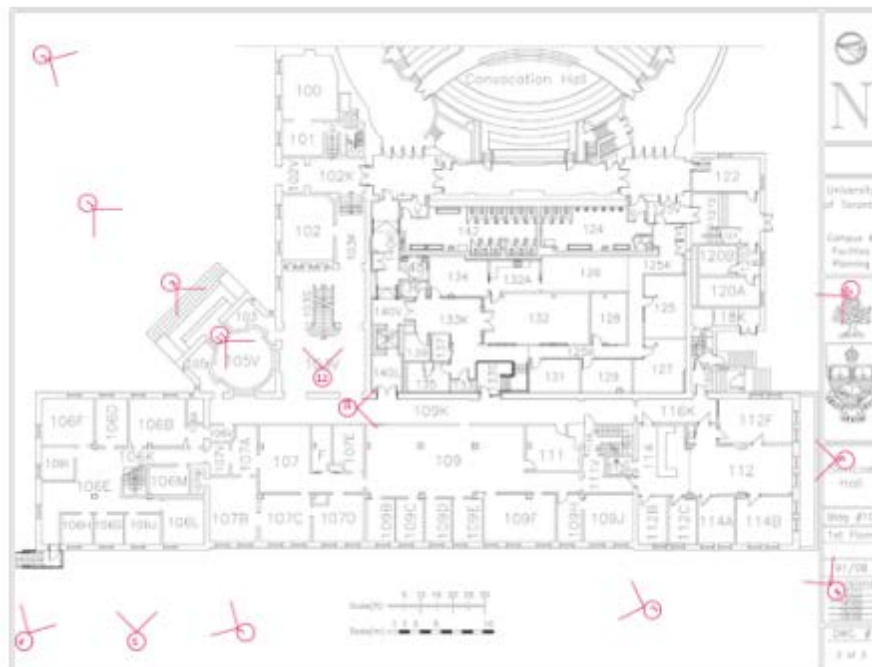
Appendix 2

Select Contemporary Visual Resources

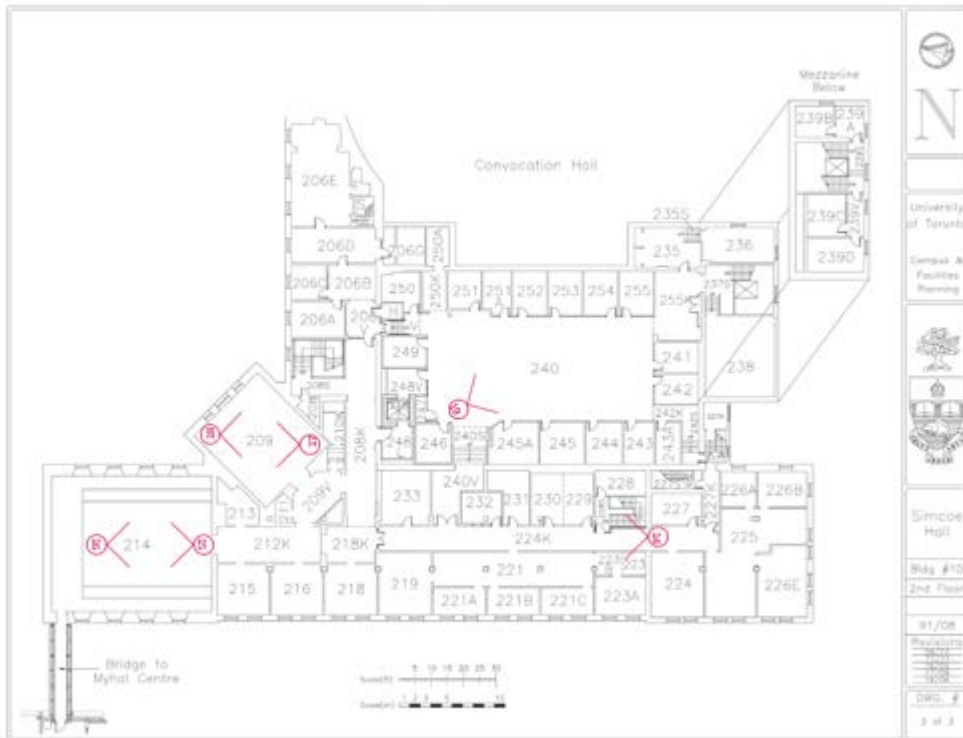
Existing Floor Plans and Photograph Location Keys



Basement



First Floor



Second Floor



Northeast elevation of Simcoe Hall showing primary entrance (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



North elevation of infill wing (centre) and northeast elevation of Simcoe Hall (right), showing the relationship with Convocation Hall (left) (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Detail view of masonry carvings on the principal elevation of Simcoe Hall (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



North (left) and west (right) elevations of Simcoe Hall showing the bridgeway connecting Simcoe Hall to the Myhal Centre (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Northern portion of the west elevation of Simcoe Hall. The rounded arch window openings are those of the second- floor Council Chamber (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Another view of the northern portion of the west elevation and its relationship with the adjacent Myhal Centre (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Central portion of the west elevation (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



South elevation of Simcoe Hall as it fronts Galbraith Road (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Another view of the south elevation of Simcoe Hall (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



South and east elevations of Simcoe Hall and their relationship to Galbraith Road (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of the rotunda at the primary entrance (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



The Romanesque arcade in the entrance foyer and the primary staircase communicating with the administrative offices and governance rooms on the second floor (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative view of a first-floor corridor space (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative view of a second-floor corridor space (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of the Council Chamber looking north. The entrance to the bridgeway to the Myhal Centre is visible in the far left corner (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of the Council Chamber looking south (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of the Chair's Boardroom looking north. The Palladian windows are those of the primary (northeast) elevation (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of the Chair's Boardroom looking south (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative office space on the second floor of Simcoe Hall. The skylight aperture and arched ribs are remnants of a 1909 utilitarian addition to Convocation Hall (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative basement corridor space (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
CONVOCATION HALL
31 KING'S COLLEGE CIRCLE

ATTACHMENT 5

Convocation Hall: 31 King's College Circle
Supporting Materials for Part IV Designation Report

Prepared by ERA Architects (GS/ SH/ HC/ BN)

October 23, 2025

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Property Location and Description

The property is municipally known as 31 King's College Circle and is located on the south side of King's College Circle and at the northwest terminus of King's College Road (the "Property").

The Property contains the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall, a three-storey rotunda structure designed in Beaux Arts style and constructed between 1904 and 1907. The building contains the namesake Convocation Hall, a large circular auditorium that is used for ceremonial, instructional, and public functions. The Property is bounded to the north by the open space of the front campus, to the west by Simcoe Hall, to which it is physically adjoined, to the south by Galbraith Road, and to the east by King's College Road.

The surrounding context includes a mixture of building types associated with institutional uses within the University of Toronto St. George Campus.

The Property was listed on the City of Toronto Heritage Register on June 20, 1973, with the following description: "Convocation Hall: 1907; Darling and Pearson – identified for convenience purposes as 31 King's College Circle - adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973."

Policy Context

Provincial Plans and Policies

As a post-secondary institution in Ontario, the University of Toronto is exempt from certain Planning Act provisions. However, the Ontario Heritage Act ("OHA") remains fully applicable and, as such, the following assessment conforms to the OHA.

Under the OHA, municipal governments are required to keep a current register of properties that are of cultural heritage value or interest. Registers are official lists of all properties that have been designated either individually or within a heritage conservation district. Since 2005, municipalities also have the authority to list properties of potential cultural heritage value or interest on their register that have not been designated.

Under Part IV of the OHA, municipalities may pass by-laws to designate individual properties that are of cultural heritage value. Property designated under Part IV must be added to the register with a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the property's heritage attributes. Designation provides a means of ensuring that alterations to properties are carried out in a manner that sustains or enhances cultural heritage value. It also provides for demolition control.

The criteria for determining a property's cultural heritage value or interest are defined under Ontario Regulation 9/06 ("O.Reg. 9/06"). These criteria, grouped according to categories of design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value, are a framework established to assist municipalities with the process of evaluating properties as candidates for protection under the OHA. According to provincial guidelines, the better

a property's characteristics under the criteria, the greater its cultural heritage value or interest, and the stronger the argument for its long-term protection under the OHA. O.Reg. 9/06 requires that, in order to be designated, a property must meet two or more of these criteria.

Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act) and Bill 200 (Homeowner Protection Act)

Through Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022) and Bill 200 (Homeowner Protection Act, 2024), the Province of Ontario amended the OHA. These amendments have implications for non-designated ("Listed Properties"), such as the Property, that are included on the City's Heritage Register. Listed Properties may now only remain on the Register for two years

Properties that were listed prior to January 1, 2023, must be either designated or removed from the Register by January 1, 2027. Once removed, Council may not relist a property for five years. Further, Council is prohibited from designating a property that is subject to specified Planning Act applications once the Clerk has provided notice that the City has received a complete application.

Draft Statement of Significance

Description of Property

Convocation Hall is a three-storey rotunda form structure constructed in the Beaux-Arts style. The design is characterized by a repetition of circular and semicircular design elements which fulfil practical acoustic requirements and have symbolic meaning. The building is symmetrical along a central axis and adjoins Simcoe Hall (1924) to the west. Along the north, east, and south elevations, three semi-circular apses are separated by a pair of two-storey entrance loggias with ionic colonnades. The third floor is set back behind a heavy entablature and supports a wide, shallow copper dome with vertical ribbing and a glazed skylight. The building exterior is primarily buff-coloured brick, and the columns, entablature, and trim at doors and windows are stone. The brick is rusticated at the first floor and portions of the third floor, and rusticated brick pilasters bookend the apses. Each loggia includes five entries with wooden double doors. Three of the doors centred on each side have arched door hoods. The loggias also include four-over-four wood sash windows at the second storey, while the apses hold multi-pane wood sash windows with prominent surrounds. The third storey features roundel windows within scrolled stone surrounds, as well as additional relief sculptural ornamentation.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Convocation Hall has considerable design, associative, and contextual significance.

Designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson, Convocation Hall was completed in 1907 and represented a significant expansion of the University's assembly space. Constructed on a rotunda-form and in the Beaux-Arts style, the structure was intended by Darling and Pearson to form the central node of a revised axial plan for the St. George Campus that was to be anchored at the intersection of King's College Circle and King's College Road. The circular form of the auditorium space and semi-circular form of the galleries satisfied acoustic requirements, conveyed symbolic importance as an egalitarian gathering space, and established the design principle for the interior and exterior configuration of the building. The building's Classical detailing represented an Edwardian shift for the University's architectural program under the leadership of University Architect, Frank Darling.

Funds for the construction of Convocation Hall were raised by the University's Alumni Association, who sought to build a hall in memory of alumni who had perished in the Fenian raids and the Boer War. Since its completion in 1907, the building has remained in constant use both for convocation, institutional, and is therefore deeply embedded within the institutional history of the University of Toronto.

Convocation Hall is a highly recognizable building that occupies a prominent site at the southern end of King's College Circle. Its copper dome and half-round Beaux-Arts façade are visible from many vantages within the historic park-like setting, as well as on approach from King's College Road.

Heritage Attributes

Attributes that Convey Design or Physical Value:

Exterior Attributes:

- The structure's rotunda form with shallow dome and composition of circular and semi-circular design elements, including colonnaded entrance loggias and the three apses arranged symmetrically around a central axis
- The pair of two-storey entrance loggias with ionic colonnades, with door and window openings trimmed with limestone
- The limestone entablature below the third-storey
- The third-floor roundel windows within scrolled stone surrounds;
- The shallow copper dome roof and large glazed skylight
- The building's brick construction with limestone embellishments, including the masonry carvings of the loggia columns, the limestone entablature, and the limestone window surrounds

Interior Attributes:

- The circular auditorium space, including semi-circular gallery balconies at the second- and third-storeys
- The circular coloured glass laylight comprising the apex of the domed ceiling

Attributes that Convey Contextual Value:

- The three-storey height of the structure that, together with the adjoined Simcoe Hall, bound the southwest portion of King's College Circle
- The prominent location at the northwest terminus of King's College Road, where it intersects with King's College Circle, establishing a gateway relationship to the front campus

Evaluation Against O.Reg. 9/06

The Property has been evaluated against O.Reg. 9/06, "Criteria For Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest" under the OHA, to determine its potential for designation under Part IV of the OHA. The evaluation found that the Property meets multiple criteria across design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value, as summarized in the tables on the following pages.

Criteria Relating to Design or Physical Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS
1) The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	Y	The Property has design and physical value as a unique example of a rotunda-form structure within Toronto, and as a representative example of the Beaux-Arts style on the University of Toronto Campus.
2) The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	Y	The Property has design and physical value through the skillful execution of its carved masonry details on all exterior elevations and the interior glass laylight at the apex of the domed ceiling.
3) The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N	Convocation Hall was constructed using methods common at the time. The Property is therefore not considered to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

Criteria Relating to Historical or Associative Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS
4) The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	Y	The Property has significant associative value through its historic and ongoing use as a ceremonial gathering space for the University of Toronto, as well as a space for instructional and public events. The Property also has value through its association with the University's Alumni Association's fundraising efforts to commemorate alumni who had perished in the Fenian raids and the Boer War Convocation Hall.
5) The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	N	While all buildings on the University of Toronto St. George Campus have the potential to provide valuable insights into the institutional and community history of the University, research does not indicate that the Property holds significant individual value in its potential to yield an understanding of a community or culture.
6) The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	Y	The Property has value through its association with the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling & Pearson. The firm contributed a number of significant buildings to the University campus and surrounding area, including the Sanford Fleming Building (1907), the Thermodynamics Building, (1909), the Toronto General Hospital (1912), the Roseburgh Building (1920), and Simcoe Hall (1924).

Criteria Relating to Contextual Value

CRITERION	Y/N	COMMENTS
7) The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Y	The Property has contextual value in defining a gateway to King's College Circle from King's College Road. Through this role it both defines and maintains the institutional character of the front campus.
8) The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Y	The Property represents the early 20th century Edwardian expansion of the University campus under the guidance of University Architect, Frank Darling. As such, it is visually and historically linked to other properties that comprised this expansion scheme, including the Sanford Fleming Building (1907) and Simcoe Hall (1924). The Property also provides a Beaux-Arts architectural contribution to the gallery of significant architectural styles represented on King's College Circle, which span from Norman Romanesque Revival (University College) through neo-classicism (Simcoe Hall) and Beaux-Arts (Convocation Hall), to mid-century modernism (Medical Sciences Building), and which represent the historical and institutional development of the University of Toronto.
9) The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	Y	Convocation Hall occupies a prominent site at the south of King's College Circle and the northwestern terminus of King's College Road. Its copper dome and half- round Beaux-Arts façade are visible from many vantage points throughout front campus, as well as on approach from King's College Road. The Property is therefore considered to be a landmark.

Historical Background Information

Site Context

The land occupied by the St. George Campus is the byproduct of the original 1828 land assembly for King's College. Totalling 150 acres, it comprised the northern portions of Park Lots # 11, 12 and 13 with allowances for road access to Yonge Street in the east and Queen Street in the south. These university-owned roads would later become College Street and University Avenue. Following the dissolution of King's College, the University intended to build on the land occupied by the defunct college, but the Province, having expropriated the land in 1853 for the site of a new legislature, refused to return the property, thereby pushing the site of the university westward.

At the time that the first university building, University College, was constructed in 1859, the surrounding area was largely rural. Although the boundaries of the City of Toronto extended north to Bloor Street, there was only sparse development on the land adjacent to the University of Toronto. The absence of surrounding development, a marked contrast with present conditions, was accompanied by a varied topography. Although the land directly to the south, west and north was flat, access to the university lands from the east and south was influenced by Taddle Creek and its ravine. Allowance for the creek created a treed, meandering approach to campus that complemented the bucolic nature of the siting of the early university buildings. The creek was dammed in 1859 to create a small pond known as McCaul's Pond. Sewage and industrial waste discharged upstream by residents of the Village of Yorkville polluted the pond, leading to its removal in 1879. Taddle Creek was buried soon afterwards, redirected into the sewer system in 1884.

As the university expanded in the late nineteenth century, growth was directed to the south of University College, framing what would later become King's College Road. This institutional expansion included Convocation Hall among an array of buildings constructed to the southeast and southwest of University College, and which created a monumental axis that framed University College.

As the university expanded in the early twentieth century, development largely concentrated east of St. George Street. However, a significant increase in enrollment beginning in the 1950's prompted the campus's westward expansion toward Spadina Avenue. Discussion around campus expansion began as early as 1948, when the Board of Governors established a Planning Committee. James Murray, an urban planner and member of the committee, created a guiding principle that it should take no longer than 10 minutes to walk from one part of the campus to another (the length of time between lectures). With Hart House as the central reference point, this time frame meant that Spadina Avenue would form the new western perimeter for the campus. By the early 1950s, a slow migration of university facilities west of St. George Street had already started, confirming the logic of further westward growth.

Design and Integrity

The need for a new university assembly space became a pressing concern after a fire destroyed the Convocation Hall in University College on February 14, 1890. Constructed in 1859, as part of the original programming of University College, the hall had already become insufficient for the university's needs by the time of its destruction. Because of a lack of space and funds, no plans were made to reinstate the hall in the post-fire reconstruction of University College, and the University resorted to ad hoc measures to stopgap the absence of a space sufficient for institution-wide ceremonial and teaching functions.

By the first years of the 20th century, however, the need for a multi-functional space became acute. The rapidly expanding university required a space suitable for convocation, as well as a multi-purpose space for teaching, lectures, and other institutional functions. The initial fundraising effort for Convocation Hall was led by the University's Alumni Association, whose members sought to construct an edifice in memory of alumni who perished in the Fenian raids and the Boer War. While the alumni association had initially planned to raise \$25,000, alterations to the initial design increased the budget considerably. Ultimately, the Alumni Association raised a total of \$50,000, which was matched and exceeded by the provincial government. Even with this considerable sum, the original limestone cladding proposed for the hall was changed to buff brick, and the interior was designed with minimal ornamentation to meet budgetary constraints.

The question of where to site the new hall also generated some controversy. The most desirable location was an assembly of lots along College Street, but with a greatly expanded cost anticipated for the structure, this option was deemed too expensive. The next most desirable location was at the southwest corner of King's College Circle, which presented its own challenges and opportunities. The siting and design of Convocation Hall at this location needed to be sensitive enough to not block views of University College from the south, but also monumental and distinct enough to frame a visual gateway to campus. The rotunda form of the structure with its shallow copper dome satisfied these campus planning requirements, while establishing a precedent for the axial and formal relationship of structures along King's College Road. The siting at this location also presented an opportunity to reorient circulation in the southern half of the campus, with the rotunda form of Convocation Hall functioning as a central gathering space and creating porous connectivity to the adjacent campus spaces.

The new building was designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling and Pearson and was constructed on a rotunda form in the Beaux-Arts style, with the building's Classical detailing represented an Edwardian shift for the University's architectural program under the leadership of Darling, who also held the position of University Architect. As Winterton notes, the inspiration for the rotunda form is likely to be found in British university campus planning principles, where prominently placed radial (or apsidal) buildings, like Radcliffe Camera (1749, Oxford) and Sheldonian Theatre (1669, Oxford), established strong axial relationships and functioned as ceremonial convoking spaces (Winterton, 132).

The design of Convocation Hall is characterized by a repetition of circular and semicircular design elements which reflect the form of the auditorium space, fulfil practical acoustic requirements, and have symbolic meaning. The building is symmetrical along a central axis, with three apses separated by a pair of two-storey entrance loggias with ionic colonnades. The third floor is set back behind a heavy entablature and supports a wide, shallow copper dome with vertical ribbing and a glazed skylight. The building exterior is primarily buff- coloured brick, and the columns, entablature, and trim at doors and windows are stone. The brick is rusticated at the first floor and portions of the third floor, and rusticated brick pilasters bookend the apses. The material palette that Darling and Pearson elected to use in Convocation Hall reflected the new, brighter classical mood for the campus, especially when the Physics Laboratory (1907) and the Thermodynamics Building (1909) were completed, all employing buff brick cladding.

The design of the building is apocryphally said to be inspired by the Sorbonne theatre in Paris. However, as Winterton argues, this influence is likely limited to its “volumetric subdivision” (Winterton, 132), if it has any relationship whatsoever. The overall form is more reminiscent of British neoclassical style and closely resembles architecture such as the Market Hall in Bridgwater, the monumental Picton Reading room library, and the Medical Institution in Liverpool. It has also been theorized that the circular shape of the auditorium space was representative of a unity that the University sought at a time when the future of its collegiate model was uncertain; and, to this end, Convocation Hall may be understood as symbolizing the “evolutionary, modern, unitary ideal” (Duffy, 2002).

The interior programming is dominated by the large circular auditorium, which currently accommodates approximately 1700 attendees in tiered seating arranged in a radial pattern about the centre. Semi-circular gallery balconies at the second- and third-storeys wrap around the perimeter of the auditorium space. A circular coloured glass laylight comprises the apex of the domed ceiling, providing natural illumination through the corresponding exterior skylight. A perimeter corridor and foyer space with terminating rotundas encircles the auditorium on the first floor, providing porous connections to the St. George Campus and emphasizing the buildings role as a central gathering space. Half-spiral staircases in each of the three entrance vestibules conform to the exterior form of the apses and connect the first- floor to the gallery balconies of the second- and third-floors.

Since its completion in 1907, Convocation Hall has remained in constant use for convocation ceremonies, teaching and public lectures, and other institutional and public functions. Through these events, the building has become deeply embedded within public memory and the institutional history of the University; and it has remained relatively intact since its construction. A large, utilitarian hall was added to the rear of the building in 1909 to extend its practical functions and served a variety of uses until it was subsumed into the adjacent Simcoe Hall in 1924. Beyond this exterior alteration, the interior of the building is largely intact from its original construction. The building underwent incremental upgrades and revitalizations throughout the 20th century, but it was not until 2007 that the first significant renovation was undertaken by ERA Architects. The scope of this work refreshed the ground- floor circulation corridor through repairs to the mosaic floor, the

installation of new wooden fixtures and seating, and repainting. Exterior skylights were also renewed at this time, keeping to their original form.

Architects

The architecture practice formed by Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Andrew Pearson (1867-1940) operated between 1895 and 1923, although the name was in use until Pearson retired in 1935. The practice became prominent at a time of economic and cultural expansion for Toronto. Its consistent and longstanding patronage by a network of influential Toronto industrialists and financiers contributed to its success as a leading early 20th century practice.

The firm is credited with designing over 300 buildings from St. Johns in the east and Victoria in the west, no other architectural firm matched this number of commissions during this period. Darling formed several partnerships during his long and successful career: MacDougall & Darling (1873-1874); Darling & Curry (1880-1890); Darling, Curry & Co. (1891); Darling, Curry, Sproatt & Pearson (1892); Darling, Sproatt & Pearson (1892-1895). His work with Pearson became a dual partnership in 1885 as Darling & Pearson. After Darling's death in 1923, Pearson would continue the practice under the name Darling & Pearson with staff person Jules Wegman (1865-1931) made full partner in 1924.

The designs by Darling & Pearson were primarily in the Classical tradition, although they built in the hybrid Romanesque style for their university projects. This demanded novel approaches to meet the demands of modern buildings. For example, the Dominion Bank Building (1 King Street West, 1914) and the Canadian Pacific Building (69 Yonge Street, 1913) were built as modern high rises and yet employed the Classical plinth, shaft, and crown arrangement, as well as Edwardian Baroque ornamentation.

Apart from their individual commissions, the practice was responsible for dozens of bank branches across Canada from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Victoria, British Columbia. In addition, the firm designed residences for many of Toronto's elites, including those who had commissioned them for their institutional and corporate buildings. Darling and Pearson's projects at the University of Toronto included important campus defining buildings and facilities, as well as a plan for Trinity College.

In addition to Convocation Hall, notable work by Darling & Pearson includes the Toronto General Hospital (200 Elizabeth Street, 1911), the Royal Ontario Museum (100 Queens Park, 1914), and the CPR's North Toronto Station (10 Scrivener Square, 1916), and Simcoe Hall (27 King's College Road, 1924).

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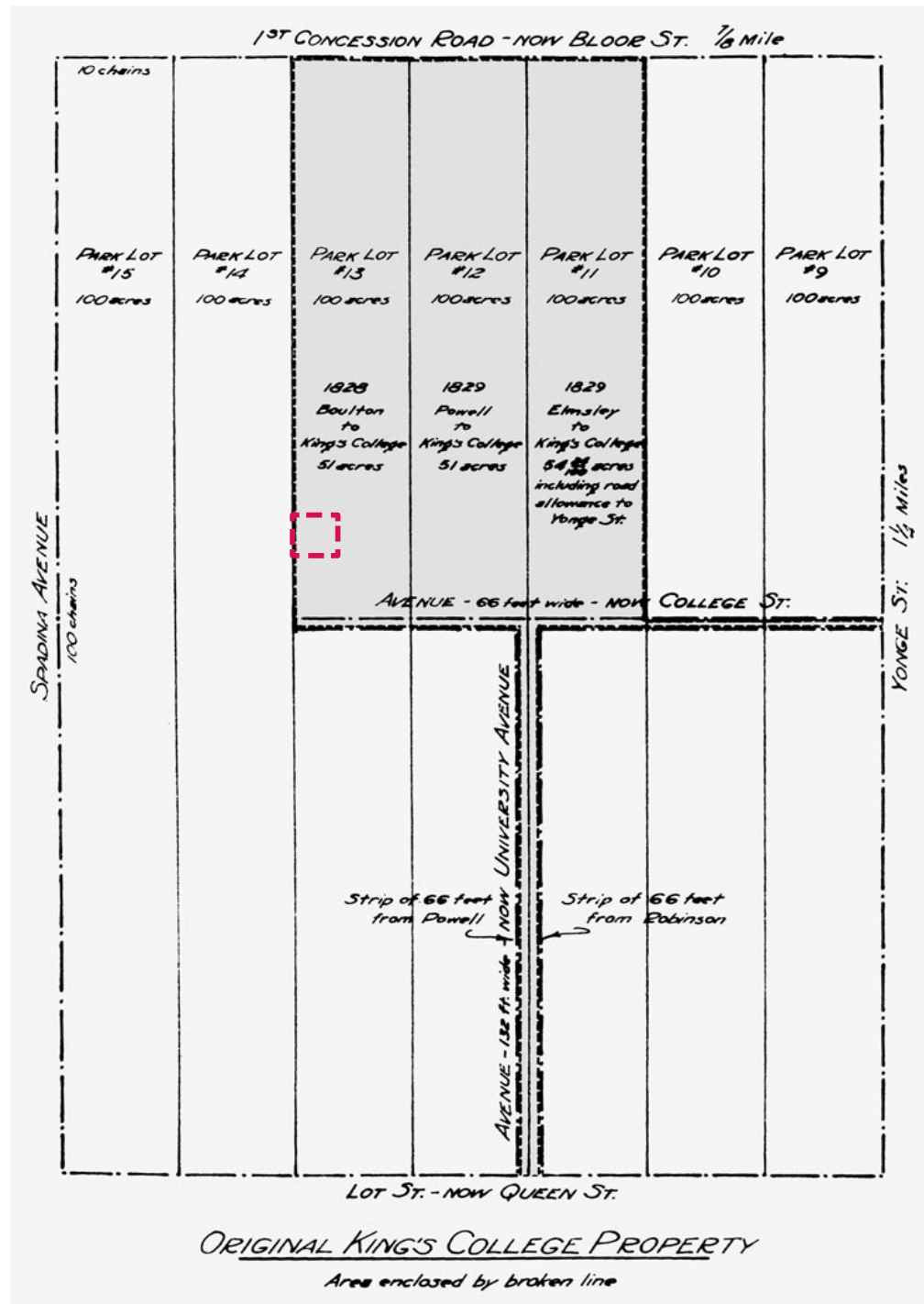
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Appendix 1

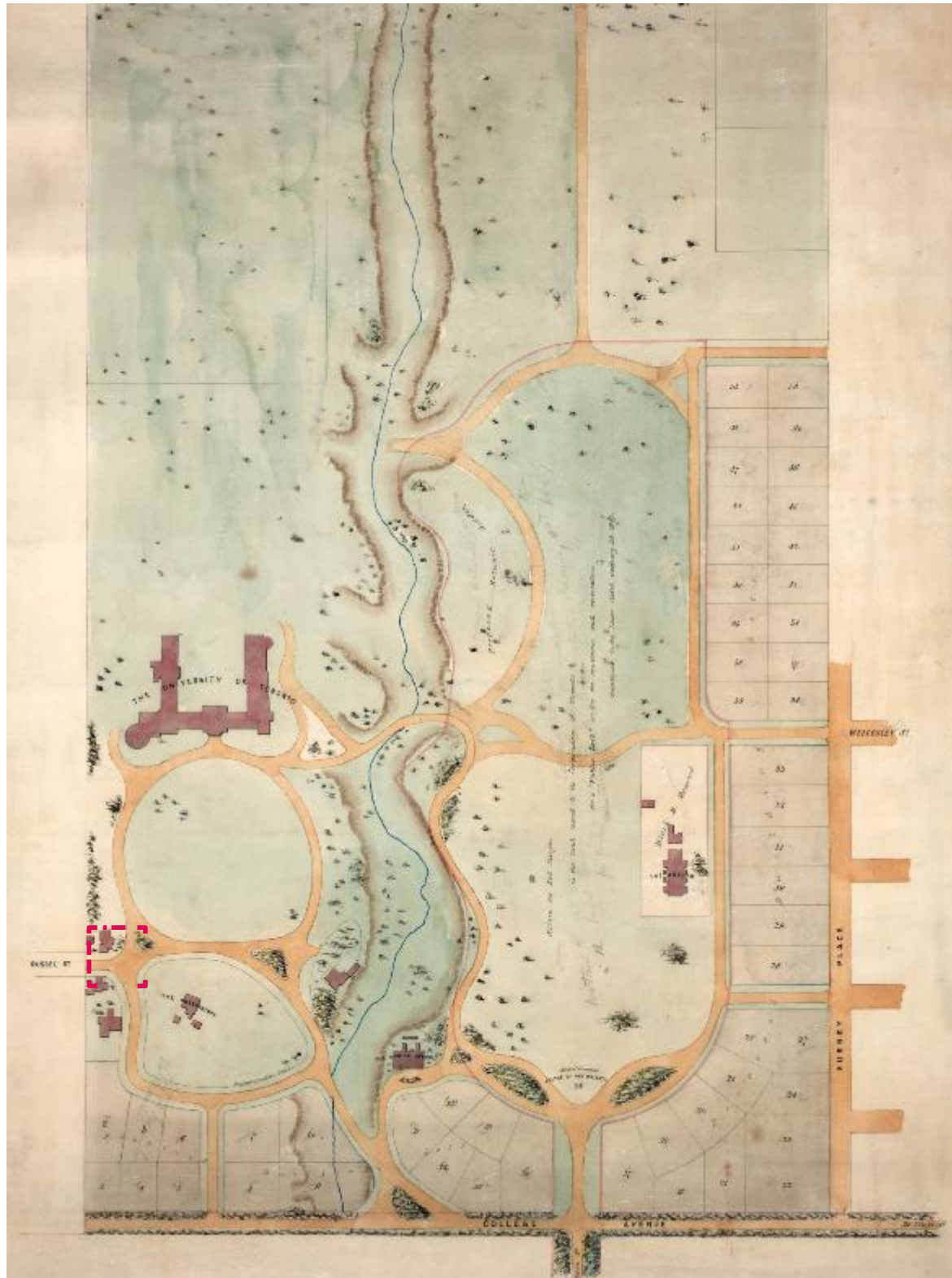
Select Historical Visual Resources



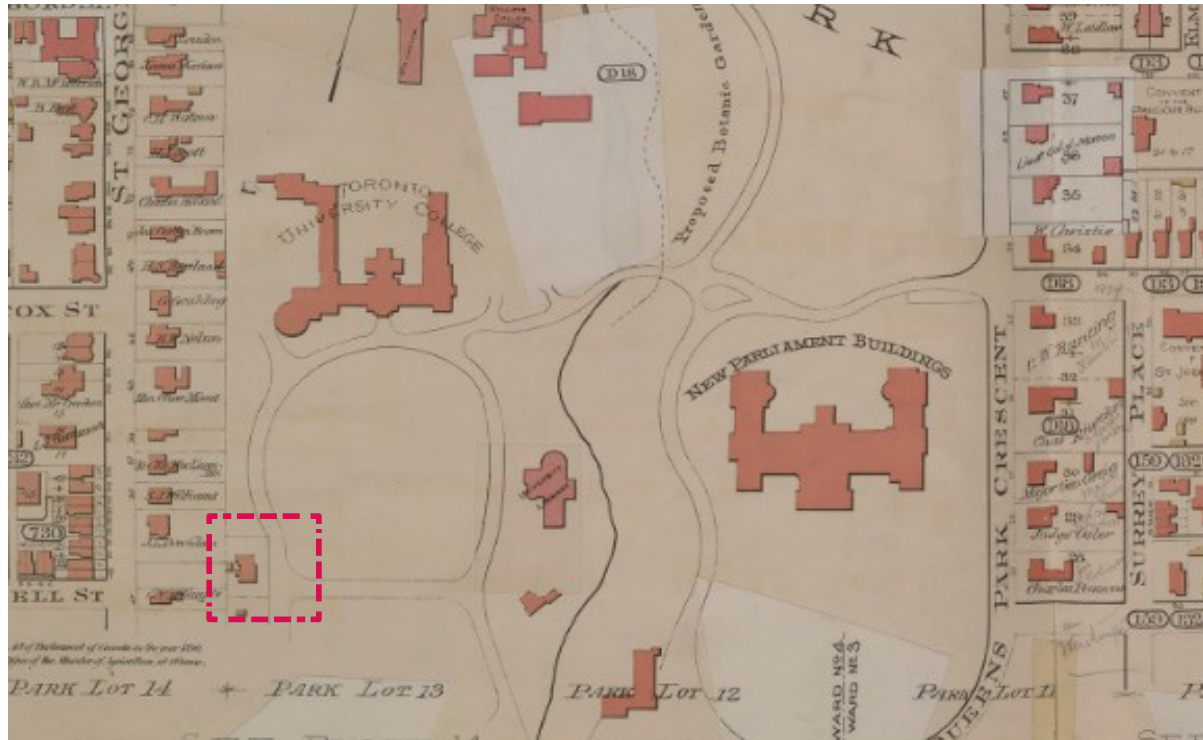
1828 land assembly for King's College showing the approximate location of Convocation Hall (dashed red line) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



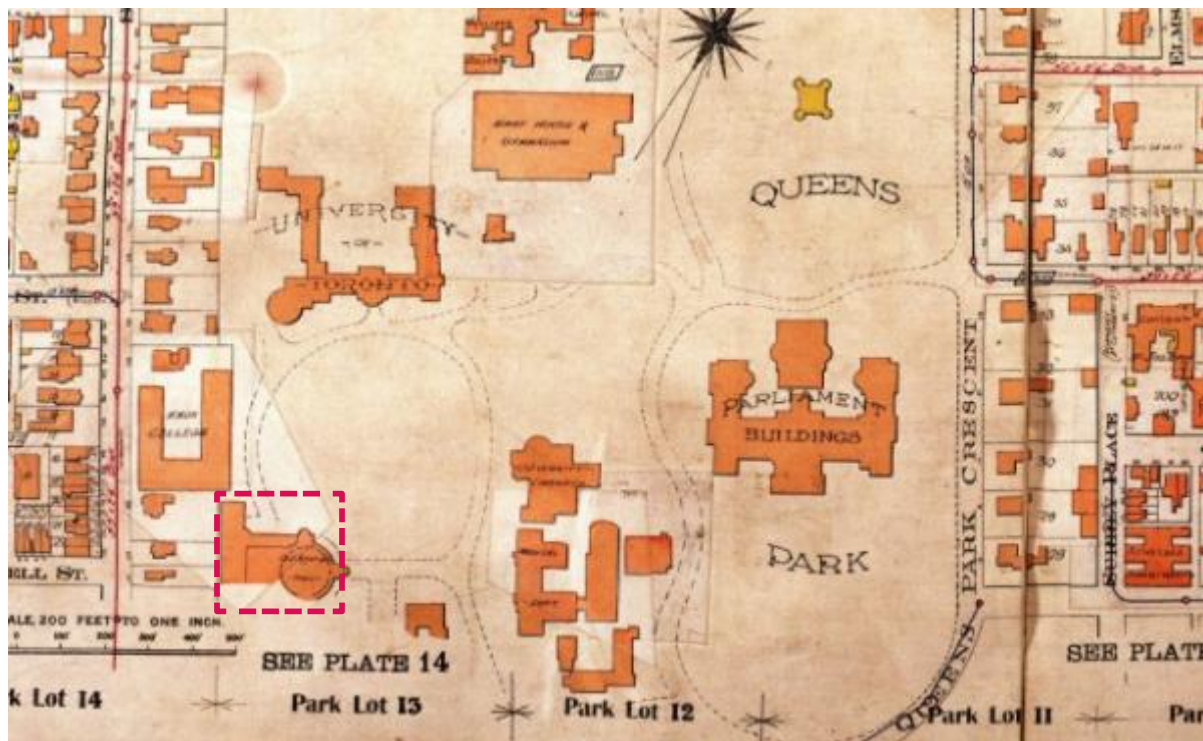
1842 Cane Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, showing the approximate location of Convocation Hall (dashed red line) (Source: Toronto Public Library).



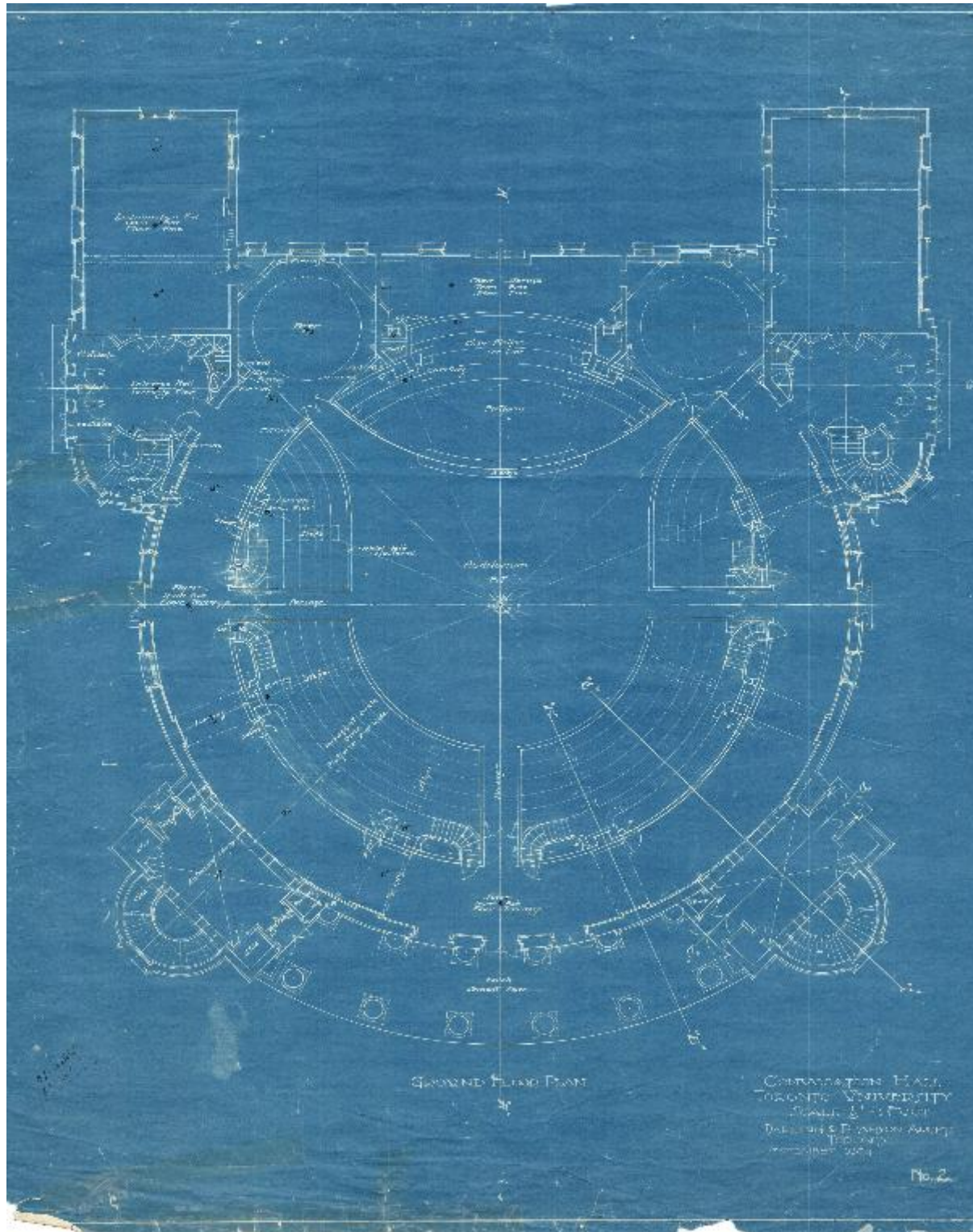
1850 map of Queen's Park and the University of Toronto, showing the approximate location of Convocation Hall (dashed red line) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



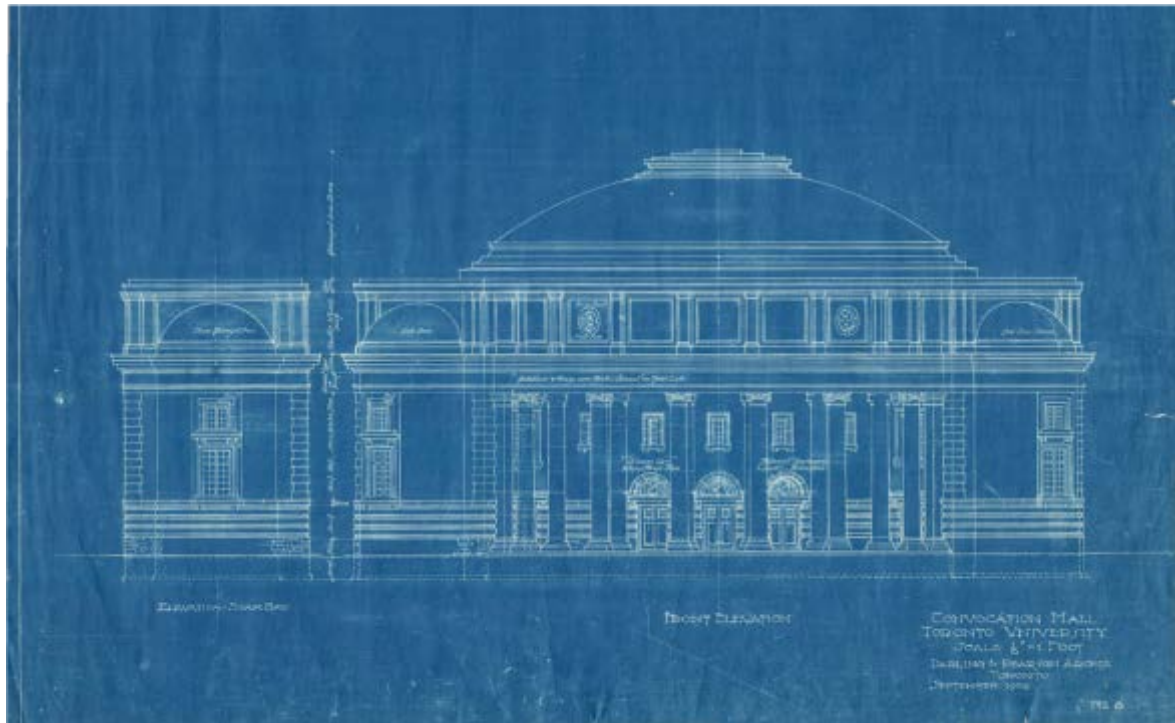
1903 Goad's Fire Insurance Map showing the approximate location of Convocation Hall (dashed red line) (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects).



1924 Goad's Fire Insurance Map showing the location of Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall (1924) (dashed red line) (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects).



Proposed ground floor plan of Convocation Hall, Darling and Pearson, 1904. Note the single loggia along the east elevation (bottom of page) in this early design (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



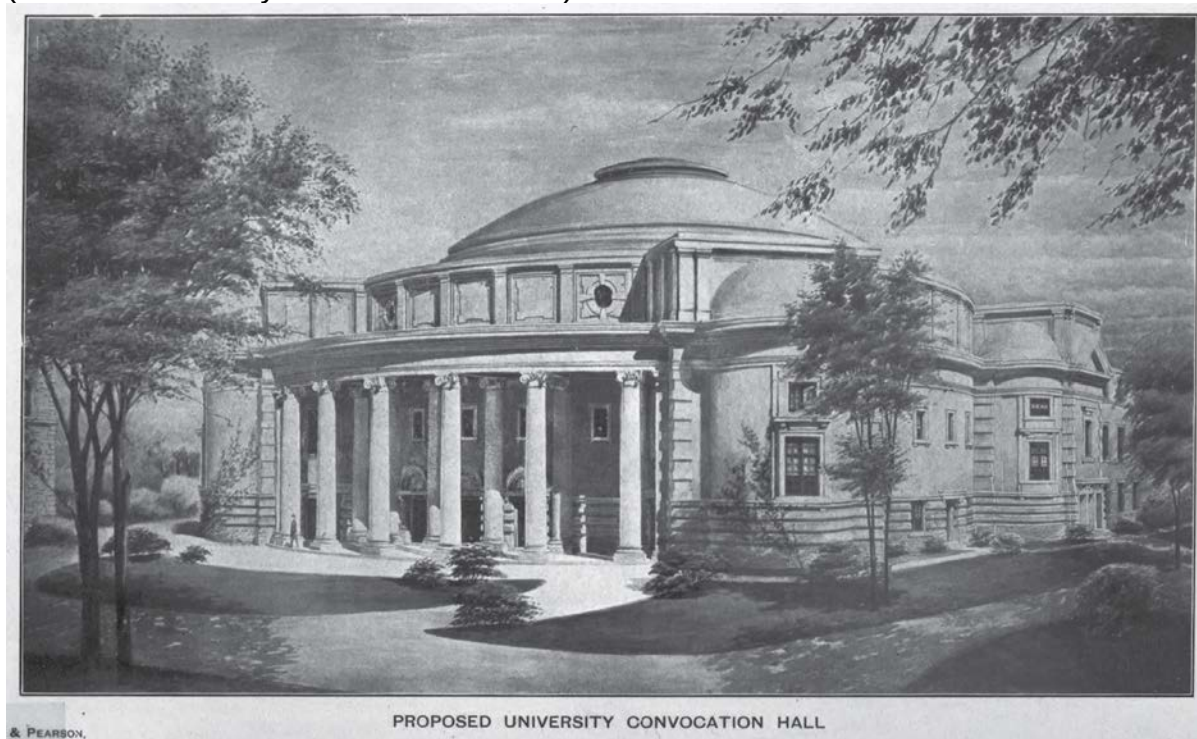
Proposed “Front Elevation”, or east elevation, of Convocation Hall, Darling and Pearson, 1904. The final design would incorporate a loggia along both the northeast and southeast elevations (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



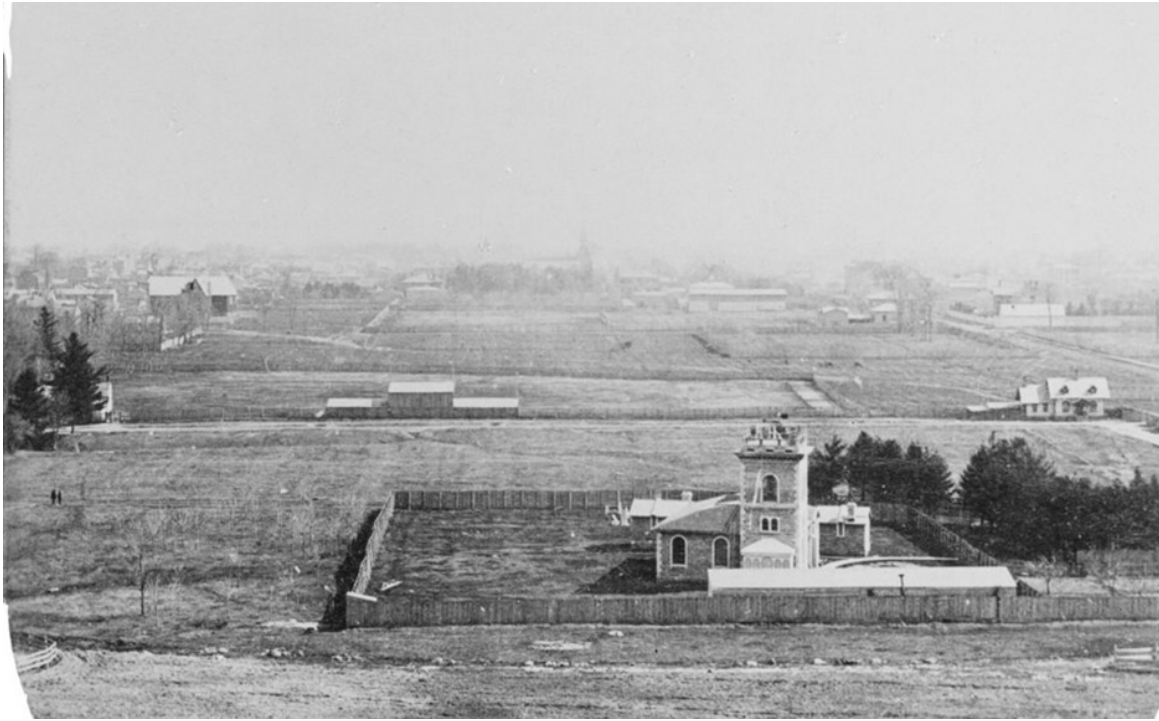
Proposed “Side Elevation”, or north elevation, of Convocation Hall, Darling and Pearson, 1904 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



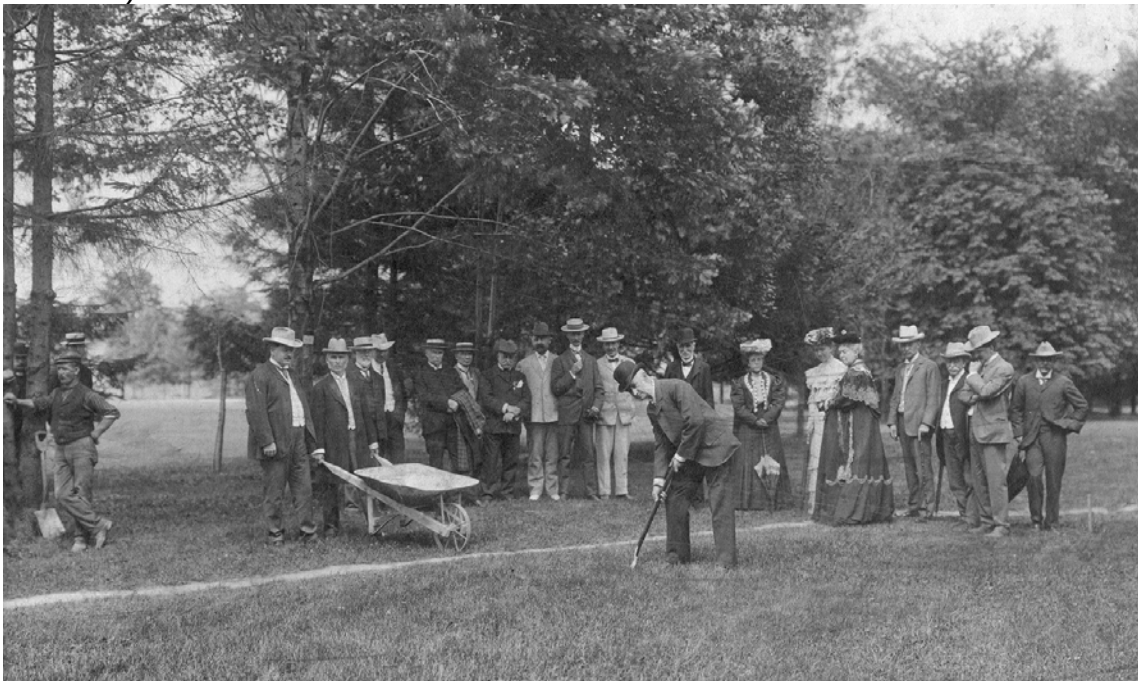
Proposed "Rear Elevation", or west elevation, of Convocation Hall, Darling and Pearson, 1904
 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



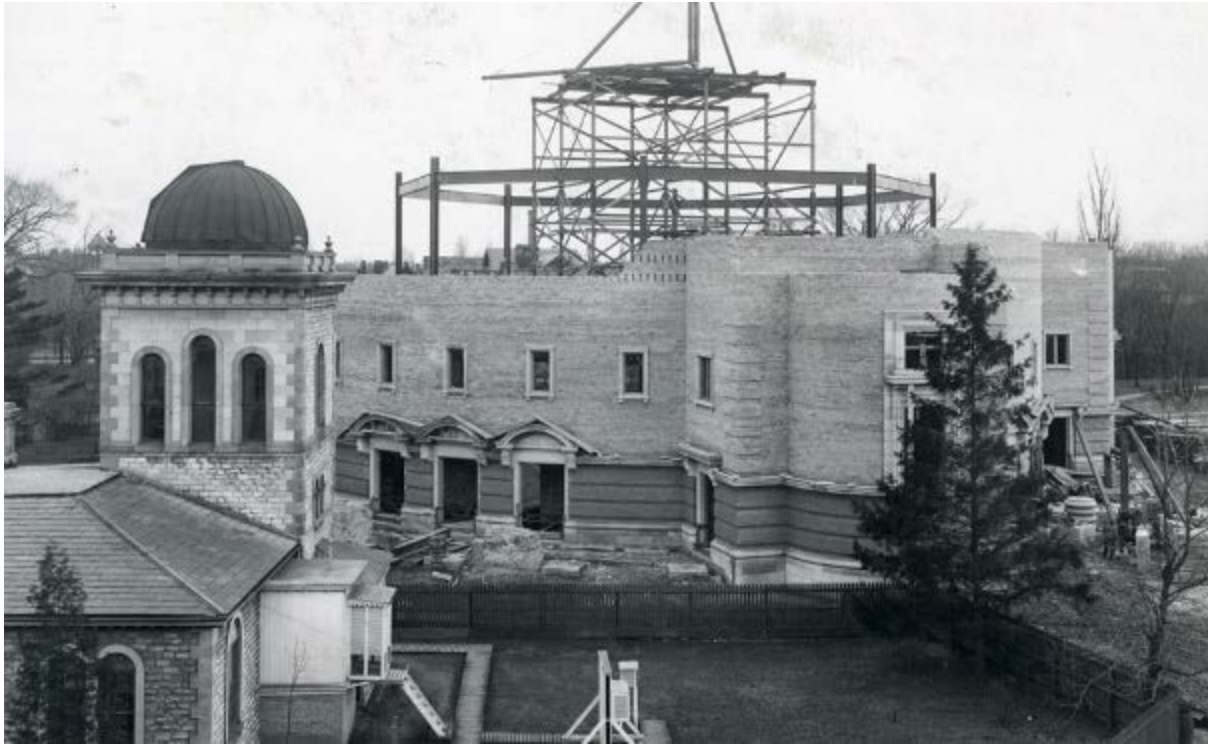
An early sketch of the proposed Convocation Hall (c. 1904), showing a single loggia along the east elevation (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



View looking south towards the Stewart (Dominion) Observatory from the roof of University College. Photographed by William Notman, 1859. Convocation Hall would be sited immediately to the west (right) of the observatory (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Sod turning ceremony for Convocation Hall (c. 1904). John Hoskin, Chair of the Board of Governors, is holding the shovel, while R. A. Reeve, president of the Alumni Association, is holding the wheelbarrow (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Convocation Hall under construction (c. 1905) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Convocation Hall shown shortly after completion in 1907; and the Stewart (Dominion) observatory shown shortly before its deconstruction and relocation (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



View of the eastern approach to Convocation Hall (c. 1907) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



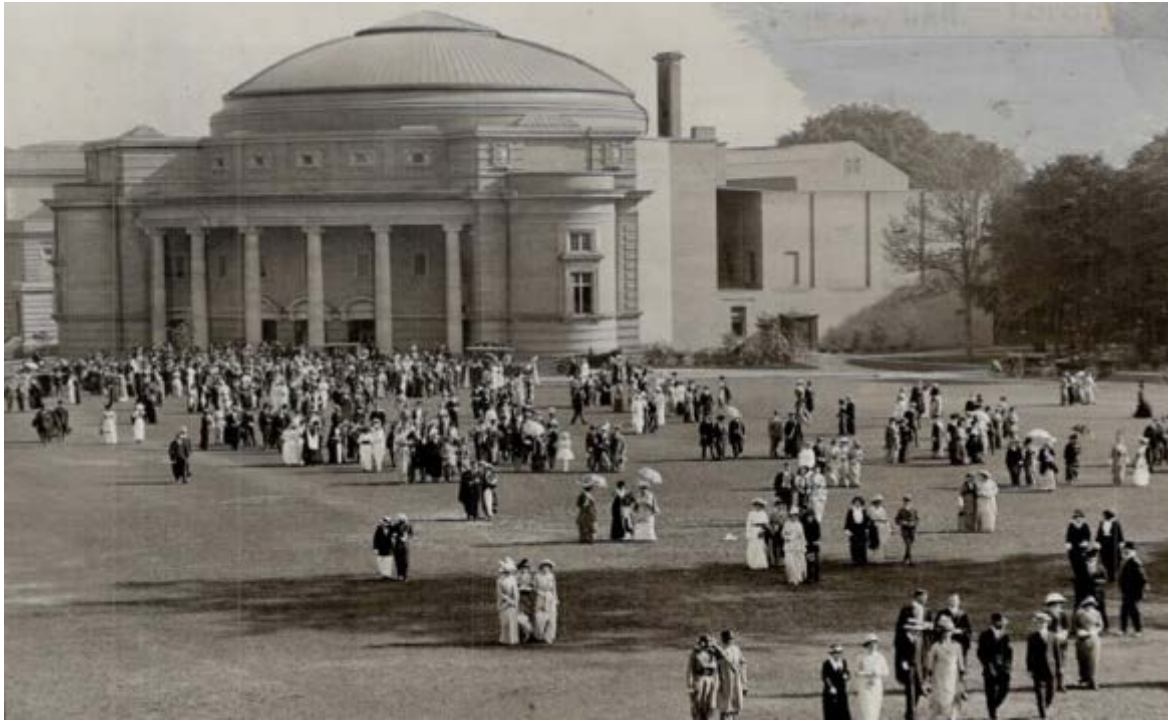
A sketch of Convocation Hall from the north by Owen Staples (c. 1930). By this time, Simcoe Hall (visible far right) had been constructed adjoining Convocation Hall (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



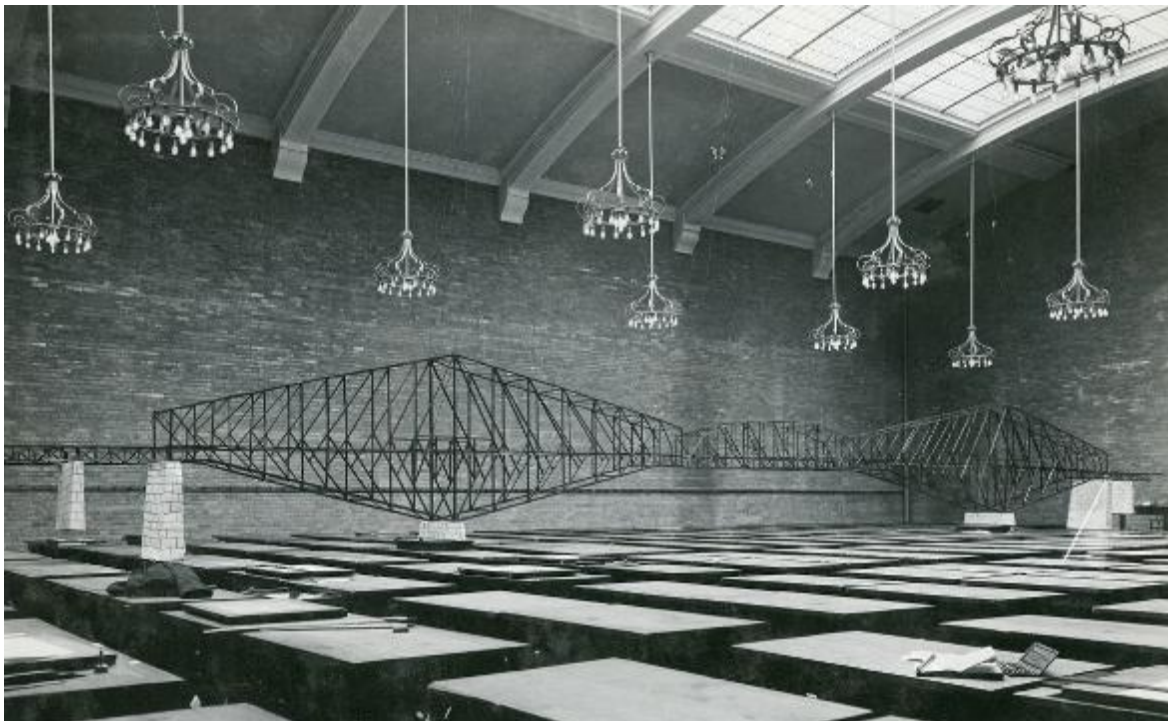
The interior of Convocation Hall prepared for an assembly of the National Council of Women (c. 1910), and before the installation of the pipe organ (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



The same view of the interior of Convocation Hall after the installation of the Casavant Brothers pipe organ in 1912 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



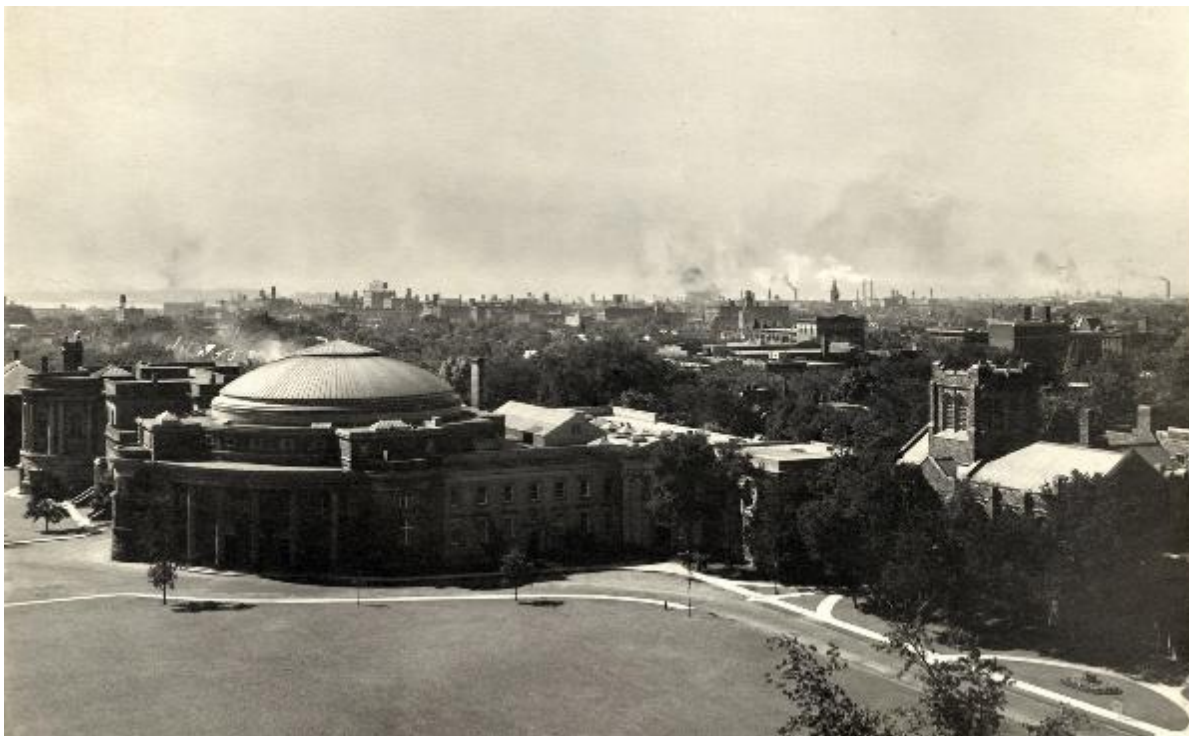
Convocation Hall photographed c. 1920, showing the utilitarian addition to the west housing the multi-purpose assembly hall (Source: Toronto Star Archives).



Interior of the multi-purpose assembly hall being used as an engineering drafting classroom and photographed shortly before it was subsumed into Simcoe Hall in 1924 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Convocation Hall in use during a graduation ceremony, June 1925 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Aerial view of the southwest portion of King's College Circle, showing Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall. Photographed c. 1925 (Source: University of Toronto Archives).



Interior of Convocation Hall being used as an assembly space for a March 1970 “Stop the Spadina Expressway” protest march (Source: University of Toronto Archives).

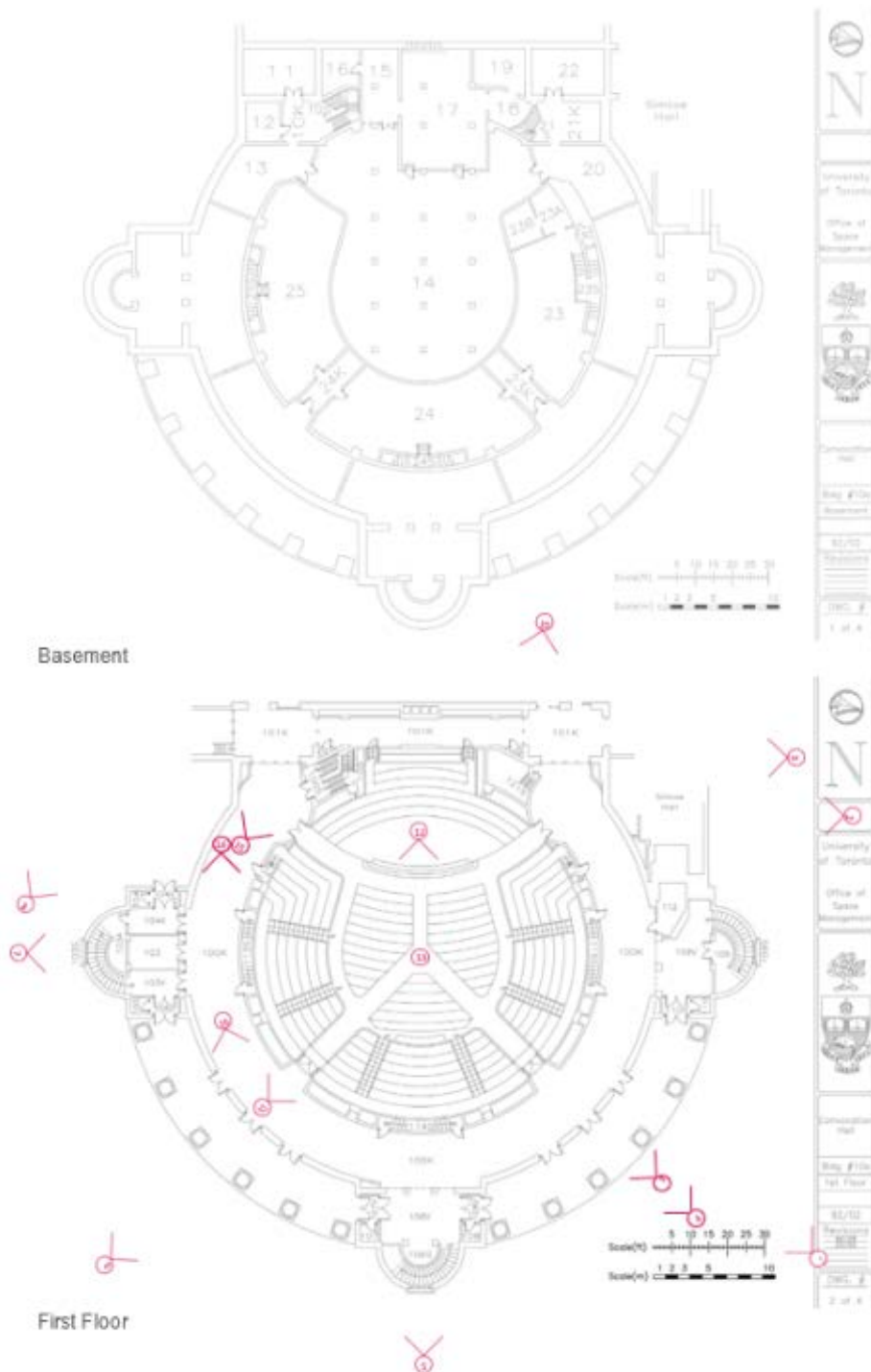


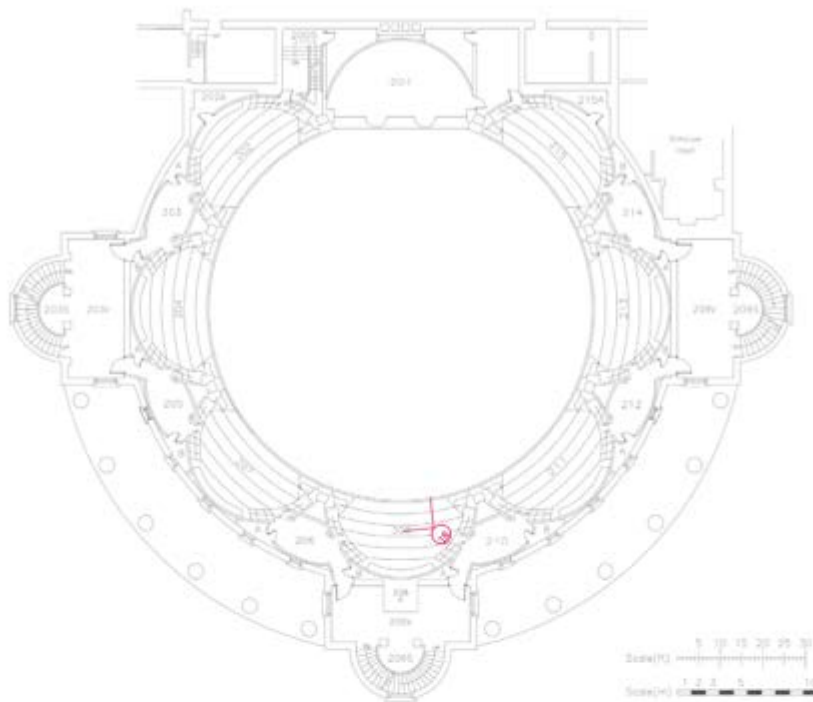
The “Stop the Spadina Expressway” protest march exiting Convocation Hall en route to Queen’s Park (March 1970) (Source: University of Toronto Archives).

Appendix 2

Select Contemporary Visual Resources

Existing Floor Plans & Photograph Location Keys

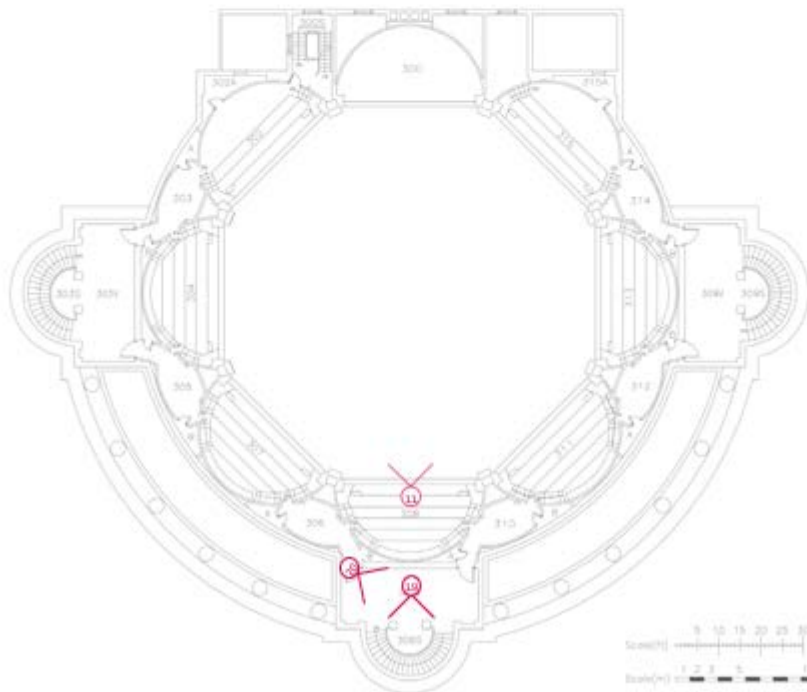





 N
 University of Toronto
 Office of Space Management


 Convocation Hall
 Ring #10a
 2nd Floor
 02/02
 Revision
 DWG. #
 5 of 6

Second Floor




 N
 University of Toronto
 Office of Space Management


 Convocation Hall
 Ring #10a
 3rd Floor
 02/02
 Revision
 DWG. #
 6 of 6

Third Floor



View of Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall looking southwest across King's College Circle. Convocation Hall frames a physical and visual gateway to and from the St. George Campus along King's College Road (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



North elevations of Convocation Hall (left) and Simcoe Hall (centre and right) (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



North elevation of the Simcoe Hall infill wing (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Northeast loggia of Convocation Hall (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Southeast elevation of Convocation Hall, with Galbraith Road in the foreground (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Southeast elevation of Convocation Hall, with Galbraith Road in the foreground (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



South elevation of Convocation hall showing the southeast loggia and the expanse of buff brick of the southwest elevation (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



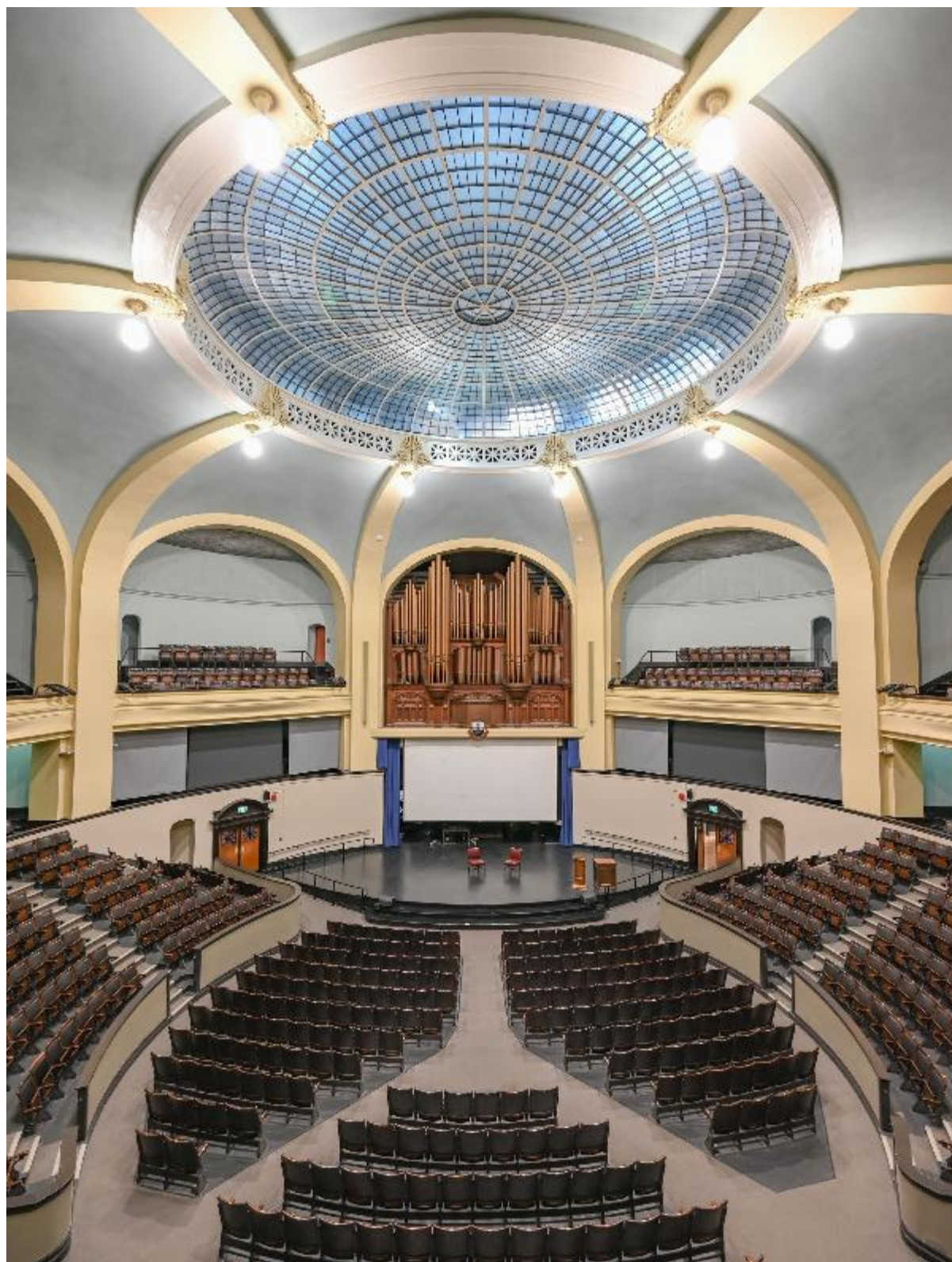
South elevation of Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall fronting Galbraith Road. A two-storey addition (centre) was added in 1947 (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Detail of the entablature, roundel windows with carved stone surrounds, and copper dome on the northeast elevation (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



View of the roof of Convocation Hall and Simcoe Hall. The aperture of the multi-purpose assembly hall that was subsumed into Simcoe Hall is visible below the copper dome (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of Convocation Hall looking west (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior of Convocation Hall looking east (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Detail of interior domed ceiling and coloured-glass laylight (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative view of the perimeter circulation corridor on the ground floor, showing three double doors (right) communicating with an entrance vestibule (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



View of one of the rotundas at each terminus of the ground floor circulation corridor (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



View of one of two sets of three double doors leading to the loggias (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Interior entrance to the auditorium space (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Representative view of the gallery spaces on the second floor (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



One of three half-spiral staircases connecting the three levels of Convocation Hall and located within the identical apses (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).



Third floor landing area between the half-spiral staircase and the entrances to the third-floor galleries (Source: ERA Architects, 2025).