

**HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT**



**PARISIAN LAUNDRY COMPANY BUILDING  
602 KING STREET WEST, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services  
City Planning Division  
City of Toronto

February 2015

## 1. DESCRIPTION



Above: view of the Parisian Laundry Company Building when the property at 602 King Street West was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register (Heritage Preservation Services, 2005); Cover: south elevation on King Street West (left) and east elevation on Portland Street (right) (Heritage Preservation Services, 2015)

<b>602 King Street West: Parisian Laundry Company Building</b>	
ADDRESS	602 King Street West <sup>1</sup> (northwest corner of Portland Street)
WARD	Ward 20 (Trinity-Spadina)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Military Reserve, Section G, part Lot 7
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	King-Spadina
HISTORICAL NAME	Parisian Laundry Company Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1904
ORIGINAL OWNER	David Morton, Jr., industrialist
ORIGINAL USE	Industrial (factory)
CURRENT USE*	Not applicable * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Henry Simpson, architect
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick cladding with brick, stone and wood trim
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Edwardian Classicism
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	1910, two additions, Simpson and Young, architects
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative and Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on City of Toronto's Heritage Register
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	February 2015

<sup>1</sup> The property includes the entrance addresses at 604-606 King Street West and 86-96 Portland Street

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 602 King Street (including 604-606 King Street West and 96-96 Portland Street) 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

<b>Key Date</b>	<b>Historical Event</b>
1841	The patent for Lot 7 in Section G of the Military Reserve is issued to Matthew Evans
1842	The patent for neighbouring Lot 18 is granted to Michael Hayes
1845	John Marvyn acquires the south portion of Lot 7, buying the rest of the lot in the 1850s
1850	Marvyn purchases part of Lot 18, followed by the remainder of the parcel in 1862 and 1865
1858	Boulton's Atlas shows the status of the area adjoining King and Portland Streets, where the residential buildings were developed by Marvyn and his extended family (according to the tax assessment rolls)
1884	The first Goad's Atlas for the area shows the existing residential buildings along King and Portland Streets, as well as the first industrial buildings in the King-Spadina neighbourhood
1903	David Morton, Jr. acquires the Parisian Laundry Company
1904 May	Morton buys part of Lot 18 on the southwest corner of King and Portland Streets from the Marvyn family, and the <u>Toronto Star</u> announces the imminent construction of a factory building on the site
1904 June	The Parisian Laundry Company is issued building permit #665 for a 3-storey brick laundry building on the northwest corner of King and Portland Streets, with Henry Simpson listed as the architect
1904 Aug	Construction is not underway when information is compiled in 1904 for the 1905 tax assessment roll, which records vacant land owned by the Parisian Laundry Company on the northwest corner of King Street West and Portland Street
1905 Apr	David Morton, Jr. acquires additional land on Portland Street from members of the Marvyn family
1905 Aug	According to the assessment roll, David Morton and Sons Limited and the Parisian Laundry of Company of Toronto Limited own a building valued at \$23,000 on the northwest corner of King and Portland
1910 Feb	Simpson and Young are identified as the architects on building permit #19061 for a 3-storey addition to the Parisian Laundry Company Building
1910 July	Building permit #21803 is issued for a second addition to the Parisian Laundry Company Building designed by architects Simpson and Young
1912	Goad's Atlas for 1910 updated to 1912 illustrates the Parisian Laundry Company's complex at King and Portland Streets
1927	The Parisian Laundry Company commissions a new facility on Bathurst Street, but retains the King Street West complex
1938	The Parisian Laundry Company mortgages its property at King and Portland

1945	Coro (Canada) Limited acquires the Parisian Laundry Company's land and premises at King and Portland, retaining it until 1955
1985	The Parisian Laundry Company is declared bankrupt
2006	The property at 602 King Street West is included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register)

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

King-Spadina Neighbourhood

The property at 602 King Street West is located in the King-Spadina neighbourhood. The historical maps and atlases found in Section 6 assist in tracing the development of this community, as well as the subject property at King and Portland Streets.

The origins of the area dated to 1793 and the founding of the Town of York (Toronto) when the expansive acreage west of the townsite was reserved as the Garrison Common or Military Reserve. With the rapid growth of the municipality, a "New Town" extended westward into the Military Reserve where the area adjoining present-day King and Simcoe Streets became the inaugural locations of Upper Canada College and Government House (the Lieutenant Governor's residence, directly north of the Third Parliament Buildings). In support of this institutional enclave, residential buildings appeared along King Street West and the adjoining streets. However, when the first steam railway extended its tracks across the Military Reserve in 1852, the lands along the route were delegated for industrial uses. The first factories and warehouses appeared on King Street West in the 1870s. After the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed Toronto's existing industrial district at Front and Bay Streets, the manufacturing sector relocated to this area adjoining the main cross-roads of King Street West and Spadina Avenue.

The King-Spadina neighbourhood remained the city's core manufacturing district during the first half of the 20th century. After World War II when industries moved to Toronto's suburbs, numerous buildings in King-Spadina stood vacant or underutilized. In 1996, the City of Toronto adopted the King-Spadina Secondary Plan, which lifted the area's restrictive zoning and encouraged the adaptive reuse of the existing properties. Twenty years later, the transformation of King-Spadina continues as Toronto's Entertainment District and a sought-after residential community.

King and Portland Streets

The land adjoining the northwest corner of King and Portland Streets where the subject property is found was surveyed as parts of Lots 7 and 18 in Section G of the Military Reserve (Image 2). The patents were granted in the early 1840s, and Cane's map of 1842 marked the first structures in place (Image 3). During the same decade, John Marvyn (c.1812-95) began purchasing parts of the lots where he and members of his family constructed residential buildings, occupying some while renting others.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> The family name is sometimes spelled "Marvin" in directories and assessment rolls, but family records and land transactions record it as "Marvyn"

development of the block through the 19th century is illustrated on Boulton's Atlas of 1858, Gross's Bird's Eye View of Toronto in 1876 and the first in the series of Goad's Atlases for the area in 1884 (Images 4 and 6-7). During the 1880s, John Marvyn began conveying parts of Lots 7 and 18 to his heirs who, in turn sold portions of the tract to David Morton, Jr., owner of the Parisian Laundry Company, in 1904 and afterward.

### Parisian Laundry Company

David Morton, Jr. (c.1862-1935) was a Toronto soap manufacturer who, in 1903 acquired the Parisian Laundry Company, which "had been in successful operation for 30 years".<sup>3</sup> The next year, the Toronto Star reported that Morton had spent \$10,000 purchasing land on the corner of King and Portland Streets as the location of a laundry factory. A building permit was issued for the first building in 1904, with two additions completed in 1910 (Images 8 and 9). The facility was illustrated on the update to Goad's Atlas in 1912, which shows the complex fronting on King Street West and extending northward along Portland Street (Image 10). The rapid expansion of the enterprise reflected Morton's success in attracting the business of the most prominent hotels in Toronto, including the famous Queen's Hotel (on the site of today's Royal York Hotel), which advertized the services of the Parisian Laundry Company in its "Traveller's Guide" of 1917" (Image 11). By the 1920s, the Parisian Laundry Company was described as the largest laundry in the country and "the only one in Canada carrying on a wholesale business in a large way". In addition to hotels, restaurants and clubs in Toronto, the Parisian Laundry Company secured major contracts with companies that included the Canada Steamship Lines, which operated passenger ships on the Great Lakes. This success stretched the capacity of the King and Portland complex, resulting in the commissioning of a new factory on Bathurst Street in 1927 (Image 12).<sup>4</sup> The Parisian Laundry Company retained its King Street West land and premises until 1945. The facility housed innumerable businesses in the second half of the 20th century (Image 13).

### Henry Simpson, Architect

Toronto architect Henry Simpson designed the Parisian Laundry Company's King Street West factory in 1904, working in partnership with Robert M. Young on the 1910 additions. Described as "a talented and prolific architect active in Toronto," Simpson (1865-1926) articulated with the prominent local practitioner, E. J. Lennox and may have received additional training in New York City.<sup>5</sup> Simpson spent the majority of his career in solo practice, designing various types of buildings in "a wide range of fashionable and eclectic architectural styles..."<sup>6</sup> One of his first industrial projects in 1898 was for a laundry building on McCaul Street, following by other factories in the King-Spadina and King-Dufferin (now Liberty Village) neighbourhoods. Simpson accepted commissions

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<sup>3</sup> Globe, July 6, 1927

<sup>4</sup> The Bathurst Street factory is no longer extant

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/architects/view/1306>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

for two additions to the Parisian Laundry Company Building in 1910, a period when he worked in partnership with architect Robert Malcolm Young (1881-1911).<sup>7</sup>

### iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Current photographs of the property at 602 King Street West are found on the cover and in Sections 2 and 6 of this report. The Parisian Laundry Company Building (1904) and its complementary additions (1910) are designed with features of Edwardian Classicism, the most popular style for all types of buildings during the period between the turn of the 20th century and World War I. Distinguished by its formal compositions and application of classical motifs, the Edwardian Classical style is particularly evident on the south elevation of the Parisian Laundry Company Building in the scale of the three-storey piers, the distinctive segmental-arched pediment, and the classically detailed entrance.

Rising three stories above a raised base with segmental-arched window openings, the factory complex is covered by a flat roof with a tall brick chimney extending at the east end and a distinctive segmental-arched pediment above the north elevation on King Street (the cornice has been removed, but is shown in archival photographs). Clad with buff-coloured brick and trimmed with brick, stone and wood, the 1904 factory and the two complementary additions (1910) form a rectangular-shaped complex with the narrow south elevation on King Street West and extending north along the west side of Portland Street. On the principal (south) elevation, the centrally-placed main entrance is found at street level in a segmental-arched surround that incorporates classically detailed piers, an entablature with dentils, and an exaggerated scrolled pediment. The entry is flanked by oversized industrial-scale flat-headed window openings, which are reduced in height in the upper floors. The openings are separated by oversized brick piers with classical detailing. On the side elevations (east and west), the flat-headed openings in the first (ground) floor and the segmental-arched widow openings in the second floor are arranged in two-storey surrounds, while the third storey has pairs of segmental-arched window openings. The openings are trimmed with brick flat-arches.

### iv. CONTEXT

The location of the property at 602 King Street West is shown on the map attached as Image 1. The Parisian Laundry Company Building anchors the northwest corner of King Street West and Portland Street, where it dominates the block extending west to Bathurst Street. It is adjoined by the William Shannon Building (1900) on the northeast corner of King and Portland, as well as other industrial buildings along King Street West, west of Spadina Avenue that are recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. Directly east of the subject properties, the Gurney Stove Company Buildings (1872) at 494-522 King and the Toronto Silverplate Company Building (1882) at 570 King represent the oldest surviving factory complexes in the neighbourhood. The Parisian Laundry

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<sup>7</sup> Young was the last of three partners Simpson worked with for short periods during his career. The pair were linked through their association with the Toronto Board of Education, where Young worked as a draftsman and Simpson served as a trustee

Company Building contributes to this significant collection of former industrial buildings that characterizes King-Spadina.

### 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>

**Representative Example of a Style and Type** – The Parisian Laundry Company Building has cultural heritage value for its design as a fine representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial building that displays features of the Edwardian Classical style popular during the period between 1900 and World War I. With its imposing scale, the building is particularly distinguished by the classical detailing applied to the elaborate door surround, monumental piers and distinctive segmental-arched pediment on the King Street elevation.

<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>N/A</b>
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	<b>X</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>

**Community** - The value of the Parisian Laundry Company is also associated with its ability to provide information about the transformation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of the King-Spadina neighbourhood as the city's primary industrial district. Following the Great Fire of 1904 that destroyed Toronto's original manufacturing centre, the Parisian Laundry Company was one of the first businesses to build its factory in this area adjoining the major cross-streets of King Street West and Spadina Avenue.

**Architect** - The cultural heritage value of the Parisian Laundry Building is also linked to its association with Toronto architect Henry Simpson, who designed the 1904 factory while overseeing a solo practice, as well as the 1910 additions in partnership with Robert

M. Young. Simpson was one of the most active practitioners of his day who accepted commissions for all types and styles of buildings, including factories and warehouses in the King-Dufferin (now Liberty Village) and King-Spadina manufacturing districts.

<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>X</b>

**Character** - Contextually, the Parisian Laundry Company is valued for its contribution to the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood, where it is part of an important collection of factories and warehouses that date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the area became Toronto's primary industrial area after the Great Fire of 1904.

**Surroundings** - The Parisian Laundry Company Building is also historically and visually linked to its setting on the northwest corner of King and Portland Streets where its scale, appearance and corner location make it highly prominent in the neighbourhood.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 602 King Street West has design, associative and contextual values as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial complex with well-crafted Edwardian Classical detailing by architect Henry Simpson that is associated with the transformation of the King-Spadina neighbourhood as the city's manufacturing centre and contributes contextually to the character of the area from its highly visible setting at King and Portland Streets.

#### 5. SOURCES

##### Archival Sources

- Abstract Indices of Deeds, Military Reserve, Section G, Lots 7 and 18
- Archival Photographs, City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Historical Board  
(individual citations in Section 6)
- Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, St. Andrew's Ward, 1880-92, and Ward 4, Division 1, 1893 ff.
- Boulton, Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1858
- Building Permits #665 (June 13, 1904), #19061 (February 22, 1910) and #21803 (July 2, 1910), City of Toronto Archives
- Building Records, Toronto and East York, 1910-46 (including 1910 specifications by Simpson and Young, architects)
- Cane, Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, 1842
- City of Toronto Directories, 1855 ff.
- Decennial Censuses of Canada, 1871-1901
- Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923
- Gross, Bird's Eye View of Toronto, 1876

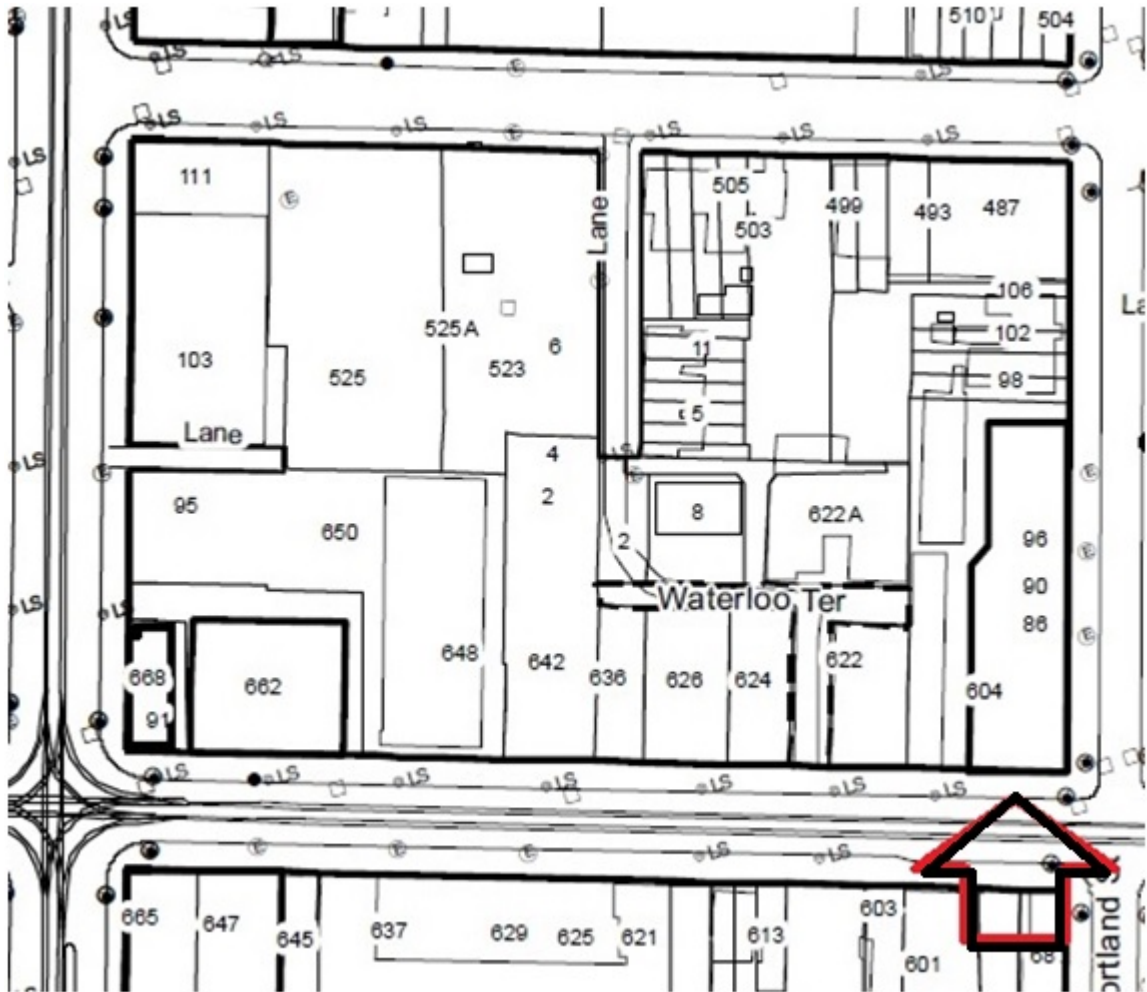


Hawkins, Toronto Military Reserve, 1837  
Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Atlas, 1954  
Wadsworth and Unwin, Map of the City of Toronto, 1872

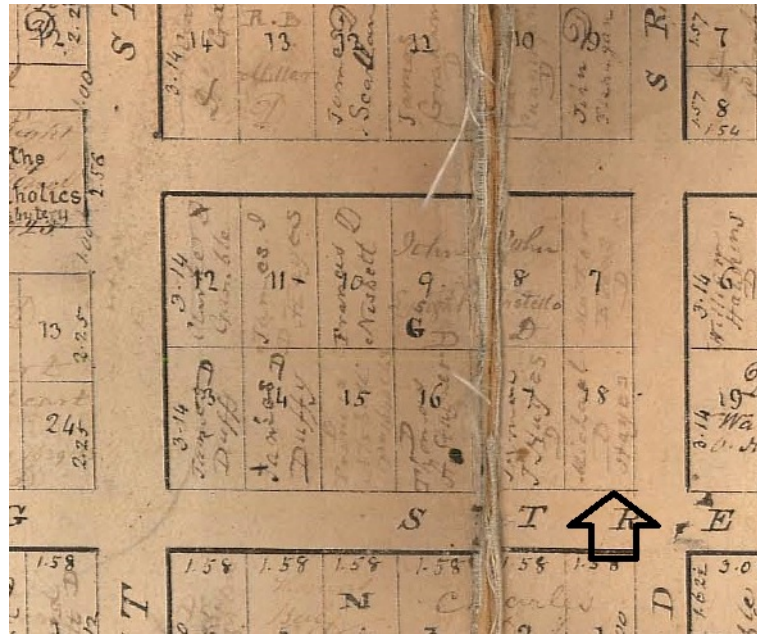
### Secondary Sources

Advertisement, "Queen's Hotel Traveler's Guide", 1917  
<http://paperthawalls.com/uncategorized/parisian-laundry-company/>  
Arthur, Eric, Toronto: no mean city, 3rd ed. revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986  
Dendy, William, Lost Toronto, 2nd ed., 1998  
"Henry Simpson," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/architects/view/1306>  
"Laundry buys site," Toronto Star, December 5, 1905  
McHugh, Patricia, Toronto Architecture: a city guide, 2nd ed., 1989  
Marvyn Family Records, [www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca)  
Morton Family Records, [www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca)  
"Parisian Laundry Company", Globe, July 6, 1927  
"Parisian Laundry Company's new building," Globe, July 15, 1927

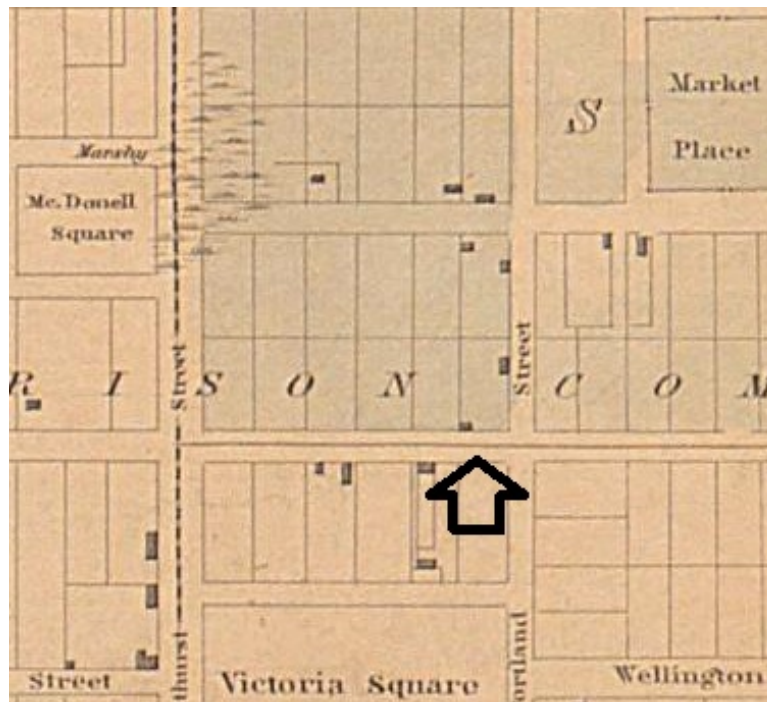
6. IMAGES – the **arrows** mark the location of the property at 602 King Street West



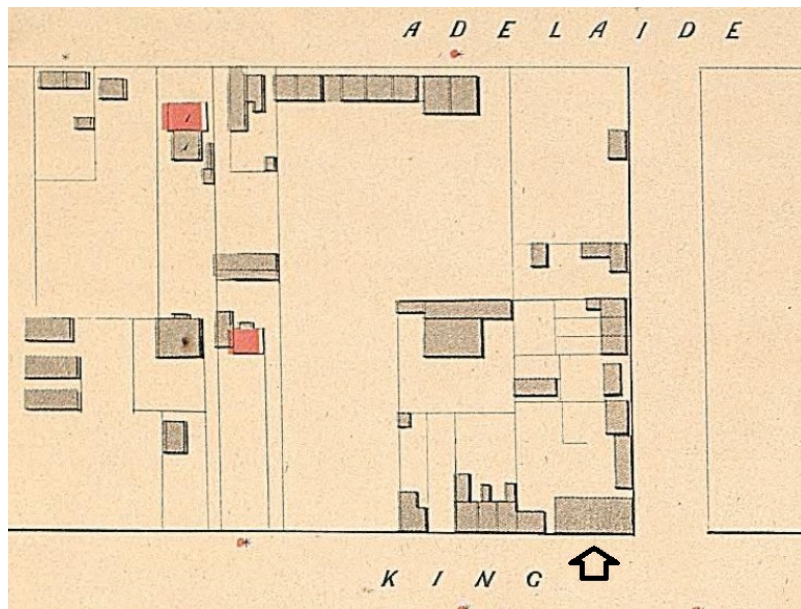
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the property at 602 King Street West on the northwest corner of Portland Street in the block bounded by King (south), Portland (east), Adelaide Street West (north) and Bathurst Street (west)



2. Hawkins' Toronto Military Reserve, 1837: showing the subdivision of the lands in the block northwest of King Street West and Portland Street with the names of the patentees on adjoining Lots 7 and 18 where the Parisian Laundry Company developed its complex in the early 20th century



3. Cane's Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, 1842: showing the first buildings in the block



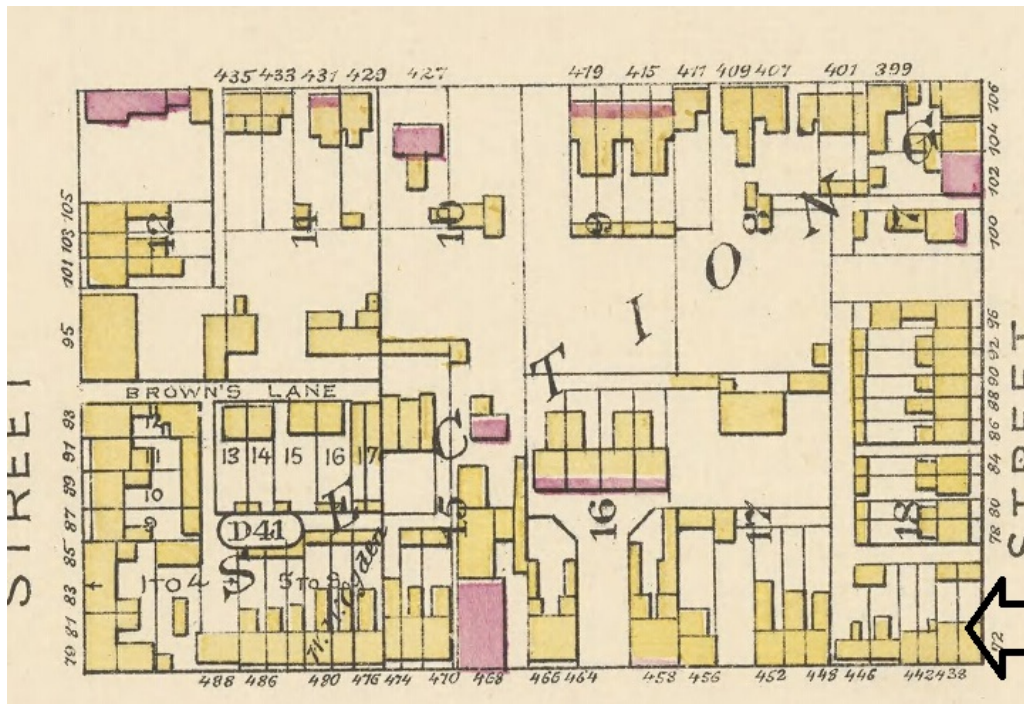
4. Boulton's Atlas, 1858: showing the development of the block to date, with residential buildings along King, Portland and Adelaide Streets constructed by John Marvyn and members of his family



5. Wadsworth and Unwin's Map of the City of Toronto, 1872: showing the further subdivision of the area, where Plan D41 has been surveyed in the southwest corner of the subject block



6. Gross's Bird's Eye View of Toronto, 1876: illustrating the house form buildings on the lands owned by the Marvyn family



7. Goad's Atlas, 1884: the first Goad's fire insurance atlas for this part of the city shows the development of the block where modest house form buildings continue to occupy the subject property

**BUILDING PERMIT**

No. 665 Plan No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_

Toronto, JUN 13 1904 190

Permit granted to  
 Mr. Parisian Laundry Co  
 To erect a Three Storey Brick Laundry  
 on N.W. cor of King & Portland Sts.  
 Architect H. Simpson  
 Builder \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cost of Building, \$ 20,000 ✓  
 Plans and Specifications approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
City Architect

No. of Block Plan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Limit B. Water, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

8. Building Permit #655, June 13, 1904: issued to the Parisian Laundry Company for a "three storey brick laundry" designed by architect Henry Simpson

**BUILDING PERMIT**

No. 19064 Plan No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_

Toronto, FEB 22 1910 191

Permit granted to  
 Mr. The Parisian Laundry Co. King & Portland  
 To erect a 3 story brick addition to laundry  
 on N.W. cor. King & Portland Sts.  
 Architect Simpson & Young  
 Builder Holby Bros.  
 Cost of Building, \$ 14,000  
 Plans and Specifications approved by \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Block Plan \_\_\_\_\_ 113.  
 Limit A. Water, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**BUILDING PERMIT**

No. 21903 Plan No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_

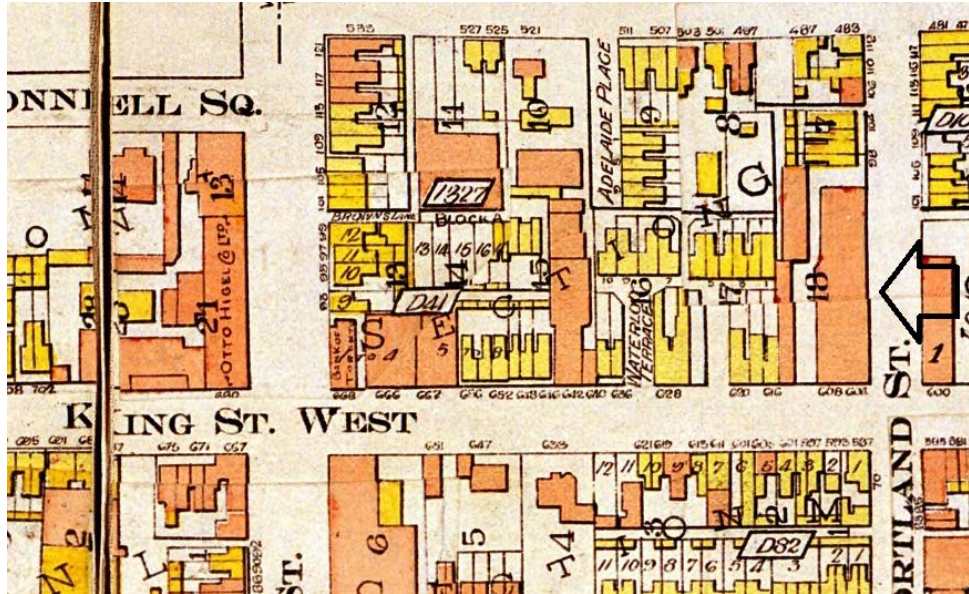
Toronto, MAY 2 1910 191

Permit granted to  
 Mr. The Parisian Laundry Co. King & Portland  
 To erect a 3 story brick addition to laundry  
 on N.W. cor. King & Portland Sts.  
 Architect Simpson & Young  
 Builder Holby Bros.  
 Cost of Building, \$ 15,000  
 Plans and Specifications approved by \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Block Plan \_\_\_\_\_ 113.  
 Limit A. Water, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This Permit does not include any openings in sidewalks or encroachment past line of street

9. Building Permits #19061, February 22, 1910 (left) and #21803, July 2, 1910 (right): for additions to the Parisian Laundry Company's complex designed by Simpson and Young, architects



10. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1912: showing the Parisian Laundry Company's factory and additions in place, replacing the former house form buildings along King and Portland Streets

**The  
PARISIAN  
LAUNDRY**

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Wish to draw your attention to the quality of work done by them. None of that glossy celluloid finish, but a snowy white smooth edge and a delight to the wearer.

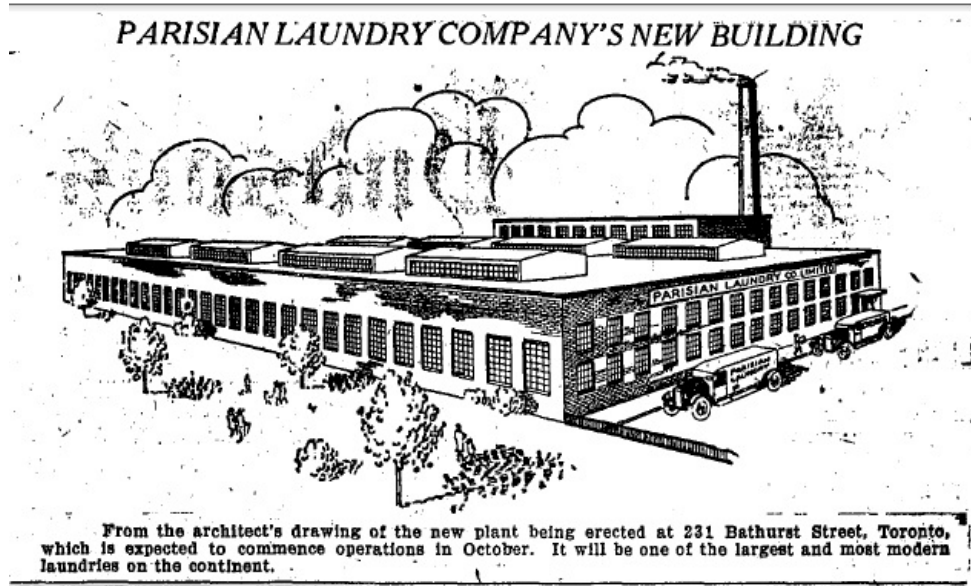
Parcels left at the Queen's Hotel Parcel Office will receive prompt attention and will be quickly returned.

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**Parisian Laundry Co'y.,**  
of Toronto, Limited  
**TELEPHONE ADELAIDE 800**  
Private Branch Exchange

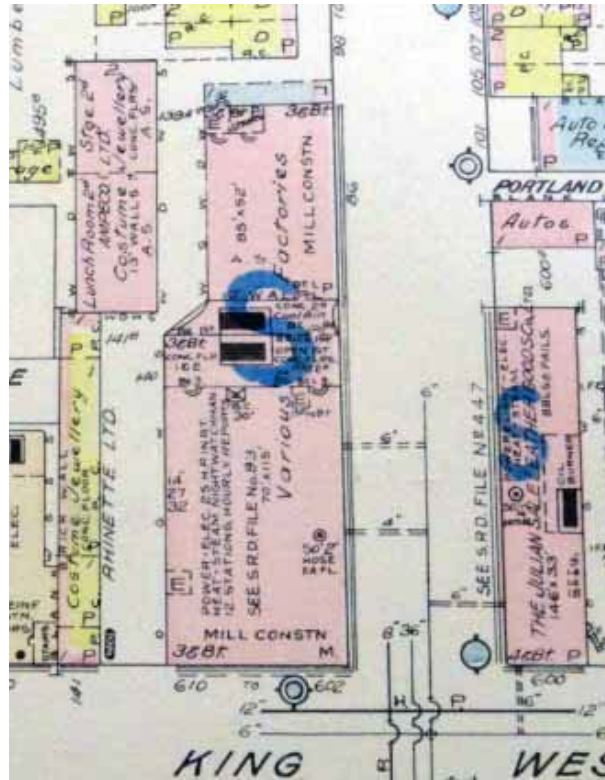
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11. Advertisement, Parisian Laundry Company, 1917: from the "Queen's Hotel Traveler's Guide", which was one of the many hotels in Toronto that employed the laundry services of the company (<http://paperthawalls.com/uncategorized/parisian-laundry-company/>)



12. Parisian Laundry Company, 231 Bathurst Street, 1927: showing the company's new building, which was commissioned based on its success in its original location and the resulting demand for expanded quarters (Toronto Star, July 15, 1927)





13. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1954: showing the property at 602 King Street West occupied by "various factories"





14. Archival Photographs, 602 King Street West, 1950s: showing the property on the northwest corner of Portland Street (above) and the view south along Portland (below) (City of Toronto Archives, Series 65, Items 1 and 4)



15. Archival Photographs, Parisian Laundry Company, 1973: view of the west elevation from King Street West (above) and showing the context of the building on the northwest corner of Portland Street with Bathurst Street in the distance (below) (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 2043, Series 1587, File 142)



16. Archival Photographs, 1991; showing the principal (south) elevation and side walls of the property (Toronto Historical Board)



17. Current Photographs, 602 King Street West, 2015: showing the south and west elevations (above) and the east and rear (north) walls (below) (Heritage Preservation Services)