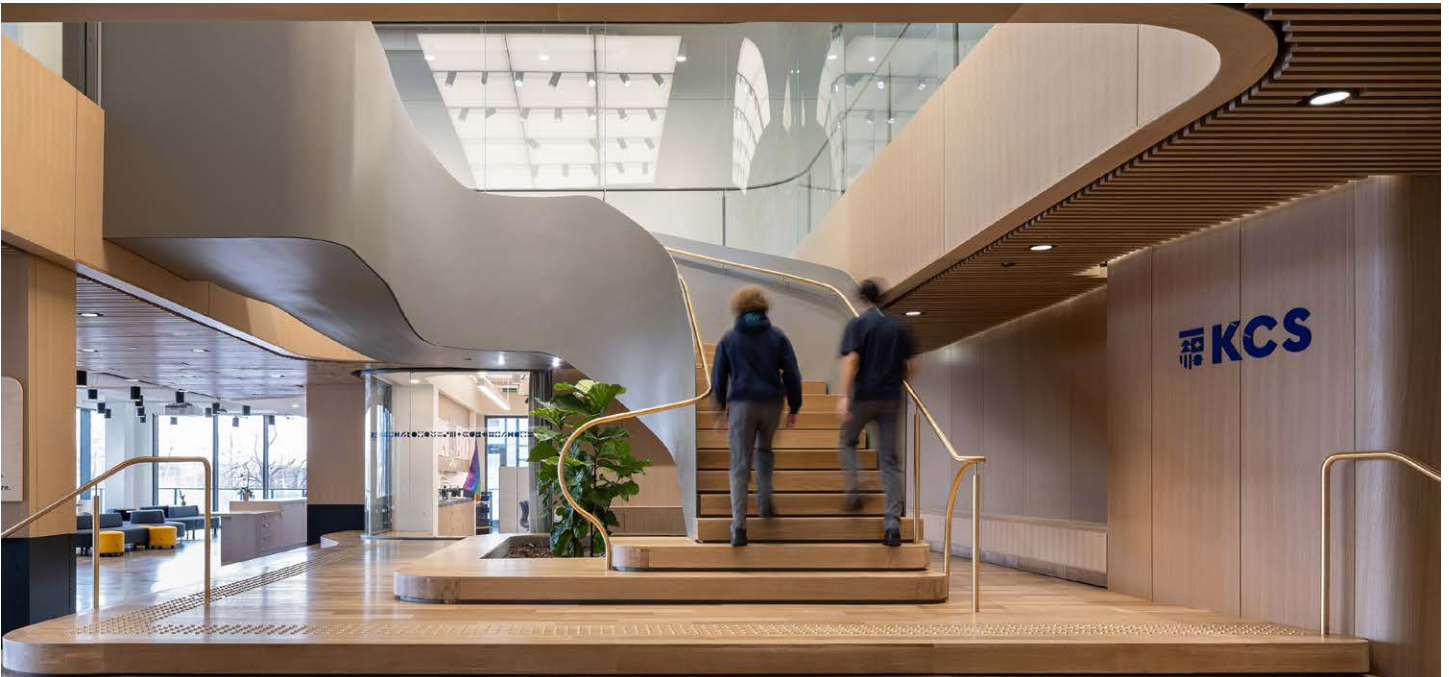


Architecture Counsel

KINGSWAY COLLEGE SCHOOL (KCS) SENIOR SCHOOL

An innovative, experiential learning environment within an existing high-rise condominium that creates a new paradigm for the high school experience



Toronto, ON | May 15, 2023

When Kingsway College School (KCS) decided to expand its curriculum to include grades 9-12, Architecture Counsel (ACi) was engaged to create an ambitious, phased master plan that would reflect the school's unique vision and ambition. The first phase (which accommodates grades 9 and 10) was completed in September 2022 with the second phase now underway.

The new senior school creates a new paradigm for high school students, using the City of Toronto as its laboratory and campus. With an emphasis on fostering community and strong civic values through experiential learning, a student-centric approach, commitment to well-being, and sustainability, the school is the only independent high school in Toronto to occupy an existing high-rise residential tower.

Above: A light-filled reception area anchored by a wood-crafted feature stair greets the visitor

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Above: The Market Place is the social hub and heart of KCS

Breaking with conventional school architecture, the flexible, open-ended design eschews the typical classroom arrangement and enables the learning environment to operate more like a series of flexible social and innovation spaces. In another break with convention, the senior school occupies 40,000 square feet of space on two levels of a 66-story condominium. While this model is not uncommon for schools in other dense urban environments (e.g., New York, Chicago, Hong Kong), it is still in its nascent stages in Toronto.

The choice to capitalize on existing infrastructure is reflective of the ethos of KCS with its focus on good citizenship, ingenuity, and environmental stewardship. Although the space was originally slated for use by a major Canadian grocery chain, through a careful configuration of spaces in tandem with a democratic approach to natural light, ACi was able to transform the space to appear purpose-built.

Despite the site's lack of outdoor space, KCS forges connections to the surrounding natural outdoors in innovative ways by using the city and surrounding landscape as an extension of the campus. By connecting



with an array of community organizations and learning partners (including the Argonaut Rowing Club, High Park Nature Club, and several athletic facilities), KCS augments its curriculum with outdoor learning and fitness activities that align with the ‘whole student’ approach. Nature itself is a formidable learning tool and KCS capitalizes on its remarkable location adjacent to Lake Ontario, Humber Bay Parks, and the Butterfly Habitat location, using the site as a living laboratory to expose students the importance of environmental stewardship and incorporate sustainable thinking into their daily life.

The main entrance to KCS is on the second floor of the podium. Upon entering the grand, double-height reception area, visitors immediately feel as though they are in a distinctive space. Greeted by an abundance of natural light, with an elegant, wood-crafted feature stair anchoring the reception area, the effect is one of great spatial release. The generous width of the stair organizes the space and adds drama to the entry sequence; its ample dimensions also allow the stair to function as one of the many social spaces where students can gather to talk and collaborate.

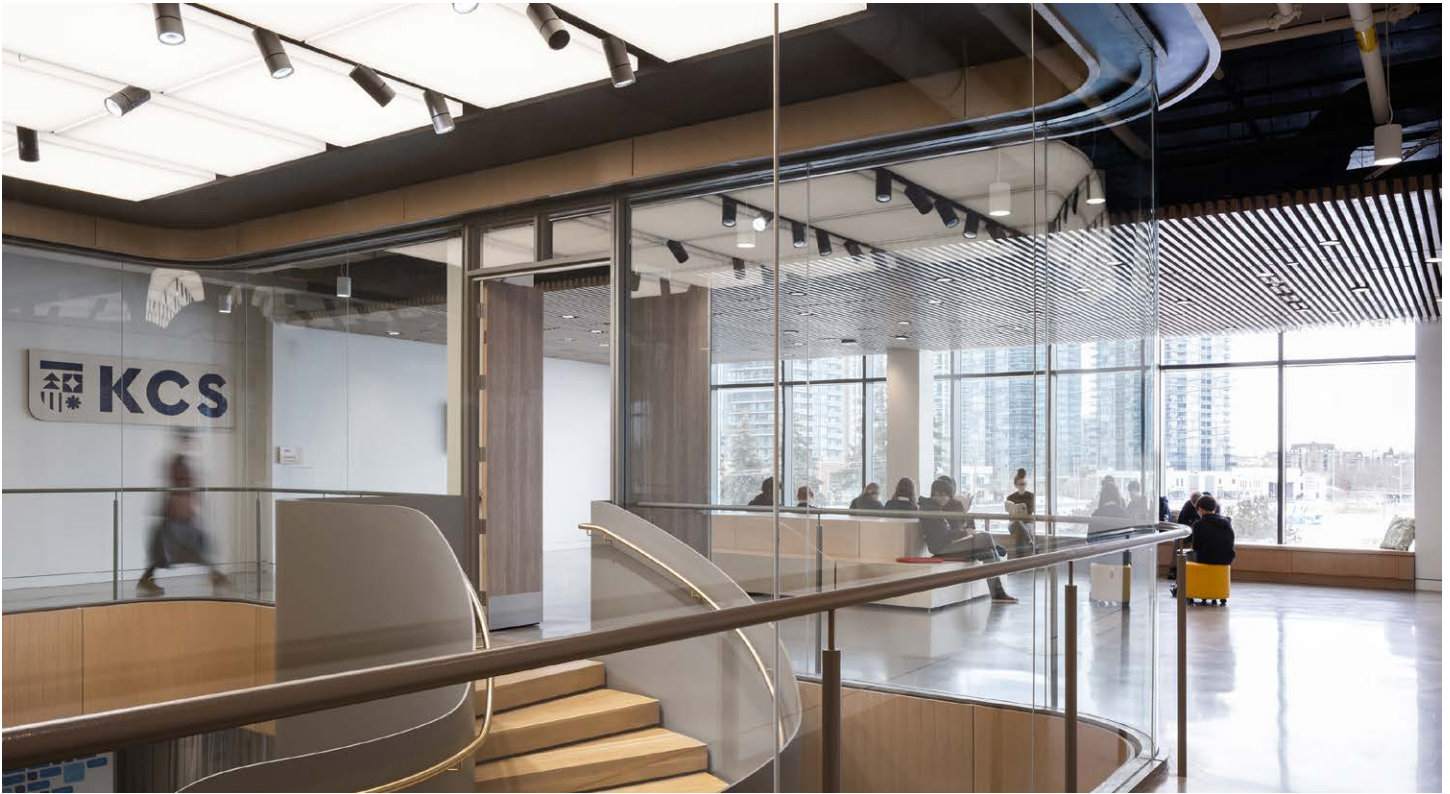
Above: The feature stair functions as one of the school’s many social spaces



Above: Meeting Room with view to Market Place and Art Classroom

To further animate the entry space, views are provided into the Market Place (an ambiantly programmed social and event space), food kiosk, art studio, glazed meeting rooms, classrooms, breakout spaces, and views of the developing cityscape and Lake Ontario. The Market Place is the heart of the school where students, staff, and learning partners can meet, collaborate, enjoy lunch, present, perform, create, and even sell products from an entrepreneurial venture. The student-led café supports authentic experiential learning in entrepreneurship as part of the KCS Path Program which connects students to external experts and learning partners in the community.

The material palette is inspired by nature and informed by biophilic design principles. Furnishings have been chosen for comfort, durability, and maneuverability while the use of lush planting materials and natural greenery add a sense of comfort and warmth. Harsh angles are avoided in favour of curved glass enclosing the meeting rooms while a delicate overlay of leaves is transposed along the bottom area of the glass walls. A large display window at the art room as well as a gallery of columns feature students' work, adding colour, life, and richness to the space.



Understanding that pedagogy continues to evolve, ACi's design solution is flexible, adaptable, and open-ended which will enable the school to grow 'accordion-like' to accommodate future enrollment and inspire future generations of life-long learners.

Above: A democratic approach to light makes the school appear purpose-built

CLIENT NAME

Kingsway College School

SIZE

40,000 sf/ 3,700 sm

COMPLETION

September 2022

ARCHITECT

Architecture Counsel Inc. (ACi)
Oliver Beck, Faisal Bashir, Sean March, Giovanna Rogatto, Davide Peruzetto

CONSULTANTS

Structural: Jablonsky Ast & Partners
Mechanical/Electrical: Crossey Engineering
Code: Arencon
Acoustics: Swallow Acoustics Consultants Ltd.
Signage: Andrew McTavish Design

ABOUT ARCHITECTURE COUNSEL

Architecture Counsel (ACi) is a full-service architectural practice founded in 2011 to provide clients with expertly crafted designs that address each client's unique aspirations and needs. Our dedicated team works diligently and consistently to uphold our tradition of exceptional design, rigorous project management, and technically advanced projects. While our initial focus was on higher education projects (45+), today our portfolio has expanded to include visionary new projects in health and wellness, affordable housing, hospitality, and senior living. As we continue to grow and evolve, Architecture Counsel remains steadfast to its mission to create meaningful, humane spaces and buildings that promote well-being, encourage positive social interaction and connections, and enhance the quality of life. For more information, please contact: info@architecturecounsel.com











