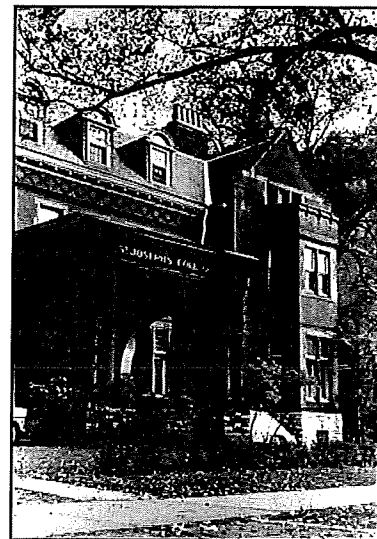
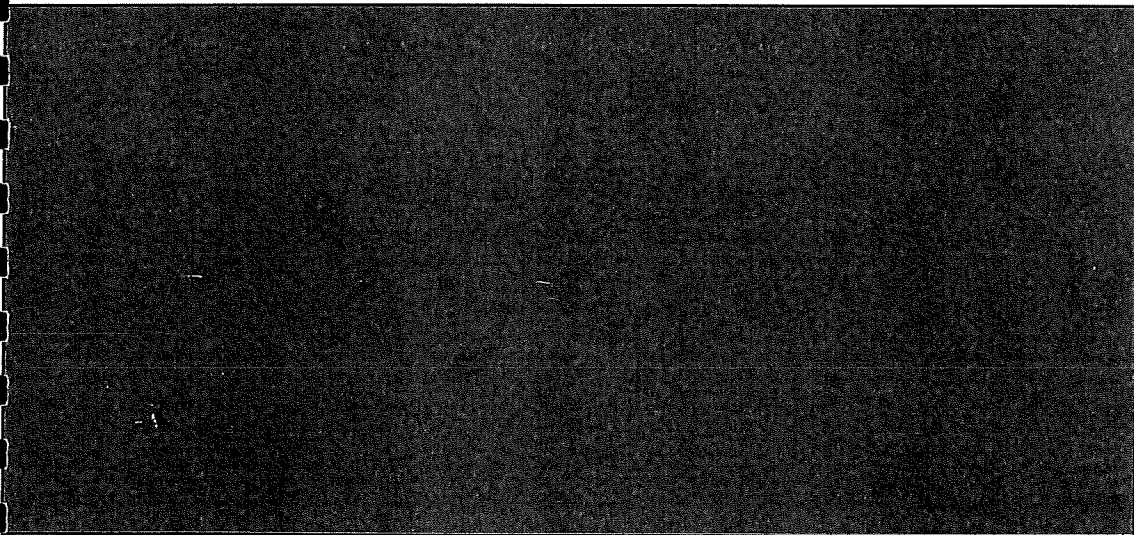
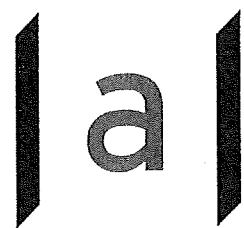


**Heritage Impact Statement  
Christie House  
Regis College**



**larkin architect limited**

**Heritage Impact Statement  
Christie House  
Regis College**



**larkin architect limited**



## **Executive Summary**

90 Wellesley Street West is a 'listed' building on the City of Toronto's inventory of heritage properties. The street address refers to three buildings, disparately known as "Christie House", "St. Mary's Hall", and "Fontbonne Hall". Collectively, these are known as Old St. Joseph's College.

In 2007, Larkin Architect Limited was commissioned by Regis College to provide architectural expertise in a relocation of the College from St. Mary Street to 90 Wellesley Street.

The mandate established by Larkin Architect Limited and the design steering committee of Regis College was to provide a design that was sensitive to the structure and form of the heritage components of St. Joseph's College, and to provide a cohesive space which could be easily identified and navigated as Regis College.

This report outlines the design approach toward the heritage aspects of the property. The report reasons that the design is sensitive to the heritage structures, and provides an improved overall setting for the historical Christie House. Proposed work does not impact the components which are of historical significance.

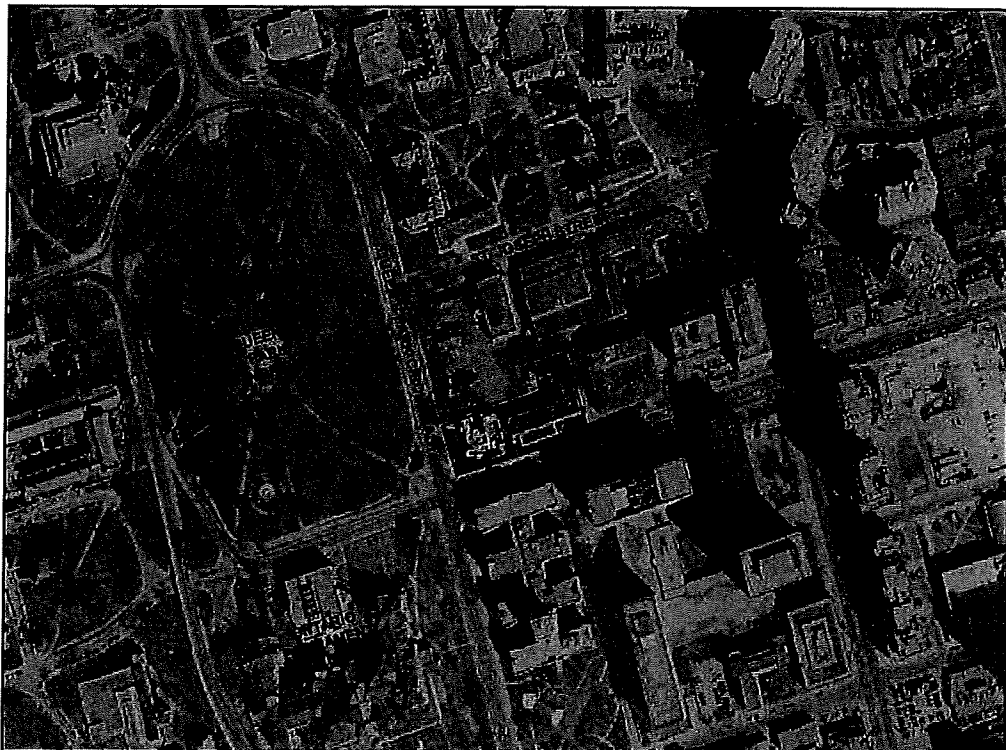
## **Report Preparation**

Prepared by:	Scott Bailey, Larkin Architect Limited
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Email:	scott@larkinarchitect.com
Date:	November, 2007

## **Table of Contents**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Location Plan</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Property Description</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Present Owner Contact</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Historical Research</b>
4.1	Christie House
4.1.1	Christie House Renovations
4.2	St. Mary's Hall
4.3	Fontbonne Hall
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Statement of Significance of the Property</b>
5.1	Christie House
5.2	St. Mary's Hall
5.3	Fontbonne Hall
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Existing Conditions Photographs</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Assessment of Existing Conditions</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Summary of Previous Alterations</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Summary of Conservation Objectives</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Summary of Issues</b>
10.1	Permission to Demolish Requested
10.2	Permission to Alter Requested
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Identification of Intervention Options</b>
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Identification of Additional Studies Required</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>A</b> Proposal Documents
	<b>B</b> Heritage Principals

## 1.0 Location Plan



*Location Plan -- Aerial View of Site*

## 2.0 Property Description

This Heritage Impact Statement pertains to the property at 90 Wellesley Street West, an address which describes three connected buildings on the site: the Christie House, Fontbonne Hall, and St Mary's Hall. Collectively, these buildings are known as St. Joseph's College.

Located at the northeast corner of Wellesley Street West and Queen's Park Circle East in Toronto, the site is across the street from Queen's Park North and the Ontario Parliament Buildings, and adjacent to many buildings on the University of Toronto campus.

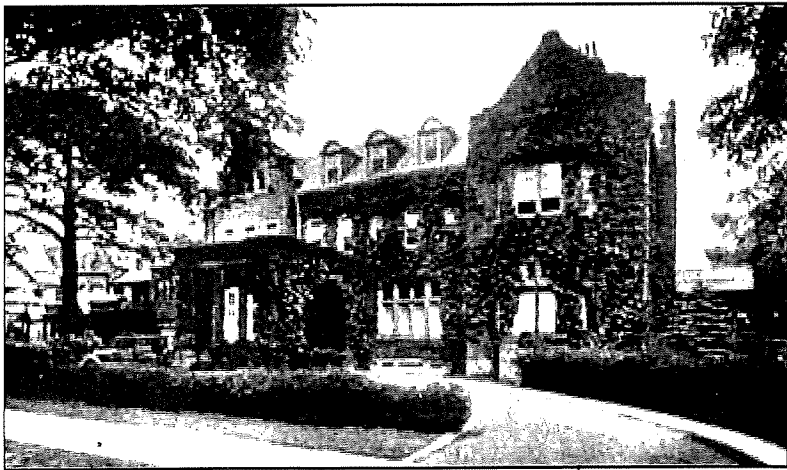
**3.0 Present Owner  
Contact**

**University of Toronto**

Elizabeth Sisam  
Assistant Vice President, Campus and Facilities Planning  
Architect, OAA, MRAIC

4th Floor, McMurrich Building  
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Fax: 416.971.2809  
Email: [elizabeth.sisam@utoronto.ca](mailto:elizabeth.sisam@utoronto.ca)



*Christie House from Southwest -- year unknown*



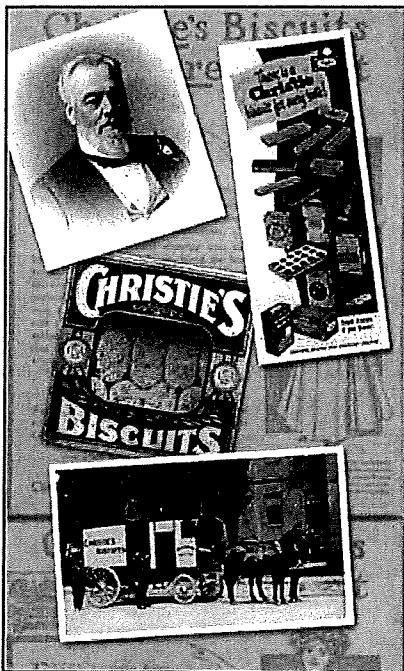
## 4.0 Historical Research

### 4.1 Christie House

The address "90 Wellesley Street" serves three buildings which are discretely known as "Christie House", "Fontbonne Hall" and "St. Mary's Hall". The first of these to be built was Christie House (1900), with St Mary's Hall and Fontbonne Hall erected in 1954 and 1958 respectively.

Toronto historian David Jones first dubbed the Christie Mansion "the house that cookies built", a monicker deriving from the occupation of the man at the centre of the story, one William Christie. Christie immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1848, a young, fully-apprenticed baker. Described in the first city directories in which he appears as a baker of breads and biscuits, by 1861 all references to bread had been removed and he is described only as a "wholesale biscuit manufacturer". In this capacity, Christie was extraordinarily successful, building larger and larger factories in Toronto in order to sell his biscuits from coast to coast.

Biscuit manufacturing made Christie very rich, and it also enabled him to become a man of great influence and prestige in the city. His status included a place on the University Senate, a position which apparently helped him to procure the site where the house is located. As the story goes, in the early 1880s, university properties were being parcelled out. Allegedly, Christie remarked at a meeting that he would be interested in the purchase of one of these properties, and a deal was concluded on the spot.



The house currently located on the site is not the building that Christie originally had built and lived in. The original house, built in 1885, was much more modest than the building which stands today. It was this first house that Mr. Christie lived in with his family until his death in 1900. Shortly after, the house was razed and a new, larger and more ornate building (designed by the firm of Gordon and Hellwell) was erected on the site -- the mansion which sits there now. This second house was inhabited by the Widow Christie until her death in 1909, at which point the property was inherited by the eldest son, Robert, who lived in it with his family until his death in 1926. In his will, Robert Christie left the sale of the house to the discretion of his trustees, who sold it to a Leonard Smith, who, a short four months later, sold it to the Sisters of St. Joseph. The following year, St. Joseph's College was opened, and the building has functioned in some capacity as part of the college until the present day.

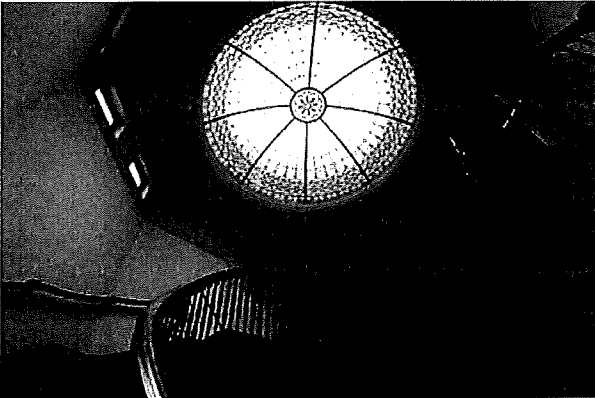
#### 4.1.1 Christie House Renovations

Both the City of Toronto's list of heritage properties and records in the archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph indicate that major renovations were undertaken by Robert Christie in 1910 after the death of his mother, and in order to make the mansion more inhabitable by Robert Christie's family. The architects of record for these renovations are the renowned Toronto firm Darling and Pearson.

Robert Christie's Mansion in 1926 was presumably not very well suited to the housing of students. While the Sisters of St. Joseph appear to have done a remarkable job in preserving the integrity of the ground floor areas, the grand staircase and the oculus above the stair, the second and third floors have been heavily altered. Walls have been moved, closets and washrooms have been added, and a partition (presumably for fire safety reasons) has been

erected at each of the second and third floor landings of the grand staircase. Many of the original fireplaces have been retained, though some appear to have been altered.

Changes on the ground floor have been limited to the servants' areas (in the northeast corner, where there is now a kitchen), the enclosure of the porch on the east, and an addition to the porch which closely resembles the porch construction and provides a stairway for connecting to the covered walkway leading to Fontbonne Hall. None of the plumbing facilities appear to be original. At some point the building was sprinklered.



*View of Oculus from Ground Floor*

#### 4.2 St Mary's Hall

St Mary's Hall is a 4-storey brick L shaped building which occupies the northeast portion of the site. It was completed in 1954, providing dormitory rooms and associated facilities for students at St. Joseph's College.

#### 4.3 Fontbonne Hall

Fontbonne Hall is a 4 storey brick building, and the largest building on the site. The last of the buildings erected on the site, it stretches west to Christie House and north to St. Mary's Hall, joining them through covered walkways and a small intervention (see 4.1.1 - Christie House Renovations). As well as providing dormitory space on the second, third and uppermost floors for students at St. Joseph's College, the building also provides classroom spaces and a laundry in the basement, a large, informal meeting area, and a 3000 s.f. chapel.

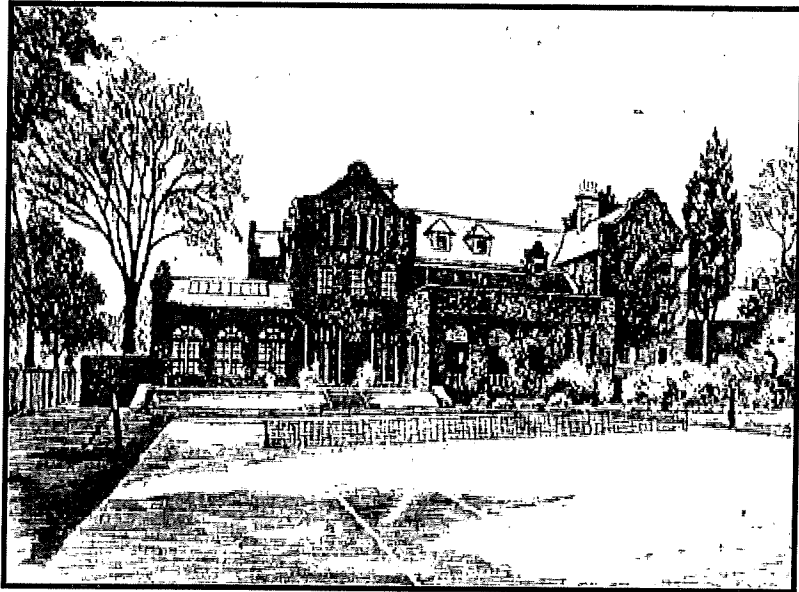
## 5.0 Statement of Significance of the Property

### 5.1 Christie House

While not the house that Christie actually lived in, the building retains historical significance by virtue of its strong connection to this colourful and prominent Toronto citizen, and is well-recognized as an important historical site in Toronto.



Photograph from Northwest, circa 1950



Etching of Christie House from East, circa 1940

Architecturally, the Christie House is a beautiful example of the Late Victorian style set prominently amongst other houses of that era along Queen's Park Circle East. The good physical condition of the building's exterior brickwork, the porte-cochere, and the crow-stepped parapet gables are of particular interest, as they differentiate the mansion from other houses along this strip.

The interior of the house is dominated by several architectural features of note. The grand staircase, which runs from the basement to the third floor, is an excellent example of Victorian craftsmanship. The staircase is capped with a magnificent oculus which allows light deep into the heart of the mansion. The ground floor comprises several well-maintained rooms including a parlor with built-in cabinets and a secret door; a grand hall with an ornate vaulted ceiling; a sitting room with views out to the street; a dining room dominated by a large fireplace and intricate ceiling plasterwork; and a sun room with marble floors, skylights, and large vaulted windows.

## 5.2 St. Mary's Hall

The historic significance of the property at 90 Wellesley Street West and the purpose of its inclusion on the City of Toronto's inventory of heritage properties rests predominantly on the Christie House. The fact that Christie House has remained largely legible in both the interior and the exterior provides a strong basis for its conservation.

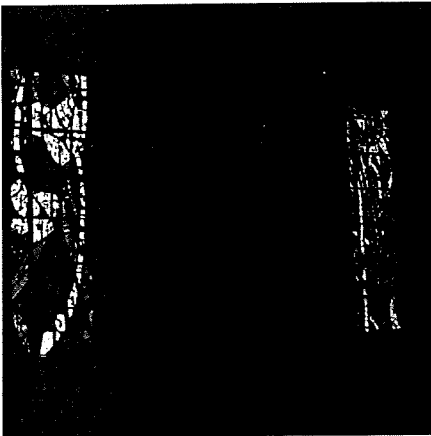
St. Mary's Hall is a common example of the kind of modernist architecture built in the 1950s. Its form and material construction do not relate to the mansion to which (through Fontbonne Hall) it is attached. While it has served St. Joseph's College well, and continues to serve the University of Toronto, it is not significantly linked to a greater cultural or social history.

For these reasons, St. Mary's Hall is not a significant historical feature of the site.

## 5.3 Fontbonne Hall

As stated above, the historic significance of the property at 90 Wellesley Street West and the purpose of its inclusion on the City of Toronto's inventory of heritage properties rests predominantly on the Christie House.

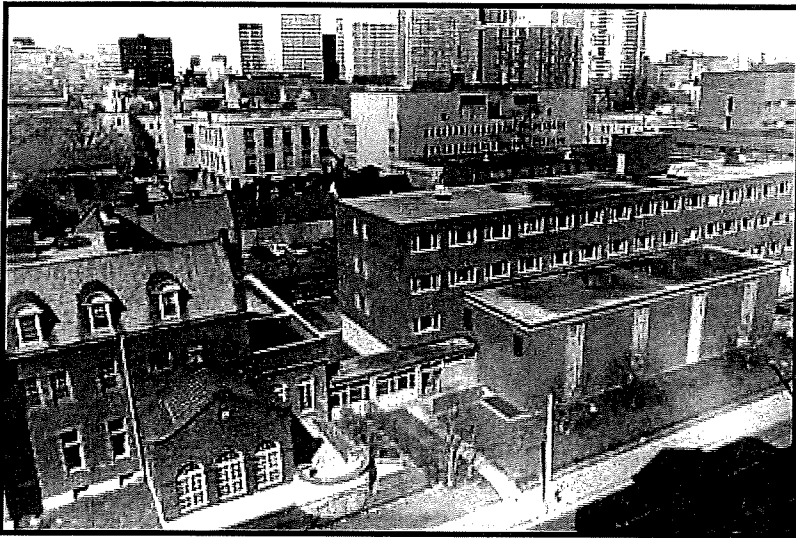
Fontbonne Hall does not have either the architectural significance, nor the historic or cultural connection to the City to identify it as a significant historical feature of the site. Further, the connection of Fontbonne to Christie House is the one area where the integrity of the original building has been blurred: the porch of the existing house was extended to the edge of the sun room to allow for a connecting stair. In this extension, the brickwork was closely matched, such that the distinction between the new and the original are evident only through a slight mis-matching of the colour of the brick. Presumably, it is at this point in time that the exterior porch was enclosed.



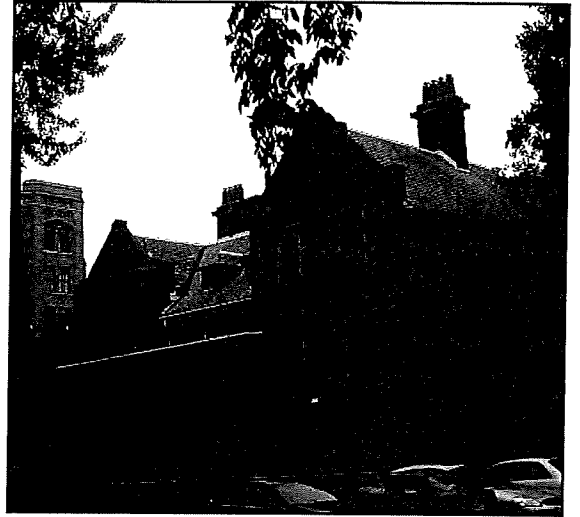
*Stained glass in Fontbonne Hall chapel*



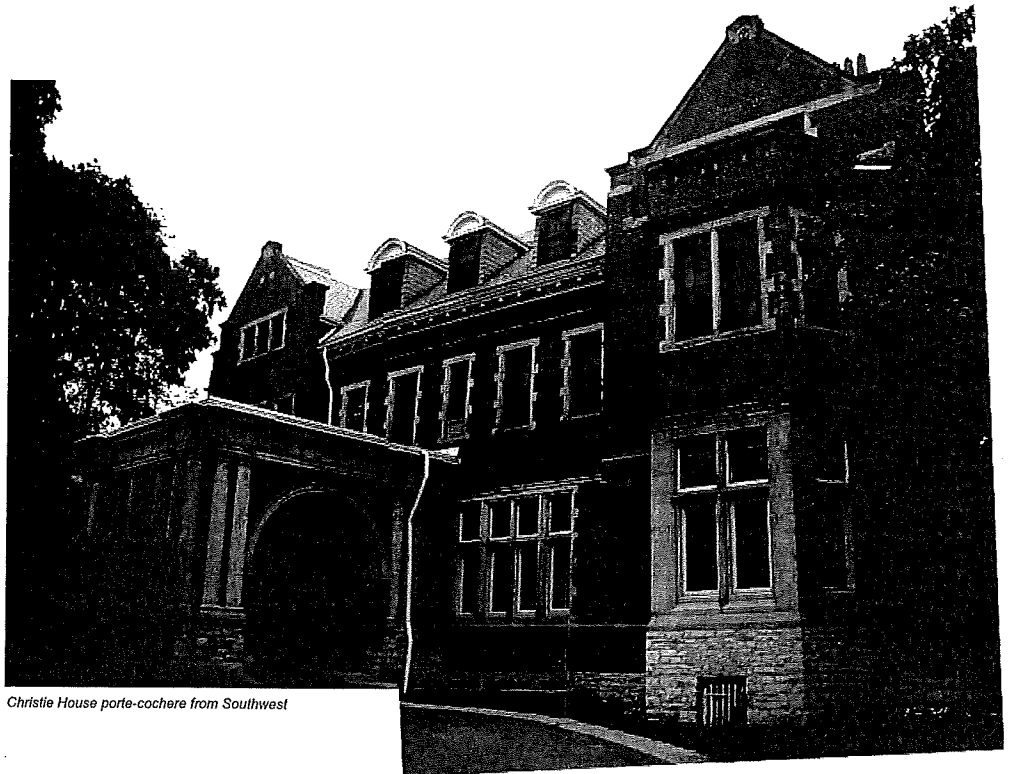
**6.0 Existing Condition  
Drawings and  
Photographs**



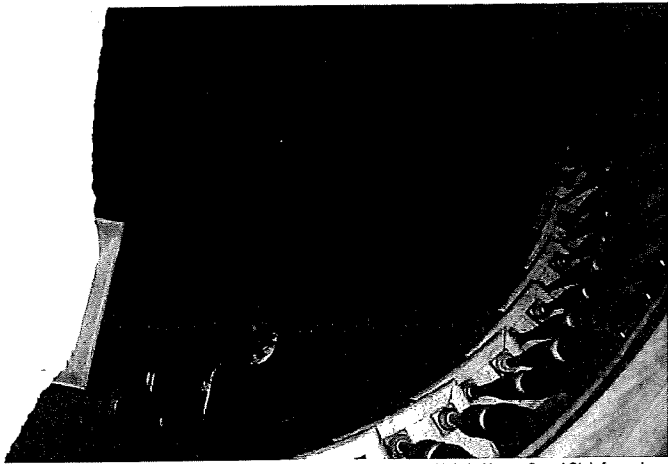
*Aerial view of Christie and Fontbonne from South, circa 1958*



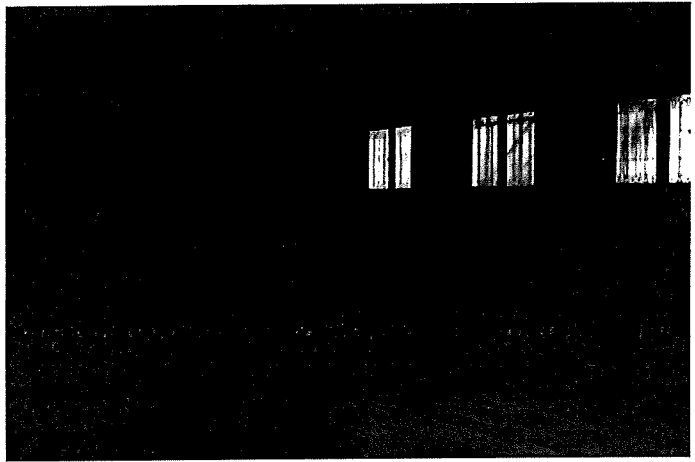
*Christie House exterior porch from N ortheast*



*Christie House porte-cochere from Southwest*



*Christie House Grand Stair from above*

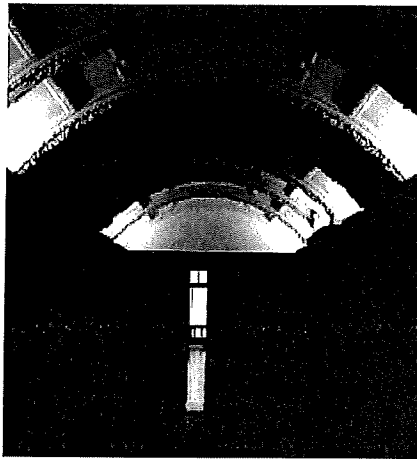


*Christie House parlor fireplace and casework*





*Christie House -- Great Hall*



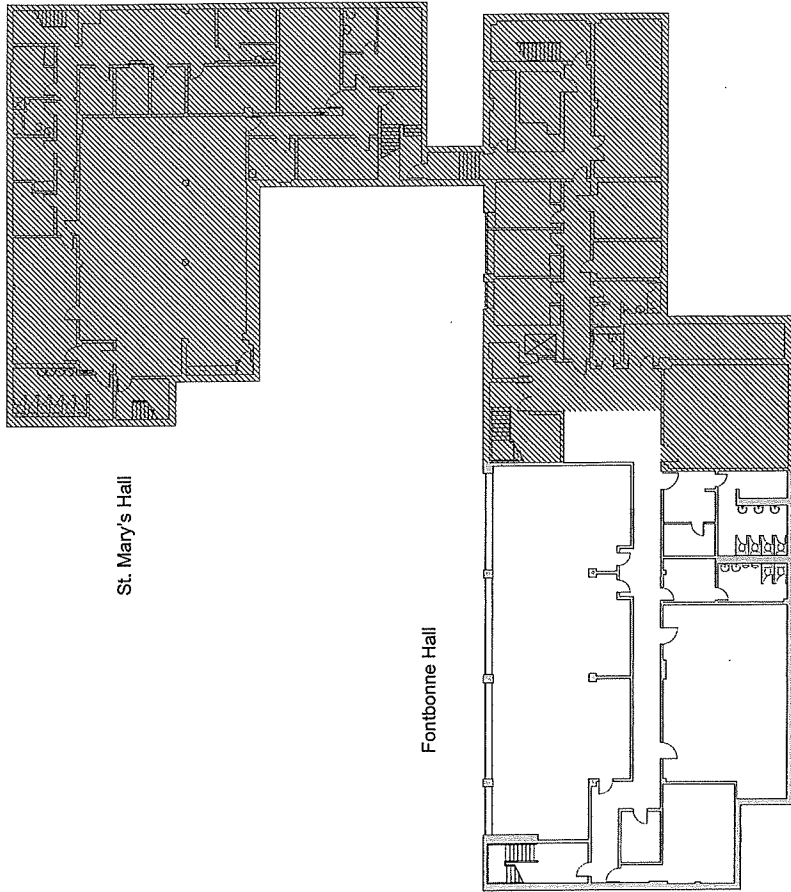
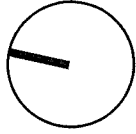
*Coffered Ceiling of Great Hall*



*Christie House -- Sun Room*

# Existing Drawings

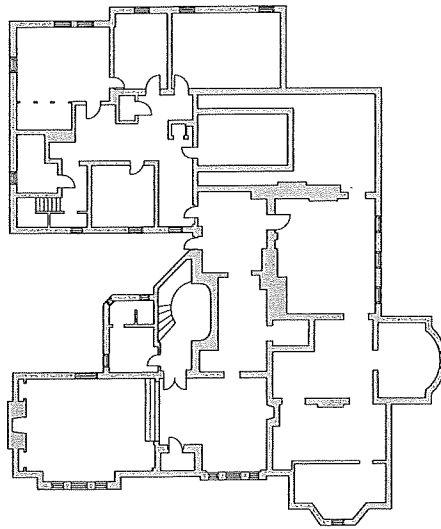
Shading indicates areas outside proposed Regis College relocation.



St. Mary's Hall

Fontbonne Hall

Christie House

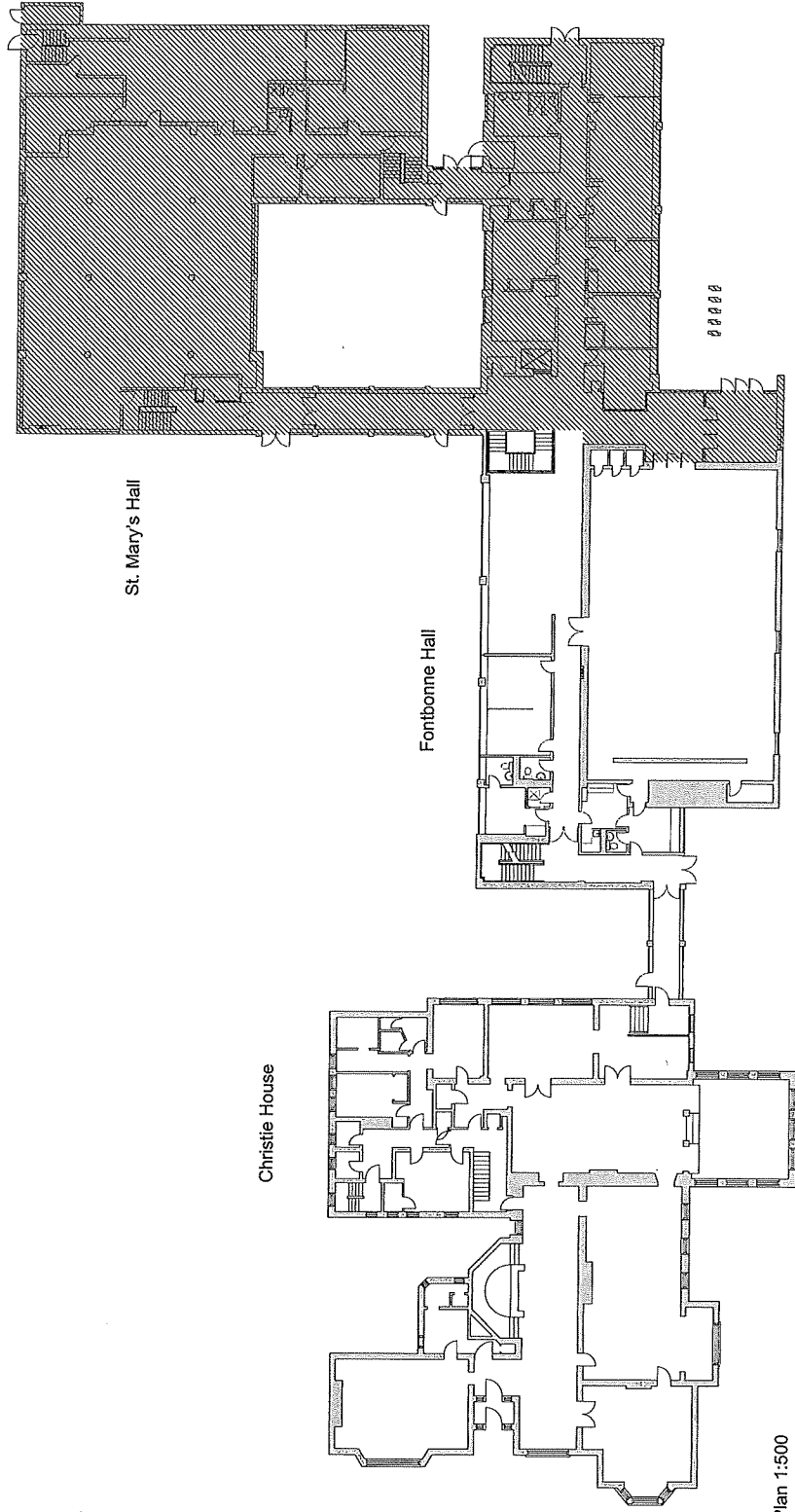
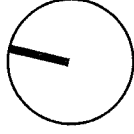


Existing Basement Plan 1:500



# Existing Drawings

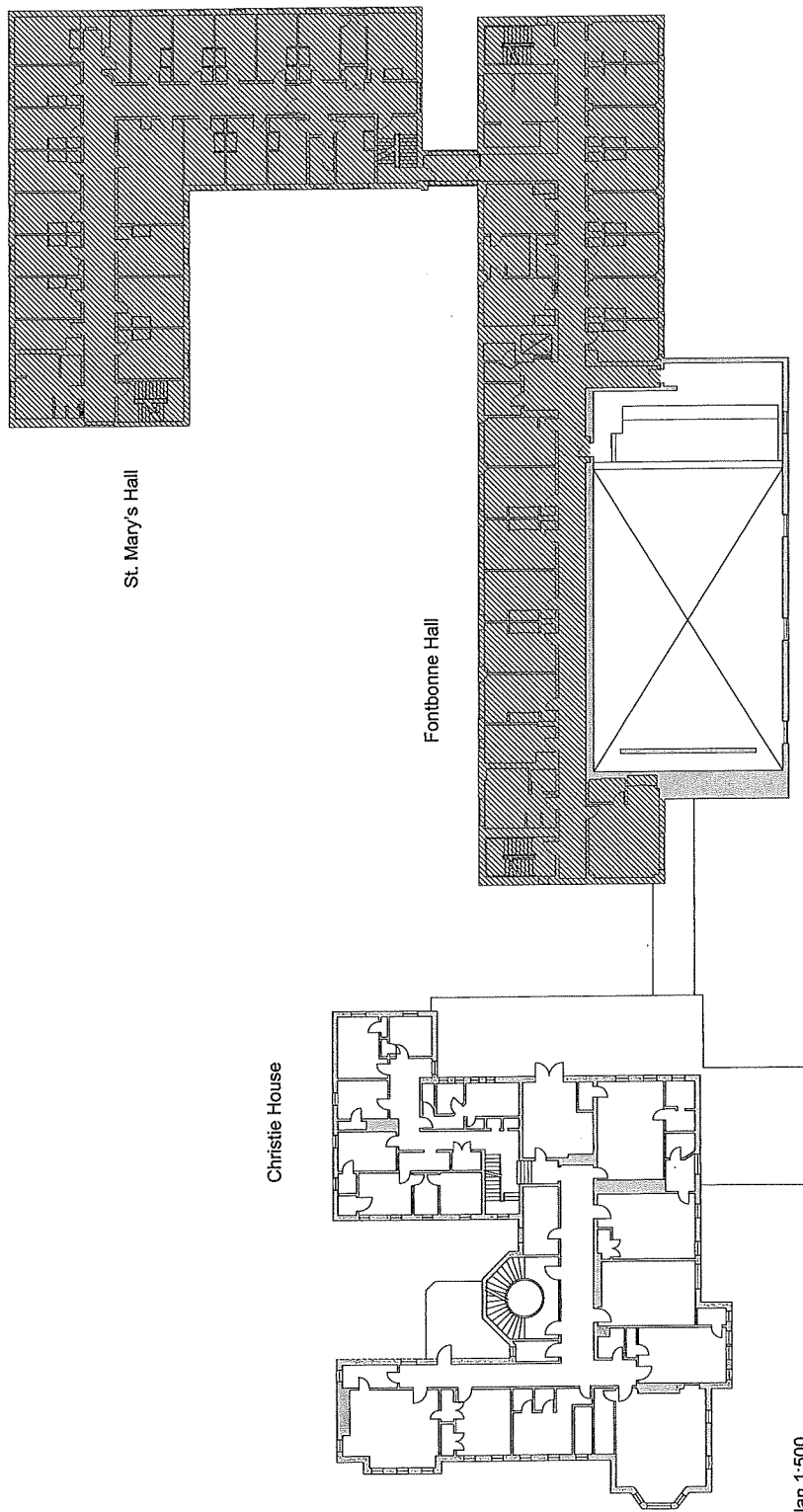
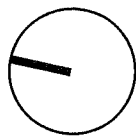
Shading indicates areas outside proposed Regis College relocation.



Existing Ground Floor Plan 1:500

# Existing Drawings

Shading indicates areas outside proposed Regis College relocation.

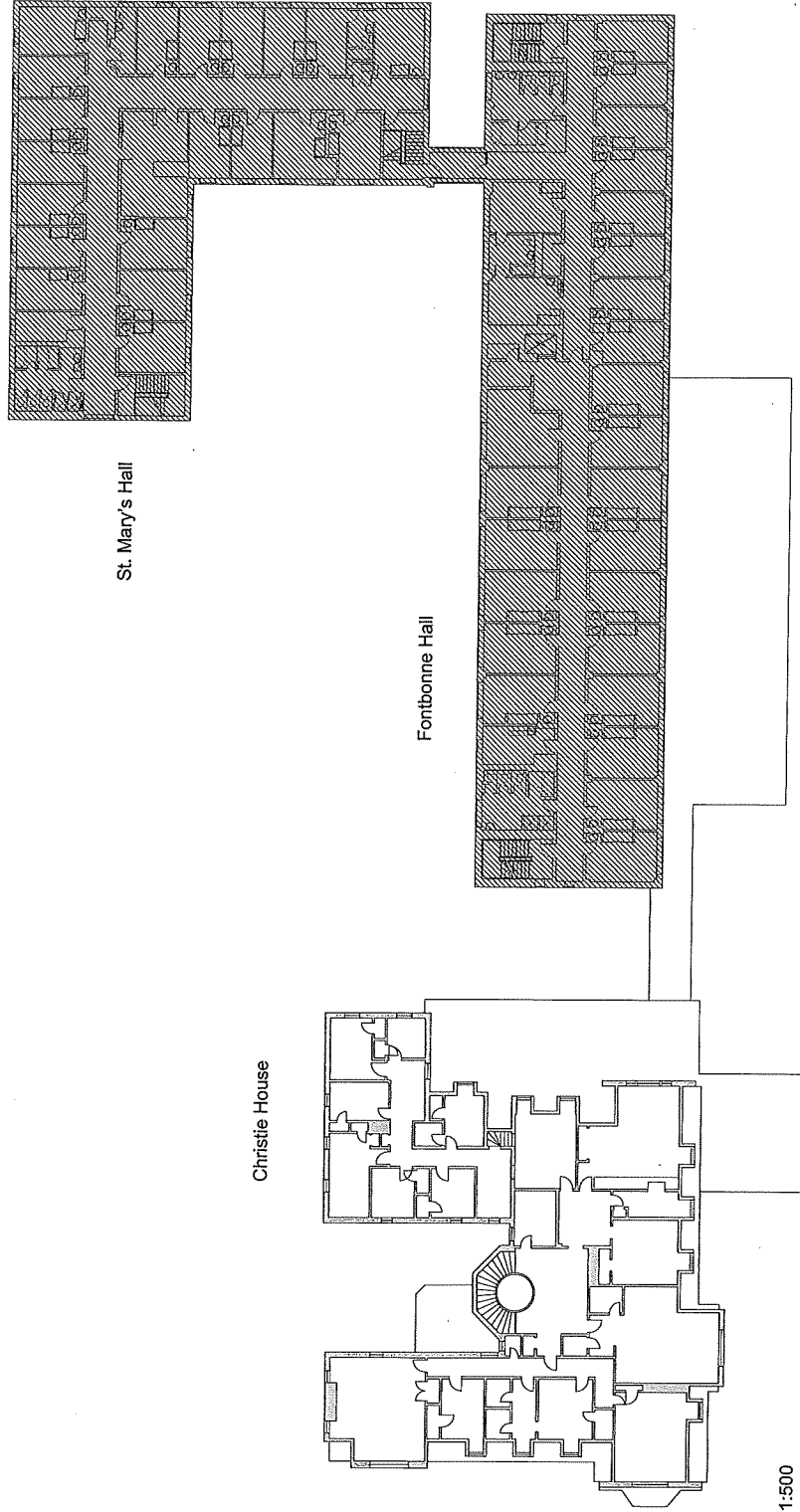
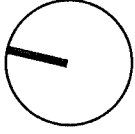


Existing Second Floor Plan 1:500



# Existing Drawings

Shading indicates areas outside proposed Regis College relocation.



Existing Third Floor Plan 1:500

## 7.0 Assessment of Existing Conditions

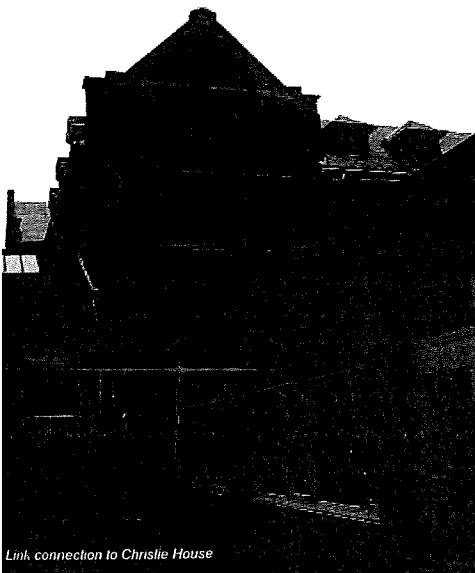
In 2006, CDW and Ass. were commissioned by the Jesuit Brothers of Upper Canada to prepare a Conditions Assessment Report for the property at 29 Queen's Park Crescent. A VFA Requirement Detail Report for Christie House commissioned by the University of Toronto followed in 2007. Finally, a conditions assessment for the entire property at 90 Wellesley Street West was prepared. These reports were undertaken with the view to the sale of the property by the Sisters of St. Joseph to the University, who will be leasing the property to Regis College, the Jesuit theological college at the University of Toronto. The following summarizes these assessments.

### 7.1 Christie House

No major structural deficiencies were noted. Minor deterioration was noted in the exterior masonry walls, and localized re-pointing and brick replacement is required. The slate roofs are in fair to poor condition, and the slate roofing should be replaced on the north, east, and west sides in the short term. The several flat roofs of the building are aging and should be replaced. The electrical system is old but serviceable, and the heat exchanger should be replaced. The wood windows require refinishing.

### 7.2 St. Mary's Hall

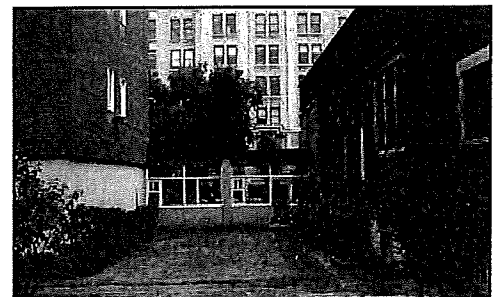
St. Mary's is in better than average condition compared to other University of Toronto buildings of the same vintage. The exterior cladding is generally in fair to good condition, although the main floor has original wood-framed windows which are deteriorating. There do not appear to be any major roof leaks, but the roof assembly is estimated to have a remaining life of 5-8 years. The kitchen areas require renovation, and there are areas where water infiltration in the basement is causing deterioration of the interior finishes. There is a common fire alarm system for all three buildings on the site.



Link connection to Christie House



Courtyard at Fontbonne Hall and link to St. Mary's Hall



Courtyard between Fontbonne and Christie House from north

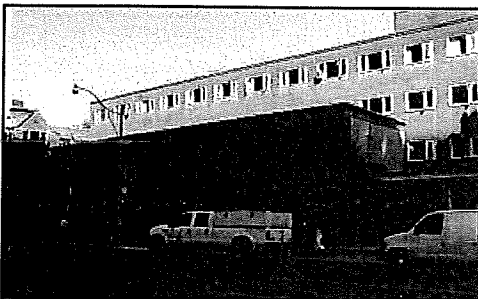
### 7.3 Fontbonne Hall

Fontbonne Hall is generally in better than average condition compared to other University of Toronto buildings of the same vintage. The exterior cladding is generally in fair to good condition. Some of the original window panes are cracked, and some of the steel window frames are corroding, staining the brick below. There do not appear to be any major roof leaks, but the roof assembly is estimated to have a remaining life of 5-8 years. Water infiltration in the basement is causing deterioration of the interior finishes.

## 8.0 Summary of Previous Alterations

As described in detail above, the history of the site is comprised of a series of renovations and additions to the second Christie Mansion. In summary:

- 1885 Original Christie House is completed
- 1900 Original house razed and new house erected on site
- 1910 Renovations by Darling and Pearson for Robert Christie
- 1926 Renovations by Sisters of St. Joseph for St. Joseph's College
- 1954 Erection of St. Mary's Hall
- 1958 Erection of Fontbonne Hall



Fontbonne Hall from south



Fontbonne Hall interior lounge

## 9.0 Proposed Addition

A 197 m<sup>2</sup> addition to the former St. Joseph's College has been prepared by Larkin Architect Limited to allow for the relocation of Regis College to this site. The proposed addition is necessary to allow Regis College to provide amenities suitable to a school of theology at the University of Toronto. The current area and the awkwardness of the connection between Christie House and Fontbonne Hall are insufficient to meet the college requirements. The addition achieves the programmatic requirements of the college, and follows a set of heritage objectives as established by Larkin Architect Limited along with Regis College for the building addition.

### 9.1 Summary of Conservation Objectives

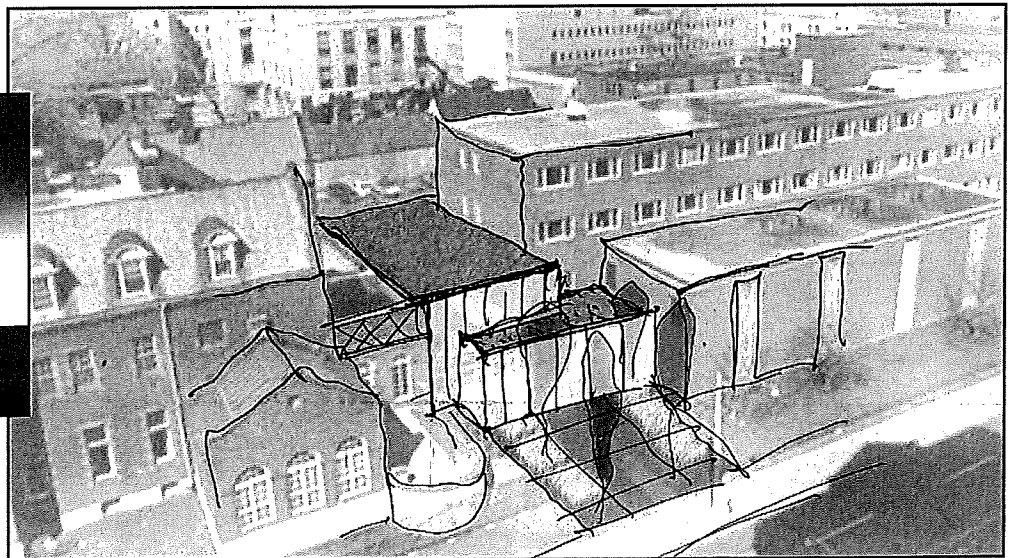
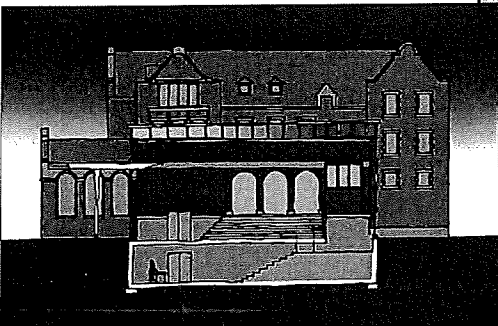
It was mandated that the college's proposed addition would:

provide a design that was sensitive to the structure, form, and material qualities of the heritage components of the Christie House,

have little or no physical impact on the heritage components of the Christie House,

provide an address to the college that was distinct from the other faculties which inhabit St. Mary's Hall and Fontbonne Hall,

provide a cohesiveness to the space which is to be Regis College while maintaining the integrity of the Christie House.



Further, the proposal adheres to the "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada" recommendations for new additions to historic buildings. The following outlines the approach to these standards:

The new addition fully retains all historically significant components, and abuts in a manner that does not interfere with a clear reading of the existing house.

The addition clearly draws a distinction between what is historic and what is new by its contemporary design approach.

The addition is complementary to the historic building through material, architectural detailing, and appropriate massing. The proposed addition will restore a clear reading of the (previously) exterior porch -- where the connection to the addition is to occur -- as a previously exterior feature. Expanses of glazing will allow the mass of the historic building to be clearly read from inside and outside.

The proposed addition will complement the historic house by providing an appropriate connection to the adjacent mass of Fontbonne Hall.

The proposed addition will connect to the historically significant house in a delicate manner, such that, in the event that the addition is removed, this can be done without damage to the original building.



## 10.0 Summary of Issues

### 10.1 Permission to Demolish Requested

#### *Ontario Heritage Act -- Demolition*

*Authority: O.B.C. 1.1.2.2.(1)(a)(xvi) Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act with respect to the consent of the council of a municipality for the demolition of a building.*

To make the relocation of Regis College to the St. Joseph's College site feasible, the existing 1958 link between Christie House and Fontbonne Hall needs to be removed. As well, interior portions of Fontbonne Hall, at the ground floor and basement levels, need to be demolished.

As sites and not buildings or their specific components are listed, the entirety of the property at 90 Wellesley Street West is deemed to be of heritage value. As discussed above, neither Fontbonne Hall nor St. Mary's Hall are significant historical features of the site. Replacement of the tenuous link with a more appropriate connection between Christie and Fontbonne will, in fact, benefit the character of the historic building.

### 10.2 Permission to Alter Requested

#### *Ontario Heritage Act -- Alteration*

*Authority: O.B.C. 1.1.2.2.(1)(a)(xvi) Section 33 of the Ontario Heritage Act*

The proposed addition interfaces with the rear (east side) of the Christie House. Appropriate heritage approaches have been taken to ensure the proposed addition is complementary in material and respectful in form to the historic building, and that Christie House remains the premier building on site.

The main rooms of the ground floor and the grand staircase in its entirety are being retained, and need only minimal repairs thanks to the excellent upkeep by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Interior renovations to the basement, second, and third floors are required in order to meet the needs of the college. As these floors have already been heavily altered and renovated, first by Robert Christie in 1910, then by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1926 for conversion to St. Joseph's College, and then again with the erection of St. Mary's and Fontbonne Hall in the 1950's, the historical significance of these areas has already been lost, and therefore renovation of these parts should not be of heritage concern. Where original components are in evidence (most notably, the fireplace mantles, trims, and mouldings), these parts will be retained and the design tailored to ensure their clear reading.

Nonetheless, since the site and not buildings or their specific components are listed, approval for these renovations is required and requested.

## **11.0 Identification of Intervention Options**

Larkin Architect Limited examined various planning options.

### **Option 1:**

Ground floor and basement addition between Christie and Fontbonne.  
Demolition of existing link.  
Renovation of Fontbonne Hall.  
Renovation of basement, 2nd and 3rd floors of Christie House.  
Insertion of elevators.

Comments:  
Addition as proposed.  
Achieves all project mandates.

### **Option 2:**

Ground floor and basement addition between Christie and Fontbonne.  
Demolition of existing link.  
Renovation of Fontbonne Hall.  
No renovations to upper floors of Christie House, and no elevator.

Comments:  
Accessibility not achieved.  
Difficult to insert programme objectives into existing dormatory configuration.

### **Option 3:**

Relocation of Regis College to site without addition.

Comments:  
Distinct accessible address of college absent.  
Legibility of Regis College as cohesive entity absent.  
Access to library difficult.  
Insufficient room for extensive library collection.  
Accessibility of Christie House not achieved  
Difficult to insert programme objectives into existing dormatory configuration.

**12.0 Identification of  
Additional Studies  
Required**

No additional studies required.

**Credits**

The chronological sequence of developments on the Christie House site was obtained from "History of 29 Queen's Park Crescent" by Bill Moreau and "The house that cookies built" by Donald Jones (Toronto Star, April 19, 1975, pg. H2), both courtesy of the Sisters of St. Joseph Archives.

Additional chronological sequencing was obtained from the Toronto Heritage Properties Inventory.

Archival photographs of Christie House were obtained from the online St. Michael's College Gallery at <http://www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/gallery/photos/stmikesarchives/index.htm>.

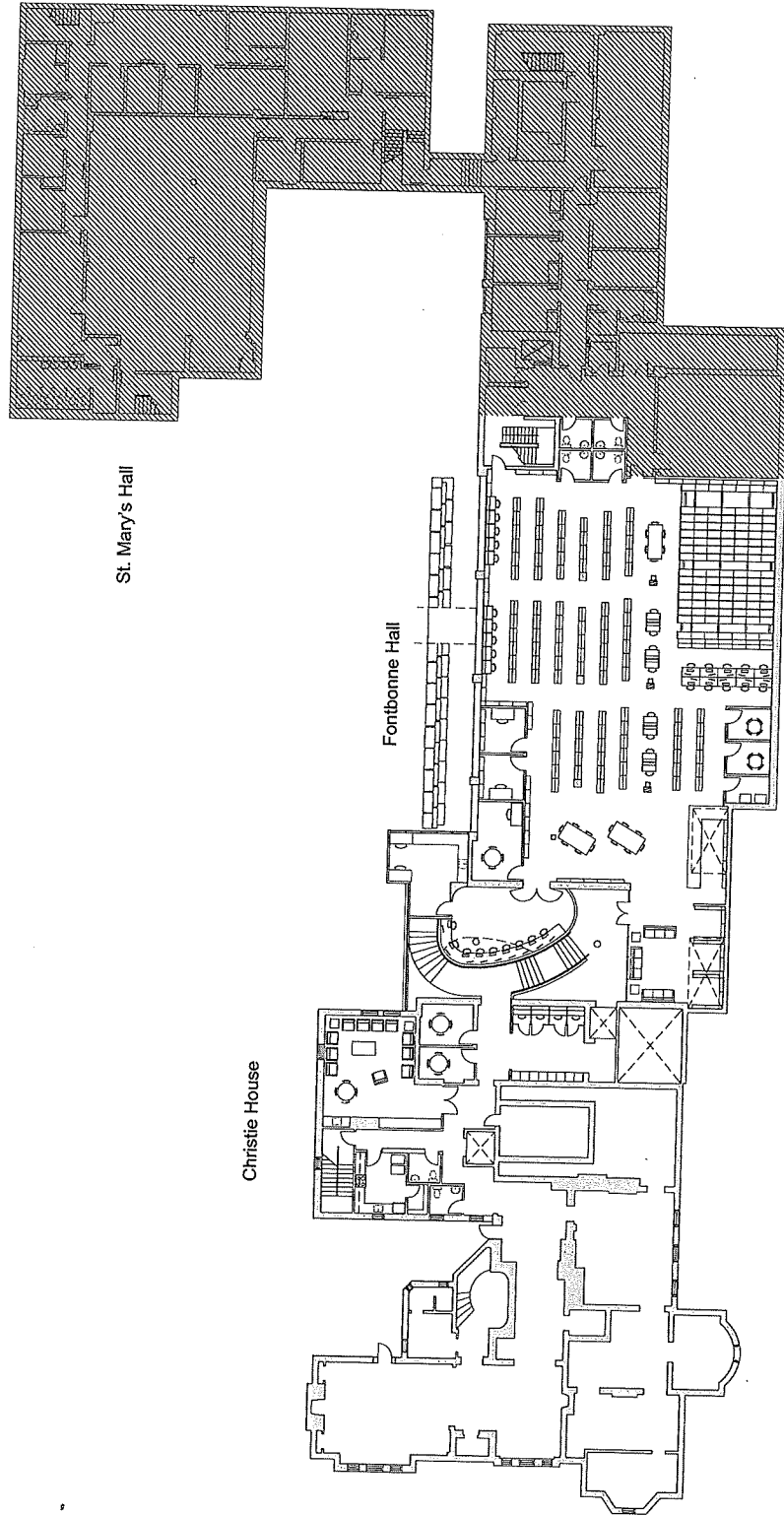
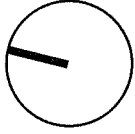
Additional photographs by Larkin Architect Limited.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Parks Canada, 2003.



# Appendix A Proposal Documents

Shading indicates areas outside  
proposed Regis College relocation.

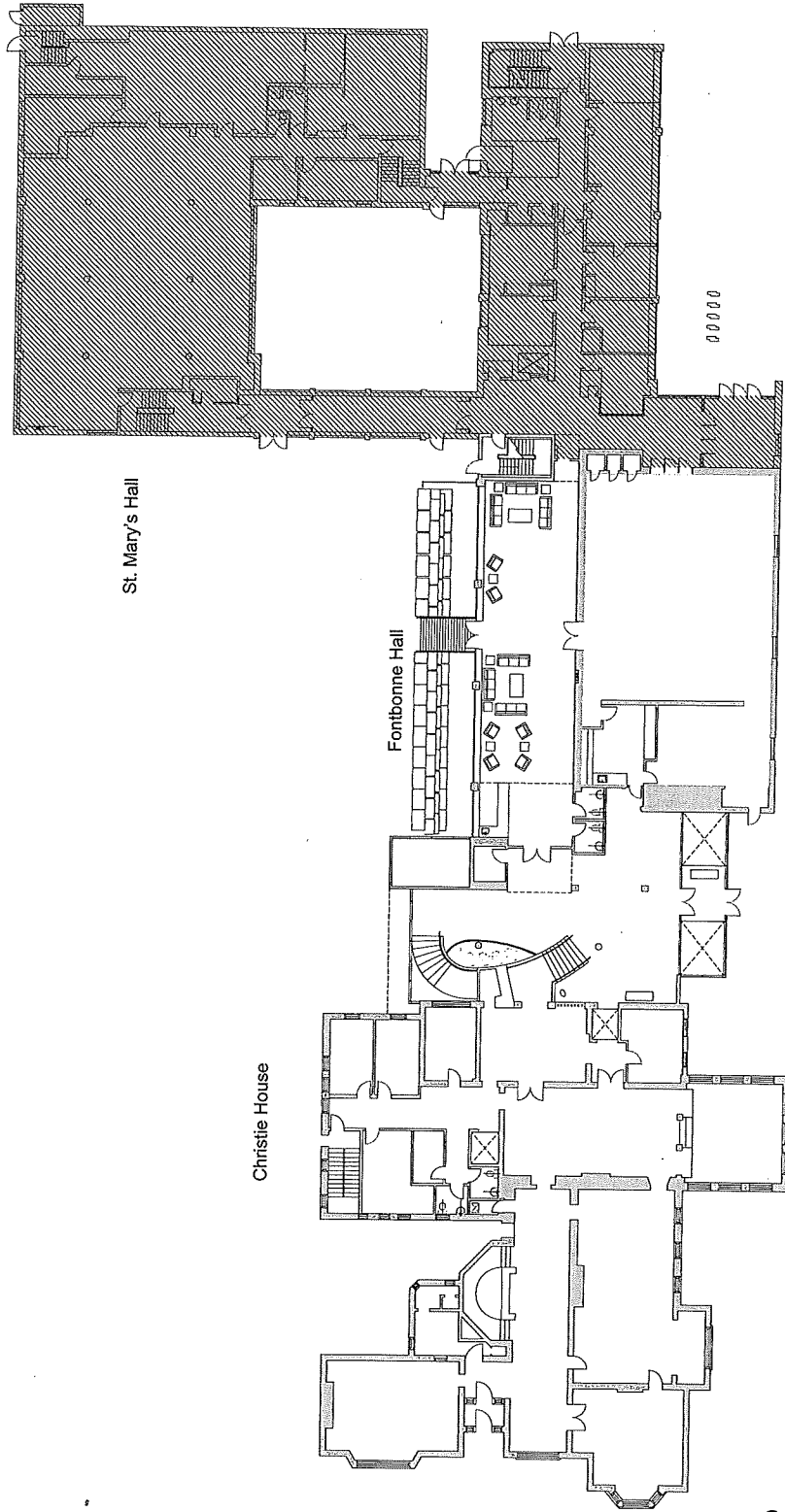
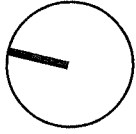


Basement Plan 1:500



# Appendix A Proposal Documents

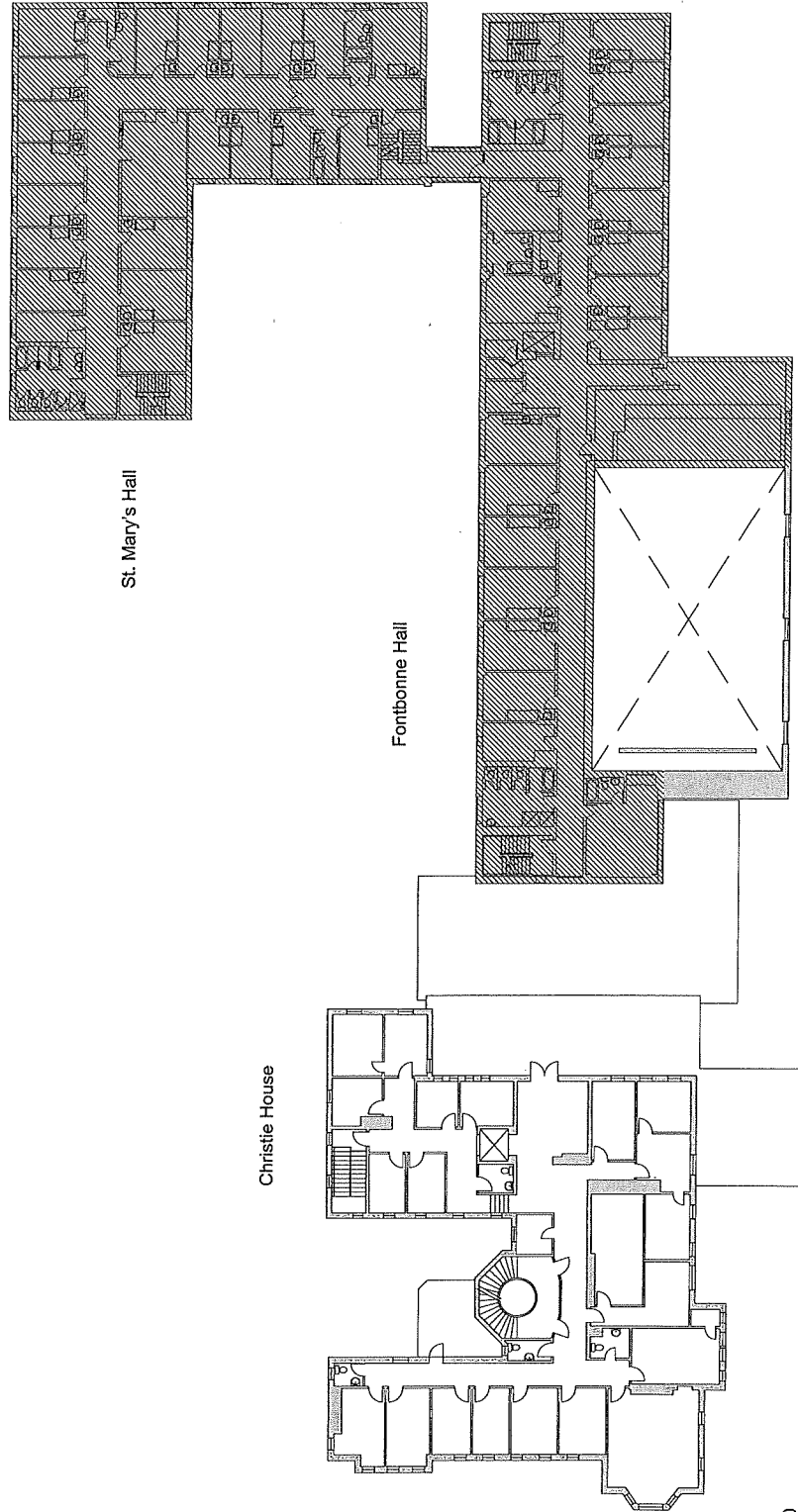
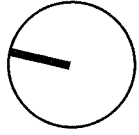
Shading indicates areas outside  
proposed Regis College relocation.



Ground Floor Plan 1:500

# Appendix A Proposal Documents

Shading indicates areas outside  
proposed Régis College relocation.

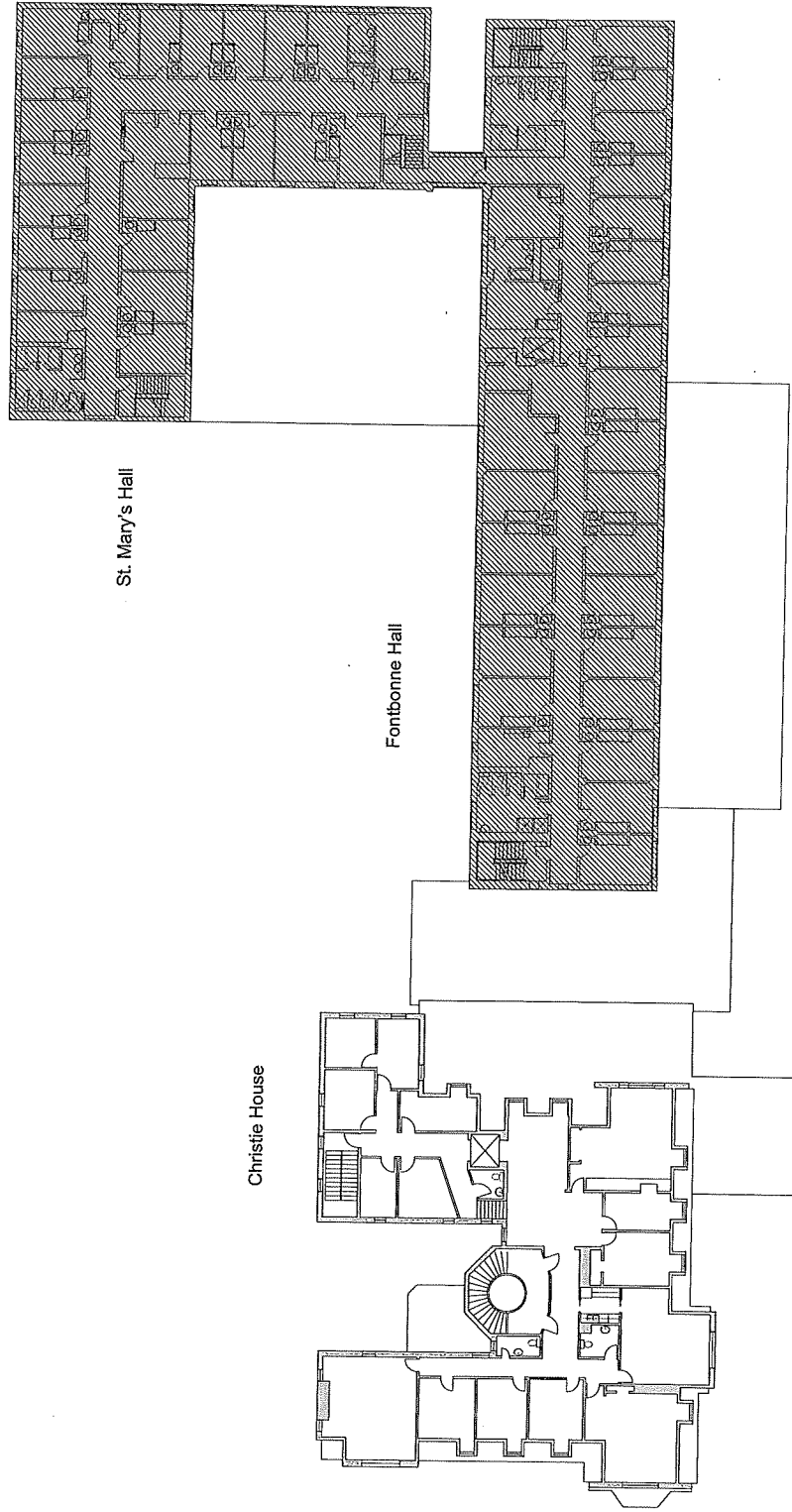
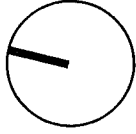


Second Floor Plan 1:500



# Appendix A Proposal Documents

Shading indicates areas outside  
proposed Regis College relocation.



Third Floor Plan 1:500

## Appendix B Heritage Principals

The design for the addition and renovation to Christie House and Fontbonne Hall complies with the guidelines provided below, found in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Standards and Guidelines

### New Additions to Historic Places

#### Recommended

Placing functions and services required for the proposed use in existing non-character-defining spaces rather than constructing a new addition.

Constructing a new addition to retain as many of the historic materials as possible and to ensure that the character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed, or the heritage value undermined.

Designing a new addition in a manner that draws a clear distinction between what is historic and what is new.

Considering the design for an attached exterior addition in terms of its relationship to the historic place as well as the historic district or neighbourhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic place. In either case, it should be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and colour, yet be distinguishable from the historic place.

Placing a new addition on a non-character-defining portion and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic place.

When required for a new use of a building, designing a rooftop addition that is set back from the wall plane such that it is as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the public realm.

#### Not Recommended

Constructing a new addition when the proposed use could be met by altering existing non-character-defining spaces.

Constructing a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic resource are obscured, damaged or destroyed, or the heritage value is otherwise undermined.

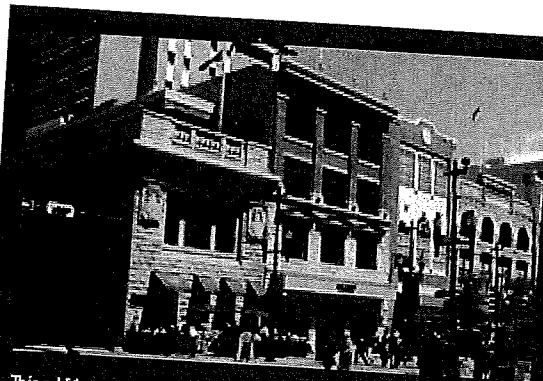
Duplicating the exact form, material, style and detailing of the historic resource in a new addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic place.

Replicating a historic style or period in a new addition.

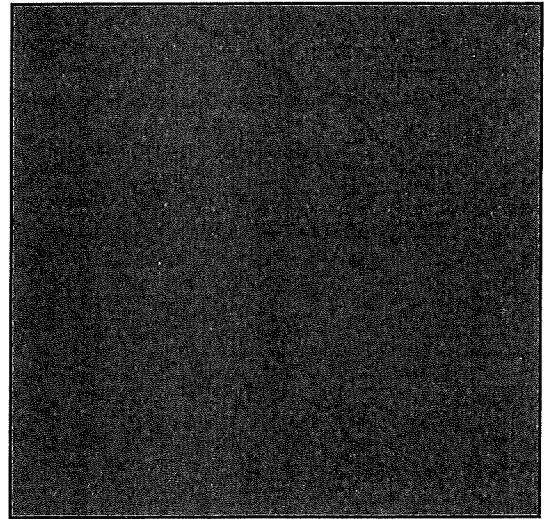
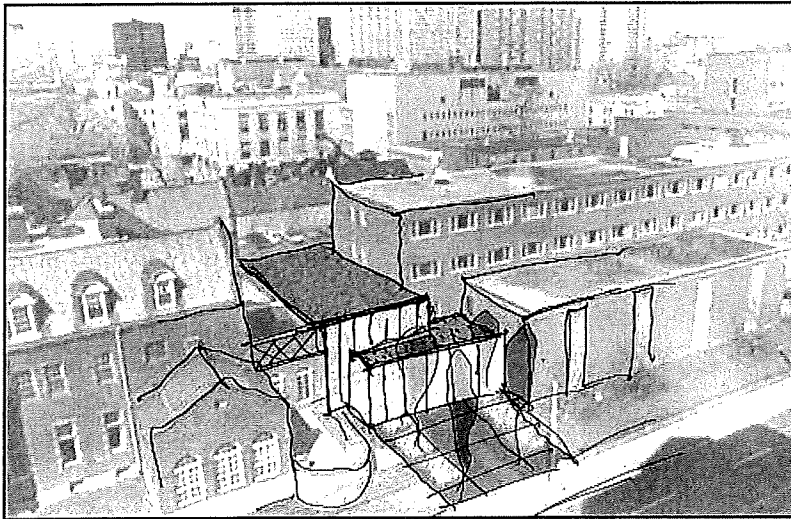
Designing and constructing new additions that diminish or eliminate the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location or setting.

Designing a new addition that obscures, damages or destroys character-defining features of the historic place or undermines its heritage value.

Constructing a rooftop addition to a building so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.



This addition to a bank in Calgary, Alberta was built as a greenhouse type rooftop structure set back from the wall plane. The existing high parapet making it as inconspicuous as possible from the street, largely conceals it. While distinguishable from the elaborate sandstone exterior of the original building, it is physically and visually compatible, and subordinate to, the historic building.



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