

# Department store repurposing wins urban design award

<https://dsai.ca/news/department-store-repurposing-wins-urban-design-award/>

Toronto – The transformation of a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century department store in London, Ontario into a multi-disciplinary centre of learning for Fanshawe College has received an Award of Excellence in Urban Design for Adaptive Re-Use.

The award was presented to Diamond Schmitt Architects and associate Phil Agar Architect, with ERA Architects as heritage consultants. In a press release announcing the winners, the City of London said the awards are a “chance to recognize and celebrate original design, innovative concepts and visionary thinking in the field of urban planning.”

The former Kingsmill’s Department Store was a fixture of city life in downtown London. This tradition continues in a vibrant urban campus that welcomes 1,600 students, staff and faculty. The new 10,600sm (114,000sf) building is home to the Schools of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts and Information Technology.

The seven-storey structure includes a setback three-storey addition above a terrace on top of the original building. The new façade is enlivened by colourful metal panels and varying densities of frit on the glazing. The building retains its street character by preserving the stone facade and awning on Dundas Street while the adjacent red brick annex was dismantled and rebuilt using the heritage brick.

A student-run restaurant animates the ground floor, which also features a two-storey biofilter living wall, amphitheatre seating, and an open corridor that links the Dundas and Carling Street entrances. Other original features incorporated in the design include reclaimed wood joists, a tin ceiling and locally made yellow brick.

The \$66.2 million campus is the single largest project by southwestern Ontario’s biggest community college.

Diamond Schmitt Architects ([www.dsai.ca](http://www.dsai.ca)) has an extensive portfolio of academic facilities, commercial and residential projects as well as recreation and performing arts centres. Current projects include Ottawa’s new central library and Library and Archives Canada joint facility; Robarts Common at the University of Toronto; and Buddy Holly Hall of Performing Arts & Sciences in Texas.