

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SUMMARY: 158 PEARL STREET



White Swan Mills Building, 158 Pearl Street, 2015: showing the principal (south) elevation (left), the east elevation (centre), and the addition at 154 Pearl Street (far right) (Heritage Preservation Services)

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Key Date	Historical Event
1829-1891	The subject property is part of the Upper Canada College (UCC) campus on King Street West ¹ (Images 2-3)
1901 Jan	The City Directory indicates that the White Swan Baking Powder Company, managed by Frank B. Allan, is located at "Old Upper Canada College" (Image 5) ²
1902 Apr	The trustees of the University of Toronto (owners of the UCC lands) subdivide the former campus under Plan 223E (Image 4)
1903 May	Allan receives building permit #1197 for a three-storey factory on the north side of Pearl Street near Duncan Street, which names Gregg and Gregg as the architects ³ (Image 7)
1903 Oct	Following his receipt of the building permit, Allan purchases land in Block C of Plan 223 E from the U of T's trustees
1903 Nov	Allan sells his property and his business to the Robert Greig Company Limited, Montreal grocers
1903	The subject building is illustrated on the update to Goad's Atlas, which

¹ As shown in Image 3, the original college complex included a central building flanked by "masters' houses" (including one reserved for the principal) that were built in 1829-31 and remodelled in the late 19th century with the addition of the mansard roofs

² By 1903, this site is described as "southwest Duncan and Adelaide"

³ Evidently walls from the former UCC complex were retained in the factory complex, and rediscovered and kept when the property was remodelled in the early 1980s ([Toronto Star](#), January 19, 1985, M3)

	mislabels the site as part of the neighbouring Canadian Printing Ink Company Building (1903) at present-day 15 Duncan Street (Image 6)
1904 July-Dec	Greig's building is illustrated in <u>The Canadian Grocer</u> magazine, which locates it "on the UCC grounds" (Image 6)
1905 Jan	According to the City Directory, the subject property is occupied by Greig's company, "White Swan Mills" and another food company
1905 Feb	Greig acquires additional land on Pearl Street
1905 Aug	In the tax assessment rolls, Greig's building is valued at \$17,000
1906 Mar	Greig's company mortgages the subject property for \$30,000 and, according to <u>The Canadian Grocer</u> , "has taken over the whole of the premises in which their present mills are situated" with plans to alter the plant and double its capacity
1908 Nov	Greig transfers the property to the White Swan Company (Spices and Cereals) Limited
1912	On the update to Goad's Atlas, the building is labeled "White Swan Mills" (Image 6)
c. 1920	An undated archival photograph shows the subject property (Image 7)
1928 Mar	White Swan sells the property to the Robert Little Company, which conveys it to the Canadian Bank of Commerce two years later
1930-61	The Canadian Bank of Commerce's Stationery Department is located at 158 Pearl Street, and illustrated on updates to the Underwriters Survey Bureau's atlases during this period (including Image 9)
1960s	The Dominion Hosiery Company occupies the subject property, which is shown in an archival photograph dated 1973 (Image 10)
1980-84	The property at 158 Pearl Street is remodelled, with the addition of the northeast wing (154 Pearl) and the retention of two walls from UCC (Images 3 and 12)
2015	The property at 158 Pearl Street is within the proposed boundaries of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study Area ⁴

The property at 158 Pearl Street 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 origins of the area date 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.

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. After 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. 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

⁴ <https://hcdtoronto.wordpress.com/category/king-spadina/>

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 at 158 Pearl Street is located on land originally subdivided for Russell Square, the former Upper Canada College campus on King Street West. When the boys' school moved to Deer Park in 1891, representatives of the University of Toronto (which formed the College's Board of Governors) originally rented out the premises to various businesses before registering a plan of subdivision in 1902. Part of the Block C under Plan 223E was acquired in 1903 by Frank B. Allan, who had operated the White Swan Mills (flour manufacturers) in the "Old Upper Canada Buildings" before commissioning the notable Toronto architects Gregg and Gregg to design the three-storey factory at present-day 158 Pearl Street. Allan sold this property with the factory to the Robert Greig Company of Montreal, which continued to manage the White Swan Mills (later the White Swan Company (Spices and Cereals) Limited) as its subsidiary. In 1930, the Canadian Bank of Commerce (forerunner to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, or CIBC) acquired the property as the location of the bank's stationery department where it remained for 30 years. At the end of the 20th century, the Dominion Hosiery Company occupied 158 Pearl Street.

In 1982, the owners of the adjoining property at 15 Duncan Street acquired the White Swan Mills Building and remodelled it for office uses. While adding the small wing and courtyard to the northeast end of the property (identified for convenience purposes as 154 Pearl), walls from the principal's house on the Upper Canada College campus were discovered and incorporated into the complex (Images 2-3 and 12).⁵ Most recently, the building contained the headquarters of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario.

The White Swan Mills Building was designed by the Toronto architectural firm of Gregg and Gregg in the Edwardian Classical style favoured for all architectural types in the early 20th century. Edwardian Classicism was a reaction to the elaborate edifices identified with the late Victorian era, and its classical organization and detailing is reflected in the design of the White Swan Mills Building.

The property at 158 Pearl Street is located on the north side of the street, east of Duncan Street, in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, where many of the former factories and warehouses are included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. Additionally, the subject property and surrounding area is currently being studied as a potential Heritage Conservation District.

⁵ A board house from the UCC campus survives at 20 Duncan Street, where it was converted for industrial uses and is recognized on the City's Heritage Register

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.

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	X
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 158 Pearl Street 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. Its design is distinguished by its symmetry and the classical embellishments that are identified with the style, and particularly by the semi-arched pediments that mark either end of the principal (south) elevation.

Historically, the property at 158 Pearl Street relates to its direct associations with Upper Canada College, which established its first permanent campus on King Street West in 1829. After relocating to Deer Park in 1891, the former college buildings were repurposed for industrial uses until the lands were redeveloped. Part of the former principal's house survived on Pearl Street where two walls were retained in the addition to the White Swan Mills Building in the 1980s.

The White Swan Mills Building is also 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 White Swan Mills Building was one of the first buildings completed on the former Upper Canada College lands following the redevelopment of the campus for industrial uses, and two walls from the historic principal's residence were incorporated into an addition to the former factory in the 1980s.

The historical value of the property at 158 Pearl Street is also through its connection with the Toronto architectural firm of Gregg and Gregg, which designed the White Swan Mills Building prior to the dissolution of the partnership. While W. R. (William Rufus) Gregg and his younger brother, A. R. (Alfred Holden) Gregg led successful architectural practices alone and with other architects, during the period from 1893 to 1904 when they worked together, the pair is credited with several factories in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, including the Eclipse Whitewear Building at King Street West and John Street, the Canada Printing Ink Company Building at 15 Duncan Street at Pearl Street, and the subject building, all of which date to 1903.

Contextually, the value of the property at 158 Pearl Street 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 White Swan Mills Building is historically and visually linked to its setting where, with the adjoining Canada Print Ink Company Building (1903) at 15 Duncan Street, and the Southam Press Building (1908) at 19 Duncan Street, it is part of the surviving trio of early 20th century industrial buildings that anchor the northeast corner of Duncan and Pearl streets, south of Adelaide Street West.

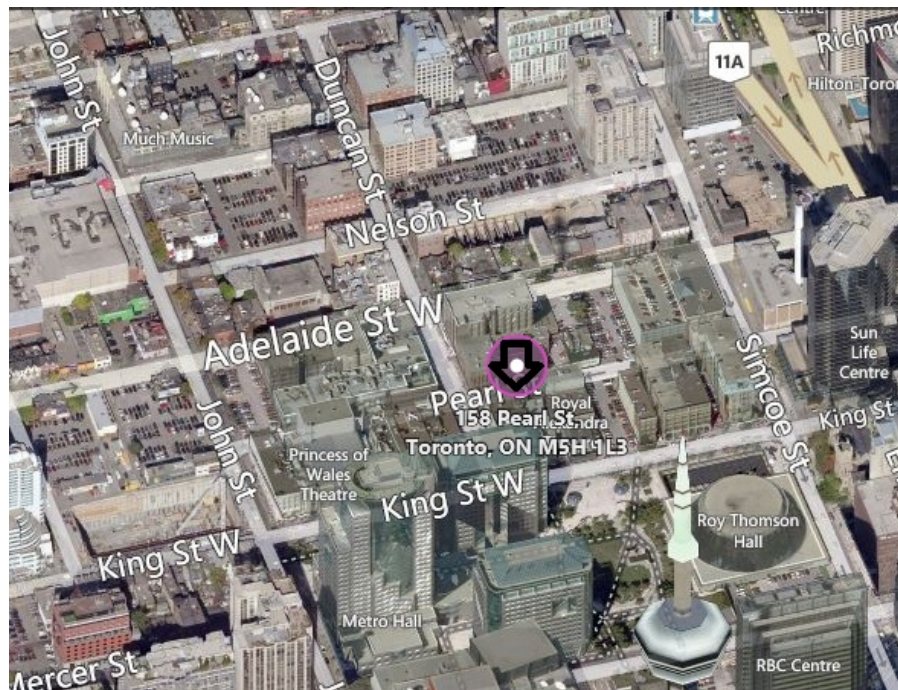
SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 158 Pearl Street has design, associative and contextual value. The White Swan Mills Building (1903) is a fine representative example of an industrial building that was designed in the Edwardian Classical style by the architectural partnership of Gregg and Gregg as part of the historical development of the King-Spadina neighbourhood when it became Toronto's new manufacturing centre after the Great Fire of 1904. An addition to the building dating to the early 1980s incorporates remnant walls from the original Upper Canada College that occupied the site in the 19th century. Contextually, the White Swan Mills Building contributes to the character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood where it is historically and visually linked to its setting as part of an enclave of three adjoining industrial buildings that anchor the northeast corner of Duncan and Pearl streets.

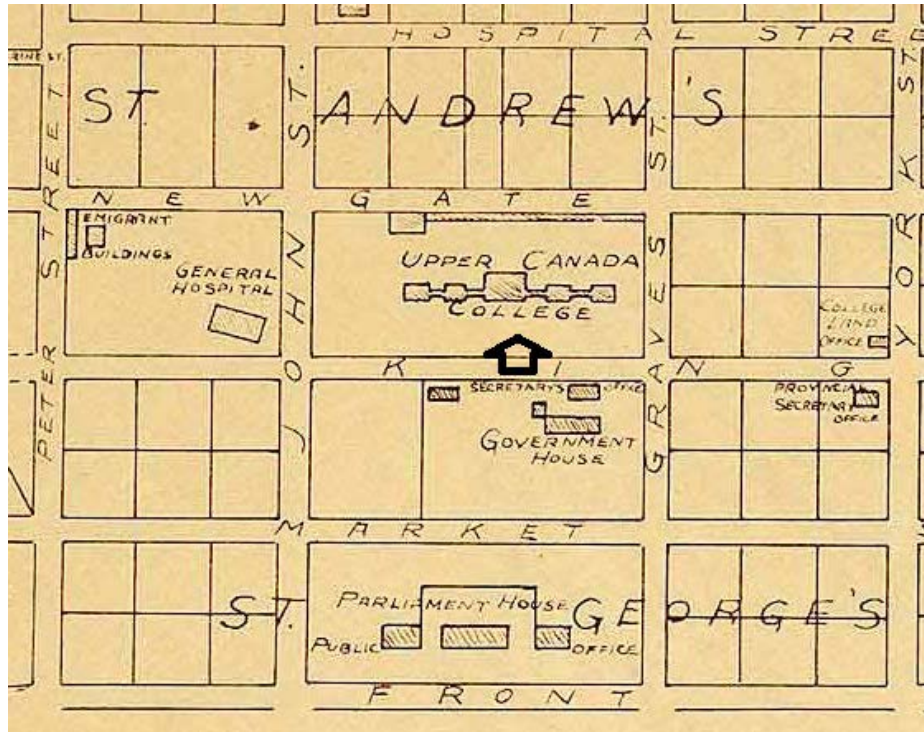
SOURCES

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IMAGES



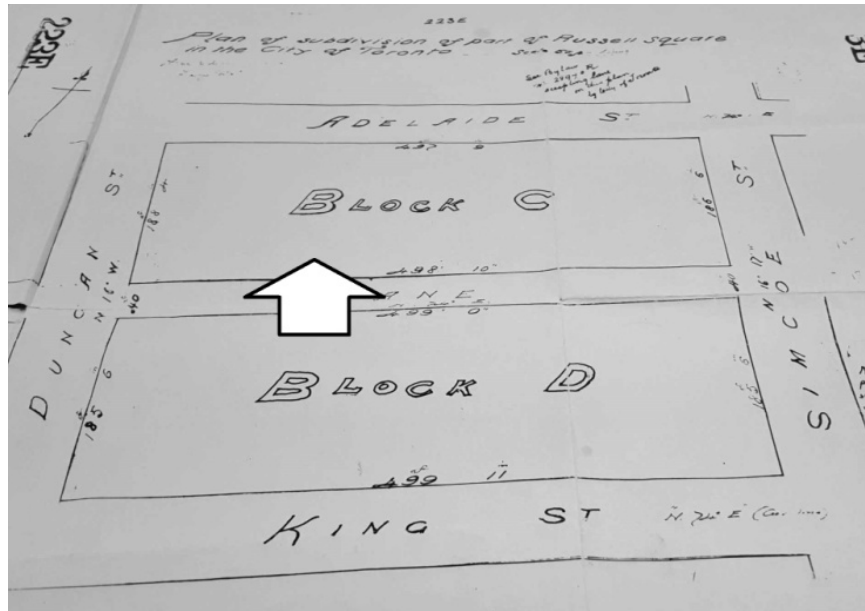
1. Location Maps: showing the location of the White Swan Mills Building at the northeast end of the King-Spadina neighbourhood (above), and on the north side of Pearl Street, east of Duncan Street (below).



2. Bonnycastle and Tazewell's Map of the City of Toronto, 1834 (redrawn 1919): this extract shows Russell Square with Upper Canada College prior to its subdivision.



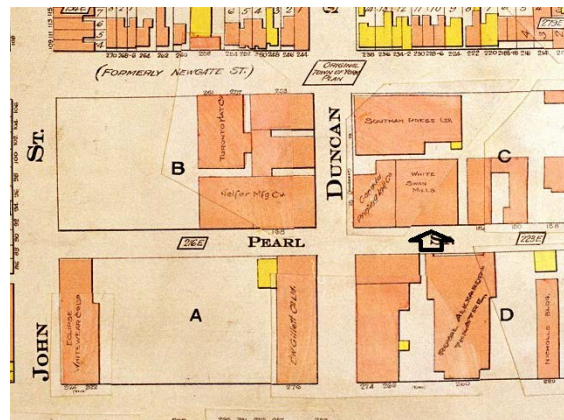
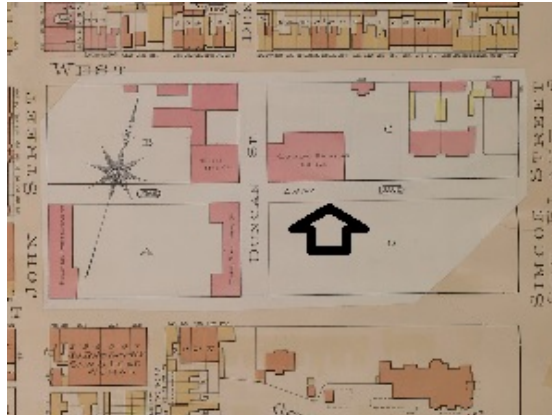
3. Archival Photograph, Upper Canada College, Russell Square, 1884: showing the principal's house at the west end of the complex, where portions of the north and east elevations survive on the property at 158 Pearl Street (Toronto Reference Library, Item 2343).



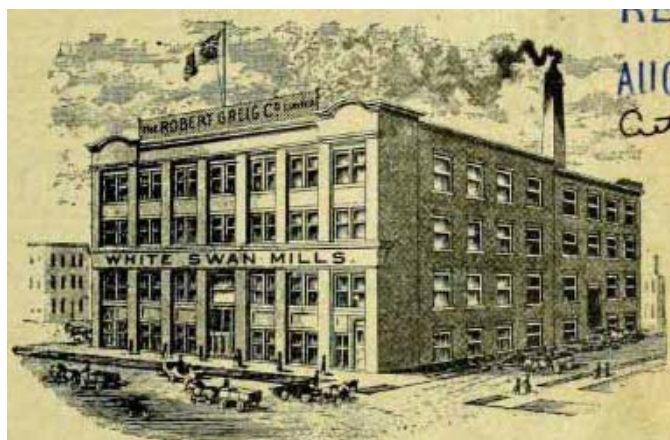
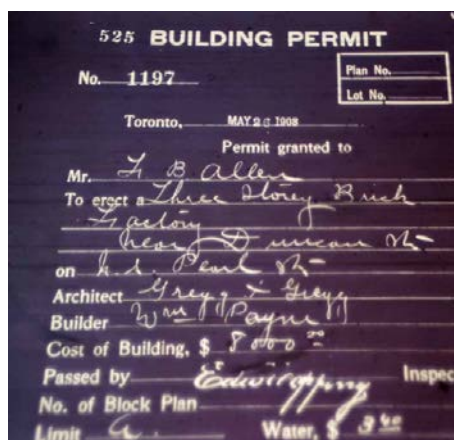
4. Plan 223E, Block C, May 1902: showing the part of the subdivision where the White Swan Mills Building was constructed the next year (City of Toronto Land Registry Office).



5. Archival Photograph, Upper Canada College, c.1911: described as the "back entrance to Upper Canada College, Adelaide Street West", the former college buildings were used for industrial purposes, including the White Swan company prior to the construction of the building at 158 Pearl Street (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 3157).



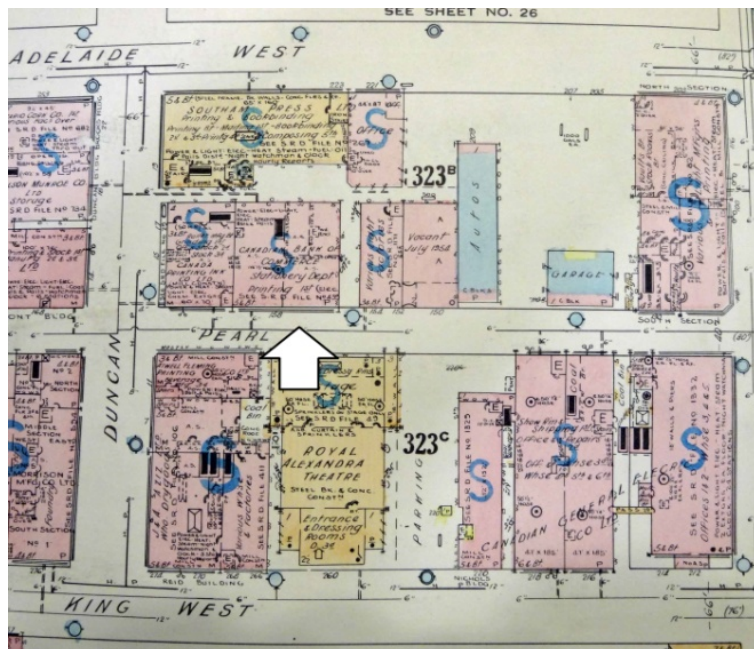
6. Goad's Atlases, 1903 (above) and 1910 revised to 1912 (below): on Pearl Street, the White Swan Mills Building is shown as part of the Canada Printing Ink Company Building on the earlier map, but corrected on the update.



7. Building Permit No. 1197, May 26, 1903 (left) and illustration, White Swan Mills, 1904 (right): designed by architects Gregg and Gregg, an illustration of the building was used for the company's advertisements (City of Toronto Archives and The Canadian Grocer).



8. Archival Photograph, White Swan Mills Building, undated: showing the location of the building on the north side of Pearl Street, east of Duncan Street with the adjoining buildings (100 Years: the Story of Canada Printing Ink, unpagged).



9. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlases, May 1965: the map is still shows the property occupied by the Canadian Bank of Commerce, following its merger in 1961 with the Imperial Bank of Canada as the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC).



10. Archival Photographs, Pearl Street, 1973: showing the location of the White Swan Mills Building on Pearl Street (left), and its principal (south) elevation (right) (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 2043, File 202).



11. Current Photographs, 2015: showing part of the principal (south) elevation where the entrance was moved to the westernmost bay (left), and the post-and-beam construction exposed on the interior (right) (Heritage Preservation Services and <http://tours.willtour360.com/public/vtour/display/39191?a=1>).



12. Current Photographs, 158 Pearl Street, 2015: showing the northeast wing identified as 154 Pearl Street where the rear (north) elevation (above) incorporates the wall from the principal's house on the Upper Canada College campus, and the east wall from the same building remains inside the wing (below) (Heritage Preservation Services).