

Authority: Etobicoke Community Council Report No. 5, Clause No. 14,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on April 16, 17 and 18, 2002
Enacted by Council: April 18, 2002

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 261-2002

**To designate the property at 222 Islington Avenue (Boxer Building) as being of
architectural and historical value or interest.**

WHEREAS authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 222 Islington Avenue (Boxer Building) as being of architectural and historical value or interest; and

WHEREAS the *Ontario Heritage Act* authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historical or architectural value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the land and premises known as 222 Islington Avenue and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The property at 222 Islington Avenue, more particularly described in Schedule "B" and shown on Schedule "C" attached to this by-law, is designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "B" to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owners of the property at 222 Islington Avenue and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 18th day of April, A.D. 2002.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

ULLI S. WATKISS
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

**SCHEDULE “A”
REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

HERITAGE PROPERTY REPORT

1.0.1 INTRODUCTION

This report is the “Long Statement of Reasons for Designation” for the designation of the property at 222 Islington Avenue (Boxer Building) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains the Heritage Property Profile, as well as sections on the Historical Occupancy, Architectural Description and Significance of the property. Sources and Photographs are included. The introduction, below, forms the “Short Statement of Reasons for Designation”, intended for publication.

The property at 222 Islington Avenue is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons. Two sections of the industrial complex are described. On the Islington Avenue (east) frontage, the ten-bay façade with patterned brick detailing purportedly dates to 1891 and was constructed for the McDonald Stamping Works, manufacturers of pressed metal products. After the Reg. N. Boxer Company, manufacturers of fine wallpapers, acquired the property in 1908, a five-part façade with Classical detailing was added to the Birmingham Street (south) frontage.

The McDonald Stamping Works Building displays the round-arched motifs associated with the Romanesque Revival style. The building is constructed of brick with contrasting brick and stone detailing. Covered by a flat roof, the structure rises two stories above a parged brick foundation. The façade is organized into ten bays by brick piers. In the first floor, pairs of round-arched window openings (some have been altered) contain twelve-over-twelve industrial sash windows. The second storey has pairs of segmental-headed window openings with four-over-four sash windows that are linked by buff brick string courses. In both stories, all of the window openings display buff brick voussoirs and stone sills. The side (north and south) walls abut the adjoining parts of the complex.

The Reg. N. Boxer Company Building displays stylistic features identified with early 20th century Edwardian Classicism. The building is constructed of brick with limestone trim. The south façade is organized into five sections, with two-storey units flanked and separated by single-storey units. The entire façade is unified by a brick band course with stone roundels that runs above the first-floor openings. Brick parapets extend the single-storey end units on the east (right) and west (left). Brick piers divide flat-headed window openings (currently bricked in) with brick voussoirs and stone sills. In the centre, the single-storey section has been altered with the addition of freight doors. Each two-storey section is organized into five bays with a projecting frontispiece in the centre. In the lower floor, a door (now altered) is set in a stone doorcase with an entablature and a bracketed cartouche with the initial “B”. The upper storey of the frontispiece has a flat-headed window opening in a stone surround. The outer bays of the two-storey portions have pairs of flat-headed window openings with brick voussoirs, stone sills and, in the upper floor, stone keystones. Stone cornices with mouldings top the two-storey sections.

The property at 222 Islington Avenue is located on the northwest corner of Birmingham Street. The McDonald Stamping Works Building, positioned on the Islington Avenue frontage, is historically significant as one of the earliest surviving industrial buildings in New Toronto and, architecturally,

is a well-designed example of Romanesque Revival styling. The Reg. N. Boxer Company Building, added after the turn of the 20th century at the south end of the complex, is architecturally important for its carefully integrated design inspired by Edwardian Classicism.

Photograph below: McDonald Stamping Works Building



1.1 HERITAGE PROPERTY PROFILE



photograph: Reg. N. Boxer Company Building

BOXER BUILDING

ADDRESS:	222 Islington Avenue (northwest corner of Islington and Birmingham Street)
WARD:	6 (Etobicoke-Lakeshore)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY:	New Toronto
HISTORICAL NAME:	Boxer Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	1891, McDonald Stamping Works Building; post-1908, Reg. N. Boxer Company Building
ORIGINAL OWNER:	Thomas McDonald, manufacturer
ORIGINAL USE:	Industrial (factory)
CURRENT USE: *	Industrial (<i>* this does not refer to permitted use(s) defined by the Zoning By-law</i>)
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN:	None found
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:	McDonald Stamping Works Building: Romanesque Revival; eg. N. Boxer Building: Edwardian Classicism
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION:	Brick construction with brick and stone detailing
ALTERATIONS:	Dates unknown: some openings altered
HERITAGE CATEGORY:	Historical and architectural criteria
RECORDER:	Kathryn Anderson, Heritage Preservation Services:
REPORT DATE:	March 2001

2.0 HISTORICAL OCCUPANCY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

2.1 NEW TORONTO

In the mid 1850s, the Great Western Railway and the Grand Trunk Railway extended competing railway lines through Etobicoke Township. Beginning in the 1890s with the availability of electricity, the Toronto and Mimico Electric Railway and Light Company built and operated a street car line along Lakeshore Road. The latter route attracted seasonal visitors to the Humber Bay resort on Lake Ontario and summer residents to estates along the lakefront. When the Grand Trunk Railway (later the Canadian National Railway) opened a rail yard at Mimico in 1906, a permanent labour force settled in the area. Other industries were attracted to the vicinity by the ability to transport goods by steam railway and workers by the radial line.

In 1889, Thomas McDonald, an industrialist from Toronto formed the Mimico Real Estate and Security Company and purchased 550 acres of farmland in Etobicoke. McDonald divided the acreage into commercial, residential and industrial sections. Large industrial tracts were reserved on Seventh (now Islington Avenue) and Eighth Streets, with workers' housing located to the east on Sixth and Seventh Streets. An article in the October 25, 1890 edition of *The Globe* reported that "just outside of the borders of the city there is an embryo town growing up which with its past development and its future prospects promises in time to equal, if not surpass, old Toronto as a commercial centre – and that place is New Toronto, south of Mimico". At the height of its development, New Toronto purportedly boasted the highest value of manufacturing per square mile in North America (Villages, 57). The shareholders of the Mimico Real Estate and Security Company financed the construction of ten factories in the first phase of the New Toronto industrial area, including Morrison's Brass Foundry, Keith and Fitzsimmons, chandelier manufacturers, and Thomas McDonald's own stamping works.

2.2 MCDONALD STAMPING WORKS BUILDING

According to *The Globe*,

"Mr. Thomas McDonald, who was formerly a partner in the firm of McDonald, Kemp and Company, has removed all his stamping and border works to New Toronto. His factory, which is situated on Sherbourne Street...will also be removed there as soon as the new premises are all completed, which is expected to be in about a month. The whole business except that connected with the warerooms will be removed from the city. Between 300 and 400 men will find employment in the new building which will cost \$35,000. His line of manufacture will be range boilers, metallic shingles, pressed tinware and everything related to the tin, zinc and iron industry. Mr. McDonald's extensive trade through Canada and his reputation as the owner of the Canadian Galvanized Steel Roofing Company of Montreal stamps him as a man of rare tact and business ability".

The same article provided an illustration of McDonald's proposed factory, described as being on the "corner, Seventh and Eighth Streets" and rising three stories with round-arched entrances on two facades. The latter building may be the two-storey section of the complex described in the "Reasons for Designation" with a floor removed, or a completely different structure. Despite the enthusiasm

of *The Globe*, both McDonald's Stamping Works and the Mimico Real Estate and Security Company went bankrupt during the depression of 1896. By 1899, McDonald's factory housed the Grocer Manufacturing Company, followed by the Imperial Soap Company the next year.

2.3 REG. N. BOXER COMPANY

In 1903, the Robert Menzie Wallpaper Company acquired the McDonald site which it occupied until 1908. During the latter year, the Reg. N. Boxer Company bought the enterprise and expanded the New Toronto premises. Marking their products "Reg. N. Boxer Co. Ltd. Master Makers of Wallpapers, Toronto, Canada", in 1926 the company introduced a specialty paper called "Maximur". In 1927, the Reg. N. Boxer Company joined with Stauntons, The Watson, Foster Company and Colin McArthur and Company to form the Canadian Wallpaper Manufacturers Limited (CWM). The four plants continued to produce their own specialties, with Boxer manufacturing Maximur, later "Resistolite" paper. The Boxer name remained in use until about 1959 (Leung, 6), while CWM continued until 1978 when, as Sunworthy, the company relocated to Brampton. The property was sold to Danbel, manufacturers of electrical fixtures.

2.4 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The McDonald Stamping Works Building, part of the Boxer Building complex, is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving industrial buildings in New Toronto.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE:

3.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Two sections of the industrial complex are described. The McDonald Stamping Works Building extends ten bays along Islington Avenue where its pattern brick detailing and round-arched openings are identified with the Romanesque Revival style. Inspired by the round-arched forms of the Roman Empire, the style was developed in the 9th-century. It was revived in North America in the mid-1800s and gained popularity through the interpretations of American architect H. H. Richardson. While University College (1856) is one of the earliest examples of the style in the city, Old City Hall is Toronto's best known Romanesque Revival building.

On Birmingham Street, between Islington Avenue and Eighth Street, a five-part façade was constructed for the Reg. N. Boxer Company in the early 1900s. The detailing is typical of early 20th century buildings designed featuring Edwardian Classicism. The use of restrained Classical forms was a reaction against the highly decorated architectural styles of the late Victorian era.

3.2 ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN

The architects, builders or craftsmen for the McDonald Stamping Works Building and the Reg. N. Boxer Company Building are unknown.

3.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

3.3.1 MCDONALD STAMPING WORKS BUILDING

The McDonald Stamping Works Building is constructed of brick with contrasting brick and stone detailing. Covered by a flat roof, the structure rises two stories above a parged brick foundation. The façade is organized into ten bays by brick piers. In the first floor, pairs of round-arched window openings (some have been altered) contain twelve-over-twelve industrial sash windows. The second storey has pairs of segmental-headed window openings with four-over-four sash windows that are linked by buff brick string courses. In both stories, all of the window openings display buff brick voussoirs and stone sills. The side (north and south) walls abut the adjoining parts of the complex.

3.3.2 REG. N. BOXER COMPANY BUILDING

The Reg. N. Boxer Company Building is constructed of brick with limestone trim. The south façade is organized into five sections, with two-storey units flanked and separated by single-storey units. The entire façade is unified by a brick band course with stone roundels that runs above the first-floor openings. Brick parapets extend the single-storey end units on the east (right) and west (left). Brick piers divide flat-headed window openings (currently bricked in) with brick voussoirs and stone sills. In the centre, the single-storey section has been altered with the addition of freight doors. Each two-storey section is organized into five bays with a projecting frontispiece in the centre. In the lower floor, a door (now altered) is set in a stone doorcase with an entablature and a bracketed cartouche with the initial “B”. The upper storey of the frontispiece has a flat-headed window opening in a stone surround. The outer bays of the two-storey portions have pairs of flat-headed window openings with brick voussoirs, stone sills and, in the upper floor, stone keystones. Stone cornices with mouldings top the two-storey sections.

3.4 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The McDonald Stamping Works Building is a good example of Romanesque Revival styling applied to a late 19th century industrial building. The Reg. N. Boxer Building is of note for its carefully designed features reflecting Edwardian Classicism.

4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 CONTEXT AND SETTING

The property at 222 Islington Avenue is located on the northwest corner of Islington and Birmingham Streets. While the industrial complex fills most of the block outlined by Islington, Birmingham, Eighth Street and Toffee Court, only two buildings are identified in the Reasons for Designation. The McDonald Stamping Works Building is situated midway along the Islington Avenue frontage, while the Reg. N. Boxer Company Building occupies the entire block along Birmingham Street.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The McDonald Stamping Works Building and Reg. N. Boxer Company Building are contextually important as the core elements of the Boxer Building complex, which occupies an entire block in the industrial section of New Toronto.

5.0 SUMMARY

The McDonald Stamping Works Building, positioned on the Islington Avenue frontage, is historically significant as one of the earliest surviving industrial buildings in New Toronto and, architecturally, is a well-designed example of Romanesque Revival styling. The Reg. N. Boxer Company Building, added after the turn of the 20th century at the south end of the complex, is architecturally important for its carefully integrated design inspired by Edwardian Classicism.

6.0 SOURCES

Adamson, Peter and Robert E. Jones. New Toronto and New Toronto Hydro. New Toronto, Ontario, 1963.

Harrison, Michael. “New Toronto factory once home to huge wallpaper maker”. *Etobicoke Life* (19 April 2000).

Hayes, Esther. Etobicoke. From Furrow to Borough. Etobicoke, Ont.: Borough of Etobicoke, 1974.

Leung, F. “Wallpaper Identification Marks and the Names of Manufacturers Marketing Wallpaper in Canada”. Research Bulletin (No. 149). Parks Canada, November 1980.

“Toronto’s Growing Suburb”. *The Globe* (25 October 1890).

Villages of Etobicoke. Weston, Ont.: Argyle Printing, 1983.

SCHEDULE "B"**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

In the City of Toronto (formerly in the City of Etobicoke) and Province of Ontario, in the Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66) being composed of:

FIRSTLY:

PIN 07600-0173 (LT).

Pcl B-1, Sec B1043.

Blocks B-1 and C-1 on Plan 1043 designated as PART 6 on Plan 66R-13683.

SECONDLY:

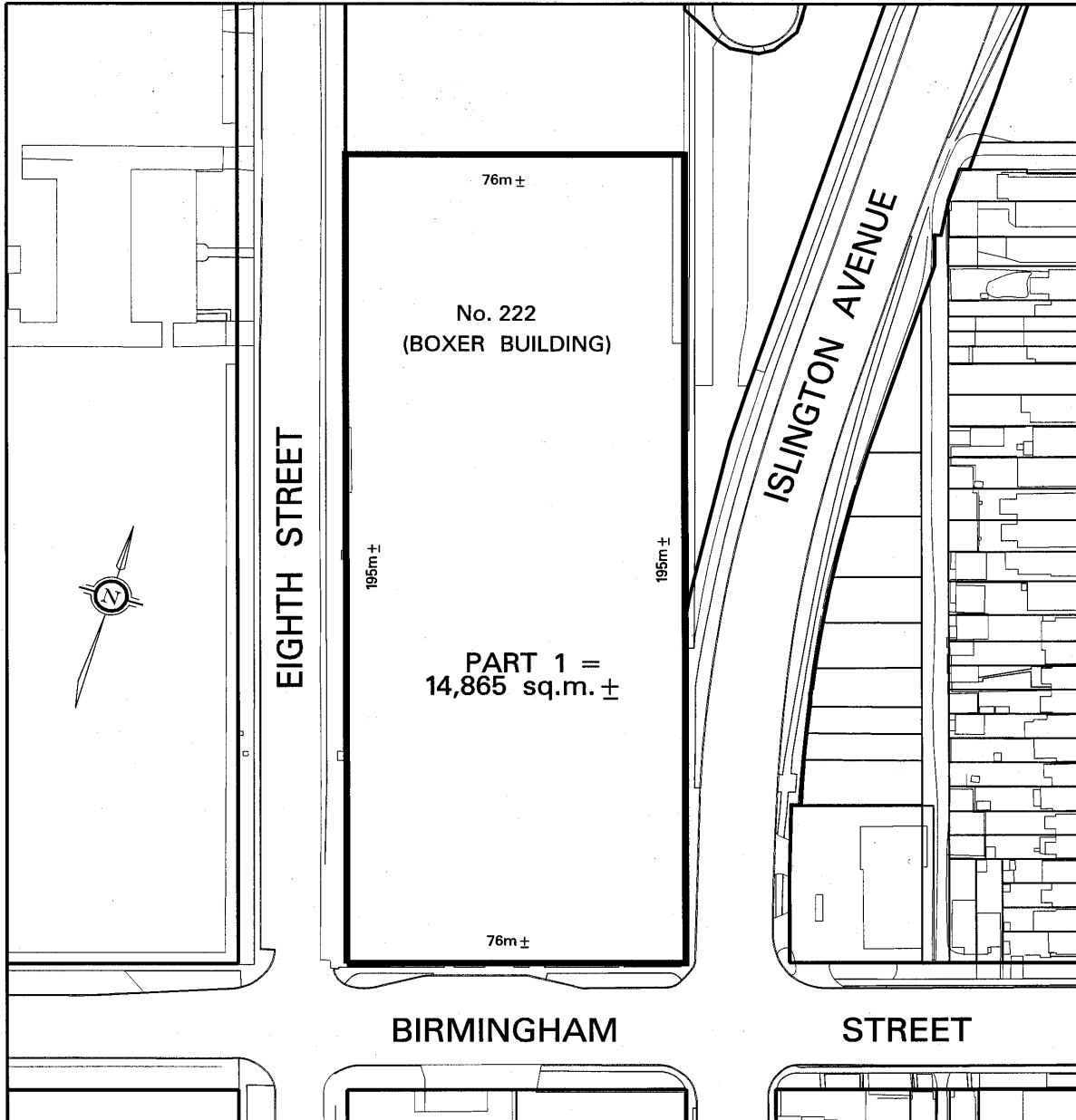
PIN 07600-0174 (LT).

Pcl A-1, Sec B1043.

Block A on Plan 1043 designated as PART 7 on Plan 66R-13683.

The hereinbefore FIRSTLY and SECONDLY described lands being delineated by heavy outline on Sketch No. PS-2002-033 dated April 12, 2002, as set out in Schedule "C".

SCHEDULE "C"



Toronto

WORKS & EMERGENCY SERVICES
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION
SURVEY & MAPPING

NOTE:
THIS SKETCH IS NOT
A PLAN OF SURVEY
AND HAS BEEN COMPILED
FROM SURVEY NOTES AND
OFFICE RECORDS, IT SHALL
NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR
THE PURPOSE INDICATED
IN THE TITLE BLOCK

PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET

No. 222 ISLINGTON AVENUE (BOXER BUILDING)

LAND DESIGNATED AS BEING OF
ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL
VALUE AND INTEREST

(NOT TO SCALE)

WARD 6 ETOBICOKE-LAKESHORE
DATE: APRIL 12, 2002

SKETCH No. PS-2002-033