

CC2.6 - Confidential Appendix D - made public on February 8, 2019

10 St. Mary Street, 81 and 85 St. Nicholas Street and 710, 712, 714, 716 and 718
Yonge Street – Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report – 710-716 Yonge
Street

**HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT – 710-716 YONGE
STREET, TORONTO**



**COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
710-716 YONGE STREET, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

December 2018

Confidential Appendix D re: 10 St. Mary Street, 81 - 85 St. Nicholas Street, 710 - 718 Yonge Street - LPAT
Appeal - Request for Direction

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10 St. Mary Street, 81 and 85 St. Nicholas Street and 710, 712, 714, 716 and 718 Yonge Street – Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report – 710-716 Yonge Street

1. DESCRIPTION



Cover: aerial photograph, which is oriented with north on the right (www.google.ca/maps); above: current photograph, east elevations, 710-716 Yonge Street (Heritage Preservation Services, 2018)

710-716 Yonge Street: Commercial Buildings	
ADDRESS	710-716 Yonge Street (west side, between St. Mary Street and Charles Street West)
WARD	Ward 13 (Toronto Centre)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan D3, Lots 3-4
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Yonge Street
HISTORICAL NAME	See Section 2
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1909
ORIGINAL OWNER	Yonge Street Realty Company
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial
CURRENT USE*	Commercial * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	George R. Harper, architect
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	See Section 2
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	See Section 2
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 2
CRITERIA	Design/Physical and Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	December 2018 ¹

¹ This report is a revised version of the one dated March 2017 for the single property at 718 Yonge Street and has been updated to describe the adjoining buildings at 710-716 Yonge Street and provide current photographs of the properties

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2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the properties at 710-716 Yonge Street, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether they merit 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
1797	James McCauley receives the patent for Park Lot 9 (Image 2a)
1799	John Elmsley acquires the north half of Park Lot 9 in a land exchange with McCauley
1858	Boulton's Atlas illustrates the subject properties where part of the adjacent street plan is in place (Image 2b)
1859	Plan D3 is registered by Elmsley's heirs on part of his Cloverhill Estate, with the lots outlined on Browne's 1861 Map of Toronto ² (Images 2c and 3a)
1880	Toronto's first Goad's Atlas indicates that the subject properties are vacant (Image 2d)
1890	A decade later, the properties remain undeveloped according to the tax assessment rolls and Goad's Atlas (the property is not updated on the atlases again until 1910) (Image 2e)
1900	The Canadian Motor Company is recorded as the tenant at "710-716 Yonge" when the tax assessment rolls are updated
1907	Remigius Elmsley's estate sells Henry Hatton Strathy parts of Lots 3 and 4 under Plan D3, "except part conveyed to one Barron" at the west end of the tract ³
1908 July	According to the tax assessment rolls, Strathy's property contains a two-storey building at "710-716 Yonge" with the Consolidated Electrical Company as the tenant on the first (ground) floor and "vacant rooms" above
1909 Jan	Robins Limited, headed by Frederick B. Robins, and Robert Barron, owner of the neighbouring grocery store at 726-728 Yonge Street, jointly purchase Strathy's former property ⁴
1909 Apr	The latter parcel is transferred to the Yonge Street Realty Company, owned by Frederick B. Robins

² Transactions on the subject properties first appear in land records in the 1870s

³ Referencing the properties at 81 and 85 St. Nicholas Street where the buildings known historically as the Robert Barron Stables are located

⁴ The Robert Barron Building is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act at 720 Yonge Street

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1909 May	A building permit is issued for “five attached two-storey brick stores and dwellings” at 710-718 Yonge Street, naming George R. Harper as the architect
1909 Sept	The tax assessment rolls record “unfinished stores” owned by the Yonge Street Realty Company at 710-718 Yonge
1910 Sept	The units are occupied according to the tax assessment rolls
1912	The commercial buildings at 710-718 Yonge are illustrated on the update to Goad’s Atlas, Volume 1(Image 2f)
2016 Jan	The Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan identifies each of the buildings at 710-716 Yonge Street as a “contributing heritage property”
2016 Mar	The properties at 710-716 Yonge Street, as well as the northernmost unit of the group at 718 Yonge, are included on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register
2016 Mar	City Council adopts the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) by By-law 235-2016 (the by-law remains under appeal in 2018), including the subject properties
2017 Oct	City Council designates the property at 718 Yonge Street (the northernmost unit of the group of adjoining buildings at 710-718 Yonge) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-law 1026-2017

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yonge Street Neighbourhood:

The properties at 710-716 Yonge Street are located on the west side of the street, south of Bloor Street West in the block between St. Mary Street (south) and Charles Street West (north). Located on former Park Lot 9 as it was subdivided under Plan D3 in 1859, the site contains a group of four two-storey commercial buildings dating to 1909.⁵

The origins of the area date to 1793 and the founding of York (Toronto) when the land north of the townsite between present-day Queen and Bloor Street was divided into 100-acre “park lots” that were conveyed to associates of the provincial government as the location of country estates. Yonge Street, which was surveyed in 1796 as a military road linking York with the northern hinterland, formed the east boundary of Park Lot 9, which was granted to James McCauley, a British army surgeon (Image 2a). McCauley and John Elmsley, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada and the owner of adjoining Park Lot 10 to the west, agreed to a land exchange whereby Elmsley received the north halves of the lots. His heir, Captain John Elmsley, built his country house named “Cloverhill” on the tract, afterward subdividing part of the estate for the first residential

⁵ Constructed with five units, the northernmost unit of the group at 718 Yonge Street was designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2017

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subdivisions.⁶ As early as 1819, Elmsley began selling the section of Park Lot 9 adjoining Yonge Street, a process that was continued by his executors and heirs throughout the 19th century.

The development of Elmsley's lands on the west side of Yonge Street was delayed by the condition of the road, which remained impassible south of Bloor Street well into the 19th century. However, by the late 1800s when Toronto's population more than tripled, the opening of the first department stores near the intersection of Yonge and Queen resulted in the emergence of Yonge Street as the city's "main street." Beginning in 1880, Goad's Atlases traced the development of Yonge Street north to Bloor Street with two- and three-storey commercial blocks that, by the early 20th century, included the subject properties at 710-716 Yonge.

710-716 Yonge Street:

On the west side of Yonge Street, the block between St. Mary Street (south) and present-day Charles Street (north) was first developed in the early 1800s with modest buildings that were depicted mid-century on Boulton's Atlas. When the first Goad's Atlas was published in 1880, the east ends of Lots 3 and 4 on Yonge Street stood vacant. However, by the turn of the 20th century, the site was occupied by the Canadian Motor Company, followed by Consolidated Electrical Limited.

In 1909, the property consisting of parts of Lots 3 and 4 fronting onto Yonge Street was jointly purchased by Robins, Limited and Robert Barron, owner of the adjoining grocery store complex at present-day 720 Yonge Street. This parcel was soon transferred to the Yonge Street Realty Company, one of several enterprises headed by Colonel Frederick B. Robins, president of Robins, Limited. During the World War I era, Robins financed and promoted a series of residential subdivisions adjoining Lake Ontario in the Long Branch community of Etobicoke, and laid out Armour Heights in York Mills where he also commissioned a country estate named "Strathrobyn."⁷ Robins received a building permit in May 1909 for the five-part row of two-storey commercial buildings at 710-718 Yonge Street, which were occupied by the next year with a variety of tenants.

Architect for 710-716 Yonge Street:

According to the building permit issued for the construction of the five-part row of commercial buildings at 710-718 Yonge Street, including the subject properties, Toronto architect George Robinson Harper (1843-1910) designed the group. Harper trained with local practitioner, William Irving, and in New York City before joining his father in

⁶ A convert to Roman Catholicism, the younger John Elmsley donated parts of Park Lots 9 and 10 to St. Michael's College, now part of the University of Toronto. The history of the development of these allotments is traced by Lundell in The Estates of Old Toronto (1997), with biographies of the participants found in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography online

⁷ Robins' estate at 215 Yonge Boulevard is listed on the City's Heritage Register

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1868 under the name Harper and Son, Architects. Following the dissolution of this partnership in 1881, Harper opened a solo office and accepted a variety of commissions, including “one of the largest contiguous rows of 19th century houses in the city” dating to 1886 that are extant at 135-163 Niagara Street where they are recognized on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register.⁸ The commercial row at 710-718 Yonge Street was among the last projects undertaken by Harper prior to his death in 1910. Although Harper was a prolific architect who, over three decades “produced designs for more than 40 ecclesiastical, institutional, industrial, commercial and residential projects in the city...,” his designs evidently “lack many of the refinements of scholarship evident in the work of other Toronto architects...”⁹

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Contemporary photographs of the properties at 710-716 Yonge Street are found on the cover and in Sections 2 and 6 of this report. The group of four near-identical edifices at 710-716 Yonge Street are typical early-20th century “Main Street Row” buildings with modest classical detailing in the corbelled brickwork beneath the rooflines and the window detailing, as well as the surviving triangular-shaped pediment on 710 Yonge. Above the shopfronts on the first (ground) floor, the buildings share complementary brick cladding (which has been painted) and, in the second storey, flat-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels incorporating rondels with floral motifs. The southernmost units at 710 and 712 Yonge Street have trios of window openings separated by brick pilasters with coping, while the buildings at 714 and 716 Yonge Street have pairs of window openings with corner blocks. The adjoining unit to the north at 718 Yonge Street (which was separately designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2017) has been overclad, but archival images indicate that it originally complemented the other buildings in the group.

iv. CONTEXT

The properties at 710-716 Yonge Street are shown on the location map and aerial photograph attached as Image 1. Located on the west side of Yonge Street, midway between St. Mary Street (south) and Charles Street West (north), the commercial buildings form part of the row of five near-identical edifices. This block is bounded by the office building (1957) at 10 St. Mary Street and the Robert Barron Building (1889 and 1902) at 720 Yonge Street (with entrance addresses at 726 and 728 Yonge) that are designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, along with the Robert Barron Stables (1895 and 1911) at 81 and 85 St. Nicholas Street to the rear (west). On Yonge Street and part of St. Nicholas Street, many of the buildings are recognized as contributing heritage properties in the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan that was adopted by City Council in March 2016.

⁸ Harper’s entry in *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950*, unpagged

⁹ *ibid*

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3. 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	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

The properties at 710-716 Yonge Street are valued for the design of the buildings as representative examples of “Main Street Rows” identified by the two-storey scale, the glazed storefronts with residential or commercial units in the upper floor, and the Edwardian Classical styling popular for early 20th-century commercial structures.

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	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

No historical or associative values have been identified at the time of the writing of this report. George R. Harper, the architect who designed the subject building as part of the row of commercial edifices at 710-718 Yonge Street, is not regarded as a significant Toronto practitioner.

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

Contextually, the properties at 710-716 Yonge Street have cultural heritage value for their contribution to the character of Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street, which is typified by the surviving buildings, both individual and in groups, which are historically linked to the metamorphosis of Yonge Street into Toronto's main commercial corridor.

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They contribute to Yonge Street's commercial main street character, which is expressed, in part, by mixed-use and commercial buildings that housed services, amenities and employment opportunities to support daily life in neighbouring residential areas, and which also provided cultural pursuits for the entire city. As such, the buildings at 710-716 Yonge Street are physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the properties at 710-718 Yonge Street have design and contextual value as early 20th century commercial buildings that as "Main Street Rows" are part of the group of five near-identical structures (including 718 Yonge Street) that contribute to the character of Yonge Street as it developed and evolved in the 19th and 20th centuries as Toronto's "Main Street."

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources:

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan D3, Lots 3 and 4
Archival Maps, <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html>.
Archival Photographs, City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Historical Board (individual citations in Section 6)
Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, Ward 3, Division 3, 1900 ff.
Building Permit 15166, May 10, 1909, City of Toronto Archives
Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York, 1946 ff.
City of Toronto Directories, 1880 ff.
Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923
Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Atlases, 1921 revised to 1943, and 1954

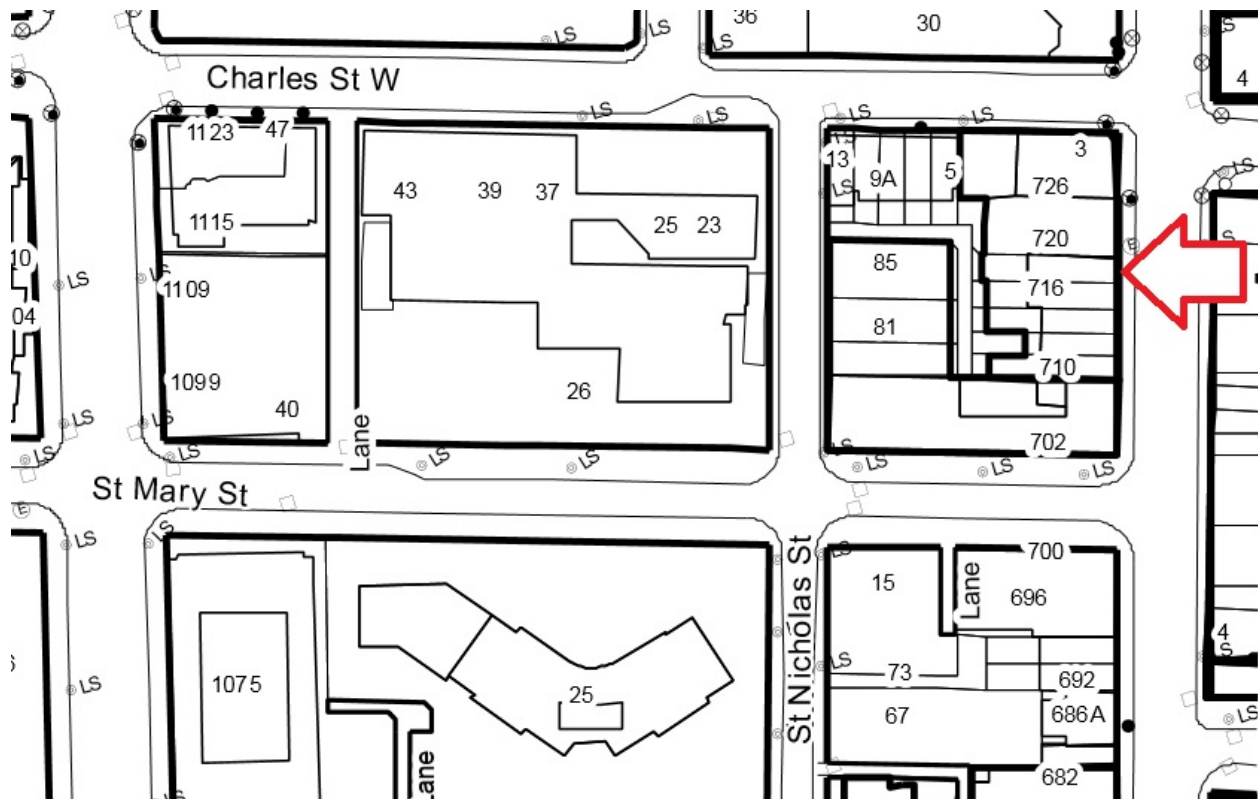
Secondary Sources:

Arthur, Eric, Toronto: No Mean City, 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986
"George Robinson Harper," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1507>
Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan, January 2017, <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-88803.pdf>
Lundell, Liz, The Estates of Old Toronto, 1997
McHugh, Patricia, Toronto Architecture: A City Guide, 2nd ed., 1989

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6. IMAGES – maps and atlases are followed by other archival images and current photographs. The arrows mark the location of the subject property. All images are oriented with north on the top unless indicated in the captions.

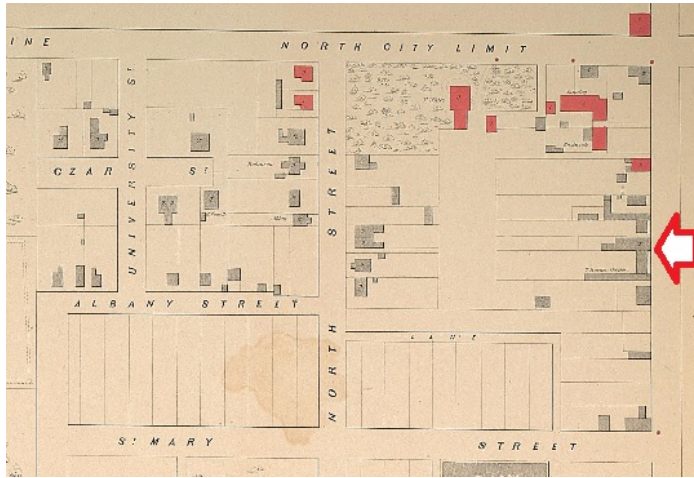


1. Location Map, 710-716 Yonge Street: showing the commercial buildings on the west side of Yonge Street in the block between St. Mary Street (south) and Charles Street West (north) (City of Toronto Property Data Map).

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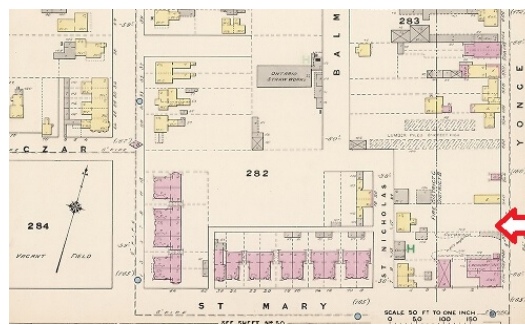
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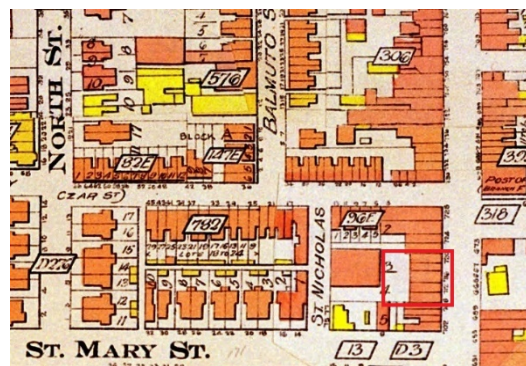
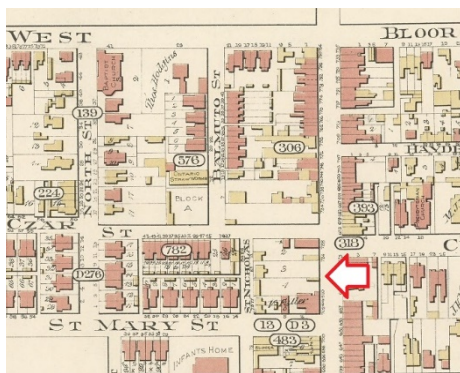
2a. Park Lots

2b. Boulton's Atlas, 1858



2c. Browne's Map, 1861

2d. Goad's Atlas, 1880



2e. Goad's Atlas, 1890

2f. Goad's Atlas, Volume 1, 1912

2. Historical Plans and Atlases, 710-716 Yonge Street: Park Lots, Lundell, 10; and, maps and atlases, <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html>.

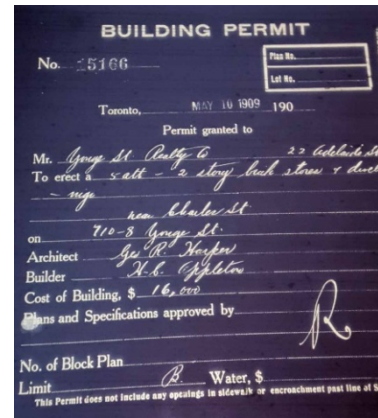
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3a. Plan D3, 1859



3b. Building Permit 15166, May 10, 1909



3c. Archival Photograph, 1931



3d. Archival Photograph, 1975



3e & 3f. Archival Photographs, 1991

3. Archival Images, 710-716 Yonge Street: Plan D3, Land Registry Office, Toronto; Building Permit 15166, 1909, City of Toronto Archives; archival photograph, 1931, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, Item 2028; and, archival photographs, 1975 and 1991, Toronto Historical Board.

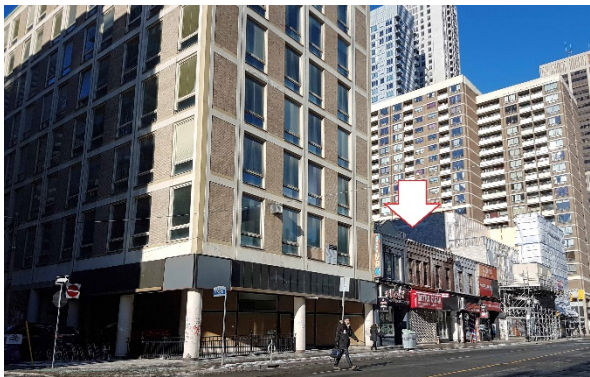
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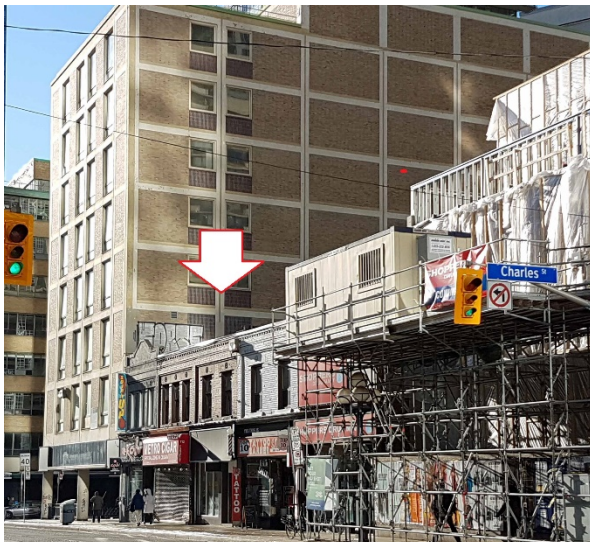
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4a. East elevations, 710-716 Yonge Street



4b. Contextual view, north from St. Mary Street



4c. Contextual view, south to St. Mary Street

4. Current Photographs, 710-716 Yonge Street: Heritage Preservation Services, 2018.