

HALDENBY, Eric Wilson (1893 – 1971)

Brigadier Eric W. Haldenby was one of the senior members of the large 20th century architectural firm of Mathers and Haldenby. While its designs were conservative in style, the firm was known for its versatility and dependability and executed a large number of institutional commissions.

Eric Haldenby was born in Toronto in 1893, attended Parkdale Collegiate and entered the University of Toronto School of Architecture in 1917. His education was interrupted by the outbreak of World War 1 and it was not until 1921 that he completed his studies. After graduation he entered into partnership with "Shy" Mathers under the name of Mathers and Haldenby, a firm that continues today under the guidance of each of their sons.

The firm was very prolific, being involved in many large projects over the years. One of their earliest designs is for the memorial for the 48th Highlanders at the north end of Queen's Park, Toronto (1923) which is a gothic monolith rising to a sculpted crown. Mathers and Haldenby designed several buildings on the University of Toronto campus including, the Botany Building, Queen's Park Circle (1931-32) with its Georgian stone facade and flamboyant greenhouse well sited on the curving crescent and the Hygiene and Public Health Building, College Street (1927). At University College they designed Whitney Hall (1930-31, with John M. Lyle) and Sir Daniel Wilson Residences (1953-55) which are a well planned Beaux-Arts college buildings executed with attention to lay-out and homogeneity of design. They also designed the University's David Dunlop Observatory, Richmond Hill, Ontario (1932-33) as well as

the Sigmund Samuel Library, King's College Circle (1952-53).

Mathers and Haldenby also designed the Canadiana Building for the Royal Ontario Museum, Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto (1949-50) which is an excellent 1950's treatment of cut-stone Georgian design, with well integrated wall sculpture depicting prominent men in Canadian history. In their design for Ellis Brothers Jewellers at 94-100 Yonge Street in 1931 (now Tip Top Tailors) they again worked in the modern classical style. Mathers and Haldenby designed the United States Consulate, University Avenue, Toronto (1950-51) and the Globe and Mail building, King Street at York, Toronto (1937-38, demolished). They also built a new facade for the Imperial Life Building, King Street east of Victor, Toronto (1938, demolished).

Projects executed in association with other architects include the University Club, University Avenue, Toronto (1929) which they designed with F. Hilton Wilkes, in an elegant Palladian Neo-Georgian style inspired by the clubs of London, England. The Canada Permanent Building, Bay at Adelaide Street, Toronto (1929) was also a collaborative venture with F. Hilton Wilkes and Sproatt & Rolph to design a richly decorated Art Deco skyscraper. Mathers and Haldenby with Beck and Eadie re-designed the office tower for the Bank of Nova Scotia, King and Bay Street, Toronto (1949-51) originally designed during the depression by John M. Lyle, which they gave a decidedly post-war "modern" look. The firm also designed the Peter Larkin out-patient department for the Toronto General Hospital, University Avenue at College Street (1934).