

**HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT**



**ECLIPSE WHITEWEAR BUILDING  
322 KING STREET WEST, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services  
City Planning Division  
City of Toronto

July 2010

## 1. DESCRIPTION



Principal (south) entrance to the Eclipse Whitewear Building

<b>322 King Street West (Eclipse Whitewear Building)</b>	
ADDRESS	322 King Street West (northeast corner of John Street)
WARD	Ward 20 (Trinity-Spadina)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 216E, Part Block A
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	King-Spadina
HISTORICAL NAME	Eclipse Whitewear Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1903
ORIGINAL OWNER	Eclipse Whitewear Company
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial/Industrial (warehouse)
CURRENT USE*	Commercial (offices) * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Gregg and Gregg, architects
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick & stone cladding; brick, stone & wood trim
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Edwardian Classicism
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	1970: conversion to office building, Diamond & Myers, architects; 1985: alterations for restaurant
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative & Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	July 2010

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 322 King Street West, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in section 4 (Summary).

### i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
1903 Feb	The Eclipse Whitewear Company's plan to construct a factory and warehouse on King Street West is reported in the <u>Contract Record</u>
1903 Feb	A building permit is issued for the "four storey brick factory" with Gregg and Gregg identified as the architects
1903 Aug	An "unfinished building" owned and occupied by the Eclipse Whitewear Company is recorded in the City's tax assessment rolls
1903 Dec	The Eclipse Whitewear Company officially purchases the subject property from representatives of the University of Toronto <sup>1</sup>
1903	The Eclipse Whitewear Building is listed in the City of Toronto Directory for 1904, indicating that the building was completed by the end of 1903 when information was gathered
1912	The Eclipse Whitewear Building is illustrated on Goad's Atlas for 1910 updated to 1912
1970	Architects Barton Myers and A J Diamond purchase the site and refurbish the Eclipse Whitewear Building
1984	The property at 322 King Street West is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties

### ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### King-Spadina Neighbourhood

The property at 322 King Street West is part of the King-Spadina Neighbourhood, the area that developed north of Front Street West between Simcoe Street and Bathurst Street, with King Street West and Spadina Avenue as its major commercial arteries. The origins of the district date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century after the founding of the Town of York and the extension of that community westward as New Town. In the early 1800s, the relocation of the Provincial Legislature (Third Parliament Buildings, 1829-32) to Simcoe Place on Front Street West was accompanied by high-end residential development that drew community leaders to the neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1829, two years later Upper Canada College opened an expansive campus on Russell Square, the tract on the north

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<sup>1</sup> The lands were originally occupied by Upper Canada College, which was founded as a private boys' school in 1829 and, eight years, placed under the control of King's College, the forerunner to the University of Toronto

<sup>2</sup> The institutional character of the area continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Government House, the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, was completed in 1870 on the southwest corner of King Street West and Simcoe Street, opposite Upper Canada College

side of King Street West, west of Simcoe Street. After the private boys' school moved to its present site on Lonsdale Road in 1891, representatives of the University of Toronto (which formed the College's Board of Governors) organized the subdivision and sale of the original property.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed the existing manufacturing district along Front Street near Bay Street, Toronto's industrial sector was re-established in the King-Spadina neighbourhood. The area was chosen for its proximity to the city centre, the availability of streetcar service for workers, and the presence of the steam railways, which had arrived in Toronto in the mid-1800s and constructed tracks and shipping facilities. The evolution of King-Spadina in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries can be traced on the Goad's Atlases, extracts from which are included in Section 6 of this report.

Despite the upheavals of the Great Depression of the 1930s followed by World War II, King-Spadina remained an active industrial area until the 1950s when the combination of large tracts of land, lower taxes and new highways for truck transport drew manufacturers to Toronto's suburbs. Although the clothing industry continued its dominance in the neighbourhood (which was later dubbed the Fashion District) many of the former warehouses stood vacant as the area's industrial zoning restricted other uses.<sup>3</sup> The revitalization of King Street, west of Simcoe began in the 1960s when Toronto entrepreneur Edwin "Honest Ed" Mirvish (1914-2007) restored the Royal Alexandra Theatre and converted many of the adjoining warehouses into eating establishments that served the theatre's patrons. By the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Roy Thomson Hall (1982) and the Princess of Wales Theatre (1993) opened on this section of King Street West, which was named Toronto's Entertainment District.

### Eclipse Whitewear Building

In 1903, the Eclipse Whitewear Company, producers of ladies' and children's underwear, announced its plans to construct a new manufacturing complex in King-Spadina. Following the issuance of a building permit that named Toronto architects Gregg and Gregg as its designers, the warehouse was constructed that same year. The company retained the site until 1970.

### Gregg and Gregg, Architects

The Eclipse Whitewear Building was designed by the architectural partnership headed by William Rufus Gregg (1851-1930) and his younger brother, Alfred Holden Gregg (1868-1945). The elder Gregg assisted Toronto architects Smith and Gemmel in the 1870s before embarking on a solo practice that was interrupted by the decade-long period he worked with his brother. A. H. Gregg began his career as his brother's assistant, prior to pursuing additional training in the United States. After their professional relationship ended, A. H. Gregg was associated with the notable Toronto practitioner A. Frank

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<sup>3</sup> In 1996, the former City of Toronto adopted the King-Spadina Part II Plan, which relaxed land-use controls in the neighbourhood

Wickson, until the latter's death in 1936. Gregg and Gregg's portfolio included institutional buildings and residential commissions. The Eclipse Whitewear Building was one of their few commercial projects, which followed the partners' designs for the Telfer Paper Box Building (1902) at Duncan Street and Pearl Street.

### Myers and Diamond, Architects

In 1970, the Eclipse Whitewear Building was purchased by architects A. J. (Jack) Diamond and Barton Myers. Born in South Africa, Diamond received his architectural training in England and the United States before arriving in Canada in 1964 to direct the Master of Architecture program at the University of Toronto. American-born Myers studied at the University of Pennsylvania before working with the notable practitioner, Louis Kahn. In 1968, Myers relocated to Toronto where he entered into an association with Diamond that lasted from 1968 to 1975. The architects incorporated heritage buildings into the Sherbourne Lanes development and refurbished the Eclipse Whitewear Building as the location of their architectural office. After the dissolution of the partnership, both men went on to successful careers, with Myers moving to Los Angeles in the 1980s. Diamond formed a new practice with Donald Schmidt that has executed both local and internationally regarded commissions. Myers accepted the inaugural Toronto Arts Award for Architecture in 1986 and was awarded the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's Gold medal in 1994.

### iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Eclipse Whitewear Building displays features of Edwardian Classicism applied to an early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse. Its appearance was the result of the developments of the previous century, when new technologies, specifically steel frame construction and elevators, enabled buildings to grow increasingly taller. These advancements were coupled with the influence of the Chicago's World Columbian Exposition of 1893, which showcased the "White City" of Beaux-Arts inspired and classically-detailed buildings. By the close of the 1800s, office buildings and warehouses hid their structural components and, in the case of manufacturers, production facilities behind facades that were embellished with classical elements. Edwardian Classicism emerged as the prevalent style in Canada, when it was particularly favoured for commercial and public buildings in the period leading up to World War I.<sup>4</sup> In Toronto, this turning away from the architectural excesses of the Victorian era in favour of the dignity, elegance and order of Edwardian Classicism coincided with the Great Fire of 1904, which provided an opportunity for architects to apply the style in the new manufacturing district. Edwardian Classicism is exhibited in the design of the Eclipse Whitewear Building, where the principal facade follows a tripartite with a base, shaft and cornice with corbelled brickwork inspired by the classical column. The contemporary elements of the building are found in the ample fenestration (characteristic of both the style and the era),<sup>5</sup> particularly the piers that create an arcade-like effect with tiers of window openings in the upper stories that extend from the south facade along the long west wall.

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<sup>4</sup> Maitland, 121

<sup>5</sup> Blumenson, 166

Rising four stories above an extended base with window openings, the structure displays a long rectangular plan beneath a flat roofline that is highlighted with corbelled brickwork. The building is clad with red brick (now painted), with brick, stone and wood trim.<sup>6</sup> The principal (south) façade on King Street is divided into three bays with a projecting centre section. Elevated in the centre of the wall, the main entrance is protected by a round-arched hood that is supported on columns and incorporates classical detailing. A name band, reading “Eclipse White Wear Company,” extends above the entrance and the flanking flat-headed window openings. In the outer bay (east), a secondary entry is covered by a round-arched hood and surmounted by a transom window. Above the first floor, brick piers divide the upper stories where the fenestration combines flat-headed, segmental-arched and round-arched window openings, the latter with corbelled brick detailing. On the west elevation facing John Street, the fenestration is symmetrically placed. In the upper stories, the piers organize the segmental-arched openings, and form an arcade with the round-arched window heads in attic level. At the west end of the south wall, a plaque commemorates the original Toronto General Hospital that was once located northwest of King Street West and John Street in the early 19th century. The east elevation adjoins the neighbouring Princess of Wales Theatre.

iv. CONTEXT

The property at 322 King Street West is located on the northwest corner of King Street West and John Street where it anchors the west end of the collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouses west of Simcoe Street. With the Princess of Wales Theatre directly east, the Eclipse Whitewear Building overlooks Metro Hall to the south and the new Bell Lightbox development to the west. On the southwest corner of King Street West and John Street, the William Barber Building (1880) is a recognized heritage site.

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

<b>Design or Physical Value</b>	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	<b>X</b>
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	<b>X</b>
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	<b>N/A</b>

<sup>6</sup> The dark brickwork is visible in the archival photographs included in Section 6 of this report

**Representative and Early Example of a Style and Type with a High Degree of Craftsmanship** – The Eclipse Whitewear Building is an excellent and well-crafted example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse that features the hallmarks of Edwardian Classicism, the most popular style for commercial building during the pre-World War I era. Displaying the classical organization of the principal facades into a base, shaft and attic (with cornice) that is typical of the Edwardian Classical style, the Eclipse Whitewear Building is particularly distinguished by its “extraordinary large proportion of window space to wall surface – nearly equal,” which creates a rhythmic pattern along the west elevation facing John Street in particular.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Historical or Associative Value</b>	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	<b>X</b>
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	<b>N/A</b>
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	<b>X</b>

**Person** - The property at 322 King Street West is associated with Toronto entrepreneur Edwin “Honest Ed” Mirvish, who revitalized King Street West with his restoration of the Royal Alexandra Theatre in the early 1960s. Over the following decades, Ed Mirvish Enterprises acquired many of the warehouses along the street, including the Eclipse Whitewear Building, converting them to commercial uses that attracted theatre goers. After the revitalization of the Royal Alexandra, Roy Thomson Hall (1982) opened on the south side of King Street, and Ed Mirvish Enterprises commissioned the Princess of Wales Theatre (1992) at 300 King Street West. Duncan Street between King Street West and Pearl Street was renamed Ed Mirvish Way in recognition of the entrepreneur’s contributions to the cultural life of the neighbourhood.

**Architect** - The Eclipse Whitewear Building was designed by the Toronto architectural firm of Gregg and Gregg. The partnership was headed by William Rufus Gregg, who practiced alone apart from his decade-long association with his brother, Alfred Holden Gregg. The pair’s design for the Eclipse Whitewear Building is among their best-known works. In 1970, the site was acquired by two noted architects, American Barton Myers and South African-born architect A. J. Diamond, who refurbished the warehouse for their architectural offices during their short-lived partnership.

<b>Contextual Value</b>	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	<b>X</b>
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	<b>X</b>
iii. landmark	<b>N/A</b>

**Character** – Contextually, the Eclipse Whitewear Building contributes to the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood, which developed as the city’s new

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, 15

manufacturing sector after the Great Fire of 1904. By World War I, the former Upper Canada College campus at Russell Square on King Street, west of Simcoe Street, was transformed from an institutional precinct to an industrial enclave of warehouses, including the Eclipse Whitewear Building at the west end of the block. Following the departure of industries from King-Spadina in the decades after World War II, the Eclipse Whitewear Building was converted to commercial uses as King Street, west of Simcoe, became the core of the city's Entertainment District.

**Surroundings** – The Eclipse Whitewear Building is historically, functionally, physically and visually linked to its surroundings on the north side of King Street West where it anchors the east corner of John Street. As part of the collection of surviving early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouses that share a complementary scale and styling, primarily with Edwardian Classical features, the Eclipse Whitewear Building and its neighbours bookend the Royal Alexandra Theatre, a National Historic Site at 260 King Street West.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 322 King Street West has cultural heritage value. As one of the oldest warehouses constructed on the former Upper Canada College campus on King Street West, the Eclipse Whitewear Building is historically associated with the architects who originally designed it and later refurbished it, as well as with businessman Ed Mirvish, who acquired the site as part of his portfolio of warehouses adjoining the Royal Alexandra Theatre. As an early warehouse designed with Edwardian Classical features, the structure contributes to the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood as it evolved from an institutional enclave and industrial precinct to the city's Entertainment District. The Eclipse Whitewear Building is linked to its setting on King Street, west of Simcoe Street, where it forms part of a collection of significant heritage properties.

#### 5. SOURCES

##### Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan 216E, Part Block A  
Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, 1900 ff.  
Building Permit #764 (February 25, 1903), City of Toronto Archives  
Building Records, Toronto and East York, 322 King Street West 1914-85  
City of Toronto Directories, 1900 ff.  
Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923  
Photographs, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Items 21 and 25  
Photograph, Library and Archives Canada, Item 25593

##### Secondary Sources

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“William Rufus Gregg,” entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada  
1850-1950, [www.dictionarofarchitectsincanada.org](http://www.dictionarofarchitectsincanada.org)

## 6. IMAGES



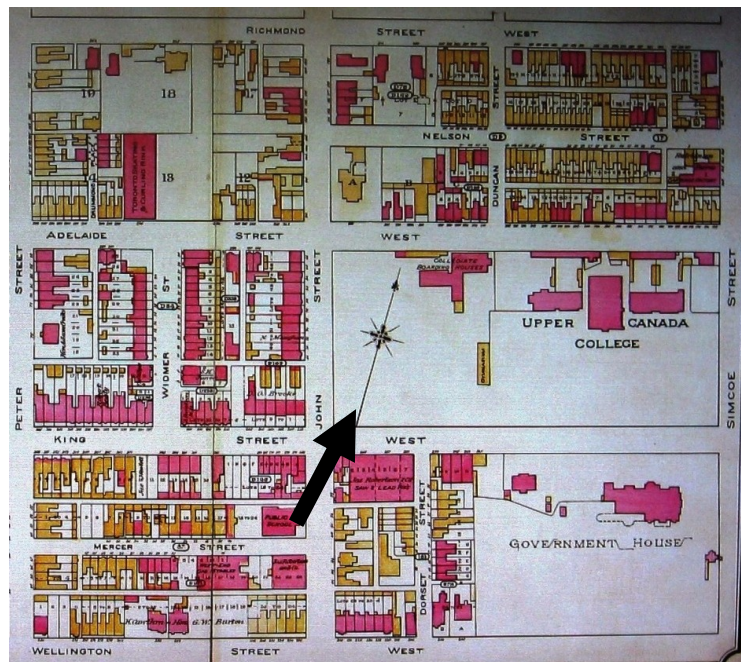
Photograph of the lower storey of the Eclipse Whitewear Building, showing the unpainted brickwork, 1961 (Source: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Item 21)



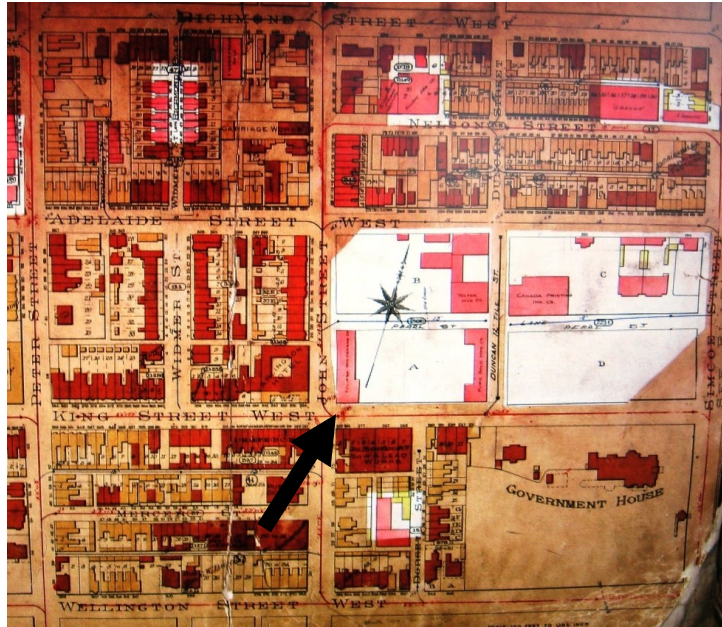
Photograph showing the portico of the Eclipse Whitewear Building (left), 1961 (Source: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Item 25)



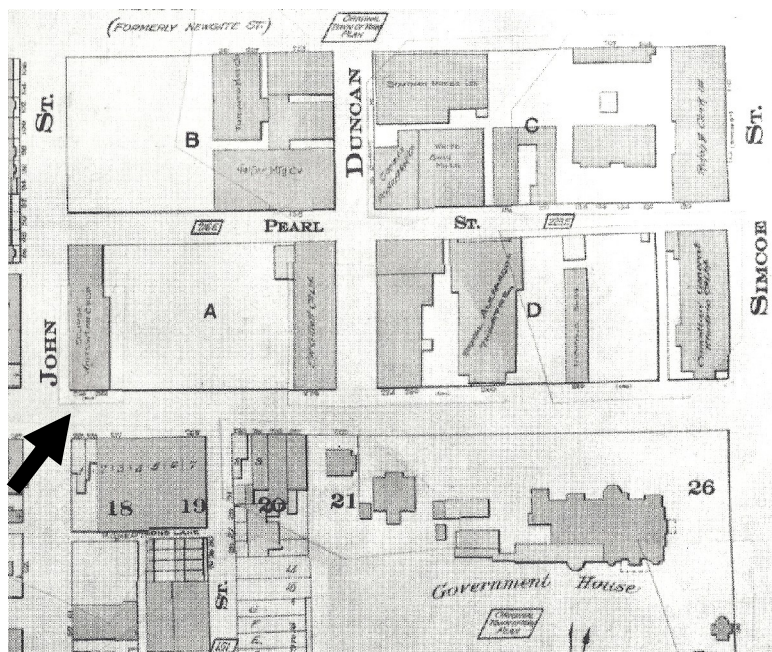
Historical photograph of Upper Canada College, showing the main campus (with the buildings facing south toward King Street West) where the Eclipse Whitewear Building was constructed (Source: Toronto Reference Library, Item B12-34b)



Excerpt, Goad's Atlas, 1884, showing King Street West before the relocation of Upper Canada College. The future site of #322 King is marked by the arrow (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Excerpt, Goad's Atlas, 1903, showing the removal of most of the buildings associated with Upper Canada College, and the introduction of the first warehouses along King Street West. The Eclipse Whitewear Building at #322 King is marked by the arrow (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Excerpt, Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1912, showing the Eclipse Whitewear Building with the development of King Street West to date (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Excerpt, Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1923, showing the King Street West warehouses in place, including the Eclipse Whitewear Building (Source: City of Toronto Archives)

**92 BUILDING PERMIT**

No. **764** Plan No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_

Toronto, FEB 25 1908

Permit granted to  
 Mr. Eclipse Whitewear Co  
 To erect a Four story Brick  
 Factory  
 on N. E. cor. King & John St.  
 Architect Glegg & Glegg  
 Builder William B. W. Co.

Building Permit #764 (February 25, 1903) for the Eclipse Whitewear Building (Source: City of Toronto Archives)