

Keys to “The Padlock”: W.G. Storm’s Cast-Iron Façade for Rice Lewis & Son, Hardware Merchants¹

by Linda Denesiuk

The Rice Lewis & Son hardware store, nicknamed “The Padlock,” was a prominent landmark on King Street East in late-19th century Toronto (figures 1, 2). Designed by the well-known Toronto architect William George Storm (1826-1892), the store, with its distinctive curved cast-iron façade, is an interesting example of Victorian commercial architecture and a major work in Storm’s oeuvre. Although the façade was demolished in the early 20th century, a wealth of documentary material is available for its study. In addition to a number of photographs and engravings, there are more than one hundred architectural drawings ranging from hasty pencil sketches on scraps of paper to annotated full-scale drawings and finished presentation watercolours.² A variety of sources is also available on the history of the Rice Lewis & Son business. Together, these materials provide an opportunity to study the store’s unique façade and to examine the complex relationship between a business infrastructure and an architect’s design.³

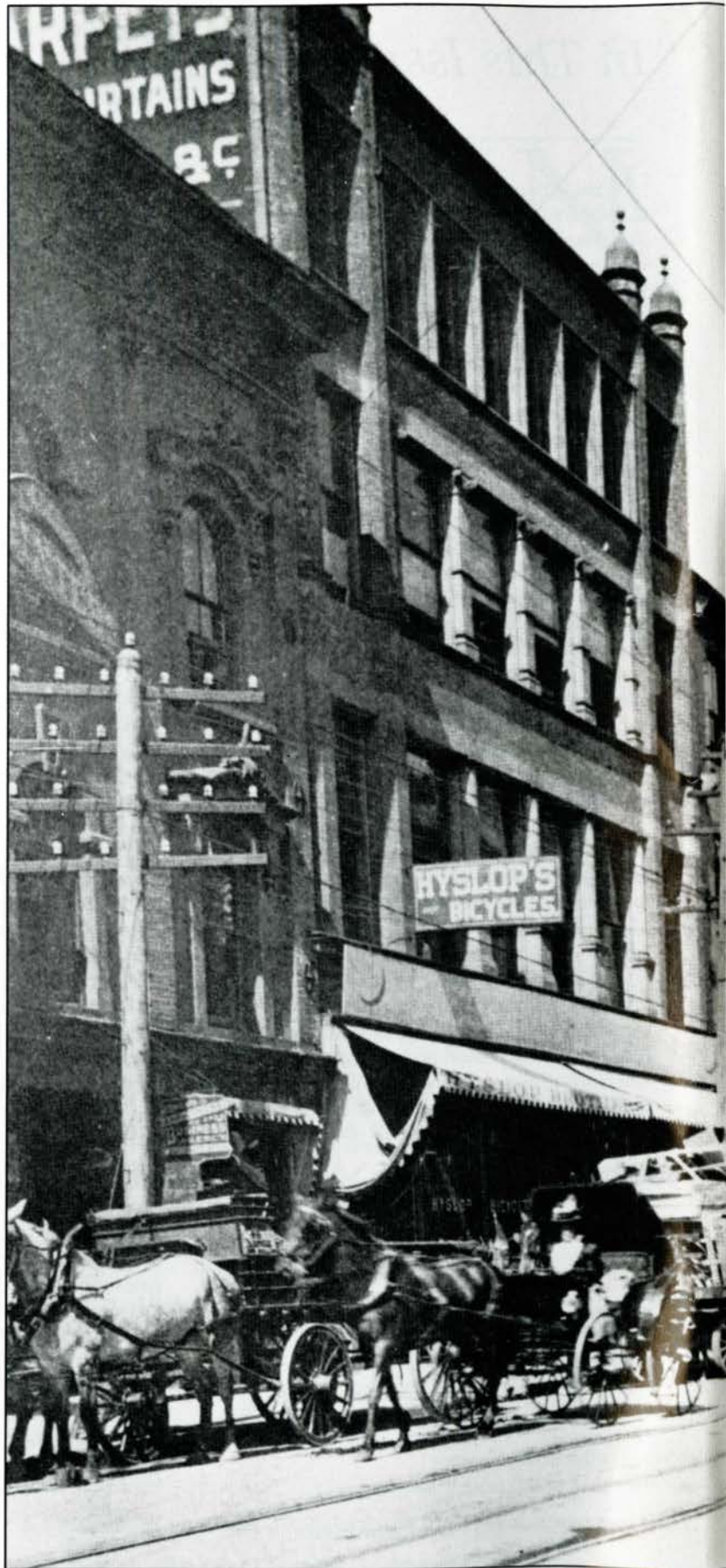




Figure 1. King Street East, c. 1898, with the Rice Lewis & Son hardware store flying the flag. (*Art Works on Toronto* [Toronto: W.H. Carré & Co., 1898; reprint, Toronto: Balantyre Books, 1984], pl. 14)

Figure 2. Rice Lewis & Son hardware store, c. 1912.
(Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room,
Acc. 13-22, repro. T-16621)



1 This paper benefited from the assistance of the staff at the Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum, the Baldwin Room at the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, the City of Toronto Archives, and the Archives of Ontario Reading Room and Drawing Collection. Kent Rawson shared his knowledge of tenders and all references to tenders in this paper are the result of his generosity. This paper was originally prepared for a graduate seminar at the University of Toronto. I would like to thank Prof. Douglas Richardson for his suggestions and encouragement.

2 There are three photographs in the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library Baldwin Room Collection: T 12603, T 30151, and T 12621. An excellent photograph is also published in *Dominion Illustrated: A Special Number Devoted to Toronto* (Montréal: Sabiston Lithographic & Publishing Co., 1891-92), 104. On the engravings, see note 32 below. The drawings are housed in the Archives of Ontario's J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, filed under C 11-757-0-1, C 11-757-0-2, and C 11-757-0-3 (previously HC[714]).

3 On the changing approaches to the study of commercial architecture, see Richard Longstreth, "Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, ed. Camille Wells (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 12-23.

4 On Rice Lewis and the early history of his business venture, see John Ross Robertson, "A Noted King Street Corner," in *Landmarks of Toronto*, vol. 5 (Toronto: J. Ross Robertson, 1908), 361-363, and "Toronto's Business Pioneers—No. 1: Rice Lewis & Son, Limited," *Toronto Board of Trade Journal*, April 1931, 45-46.

5 For an engraving of the building originally used on invoices, see Robertson, *Landmarks*, vol. 5, 362.

6 Five photographs are housed in the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library Baldwin Collection: T 10223, T 12628, T 12630, T 12631, and T 12801. There is some confusion on the date of the renovation. William Dendy, *Lost Toronto: Images of the City's Past*, rev. ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 103, states that it took place in 1867-68, but does not cite the source of this information. No tenders were issued in 1867-68. Kent Rawson has found a tender in *The Globe*, 14 August 1861, for additions to the Rice Lewis & Son building by William Tutin Thomas. The Rice Lewis & Son warehouse, located on Toronto Street directly behind the store, was also renovated. The tender for the construction of the warehouse appeared in *The Globe* on 14 June 1869. The architects were Thomas Gundy and Edmund Burke.

Rice Lewis & Son, which became one of Toronto's most successful hardware businesses in the late 19th century, had modest beginnings.⁴ In 1846 Rice Lewis, in partnership with John J. Evans, purchased the already-established hardware business of S. Scott & Co. located in the Wellington Building at 52-54 King Street East, on the northeast corner at Toronto Street. The business was renamed Rice Lewis & Co. A sign in the shape of a padlock hung above the door and a large padlock sign stood on the sidewalk in front of the store; the business took its nickname, "The Padlock," from these signs.⁵

In 1853 Evans retired from the partnership and Lewis's eldest son became a partner. The business was renamed Rice Lewis & Son and a period of expansion began. In 1860 the store next door, also part of the Wellington Building, was purchased. During the 1860s, the street-level façades of both stores were remodelled with metal-framed and -arched plate glass fronts.⁶

In 1877, two long-time employees, Arthur Brindley Lee and John Leys, Jr., assumed control of the business. Lee and Leys initiated a more aggressive approach to business and Rice Lewis & Son enjoyed a period of remarkable growth.

Although the store's location was good, many prestigious stores on King Street East were closer to Yonge Street. Some time after 1877 Lee and Leys decided to move the business west from its original location, to be nearer the bustle and traffic of Yonge Street. The plans for the move began with the leasing of the Leslie Brothers Building at 30-32 King Street East, at the northeast corner of Globe Lane. The Leslie Brothers Building, constructed before 1836, was plain and somewhat decrepid; its primary value appears to be the land it occupied.⁷

In 1878, Lee and Leys hired the architectural firm of Henry Langley, Charles Langley, and Edmund Burke to construct a three-storey brick warehouse on Globe Lane, directly behind the Leslie Brothers Building. Construction proceeded quickly and the move from the old warehouse took place within months.⁸ By the late 1880s Lee and Leys were ready to demolish the Leslie Brothers Building and construct a new store in its place. While details concerning the selection of an architect for this project are unknown, their decision to hire William George Storm was not surprising.

Storm was a well-known architect who had worked on some of Toronto's most celebrated buildings.⁹ Although best known for his religious, institutional, and residential buildings, Storm also accepted many commissions for smaller, less prestigious projects, including commercial structures, storefronts, and alterations to existing store façades.¹⁰ These minor commissions kept his practice busy and appear not to have tarnished the reputation that he had earned from his major projects. Storm enjoyed the respect of his peers and, upon the incorporation of the Ontario Association of Architects, was elected its first president.

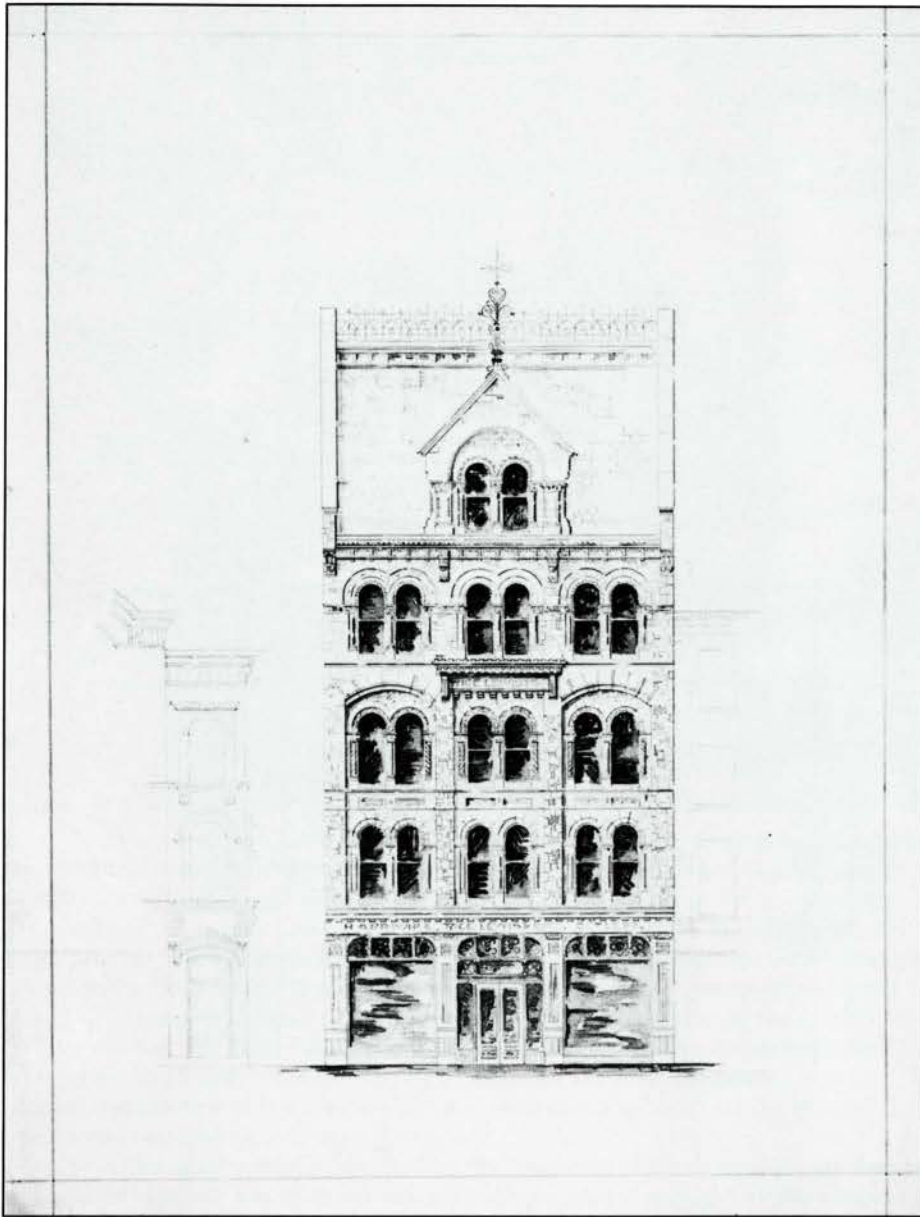


Figure 3. Presentation watercolour by William George Storm of the rejected design for the Rice Lewis & Son hardware store. (Archives of Ontario, J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 77)

Storm was therefore a solid choice as the architect for the new Rice Lewis & Son store. Not only was he well-known and well-respected, he was also experienced in commercial architecture. Perhaps most importantly, his clients possessed first-hand knowledge of his work; some years earlier Storm had renovated the home of Arthur Brindley Lee.¹¹

The Rice Lewis & Son commission consisted of two distinct but related projects. A five-storey store was to be built on the site of the Leslie Brothers Building, and the recently constructed three-storey warehouse was to receive two additional storeys. A narrow delivery lane between the store and the warehouse was to be maintained at ground level, but the two buildings were to be joined on the second through fifth floors. The warehouse renovations were fairly straightforward and offered Storm few design opportunities. The store project, however, was an entirely different case.

Storm offered Lee and Leys presentation watercolours for two dramatically different store façades. Although neither is dated, they must have been prepared between 1884 and the first months of 1887.¹² One design shows a flat stone façade divided into three bays (figure 3). The ground floor is dominated by large windows with stained-glass insets. Although various decorative devices such as relieving arches, carved colonnettes, elaborate mouldings, and a gabled dormer window are employed, the overall effect is solid and sombre. The steep roof diminishes the effect of the five-storey elevation and the windows of the upper storeys are quite small.¹³

7 The date of the building is given in Robertson, *Landmarks of Toronto*, vol. 3 (1893; reprint, Belleville, Ont.: Mika, 1974), 57. For a photograph of the building, c. 1867(?), and the extreme narrowness of Globe Lane that separated it from the Globe Building, see Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library Baldwin Collection photograph T 12612.

8 A construction tender was issued in *The Globe* on 21 August 1878. Langley, Langley & Burke also tendered the sale of the cast iron front and the windows from the old warehouse in *The Globe* on 14 January 1879.

9 For a full summary of Storm's career, see Shirley G. Morriss, "William George Storm," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (1891 to 1900) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 991-94.

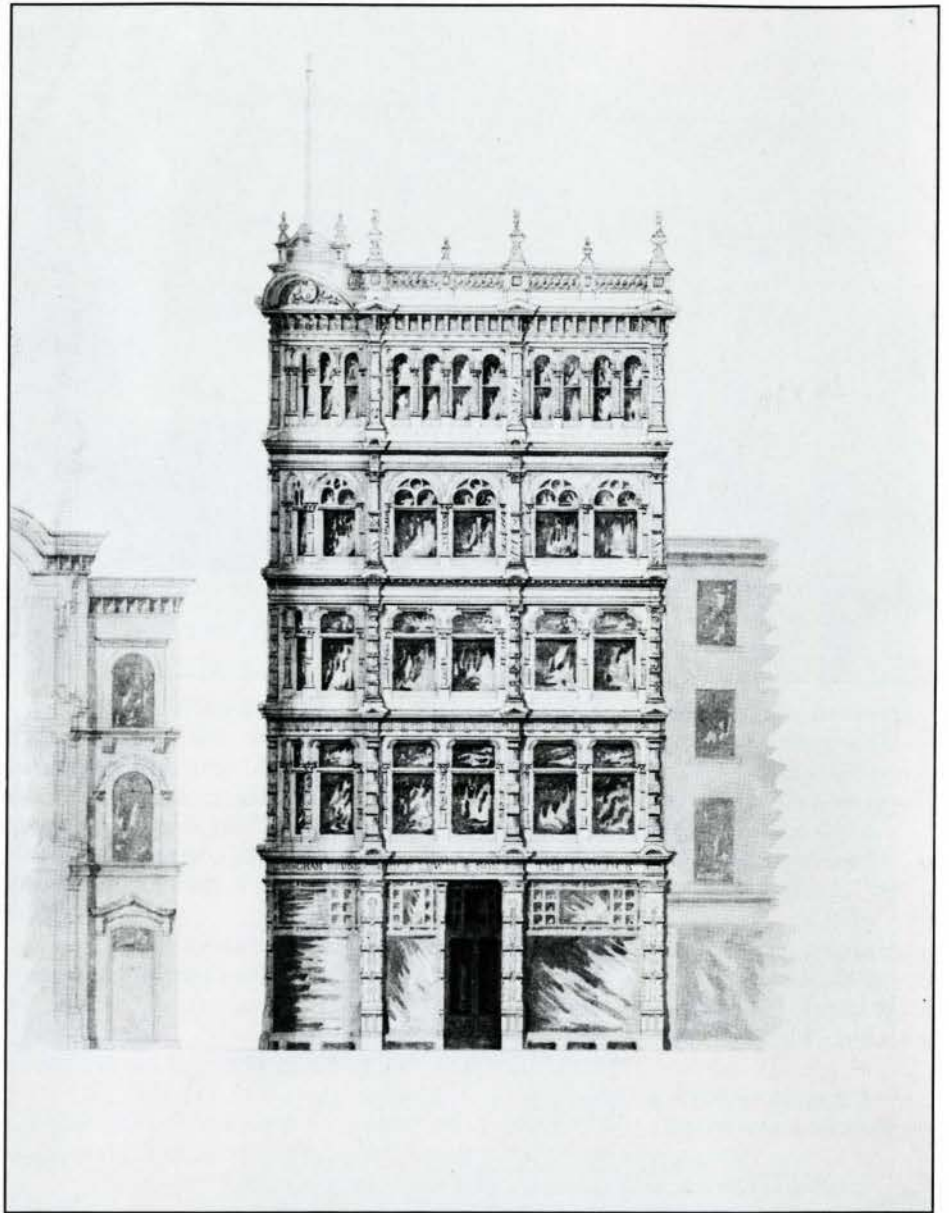
10 See, for example, the drawings in the Horwood Collection: C 11-721, C 11-788, C 11-731, C 11-736, C 11-737, C 11-751, C 11-748, C 11-770, C 11-781, C 11-713, C 11-714, and C 11-786. Two of his commercial buildings in Toronto still stand, a five-unit block at 388-396 Queen Street West constructed between 1881 and 1884, and a five-unit block at 350-358 Spadina Avenue constructed in 1890.

11 Morriss, 994. The house was located at 420 Jarvis Street. Storm's drawings for this project are in the Horwood Collection, C 11-722-0-1.

12 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 77 and C 11-757-0-1, 78. Whatman paper, watermarked 1884, was used for the former watercolour. There is no visible watermark for the latter, although it does appear to be of the same paper stock. The first tenders for the building were issued in May 1887.

13 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 77.

Figure 4. Presentation watercolour by William George Storm of the accepted design for the Rice Lewis & Son hardware store. (Archives of Ontario, J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 78)



14 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 78. While there are no plans or internal elevations that correspond to the design of the stone façade, there is one plan that corresponds to the design of the cast iron façade (C 11-757-0-1, 90). This plan shares one unique detail with the presentation watercolour: the main entrance is not set in the centre of its bay, but is placed off centre. This was later changed.

15 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 14.

16 For the signed contract drawings, see Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 7 through C 11-757-0-1, 14. Adams witnessed C 11-757-0-1, 12 and C 11-757-0-1, 13. The contractors were Ben Brick, builder, Thomas J. Dudley and James C. Scott, builders, G. Duthie and Sons, roofers, John Douglas & Co., galvanized trim manufacturers, and M. O'Connor, painter and decorator. It is impossible to assess Adams's contribution to the project, but details of the drawings, especially the lettering, suggest that at least two hands were at work.

17 Coatsworth signed C 11-757-0-1, 13. On the relationship between Coatsworth and Storm, see Morriss, 992. The building permit is housed in the City of Toronto Archives, RG 13, G 4-3. The permit was probably intended to cover both the construction of the store and the addition to the warehouse; the store project is consistently referred to as a warehouse on the drawings.

18 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 38.

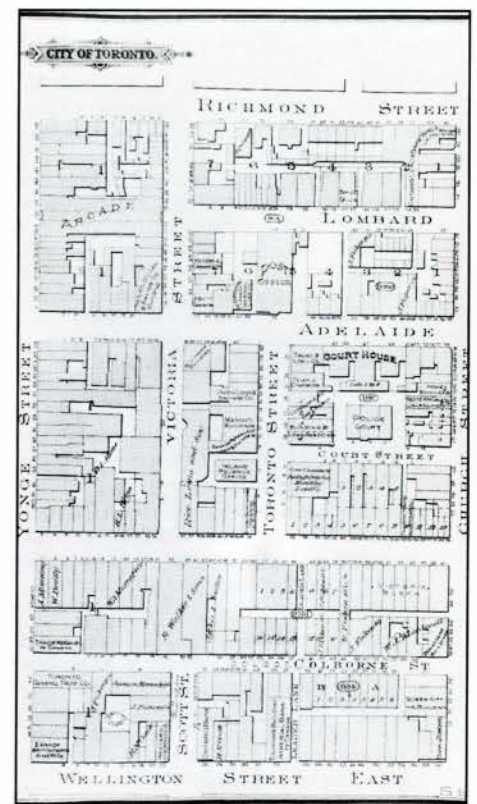
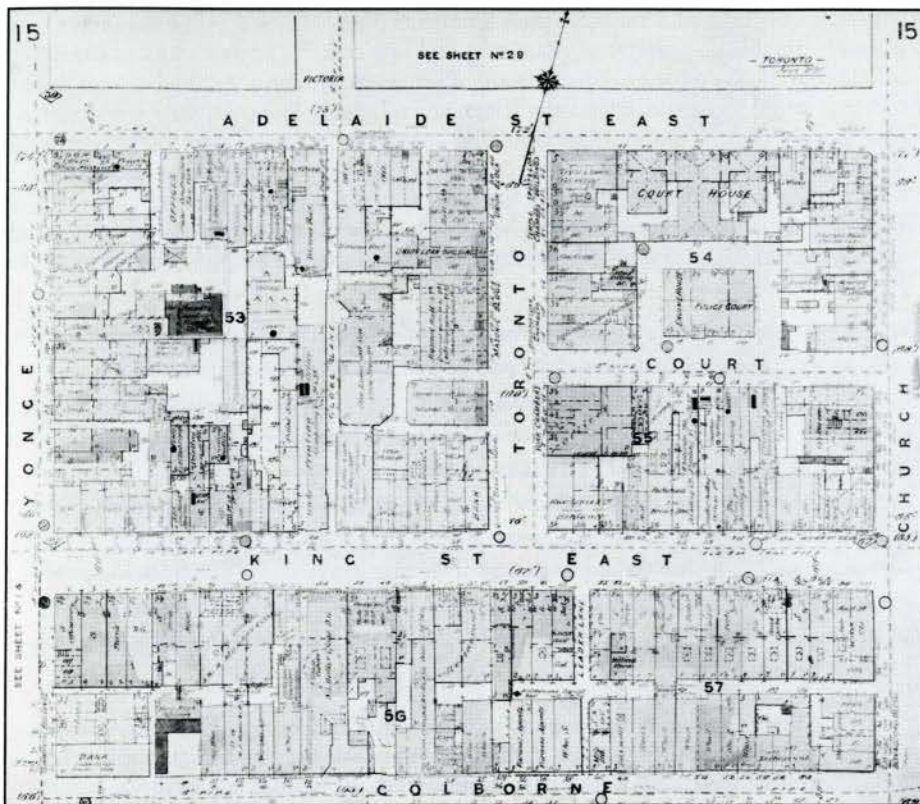
19 The City of Toronto Assessment Roll for the Ward of St. James for 1889 (compiled September 1888) describes the property as an "unfinished building," as does the Assessment Roll for 1890 (compiled September 1889). Charles E. Goad's *Insurance Plan for the City of Toronto*, vol. 1, originally surveyed in 1880 but fully revised in August 1889, labels the building as "under construction."

20 There was also an important change in the business infrastructure at this time. Rice Lewis & Son was incorporated by letters patent on 16 May 1889 and became known as Rice Lewis & Son Ltd. See Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, File TC-17555.

The other design shows an elaborately ornamented cast-iron façade (figure 4). The entire surface is covered with finely detailed decorations. Each storey receives a different treatment, and the overall effect is of layering in an increasingly delicate progression. Commemorating the store's nickname, the segmental pediment on the skyline is decorated with a huge padlock. The façade is curved, acknowledging the Globe Lane intersection and offering an attractive view from Yonge Street. The five-storey elevation seems to soar and large windows dominate. Lee and Leys selected the curved cast-iron façade, although some minor details of the design were subsequently changed.¹⁴

The contract drawings indicate that tenders for the store were issued in May and October 1887.¹⁵ Several of the contractors who submitted successful tenders signed the drawings, but only one contract drawing was witnessed. The witness, John S. Adams, is listed in the 1887 *City of Toronto Directory* as Storm's draughtsman.¹⁶ The contract drawings were approved by the city building inspector, Emerson Coatsworth, on 12 January 1888 and a building permit was issued to Rice Lewis & Son the following day. The estimated cost of construction was \$25,000.¹⁷ Tenders for the addition to the warehouse were issued on 22 May 1888.¹⁸

Construction of the store and warehouse began in 1888 and was still in progress in August 1889.¹⁹ Work had progressed sufficiently to allow the business to begin operating from its new premises by the end of 1889, and by 1890 the original store was vacant.²⁰ Construction proceeded rapidly, but not without incident.



When construction was in progress a crisis erupted. In 1889, in an attempt to ease traffic flow problems, the city of Toronto proposed an extension of Victoria Street south from Adelaide Street to King Street East (figure 5).²¹ This proposal envisioned transforming the narrow Globe Lane into a much wider street, and thus required the expropriation of land beside the lane. On 1 October 1889 the solicitors for Lee and Leys, Messrs. Hoskin and Ogden, formally protested the proposed extension of Victoria Street.²² The objection was understandable, since the plan threatened the demolition of the store that was being built as well as the warehouse that was being renovated. The matter was finally resolved, and on 9 December 1889 the city council was informed that the case of "Lee vs the City" had been dismissed and that the interested parties had resolved all existing differences.²³

Although the details surrounding the resolution of the dispute are unclear, it is likely that the suit was dropped when the city decided to extend Victoria Street as proposed but agreed to make the street somewhat narrower than originally planned. Only buildings along the west side of the lane had to be demolished. Thus, Globe Lane was widened and renamed Victoria Street and the Rice Lewis & Son buildings survived undamaged (figure 6).²⁴

The widening of the street created new design opportunities. In his original design for the store Storm acknowledged the existence of Globe Lane with the quarter-round treatment at the southwest corner of the building, but had paid little attention to the embellishment of the relatively unseen west side. The increased flow of traffic along Victoria Street demanded that some revisions be made to the west side of the store. In May 1891 Storm drew plans to insert windows in this wall to enliven it and create additional space for window displays.²⁵

Drawings, photographs, and documentary sources reveal a great deal about Storm's design for the Rice Lewis & Son store, but one aspect of the project is not resolved by these sources: Why did Storm design such an elaborate façade in cast iron? Storm had used cast iron to frame street-level windows for other stores, but he is not known to have designed any other complete cast-iron façade. While Storm's œuvre reveals a notable eclecticism, the styles of his best-known works suggest that he was more comfortable with the heavy masses and round-headed arches of the rejected stone façade than the accepted decorative cast-iron façade.

The choice of the design is also surprising because elaborate cast-iron façades were a fad whose time had come and gone by the 1880s. Cast iron had first become

Figure 5 (left). Fire insurance plan showing the Rice Lewis & Son buildings on King Street East and Globe Lane. The hardware store is shown under construction and the warehouse at rear is shown as complete. The original store location, at the corner of King Street East and Toronto Street, is also shown. (Goad Insurance Atlas, March 1882, revised December 1889, sheet 15)

Figure 6 (above). Fire insurance plan showing the Rice Lewis & Son buildings after Globe Lane was widened and renamed Victoria Street. Note the relative narrowness of Victoria Street for this one block. (Goad Insurance Atlas, 2nd ed., March 1890, revised March 1899, sheet 7 (detail)) Figures 5 and 6 reproduced with the permission of Insurers' Advisory Organization (1989) Inc., copyright holders of these plans/maps.

21 *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto for the Year 1889* (Toronto: J.Y. Reid, 1890), #827. For a discussion of traffic problems in the area and a call for better planning, see *The Canadian Architect and Builder* 1, no. 5 (May 1888): 2.

22 *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council*, #1072.

23 *Ibid.*, #1379. The bylaw extending Victoria Street was passed soon after (*ibid.*, #1404).

24 On 2 December 1889, *The Globe* reported that "a letter was read from Mr. Hoskin relieving the city from its promise not to expropriate land on Globe Lane necessary for the expansion. Mr. Hoskin consented to the expropriating of the land going through." Since measurements on the pre- and post-extension drawings indicate that the Rice Lewis & Son buildings were not narrowed, this expropriation could only have referred to other buildings along the west side of the lane.

25 Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, (c)17 and C 11-757-0-1, 18.

26 For an introduction to cast iron architecture, see Antoinette J. Lee, "Cast Iron in American Architecture: A Synoptic View," in *The Technology of American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Processes, and the Mechanization of Building Construction*, ed. H. Ward Jandl (Washington: Association for Preservation Technology, 1983), 97-116. Although it contains no discussion of the Rice Lewis & Son building, Eric Arthur and Thomas Ritchie's *Iron: Cast and Wrought Iron in Canada from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) is valuable. On cast iron architecture in Toronto, see Wendy Fletcher, "Cast Iron Building in Toronto: The Iron Facades of Smith and Gemmell, 1871-1872," unpublished paper, 1978 (Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario).

27 William John Fryer, *Architectural Ironwork* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1876), 82. Fryer concludes with the observation that "these early stages have been passed, and taste and utility now go hand in hand."

28 Cast iron façades remained popular in other cities at this time. See Cervin Robinson, "Late Cast Iron in New York," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, no. 2 (1971): 164-169. They were, however, no longer popular in Toronto. Fletcher (p. 53) notes that they were not being used in Toronto after the mid-1870s.

29 Storm's books are now housed in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room at the University of Toronto. For a complete list of Storm's library, see Marianna May Richardson, comp., *The Ontario Association of Architects: Centennial Collection Bibliography* (Toronto: Ontario Association of Architects, 1990). Storm seems to have actively consulted his books. For example, he drew free-hand variations of published designs for metal work in his copy of L[ewis] N[ockalls] Cottingham, *The Smith's, Founder's, and Ornamental Metal Worker's Director, Comprising a Variety of Designs ... for Gates, Piers, Balcony Railings, Window Guards, Verandas, Balustrades, Vases, &c. &c. ...* (London: M. Taylor, n.d.).

30 Victor Delassaux and John Elliott, *Street Architecture: A Series of Shop Fronts and Facades, Characteristic of and Adapted to Different Branches of Commerce ...* (London: John Weale, 1855), plates 16, 21, and 22.

31 On the ways in which single-occupant structures constructed by their owners used architectural styles to project business images, see Kenneth Turney Gibbs, *Business Architectural Imagery in America, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1984), especially p. 61.

32 *The Illustrated Catalogue of General Hardware*, issued in September 1898, is housed in the Archives of Ontario Drawing Collection. For two slightly different examples of the Rice Lewis & Son letterhead, see Archives of Ontario, RG-8, Series I-1-D, File #1301, Year 1901, Box 810, and *ibid.*, File #1562, Year 1902, Box 871.

33 On the labour situation in Toronto in the 1880s, see George S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). Strikes in the building trades are conveniently summarized in Table II.4.

34 A cast iron façade could be erected in less than a week. Margot Gayle, "Introduction to the Dover Edition," *Badger's Illustrated Catalogue of Cast Iron Architecture* (New York: Dover, 1981), vi.

popular in the mid 19th century when architects were attracted to the material's strength, durability, portability, plasticity, and low cost.²⁶ The aesthetics of the cast-iron façade, however, were debated soon after its introduction. As it advocates noted, cast iron could be moulded into any shape at a relatively low cost, thus enabling the creation of elaborate designs that would be impractical in stone. But this was also the feature that critics singled out for particular scorn. Many observed that architects were unable to free themselves from the seduction of cast iron's plasticity and that, as a result, cast-iron façades were often bedecked with excessive quantities and types of decoration. William John Fryer's condemnation of elaborate cast-iron façades, published in 1876, is typical:

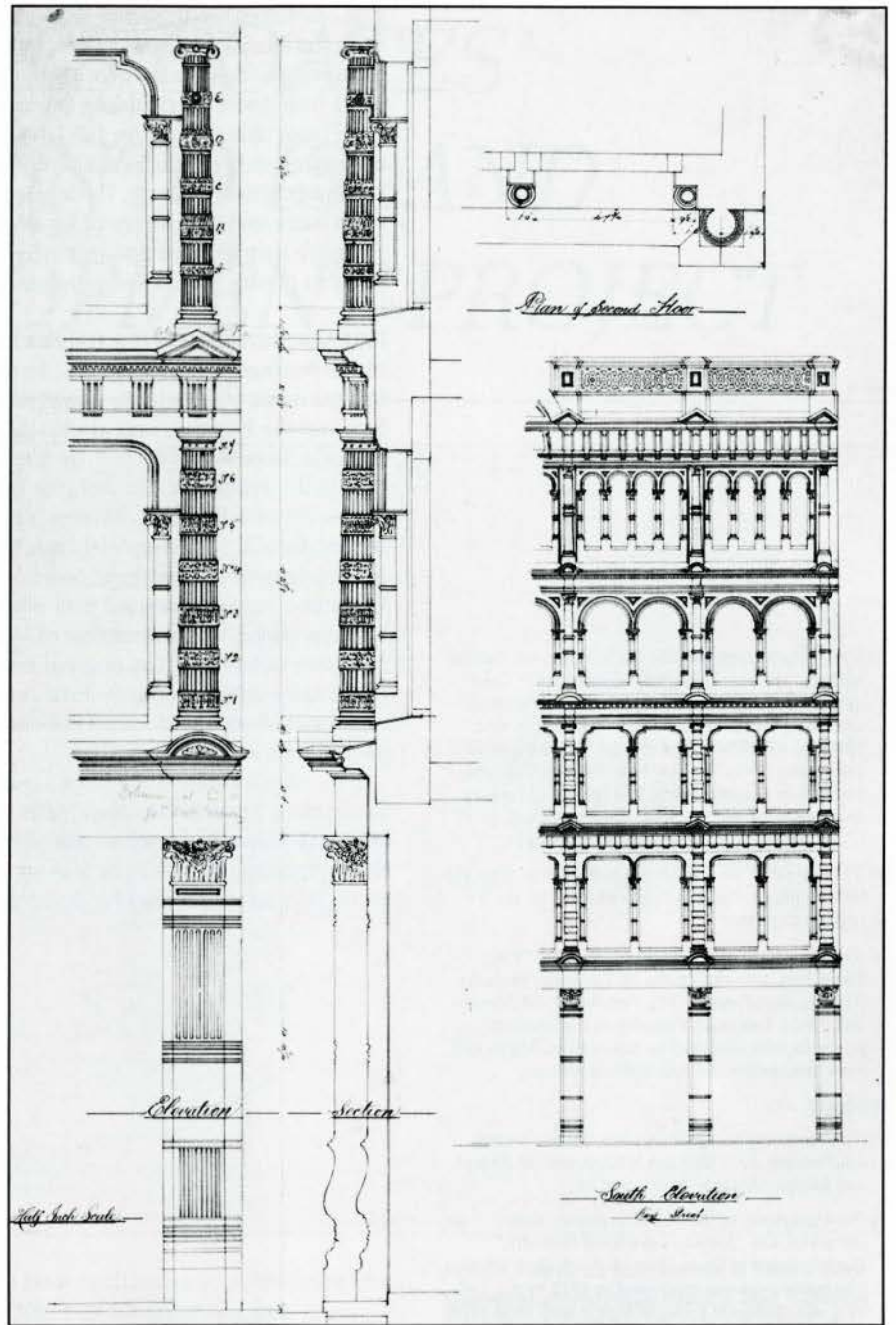
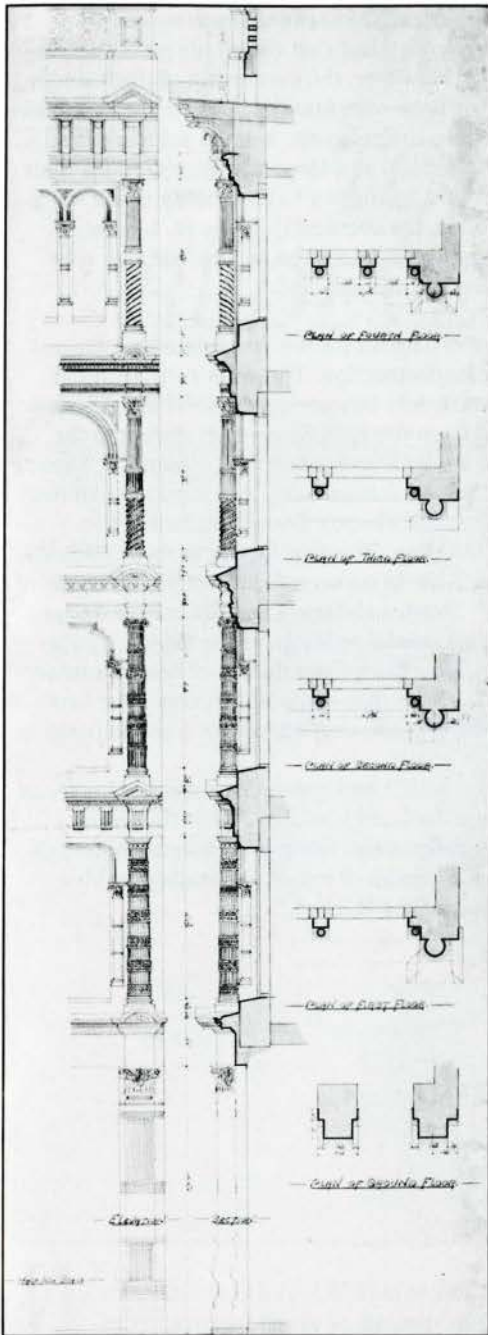
The introducing manufacturers and architects in iron acted on the self-evident proposition that a multiplicity of ornament and decoration could be executed in iron at an expense not to be named in comparison with that of stone and literally covered their fronts with useless filigree work. Every column was made fluted or of some intricate pattern, every moulding enriched. The carvings high up in the air, on the fifth story, were the same as those low down on the first—no bolder, and in every case too flat and fine. Instead of seeking for beautiful outlines and proportions, and appropriately embellishing special features to contrast with other proportions of the edifice purposely left plain and unpretending, ornateness was made the governing idea, and an extreme elaboration produced, with twistings and contortions in outline, and crowding in of small columns and pilasters, and diminutive friezes and cornices, overlaying everything with so-called ornament.²⁷

Storm's design fell into many of these traps. Indeed, Fryer's stinging attack, though written some twenty years earlier, could have been directed at the Rice Lewis & Son building itself. Cast iron was still being used for façades in the 1880s, but the designs tended to be simple and restrained. Storm's ornate façade went against current fashion.²⁸

The façade is bedecked with a wide variety of motifs and decorations, many echoing Renaissance designs (figures 7, 8). Storm may have culled ideas from design books housed in his extensive personal library.²⁹ He owned Victor Delassaux and John Elliott's *Street Architecture*, and may have been influenced by the authors' insistence that Renaissance-inspired designs were ideal for commercial architecture, since the Renaissance was not bound by the same sorts of strict rules that prevailed over the Gothic and Classical styles. While the authors did not include a design for a hardware store, Storm may have been inspired by their discussion of a design for an ironmonger's and brazier's shop, a not-unrelated store-type. Delassaux and Elliott stressed that "a little extra expense in the façade will not be thrown away in this business, the front affording the best opportunity of shewing what the proprietor can effect with the material in which he deals." They noted that an elaborate design could be achieved inexpensively with cast iron.³⁰ Storm may have been heeding their advice when he designed "The Padlock."

Lee and Leys probably envisioned the store's façade as a means of promulgating a business identity.³¹ A façade of cast iron may have seemed a fitting and appealing choice for a store that sold hardware and iron goods. Even though its extreme decorativeness may have gone against current fashion, Lee and Leys were proud of their store and used it to advertise their business. In addition to featuring the façade on the frontispiece of their general catalogue, engravings of the façade were used on Rice Lewis & Son letterhead stationery.³²

Practical considerations may have also influenced the selection. Recurrent strikes in the building sectors continually disrupted construction projects in Toronto during the closing decades of the 19th century. The cast-iron façade may have been seen as an attractive alternative to an extensive use of cut stone, particularly since the stone masons were out on strike in 1887, when Lee and Leys probably selected the design, and future labour problems loomed.³³ Avoiding the use of stone masons may have seemed prudent in such a climate. The potential backlog of jobs that would await completion upon settlement of the strikes and the concomitant shortage of labour may have contributed to the decision. Thus, the labour situation in Toronto may have encouraged the use of a labour-saving material such as cast iron. Cast-iron façades were quick and easy to erect, and the on-site assembly was completed by the foundry workers.³⁴



The mention of foundry workers naturally raises the question of a foundry. Surprisingly, none of the contract drawings contains a reference to a foundry, and a foundry representative's signature is conspicuously absent. Furthermore, no tender appears to have been issued for the provision of the cast iron.

These lacunae may in fact reflect an important development in the Rice Lewis & Son business. While Rice Lewis had been content to sell imported iron products, Lee and Leys broadened their business base and sought opportunities for expansion. In 1876 a fire destroyed the St. Lawrence Foundry on Front Street East and its owner, William Hamilton, insured for only one-third of his losses, was consequently forced to sell the business. Lee and Leys snatched up the bargain in 1877. Leys became president and Lee vice-president, while Hamilton's son continued to run the foundry as manager.³⁵ Lee and Leys thus not only sold but also manufactured iron goods.

It seems likely that the forty-five tons of cast iron required for Storm's façade were cast at the St. Lawrence Foundry.³⁶ The foundry would have been a natural choice for casting any façade in Toronto. It was already experienced in the casting of other shop fronts, as well as whole façades.³⁷ It also enjoyed an excellent reputation

Figure 7 (left). Partial elevation, section, and plans by William George Storm for the Rice Lewis & Son hardware store. (Archives of Ontario, J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 15)

Figure 8 (above). Partial elevations, section, and plan by William George Storm for the Rice Lewis & Son hardware store. (Archives of Ontario, J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, C 11-757-0-1, 79)

and employed well-trained artisans and moulders.³⁸ Moreover, Storm was familiar with the foundry's work; the St. Lawrence Foundry had cast one of his most successful designs, the iron fence at Osgoode Hall.³⁹ However, the ownership of the foundry must have been the deciding factor. By using their own foundry, Lee and Leys would have been able to monitor the labour situation, control costs, keep to schedule, and maintain quality. The façade would also have stood as a large advertisement for their second business venture, its decorative design a testimony to the quality of the foundry's work and the calibre of its workers. Thus, the ownership of the St. Lawrence Foundry may explain not only why cast iron was used for the façade, but also why such an ornate, and rather anachronistic, design was selected.

JUST AS STORM'S DESIGN FOR THE RICE LEWIS & SON hardware store was related to changes in the business's infrastructure, so too was its destruction. The store suffered a sad fate not many years after its completion. In 1904, A.E. Gilverson purchased Rice Lewis & Son and the business was gradually moved from the King Street East store into the Victoria Street warehouse.⁴⁰ By 1914, "The Padlock" was vacant. Ferdinand H. Marani eventually renovated the store for Babylon Levon, a rug dealer, and it became known as the Victoria Building. Marani retained much of Storm's design, including the curved façade, but completely refaced the building. The new façade perhaps indicates the fundamental problem of Storm's design: Marani constructed a restrained façade of limestone with ornamental iron windows;⁴¹ Storm's elaborate and decorative design was dismissed. In a discussion of Marani's successful redesign of the façade, a commentator noted that "the original building ... was from a standpoint of design a structure totally without architectural merit."⁴² It seems that while Storm may have had reasons for designing such an elaborate cast-iron façade, only his clients were prepared to overlook its anachronisms.

On 14 June 1933, Rice Lewis & Son, which had grown from a small hardware store into a Toronto business institution, was declared bankrupt.⁴³ For this vibrant business Storm had created one of his most unique and intriguing designs. Although the destruction of this store was a great loss, a wealth of extant materials provides some keys to understanding Storm's design for "The Padlock."

35 On William Hamilton and his foundry, see George Mainer, "William Hamilton," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 10 (1871 to 1880) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 330-31, and Fletcher, 23. Neither Mainer nor Fletcher consider the history of the foundry after the fire. The post-fire history is discussed in *The History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario, Illustrated*, vol. 1 (Toronto: C. Blackette Robinson, 1885), 417.

36 The weight of the cast iron is provided in "The Victoria Building, Toronto," *Construction* 16, no. 4 (April 1923): 141.

37 The shop front of the Golden Lion, 33-37 King Street East, was cast by the St. Lawrence Foundry (Dendy, *Lost Toronto*, 97). Fletcher (2, 23) identified the St. Lawrence Foundry as the location where façades designed by James Avon Smith and John Gemmell in the mid-1870s were cast.

38 Mainer, 331.

39 The fence was designed in 1866. On the casting, see Fletcher, 23. The fence is illustrated in Arthur and Ritchie on pages 70, 71, and 91.

40 For a summary of the business history under Gilverson, see "Toronto's Business Pioneers," *Toronto Board of Trade Journal*, April 1931, 45-46. The warehouse was renovated in 1912 by E.J. Lennox, who designed a simple façade with large plate glass windows set in cast iron frames. The Lennox plans and specifications are housed in the City of Toronto Building Inspection Office, #F1-71.

41 On Marani's design, see A. Cyril Marchant, "Some Metal Store Fronts in Toronto," *Construction* 18, no. 2 (February 1925): 64-66.

42 "The Victoria Building, Toronto," 141. The article also notes that the supports that fixed the cast iron to the wall were seriously corroded and thus constituted a hazard.

43 Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, TC-17555.

Linda Denesiuk is a Toronto-based freelance researcher and a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario.