

A History of this Site

Since its earliest days, the facilities on this site have addressed the most pressing public issues of the time. In the 1860s, planning and construction began for a new, progressive Jail and a House of Refuge. The House was constructed to shelter Toronto's "poor, needy, and disabled" but was converted to serve as an isolation hospital when a smallpox epidemic began in the 1870s. Over the years the hospital grew, and in recent years has evolved into Bridgepoint Active Healthcare, Canada's leader in understanding, treating, and managing complex chronic illness.

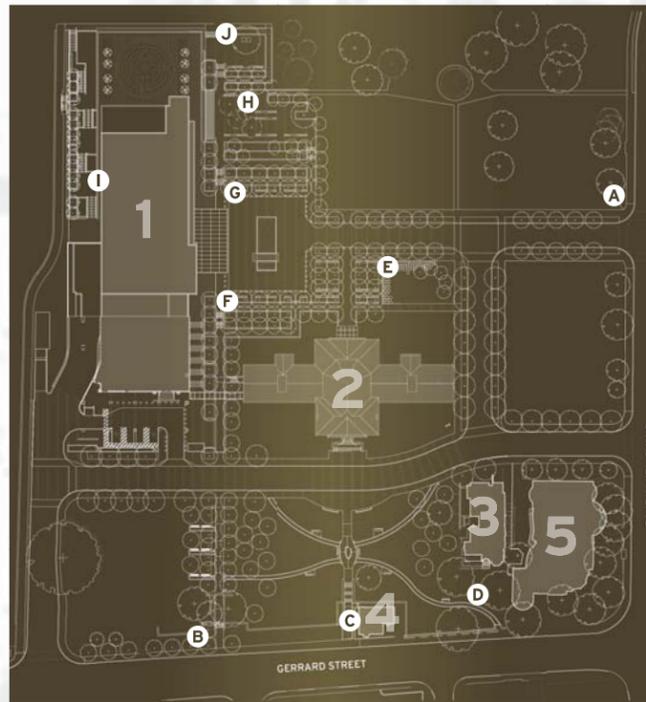
Site Buildings

- 1 Bridgepoint Hospital (2013)
- 2 Old Don Jail (1864)
Bridgepoint Administration Building (2013)
- 3 Governor's House (1888)
Emily's House, Philip Aziz Centre (2013)
- 4 Gate House (1865)
Philip Aziz Centre Administration (2013)
- 5 Riverdale Public Library (1910)

Information Panels

Information panels throughout the Bridgepoint campus tell the fascinating stories associated with the site. As you explore, look out for these exterior panels:

- A A History of this Site
- B A History of this Site
- C The Gate House
- D The Governor's House
- E The Exercise Yards
- F Hospital Development & Evolution
- G Physicians & Nurses
- H Riverdale Hospital
- I Life: A Mosaic Tile Mural
- J The Landscape: Scadding's Property



Bridgepoint Health Site Map, 2013.

Site Timeline

- 1793 – 243 acres are granted by Toronto's founder, Governor General Simcoe, to his estate manager, John Scadding
- 1856 – 120 acres is sold by Scadding's family to the City of Toronto
- 1860 – The House of Refuge is constructed for Toronto's "poor, needy, and disabled"
- 1864 – The Old Don Jail is constructed as a more humane and orderly new alternative to Toronto's previous three jails
- 1865 – A Gate House is constructed for the gatekeeper of the Old Don Jail
- 1872 – The House of Refuge is converted to the Smallpox Hospital
- 1888 – The Governor's House is constructed when the south centre block of the Old Don Jail is converted to cells and other facilities
- 1891 – The Smallpox Hospital is renamed the Isolation Hospital, responding to new epidemics such as scarlet fever and diphtheria
- 1893 – A New Isolation Hospital is constructed
- 1904 – The Isolation Hospital is renamed Riverdale Isolation Hospital
- 1904 – Riverdale Public Library is constructed

- 1957 – The Riverdale Isolation Hospital is renamed Riverdale Hospital
- 1958 – The new East Wing of Metropolitan Toronto Jail is constructed
- 1963 – The new Riverdale Hospital opens
- 1964 – The Don Valley Parkway opens
- 1977 – The Old Don Jail closes
- 2002 – Riverdale Hospital is renamed Bridgepoint Hospital
- 2013 – The new Bridgepoint Hospital and Emily's House open

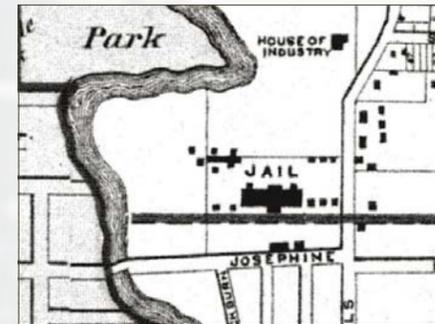
Interested in learning more about the history of the Bridgepoint Health Site? For more information go to the hospital's web site.

The Gate House at the Old Don Jail

The property of the Old Don Jail was bordered to the south by Gerrard Street, which at one time was lined with a wooden fence. The Gate House, completed in 1865, was originally a modest one-storey structure. It marked the entrance to the property and served as the post for the Jail's Gatekeeper. It is unclear whether the Gatekeeper was a permanent position or a role held variously by different turnkeys or head guards, who were responsible for controlling access to the property and to different parts of the Jail. These turnkeys resided in roughcast cottages in line with the east wing of the Jail proper.

A few years after the Jail opened, a Deputy Governor was hired to assist the Governor. The Gate House was made the Deputy Governor's residence, and by 1879 was expanded significantly to provide him more space. The Second Empire style addition is notable for its mansard roof, which gives the building a modest, domestic appearance in contrast to the grandeur of the Jail.

In 2012 the house was renovated by the Phillip Aziz Centre for use as the administrative offices for a children's hospice called Emily's House.



Map of Toronto showing a number of cottages along the Jail proper, c. 1880



Entrance gates to the Old Don Jail across the drive from the Gate House, 1915 (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 373, Sub-Series 58, Item 449)



Rear / east façade of the Gate House, 1922

The Governor's House at the Old Don Jail

The head officer of the Old Don Jail was known as its Governor. During the first decades of the Jail's life, beginning with George L. Allen, the Governor resided in an administrative wing of the Jail itself.

In 1888 architect Charles Mancel Willmot (1855–1936) was contracted to renovate the interior of the Jail to provide the facility with more cells, infirmary space, and laundry facilities. As part of this renovation, a new, freestanding residence was built for Governor John Green and his family at 562 Gerrard Street East. It was designed in the Queen Anne Revival style, characterized by its asymmetrical façade, cross-gable roof, decorative brick patterns, and simple Victorian woodwork.

This house remained in use as a residence until 1973, after which it was used for programs related to the Ministry of Correctional Services, notably the Toronto offices of the John Howard Society, an advocacy group for correctional and criminal justice.

In 2012, the House was renovated by the Phillip Aziz Centre for use as a children's hospice called Emily's House.



Governor's House, c. 1930

The Exercise Yards of the Old Don Jail

This area behind the Old Don Jail was once divided into three exercise yards for inmates. Allowing prisoners to spend time outdoors was part of 19th century penal reform, a movement maintaining that incarceration was not just an instrument of punishment, but also an opportunity to prepare convicts for reintroduction to society. Whereas many prisons at the time simply packed inmates into overcrowded cells, rarely to be let out, reform prisons held the view that inmates should live a varied lifestyle, including fresh air, work, and education.

The location of the Old Don Jail, overlooking the Don River Valley and surrounded by fields and woodland, was thought to be a healthy moral and physical environment for inmates. The property included a hospital, residences, and a farm that harvested oats, potatoes, carrots, and peas, and raised chickens, turkeys, sheep, and pigs. Evidence has also been found of an old well and cistern, which would have been used to supply the Jail with water. Even inside the Jail, natural light was far more abundant than one might expect. A large skylight and rotunda brought sunlight into the centre of the building and reduced the need for artificial light. Though the original skylight was removed in the late 1950s or '60s, the present skylight, seen at the centre of the Jail roof, is a reconstruction based on the 1956 photograph displayed here.

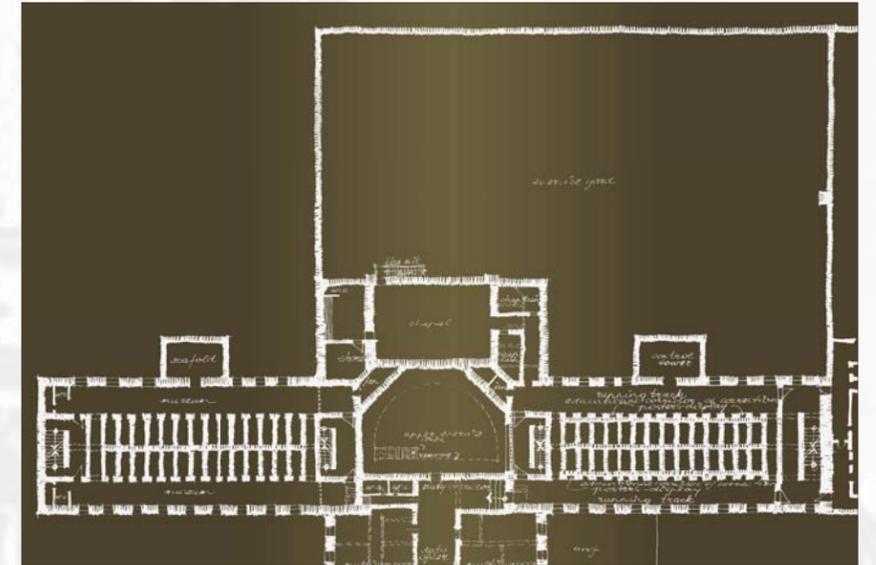
One of the risks of allowing prisoners out of doors, of course, was the possibility that some would attempt escape. The so-called Polka Dot Gang, for example, once attacked and bound two guards and formed a human pyramid to try to mount the yard wall. Additional security soon arrived, however, and defeated the attempt. To impose greater order on these yards, a guard room was eventually installed to monitor prisoners through slim, horizontal rifle windows. These windows can be seen on the ground floor of the west tower.

Though the Old Don Jail was progressive in many respects, part of its role was to administer capital punishment. In fact, investigations in 2007 revealed that a number of burials had taken place here in the east exercise yard over the years. After a team of archaeologists had carefully studied and documented the entire area, the men buried here were reinterred at St. James Cemetery.

For more information on the structure and operations of the Old Don Jail, please see information boards both outside and inside the building, or go to www.bridgepointhealth.ca.



Metropolitan Toronto Jail addition under construction, photo by Dell Construction, June 11, 1956
(City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 220, Series 163, File 15, Item 5500)



Jail plan showing yards after 1977 closure (Istvan Lendvai, Architect)

Hospital Development & Evolution

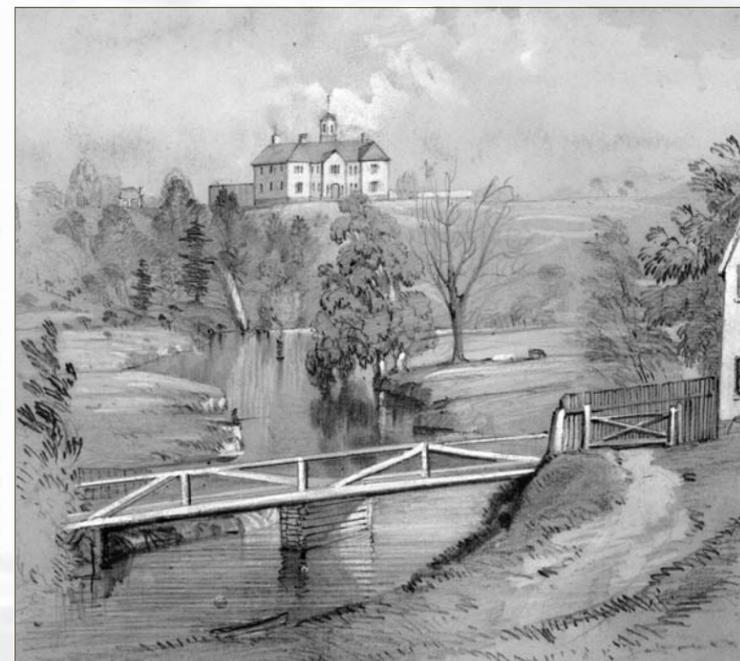
This site, which is now home to Bridgepoint Active Healthcare, has a long history addressing Toronto's most pressing social and healthcare issues. In 1856 the City purchased this land from the Scadding family and immediately began plans for a new Jail and House of Refuge. The site was outside of the city, surrounded by forests and fields, and adjacent to the Don River, which was considered an excellent setting to promote moral and physical health.

In 1860 the House of Refuge was constructed to attend to the "poor, needy, and disabled" residents of the city. In 1872, however, an outbreak of smallpox in Toronto necessitated that sick patients be treated in isolation, and the House of Refuge shifted its focus to caring for them. By 1891 the institution had extended its attention to other contagious diseases such as diphtheria, polio, and scarlet fever, and became known as the Isolation Hospital. A brand new facility was built in 1893, and by 1904 it was known as Riverdale Isolation Hospital.

Over the next 50 years the institution continued to transform to meet the needs of the community, creating a training school for nurses in 1894, new buildings for more beds in 1911, and a measles ward in 1927.

By 1957 the Riverdale Isolation Hospital was renamed Riverdale Hospital, and the care mandate was expanded to include chronic illnesses and rehabilitation services, specializing in orthopedics, surgery, oncology, neurotrauma, amputee, post-cardiac, and palliative care.

Bridgepoint Active Healthcare is a global leader in the research and treatment of complex chronic illness and rehabilitation.



House of Refuge, drawing by unknown artist, 1865 (Toronto Public Library)



Measles Ward at Riverdale Isolation Hospital, May 10, 1927
(City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series, 372, Sub-Series 32, Item 779)



Isolation Hospital from just east of the Gerrard Street Bridge, 1917
(City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, Item 2074)

BRIDGEPOINT

Physicians & Nurses

Over the years, physicians and nurses have played a significant role in the evolution of healthcare services offered at this site.

In the late nineteenth century, a number of outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as diphtheria and scarlet fever, created a great demand in Toronto for medical staff. Responding to this situation in 1891, Dr. Norman Allen, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, wrote to ask for the help of Toronto's Sisters of St. Joseph, an organization dedicated to helping others. The Sisters responded admirably and sent six women to give their hard work and knowledge to caring for the ill.

In 1894 a training school for nurses was established at the Isolation Hospital, and training would continue to be integral to its role. In 1922, under the supervision of Dr. Beverly Hannah, Riverdale Isolation Hospital became the centre for teaching the treatment of communicable diseases to University of Toronto students. A nurses' residence was soon built to facilitate this important program. In 1945 the hospital's South Building was renovated and renamed the Hannah Building to recognize Dr. Hannah's contributions.

Between the years of 1910 and 1929, many health reforms were made in Toronto, thanks to Chief Medical Officer Dr. Charles Hastings. He helped reduce the spread of disease by creating policy for public vaccinations, established legislation for the pasteurization of milk and the chlorination of drinking water, and helped to secure state-of-the-art steam laundry facilities for Riverdale Isolation Hospital. In 1927 a new ward was built at the hospital and named in honour of Dr. Hastings.



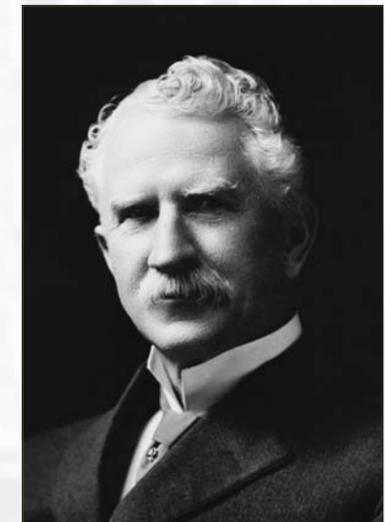
*Dr. Norman Allen
(Bridgepoint Health)*



*Dr. Beverly Hannah
(Bridgepoint Health)*



*Sister Juliana
Morrow of the
Sisters of St. Joseph
(Bridgepoint Health)*



*Dr. Charles Hastings
(City of Toronto
Archives, Fonds 200,
Series 372, Sub-Series
32, Item 642)*

Riverdale Hospital

Beginning in the 1870s, the healthcare facilities on this site played an important role in the care of patients with contagious diseases. By 1957, the threat of epidemics was no longer as serious as it had once been, and the Hospital's mandate was expanded to include chronic illnesses and rehabilitative services with specializations in orthopedics, surgery, oncology, neurotrauma, amputee, post-cardiac, and palliative care.

In 1959 the architecture firm of Chapman and Hurst was awarded a commission to design an exciting new Riverdale Hospital building. Their design offered patients attractive views of Riverdale Park, and their choice to use interior brick and woodwork finishings provided a warm and comforting effect.

The design also used bright colours and playful forms such as the large mosaic mural in the former Hospital lobby and the mushroom-shaped entrance canopies that mark its original entrance. The canopies have been preserved in place as an example of the former architecture and the mosaic mural, *Life*, has been restored and relocated to the main floor of the new Bridgepoint Hospital.



Main entrance of Riverdale Hospital with mushroom canopies, c. 1960s (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 7, Series 56, File 4, Panda Ref. No. 601210-127)

Life: A Mosaic Tile Mural

The mosaic entitled *Life*, completed in 1962 by Kitchener-based artist Margit Gatterbauer, was originally situated on a curved wall in the former Riverdale Hospital. The mosaic is 8 feet high, 85 feet long, contains 600,000 glass tiles, and took two and a half years to complete.

Gatterbauer's design, which depicts a family set in a scene of earth and heavens, was intended to inspire and encourage hospital patients with imagery showing the richness of life.

Architect Len Hurst first had the idea to incorporate a large mosaic mural in the design of the hospital lobby. Hurst was committed to the display of art in public buildings and examined other hospitals prior to creating his proposal for Riverdale. Gatterbauer shared Hurst's commitment and expressed her enthusiasm to create "a very good work of art" that would act as a true expression of the time for forthcoming generations.

Gatterbauer prepared a full size watercolour painting of the composition for the Clerk's office to approve, prior to preparation and installation. The total cost of the mosaic, including design, was \$17,000.

The following poem, written in 1962, provides some perspective on the mosaic's symbolism.

The Meaning of Life

The SUN is the most important requisite for life on earth.

The FAMILY group is the source of human life and the foundation of our civilization.

MAN holding the planets symbolizes the source of strength, exploration, and discovery.

WOMAN sitting on the earth symbolizes her duties and responsibilities for creation and family life.

The CHILDREN protected by man and wife are God's trust and man's hope for the future.

The ROCKS, EARTH, FOREST, and WATER were the beginning; after millions of years mankind developed a civilization.

The giant step from man's first erectness to our present day life is symbolized in the mural by the RAINBOW as the connecting link between nature or primitive society to the floating city or present day civilization.

FISH and BIRDS, WATER and SKY are our steady companions.

The MOON is the reciprocation of the sun as night is to day.

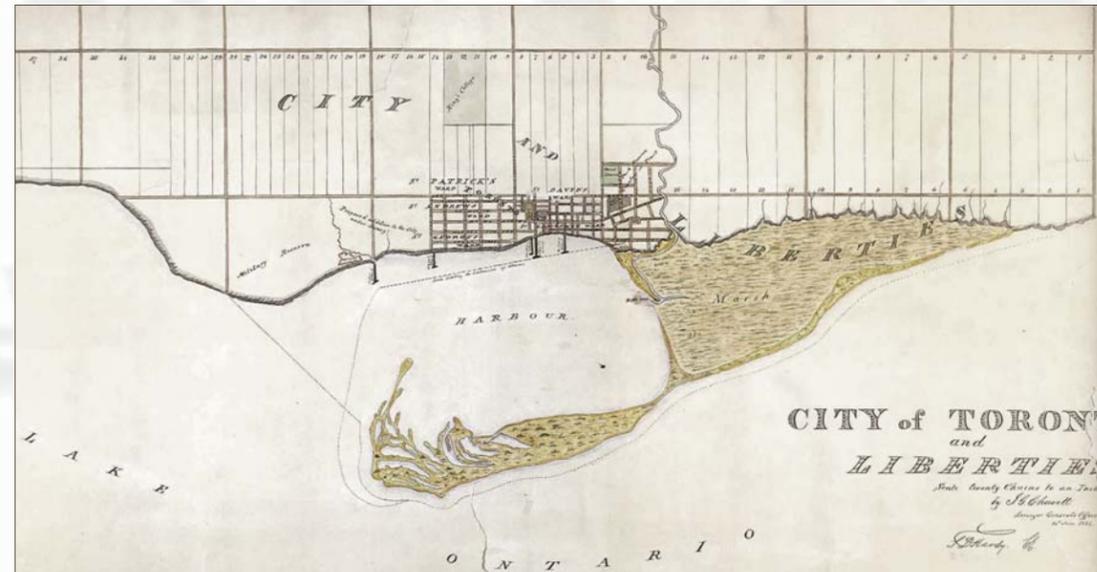
MOUNTAINS and ROCKS symbolize the obstacles over which we struggle to survive and conquer.

The Landscape: Scadding's Property

The history of these grounds reaches back to a number of founding English families who dominated Toronto's early days.

The old Town of York, set on the lakeshore just a few kilometers to the southwest, was established in 1793 by the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. In order to attract men of influence from England to join him in presiding over town and country, Simcoe offered dozens of candidates 100- to 200-acre lots to use as lake-view estates just outside of York. These lots extended from Lot Street (now Queen) north to Bloor, and from the Don River to the Humber River.

This site overlaps former lots 15 and 16 "East of the Don," much of which was granted in 1796 to Simcoe's estate manager, John Scadding. Scadding built three houses on the land over the years, one of which—the oldest surviving in Toronto—was moved in 1879 to the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, where it remains today.



Map of Toronto, 1834 (Toronto Public Library)



Scadding Homestead on Gerrard Street East, watercolour by unknown artist, 1820 (Toronto Public Library)



Historian Henry Scadding (son of John), surveying nearby site of Simcoes' former cottage, 'Castle Frank', c.1880 (Toronto Public Library)

After Scadding's death in 1824, the family held on to the property and acquired adjacent land. By 1856, the Town of York had become the City of Toronto and was experiencing continuous, rapid growth. City Council, in need of land to build a new hospice and jail to serve the growing population, allocated the sum of £14,000 for the purchase of about 120 acres of the Scadding properties.

Plans immediately began for the House of Refuge, a hospice for the "poor, needy, and disabled," as well as the Old Don Jail, a progressive "reform" jail. These two facilities would soon operate together as a self-sufficient compound complete with residences and a working farm planted with oats, potatoes, carrots, and peas, and stocked with chickens, turkeys, sheep, and pigs.

Cells at the Old Don Jail

At first glance, the cells of the Old Don Jail appear to be quite similar, but in fact they differ significantly based on their purpose and location.

Standard One-person Cells

Most of the cells in the original plan of the Old Don Jail, including those situated adjacent to this information board, were one-person cells approximately one meter wide, two and a half meters deep, and just over three meters high. These cells were typically constructed of brick masonry walls with gate-style doors made of iron bars. Since these cells were originally intended to be private sleeping spaces for single inmates, each was equipped with bedding and a night bucket.

Double Cells

At more than twice the width of the standard cells, the double cells, located only in the third-floor wings, would have held more than one prisoner at a time. It is not known exactly how they were employed, but they may have been used when more than one member of a family were jailed together.

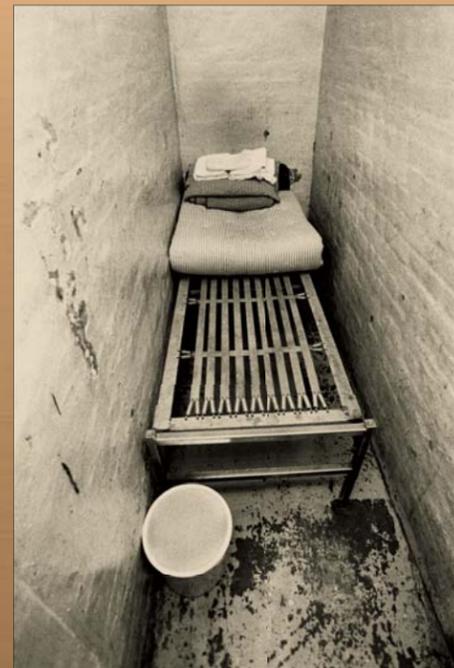
Segregation & Punishment Cells

Over the years, rules and the consequences of breaking them changed many times. In the Jail's early days, prisoners who were deemed insubordinate may have been lashed or caned, had their diet restricted to bread and water, or been remanded to punishment cells for a period of time. These cells, though more than twice as

wide as standard cells, were equipped with solid oak doors that blocked out all light. In a jail that prided itself on providing prisoners with daily fresh air and natural light, this type of confinement was to be taken quite seriously.

Iron Cells

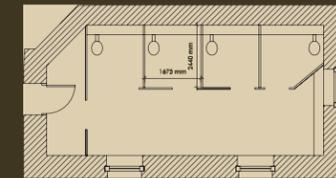
The iron cells, made of prefabricated iron sheets and bars, were installed in 1888 when the Governor's Residence was moved from the administrative wing of the Jail to a new, freestanding house on-site. In the space made available, a new women's area and matron's quarters were built.



One person cell in the Old Don Jail, photo by Graham Bezzant, 1977 (Toronto Star)

Death Row Cells

Between 1869 and 1962, the death penalty was administered a total of 70 times at the Don Jail. The so-called death row cells were built in 1939 on the second floor of the north wing, originally as isolation cells for sick inmates. Later, since they were a short walking distance from the gallows, they were used for inmates awaiting execution. The Boyd Gang were housed in these cells after their first escape and recapture. They managed to escape yet again by sawing through several iron bars on the window using a hacksaw blade that was smuggled into the Jail.



Layout of death row cells, as found after jail closure

A Day in the Life of an Inmate

The penal system at the Old Don Jail was based on the belief that life as an inmate should include a balance of solitary time, work, exercise, fresh air, and natural light. When it was first built, the Jail was known as a “palace” compared to the primitive facilities and overcrowded conditions of Toronto’s first three jails. Upon the opening of the Old Don Jail, *The Globe* newspaper reported that “a finer or more commodious prison cannot be found in the province,” and a quarter century later, provincial inspectors described it as being in the “highest state of cleanliness and order.”

Since the Old Don Jail was in fact a jail and not a prison, its inmates ranged from vagrants held for the night to those charged with murder awaiting transfer elsewhere. It was believed that keeping these inmates separate was the best thing for their moral and physical health and for the order of the jail. Inmates spent their nights in individual cells, each equipped with bedding and a “night bucket,” and they spent their days in “day rooms” (corridors adjacent to cells), exercise fields, or working at various jobs.



Shoemaking, English Prisoners' Aid Association, 1897

Work at the Old Don Jail included shoemaking, sewing and mending, bathroom and laundry detail, farming the fields, and even hard labour such as breaking rock. Short-term inmates wore their civilian clothes while longer-term inmates wore patchwork or striped uniforms likely made on-site. Beginning in the early 20th century, all inmates were given blue denim pants, shirts, and caps upon arrival, and their civilian clothes were kept, cleaned, and returned only for court appearances or upon their release.

Over the years, conditions at the Jail varied based on governance, staffing, and number of inmates. During times of rapid population growth in Toronto, for example, the Jail would become overcrowded, and two or three people would sometimes be required to share a single cell.



Study, English Prisoners' Aid Association, 1897

Segregation Cell

Evidence suggests that the segregation cell was in fact a punishment cell kept in use after the majority of punishment cells had been reassigned to storage prior to 1953. Prisoners were sent to segregation by the guards of the Old Don Jail for misbehavior.

A cell of this type was equipped with a solid oak door that blocked out all the light. In a jail that prided itself on providing prisoners with daily fresh air and natural light, this type of confinement was taken quite seriously.

By the time of the Jail's closure, however, perhaps partially because it provided a break from the overcrowded standard cells, segregation was not considered as harsh a punishment:

For an inmate housed in the old section of the jail, a three day stint in segregation is a welcomed holiday. The restricted diet punishment which used to accompany a trip to the segregation cells is now rarely used. Inmates are given the full diet while in segregation, removing any element of punishment attached to a segregation sentence.

Royal Commission on the Toronto Jail and Custodial Services, 1978, vol. 4, pg. 99-100.

Punishment Cells

Over the years, rules and the consequences of breaking them changed many times at the Old Don Jail. In the Jail's early days, prisoners deemed insubordinate may have been lashed or caned, fed only bread and water for a time, or remanded to punishment cells.

These cells, though more than twice as wide as standard cells, were equipped with solid oak doors that blocked out all light. In a jail that prided itself on providing prisoners with daily fresh air and natural light, this type of confinement was not taken lightly in the 1800s.

By 1953, most punishment cells had been converted to storage spaces, and only one remained: the segregation cell. By the time of the Jail's closure, perhaps because it provided a break from the overcrowded standard cells, but also because it involved no food deprivation, as it had in previous years, segregation was not considered as harsh a punishment.

Bridgepoint Administration Building Visitor Information

General Public Access Policy and Guidelines

- Public access is between 9am and 5pm.
- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Groups of ten or more are required to pre-arrange their visit through Bridgepoint's Communications Department.

Bridgepoint Tour Management Policy and Guidelines

- Visiting groups requesting a tour or groups of 15 people or more are required to pre-arrange their visit with Bridgepoint's Communications Department.
- Bridgepoint's Communication Department will, as a courtesy, provide the names of tour guides ranging from voluntary groups to commercial organizations qualified to offer guided tours to groups. Bridgepoint will not have dedicated staff to conduct private tours.
- Should visiting groups wish to contact such heritage tour groups, they are free to do so with the understanding that Bridgepoint assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the actions of the heritage tour groups.
- Whether escorted by a heritage group member or not, visiting groups are to disembark from buses and cars along Street C, assemble outside the north or south entrances of the former Jail, enter through the north vestibule or south entrance and proceed aided by signage to the lower level gallery for orientation. Orientation signage will be provided in both the north and south vestibules to support this.
- The guide or leader of the visiting group will remain with the visiting groups at all times, escort them through the length of their tour and thereby maintain safety for visitors and privacy for Bridgepoint building users.

Society & Crime

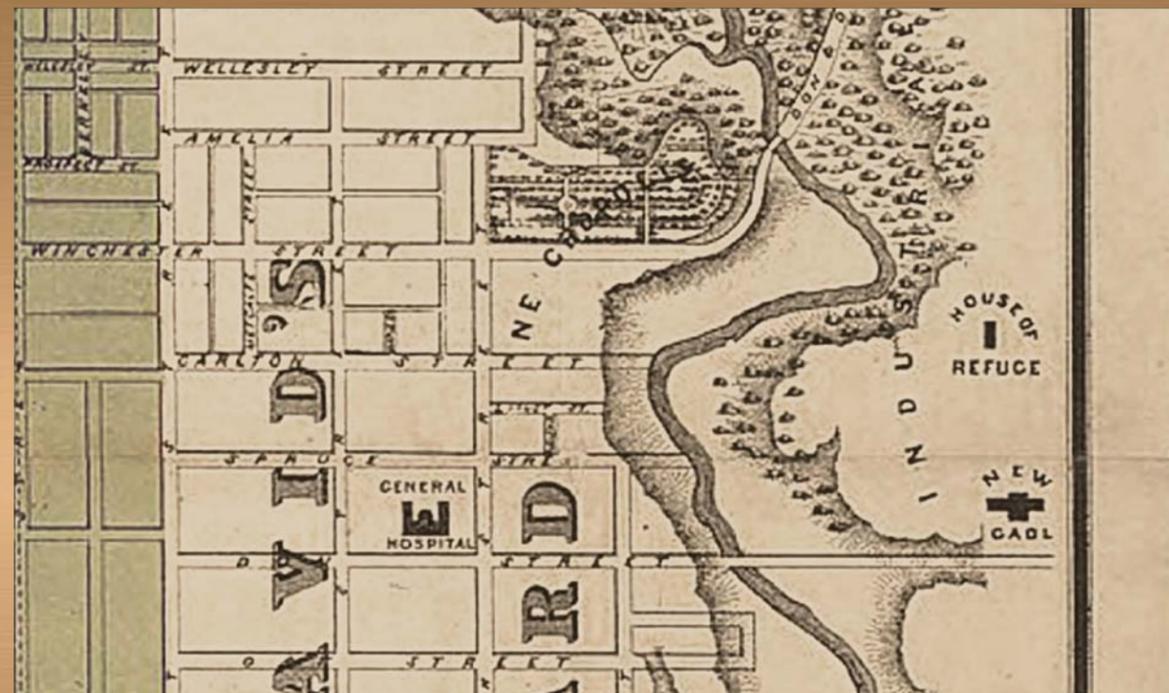
Throughout the 1800s, Toronto experienced tremendous growth, and in the decades prior to the building of the Old Don Jail, it grew from a town of roughly 4,000 to a city of over 40,000. By the early 1860s, Toronto had built a number of canals and railways; amassed a fleet of steamers, schooners, and barges on Lake Ontario; founded a Stock Exchange; and seen the birth of a new class of merchants, manufacturers, importers, exporters, brewers, and distillers. This period of change and opportunity attracted thousands of immigrants, mostly from Ireland, England, and Scotland.

As Toronto's population increased, so did its struggle with poverty, alcohol, and crime. The City's existing jails had become insufficient, and the City was in need of a new facility. In 1856, the City purchased parts of the Scadding family property adjacent to the Don River. Its remote location, then outside Toronto's limits, was deemed an ideal setting according to prison philosophy of the day:

A county-gaol, and indeed every prison, should be built on a spot that is airy, and if possible near a river, or brook. I have commonly found prisons situated near a river, the cleanest and most healthy.

The State of the Prisons in England and Wales by William James Forsythe and John Howard

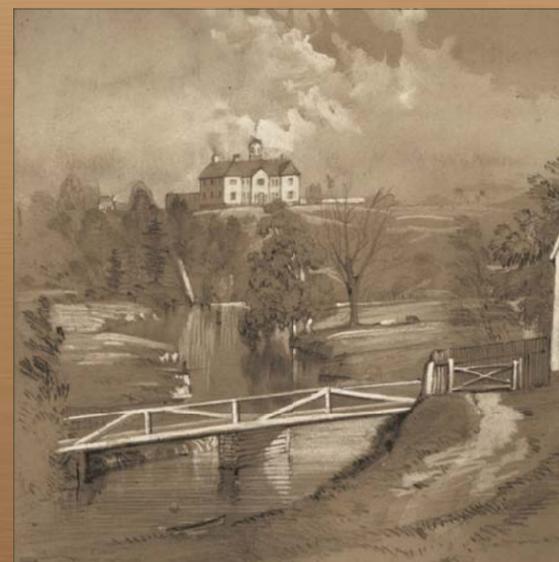
Theorists such as Forsythe and Howard advocated for a more humane approach to the prison system, one that would stand to reform or rehabilitate prisoners for reintroduction to society. The Old Don Jail was designed under the principle that life as an inmate should include a balance of solitary time, work, exercise, fresh air, and natural light.



City of Toronto Map showing New Gaol and House of Refuge, Copp, Clarke & Co., 1874

When it was first built, the Jail was known as a "palace" compared to the primitive facilities and overcrowded conditions of Toronto's first three jails. Since the Old Don Jail was in fact a jail and not a prison, its inmates ranged from vagrants held for a night to those charged with very serious crimes awaiting trial or transfer to long-term penitentiaries.

In addition to the Jail, a House of Refuge was built to shelter and serve Toronto's "poor, needy, and disabled" population. It augmented the services provided by the existing House of Industry, which for many years had supplied the underprivileged with food, shelter, and coal. By 1872, smallpox had become a serious concern, and the House of Refuge was converted to a hospital.



House of Refuge, drawing by unknown artist, 1865 (Toronto Public Library)



Toronto's third jail at Front and Parliament Streets, pen and ink drawing by William James Thomson, c. 1850s (Toronto Public Library)

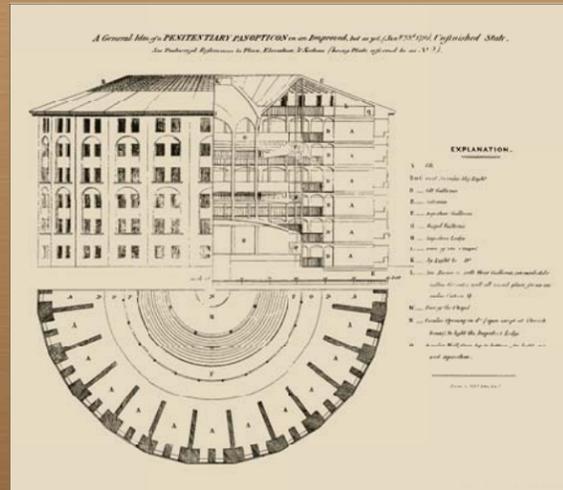


Toronto's third jail being demolished, 1885 (Toronto Public Library)

Prison Design & Penal Reform

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, new ideas in prison theory emerged that affected how the Old Don Jail was designed and operated. Penal reform was a movement maintaining that imprisonment was not just an instrument of punishment, but also an opportunity to prepare convicts for reintroduction to society. According to *The Globe* newspaper of 1859, the hope for the Old Don Jail was to create “a prison suitable to accomplish the ends of justice and humanity instead of herding people as to many animals.”

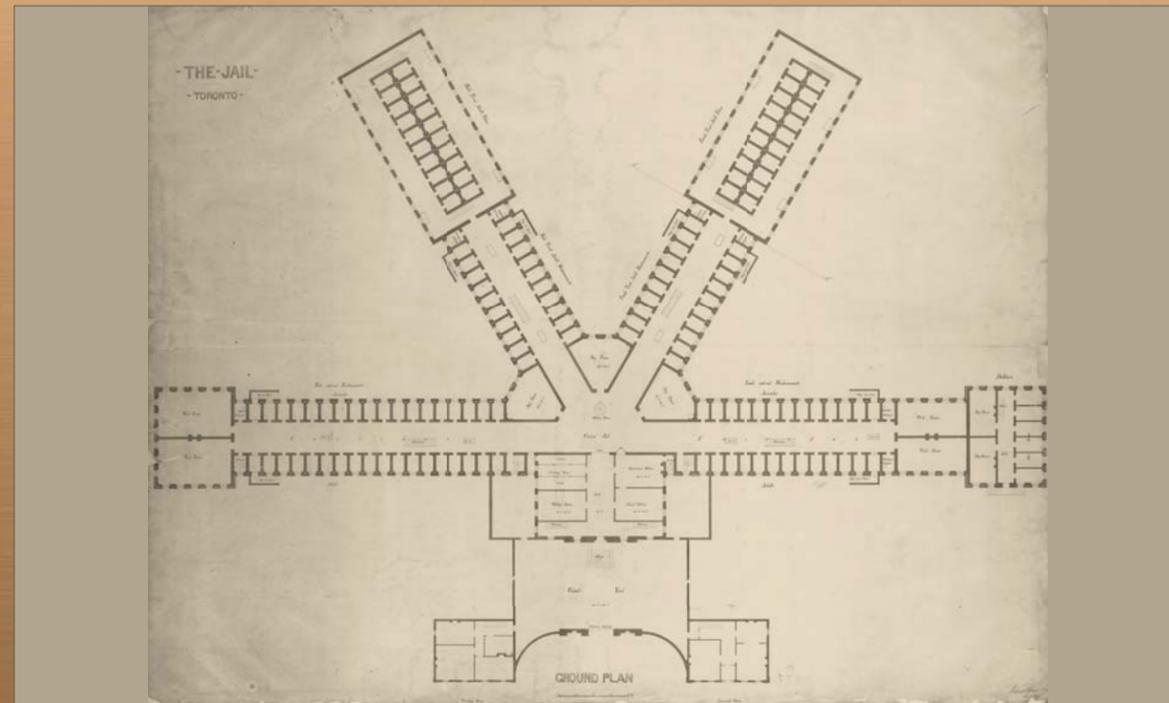
The Old Don Jail was designed to allow prisoners to congregate and work during the day in farm fields, classrooms, or day rooms (light-filled corridors), and retreat at night to individual cells. It was believed that a balance of fresh air, natural light, work, education, and solitary time was necessary to the moral and physical health of the prisoners. This system was influenced by systems used in US prisons of the time, such as the Auburn and Eastern Penitentiaries.



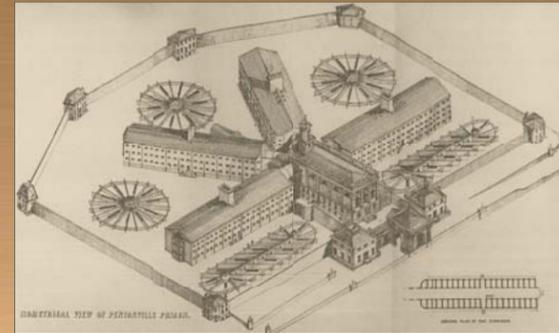
Plan/elevation/section of the Panopticon, drawing by Jeremy Bentham, 1791
(John Bowring, *Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 1843, vol. 4, opposite 172)

The architecture of the Old Don Jail was also meant to provide security and order. In the recent past, penal reformers John Howard (1726–1790) and Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) had promoted the principle of surveillance in prison design through octagon and Panopticon plans. The Panopticon arrangement consisted of radiating wings, enabling a number of cells to be monitored together from the location of a central tower or rotunda.

Adopting this type of plan, architect William Thomas indicated four wings radiating from a central block in his original drawings for the Old Don Jail. The building’s scale was later reduced to include just two wings radiating east and west. Despite this reduction the Jail remained an impressively large facility at the time of its completion in 1864.



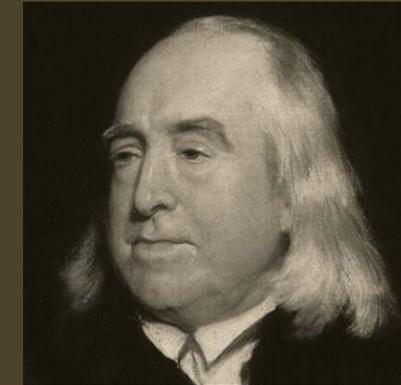
Original ground floor plan of the Old Don Jail, drawing by William Thomas, Architect, 1857-59
(City of Toronto Archives, Series 1508, Item 26)



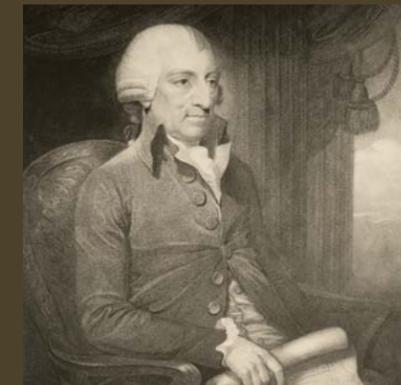
Pentonville Prison, London, England, 1844
(Joshua Jebb, *Report of the Surveyor-General of Prisons*, 1844, 133)

Unfortunately, Thomas passed away in 1860, and the Jail had to be completed by his sons. Just after the facility opened in 1864, a report was submitted to Toronto City Council praising the building as “second to none in Canada.”

English Prison Reformers



Portrait of Jeremy Bentham, oil on canvas
by Henry William Pickersgill, 1829
(National Portrait Gallery, London, England)



Portrait of John Howard, stipple engraving
by Edmund Scott, 1789
(National Portrait Gallery, London, England)

The Architecture of the Old Don Jail



The Old Don Jail, completed in 1864, William Thomas, Architect (Province of Ontario Archives)

The Old Don Jail, completed in 1864, was the final project of one of Canada's most respected early architects, William Thomas. Like much of Thomas' late work, the Jail is considered Renaissance Revival, a popular style of the mid-1800s that drew inspiration from Italian Renaissance, Baroque, and Mannerist architecture.

The finely crafted exterior of the Jail consists of a richly ornamented central pavilion and two much simpler wings. The central pavilion is notable for its heavily rusticated or rough-hewn stonework, including

several uses of vermiculation, a unique textural style named for its "worm-eaten" appearance. Note the sculptural keystone of the central portico entrance, which depicts a bearded face some have speculated to represent Father Time.

The interior of the Old Don Jail was intended to provide ample light and air to create an open space conducive to moral and physical health. The central pavilion features a grand four-storey rotunda reaching up to a large skylight that admits generous light during the day. Note the various uses of high-quality

iron, wrought at the St. Lawrence Foundry: brackets in the form of serpents and griffins support balconies and stone floors, and large fanning grilles screen the arched openings of the rotunda. The motif of iron throughout the interior is symbolic of the confinement provided by the iron bars originally seen on every window and cell door.

The plan of the Jail was meant to provide individual cells for prisoners to occupy alone at night, and communal areas for inmates to work and congregate in as members of a community during the day. The building originally consisted of approximately 180 cells, as well as "day rooms" (light-filled corridors), classrooms, visiting rooms, officers' rooms, a suite of apartments for the first governors, a spacious chapel, a scullery, a kitchen, an infirmary, farm fields, exercise yards, and eventually a gallows. As capacity grew, the interior plan changed over time to accommodate more and more inmates.

In 1977 the Old Don Jail was permanently closed, and in 2013 a conservation and adaptive reuse project was completed in order to preserve the heritage of the site while providing new administrative offices for Bridgepoint Health.



Original front / south elevation of the Old Don Jail, drawing by William Thomas, Architect, 1857-59 (City of Toronto Archives, Series 1508, Item 24)



Portico entrance keystone

The Architect of the Old Don Jail, William Thomas & Sons

William Thomas was born in 1799 in Suffolk, England. He apprenticed in Birmingham under builder and surveyor Richard Tutin. Opening his own practice in the 1830s, Thomas designed and built homes, halls, villas, and churches in Birmingham and Leamington Spa in a variety of architectural styles. Speculative real estate projects bankrupted Thomas in the late 1830s, so in the early 1840s he decided to try his luck in the New World.

Thomas moved to Toronto with his family in 1843 and quickly established himself as an important member of Canada's small but growing number of trained architects. He was a founder of the Association of Architects, Civil Engineers, and Provincial Land Surveyors, and from 1843 to 1860, he built over 100 buildings in Canada, including Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall and St. Michael's Cathedral.

The Old Don Jail was Thomas's last building. He died in 1860, before it was finished, leaving the completion of the project to his sons William and Cyrus.



Portrait of William Thomas, photo taken in London, England, 1857



Portrait of William Tutin Thomas

Capital Punishment in Canada

From the first days of British and French settlement in Canada, capital punishment was a part of the judiciary system. Men and women could be hanged for approximately 200 different crimes, from murder and treason to more obscure infractions such as displaying false signals endangering a ship.

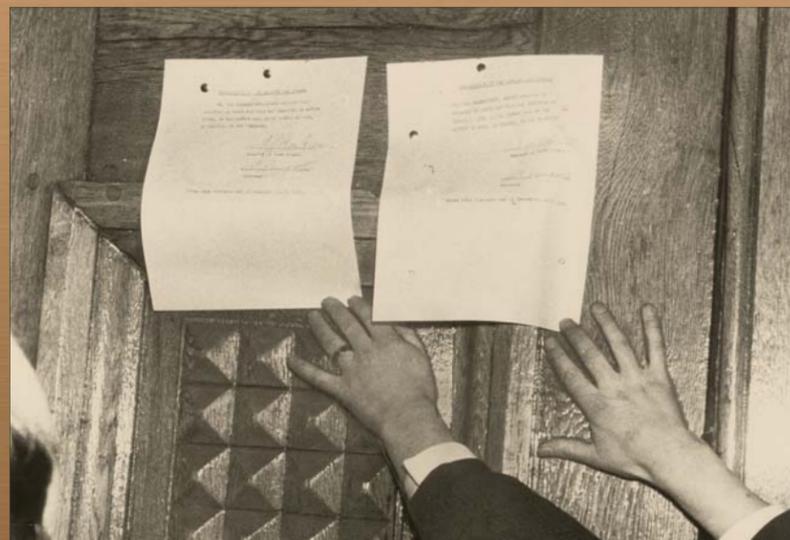
Beginning with Confederation in 1867, hanging by gallows was the only accepted means of execution. Since that time, 710 people have been executed on Canadian soil.

Prior to the 1860s, executions had been public affairs, but in 1869 public executions were disallowed, and capital punishment became one of the mandates of the prison system. That year executions began at a gallows constructed in the east exercise yard of the Old Don Jail. In 1905 the gallows were moved to an even more secluded and private area: a latrine in the east wing that could be closed when not in use.

Over the next 93 years, 70 executions would take place on these grounds.

In 1962 the Old Don Jail was the site of the last two executions in Canada: the double hanging of Arthur Lucas and Ronald Turpin. Both men had been tried and convicted for murder, but their circumstances became the subject of much controversy. Prior to Lucas and Turpin's execution, numerous parties attempted to overturn their sentences, and after their deaths the public questioned the legitimacy of their charges and the fairness of their fate.

By this time, capital punishment had already been debated for decades, and the deaths of Lucas and Turpin further fueled the debate. Finally, in 1976, following an animated speech to the House of Commons by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the death penalty was abolished. The vote was won by only a slim margin, and even in recent years public opinion on this matter has been passionately divided.



Declaration of hangings on south entrance door, photo by Barry Philip, 1962 (Toronto Star)



Capital punishment protest, photo by Barry Philip, 1962 (Toronto Star)



Crowd outside Old Don Jail after hangings, 1962 (Toronto Star)

Capital punishment was eliminated from Canada's Criminal Code under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1976. Bill C-84 abolished capital punishment. Since 1976, criminals charged with first degree murder in Canada face a life sentence in jail without parole.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau speaking to the House of Commons:

"To make that quite clear: if this bill is defeated, some people will certainly hang. While members are free to vote as they wish, those who vote against the bill for whatever reason, cannot escape their personal share of responsibility for the hangings which will take place if the bill is defeated.

"I do not deny that society has the right to punish a criminal, and the right to make the punishment fit the crime, but to kill a man for punishment alone is an act of revenge. Nothing else. Some would prefer to call it retribution because that word has a nicer sound. But the meaning is the same. Are we, as a society, so lacking in respect for ourselves, so lacking in hope for human betterment, so socially bankrupt that we are ready to accept state violence as our penal philosophy? ... My primary concern here is not compassion for the murderer. My concern is for the society which adopts vengeance as an acceptable motive for its collective behavior. If we make that choice, we will snuff out some of the boundless hope and confidence in ourselves and other people, which has marked our maturing as a free people."

Bridgepoint Administration Building Visitor Information

General Public Access Policy and Guidelines

- Public access is between 9am and 5pm.
- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Groups of ten or more are required to pre-arrange their visit through Bridgepoint's Communications Department.

Bridgepoint Tour Management Policy and Guidelines

- Visiting groups requesting a tour or groups of 15 people or more are required to pre-arrange their visit with Bridgepoint's Communications Department.
- Bridgepoint's Communication Department will, as a courtesy, provide the names of tour guides ranging from voluntary groups to commercial organizations qualified to offer guided tours to groups. Bridgepoint will not have dedicated staff to conduct private tours.
- Should visiting groups wish to contact such heritage tour groups, they are free to do so with the understanding that Bridgepoint assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the actions of the heritage tour groups.
- Whether escorted by a heritage group member or not, visiting groups are to disembark from buses and cars along Street C, assemble outside the north or south entrances of the former Jail, enter through the north vestibule or south entrance and proceed aided by signage to the lower level gallery for orientation. Orientation signage will be provided in both the north and south vestibules to support this.
- The guide or leader of the visiting group will remain with the visiting groups at all times, escort them through the length of their tour and thereby maintain safety for visitors and privacy for Bridgepoint building users.

The Governor's Residence

The head officer of the Old Don Jail was known as its Governor. During the first decades of the Jail's life, beginning with George L. Allen, the Governor resided in this administrative wing of the Jail proper.

In 1888 architect Charles Mancel Willmot (1855–1936) was contracted to renovate the interior of the Jail to provide the facility with more cells, infirmary space, and laundry facilities. As part of this renovation, a new, freestanding residence was built for Governor John Green and his family at 562 Gerrard Street East.

During the Bridgepoint Health Redevelopment project, a number of historic finishes were uncovered behind walls and above ceilings in this area. Of particular note are wallpaper fragments and wood stenciling. Representative examples of the wallpaper fragments have been preserved in place above the ceilings on the second and third floors.

The Polka Dot Gang

For a brief period in 1945, Toronto and Southern Ontario were terrorized by a mysterious gang known for the red and white polka dot handkerchiefs they wore over their faces. The so-called Polka Dot Gang targeted a wide range of businesses, from flour mills to motor shops, and were known for regularly firing their machine guns and revolvers, as well as for attacking, binding, and gagging business owners and guards. The gang was responsible for robberies of sums as large as \$10,000 and as small as a few hundred.

The Old Don Jail was home to all five members of the gang for a brief period as they awaited various trials in 1945 and 1946. At one point, according to some accounts, the gang attempted to escape from the East Exercise Yard by forming a human pyramid to mount the yard walls. Guards soon discovered and defeated the attempt.

Gang leader Kenneth Green, reportedly a tall, well-dressed young man, and other senior member George Constantine were eventually sentenced to fourteen years in prison, which they served at Kingston Penitentiary.



Members of the Polka Dot gang on trial in Detroit, May 18, 1946 (Toronto Daily Star)

Escape Attempts

Many have attempted to escape from the Old Don Jail, but few with any success. One exception is Frank McCullough, a drifter charged with the murder of a police officer in 1918. McCullough claimed the death was an accident, but was nevertheless found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged at the Old Don Jail.

Torontonians, however, were enamoured of McCullough, and many petitioned Ottawa on his behalf. Perhaps emboldened by his fans, McCullough sawed through the security bars of his cell and escaped. He was found three weeks later living in plain sight.

McCullough was recaptured, returned to his cell, and slated to be hanged on June 13, 1919. The night before his execution, thousands gathered beneath his cell, cheering and threatening to storm the Jail. Their protests were unsuccessful, and the execution proceeded.

Escape attempts continued until the closure of the Old Don Jail in 1977. The Boyd Gang succeeded; the Polka Dot Gang did not. One unusual escape attempt was made by James Bass and Melville Yeomans, who dug a hole with kitchen utensils and concealed it using cardboard and strawberry jam. Security guards soon discovered and put an end to their plan.

The Boyd Gang

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Edwin Alonzo Boyd became known for a total of 11 bank robberies in Toronto, thousands of dollars in stolen money, and two successful escapes from the Old Don Jail.

After serving Canada in World War II, Boyd returned to his wife Dorreen and their children in Toronto. Struggling to support his family and frustrated with the lack of prospects available to him, Boyd eventually turned to crime.

For his first robbery, Boyd disguised himself with rouge and mascara and filled his mouth with cotton balls to distort his face. In a quiet North York bank, he handed a note to the manager and brandished a Luger. Minutes later he was being shot at in the street as he fled, some \$2000 richer.



Edwin Boyd being escorted outside of the Old Don Jail (Toronto Star)

Over the next two years Boyd committed five more robberies. On his seventh attempt, he was caught and sent to the Old Don Jail. By this time, the Jail was understaffed and severely overpopulated, but the governor at the time was intent on providing the most humane conditions possible, allowing prisoners to bowl in the corridors, play cards in the day rooms, and play quoits, or ring-toss, in the yards.

Boyd became friendly with fellow bank robbers Leonard Jackson and William Jackson (no relation) and the three began planning their escape. Leonard had concealed a hacksaw blade in his wooden left foot, and the men used the blade in shifts to cut the iron bars of a nearby window. On November 4, 1951, the men climbed from the window down a rope to the ground, and over the yard wall.

Now free and working together with one other cohort, Steve Suchan, the so-called Boyd Gang immediately took up bank robberies again. But their freedom would not last long: On March 6, 1952, Suchan and Leonard Jackson were stopped by police on route to a robbery. A gun fight ensued, killing two detectives. The incident set off a major manhunt, and all four men were soon recaptured and sent back to the Jail.

Surprisingly, on September 8, 1952, the gang managed to escape again. According to Boyd, William Jackson's lawyer had smuggled them a hacksaw blade, a flat piece of steel, and a file. Boyd fashioned a key that allowed them to unlock their cells, work through several iron window bars with the hacksaw, and eventually slip out under cover of darkness.

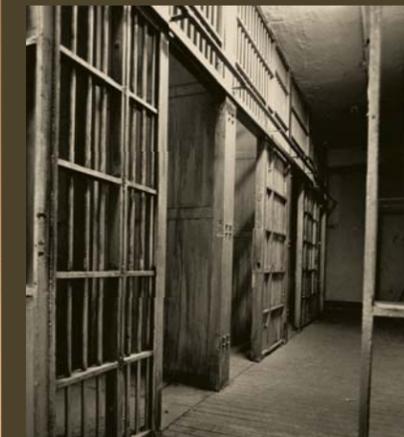


Chisholm, Payne, Craven, Mulholland, Lamport, briefcase with stolen money and a gun used by the Boyd Gang (Toronto Star)

Eight days later, the gang was found in a North York barn. Suchan and Leonard Jackson were charged with murder and hanged on December 16, 1952. Boyd served fourteen years of his life sentence under strict supervision at Kingston Penitentiary, was granted parole in 1966, lived under an assumed identity for his remaining years, and died on May 17, 2002.



Leaving the Old Don Jail for City Hall and general sessions court, Norman Boyd, left, brother of Edwin, Joseph Jackson, brother of William, and Edwin Boyd (Toronto Star)



Death row in Old Don Jail, photo by Reg Innell, 1987 (Toronto Star)

The Gallows

From the first days of European settlement until Canada's last hanging in 1962, execution was a part of our penal system. Beginning with Confederation in 1867, hanging by gallows was the only legal way to administer the death penalty. Since that time, 710 executions were administered on Canadian soil, 70 of which took place at the Old Don Jail.

Pre-Confederation, executions were public affairs, but in 1869, public executions were disallowed, and capital punishment became one of the mandates of the prison system. That year at the Old Don Jail, executions began at a gallows constructed in the east exercise yard.

In 1905 the Old Don Jail moved its gallows to an even more secluded and private area: a former latrine in the east wing that could be closed when not in use. Today the traces or "ghosting" of this second gallows are still visible on the interior walls.

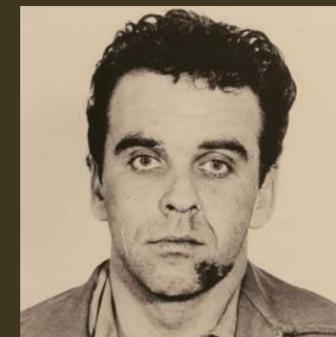
In 1962 the Jail was the site of the last two executions in Canada: the double hanging of Arthur Lucas and Ronald Turpin. Both men had been tried and convicted for murder, but their circumstances became the subject of much controversy. Prior to Lucas and Turpin's execution, numerous parties attempted to overturn their sentences, and after their deaths the public questioned the legitimacy of their charges and the fairness of their fate.

Capital punishment had lost an amount of public and political approval, and the deaths of these men and others like them fueled the debate for several years. Finally, in 1976, following an animated speech to the House of Commons by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the death penalty was abolished. The vote was won by only a slim margin, and even in recent years public opinion on this matter is passionately divided.

On December 11, 1962, Arthur Lucas and Ronald Turpin became the last prisoners to be hanged at the Old Don Jail. Arthur Lucas was convicted for the double homicide of Carol Ann Newman and Therland Crater on November 17, 1961. Ronald Turpin was convicted for the shooting and killing of an Officer Frederick John Nash following an attempted robbery at the Red Rooster Restaurant on February 12, 1962.



Arthur Lucas, mug shot, 1962



Ronald Turpin, mug shot, 1962

Heating & Cooling in the Old Don Jail

The original drawings William Thomas produced for the Jail show a network of ducts and flues running throughout the central pavilion and east and west wings. This network would have been an innovative idea for a simple way to heat and cool the building.

In cold weather, steam boilers were meant to heat trapped air that would travel a course of ducts and flues until it was finally released outdoors via two ventilation towers.

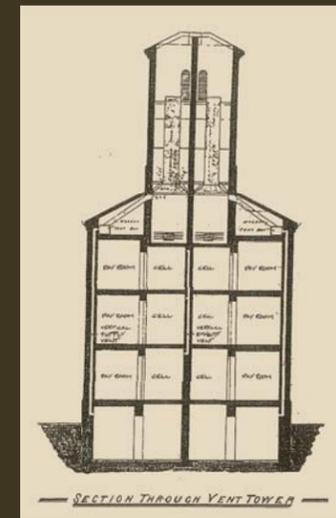
In warm weather, the Jail stayed moderately cool, probably due less to the ventilation system, and more as a result of the building's thick walls and ample shade.

Overall, the system was more successful on paper than in reality. In 1888 architect

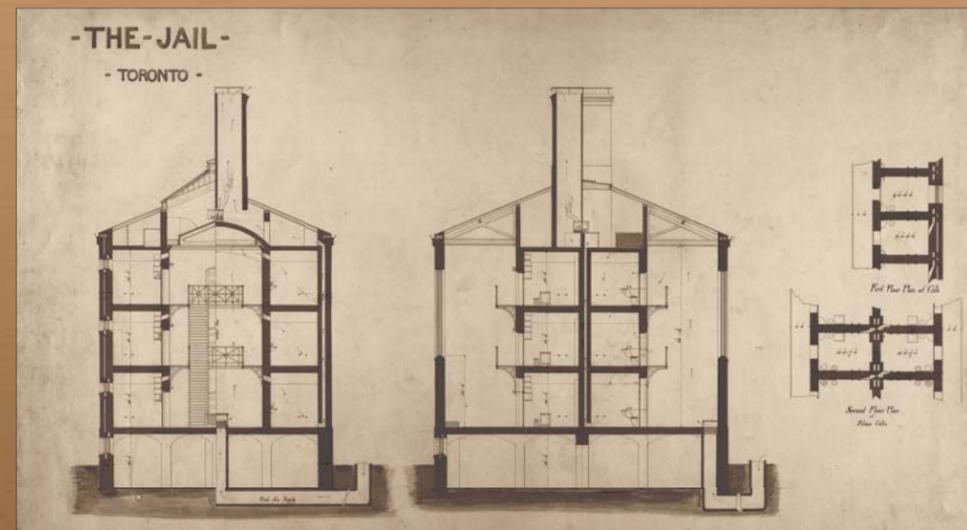
Charles Willmot reported discrepancies between Thomas's drawings and the actual infrastructure, and in 1889 an engineer's report recommended remodeling the entire heating and ventilation strategy.

A system of pipes and radiators was installed throughout the facility, significantly improving the comfort of the Jail during winter. Traces of this serpentine network of pipes and wooden ductwork can still be seen on the interior of the lower level and fourth floor of the building.

In the 1940s and 1970s the original ventilation towers were removed from the Jail's west and east wings, respectively. As part of Bridgepoint's heritage conservation efforts, these towers have been reconstructed based on their original design, construction, and functionality.



Old Don Jail ventilation system, drawing by Charles Willmot, 1888 (Province of Ontario Archives)

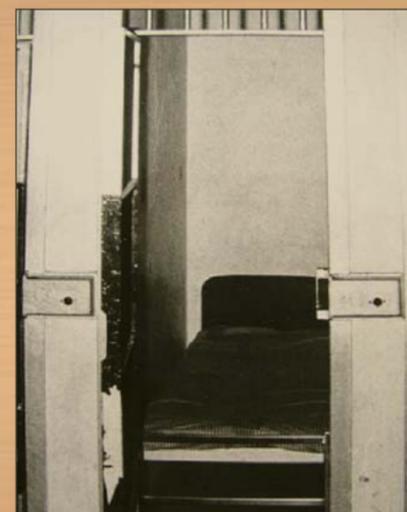


Original north/south section drawing of the Old Don Jail, drawing by William Thomas, Architect, 1857-59 (City of Toronto Archives, Series 1508, Item 16)

Iron Cells

The “iron cells,” made of prefabricated iron sheets and bars, were installed in 1888 when the Governor’s Residence was moved from the administrative wing of the Jail to a new, freestanding house on-site. In the space made available, a new women’s area and matron’s quarters were built.

The iron sheeting had two advantages over masonry construction: it took up less space and was light enough that the existing wooden floor construction could safely bear the weight.



Fourth floor iron cell (Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services)