

STOP 8 – THE GREAT STAINED GLASS WINDOW

The great stained glass window was designed by Robert McCausland and carried out in his studio under his personal supervision. It is 16 feet tall by 23 feet wide. Robert McCausland was known for producing stained glass windows "in the English Style," a term given to windows radiantly light in colour and harmonized with the architecture of their setting.

The window combines the Victorian love of naturalism and symbolism with modern views of Toronto to portray its roots, continuity and traditions. The scene represents the union of commerce and industry and also symbolizes the growth and progress of Toronto.

To the east behind industry, is a grouping of representatives from various trade unions. These figures are more realistic and contemporary.

To the west behind Commerce, we find symbolic or allegorical figures representing the Continents..." For example, Europe is seen here holding a miniature statue of the Venus de Milo.

In the background above Commerce we can see a ship and a waterfront setting that recalls the birth of what we now call Toronto on the harbour and its nineteenth century success as a lake port.

The distant building surmounted by a cupola is a good representation of the previous City Hall, what is now St. Lawrence Market.

McCausland also used sunrays, which were popular Victorian decorations found on many Toronto homes from the same time period.

In the centre panel at the top is the coat of arms for the City of Toronto with the motto: Industry, Integrity, and Intelligence and flanked by peace and honour.

In 1947, the stairs in front of the stained glass window were changed to accommodate a war memorial. The Book of Remembrance that once lay open in the centre is now located at New City Hall.

Two griffins used to be on either side of the old stairway. Griffins are mythical animals with the head, wings and front legs of an eagle but the body, hind legs and tail of a lion. They were made

of iron and called Victorian grotesques, but were sold for scrap. In 1987 they were discovered in an antique auction catalogue and purchased for replacement in their original 1899 positions.