

# THE HEART OF ST. MIKE'S

SUPPORT THE RENEWAL  
OF BRENNAN HALL




UNIVERSITY OF  
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**BOUNDLESS**



BRENNAN HALL

A photograph of a stone building corner, likely Brennan Hall at St. Mike's, with a light blue overlay. The stone is light-colored and arranged in a regular pattern. A small, dark, rectangular vent is visible on the left side of the wall. The background is a bright, overcast sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“For us, Brennan Hall was the heart of St. Mike’s, a place for socializing, nourishment, and fun. Where else could one relax with a Coke and French fries, listen to loud Beatles’ tunes, and compare exam results with a bunch of co-ed friends? Where else could you dance, meet other USMC’ers — non-residents, as well as those in other dorms — and still be close to one’s dorm, in order get back before curfew?”

**Jane Lavery, 6T8**  
USMC alumna



Pause Have a Coke Refresh!

ENTER HERE

HOT POP BARS 10¢  
HOT POP BARS 10¢

Students at Football Dance in Brennan Hall, 1950.

## A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

For decades, the University of St. Michael's College (USMC) has stood out at the University of Toronto for its unique focus on the educational, personal and spiritual development of its students. At the very heart of this vocation is a building beloved by generations of St. Michael's alumni—Brennan Hall.

For St. Mike's students, Brennan Hall is more than a building; it is the geographic and spiritual centre of the USMC community, a place for life-changing conversations and blossoming friendships, for peaceful reflection and lively celebration. For both residents and commuter students, Brennan Hall is a welcome home away from home.

Constructed in 1938 as a residence hall, Brennan has, over the years, evolved into a bustling hub of student activity on campus, with the dining hall, offices for university staff, student government and clubs, common rooms, event spaces and more.

As times have changed, however, so have the needs of students. Now, more than ever, they depend on the facilities, guidance and sense of community St. Mike's provides, to prepare for an increasingly uncertain world after graduation. It is imperative that Brennan Hall adapt to reflect this growing need while retaining and preserving its historic character and purpose.

That's why the University of St. Michael's College is launching an exciting interior renovation project that will enhance Brennan Hall's role as an open, modern and inviting gathering place for students. This project will overhaul and improve the USMC registrar's office; create adaptable office spaces for clubs and student groups; establish areas for casual conversation and quiet study; and reaffirm Brennan Hall's place at the heart of the University of St. Michael's College for years to come.

“One of the best things about St. Mike’s is our historic commitment to undergraduate students, and the transformative experiences those students have in our spaces and with our people. The renovations at Brennan Hall will enhance this by creating a registrar’s office that both reflects 21<sup>st</sup> century student interests and needs—a multi-functional hub where you can relax, work and chat with friends and get your business done with the registrar. It will also create a through line from the student services experience into a social work space, creating the kind of place where St. Mike’s alumni have had some of their most memorable experiences.”

**Randy Boyagoda**

Principal, University of St. Michael’s College



# THE BRENNAN HALL PROJECT

In collaboration with leading academic architectural firm Gow Hastings, and in close consultation with students, faculty and staff, the University of St. Michael's College is making critical renovations to the Brennan Hall interior. These changes will enhance the student experience inside Brennan while preserving the hall's historic façade, restoring the building's legacy and purpose as an essential hub for student life on campus.

The revitalized Brennan Hall will feature bright, open and multifunctional spaces designed to encourage both casual conversation and quiet study. It will also include a redesigned registrar's office, waiting area and a glass mural celebrating the history of the College. The renovation will also refresh the offices used by the Dean of Students, Student Life, Campus Ministry, Commuter Dons, SMCSU and student clubs, with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptability.

These exciting new spaces will include warm lighting and contemporary furnishings with modern amenities such as charging stations and work surfaces, as well as a kitchen and café area.

This renewal follows Gow Hastings' successful interior redesigns at Ryerson and OISE, projects praised by students, staff and faculty alike. The Brennan Hall renovation will link old and new, underlining the building's legacy as a place for conversation, mentorship, discussion and friendship—a place where St. Mike's students feel they truly belong. Brennan Hall will also serve once again as the central campus hub for the USMC community, a place where residents and commuter students can interact on a daily basis, creating a stronger sense of identity with St. Mike's among its members.

“As someone who transferred to St. Mike’s in their second year, the registrar’s office was extremely helpful in guiding me to choose the right courses. But sometimes we would have to wait for an hour or more in areas with few chairs and little space, and there were times I would have to walk out. The idea of the registrar’s office being in an open, inviting space where I can work while I wait would make a huge difference and make the process much easier.”

**Samantha Douek**

President of SMCSU





“Brennan is important to me as a commuter student as it’s a home base, a place where people come to gather between classes or at odd times before they have to make the long trip home. A more open inviting Brennan will encourage more collaboration between groups and individual students, creating a greater sense of community.”

**Angelo Serrentino**  
Commuter Don

## A FOCUS ON STUDENTS

“One of the great things about St. Mike’s is that it’s always been known for having a strong and supportive community, even though we’re spread out over a dozen acres and comprised of twenty different buildings. I think having so many different services under one roof at Brennan Hall is going to strengthen that community by encouraging commuter and residence students to take off their headphones and interact with each other, and start ad hoc conversations that will lead to new acquaintances and friendships down the road.”  
—Duane Rendle, Dean of Students USMC

Our time at university leaves us with indelible memories, whether a favourite study haunt, a fascinating class, or a life-changing conversation with a trusted friend or mentor. When St. Mike’s alumni reflect on what made U of T special to them, they mention Brennan Hall.

After all, from student dances to club talent shows, important student group meetings to study sessions with friends, Brennan Hall is a place of firsts. Brennan is where St. Mike’s students first develop lifelong friendships or life partnerships, where budding journalists earn their first by-line with *The Mike*, and where SMCSU members first hone their political principles. It is a place where professors and advisors offer advice to students that changes the course of their lives for the better.

It was therefore vital that St. Mike’s students be at the heart of the Brennan Hall renewal project, both from its inception and in close consultation with Gow Hastings Architects. The choice of everything from room and office designs to lighting and furniture is being made with input from the St. Mike’s community. The new Brennan Hall will be a space created by and for students.



Students gather on front steps of Brennan Hall's south entrance, 1954–55 (left) and 2017–18 (right).



“We believe that the involvement of students must begin early in the design stage. Through a series of workshops and a Town Hall with various student stakeholders, we facilitated open discussions and a dialogue to frame our design vision and goal and to establish the project’s mandate of what Brennan Hall needed to be and achieve for USMC. This process allows everyone to be heard, and ensures a collective ‘buy-in’ of a common goal and direction, which ultimately serves to reinforce the overall success of the project.”

**Valerie Gow**

Gow Hastings co-founder and interior design principal

Rendering of Registrar’s Office  
(credit: Gow Hastings Architects).



“Our Age of Anxiety is, in great part, the result of trying to do today’s jobs with yesterday’s tools.”

**Marshall McLuhan**

Media theorist and former professor at USMC

## A REGISTRAR’S OFFICE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Today, our students rely on the guidance and expertise provided by the St. Mike’s Registrar’s Office to navigate their way through a challenging and exciting four years of academic and personal achievement. That’s why we’re introducing an open, updated and modernized registrar’s office to Brennan Hall, taking it directly to the heart of student life at St. Mike’s and encouraging greater access to student services.

The new office design will help staff provide more efficient and accessible service to students in a hurry, while inviting and comfortable seating will alleviate the stress of waiting during busy seasonal periods. The open floor plan at the office will also encourage more interaction between staff and students, supporting the pastoral care that alumni have long associated with USMC. These changes will motivate more students to seek financial and academic advice, and reaffirm the role of the registrar’s office in the life of St. Mike’s students.

These improvements echo Gow Hastings successful work at Ryerson University, where the experienced architects transformed a dark, enclosed registrar’s office into a bright, streamlined 13,000 square foot student services hub with modern amenities and furnishings—a project that met with overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, staff and faculty. As with Ryerson, the Brennan Hall renewal project will greatly enhance student services while helping to preserve the building’s legacy for years to come.

“The proposed changes will significantly improve the work we do every day at the registrar’s office and in Student Services. It will be a welcoming area where most if not all student services will be geographically consolidated to help students with a diverse set of needs. It will allow us to make direct referrals to the various student services such as Health and Wellness, Learning Strategists,

the Dean of Students, Chaplaincy, and Student Life. Also, all On Location Services will be housed in the same area, allowing for the continued collaboration with services offered by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. This will lead to an improved level of service to students and greater student satisfaction.” — Giancarlo Mazzanti, Registrar and Director of Student Services University of St. Michael’s College



Rendering of Lobby with view of Welcome Desk  
(credit: Gow Hastings Architects).



Rendering of Lobby with view of Registrar's Reception (credit: Gow Hastings Architects).

“I was happy to give my annual donation to the Brennan Hall renovation project. For many of us, Brennan and St. Basil’s church were the center of our lives at St. Mike’s, and I hope it will continue to be that way for students in the years to come.”

**Major General Thomas Flynn, 5T2**  
USMC alumnus

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

We are delighted to announce that work on the exciting two-phase Brennan Hall renewal project has already begun. This would not be possible without the generous support of a group of alumni and friends, as well as the University of St. Michael’s College.

However, we need additional support from our generous and dedicated St. Mike’s community to help see this incredible initiative through to its expected completion at the end of 2018.

With your help, and with the wonderful generosity and involvement of all of our alumni and friends, together we can ensure future generations of St. Mike’s students will enjoy the same memories, the same fellowship, and the same guidance our alumni have come to associate with Brennan Hall.





St. Mike's graduates prepare to cross Front Campus as part of convocation.

# A BOLD FUTURE FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

The Brennan Hall renewal project is far more than an interior design project. It is a reaffirmation of the role, impact and identity of the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto. This vital project will not only secure Brennan Hall's place at the heart of student life at St. Mike's, it will underline USMC's commitment to community, mentorship and student support for decades.

Today, as students face an ever-changing set of challenges and obstacles in completing their university education, they will need the space, the facilities and the services a revitalized Brennan Hall will provide. The new Brennan Hall will not only provide future students with the guidance and advice they need to make their way through their degrees and into their professional lives, it will once again serve at the centre of student life on campus.

Please join us as we make history at the University of St. Michael's College.

**For more information, please contact:**

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