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CANADA'S NEW WAVE
Grimshaw's joints
Aalto's Viipuri library



1

CAMPUS SHOWPIECE



² Two recently completed buildings for universities in Ontario seek to rebuild the institutions through a particular vision of the city. Designed by two of Canada's leading architects they investigate ways of creating a campus in the development of models of the traditional city in contemporary educational settings. Here, Brian Carter describes York University's Student Centre and on p57 considers a new college building for the University of Toronto.

The campus of York University is a collection of dispersed buildings built in the '60s and set within an open landscape on the northern outskirts of metropolitan Toronto. In the relatively harsh Canadian climate this form of development did not create a physical environment appropriate for education. So the master plan, designed for the next stages of development, was devised to encourage more compact configurations of building, forming sheltered open spaces and incorporating pedestrian routes with linkages to create a

more habitable place as well as a more intensive use of land and services. The new Student Centre provides a central forum for student life at the university but it is also an integral part of that new plan for the campus.

The Centre has two broadly defined functions. One is to provide a range of social facilities for eating, drinking and informal meeting; the other is to house the administrative activities of the student community. As well as providing dining facilities (ranging from fast food to restaurant service), shops, a pub with a

Student Centre, York University, Toronto
Architects
A. J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt & Company

- 1 The Student Centre faces on to a new green square.
- 2 The south-facing colonnade encloses and defines a pleasant urban street. In winter it can be sealed against the cold with sliding windows.
- 3 The slightly schizophrenic south facade – monolithic masonry topped by double-height glazing.
- 4 Detail of the side elevation.



3

4

discotheque, lounges and a child-care centre, the building houses meeting rooms and offices for more than 50 different student societies, clubs and associations. The Centre is the social hub for the campus and has been designed to encourage interaction at many levels through both the range of amenities and the spaces which have been created to house them.

The rectangular building combines with a series of other new buildings to define a new green at the main entrance to the campus. The plan of the Centre

has been organised around a great hall with a colonnade along its long south-facing facade which fronts onto the green. The organisation of the building is simple and clear. Within this great hall a massive but elegantly detailed concrete structure defines three toplit spaces each three storeys high. These spaces introduce daylight dramatically into the lounges and dining areas which occupy the whole of the ground floor. While the pub and discotheque are appropriately buried within an enclosed and beautifully sculpted concrete

cellar, the dining spaces have views out over the colonnade to the green. As a result the colonnade, enclosed by triple glazing and warm in winter but designed to be opened up in summer, is enlivened by the activities of the Centre and assumes many of the characteristics of a genuine bustling urban street.

A grand helical stair rises up from the ground floor of the great hall through the space to offices and meeting rooms arranged on the two upper floors. At these upper levels the circulation is