



The Oculus

Revitalizing a Space-Age Park Pavilion

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Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and Giaimo Architects are thrilled to embark on a new community-initiative to revitalize The Oculus, an under-used pavilion in Etobicoke. This project is one of five recipients of Park People's 2019 Public Space Incubator (PSI) Grant, funded by the Balsalm Foundation and Ken and Eti Greenberg. The PSI program aims to encourage and support the next generation of creative public space projects by providing access to funding and professional networks.

"The Oculus is a bold and eccentric piece of modernist architecture, but over time it has deteriorated and is now underutilized as a park pavilion," says project co-lead Stephanie Mah, VP of ACO Toronto. "The PSI grant provides us the opportunity to give new life to this abandoned space-age structure and showcase how architectural heritage conservation and community partnerships can create engaging public spaces."

Designed in 1958 by Alan Crossley, The Oculus is a fantastical space-age park shelter nestled in a meadow along the Humber River Recreational Trail in the City of Toronto's South Humber Park. Over the last few decades, the pavilion has suffered significant neglect. This revitalization project aims to transform The Oculus into a welcoming community gathering place along the trail by restoring and cleaning the existing pavilion and implementing flexible and contextual outdoor furniture. The project will also include a series of engaging and educational programming, such as walking tours, design workshops, and an installation, that bring new life to The Oculus and provide the community with ongoing occasions to visit the site, explore the space, and learn about Toronto's built heritage.

Co-led by ACO Toronto, ACO NextGen, and Giaimo Architects, The Oculus project combines innovative design solutions with community collaboration to conserve heritage and create a vibrant unique place for people. The project team looks forward to working with the City of Toronto and community members on the next steps to realize this exciting project.

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