

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SUMMARY: 46 SPADINA AVENUE



Systems Building, 46 Spadina Avenue, 2015: showing the principal (east) elevation
(other current photographs are attached as Image 8 below)
(Heritage Preservation Services)

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Key Date	Historical Event
1837	Following the incorporation of the City of Toronto (1834), Bonnycastle's Map shows the subdivision of the Military Reserve, which was originally set aside for the garrison west of the (Old) Town of York (Image 2)
1858	Boulton's Atlas illustrates wholesale merchant Lewis Moffatt's house and grounds on the west side of Brock Street (present-day Spadina Avenue), north of Wellington Place (present-day Wellington Street West) (Image 3)
1887 June	Part of the Military Reserve is subdivided under Plan 692, placing the Moffatt House on Lot 5 (Image 3)
1903	Goad's Atlas illustrates the former Moffatt House, now adjoined by other house form buildings (Image 4)
1905 Sept	Business Systems Limited is founded to manufacture business stationery, including loose-leaf, card and correspondence systems
1906 Jan	The city directory records the former Moffatt House at "52 Spadina" as vacant
1906 Aug	According to the tax assessment rolls, William Davies owns the former house form building at "52 Spadina," where Business Systems Limited is the tenant in the upper storey
1907 Apr	Business Systems Limited is issued a building permit for a four-storey brick warehouse at "50-52 Spadina Avenue" that identifies Burke and Horwood as the architects (Image 5)
1907 Aug	Business Systems Limited's manager, Harry J. King owns the "unfinished" building, according to the tax assessment rolls, and the "new Systems Building" is advertised in local newspapers (Image 5)

1908 Feb	Business Systems Limited is incorporated
1908 Aug	The Systems Building is valued at \$35,000 in the assessment rolls, and the complex also includes a commercial school and the Dominion Envelope Company, both owned by Harry J. King
1912	The update to Goad's Atlas illustrates the Systems Building (Image 4)
1949	An archival photograph shows the Systems Building during the period when King-Spadina was in decline as Toronto's manufacturing centre (Image 6)
1960	Business Systems Limited is recorded for the last time in the City Directory (published in 1961 with information dating to the previous year)
1961	According to the next City Directory, R. L. Crain Limited, producer of business forms, is the new occupant of the Systems Building
1971-2005	The Systems Building is depicted in archival photographs when its tenants were associated with Toronto's Fashion District (Image 7)
2015	The property at 46 Spadina Avenue is within the proposed boundaries of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study Area ¹

The property at 46 Spadina Avenue is part of the King-Spadina neighbourhood that developed in the early 20th century adjoining the major cross-roads of King Street West and Spadina Avenue. The origin of the area dates to the late 18th century when Toronto was founded as the Town of York and the area west of the townsite was set aside as the Military Reserve. However, the rapid growth of the community led to its westward expansion as New Town where the third Provincial Parliament Buildings (1829) and Upper Canada College (1831) created institutional enclaves around which residential neighbourhoods developed in King-Spadina.

King-Spadina became Toronto's new manufacturing district after the Great Fire of 1904 when large-scale factories and warehouses replaced most of the earlier housing stock. Following World War II when many manufacturers were drawn to the suburbs, buildings in King-Spadina stood vacant as the area's industrial zoning restricted other uses. During the late 20th century, King-Spadina was primarily identified as Toronto's Fashion District for the number of clothing designers and manufacturers that dominated the area. The revitalization of the area began in the 1960s when famed entrepreneur Edwin "Honest Ed" Mirvish restored the Royal Alexandra Theatre (1906) and converted several of the adjoining early 20th century warehouses to restaurants, forming the nucleus of today's Entertainment District that includes Roy Thomson Hall (1982) and the Princess of Wales Theatre (1993). In 1996, the City of Toronto adopted the King-Spadina Secondary Plan, which encouraged the adaptive reuse of the existing industrial buildings. Twenty years later, the transformation of King-Spadina continues as a sought-after residential community.

The subject property is located on Spadina Avenue, which was originally named Brock Street after it was laid out by Dr. William Warren Baldwin as the road to his country estate, "Spadina" on the escarpment north of the city. At the south end of Spadina Avenue, the street was flanked on the east and west by Clarence Square and Victoria Square, respectively, which were connected by an expansive boulevard named

¹ <https://hcdtoronto.wordpress.com/category/king-spadina/>

Wellington Place (later extended as Wellington Street West). The surrounding neighbourhood attracted high-end residences, one of which was commissioned in the mid 19th century by Lewis Moffatt (c. 1809-92), a successful wholesale merchant and financial director. Moffatt's property was subdivided for additional housing along Spadina Avenue before the end of the 19th century and, by 1906, his residence was converted for commercial uses with Business Systems Limited among the first tenants.

Business Systems Limited was founded in 1905 to manufacture "loose-leaf accounting systems, perpetual ledgers, order, bill and charge systems, auditing and cost systems" with headquarters in Toronto and branches in Montreal, Winnipeg and St. John, New Brunswick.² Newspaper accounts in the early 20th century described the success of Business Systems Limited and the expansion of its plant on Spadina Avenue. In 1907, the company's manager, Harry J. King received a building permit for a four-storey warehouse that housed the stationery factory, as well as King's other enterprises: a commercial school and the Dominion Envelope Company. The Business Systems Limited remained in this location until 1960, after which it was occupied by tenants identified with Toronto's fashion industry.

Designed by the notable Toronto architectural partnership of Burke and Horwood, the Systems Building was designed in the Edwardian Classical style popular for all architectural types in the early 20th century, including many of the factories and warehouses that represent a prevalent building typology in the King-Spadina neighbourhood. Edwardian Classicism was a reaction to the more elaborate styles of the Victorian era, featuring symmetrically organized elevations and classical detailing that is illustrated on the Systems Building.

The property at 46 Spadina Avenue is located on the west side of the street, midway between Wellington Street West (south) and King Street West (north) near the centre of the King-Spadina neighbourhood, where many of the former factories and warehouses are included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value and the area is currently being studied as a potential Heritage Conservation District.

EVALUATION

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's Heritage Register. 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.

² Toronto Star, September 8, 1905

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

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

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

The property at 46 Spadina Avenue has design value as a well-crafted example of an early 20th century factory in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, which was designed with features of Edwardian Classicism, the most popular style for all building types during this era. The Systems Building is particularly distinguished by its elaborate classical detailing that includes the frontispieces with quoins and the twin entrances on the principal (east) elevation.

The Systems Building is valued for its contributions to the development and evolution of the King-Spadina neighbourhood in the early 20th century when the area changed from an institutional enclave adjoined by residential subdivisions to Toronto's new manufacturing district after the Great Fire of 1904. The property at 46 Spadina Avenue is especially linked to the historical transition of King-Spadina, as Business Systems Limited established its company in one of the former high-end residences that marked the initial development along the street before replacing it with the large-scale warehouse, a building typology that was indicative of the industrial character of the community after 1900.

The historical value of the property at 46 Spadina Avenue is also through its connection with the architectural practice of Burke and Horwood. As the successor to the firm founded by his uncle, Henry Langley, Edmund Burke formed a partnership with John Horwood in 1894, and the pair received immediate recognition as the designers of the Robert Simpson Store as the first Chicago-style building in Toronto. Although Horwood and White designed innumerable residential, institutional and industrial buildings in the city, they accepted few documented commissions in King-Spadina, including the Systems Building and the neighbouring Samuel, Benjamin and Company Building on the

southwest corner of King and Spadina, which is included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

Contextually, the value of the property at 46 Spadina Avenue is through its support for the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood where it is part of an important collection of former factories and warehouses that changed the area from its origins as an institutional and residential district to Toronto's manufacturing centre after the Great Fire of 1904. The Systems Building is historically and visually linked to its setting on Spadina Avenue, south of King Street West, where other large-scale warehouses on Spadina, King and Wellington streets are among the neighbouring properties that are included on the City's Heritage Register.

SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 46 Spadina Avenue has design, associative and contextual values. As a well-crafted industrial building designed in the Edwardian Classical style by the notable Toronto architectural firm of Burke and Horwood, the Systems Building (1907) is historically and visually linked to its setting on Spadina Avenue where it contributes to the historic industrial character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood.

SOURCES

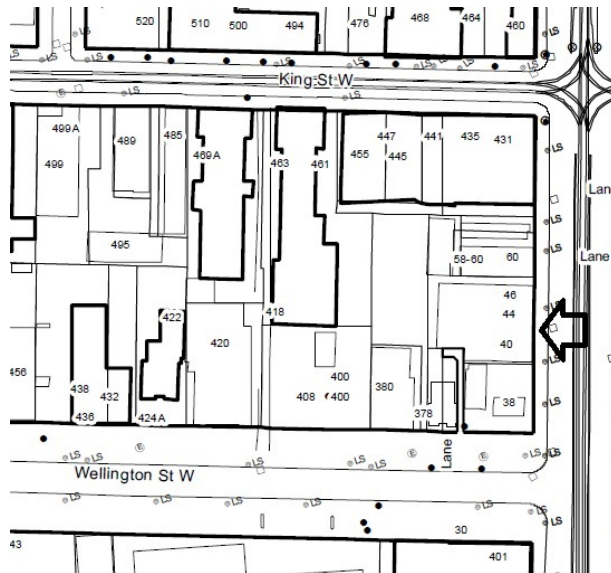
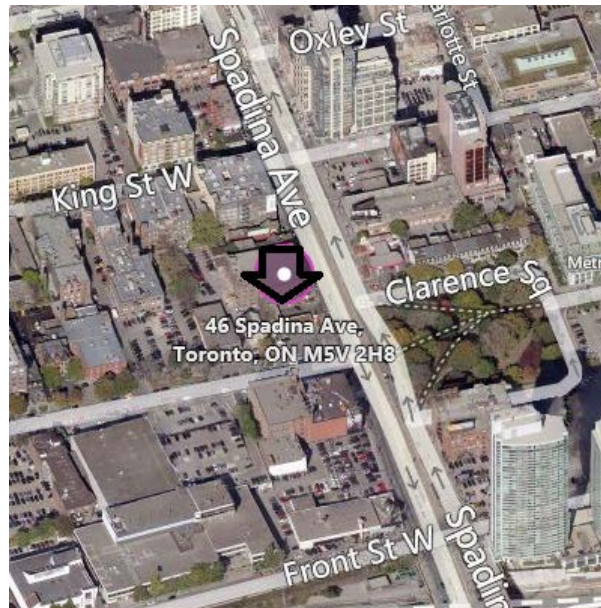
- Abstract Index of Deeds, Plan 692, Lots 5-6 and 15
Advertisement, The Globe, September 11, 1907
Archival Photographs, City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Historical Board
(individual citations in Images below)
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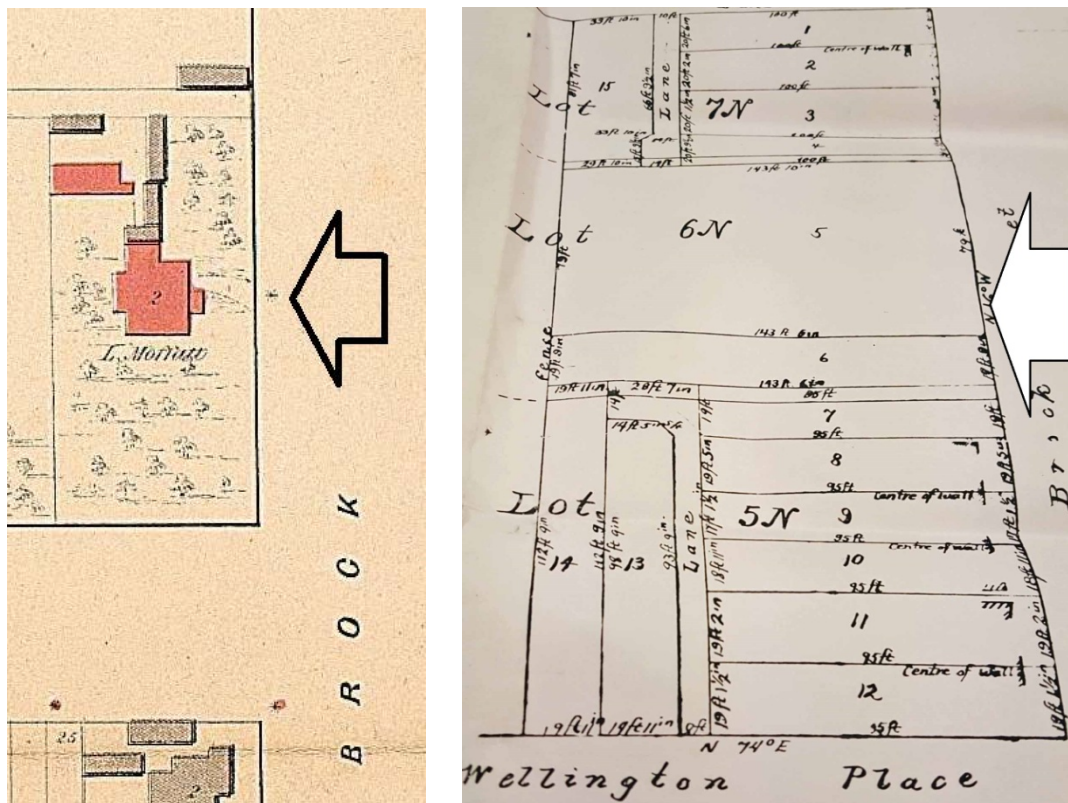
IMAGES



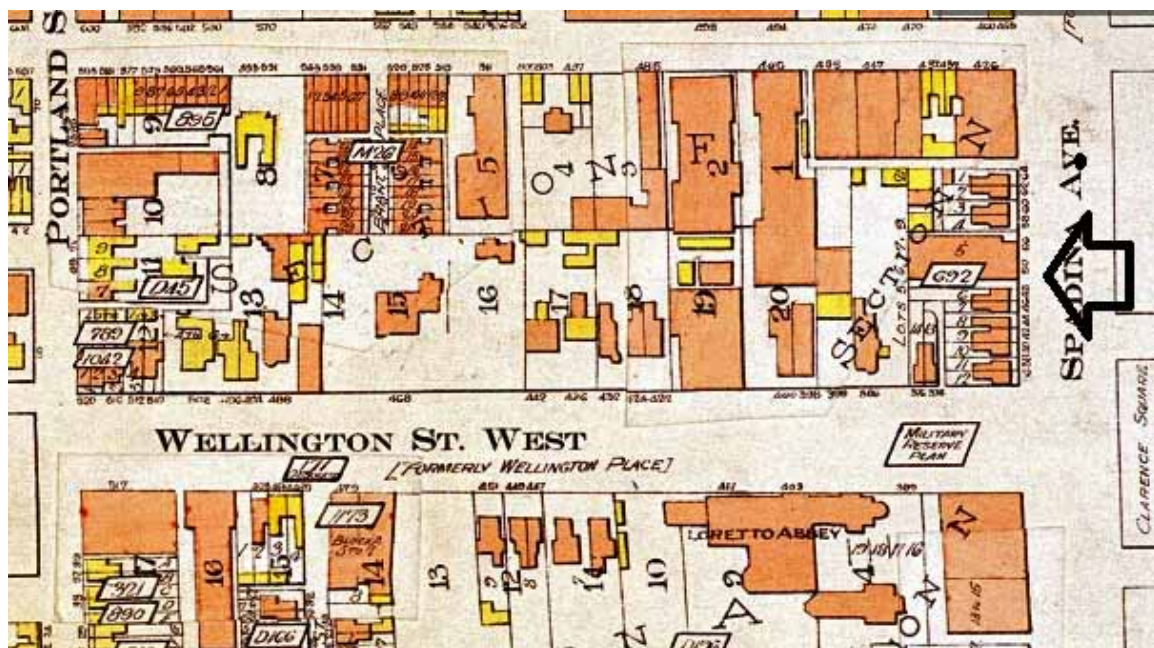
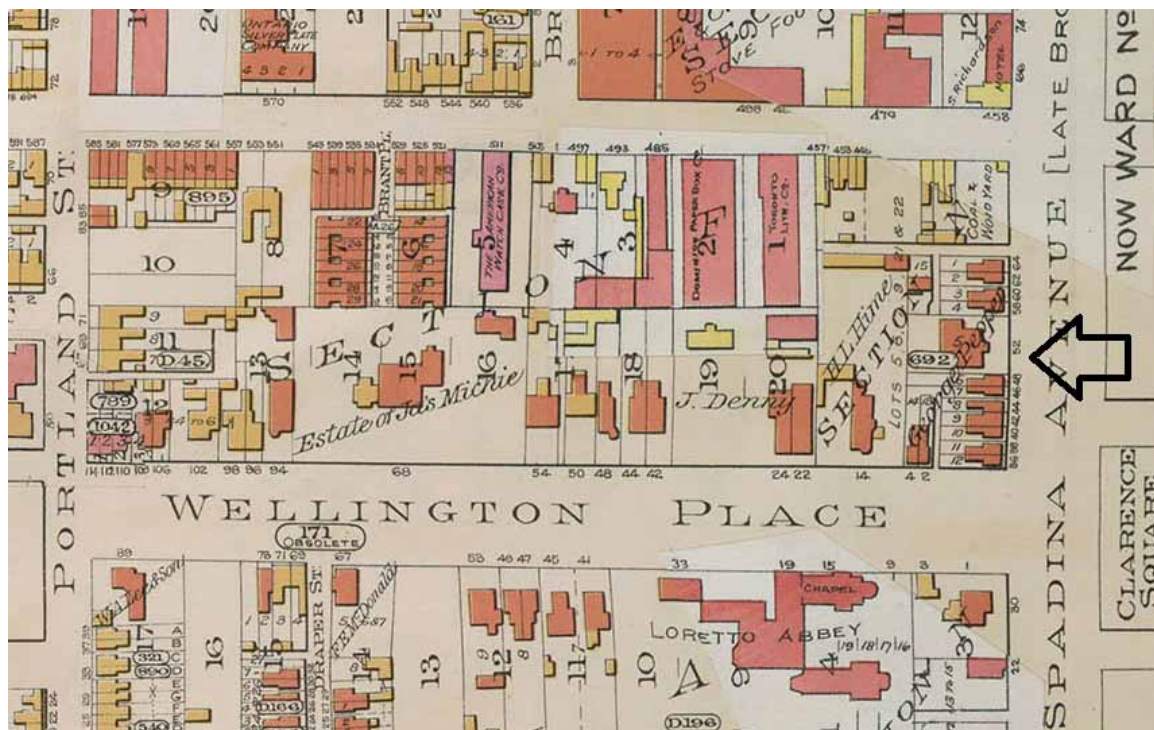
1. Location Maps: showing the location of the Systems Building on the west side of Spadina Avenue, south of King Street West (below) near the centre of the King-Spadina neighbourhood (above).



2. Bonnycastle, Toronto Military Reserve, 1837: the subdivision of the Military Reserve is shown, including the future location of the subject property on the west side of Brock Avenue (present-day Spadina Avenue), north of Wellington Place (present-day Wellington Street West).



3. Boulton's Atlas, 1858 (left) and Plan 692, 1887 (right): showing the subject property on the west side of present-day Spadina Avenue when it was the setting for the residence of merchant Lewis Moffat (left), and its location on the plan of subdivision where it occupies Lots 5-7 and part of Lot 15 (right) (City of Toronto Land Registry Office).



4. Goad's Atlases, 1903 (above) and 1910 revised to 1912 (below): the maps show the property before and after the detached house form building (constructed in the 1850s for prominent Toronto businessman, Lewis Moffatt) was replaced by the Systems Building (1908).

BUILDING PERMIT

No. 6940 Plan No. _____
 Lot No. _____

Toronto, APR 12 1907 190

Permit granted to
 Mr. Business Systems Ltd. 50-52 Spadina Ave.
 To erect a 4 story brick warehouse
near King St.
 on 50-52 Spadina Ave.
 Architect Burke & Horwood
 Builder John Aldredge
 Cost of Building, \$ 43,000 \$43,000
 Plans and Specifications approved by _____
 No. of Block Plan _____
 Limit 6. Water, \$ _____

This Permit does not include any drawings or specifications and does not constitute a contract.

THE ONE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

Once in a lifetime "OPPORTUNITY" knocks at the door of every human being, and if not at once grasped passes on. Some with commendable foresight open the door and seize that opportunity to their future advancement and delight; others carelessly, thoughtlessly or indifferently allow it to pass by, and it becomes a lifelong regret.

Business Systems Commercial School, strictly the first school, decidedly the only school giving a complete course of Modern Loose Leaf Accounting, now opens the "Door of Opportunity" to you. Loose Leaf Accounting is the system of to-day, and from present prospects will be the system of the future. Every young man, every young woman of business should, therefore, have a thorough knowledge of it. Business Systems Commercial School has outlined a superior course in both Business and Shorthand Departments. We want this fact to become known. Newspaper advertising, while good in its place, is not the only kind. We want to send out within a year a large number of walking and talking advertisements in the person of graduates whose success during their course and in their subsequent positions will commend this school to their brothers, their sisters, their relatives and friends.

OUR PROPOSITION

In our new rooms in the new Systems Building we can at once accommodate two hundred energetic, ambitious students. Ours is a new school; we know it. We are human beings, and know how auspiciously new things are looked upon until they have been tested. Our testing time has come. We do not fear results. We will meet you half way. To the next two hundred who register we will give a bonus as follows:—

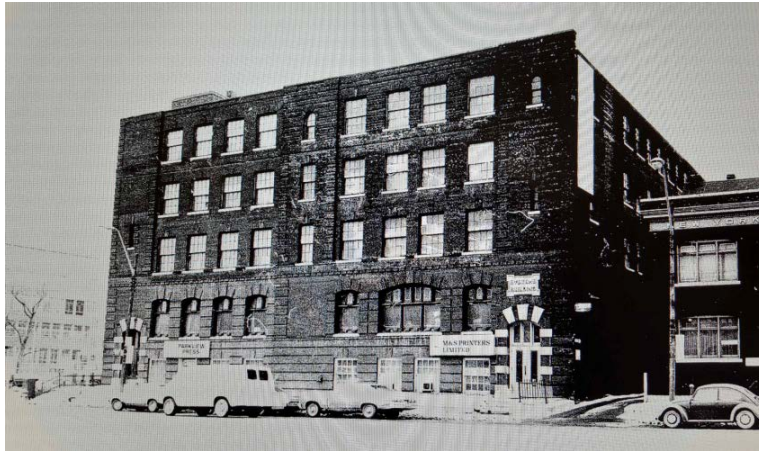
To those who register for six months day classes, paying fees in full therefor, according to our regular schedule, we will give as a bonus three months' tuition extra, or nine months in all. To those who register for three months' day classes, paying fees therefor, we will give as a bonus one month's tuition extra, or four months in all. If you would be one of the two hundred start now.

Address—
Business Systems Commercial School, Limited,
46-52 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Canada
T. F. WRIGHT, Principal.

5. Building Permit No. 6940, April 12, 1907, and Advertisement, Business Systems, September 11, 1907: the building permit issued for the four-storey brick warehouse designed by architects Burke and Horwood is shown on the left, with a newspaper advertisement for the company's commercial school in "the new Systems Building" (not yet constructed) on the right (City of Toronto Archives and The Globe, September 11, 1907).



6. Archival Photograph, Spadina Avenue north of Wellington Street West, 1949: showing the Systems Building on the west side of the street, with the signage on the south elevation (City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Item 1947).



1973



1999



2005

7. Archival Photographs, 46 Spadina Avenue, 1973-2005: view of the principal (east) and north elevations (top), the principal (east) elevation (centre), and the principal (east) and south elevations (bottom) (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 2043, File 260; Toronto Historical Board, 1991; Heritage Preservation Services, 2005).



8. Current Photographs, 46 Spadina Avenue, 2015: showing the twin entrances at the north and south ends of the principal (east) elevation (above), and the north and rear (west) elevations (below) (Heritage Preservation Services).