

1-7 Douglas

The original Brownlow Block, built from locally quarried limestone, originally was numbered 1-7. The building's namesake, William Brownlow, was a carpenter and undertaker—two jobs that often went hand-in-hand. In the 1860s, Brownlow worked alongside one of the Tovell brothers in an undertaking business behind the old Wellington Hotel, where the Red Brick Café now stands. Brownlow purchased the lot across from that shop in 1872 and the “Mercury Progress Report” of December 1872 tells us, “Those who have charge of the Brownlow Estate are now completing the large three storey building on Douglas Street, which when finished will be fitted up for offices.” The use of the phrase, “Brownlow Estate” is somewhat confusing. Mr. Brownlow was living at the time of construction and did not die until many years later, in 1908. However, just three months after the newspaper's report on the building's status, the tax assessment role of 1873 no longer lists Brownlow as the owner of the property. Perhaps poor health or financial difficulties was the reason that another party was looking after his business affairs. At the same time, his undertaking advertisements disappeared from the newspapers. The building was known as the Brownlow Block for the next 40 years, despite the fact that he owned it for approximately just one year.

The exact date of the building's opening is not known, but lawyers, Andrew Lemon and Henry Peterson, were one of the first tenants in the Brownlow Block offices and their firm was a regular advertiser in the *Guelph Evening Mercury*. On March 21, 1873 their ad indicates they are located in “an office above the Bank of Commerce” and on the following day, March 22, an address change is noted as being in “the New Brownlow Building near the Registry Office”.

Between 1873-1905, ownership changed hands a few times. Gertrude Gummer and the Day family owned the building in 1905 and by 1914 Gertrude's father, Harry, and her brother, Bertram, are listed as the owners. The Gummer Press, publishers of the *Guelph Herald*, moved from their Quebec Street location, which was just around the corner behind what is now CIBC, and from that point onwards, the Brownlow Block has been known as the Gummer Building. The fourth floor was added sometime around 1910. A new sign has recently been hung over the building's front door, and Harry Gummer's image has been given the spotlight on the side of the sign facing away from the Square. Far from

today's rates, in 1900 the subscription cost of the daily *Herald* was \$4 per annum and just \$1.50 per annum for the weekly edition. Gummer remained proprietor of *The Herald* until January 3, 1924 and then sold his newspaper business to his rival, *The Guelph Evening Mercury*. It has been said that the records of *The Herald* were sold to a junkman who in turn sold the newspapers for scrap paper.

Over the years, the offices of this now designated building have been used by a variety of tenants including Bell Telephone. Their switchboard and offices were here from 1883 to approximately 1903. Interestingly, Charles Raymond of Raymond's Sewing Machines, was the first phone subscriber in Guelph at a cost of 80 cents per month, and the phone directory of 1883 listed exactly 50 subscribers, only nine of which were residential lines. Many lawyers, accountants and insurance agents carried on business activities within these offices.

A previous tenant from the early 2000s, recalls some of the building's features. She remembers that the floor in her office

was so slanted my wheeled office chair kept rolling to the other end of the room. But I always felt completely snug in my fourth floor garret with high ceilings, wood sash windows and oak floors. Although its Victorian-era steam radiators hulked and hissed, they produced little heat so fingerless gloves, space heaters and hot drinks were my source of extra comfort. Many of the offices still bore the old-fashioned heavy, varnished oak doors with stippled glass, and gold stencilled lettering across the glass identified the blur beyond. Although it had a rather grand staircase, the building also had a vintage elevator and an equally vintage black and white lit sign with the single word, 'Elevator', suspended out from the wall beside the elevator since it was otherwise not visible from the lobby. It was the kind of elevator with a cage door that is pulled across before the main door closes, ergo the need for a trained elevator operator. The fact that it closed with a safety hook that looked suspiciously like a bent coat hanger seemed of no import."

The last "elevator man" and his daughter, who also was employed as caretaker and elevator operator, had a passion for photography and their dark-room was in the basement. Some of their photos featuring details of the architecture and fittings of the building hung along the main hall leading to the elevator. Other local photographers like Dean Palmer, have captured the pre-fire interior charm of The Gummer. Trina Koster's camera caught an elevator operator in the original wooden shaft elevator, which was one of the oldest remaining functioning attendant-operated elevators in Ontario.

Easter weekend of 2007, 40 firefighters battled flames, as they valiantly worked to save three historic structures—The Gummer Building, and the neighboring Stewart Building and the Victoria Hotel. Twenty-

three businesses and individuals were renting space at the time. The fire's devastation included the loss of the building's renowned manually-operated elevator. The Gummer narrowly escaped extinction—only the exterior walls of the building remained intact after the fire,. The building graces the downtown because concerned citizens, a city, and a local developer, Skyline, were collectively motivated to preserve and revitalize the fabric of Guelph's downtown core. Today the beautifully restored 77,000 square foot building houses offices, retailers, a restaurant and 18 apartments. Salvageable stone and wood were reused during renovations, saving tons of landfill waste, at the same time preserving the historical significance of the original structure. The brass elevator handle and light were to have been either donated to the museum or put on display in the restored Gummer, but unfortunately disappeared during the cleanup after the fire. Skyline's "New Gummer" which is now numbered #5 Douglas, is an eco-sensitive building, and as a participant in the Green Roof Project, had perennial sedums planted on the rooftop in 2013. Its roof-top covering attracts birds and bees and is essentially maintenance-free. Skyline was the recipient of the Gordon Couling Heritage Award for their restoration of this downtown landmark.

9

From caskets to cakes, the limestone and pale yellow brick structure that is number 9, has seen little change structurally, and has had a variety of uses since its construction in 1878.

A fire insurance plan that pre-dates the construction, indicates that a structure noted as number 9 existed further back on the property and that coffin manufacturing was its purpose. The property then was owned by undertaker James Tovell. After the death of James, his son Nathan established a partnership with undertaker and brother-in-law, John Mitchell, and together they operated a business at the corner of Quebec and Wyndham Streets (now the CIBC). Mitchell moved to this location, Tovell set up his own funeral business on Quebec Street, and in 1906, Mitchell's son, Austin, eventually took over business operations. I could not determine if this building was merely a showroom and wareroom of funereal supplies or if embalming ever took place within its walls, but A. M. Mitchell is quoted in the *Royal City Booklet of 1907* as being an experienced embalmer and funeral director, and an invoice from

John Mitchell dated March 18, 1897, adds the notation “Undertaker and Embalmer” under Mr. Mitchell’s name.

In 1951 the sign outside the shop changed to Augie’s Shoe Shine and at that time, a barber conducted business in the back of the shop with hat repairs available in the basement. A matchbook cover from Augie’s is in the Guelph Civic Museum’s collection and lists the services provided inside his shop.

A wig boutique opened in 1967 and this bright green facade lasted a short time under the tenancy of Carmen Decorso. Dorothy Watson took over the wig business, adding a hairstyling salon with aesthetic services available in the rented basement. I spoke with one of these aestheticians recently and she wanted me to know about the inexplicable noises that were heard above during shop hours. After hearing such a noise, they would investigate the upper level, only to find nothing or no one that could explain the sounds. One day the owner of the salon was doing some calculations on the cash register when the number 666 appeared on the display—for a few moments no other numbers were operable. Haunted or coincidental? These women were convinced the first adjective was most likely!

Beauty products on the shelves were replaced with books when the Ali Baba Book Shop opened in 1993. Then in 2001, this building was home to the pottery shop, You’re Fired, followed by a women’s clothing store, Stelle.

While relatively intact, this building was affected by the Gummer building fire of 2007. A new roof was needed and the interior suffered from water, mould, and smoke damage. Current owner, Anne Forestell, moved in with her business, Wellington Cakes, in 2012. Anne’s Guelph roots date back to 1827—her great-great-great-grandfather, Felix Hanlon, is listed as one of Guelph’s First Year Settlers. The sign that often sits outside her shop reads, “Best butter tarts in Guelph—according to our Dads!”

11

In the empty lot at number 11, stood the two-storey terra-cotta brick home of John Mitchell, whose business we just visited next door. The home was built in 1892 and remained in the family until 1964. The house became vacant and was demolished in 1967 at which time the property became a parking

lot for the Bank of Nova Scotia. Skyline tenant parking signs are currently posted in the lot, but ownership belongs to Mason Realty.

15

The second oldest building on the street is number 15. In 1862 the law firm of Fergusson, Kingsmill & Guthrie acted as County Solicitors and John Juchereau Kingsmill was also acting as County Crown Attorney. In December of that year, County Council received a request from Kingsmill that he be allowed to erect an office adjacent to the Court House and Jail. The County leased the vacant lot to Kingsmill with the stipulation that, “he erect a good and sufficient edifice thereon, two stories high with a fire-proof roof adapted for the purpose of a crown attorney’s office at a cost of not less than \$1200, at a rent of one shilling per annum so long as it is used as a crown attorney’s office, but charging a rent of \$100 per annum in the event that it is no longer used for that purpose.” This limestone building with a construction date of 1863-65 is the result of that clause. Just a few years later, in 1869, Adam Johnston Fergusson proposed to sell the building or purchase the land upon which it stood. The County decided to buy the building and has remained in the possession of it for the past 150 years. The long list of successors to the original law firm of Fergusson, Kingsmill & Guthrie occupied these offices and filled the duties of County Solicitor for an Ontario record of more than a century.

Number 15 was designated in 1980, at which time renovations took place, including repointing and cleaning of chimneys and stones, and the removal of Virginia Creeper that adorned the exterior walls. Beyond the front door, ornate tin ceilings, arched doorways, and fireplaces speak of years gone by. The building has seen some interior renovations to accommodate modern offices and still belongs to the County of Wellington. The second floor offices were originally occupied by the Local Master of the Supreme Court and other offices were rented out to a number of varied tenants. In the 1960s it was home to the Guelph detachment of the OPP. The Childrens’ Early Years Division of the County currently holds offices in this building.

Taking a few more steps up the street we find number 21, the location for many years of the Registry Office. The original registry office was built in 1847 on this site and stood forward on the property, just steps away from the sidewalk. The new building was built in 1953 behind the existing office, and once completed, the old registry office was torn down. The cairn on the front lawn has been made of stones from the original structure. Today, the County of Wellington's IT department runs out of this office space. Interestingly, a 1920s fire insurance plan indicates the existence of a bowling green in the back of the building.

25-27

The structure at number 25-27 was built in 1885 and was designed by John Hall, who was the architect of many homes and commercial buildings in Guelph, including Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute and the two schools, St. Agnes and St. Stanislaus, on opposite sides of the parking lot at the Basilica of Our Lady. Coincidentally, Mr. Hall rented office space on the second floor of number 15. Made of pale yellow brick and limestone, it was built as an office for the Crown Attorney and was used for that purpose until 1967. Many unique details can be found upon a closer inspection: the patterned slate roof is original, and an embossed owl sits perched on the keystone of an upper window—a most appropriately chosen image. In Greek mythology, an owl sat on the blind side of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and strategy, so that she could see the whole truth. The indented 15-panel corner doorway is one of the items included in the protected features when the building was designated in 1980.

The building has seen many tenants in addition to the Crown Attorney and that list includes the Guelph Township Offices, Small Claims Court and Legal Aid Office, barristers, a dentist, the Historical Research Society and Guelph School of Music. This building is still owned by County of Wellington, and sadly, is currently used as storage.

Gaol and Governor's house

Let's walk down the laneway beside the building to take a peek in behind. Here stands the Governor's House and former gaol site, both erected in 1911 and designed by William A. Mahoney, the architect of

many of Ontario's Carnegie Libraries—excluding Guelph's. Mr. Mahoney was also a tenant on Douglas Street, occupying an office in number 20. These buildings are built with stone that was salvaged from the original octagonal gaol that stood in this same spot in 1839. The 1839 gaol was the first permanent public building in town and James Lindsay has the distinction of being the first person confined within it. His crime? Stealing cattle—unfortunately his five-year imprisonment did not curb his criminal tendencies, as after only six weeks of freedom, Mr. Lindsay was arrested near Toronto on similar charges and subsequently served another seven years in the Provincial Penitentiary. This site was the location of six public hangings between 1847 and 1919.

A stone-walled exercise yard was part of the design of the original 1839 gaol, and a portion of that wall was incorporated into the 1911 redesign and remains here today. These two structures—Governor's House and the Gaol—were given designated status in 1983. The gaol's twin building still stands in Goderich and serves as a museum.

29

Let's return to the street. At the beginning of the 20th century, number 29, right next to the Crown Attorney's Building, first housed a medical office before becoming a barbershop for the next approximate 35 years. This was in the days of a 25¢ haircut and when 15¢ would get you a shave. As the title of this essay suggests, clips could be found on this street by a number of barbers and hairdressers of the time.

The Second World War and the post-war years brought new services to town, including the Wartime Housing Ltd, who had an office in this building in 1947, and the National War Finance Committee occupied an office in the Gummer Building in 1943. William Vorvis Law Office was the last tenant here before the building was demolished in 1966.

33-37

An 1894 city directory indicates that Harry Gummer, proprietor of *The Herald*, lived at number 33. Dr. Lindsay's and Dr. McCarter's medical practices and A. Duignan & Sons undertaking business were situated at this end of the street as well as apartments for rent. The brick structure was apparently the

first building in Guelph in which electric service was installed during construction. After demolition in 1973, the property became a parking lot.

30-32

A lovely home with an actual address of Woolwich Street stood as the anchor to Douglas Street on the corner of Douglas and Woolwich which too, is now a parking lot. This site was home of George Oxnard, father-in-law of lawyer Charles Lawrence Dunbar, who constructed 32 Douglas as offices for his law practice. The building is another example of architecture designed by William A. Mahoney, and with a construction date of 1918 is the newest building on the street. Angus Dunbar joined his father's firm in 1923 and practiced law on the first floor for 60 years. Since 1984, Mason Realty has owned and occupied the building which for decades, was known as the Dunbar Building. The interior has been virtually untouched, and boasts the original fireplace, wood doors and trim. The only modifications have been the removal of a main floor powder room in the front office and the widening of the basement stairs. The door on the left side of the building, numbered 30 is the entrance door and stairway to the upper offices of number 32. A variety of tenants have occupied the upper floor, including dentist, Dr. Douglas M. Foster.

26-28

Imagine the sound of the horses' hooves of yesteryear as we move to number 28. Its beginnings date back to a time that pre-dates today's parking lot. A livery provided stabling in addition to hiring out a horse and carriage. 1878 was the year of construction, built by George Patterson at a cost of \$1500. The livery saw a succession of owners over a period of more than 50 years, and in that time the signage on the building's exterior changed from Patterson's Livery, McCannell & Patterson, Arch McLain Livery, Douglas Street Livery owned by A. E. Johnson, then P. Spragge (who also ran an auctioneer business here), C. L. Kearns Taxi & Auto Livery and finally in 1925 became Kearn's Garage. In the *Royal City Booklet of 1907*, this livery is described as a business that "kept on hand, the newest and most up-to-date turnouts, tally-hos, rubber-tired runabouts, comfortable rubber-tired hacks and broughams, well-groomed horses, reliable drivers, and a telephone that never sleeps. Teams are hooked to hacks on the floor, always ready to answer calls at a moment's notice."

The fire insurance plan of 1929 indicates the building was undergoing renovations with the notation that it was to become a furniture store. Again, ownership of the furniture and household appliance store changed hands a few times. First owner, Fred J. Armstrong, sold the business to Stanley Koch, who changed the name to Pioneer Furniture. Coincidentally, Stanley's brother owned Pioneer Farm Equipment on Waterloo Avenue where now the Pioneer Apartments stand. Mr. Koch sold to Doug Florence in 1967, and after Doug's retirement, his sons ran the business at both this and the Highway 24 location until 2011. Bryan Florence recalls a memory from his childhood of riding brand new bicycles in the basement of the home furnishings shop. In addition to furniture, the store offered everything from toasters to bicycles.

Currently in the rear of number 28, where the horse stables for the livery once existed, three artists have made their studio space very warm and inviting. Laurie McGaw, whose work is depicted on 35 Royal Canadian Mint coins, is on the main floor, sharing space with fibre artist, Sheila Thompson. Helen Hoy is above, in what would have been the hay loft. The exposed brick walls provide the backdrop for their artwork. Interesting features of the building include the carved trough in the concrete floor, which at one time would have allowed horse urine to flow out of the barn. The support system in place eliminated the need to build support posts in the centre of the room. Both Laurie and Helen are annual participants in Guelph's Fall Studio Tour, and Sheila just moved to the street recently.

Renovations have recently restored the facade beautifully within to its original arched windows and doorway. Today number 28 is home to Chestnut Park Realty, and the rear upper floor of the building, accessible via the doorway from the street marked number 26, is currently for lease, while an interior decorator occupies the upper front office space.

24

The building next door at number 24 is also currently for lease. Built in the 1870s, this residence was an investment property for John Hogg, owner of the Queen Street mansion, Wyoming. From the mid 1930s to 1988 it was a beauty parlor under two different owners, then a flower shop occupied the space in the

early 1990s. Tenants thereafter include an aesthetician, support and self-help organizations, and most recently a consignment shop.

20

Past the laneway, is number 20—a stone building with a red brick facade. “The Mercury Progress Report” of 1903 states that at a cost of \$10,000, Robert Lachlan McKinnon had this building constructed to house offices to rent and for his own law practice. The successors of McKinnon’s law firm serviced their clients in this same building until 1989, when having outgrown the space, moved to Woolwich Street. Number 20 was known as the Telephone Building during Bell’s occupancy from 1904-1915, though they were just tenants, not owner. Bell had grown and their office in the Brownlow Building was no longer sufficient. Bell’s office manager of 1903 recommended this move, “if you think we can possibly afford a place at \$650 a year, as the location is magnificent and it will cost us more than that if we stay where we are and take the upstairs of the present building. The proposed location is about the very best in town.” By 1911, Bell reached a milestone of having its 1,000th telephone placed in service in Guelph, though until well after The Depression owning a telephone showed considerable affluence and progressiveness—a status symbol of the time.

Other tenants of significance include Guelph’s first millionaire, James W. Lyon, who had occupied a building further up the street circa 1880s. Architect William A. Mahoney was an early tenant, and George Drew, former Guelph mayor and Ontario’s 14th premier, practiced law inside these offices.

The exterior steps leading down to a basement rental unit was for many years, another place to get clipped. A barbershop pole was an exterior fixture on number 20 for an approximate time period of 1916 to 1970.

For three years, this building housed the United States Consulate, which had been operating elsewhere in the city since 1866. The Consuls kept log books, and in an entry written by Consul Harry Dill, it’s reported that, “The duties at this port, though wholly commercial are, I think, more arduous than at any other Canadian consulate, owing to the necessity of meeting the shippers of livestock to certify to their invoices; delays and special trains frequently requiring my attendance till a late hour of the night.”

Figures from the 1884 log book of Consul Loton S. Hunt indicate that by dollar value, the top exported goods at that time from Guelph to the United States were livestock and eggs.

The consulate office was one of ten U.S. consulates in Ontario that were recommended to be abolished in 1906.

Today, the second floor of this building has been transformed into a large, bright fitness studio where a husband/wife duo offer personal training under the banner of Barres and Bells. Other offices within are leased to lawyers and health care professionals, in keeping with the historical thread of the building's original occupants. These personal trainers have commented that they enjoy the views and ambiance of the street, and are not the only business owners who have mentioned to me the comforting presence of the bells that ring out from the clock tower of St. George's. Not only do the chimes mark the passing of the day, but reassure all who hear them that all is well on Douglas Street.

18

The next building, number 18, is set back from the street, almost hidden by the buildings on either side and was built in the early 1860s as a dwelling for land agent, Andrew M. Jackson, who rented office space in the Brownlow Block Building. It has the distinction of being the oldest structure on the street, as an early fire plan indicates an empty lot across the street, where the County Solicitor's Building was built the following year. In the 1890's, the prestigious men's group, The Priory Club, used this space as its meeting house. The Priory Club eventually moved around the corner to Woolwich Street, and for the next 80 years, number 18 became the office space for barristers. Since 2000 it has been a dental office. The half timbered gables and bay windows were later additions.

16

Number 16 is attached to its neighbor, but with an original construction date of 1892, it was built prior to the red brick structure next door. C. L Dunbar practiced law here with partner Hugh McMillan before building their establishment up the street at number 30-32, which we've already visited. Undertaker, Angus McNiven, then moved in, followed by Duignan & Sons, also undertakers. The building returned to

law office status in the late 1930s through to 1984. It was then converted to the Blue Danube Restaurant, closely followed by the fine dining establishment of Georgian Creeds. La Luma Salon & Academy is the current tenant, making it the most recent shop on the street offering hairstyling services.

8-12

On the site of the current Red Brick Café, there was once a small wooden frame structure where in the 1880s, J. W. Lyon established the headquarters office for his business, World Publishing Company. It was the largest subscription business in Canada and employed 500 salesmen. He began pumping out thousands of books for commission agents in such far-off places as Australia, Africa, the West Indies and China. He was a successful entrepreneur and became Guelph's first millionaire. We have Mr. Lyon to thank for Guelph's Riverside Park.

By 1896, a new building stood on the property and "The Mercury's Progress Report" of that year reports that,

McLean & McLean have added greatly to the appearance of the business part of the city by the erection of a handsome two-story structure, pressed brick with white stone trimmings on Douglas Street, which takes the place of the old building which was an eyesore to that important section. The building is admirably arranged as a block for offices, the interior fitting, vaults, lighting, etc., being designed with that end in view. It is heated by hot water and lighted with electricity throughout.

William & John McLean were barristers and the quoted cost of construction of their building was \$7,000.

Around 1910, Albert D. Savage moved into number 8, and there, looked after his clients for an approximate 30 years. Savage was a successful optometrist and optician, being the exclusive optical establishment in the district and lenses were ground right on the premises next door at number 10. The second floor offices have been rented out to a variety of tenants over the years and the doorway that bears number 10 now, is a stairwell to those offices. Similarly, the exterior door marked number 12 is the stairwell access to the now bright, high-ceilinged apartment that was once office space for a variety of occupants including the Humane Society, Children's Aid Society, barristers, barbers, insurance agents, and Conger Lehigh Coal Co.

A Savage shop sign bearing a pair of eyes hung from the building and watched over the street's activities for decades. Sadly, when I asked the grandson of A. D. Savage about this iconic sign, he indicated that the family does not know what fate the sign encountered. Savage was a prolific advertiser and his ads were warnings, linking eye health to life's successes. Examples that appeared regularly are, "Is Your Financial Success Leaking Through Your Eyes?", and "Success depends on your eyes. The man with poor eyesight is apt to be undecided and to use bad judgment." His slogan—"See Savage ... See Better!", was believed by many Guelph citizens. Even Guelph native, Edward Johnson, who was living in New York City at the time, had Savage fill his eyeglass prescription. A thank you letter from Johnson, indicates a satisfied customer. "The glasses arrived safely and are splendid. I like the color and I like the form. And I am so glad you persuaded me to have the test and to make the changes because I feel sure I am going to see easier with these new lenz. Thank you a thousand times and with all good wishes, I am sincerely yours, Eddie Johnson."

After the death of A. D. Savage, a succession of optical businesses followed in the building—Carr Optical, C.R. Nimmo Optician, Optical Dispensary with Imperial Optical taking over the lab space in number 10. Imperial Optical was managed by Roy Coburn—father of current Wyndham Street Optician, Scott Coburn, from 1940-1984. Scott took over the business in 1984 and moved into the newly built Eaton Centre. As a youth, Scott was the delivery boy for his father's wholesaling business, picking up prescriptions daily from local optometrists and subsequently returning the finished eyeglasses from the lab. Scott recalls the fire that occurred in the building in 1975. A *Mercury* report the day after the fire, resulted in phone calls of sympathy to his mother because the article that accompanied a photo of Roy stated he was "the latest victim of fire." People thought Mrs. Coburn was now a widow! There had been a string of downtown fires at the time, all believed to have been the work of an arsonist. While the building was a victim, Roy was safely at home eating dinner when the fire broke out on December 28, 1975. The cause of this fire was listed as a faulty furnace & chimney that resulted in an approximate \$100,000 damage to the contents of the dispensary.

The Red Brick Café, the current occupant of this building, has been in operation for the past 15 years and renovations to the basement of number 8 have taken place fairly recently by the current owner.

Digging out the basement dirt floor, a concrete floor was poured, making a spacious kitchen area for the café. A large office and staff room were also created.

This building shares a common interior feature with seven other buildings on the street—the walk-in safe. Today, most of these Douglas Street safes are no more than storage, linen, and clothes closets, but vaults and safes were installed in many of these buildings because the threat of fire was a real concern in the street's early days. These buildings, as we have learned, housed lawyers, insurance companies and accountants—businesses that required protected file storage. J & J Taylor was a Canadian manufacturer of safes, and a number of the Douglas Street safes bear that name. I found an old advertisement for J & J Taylor, and in it they boast that their safes, “never fail to preserve their contents, even in the hottest fires.” As for the current use of these safes, one tenant on the street has commented that the exterior-wall walk-in safe in his office is a great place to store beer in the winter!

Post Office / Customs & Inland Revenue Building

The entrance to Douglas was once announced by the majestic Post Office, Customs & Inland Revenue Building. Originally a two-storey structure, it was built in 1877 at a cost of approximately \$25,000. 1894 saw some building improvements including a galvanized iron roof, exterior paint job and new flag pole, and in 1902 the stone building received an addition of a third floor, clock tower, and a turret-style extension at the end of the building towards Douglas Street with a spiral staircase. The clock was installed in 1906, but on October 19, 1960, the clock stopped ticking at 2:35 pm, as demolition of the building began. Regrettably, moving the postal services from the old Post Office/Customs House on St. George's Square to the newer Dominion Building on Wyndham in 1936, was one of the factors that led to this iconic building's eventual demolition. For 83 years, this statuesque building was downtown's beauty; it was the subject of many photos and postcards.