

Press release

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Leslie L. Dan Pharmacy Building opens in Toronto

Foster and Partners Leslie L. Dan Pharmacy Building opened today at the University of Toronto. The new building provides state-of-the-art facilities for more than 1200 undergraduate and postgraduate students. Currently the only pharmacy faculty in Ontario, it centralises all teaching, research and administrative spaces within a single, efficient structure, many of which were previously spread throughout the university campus.

Nigel Dancey, Senior Partner, said: The Leslie L. Dan Pharmacy Building takes functional logic to a new dimension it is a highly efficient new home for the faculty that both relates to the historic context and establishes a bold presence on the campus.

Located on one of the most prominent sites in the city, the building is at the south east corner of the University of Toronto campus on Queens Park. Adjacent to two significant historic buildings - the Ontario Legislature and the Royal Ontario Museum - the Foster design creates a strong presence that is sensitive to this context. The building is divided into three parts: undergraduate lecture theatres at basement level; a five-storey colonnaded study area at ground level; and seven-storeys of postgraduate research space above. With public and teaching areas concentrated on the lower floors, and the upper floors containing the more private postgraduate research areas and offices which benefit from natural light, circulation requirements are minimised.

Lifted 20m-high, the colonnaded area aligns with the cornice heights of the nearby listed buildings. Transparent and flooded with daylight, this elegant space is both a window on the rest of the campus and also forms the hub of undergraduate activities. An atrium slot runs throughout the building providing visual connections between all floors.

Two dramatic pods, created from steel baskets hang within the atrium space. The larger of the two houses a 60-person lecture theatre and a reading room above. The other accommodates a smaller 24-person classroom with the faculty lounge. These dynamic objects were designed and constructed with simple, efficient engineering techniques. Suspended by solid steel bars and wrapped in a silver skin, they appear to float within the atrium, allowing the eye to follow their elegant contours without detracting from the generous and unqualified volume of the space. At night, the atrium can be illuminated with varying colours of red, green and blue, and the image of the pods is repeated in the buildings darkened glazing which generates a series of striking reflections.

The compact footprint establishes a generous border at ground level, allowing the campus to connect with the city. The building skin is oriented to maximise daylight where needed and minimise unwanted solar gain, reinforcing its clear and logical diagram. The full height atrium functions as a light slot, bringing daylight deep into the buildings plan.

For further information
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