

A JANUS IN THE COLD WAR: THE FOUNDING OF THE RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY¹

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Built between 1959 and 1964, Ryerson University's Kerr Hall (fig. 1) is the architectural embodiment of the ideals informing a new education system's attempts to respond to pressing social needs in Canada in the wake of World War II. In its attempts to address the sweeping political, social, and technological change of the time, the system looks forward in anticipation of the future. As well, perhaps in the face of uncertainty and in the wake of global devastation and suffering, it takes direction from the past. The characteristics of this past are demonstrated to be rooted in the specific local of Toronto as it had evolved culturally and urbanistically over the prior one hundred and fifty years, but also in a concept of shared values which are rooted in the democracy of ancient Greece. Under the direction of Howard Killen Kerr, the founder of the original Ryerson Institute of Technology in 1948, and the man for whom Kerr Hall is rightly named, education was seen as an important tool in the preservation and evolution of both technology and democracy. Like the Roman god Janus, both the educational system and the building are persistent in expressed integration of past and future.

HOWARD HILLEN KERR AND THE FOUNDING OF THE RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Founded in 1948, the Ryerson Institute of Technology (RIT) was the brainchild of educator Howard Hillen Kerr (1900-1984). With degrees in engineering and education from the University of Toronto, Kerr had a long-established career as an



FIG. 1. KERR HALL BUILT AROUND THE NORMAL SCHOOL, 1963, S.B. COON & SON LTD. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES,
DOC FL: HOWARD KERR HALL.

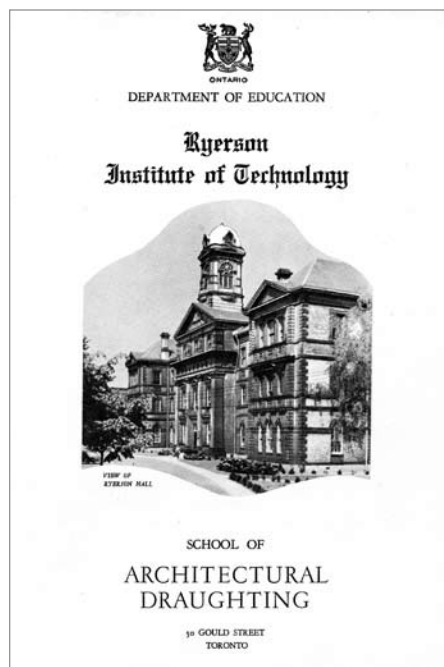


FIG. 2. THE NORMAL SCHOOL CIRCA 1896, FEATURED ON THE COVER OF THE FIRST RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ARCHITECTURAL DRAUGHTING COURSE CALENDAR, 1948. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 1948-1949 COURSE CALENDAR.

academic administrator, having been the principal of the Oshawa Collegiate and Vocational Training School before World War II. In 1940, as war efforts were stepped up, he was invited to lead the Dominion Provincial War Emergency Training Programs for troops at Queen's Park in Toronto. Later, in anticipation of the end of the war, he was appointed director of the Training and Re-Establishment Institute for returning veterans, which was situated at what has since become the present-day Ryerson University. For almost twenty years, Kerr remained at Ryerson, where he was to become the RIT's first principal, serving from 1948 to 1966. He retired from this position taking up the post of chair of the Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and under his guidance twenty other colleges modelled on Ryerson were created in Ontario.

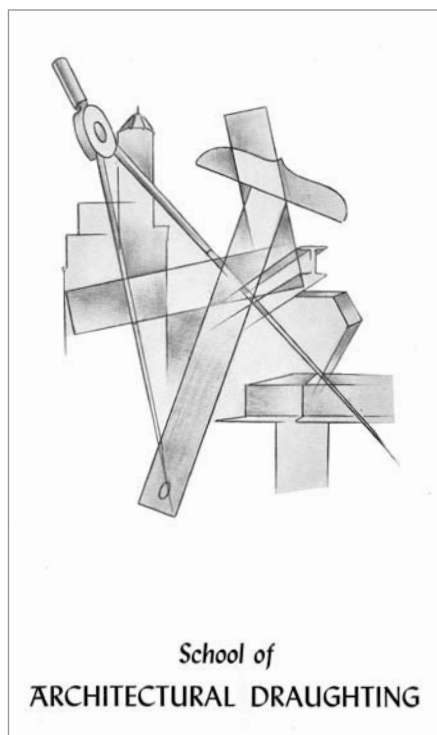


FIG. 3. COVER, ARCHITECTURAL DRAUGHTING COURSE CALENDAR, RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, 1949. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES.

RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY: A POST-WWII PARADIGM FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

In anticipation of the end of the war, Howard Kerr and members of the Toronto Board of Education recognized a need for postsecondary education that would provide training for specific careers. Kerr conceived of a new type of education that would span the gap between high school and university. He had visited the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1943 and wanted to create its equivalent in Canada. To that end, Ontario's Vocational Education Act was amended in 1946 to create two new educational types: vocational schools and technological institutes. As a result, along with Ryerson, three other institutes were

opened in Ontario: Hamilton Institute of Textiles, Lakehead Technical Institute, and Haileybury Mining Institute.

DR. EGERTON RYERSON AND THE NORMAL SCHOOL FOR UPPER CANADA

Howard Kerr's choice of name for Toronto's new institute was deliberate: "Ryerson Institute of Technology" embedded Kerr's complex educational ideology in its very title. It was forward-looking and responsive to the sweeping changes that characterized postwar decades, but was also grounded in the traditions of the past and particularly the *genius loci* or spirit of its site. The location for the new RIT was full of associations with the role and evolution of education in Ontario. Situated on St. James Square east of Yonge Street and bound by Victoria, Gerrard, Church, and Gould streets, the new Institute occupied the site of the Normal School for Upper Canada, founded by Dr. (Adolphus) Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882), the chief superintendent of Education in Canada West from 1846 to 1876. Egerton Ryerson's study of education in Europe became the founding basis for education in Canada West as legislated in the 1846 Education Act, and the standard model for publicly funded education covering the curriculum and training of teachers.

The Normal School for Upper Canada (renamed Toronto Normal School in 1875) was the headquarters for teacher training and the offices for administering educational standards throughout the province. The Normal School was the incubator for what were to later become a number of Ontario's pre-eminent educational and cultural institutions. Among these are the Toronto Teachers' Training College, which became the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education;

Canada's first publicly-funded museum, the Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts (established in 1857 at Egerton Ryerson's instigation with the inclusion of his own art collection), later the Royal Ontario Museum; and in 1872 the art school of the Ontario Society of Artists, which was the first iteration of today's Ontario College of Art and Design. In addition, St. James Square's eight-acre site included a botanical garden and an area reserved for agricultural experiments, which led to the establishment in 1874 of the Ontario Agricultural College and in turn ultimately evolved into the University of Guelph.

By the mid-1940s however, St. James Square was densely packed with barracks and other temporary buildings constructed as the No. 6 Initial Training Centre for wartime mobilization by the Royal Canadian Air Force. As Howard Kerr had been the director of the site during WWII, he was perhaps a logical choice to become the director of the Training and Re-Establishment Institute for returning veterans in 1945.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, 1948

While the RIT had been conceived during the war, its inauguration and that of the other new institutes was delayed until the late 1940s by the looming threat of the Cold War and the possibility that the site might once again be required for the training of troops. However, as the decade closed, there was sufficient confidence that war deployment would no longer be necessary and so, in August 1948, hastily rendered course catalogues were released featuring images of the Normal School portico and the statue of Egerton Ryerson, and the first academic year at the RIT was inaugurated (fig. 2).

KERR'S PARADIGM: GROUNDED IN THE PAST, PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Howard Kerr's prefaces to the course catalogues presents a Janus-like balance that embraced the new social and economic realities of postwar Canada, while recognizing and maintaining traditions. Perhaps in reaction to the uncertain situation of the Cold War era, the imagery of the 1948 course catalogues anchored the RIT firmly in the educational traditions of Ontario's past providing a reassuring representation of the new educational model. By 1949 the new experiment in education was gaining in confidence and conviction in its ability to move forward. Catalogues such as that for Architectural Drafting presented new and sophisticated contemporary graphic styles and lettering which contrasted with the ponderous and traditional script of the first 1948 RIT catalogue (fig. 3).

While grounded in traditional classical educational values, the RIT was imbued with a keen understanding of the contemporary world. The curriculum included various emerging fields such as aeronautical and chemical engineering, early childhood education, electronics, business studies, radio and television production, as well as the more established careers of architectural drafting, tailoring, furniture making, journalism, nursing, and photography. As a reflection of the shift in the purpose of education and the need for career training, from the beginning the number of part-time students attending night school was significantly greater than full-time day students, with the statistics for 1949-1950's academic year enrolling 551 full-time students versus 1518 continuing education students.²

Beyond the emphasis on practical training for employment, Howard Kerr believed

not just in producing skilled workers but in educating citizens who would become effective leaders, able to withstand the influences of totalitarianism that had devastated Europe. To that end, courses in English, physical education, and history were mandatory in the early curriculum. In 1952 Kerr wrote:

Ryerson has been fully aware of the value of the humanities in training young men and women aiding in the total development of the student while training for specific vocational competence. English and the social sciences are rated in equal importance to any technological subject. Ryerson's aim is to graduate potential leaders and all subjects are chosen with this aim in view.³

A year later he reiterated:

Obviously the need is for a very special type of education that will provide both specific vocational competence and a core of cultural wisdom. In a society that places great value on technique, economics and ethics merge: it becomes impossible to divorce man's way of life from his method of earning a living. It is the purpose of a Ryerson education to promote such a vision.⁴

Although the language suggests gender exclusivity, Ryerson's catalogues of the 1950s testified to equal participation of men and women and presented as well a student body representative of Canada's increasingly diverse ethnic population. Yet traditional elements remained intact. Symbols of the institution included a gold medal awarded annually for outstanding achievement featured a profile of Egerton Ryerson reminiscent of a classical coin, and the "lamp of learning," a small antique vessel from Rome carried at the head of the convocation processions.⁵ In all of this the values of tradition, the importance of protecting democracy, and embracing a newly emerging society were reinforced.

The legacy of the RIT spirit of 1948 is still found in Ryerson’s motto “*mente et scientiam*”—“mind and skill,” which underlines Howard Kerr’s determination to foster education that was beyond postwar labour force training. His commitment to a broad education that inculcated democratic values supported by tradition finds its parallel expression in his approach to architecture, heritage, and building programs at Ryerson’s site.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ST. JAMES SQUARE

Locating the new RIT on St. James Square afforded Howard Kerr the opportunity to capture the *genius loci* of its historic site as the new institution was established. Egerton Ryerson had purchased the eight acres providing a generous park-like setting for the new Normal School of Upper Canada. The site, positioned at the top end of Bond Street, so that the building would terminate the street’s northern vista, represented an urban pattern typical in Toronto from its earliest days when prominent merchants, such as D’Arcy (1818) and Campbell (1822), situated

their residences at the top of north-south streets, affording them a clear vista to Lake Ontario. That pattern was repeated throughout the nineteenth century, as other prominent institutions, such as the first wing of Osgoode Hall, Old City Hall, and the Ontario Legislature, commanded similar prospects.⁶

CUMBERLAND AND STORM’S NORMAL SCHOOL, 1851-1852

For the design of the Normal School, Egerton Ryerson commissioned architects Frederick Cumberland (1821-1881) and William Storm (1826-1892) and the main building was constructed in 1851-1852 (fig. 4). It was one of a series of significant commissions undertaken by Cumberland and Storm and later Cumberland and Ridout in the 1850s which gave shape to the expanding character of the city of Toronto during that decade.⁷

With its central bay, recessed linking wings, and projecting end pavilions, the exterior design of the Normal School relied on a Palladian vocabulary filtered through eighteenth-century English

country houses and already adapted in Ontario as an appropriate model for new emerging public building typologies, including Osgoode Hall (1831-1832, 1844, and 1856) and St. Lawrence Town Hall (1849-1850). The centre was marked by a portico with a pediment and cupola above. By the 1850s the Georgian Palladian style of the original form was superseded by a tougher Greek revival which here featured four double-height square piers that were matched by the firm’s Adelaide Street courthouse of 1851-1853 and the Ionic order columns of the Seventh Post Office on Toronto Street (1851-1853). In 1896 a third storey with a new portico and ungainly tower with gothic overtones was added to the Normal School, as featured on the 1948 catalogue cover.

KERR HALL 1958-1963

A century later, as Howard Kerr set out to establish the new RIT, he was confronted with a site occupied by barracks and temporary buildings erected during the war for troop training and veteran repatriation (fig. 5). Initially Kerr was determined to contain the new institute within the



FIG. 4. NORMAL SCHOOL OF UPPER CANADA, 1852, CUMBERLAND AND STORM. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, DOC FL: NORMAL SCHOOL FILE, PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES FONDS 1662, ITEM 12.



FIG. 5. THE NORMAL SCHOOL SITE WITH MILITARY BARRACKS, CIRCA 1948. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RG-95-1, BINDER 20, RYERSON HALL.

existing Normal School buildings (fig. 6). However, to meet the expanding demands of a rapidly-increasing daytime and evening student body and given the program of the new institution, this proved impossible. In the late 1950s he announced an ambitious building plan: a new building designed by the firm of S.B. Coon & Son Ltd. Architects and Contractors to be erected around the existing school. The firm started by Stephen Burwell Coon (born 1862) and then led by his son Burwell Rancier Coon (born 1892) was retained for the Oshawa Collegiate and Training Vocational School where Kerr had been principal before the war. They were well established, having done a number of commercial buildings, apartments, and public schools, which together exhibited a similar stylistic eclecticism shown by Cumberland and Storm one hundred years earlier.⁸ Kerr Hall was to be S.B. Coon & Son's biggest commission. In 1958 construction of the new academic building was started in a square plan around the original Normal School (figs. 1 and 7). However, as construction progressed and the new building was occupied, it became evident that the Normal School would have to be demolished. By July 1963 all that remained of Cumberland and Storm's building was the original two-storey portico.

The *parti* for the new academic building—ultimately named Kerr Hall—was a three-storey block with a raised basement built around a courtyard (fig. 8). Entrance to the complex was via a single gateway to the north on Gerrard Street and two smaller archways on the south from Gould Street. These brought both pedestrians and vehicles into the large courtyard previously occupied by the Normal School. It was landscaped with a large parterre divided into quadrants at the centre, with parking on its edges, vehicular access and a sidewalk around the outermost perimeter for pedestrians.

From the courtyard multiple entrances on all four sides provided access to the interior of the new academic building whose plan was organized with double loaded corridors leading to classrooms, laboratories, administrative offices, a theatre on the north, and a gymnasium and library on the west.

EMBEDDING EDUCATIONAL IDEALS IN ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND LANGUAGE

It is primarily in the design and detailing of the elevations that Howard Kerr's ambitions for the new institute were expressed. The architectural language of the elevations is best described as a highly reductive neo-classical postwar survival combining what Kerr might have considered a successful blend of the modern and the traditional. In design, each façade presents a different story relating to the specifics of adjacent street or internal building functions. A close reading of the building parts explains how Kerr sought to respect the pattern of the nineteenth-century urban context while creating an architectural complex that blends a commitment to traditional educational forms with local and national typologies and at the same time celebrates the new technologies of the post-WWII society.

STREET FACADES AND CONTEXT: GOULD STREET ELEVATION

The south façade on Gould Street (fig. 9), which replaced the primary entry façade of the Normal School, is the most traditional. The long block mimics the basic form of the Normal School in principle with its central projecting bay, two adjacent narrow links housing the gateways to the courtyard, and two projecting end blocks here stretching the length of the city block. The building is set on a raised basement storey clad in polished red

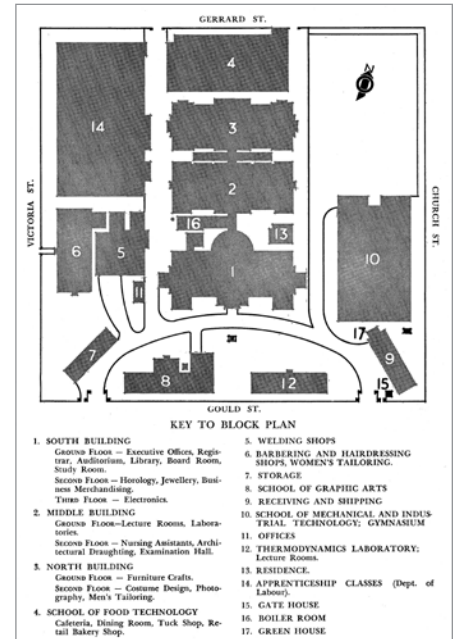


FIG. 6. CAMPUS PLAN, RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 1949-1950. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 1949-1950 COURSE CALENDAR.



FIG. 7. GENERAL VIEW OF SOUTH ELEVATION, KERR HALL CIRCA 1964. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, DOC FL: HOWARD KERR HALL.



FIG. 8. KERR HALL, CIRCA 1964, AERIAL VIEW AFTER DEMOLITION OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL WITH PORTICO REMAINING. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RG-95-1, BINDER 13, HOWARD KERR HALL.



FIG. 9. KERR HALL, CIRCA 1961, SOUTH FAÇADE ON GOULD STREET. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, DOC FL: HOWARD KERR HALL.



FIG. 10. KERR HALL, LINK WITH PASSAGE TO COURTYARD FROM GOULD STREET. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.



FIG. 11. THE HOCKEY GOALIE, KERR HALL, SOUTH FAÇADE BY JACOBINE JONES. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.



FIG. 12. KERR HALL UNDER CONSTRUCTION TERMINATING THE NORTH END OF BOND STREET. | RYERSON UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT.

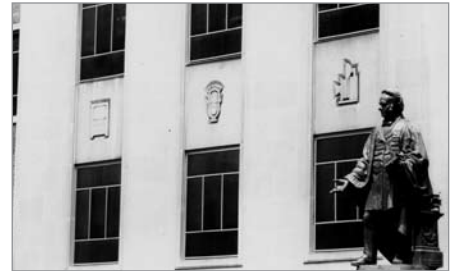


FIG. 13. STATUE OF EGERTON RYERSON, WITH LIMESTONE BAS-RELIEF PANELS DEPICTING A TELEVISION, CJRT RADIO MICROPHONE, AND CAMERA, GOULD STREET FAÇADE. RELIEFS BY DORA DE PEDERY HUNT. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RG 24-208.

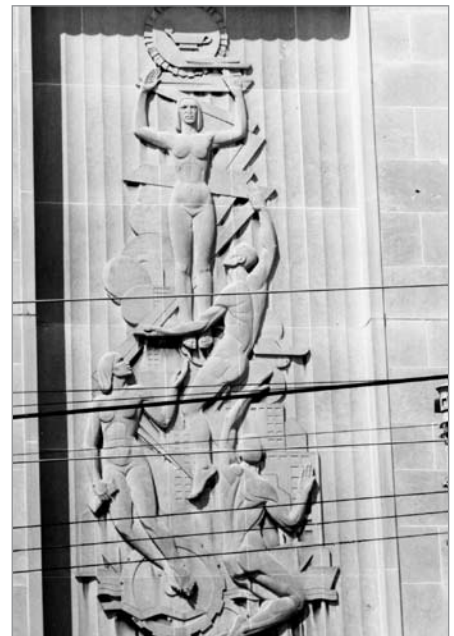


FIG. 14. BAS-RELIEF, KERR HALL, CHURCH STREET FAÇADE, ELIZABETH WYN WOOD. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, FILE 204-28.

granite. The upper storeys of the links and wings are clad in light brown brick. The windows of the first two floors of the wings are trimmed with sandstone and linked by ridged aluminum panels allowing the adjacent brick to be read as a traditional giant order. Instead of the typical attic windows or loggia space of a Renaissance palazzo type, modernist bands of ribbon windows top the third storey. Although surrounded by stone frames, the windows, rather than being double hung sash, sport a 1950s styling with their metal

frames and asymmetrical composition of horizontal and vertical panes.

The façade treatment of the narrow links between the central bay and outer wings continues the classical references with the arched entry passageways trimmed with granite keystones. Above each, set in a niche, a sculpture by Jacobine Jones of a graduand on the east and a hockey goalie on the west are classical elements portraying contemporary society (figs. 10-11).

The most important feature of the Gould façade is the central bay. Set at the top of Bond Street it maintains the urban function of the Normal School in closing the vista and providing a backdrop to the statue of Egerton Ryerson (fig. 12). Clad entirely in sandstone above the granite base, the central bay recalls the Normal School portico. Seven bays of windows with the first two storeys linked here by stone panels allow the piers of the old two-storey portico to be read again. The stone panels replace the lost



FIG. 15. DRAWING, KERR HALL COURTYARD, EAST ELEVATION WITH RADIO TOWER (DELINEATOR UNKNOWN). | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, RYERSON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 1961-1962 COURSE CALENDAR.



FIG. 16. THEATRE ENTRANCE, KERR HALL, NORTH PASSAGEWAY TO GERRARD STREET. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.

metopes of the Normal School entablature and feature relief carvings by Dora de Pedery-Hunt (1903-2008) depicting a microscope, chemical retort, surveyor's tripod, television, Ryerson's CJRT radio station microphone, camera, and geodesic dome referring to the technologically-based careers which would be pursued at Ryerson (fig. 13). The pediment of the Normal School portico has been omitted, but two small stone urns, whose minuscule scale seems to underline the tentativeness of the classical language, mark the corners of the roof parapet. A small clock tower alludes to the traditional lantern towers of the college dining halls of Oxford and Cambridge and maintains the focal point originally provided by Cumberland's portico and tower. Working in a modernist idiom most of the building has a flat roof, but the central bay has a copper-clad hipped roof, by then a characteristic feature of other Canadian municipal, provincial, and national institutions.

As a whole, the south façade reinforces existing contexts and urban patterns; it continues to provide an honorific backdrop highlighting the statue of Egerton Ryerson, the spiritual figurehead of public education in Ontario. The façade relies on classical forms and typologies but

integrates deliberately modern ones in an effort to speak of an institution grounded in the historic roots of Ontario's education while providing the technological training required for future opportunities.

CHURCH STREET ELEVATION

While the south façade reiterates history and tradition, the east façade on Church Street establishes a firm commitment to the future and new technology. It continues the granite base, brown brick and also has a central projecting bay clad in sandstone, but here provides one of the most unusual variations and further interpretations of a portico by inverting the classical model and applying Doric fluting not to the piers but to the recessed bays in between. These bays are entirely blind except for windows at the lowest storey, again inverting classical expectations for large windows at the *piano nobile* or upper level. The central bay features a large relief by Elizabeth Wyn Wood (1903-1966) with two women and two men set against a vertiginous modern cityscape culminating at the top with the lamp of learning (fig. 14) modelled on that carried annually in the convocation processions. The lamp explicitly connects Ryerson's focus on career-based education with graduates' participation in the modern urban world.

The traditional copper-clad hipped roof and tower with its Canadian and Oxbridge associations is absent on Church Street and instead this elevation is crowned with a radio tower. It was emblematic of Ryerson's commitment to future technologies; indeed the first campus radio station CJRT-FM operated from 1949 and the first live television broadcast in Canada was produced by Ryerson students. As evidence of its importance, it was featured as a fold-out illustration at the front of the 1961-1962 calendar (fig. 15).

GERRARD AND VICTORIA STREET ELEVATIONS

In contrast to the south and east elevations, Gerrard Street's north façade provides another element which emphasizes public access (fig. 16). A triple-storey, triple entrance-way recalling a Roman triumphal arch creates a large portico for the entrance to the Ryerson Theatre and to the courtyard. Treatment is minimal with elements of classicism evident only in the stone frames, piers, and roundels above the theatre entrance. As with the two gateways on Gould Street, this entrance has wrought iron gates, which, as in the traditional Oxbridge college, controls access.



FIG. 17. DOOR WITH ENTABLATURE FRAME AND KEYSTONE, KERR HALL EAST COURTYARD ELEVATION. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, DOC FL: HOWARD KERR HALL.



FIG. 18. BAS RELIEF, GYMNASIUM ENTRANCE, KERR HALL, WEST COURTYARD ELEVATION, ELIZABETH WYN WOOD. | COURTESY OF RYERSON UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, FILE 204-28.



FIG. 19. MURAL "TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORLD," 1963, KERR HALL WEST, ALAN CASSWELL COLLIER. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.

In the Kerr Hall design, the west façade seems to be of least importance. Facing Victoria Street a minor entrance leads to the athletic facilities and the program within is signalled by façade reliefs of sportsmen created by Dora de Pedery-Hunt.

SCULPTURE AND DESIGN DETAILS OF THE COURTYARD ELEVATIONS

The narrative of sculpture and detail design on the courtyard facades further elucidates Howard Kerr's vision. These elevations continue the integration of reductive classical elements and a traditional material palette with new forms, materials, and a modern iconography. For example, on the main entrance of the east side of the courtyard, modified classical entablature frames with keystones and a staircase with stylized squat, square stone urns flanking wrought iron balustrades contrast with the far more reductive character of the west façade entrances where all classical references have been suppressed and pilasters are reduced to linear stone frames (fig. 17). The entrance to the current Early Learning Centre features a stripped portico of simple square section piers that, in spite of Kerr's position against totalitarianism, recalls the work of the Italian Rationalists executed under Mussolini.

On the south elevation of the courtyard in parallel with the façade on Gould, small panels by Dora de Pedery-Hunt are inserted between windows and feature simple reliefs representing child care, tailoring, food services, and hotel and restaurant management. On the east face, bas-reliefs by Thomas Bowie feature stylized male and female classical nudes with their associated tools of their professions such as chemistry, drafting, and building construction. Most remarkable are those

by Elizabeth Wyn Wood over the gymnasium entrance on the west (fig. 18). Here two nudes, male and female, sit cross-legged with bow and arrow shooting past each other to targets in the adjacent panels surrounded by maple leaves, pine boughs, and squirrels. In writing about the Kerr Hall sculpture John Warkentin observed:

It should be noted that in contrast to the bas-reliefs installed on commercial and civic buildings in the 1920's and '30's, the existence of women as persons in their own right has finally been recognized, and they are given equal treatment with men in these panels.⁹

In these sculptures we find a parallel to Kerr's blend of local and ancient traditions that give true expression to the spirit of the time and the place in which this institution was founded while embracing a progressive social agenda of equality.

CASSWELL COLLIER'S MURALS

Two murals on the interior of Kerr Hall depict Howard Kerr's ambitions and ideals most forcefully. In the western wing of Kerr Hall, Alan Casswell Collier's (1911-1990) mural "The History of Technology in the World" illustrates that even "with the present uses of automation in industrial power, the ultimate control remains in human minds and hands (fig. 19)."¹⁰ Situated on the west side of the court, in a ground floor corridor, the mural reinforces the technological motifs found in the exterior bas-reliefs of Kerr Hall and is set opposite to the great radio tower atop the east block. As a result, anyone passing the mural and emerging from the west block into the courtyard would be confronted with the view of the radio tower and Kerr's ambitions that Ryerson play a leading role in adapting technology for the future.

On the interior of the eastern block, under the radio tower, a second allegorical mural is presented. Casswell Collier's "The Portico of Philosophers" portraying two central figures in antique dress recalls Raphael's Renaissance mural, "The School of Athens," which illustrates the debate between Plato and Aristotle. In Raphael's version, the central figures of Aristotle and Plato point to the earth and the sky, but Collier portrays these figures no longer as two males, but as a man and woman, symbolic of Ryerson's commitment to gender equality so consistently represented by the institution in its media. Whereas Raphael set the two main figures at the top of a staircase, framed by a series of classical barrel vaults retreating perspectively into the distance, Collier presents the modern-day figures within a continuous grid of minimalist, rectilinear piers, framing a series of stepped platforms. The grid, recalling the piers found at the entrance of the Early Learning Centre, has symbolic importance for its lack of hierarchy, and its inherent rationalism and neutrality. The mural signifies Kerr's postwar democratic ambitions and ideals for the Ryerson Institute of Technology. Associations with past classical traditions, especially those aligning Ryerson education with the birth of democracy and the creation of an open society which encouraged debate and full participation of its citizenry, was essential. These murals illustrate the concurrent principles of the inclusion of tradition and heritage, the harnessing of technology, and an emerging fully democratic society, which were the foundations on which Kerr's educational institution was built.

POSTWAR COURTYARD EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS

Ryerson's new building was one of many postwar educational institutions being built in Toronto in the mid-twentieth



FIG. 20. COURTYARD, MASSEY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 1963, RON THOM. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.



FIG. 21. COURTYARD, NEW COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 1967, MACY DUBOIS. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.

century adapting the traditional courtyard typology of Oxford and Cambridge to the contemporary university. Others include Massey College (1963) by Ron Thom and New College (1967) by Macy DuBois (figs. 20-21). Along with Kerr Hall, these represent the evolution of the courtyard type reworked through modernist principles and sensibilities. Indeed, new architecture in Britain, particularly at traditional universities, explored a modern interpretation of the courtyard type. One of the earliest examples was executed by Sir Hugh Casson and Neville Condor in the Faculty of Arts Building at Cambridge in 1952 (fig. 22). The traditional medieval courtyard was to be given a distinctive reconceptualization. Raised on thick Corbusian pilotis, the building provides a continuity of interior and exterior spaces capturing the ideals of class-free accessibility which these institutions sought to accomplish in postwar Labour-ruled Britain.



FIG. 22. COURTYARD, FACULTY OF ARTS BUILDING, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, 1952, SIR HUGH CASSON AND NEVILLE CONDOR. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.



FIG. 23. COURTYARD, HART HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 1910-1919, SPROATT & ROLPH. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.

In Toronto, historical references to English universities are well known. In its depiction of the gothic, Hart House, designed by Sproatt and Rolph and built 1910-1919, endeavoured to connect the facilities at the University of Toronto with the hallowed traditions of medieval England (fig. 23). Thom's Massey College continued this tradition, while adapting other contemporary stylistic filters, such as that of Frank Lloyd Wright's work.

At Ryerson through its use of a courtyard with arcuated entries and gateway a similar model was in operation. More important, however, is the design's connection with the specific history of the site and the evolution of Toronto's urban form. Rather than invoking collegiate gothic that had been the dominant stylistic language for educational building types throughout the first two thirds of the twentieth century, Kerr Hall by contrast is deliberately classical. It recaptures however faintly



FIG. 24. NORMAL SCHOOL PORTICO FRAGMENT, KERR HALL COURTYARD. | MARYBETH McTEAGUE.



FIG. 25. PROPOSAL FOR THE KERR HALL COURTYARD, RYERSON UNIVERSITY MASTER PLAN SHOWING PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF KERR HALL AND RETENTION OF NORMAL SCHOOL PORTICO, 2008, KUWABARA PAYNE MCKENNA BLUMBERG ARCHITECTS AND DAOUST LESTAGE INC. IN ASSOCIATION WITH GREENBERG CONSULTANTS AND IBI GROUP, RENDERING BY NORM LI, AG+I. | KUWABARA, PAYNE, MCKENNA, BLUMBERG.

the Palladian survival and neo-classical styles of the original Normal School and reinstates its response to the urban context by creating the pseudo-portico at the head of Bond Street. Further, the reinterpretation of traditional themes in education, while adapting the RIT to the modern age, reflects Kerr's Janus-like commitment to including heritage while securing the promise of the future.

KERR AND THE PRESERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Howard Kerr's initial ambition was to retain the Normal School at the heart of the new educational quadrangle. At the opening of the first new building in 1958 he wrote:

The continual development of Ontario's education system for over a century will be visible on St. James Square [...] This year Ryerson Institute of Technology in its efforts to serve Canada by educating technologists begins its expansion. Its insistence on a balanced curriculum of the Sciences, of the Arts and of the Technologies will be

constantly symbolized by the Modern buildings dominated by the original Ryerson Hall and the statue of its Founder.¹¹

By 1963 the original Normal School had been all but demolished except for Cumberland's original two-storey portico, retained in its original location and now serving as the entry to below-ground university athletic facilities. Just as the 1963 radio transmitter tower acted as a billboard for Ryerson's commitment to future technological innovation, the retention of the Normal School portico stood as a declaration of respect for the past, a commemoration of the evolution of education in Ontario, and a beacon to guide those individuals charged with creating the new institution on hallowed ground (fig. 24).

In recent decades this vision has been obscured. Retaining only fragments of heritage buildings has been disdained by purists. In the heady days of 1980s conservation, which saw the first fruits of the Ontario Heritage Act (1974) and building designation put into place, William Dendy was to decry this fragment:

The ruin was completed, literally, when a mere fragment of the front façade of Cumberland's central pavilion was retained—the epitome of token preservation, lost and largely forgotten in the Ryerson quadrangle that is all that remains of St. James Square.¹²

But within the context of Toronto in the early 1960s, the preservation of this artefact is indeed remarkable. Undertaken in the years before the Ontario Heritage Foundation had been established, and a decade before the passage of the Ontario Heritage Act, the preservation of a fragment of Toronto history stands as a forerunner of heritage preservation in Toronto. As Dendy's *Lost Toronto* would record, many buildings were being demolished in the 1960s without a second glance and a *tabula rasa* approach to the city was widespread, perhaps best exemplified by the demolition of an entire city block to make way for the new Toronto Dominion Centre, 1963-1969, designed by Mies van der Rohe in association with John B. Parkin Associates and Bregman and Hamann. In the following decade heritage recognition

became more widespread. In projects such as Commerce Court, 1972, designed by I.M. Pei Associates with Page & Steele associated architects, the existing Bank of Commerce Building of 1929-1930, by York & Sawyer and Darling & Pearson associated architects, was preserved within the new complex.

LOOKING FORWARD: RYERSON'S CURRENT MASTER PLAN

In his conceptualization of the design for the RIT, Howard Hillen Kerr created two parallel models, one for education and one for historic sites. In both, technology was the focal point, and the future was envisioned with reference to the past. Allusions and allegiances combined institutions and forms of classical Greece with educational models of medieval England all filtered through the evolving situation of the city of Toronto. Unlike medieval college models pursued in the architectural program of other institutions of higher learning, Kerr's allusions were not constructions rooted in fiction but presented a realistic reinterpretation of the contemporary university within the specifics of Toronto's urban context.

As Ryerson's role in postsecondary education continues to evolve, it is hoped that the institution will continue to reinforce and integrate Kerr's model of a continued emphasis on the education of citizens for leadership, in parallel with education in technology to meet demands of current challenges and possible crises. In recent years Ryerson has begun ambitious plans for the future. For current master planning at Ryerson we would hope that Kerr's ideals of respect for tradition, context, and site heritage are not forgotten.

In the 2008 master plan for the redevelopment of the Ryerson University campus, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg

Architects and Daoust Lestage Inc. in association with Greenberg Consultants and IBI Group initially acknowledge the importance of heritage by identifying the intersection of Gould and Bond as the heart of the campus and by adding heritage elements to the list of urban design principles.¹³ However in the development of the proposal, heritage attributes, Egerton Ryerson's statue and Cumberland's portico, are not mentioned nor listed, for example, in the section on "Design Excellence."

The illustrations of the master plan do not highlight the historic significance of the urban context, the importance of Ryerson's statue, or the fragment of one of Toronto's most prolific and talented nineteenth-century architects, Frederick Cumberland. For example, the master plan calls for the removal of the central hipped-roof bay of Kerr Hall at the top of Bond Street and its replacement with a glass façade allowing views into the courtyard (fig. 25). This proposal has the potential to reassert the significance of the original Normal School portico. However, this is not indicated as an objective in their strategy. At a detail level proposals for street lighting fail to highlight important heritage features, such as the statue of Egerton Ryerson as the figurehead both of the University and Ontario's public education system situated at the top of Bond Street.

The master plan is a clear reflection of Ryerson's evolution and potential for future growth. It would only be a matter of some minor reconsideration of focus and emphasis to integrate the importance of Ryerson's founder, Howard Kerr, gave to sustaining tradition and heritage while embracing new forms and technologies appropriate to the changing needs of an educational institution. As the site is laden with architectural, historical, and

urban legacies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their distinct integration could provide the opportunity to create a renewed and richly layered Ryerson campus in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

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2. Ryerson University Archives, Annual Report.
3. Kerr, Howard Hillen, 1952, *Ryerson Institute of Technology, Catalogue 1952-1953*, Ryerson Institute of Technology, Toronto, p. 8.
4. Kerr, Howard Hillen, 1953, *Ryerson Institute of Technology, Catalogue 1953-1954*, Ryerson Institute of Technology, Toronto, p. 7.
5. The first director of architectural draughting at Ryerson, G.D.W. MacRae, discovered the "lamp of learning" in an antique shop in Rome and brought it back to Ryerson where it was to be carried in convocation processions from the early 1950s through to the 1980s. Today it is on display in the Ryerson University Archives.
6. Other Toronto institutions situated at the top of north-south streets looking toward Lake Ontario include Osgoode Hall's first building, the east wing (1831-1832) set at the top of York Street, Knox College (1875) on Spadina Avenue, and City Hall (1886-1899) at the top of Bay Street.
7. Other works include St. James Cathedral (1850-1853), Adelaide Street Court House (1851-1853), Seventh Post Office (1851-1853), Osgoode Hall (1856-1860), University College (1856-1859), and the adjacent Observatory (1852).
8. Other buildings include the Dominion Building on Bay Street (1928), the Balmoral Apartments (1928), as well as numerous public schools and high schools in Toronto and Southern Ontario. Burwell Coon who undertook the Kerr Hall commission had been a president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada from

1938-1940 and chair of the Toronto Society of Architects in 1933-1934. His bequest to the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada after his death led to the creation in 1984 of the annual Burwell Coon Award. S.B. Coon & Son Architects were also credited with being the contractors for Kerr Hall.

9. Warkentin, John, 2010, *Creating Memory; A Guide to Outdoor Public Sculpture in Toronto*, Toronto, Becker Associates in Association with the City Institute at York University, p. 166.
10. Letter from Howard Hillen Kerr, June 1963, quoting Alan Caswell Collier, Ryerson University Archives, RG 24-208.
11. Kerr, Howard Hillen, 1958, *Ryerson Institute of Technology, Catalogue 1958-1959*, Ryerson Institute of Technology, Toronto, p. 9.
12. Dendy, William, 1978, *Lost Toronto*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, p. 118.
13. Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects and Daoust Lestage Inc. in association with Greenberg Consultants and IBI Group, 2008, Ryerson University Master Plan, section 1.9.

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