

# A Proposal To Re-Green the Osgoode- Atkinson Green



current



proposed

# Re-Green the Osgoode-Atkinson Green

## Introduction

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The Osgoode-Atkinson Green (“OAG”) is a former recreational grass field located between Atkinson College and Osgoode Hall Law School (“Osgoode”). In recent years, the site was converted into a dirt and gravel flatland in order to function as a convocation tent staging site. The site sat empty outside of Convocation periods.



*The Osgoode-Atkinson Green*

In 2009, York University (“the University”) moved convocation from the OAG to the Rexall Centre. No formal plans have been adopted for the site, but the University has expressed an ambition to return the site to green space (Helen Psathas, CSBO, Sept 2009, personal communication).

Recognizing an opportunity to improve our campus environment, the Osgoode Environmental Law Society (ELS) is proposing that the OAG be revitalized to a high quality community green space. Given the ongoing University Master Plan review, the ELS believes the time is now to enhance the community green space in this corner of the campus.

Community green space is a valued commodity on university campuses. Mark Levitski of the Excalibur newspaper highlights the need for better community space (“Unrest in Vari Hall” 20 Jan 2010). The OAG can be such a space.

## Objectives

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The primary objective of this proposal is to promote the revitalization of the OAG, and to initiate a discussion about what the University community desires in the OAG space.

The ELS proposes a park on the OAG that incorporates green space, functional elements, and an illustration of the history of the University. The proposed park will enhance the aesthetics of the University campus, facilitate student and staff interactions and well-being, and serve as a significant site for promoting the University. This proposal is intended to illustrate the possibilities for the OAG space and is only a concept.

## Park Features

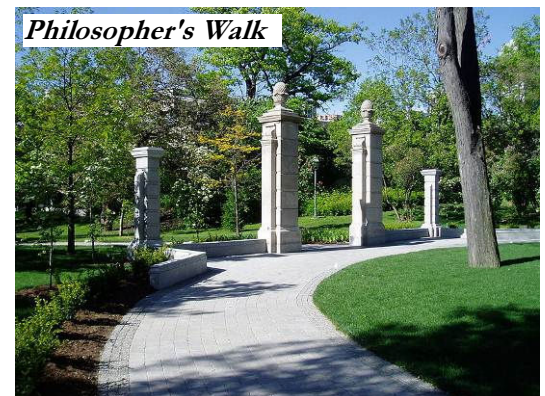
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### ■ *General*

The OAG can function as a significant community green space, incorporating typical features of a park including trees, shrubs, flowers, benches, and recycling and compost bins. Refer to Appendix 1 for a sketch of the proposed park (cf. Appendix 2, existing site). The OAG should be designed to create community meeting spaces (e.g. see Appendix 3 for Philosopher’s Walk at the University of Toronto, and the City of Toronto Discovery Walks).

### ■ *Gardens and Pond*

The ELS suggests the park feature low-maintenance native gardens, which contain native grasses, bushes and field flowers, compatible with the Faculty of Environmental Studies’ research plots currently on site. See Appendix 5 in “Additional Appendices” document (attached) for a report by the Faculty of Environmental outlining the most appropriate vegetation for this area. A small natural pond and/or fountain may optionally be incorporated into the park if its impact on energy and water use as well as maintenance is minimal.



*Philosopher's Walk*

- *Community Space*

The proposed OAG includes both natural and community spaces for students, faculty and other staff, which is severely lacking in this area of the University campus (see Appendix 3 for examples).

- *History Path*

The historical element of the park is what will make this park an especially unique addition to the University campus. The ELS proposes that a winding footpath be supplemented with plaques and other historical markers that will guide visitors through the history and features of the University. Additional pathways on the site should accommodate existing traffic flow, and all should be fully accessible. The markers will inform visitors of significant events and people in the history of the University, as well as general facts about the University. The historical markers should identify and celebrate defining elements of the University and its history.

The following are some examples of content for the markers:

- **Significant Events to Recognize:**

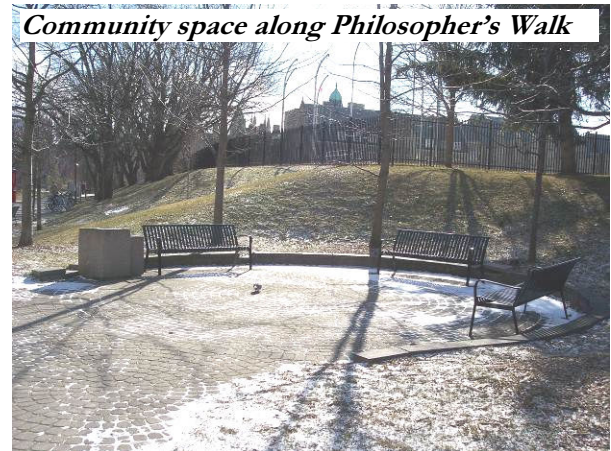
- Founding of the University and Establishment of Colleges
- Osgoode's affiliation with the University and its relocation from downtown Toronto
- Significant environmental achievements at the University
  - Creation of a co-generation plan; electric maintenance carts; composting; Osgoode LEED certification
  - Establishment of the Las Nubes Reserve in Costa Rica, an FES initiative
- Establishment of Schulich
- The Future – increased sustainable transport: subway

- **Key Figures in the University's history:**

- Chancellors
- Presidents
- Faculty
- Alumni
- Donors

- **York University Facts and Achievements:**

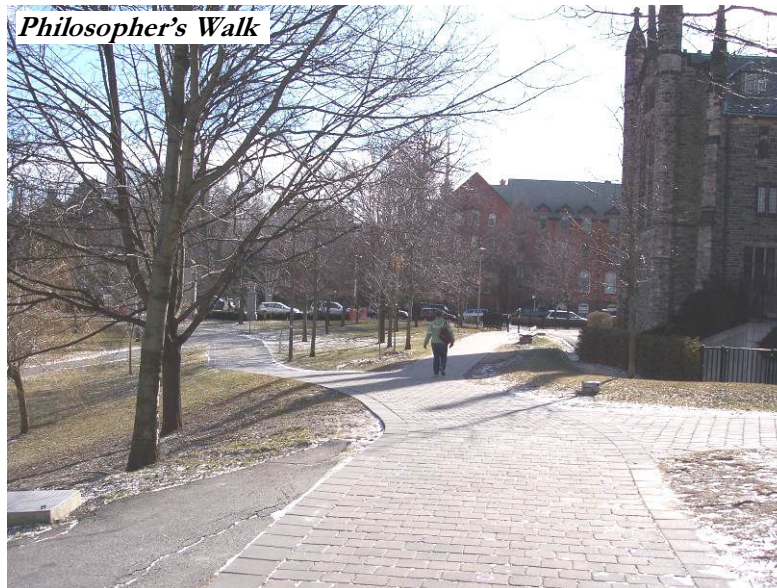
- Canada's Third Largest University
- Osgoode ranks #1 amongst law schools in Canada
- Faculty of Environmental Studies is the first of its kind and largest in North America
- School of Nursing won 5 of 9 awards in the inaugural competition for awards from the Faculty of Health Interprofessional Education Initiatives Fund (2010)
- Schulich ranks among top business schools in Canada and Internationally
- 26 research centres enhancing knowledge and insight



## Conclusion

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In a campus catering to students, faculty, administrative staff, maintenance personnel, donors and investors, functional green space is essential for the health, enjoyment, and promotion of the University. The 2008-9 Report of the President's Sustainability Council emphasizes the need to expand and enhance the availability of indoor and outdoor sitting/common spaces, and develop ecologically progressive plans and procedures to guide campus landscaping and grounds management. The proposed revitalization of the OAG achieves those goals and creates a multifunctional space for relaxation and enjoyment; promoting the University to prospective students, donors, and other visitors; and a venue for announcements, concerts, photographs, and other events. Together with Osgoode's renovated building, a revitalized OAG will create an unparalleled environment in this area of the University campus.



## Feedback

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In drafting this proposal, the ELS sought and incorporated feedback from various stakeholder groups at the University. See Appendix 4 in "Additional Appendices" document (attached) for more information.

## About the ELS

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The ELS is a student organization at Osgoode Hall Law School with a stated mission to foster environmental awareness, promote and initiate projects and activities in order to raise awareness of environmental issues, and encourage student participation in current and ongoing environmental issues.

The ELS is committed to working with the University and its stakeholders to develop a plan for the OAG.

For more information, **visit** <http://osgoode.yorku.ca/els> or **contact** [EnvironmentalLawSociety@osgoode.yorku.ca](mailto:EnvironmentalLawSociety@osgoode.yorku.ca)

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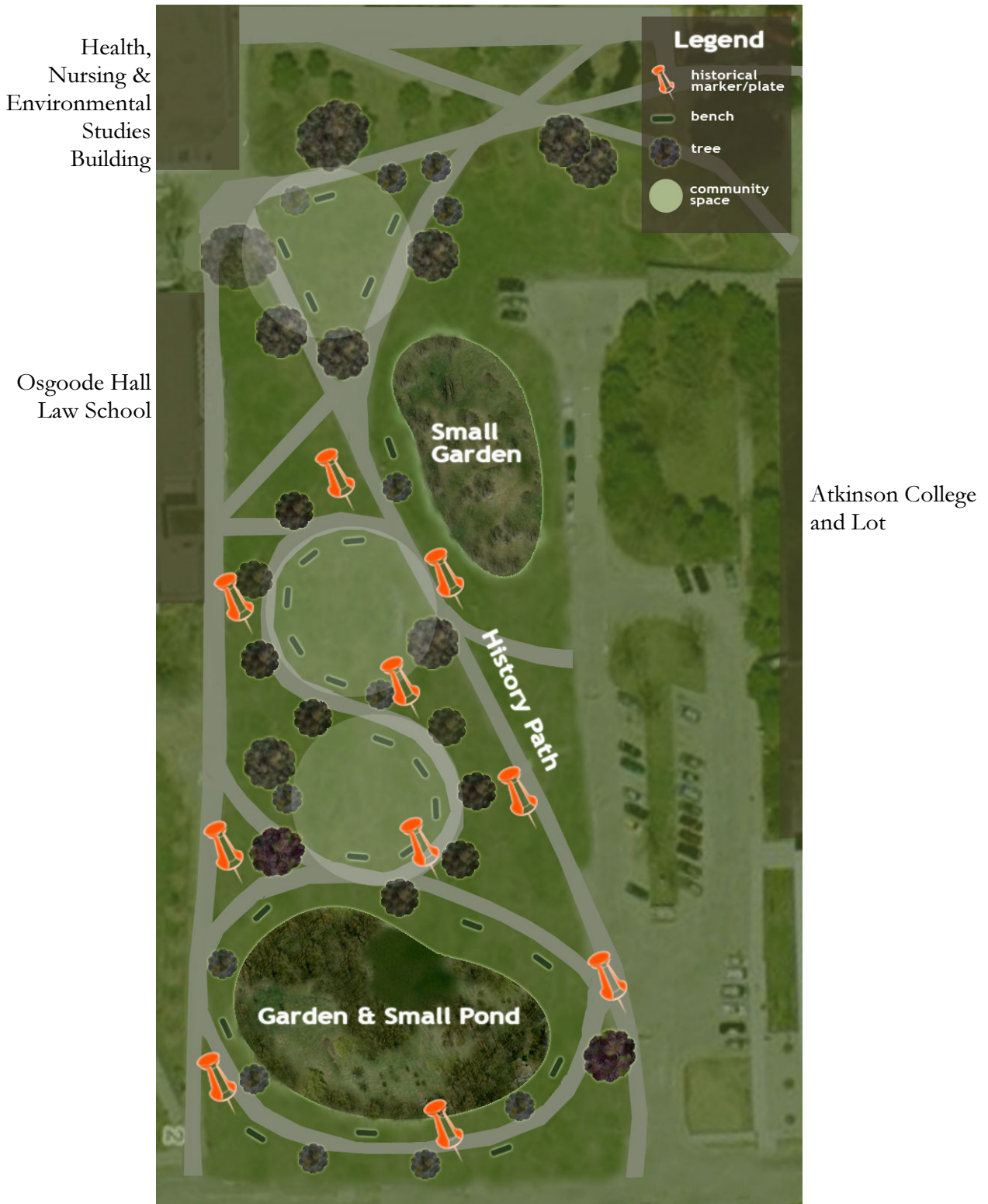
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**Appendix 1: Conceptual Sketch of the Proposed Park**



\*Existing trees not visible in this image are suggested to remain in place.

**Appendix 2: Bird's Eye View of the Existing OAG Space**

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Health,  
Nursing &  
Environmental  
Studies  
Building

Osgoode Hall  
Law School



Atkinson College  
and Lot

Appendix 3: Additional Pictures of Philosopher's Walk and Uptown Toronto Discovery Walk

