

**History of Max Gluskin House**  
**150 St. George St.**  
Don Dewees

***Short Chronology***

1889 Built for William Crowther, Toronto merchant.<sup>1</sup>

1927 Purchased by the China Inland Mission.<sup>1,2</sup>

19xx CIM built the link from main house to coach house, adding 6 bedrooms, a bathroom and washroom on the second floor and a large “boxroom” on the first floor.<sup>2</sup>

195x China expels missionaries in 1950-51. CIM broadens its focus and changes its name to [Overseas Missionary Fellowship](#) and moves to 1058 Avenue Rd.<sup>4</sup>

1955 Property purchased by the Canadian Medical Association.<sup>1</sup> Price approx \$140,000.<sup>2</sup>

1960 2-story brick addition to south completed.<sup>1</sup>

1960’s UofT leased, then purchased, the property from the CMA.<sup>1</sup> First used by Centre for Urban and Community Studies then by Institute for Policy Analysis. In 1982 the building was assigned to Economics.

1997-8 Economics Department renovates and restores the front hall and grand staircase, then renovates the Coach House conference room, adding 2 small offices. Nancy Gallini, Chair.

2001 Michael Berkowitz, Chair of Economics, submits a Project Planning Report for renovation and expansion having developed a financing plan and compelling needs.

2003 Renovation and expansion budget approved and Hariri Pontrini Architects chosen to design the project. 2-phase project contemplated with phase II depending on funding.

2005 September 6, Economics Department moves out of 150 St. George St. to Sidney Smith Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors. Demolition begins in November. Construction starts in early 2006.

2006 January. Generous gift of \$3.5 million by Ira Gluskin and Maxine Granovsky-Gluskin enables combining of phases I and II. The building will be named The Max Gluskin House in honour of Mr. Gluskin's father, who graduated with a degree in Commerce and Finance in 1936.

2008 Construction completed. Department moves back in late December.

Sources of information:

1. Report, Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto, December, 2003.
2. Correspondence from Maybeth Henderson’s mother Vera Tyler, October 8, 2005.
3. Discussions with Maybeth Henderson, brother John, and Jill, Beryl, October 29, 2005.
4. Discussions with Ian Grant and Francis Joyce, residents in the house 1950-51. July 29, 2009.

## ***History and Architecture of the Economics Department Building***

The house and coach house at 150 St. George Street were completed in 1889 for William Crowther, a Toronto merchant who occupied the site until 1926. The architect is unknown. The architecture is Victorian, with features of Queen Anne Revival styling. The property was acquired in 1927 by the China Inland Mission, an international organization formed in the mid 19th century to spread Christianity throughout China. The CIM added a structure to the back of the house connecting it to the coach house on the second floor, with the driveway passing underneath.

**Photo #1. The house from St. George St. looking northwest** showing the original house and the coach house behind. The bay window (centre of photo) is in the dining room, now the Chair's office. Note the two-story veranda, long since removed. Perhaps 1950's. [*History photo-front-south-150.jpg* ]



While the CIM owned the house the principal rooms on the first floor, from front to rear were (with 2012 Economics room numbers and functions in []):

- [144 Reception Lounge] A large drawing room with a fireplace and wood mantle on the south wall, radiators enclosed by cast iron grillwork and covered with marble, a door on the south side opening onto a side porch, and pocket doors to the front hall and to:
- [148 Receptionist and Chair's Secretary] A sitting room with a piano and a fireplace on the west wall and high doors opening onto:
- [150 Dep't Chair] The dining room with a bay window on the south and a fireplace on the west wall. The floor still contains a patched hole for the wires for a buzzer to the kitchen.

- [152 Ass't to Business Officer] Next was a small butler's pantry with dishes and a doorway into:
- [154 Business Officer] The kitchen, with a restaurant-size gas stove on the west wall, vented to the chimney.
- [Courtyard, Common Room] Beyond the kitchen, in the 1927 addition, was a pantry where the cook was said to rest. Beyond that was the box room where the suitcases and trunks of visiting missionaries were delivered and stored. This room had a trap door and stairs to a storage room in the basement.

The front hall had a fireplace on the north wall with a brass rail around the hearth and an unusual stained glass window directly over the fireplace. (See Photo #2D) A second stained glass window was just behind the stairs in front of the washroom (see Photo #2B) and a third was on the landing just below the second floor. All three windows were lost when the Canadian Medical Association purchased and renovated the building.

The CIM used the largest room in the second floor rear of the coach house as a boardroom and in 2005 the dumbwaiter serving that room was still visible. On the first floor of the coach house was a meeting room where services were held. The coach house was apparently always used for staff. Vehicles were parked in a shed along the lane to the south of the coach house.

The next page shows a winter view from St. George St., prior to 1950, photo 2A, top. The three other pictures were taken while CIM owned the building and they show:

- #2B (left) looking from the old dining room (now chair's office) north across the hall to a stained glass window, long gone;
- #2C (middle) looking from a walkway north of the house west toward the coach house (used as offices) and the entry door to the coach house which was in use until this building was demolished in 2006.
- #2D (right) looking west from the front doorway at the main staircase. Note the fireplace on the right (north) wall with a stained glass window above it. The chimney flue must have gone around the window. Note the lamp on the post at the foot of the stairs and the small statue in the alcove at the landing at the top of the picture. The fireplace, stained glass window and staircase lamp were gone by the time the University acquired the property.

Photos 2A (top), 2B, 2C, 2D (bottom)



2B



2C



2D

In 1950-51 China expelled foreigners so most of the missionaries left. Many came through 150 St. George on their way to other postings. In the next few years, the CIM changed its name to the Overseas Mission Fellowship, an organization that existed into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The organization moved from 150 St. George to a building on Avenue Rd.

The Canadian Medical Association purchased the site in 1955 as the location of "CMA House". Five years later, the south wing was completed in the Georgian Revival style according to the designs of the Toronto architectural firm of Allward and Gouinlock. It has a flat roof with a parapet and dentilled cornice.

The University of Toronto began leasing the property in the 1960s when the CMA relocated to Ottawa. It was first used for the Centre for Urban and Community Studies and then also for the Institute for Policy Analysis. In 1982 both of them moved out and the Economics Department moved in, following the division of the Department of Political Economy into three parts. The drawing room became the front conference room; the sitting room was occupied by administrative staff; the dining room became the Chair's office, and the kitchen became the business officer's office. The "box room" was used for storage and then for cubicles for emeritus faculty. See Appendix B for the floor plans of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors during the Economics Department period from 1972 to 2005.

The original front doors were removed and stored because they did not meet the fire code. When the Centre for Urban and Community Studies moved out, they had the doors mounted in the corridor of their new premises. CUCS then renovated and refinished the doors which in 2005 served as the entry doors to the CUCS offices on the fourth floor of the building at 455 Spadina at College. See Photo #3, next page.

The coach house and 1927 addition were demolished in 2005, the house and south building were renovated and a new addition was built on the north and west sides of the property. See Renovation pages. The new/renovated building was re-occupied in December, 2008.

With input from Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto, December, 2003, and information supplied by Ms. Maybeth Henderson, and her mother Mrs. Vera Tyler, residents of the house when it was owned by the CIM.

**Photo #3 Original Front Doors.** [*EcoBldg Doors/DSCF0488.JPG.*]



## Appendix A: Room uses by China Inland Mission and architectural features:

These room functions and room descriptions are as of the 1950's. Room numbers are the numbers used by Economics from the 1970's to the renovation, followed by the Max Gluskin House numbers in (). See 2000 floor plans in Appendix B for Economics old room numbers.

N101 (144 reception waiting) Large drawing room with fireplace on S. wall. See photo of mantle. Cast iron radiator covers with marble tops.

Front Hall Gas fireplace on N. wall with brass rail around hearth, wood mantle. Stained glass window over fireplace. Large stained glass windows on 1<sup>st</sup> floor and on landing. Lost in 1955? Light fixture on the pedestal of the banister. See photos.

N102 (146, 148 receptionist, chair's secretary) Back sitting room with piano, fireplace on W wall. Cast iron radiator cover with marble top. In SE corner of room, door on E wall leading out to a porch on S of house. Down 1 step to porch, then a set of steps down to the side lawn. Where in 1960-2005 ECO had a door to the 1960 addition in the SE corner of the room, there was originally a window looking onto the porch and lawn. See photos.

N103 (150, chair's office) Dining room with fireplace on W wall with wood mantle and mirror over the mantle to the ceiling. Note excellent replacement of wainscoting where fireplace was; similar quality to front hall. Button on floor to summon cook/maid from kitchen. 1 cm dia plug visible in floor near N end of room where wire for button ran through floor. Light fixture was **not** an elaborate chandelier.

N103A (demolished 2005) Powder room with pull-chain toilet

N104 (152 & corridor) Butler's pantry with pass-through to kitchen. Swinging doors to kitchen and dining room (seems reasonable to kitchen, but to DR?).

N105 (154) Kitchen with restaurant gas stove on W wall, vented to chimney. Sink on E wall.

N106 (demolished 2005) Pantry, food storage.

N108 (demolished 2005) Box room for storing trunks, suitcases, boxes. Doors loaded directly from trucks. Trap door to storage room below, still visible from storage room below.

N010 Basement: Billiard Room, later ping-pong table. There was a bench in the bay to sit watching the game. Fireplace on N. wall.

N012 (copy room) Drying room, with clotheslines all over.

N01x (caretaking) Laundry room for all but sheets which were sent out.

N basement Rear furnace room, coal cellar, storage room under N108, front furnace room.

2<sup>nd</sup> floor - apartment with:

N203 (246, PhD) bedroom

N202 (244) sitting room. The small room off to the south (N202A, now corridor) was used as a child's bedroom and had a door exiting to the veranda.

N201 (242) small bedroom. Watched the Santa Claus parade here.

N201B (demolished 2005) bathroom

Door through the dressing room from sitting room to bedroom. Small verandah to the south. Fireplaces with wood mantles in the bedroom and sitting room, but fireplaces closed off. (The mantles are in the attic; painted wood, less elaborate than 1<sup>st</sup> floor.)

N204 (248 PhD) Guest room with large walk-in closet. For special guests. Probably had a fireplace.

N207 (207 approx) Guest room with washbasin.

N205 (WC and caretaking closet) Linen closet?  
N208 (demolished 2005) Large bathroom?  
The second floor woodwork was all varnished, not painted.  
[Addition to the house]  
N209 (demolished 2005) Ironing room  
N210, 212, 213 (demolished 2005) Double bedrooms

N216 (demolished 2005) Boardroom for meetings. Relic dumbwaiter in W wall, use unknown.  
N217 (demolished 2005) Director's office.  
Coach house second floor: (demolished 2005) offices.  
Coach house first floor: (demolished 2005) prayer room for 100 people in N 111 (Coach House Conference Room) and N114, N115 offices. That is, the prayer room was the whole north half of the first floor, N of the entry.

Stables were south of the existing coach house, attached where the half timbering covered the wall in 2000. Entry from East side only. Converted to a garage and storage while CIM owned the house; CIM owned only one car. Must have been torn down by CMA.

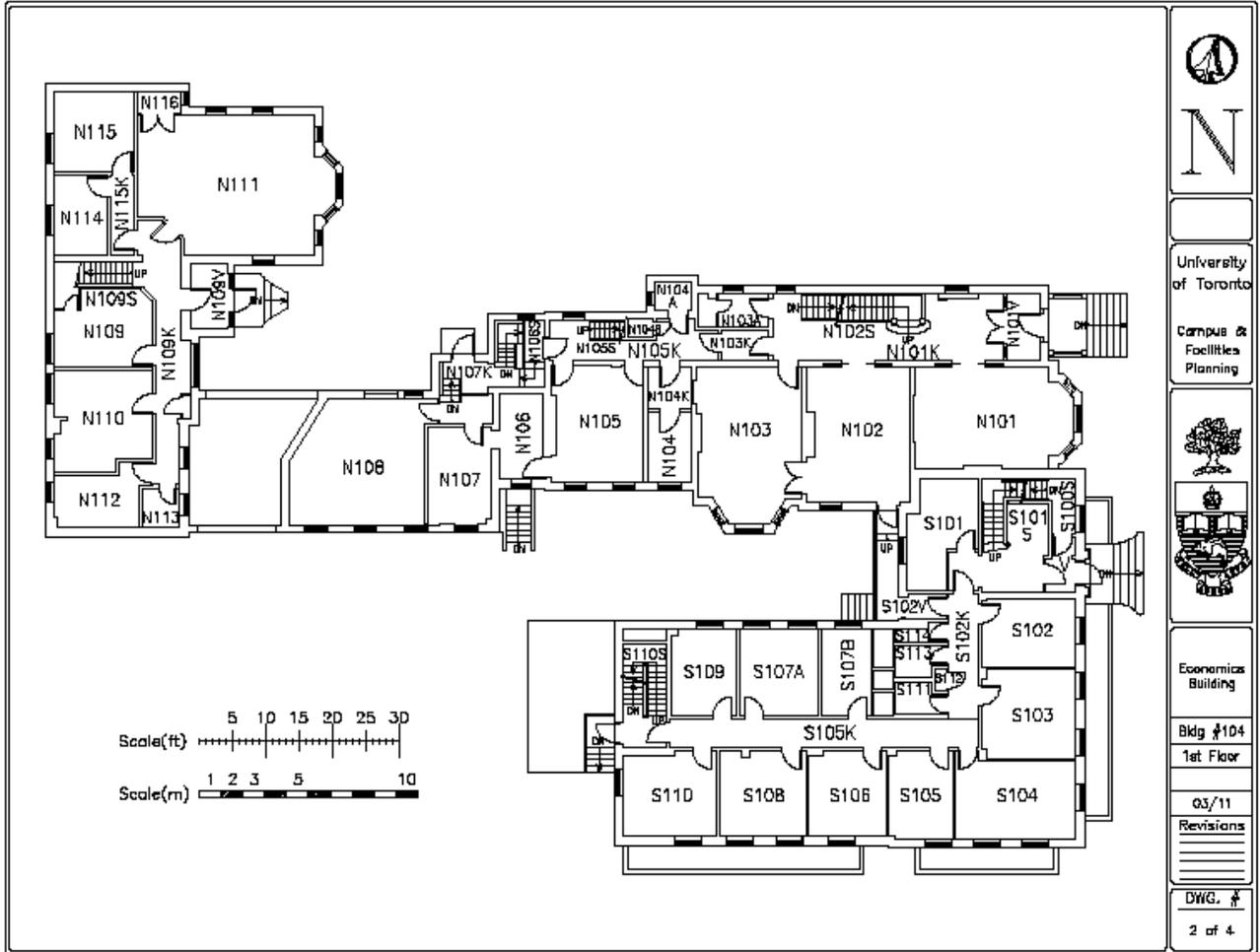
There was a large yard south of the house with trees and a gazebo. The area in front of the stables was driveway with a half turn-around, all gravel. The rest was grass.

#### **Sources for Appendix A information:**

Correspondence from Maybeth Henderson's mother Vera Tyler, October 8, 2005. Mrs. Tyler's biography tells about the house. 8mm movies show some house details.  
Discussions with Maybeth Henderson, brother John, and Jill, Beryl, October 29, 2005.  
Don Dewees records of floor plans and personal recollections.

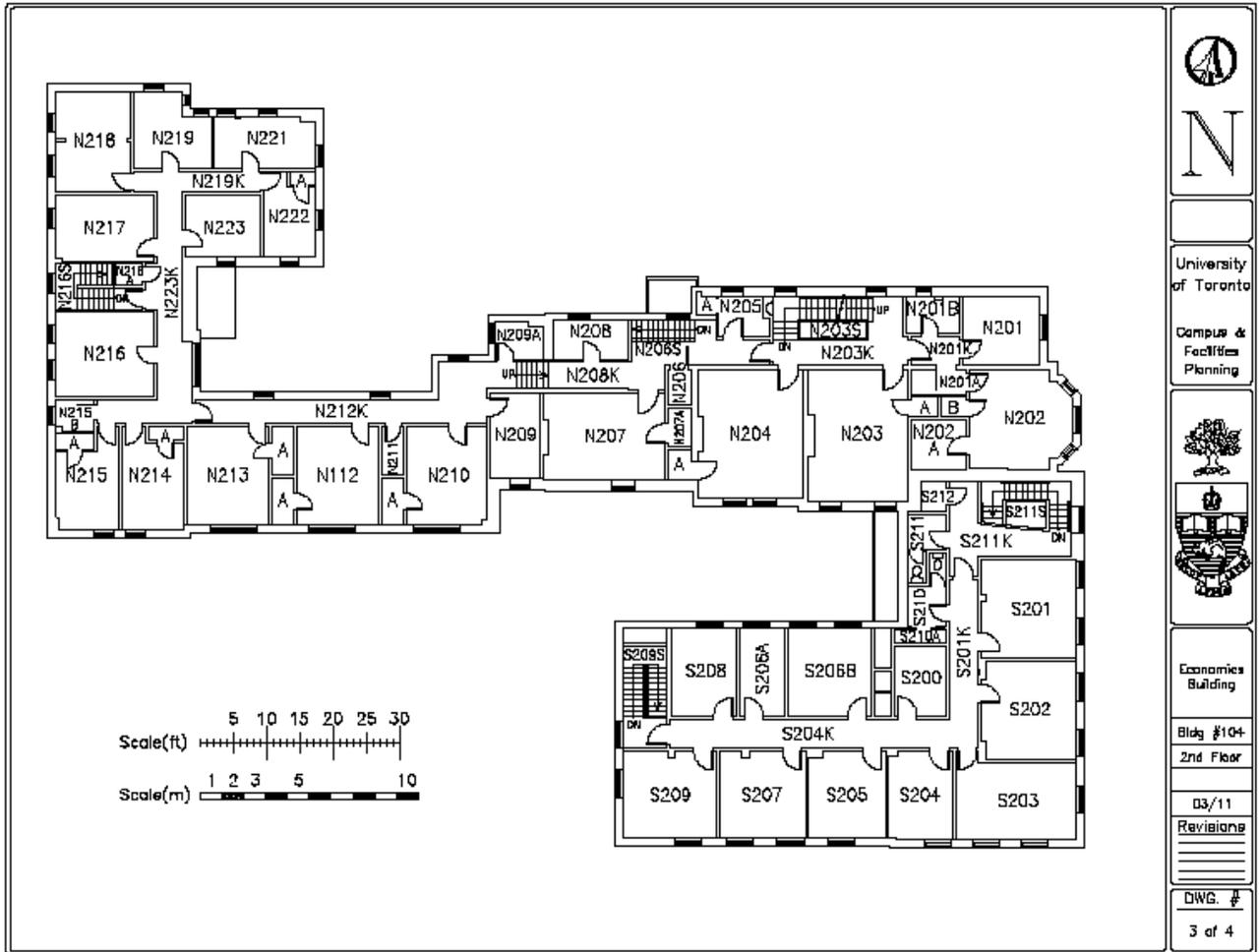
**Appendix B. Floor plans of the property, years 1970-2005 when used by Economics, first and second floors only.**

**First Floor Plans**



Rooms N101 through N105 represent the original 1889 house.  
 Rooms N109 through N115 represent the original Coach House.  
 Rooms N106 through N108 were built as part of the 1927 CIM addition connecting the original house to the Coach House on the second floor.

## Second Floor Plans



Rooms N201 through N208 represent the original 1889 house.

Rooms N214 through N223 represent the original Coach House.

Rooms N209 through N213 represent the CIM addition linking the original house to the Coach House.