

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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Globe T.O

Old buildings, new beginnings

From Regent Park to U of T, Doors Open Toronto opens up structures that are fostering new business, new ideas and new art

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Being nosy is usually considered a bad thing. But for a couple of days each year, Torontonians are actually encouraged to acknowledge their inner snoop. The occasion is, of course, Doors Open Toronto, the 14th annual edition of which occurs Saturday and Sunday.

Last year, Doors Open saw close to 150 sites across the city – historic churches, office buildings, public spaces, grounds, studios, schools, houses, transportation hubs, factories and much else – open their doors and gates to almost 200,000 visitors. This weekend, 167 sites, including 62 that weren't on last year's itinerary, are open to the curious.

Doors Open was conceived by the city as a one-off event in 2000. But its 96 locations proved so popular that time, drawing more than 50,000 visitors, the decision was made to keep it going in each successive year. The theme for this year's Doors Open is Creators, Makers and Innovators. And as part of that, there's "a celebration of old buildings that have been repurposed, given a second life again," said Kerry MacDonald, the city's supervisor of special events programming for Economic Development and Culture.

Eleven criteria are used to determine whether a site is Doors Open-worthy, she said. Among the most important are that the building or area is not usually open to the public, that the site has significant architectural or design features, that it fits well with the theme that year or is having a significant anniversary and that it's part of "a destination cluster" of complementary structures or areas. "People often suggest buildings they'd like to see," Ms. MacDonald says. Other times it's an owner who thinks his or her locale deserves the Doors Open treatment, and Ms. MacDonald and Heritage Toronto officials also extend invitations to participate.

"Every year, we usually have 30 to 40 per cent absolutely new buildings that have never been in the program before, and the rest are returning." We take a closer look at five of these buildings new to the event this year – the Munk School of Global Affairs, Daniels Spectrum in Regent Park, the Toronto Carpet Factory in Liberty Village, the Riverdale Hub and **Bridgepoint Hospital**.



Bridgepoint Hospital and Administration Building

14 St. Matthews Rd.

Original architect (administration): William Thomas

Year built: 864

Original purpose: The Don Valley Jail (1864-1977)

New purpose: Administration offices for Bridgepoint Hospital's new 462-bed continuing and rehabilitation care centre as well as adjacent campus. (The hospital proper, to the west of the administration building, is a just-opened, all-new, purpose-built facility jointly conceived and realized by Stantec Architecture, KPMB Architects, Diamond Schmitt Architects and HDR Architecture.)

Architectural highlights: In the administration building, the restored Great Rotunda with its skylight, uncovered glass floor and walkways supported by snake and dragon-shaped corbels. In the hospital, lounges with views of the Don Valley and downtown Toronto. ■

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