

# Memory Lane

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## Arliss Building (The Olympia Club)

53 King Street East is a four-storey brick commercial building constructed circa 1915 consisting of 53 to 59 King Street East. The building was refaced circa 1947.

53 King Street East was the site of Robert McKay & Company's dry goods business for nearly 40 years. The company, originally known as the McKay Brothers, was first located on the site in the 1880s in a stone-faced three-storey brick building, and became Robert McKay & Company in the 1890s. In 1914, the building was gutted by fire. The fire broke out shortly before 8:00 A.M. on Saturday February 17, 1914 at the big department store. The cause of the fire was thought to be a small gas stove that was situated in the workroom on the fourth floor. The blaze was confined to the third and fourth floors of the building. It was estimated that there was \$300,000.00 damage done by the fire.

The building was rebuilt circa 1915 as a four-storey brick building influenced by the Neo-Gothic style with a three-bay front façade composed of tripartite windows, brick pilasters, stone accents and cornices above the second and fourth storeys and a balustrade along the roofline. The building was occupied by Robert McKay & Company until 1921. In 1922 it was purchased by the Steel Stores, limited, an American organization who opened a retail store on the site for a short period of time. In 1940, it was announced that the building had been acquired by the Adams Furniture Company of Toronto for \$200,000.

In 1941, Adam's Furniture Company moved into the building and remodelled it including refacing it with a contemporary flush façade inspired by the International style. The building was occupied by Adam's Furniture until 1948.

In 1949, the building was branded as the Arliss Building when the Arliss Company moved in and renovated it to accommodate several tenants including a restaurant, a bowling alley and several stores.

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The fire being fought at R. McKay & Co in 1914.

# Arliss Building ...continued



The building when it house Adam's furniture. We can also see 61 King Street East next door when it was Singer Sewing Centre. 61 King Street East, originally known as the Singer Building, was designed by architect N.A. Armstrong and was constructed in 1947 for the Singer Sewing Company, who occupied the building until 1980. The building was subsequently occupied by Palace Billiards and Amusement Arcade before being converted to an adult cinema and peep show in 1986, known as Show World.



The building when it was a bowling alley and several storefronts. 61 King St. East is Brock Shoe Stores.

The building housed the Arliss Shoe Store in the ground floor from 1949 to the 1980s as well as Duffy's Tavern from 1949 to 1979. Duffy's Tavern, hosting classic rock bands like Rush and Max Webster, became Duffy's Rockpile transitioned to a more punk influence in the late 70's. In 1983 Duffy's became Oliver's. The lineup was Top 40 bands, with seating for 270 fans. The last listing for Oliver's was March 1997.



A nighttime view of the building as the Arliss Company and Duffy's Tavern. Also pictured is the large display window at Kresge's as well as the Reitman's store to the right.



A photo of the building in the recent past as My Convenience Store and the Salvation Army Thrift Store. The current renovations by Core Urban were completed on the building and its neighbor 61 King St. East, now The Olympia Club, in 2020.