



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement – 111 St. Clair Avenue West

Date:	August 18, 2011
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Acting Director, Policy & Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	St. Paul's – Ward 22
Reference Number:	P:\2011\Cluster B\PLN\HPS\TEYCC\September 12 2011\teHPS13

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West (Imperial Oil Building) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and to authorize the entering into of a Heritage Easement Agreement between the City and the property owners.

The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West, which is located on the south side of the street, east of Avenue Road, contains the former headquarters of the Imperial Oil Company (now Imperial Oil Limited). City Council listed the site on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in February 2005.

The property is the subject of a development application that proposes to convert the former office building for use as a residential condominium. The proposal retains the heritage building and involves minor alterations to the rooftop penthouse and window openings. The property owners have agreed to the designation of the site under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City of Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West (Imperial Oil Building) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
2. If there are no objections to the designation in accordance with Section 29(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the bills in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
3. If there are objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council direct the City Clerk to refer the designation to the Conservation Review Board.
4. If the designation is referred to the Conservation Review Board, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate staff to attend any hearing held by the Conservation Review Board in support of Council's decision on the designation of the property.
5. City Council grant authority for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owners of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West for the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West.
6. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary Bill in Council authorizing the entering into of the Heritage Easement Agreement.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Council included the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in February 2005. The site contains the Imperial Oil Building, the former headquarters of the Canadian company, which is being converted from an office building to a residential condominium. The property owners have agreed to the designation of the property under the Ontario Heritage Act and to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City.

COMMENTS

Staff have completed a Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West, which is appended as Attachment No. 4. As a result of this assessment, staff have determined that the property meets Ontario

Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation. A location map (Attachment No. 1) and photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached.

The Reasons for Designation (Statement of Significance) are found in Attachment No. 3. The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the provincial criteria for municipal designation under the three categories of design, associative and contextual values. Located on the south side of St. Clair Avenue West, east of Avenue Road, the Imperial Oil Building (1957) is a representative example of a building designed for corporate offices in the Modern style by the Toronto architectural firm of Mathers and Haldenby, with distinctive interior murals by Canadian artist R. York Wilson, and a local landmark in the Deer Park neighbourhood. The Reasons for Designation (Statement of Significance), which is the public Notice of Intention to Designate, will be advertised on the City of Toronto's web site in accordance with the City of Toronto Act provisions and served on the owners of 111 St. Clair Avenue West and the Ontario Heritage Trust according to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CONTACT

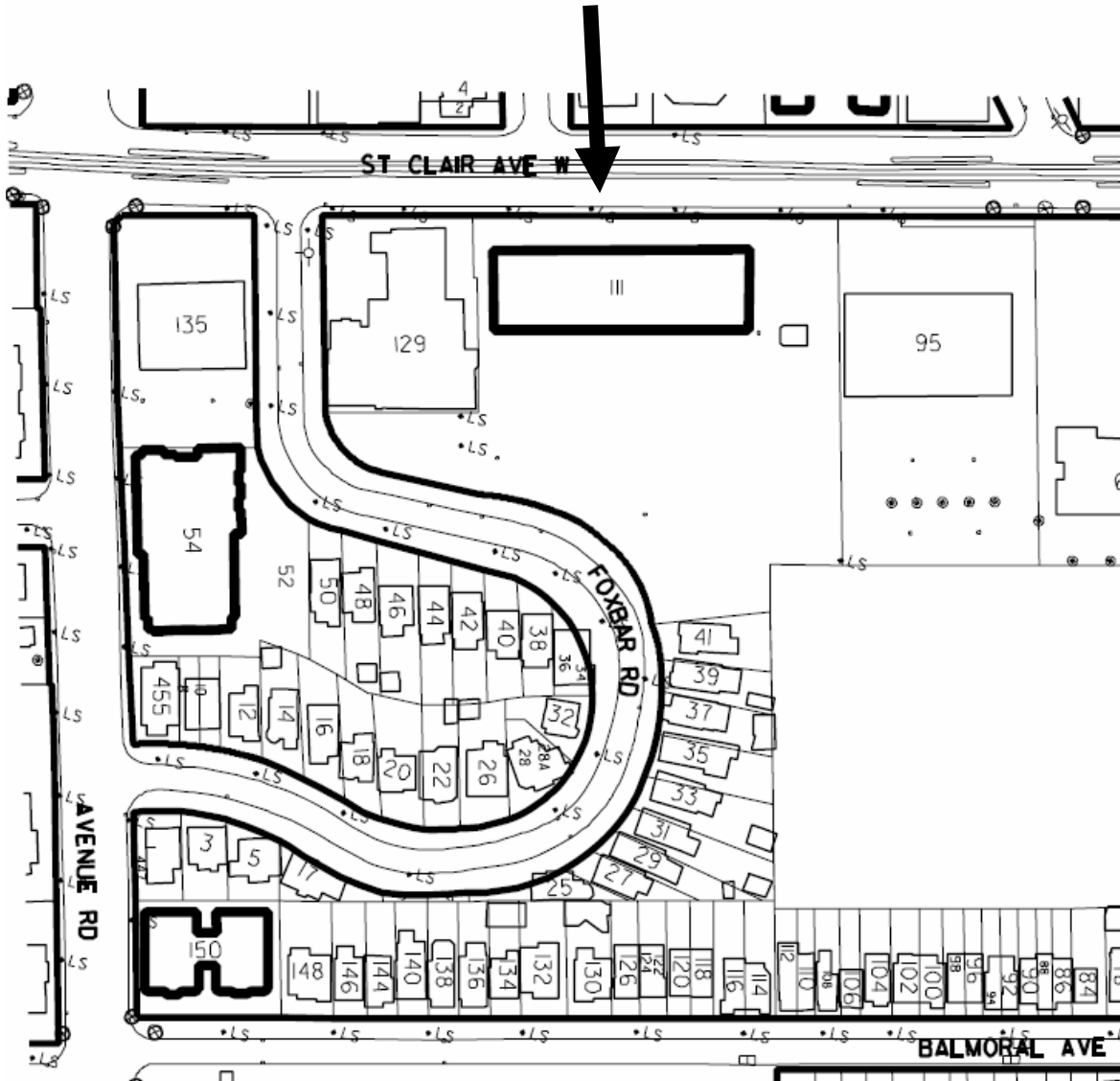
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SIGNATURE

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City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs
Attachment No. 3 – Reasons for Designation (Statement of Significance)
Attachment No. 3 – Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report



This location map is for information purposes only;
the exact boundaries of the property are not shown.

The **arrow** marks the location of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West.



Imperial Oil Building, showing the principal (north) façade on St. Clair Avenue West (right) and the east elevation (left)

Imperial Oil Building

Description

The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West is worth of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the south side of St. Clair Avenue West, east of Avenue Road, the Imperial Oil Building (1957) is a 19-storey office building. The site was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2005.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Imperial Oil Building has design value as an early and representative example of an office building that displays styling from the post-World War II period when the Modern Movement in architecture was gaining popularity in Toronto. Inspired by a proposal for New City Hall, its well-crafted design is distinguished by the distinctive treatment of the base, tower and penthouse and the attention to detailing in the entrance lobby, with the materials and the incorporation of thematic murals. The Imperial Oil Building demonstrates technical achievement as the largest all-welded steel-frame building in the world at the time of its construction when it also introduced technology for temperature control and communications that was advanced for the era.

The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West is associated with the Imperial Oil Company (now Imperial Oil Limited), one of Canada's iconic businesses that developed from small-scale refining firms in western Ontario to an international conglomerate specializing in oil exploration and production. The Imperial Oil Building served as the company's corporate headquarters for nearly half a century (1957-2005).

The Imperial Oil Building represents the work of leading Toronto architects and artists. Its architectural design was created by the notable Toronto firm of Mathers and Haldenby. While the partnership was best known for its high profile projects for Toronto General Hospital (now part of the University Health Network) and the University of Toronto's St. George Campus, Mathers and Haldenby also designed prestigious commercial buildings, from the Canada Permanent Building (1929, in partnership) at 320 Bay Street to the former Globe and Mail headquarters (1937, now demolished) near King and Bay Streets, with the Imperial Oil Building as an example of the firm's post-World War II interpretation of Modernism. In the lobby, the important Canadian artist, R. York Wilson designed and executed the two monumental murals depicting "The Story of Oil." An internationally acclaimed artist who was known for his paintings, tapestries and collages, in Canada, Wilson is best recognized for his mural projects, including "The

Seven Lively Arts” at the O’Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts (now known as the Sony Centre) and his commission for the Imperial Oil Building.

Contextually, the Imperial Oil Building is a landmark on St. Clair Avenue West where, with its height and setting overlooking the escarpment, it is visible from many vantage points in the Deer Park neighbourhood and beyond.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West are:

- The scale, form and massing
- The rectangular plan rising 19 stories
- The flat roof, where a two-storey penthouse is set back
- The materials, with steel, stone, metal and glass, including the polished pink granite on the base and the Indiana limestone cladding on the upper floors
- The principal (north) façade, where the first two stories are glazed and the main entrance is centered in the wall and protected by a single-storey glazed vestibule
- On the north and south elevations, the columns that rise from the base to the 17th storey (where the 18th and 19th floors are setback above) and organize pairs of symmetrically placed flat-headed window openings
- On the side walls (east and west), the punched flat-headed window openings, which are placed six per storey
- On the interior, the two-storey entrance hall where the walls have Lorado Chioso marble cladding and gold mosaic tiles, and the flooring is pink and gray Tennessee marble
- In the entrance hall, flanking the passage to the elevator lobby where they are visible from St. Clair Avenue West, the two monumental murals portraying "The Story of Oil"

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



IMPERIAL OIL BUILDING
111 St. Clair Avenue West, TORONTO

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

June 2011

1. DESCRIPTION



111 St. Clair Avenue West: Imperial Oil Building	
ADDRESS	111 St. Clair Avenue West (south side, east of Avenue Road)
WARD	22 (St. Paul's)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 325E, Part Lots 13-25; Plan 1235, Part Block A
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Deer Park
HISTORICAL NAME	Imperial Oil Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1957
ORIGINAL OWNER	Imperial Oil Company
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial (office building)
CURRENT USE*	Vacant * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Mathers & Haldenby, architects; R. York Wilson, artist
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION	Stone cladding with stone, metal & glass detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Modern
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	No significant alterations are identified
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative & Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	June 2011

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits 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
1902	Plan 1235 is registered, consisting of a 13-lot subdivision on the south side of St. Clair Avenue East, east of Avenue Road
1907	Plan 325E is registered by the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto, apportioning lands along the south side of St. Clair Avenue West into a 44-lot subdivision
1953 June-July	The Imperial Oil Company acquires a series of parcels along the south side of St. Clair Avenue West from half a dozen residential property owners
1954 Feb	Construction of the Imperial Oil Building is underway
1957 Apr	The new company headquarters is occupied
1957 & 1958	Imperial Oil purchases additional footage on St. Clair from the Clarke, Irwin Company and another property owner
2005 Feb	111 St. Clair Avenue West is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
2005 Aug	Imperial Oil Limited moves its corporate headquarters to Calgary

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Deer Park

The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West is located in Deer Park, the neighbourhood that developed around the intersection of St. Clair Avenue and Yonge Street. Following the settlement of the Town of York, the area north of present-day Bloor Street was surveyed into 200-acre farm lots. After members of the Heath family acquired acreage near the northwest corner of Yonge and St. Clair in the 1840s, their farm was known locally as “Deer Park,” with the name applied to the local community. The adjoining farm lots to the west were inherited by William Augustus Baldwin as the setting of a country estate named “Mashquoteh,” or “meadow where the deer come to feed”. In the mid-19th century, Deer Park remained well removed from the city and was chosen as the location for St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Cemetery and the non-sectarian Mount Pleasant Cemetery, which opened expansive burial grounds on either side of the Yonge and St. Clair intersection.

The initial residential development of the neighbourhood occurred in the 1880s following the subdivision of the Baldwin estate, the extension of Avenue Road north of St. Clair Avenue West, and the arrival of both the Metropolitan Street Railway on Yonge Street and the short-lived Belt Line Railway that linked downtown Toronto with the city limits. The area is depicted on Goad’s Atlases, with extracts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries attached as Images 2-6. Deer Park remained an unincorporated community

between the towns of Yorkville and North Toronto prior to its annexation by the City of Toronto in 1908. An archival photograph (Image 8) shows the subject property at that time. In the post-World War I era, aided by its location on Yonge Street between Forest Hill Village to the west and Moore Park further east, Deer Park attracted upscale recreational and commercial facilities, including the Granite Club.

Following World War II, corporate head offices moved to Deer Park, drawn by the area's prominence and accessible location with the completion of the Yonge Street Subway in 1954 (the aerial photograph attached as Image 9 shows the neighbourhood in 1947). Among the first office buildings in place was the Duplate Safety Glass Company of Canada Building (1951) at 50 St. Clair, which is recognized on the City's heritage inventory. The Anglo Canada Insurance Company completed a landmark Modern headquarters at 76 St. Clair Street West in 1954 (the building has been demolished). The latter buildings were typical of the low-scale edifices appearing along St. Clair Avenue prior to 1957 when the Imperial Oil Company unveiled its 19-storey high rise building.

Imperial Oil Company

The origins of the Imperial Oil Company (now Imperial Oil Limited) date to 1880 and the amalgamation of seven small-scale refining firms in the Ontario communities of London and Petrolia. Originally headquartered in the latter town, the company's products ranged from axle grease and lamp oil to wax and candles. At the turn of the 20th century, Imperial Oil moved its head office to Sarnia, Ontario, where the entity had constructed a new refinery following its alliance with New York's Standard Oil Company. During a period of rapid expansion, Imperial Oil unveiled distribution stations across western Canada and opened divisional offices from coast-to-coast. With the construction of new refineries in Vancouver, Regina, Montreal and Halifax, "these were the years in which Imperial ceased to be largely a refiner and distributor of petroleum procures and became an active explorer and producer as well."¹ During and after World War I, Imperial Oil opened and expanded its exploration department, uncovering new oil fields in Canada's western provinces and the Arctic. At the same time, it established the International Petroleum Company as a subsidiary to develop resources in South America. Imperial Oil's production included aviation fuel and synthetic rubber for military supplies during World War II. Following the conflict, the company sold its subsidiaries to finance its exploration and production programs in western and northern Canada and, in 1949, created Interprovincial Pipe Line Limited to construct a pipeline that reached Montreal over a quarter century later. By the late 20th century, Imperial Oil's extensive oil and natural gas reserves also provided raw materials for the petrochemicals industry. More recently, through Imperial Oil Resources, the company founded and is a joint-owner of Syncrude Canada, one of the world's largest producers of crude oil from Alberta's Athabasca oil sands.

¹ Broadfoot, 3

Imperial Oil Building

By the 1930s, the executive offices of the Imperial Oil Company and its subsidiaries were located on Church Street in Toronto where the firm embarked on a 20-year process of expanding into additional premises in the downtown core and beyond.² In 1953, the company acquired a substantial parcel of land “located on an escarpment 496 feet above sea level on the south side of St. Clair Avenue just west of Yonge Street” where it “will occupy a commanding position on Toronto’s skyline.”³ Construction of the structure commenced in February 1954 and the building was occupied by April 1957 (as shown in the archival photographs attached as Images 11-17). The Imperial Oil Building is depicted on a survey updated in 1959 by the Underwriters’ Insurance Bureau (Image 7).

Mathers and Haldenby, Architects

The Imperial Oil Building was designed by the Toronto architectural firm of Mathers and Haldenby, with K. J. Duckworth, a former Imperial Oil employee as the project architect. Co-founded by Alvan Sherlock Mathers and Eric Wilson Haldenby in 1921, the partnership gained recognition with its high profile projects for Toronto General Hospital (now part of the University Health Network) and the University of Toronto’s St. George Campus.

In 1952, Mathers and Haldenby were one of three leading Toronto architectural firms invited by Toronto City Council to collaborate on a design for New City Hall. The resulting scheme was anchored by a high-rise office tower that was inspired by the recent United Nations Headquarters in New York City. While the plans were initially approved, the scheme remained unexecuted following the announcement of an international design competition that produced the current complex. Mathers and Haldenby’s plans for the Imperial Oil Building “bears a striking resemblance to the rejected City Hall design,”⁴ which is shown in the visual reproduced as Image 10.

R. York Wilson, Artist

The interior decoration of the Imperial Oil Building was supervised by Canadian artist and art consultant Cleeve Horne, who selected Oscar Cahen, Sydney H. Watson and R. York Wilson to provide works of art. The most visible commission was one for the dramatic and monumental murals in the interior lobby, which were planned and executed by Wilson (Image 18).

Born in Toronto, Ronald York Wilson (1907-1984) received formal training at Central Technical School where his instructors included muralist Frederick Challenger. Wilson continued to study part-time at the Ontario College of Art while employed at Brigdens Limited, one of Toronto’s largest commercial art studios. Prior to 1930, Wilson worked at other studios in Toronto and Detroit and embarked on a short-lived partnership with

² In 1941, the marketing division moved to Leaside (Imperial Oil Review, December 1954, 27)

³ Imperial Oil Review, December 1954, 25

⁴ Osbaldeston, 91

designer Wesley Flin. As a leading commercial illustrator, Wilson did freelance work for local advertising agencies while the first public exhibitions of his artwork were hosted by leading museums in Montreal and Toronto, including the forerunner to the Art Gallery of Ontario, in 1931. Experimenting with both oils and watercolours, and exploring subject matter from landscapes to character studies, Wilson's first large-scale oil painting ("Burlesque No. 2") led to his participation in the Canadian Group of Painters' show at the New York World's Fair in 1939. Wilson received greater acclaim after his two-man show with fellow Canadian artist Jack Bush in 1944 and a solo exhibit four years later.

As a full-time artist beginning in 1949, Wilson travelled internationally, residing in Paris from 1959 to 1964. His work was influenced by monumental wall paintings during extended periods spent in Mexico. Beginning in the 1950s, Wilson's projects became increasingly abstract in form and colour and, by the 1970s, he was experimenting with collages and tapestries. His international exhibits included a 1978 show with the renowned international artists Jean Arp and Frank Stella in Calcutta. Adding to Wilson's international acclaim was his selection by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence to paint a self-portrait for its Vasari Corridor.⁵

Known in Canada as a prolific mural painter, Wilson completed his inaugural commission for Lord Thomson of Fleet's Northern Broadcasting and Publishing Limited Building in Timmins, Ontario in 1940. During the next 30 years, he executed more than a dozen murals, including "The Seven Lively Arts" (1960) for the O'Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts (now known as the Sony Centre).⁶ His mural studies were the subject of a special exhibition held at Carlton University in 1977. At the Imperial Oil Building, Wilson's two-part mural was described as the largest ever painted in Canada and, in reviews of the artist's work, as his "most important mural."⁷

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Imperial Oil Building is designed in the Modern style "that reached Canada tentatively in the 1930s and became firmly entrenched in the 1950s."⁸ The Modern Movement in architecture represented a rejection of historical architectural styles, turning away from the applied ornament associated with the past and embracing contemporary building technology, engineering and construction materials. Modern designs were recognized by their angular edges and plain surfaces where large expanses of glass were expressed in skeletons of steel or reinforced concrete. The appearance and gradual acceptance of Modernism in Canada coincided with this country's post-World War II building boom.

⁵ Globe and Mail, December 2, 2006. With printmaker David Blackwood, Wilson was one of only two Canadian artists to receive this distinction

⁶ The former O'Keefe Centre, including the mural, is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, as is Wilson's combined residence and art studio at 2 Alcina Avenue, adjoining the Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District

⁷ Globe and Mail, December 2, 1996

⁸ Kalman, 779

The Imperial Oil Building is unusual in its application of a welded steel structure, which is encased in concrete and clad with glass, metal and stone, including granite on the lower two stories with grey limestone above. With a rectangular-shaped plan, the building rises 19 stories to a flat roof where a two-storey penthouse is set back and, at the time of construction, was described as “the highest point in the city and will provide an unobstructed view of Greater Toronto.”⁹ The two-storey glazed base has stainless steel finishes and, on the north façade facing St. Clair Avenue West, places the main entrance in a glazed vestibule. Above the second floor, columns rise 17 stories on the north and south elevations to organize pairs of regularly placed flat-headed window openings. Punched openings are found six per storey on the narrow end walls (east and west).

On the interior, the two-storey entrance lobby features Lorado Chioso marble and gold mosaic tiles on the walls, with pink and gray Tennessee marble flooring. Visible through the glazed exterior walls from St. Clair Avenue West, the two murals depicting “The Story of Oil” flank the passage from the entrance hall to the elevator lobby. Described after its unveiling as a “lavish and effective use of the muralist’s art,”¹⁰ the murals showcased a new medium that mixed vinyl acetate and dry pigments to increase the works’ longevity. The panels are related in theme but different in composition, with one panel employing curved and broken lines to depict the discovery of oil (left), and its counterpart incorporating symmetrical shapes to showcase oil’s use by humankind. The murals are shown in Images 17 and 18, below.

iv. CONTEXT

The Imperial Oil Building is located on the south side of St. Clair Avenue West near Avenue Road (Image 1). While the street displays a mixture of commercial, residential and institutional buildings from the early to mid 20th centuries, the Duplate of Canada Building (1951) at 50 St. Clair Avenue West is an office building from the same era as the Imperial Oil Building that is also recognized on the City’s heritage inventory.

Beside (west of) the Imperial Oil Building, the former Deer Park United Church (1912) at 129 St. Clair Avenue West is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, along with the Peace Fountain (1929) in Amsterdam Park at the northeast corner of St. Clair and Avenue Road, opposite. To the south, the Imperial Oil Building overlooks the Deer Park neighbourhood and the downtown core of the City of Toronto beyond.

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

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

⁹ Imperial Oil Review, December 1954, 25 As designed, the roof had an observation deck, as well as a landing deck for helicopters

¹⁰ The Canadian Architect, June 1957, 42

City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. 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	X
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	X

Representative and Early Example of a Style and Type – The Imperial Oil Building is an early and representative example of a well-designed office building that displays styling from the post-World War II period when the Modern Movement in architecture was gaining popularity in Toronto. Inspired by a proposal for New City Hall, its design is distinguished by the distinctive treatment of the base, tower and penthouse and the attention to detailing in the entrance lobby, including the incorporation of thematic murals.

Artistic Merit – The Imperial Oil Building displays artistic merit with the incorporation of iconic murals by the important Canadian artist, R. York Wilson. Depicting “The Story of Oil” through the discovery of and application of the resource, the murals are integral parts of the design of the Imperial Oil Building.

Technical Achievement – The Imperial Oil Building was described upon its completion as “one of the most advanced in Canada, architecturally and structurally” as it was “the largest all-welded steel-frame building in the world.”¹¹ Considered revolutionary for its time, the building featured an advanced air conditioning system with the ability to cool light fixtures and control temperatures in individual offices. Other innovations were automatic elevators and an electronically-controlled mail system, as well as the technology to convert the telephone system to “video phones.”¹² In 1959, Imperial Oil’s first computer in Toronto, which was installed in its new headquarters at 111 St. Clair Avenue West, was among the largest industrial computers in Canada at that time.¹³

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	X
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	X

¹¹ Imperial Oil Review, June 1957, 10

¹² Imperial Oil Review, June 1957, 12

¹³ Broadfoot, 110

Significant Organization - The property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West is associated with the Imperial Oil Company (now Imperial Oil Limited), one of Canada’s iconic businesses that developed from small-scale refining firms in western Ontario to an international conglomerate specializing in oil exploration and production. The Imperial Oil Building served as the company’s corporate headquarters for nearly half a century (1957-2005).

Architect – The Imperial Oil Building was designed by Mathers and Haldenby, the Toronto architectural firm that was known for its high profile projects for Toronto General Hospital (now part of the University Health Network) and the University of Toronto’s St. George Campus. As designers of prestigious commercial buildings, from the Canada Permanent Building (1929, in partnership) at 320 Bay Street to the former Globe and Mail headquarters (1937, now demolished) near King and Bay Streets, the Imperial Oil Building is significant as an example of Mathers and Haldenby’s transition to Modern design following World War II.

Artist – The Imperial Oil Building is also associated with the important Canadian artist, R. York Wilson, who designed and executed the two monumental murals depicting “The Story of Oil.” An internationally acclaimed artist who was known for his paintings, tapestries and collages, in Canada Wilson is best recognized for his mural projects, including “The Seven Lively Arts” at the O’Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts (now known as the Sony Centre) and his commission for the Imperial Oil Building.

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	N/A
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	N/A
iii. landmark	X

Landmark – With its height and raised setting, the Imperial Oil Building is a local landmark on St. Clair Avenue West where it is visible from many vantage points in the Deer Park neighbourhood and beyond. Upon its completion, the building’s ‘most outstanding feature’ was described as “a panoramic view of the entire city and surrounding countryside, made possible by the height of the building itself and the escarpment on which it stands.”¹⁴

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West has cultural heritage value. A representative example of a post-World War II office building from the Modern Movement in architecture, the Imperial Oil Building is notable for its craftsmanship (particularly the interior murals) and technical innovations. As the long-time headquarters of the Imperial Oil Company (now Imperial Oil Limited) for nearly half a century, the building is also important in the careers of Toronto architects Mathers and Haldenby and Canadian artist R. York Wilson, who were instrumental in its appearance.

¹⁴ Imperial Oil Review, December 1956, 5

With its position on St. Clair Avenue West on the escarpment overlooking the city to the south, the Imperial Oil Building stands as a local landmark in the Deer Park neighbourhood and beyond.

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan 325E, Part Lots 13-25

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan 1235, Part Block A

Aerial Map, City of Toronto, 1947

Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923

Photographs, Imperial Oil Building, 1955-1957, Canadian Architectural Archives

Photograph, St. Clair Avenue West at Avenue Road, 1910, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 7065

Secondary Sources

Blumenson, John, Ontario Architecture, 1990

Broadview, Barry, Memories: the story of Imperial's first century, 1980

Freedman, Adele, Sightlines, 1990

Kalman, Harold, A History of Canadian Architecture, Vol. 2, 1994

Kinsella, Joan C., Historical Walking Tour of Deer Park, 1996

Osbaldeston, Mark, Unbuilt Toronto, 2008

Our Past and Present and a Glimpse into the Future, Imperial Oil, 1940

"Art as part of the environment," Canadian Interiors, September 1964, 61, 70

"Mathers and Haldenby: a tradition continues," Canadian Building, November-December 1986,

"Mural: two panels by Canadian artist R. York Wilson in the lobby of the Imperial Oil Building, make up the largest mural ever painted in Canada," Imperial Oil Review, June 1957, 13-16

"Office interiors, east and west," Canadian Architect, June 1957, 36-43

"On business," Canadian Art, May-June 1962, 198-200

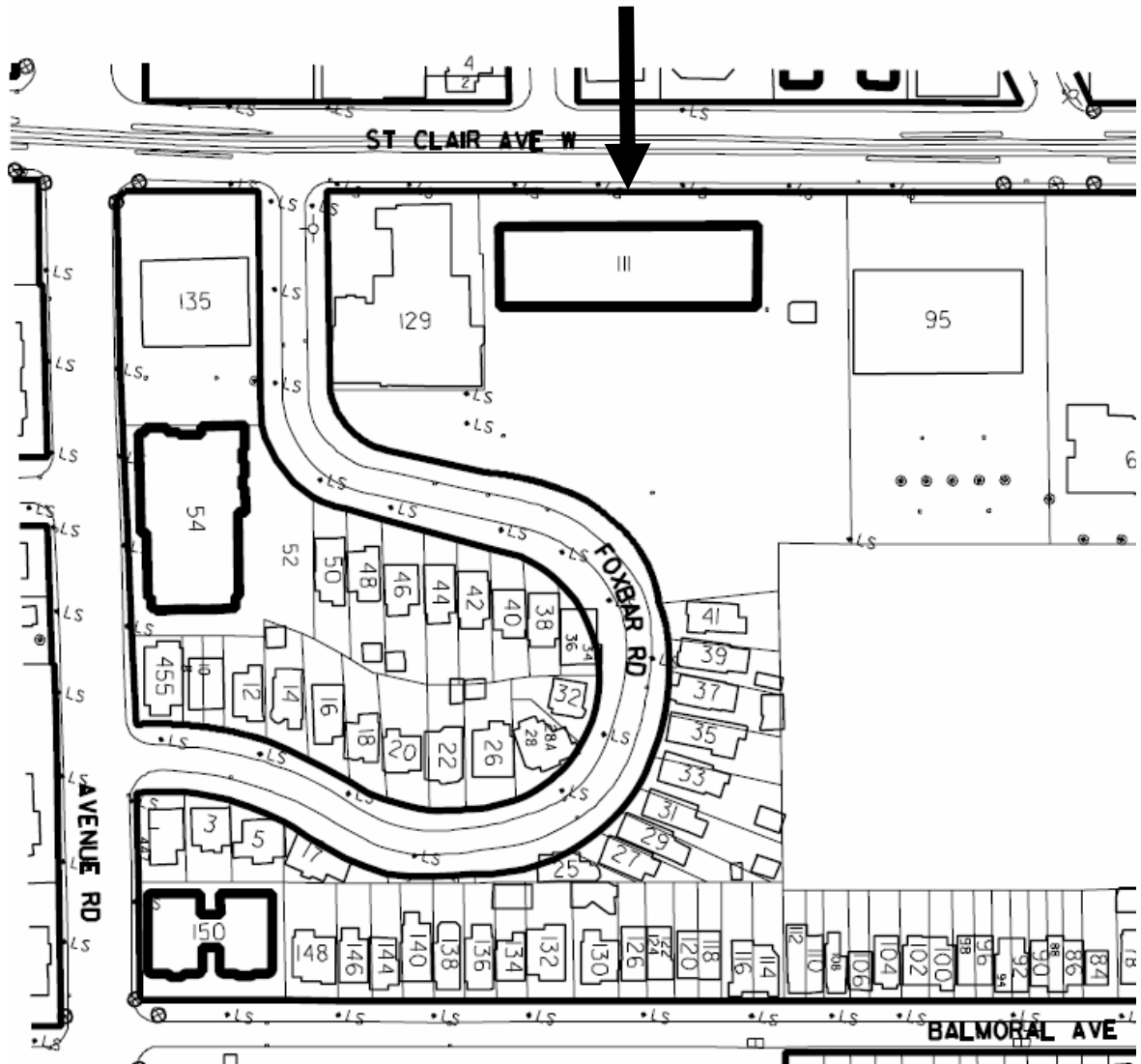
"111 St. Clair West," Imperial Oil Review, June 1957, 9-12

"This is the site we chose," Imperial Oil Review, December 1956, 2-5

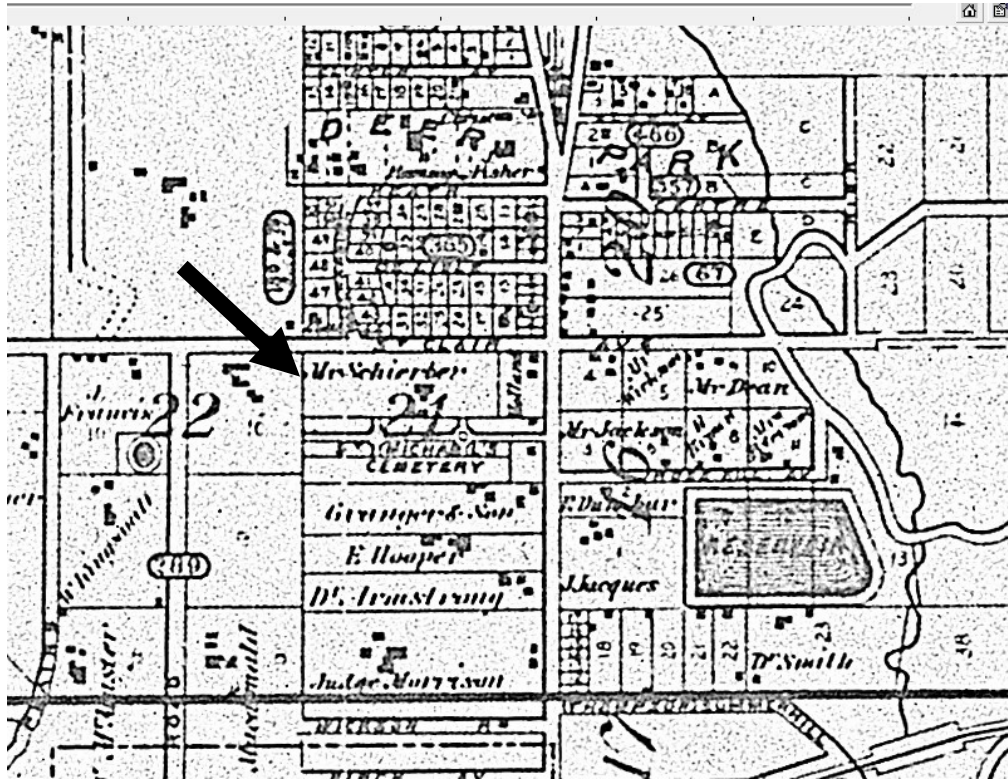
"We're building a new home," Imperial Oil Review, December 1954, 24-28

"York Wilson," www.yorkwilson.com

6. IMAGES: **arrows** mark the location of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West



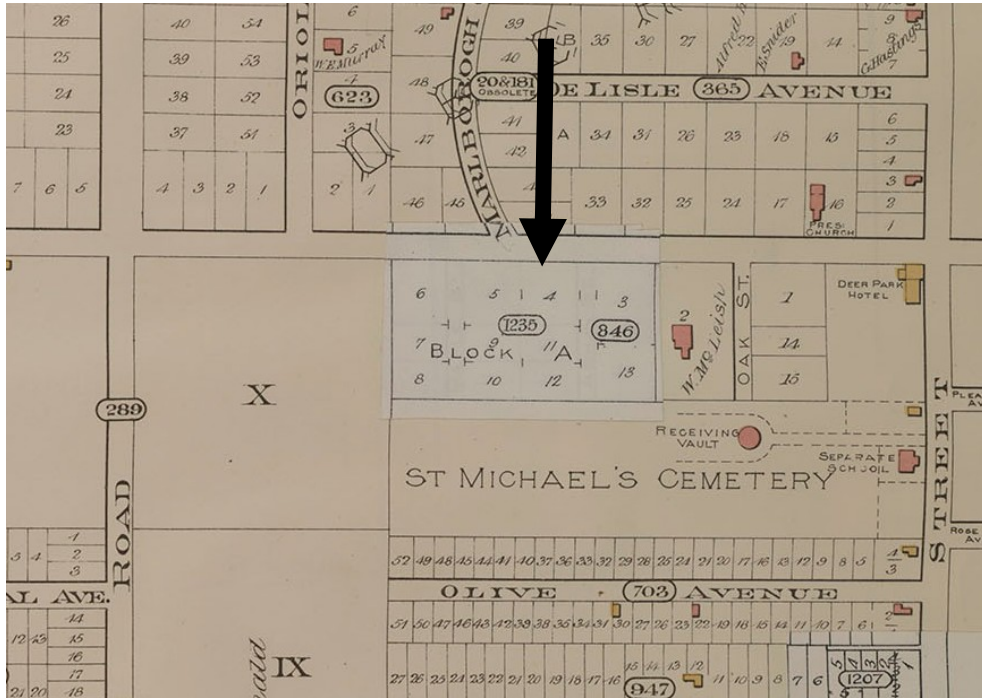
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the property at 111 St. Clair Avenue West on the south side of the street, east of Avenue Road



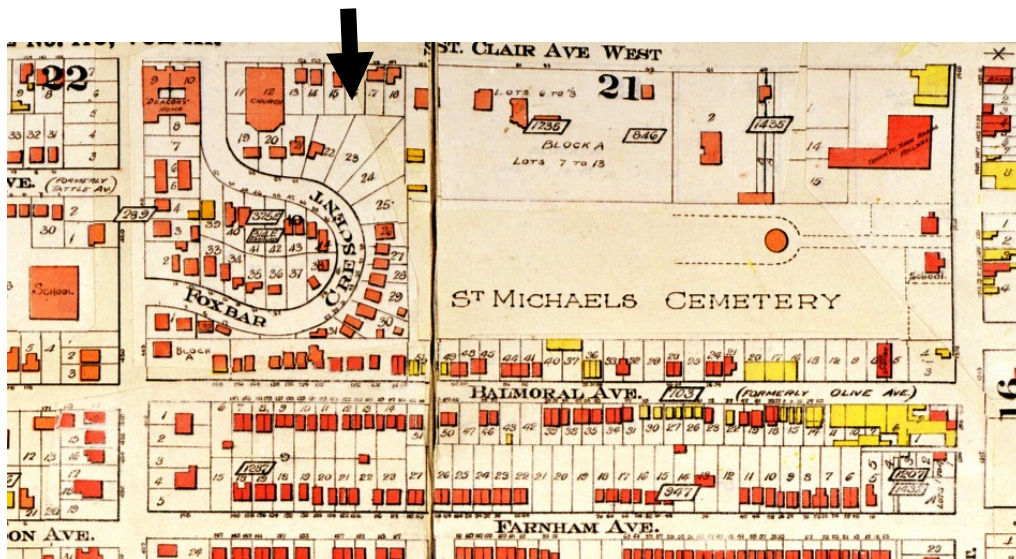
2. Goad's Atlas, 1884: showing the Deer Park community where the Imperial Oil Building was later built



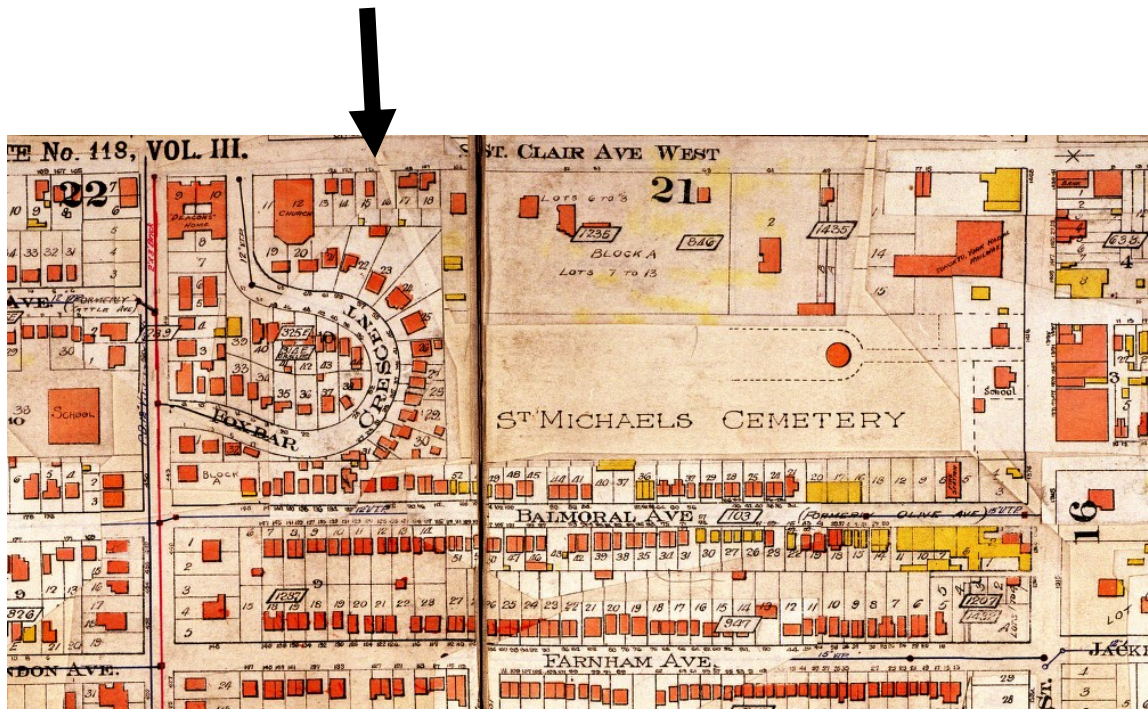
3. Goad's Atlas, 1894: showing the subdivision of the area a decade later



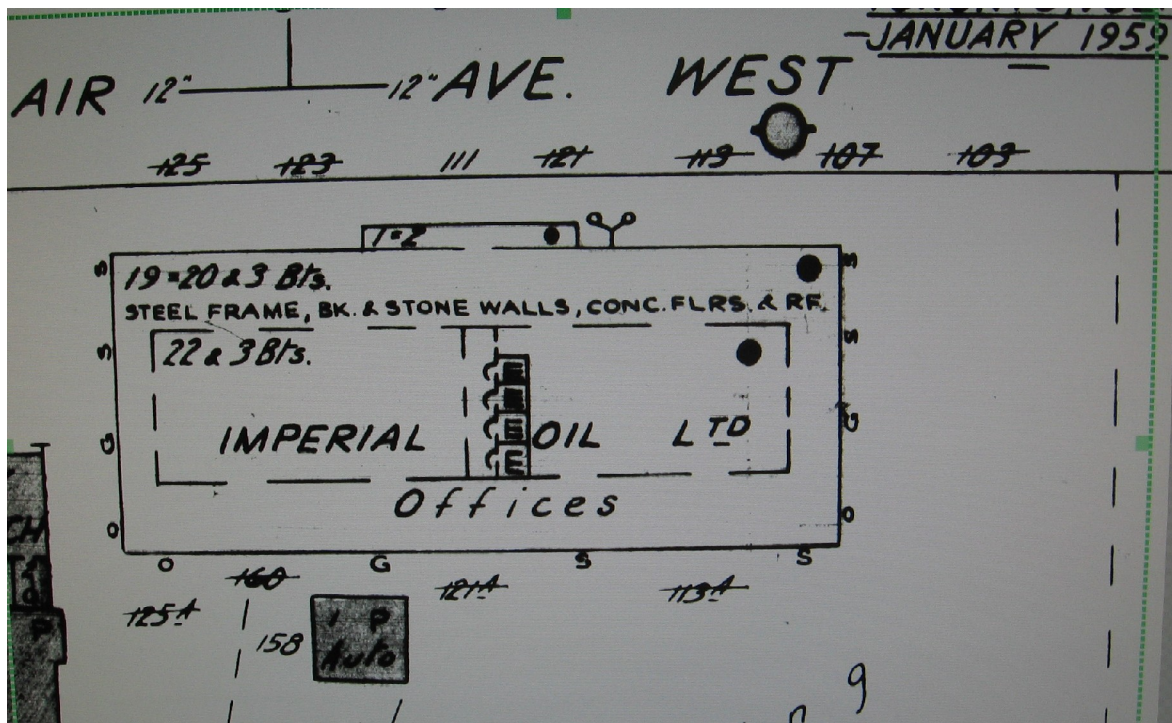
4. Goad's Atlas, 1903: showing the overlay of plans of subdivision, including Plan 1235



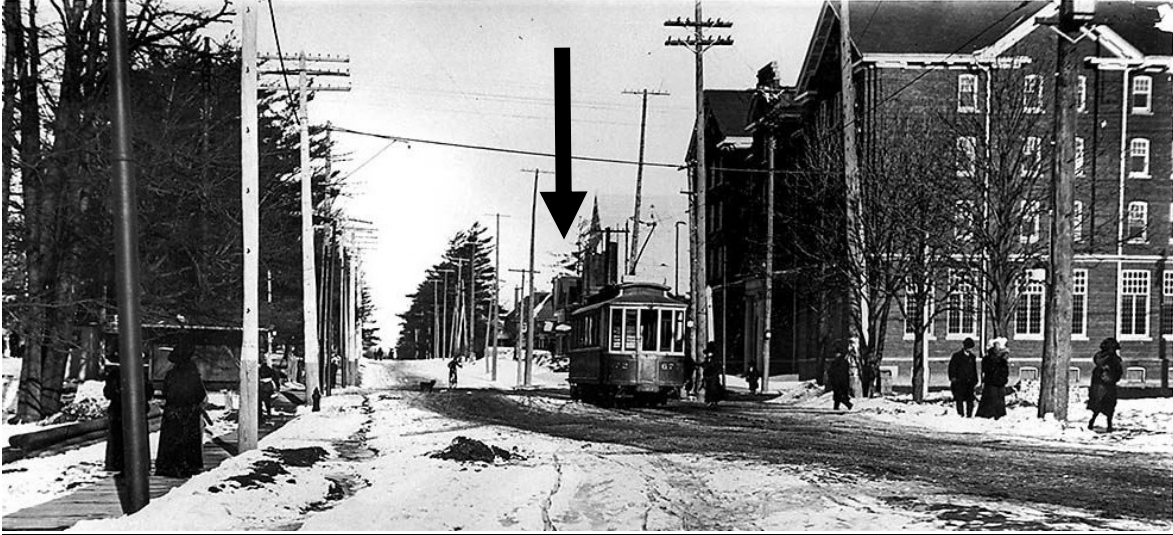
5. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1912: showing the development of the lands along the south side of St. Clair Avenue West, including the recently completed Deer Park Presbyterian (later United) Church on the southeast corner of Foxbar Crescent beside the future site of the Imperial Oil Building



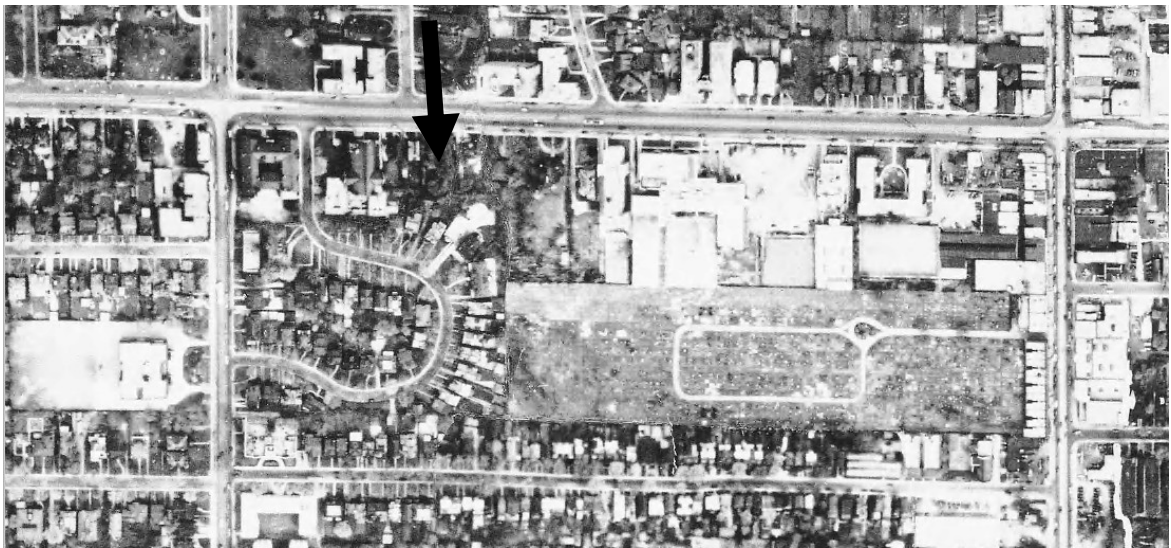
6. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1923: showing the residential properties on the site of the future Imperial Oil Building



7. Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Survey, 1959: showing the Imperial Oil Building in place on the south side of St. Clair Avenue West



8. Photograph, 1910: looking east on St. Clair Avenue West past Avenue Road in Deer Park where the future location of the Imperial Oil Building is marked by the **arrow** (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 7065)



9. Aerial Photograph, 1947: showing the setting prior to the construction of the Imperial Oil Building, where St. Michael's Cemetery is the large land mass to the southeast (City of Toronto Archives)



10. Drawing, 1955: showing an unexecuted proposal for Toronto's New City Hall that inspired the design for the Imperial Oil Building on St. Clair Avenue West (Osbaldeston, Unbuilt Toronto, 2008, 91)



11. Archival Photograph, 1955: showing the foundations for the Imperial Oil Building (Canadian Architectural Archives)



12. Archival Photograph, 1955: showing the construction of the Imperial Oil Building, with Deer Park United Church to the west (right) (Canadian Architectural Archives)



13. Archival Photograph, 1957: showing the Imperial Oil Building in place and looking west along St. Clair Avenue (Canadian Architectural Archives)



14. Archival Photograph, 1957: showing the rear (south) wall of the Imperial Oil Building (Canadian Architectural Archives)



15. Archival Photograph, 1957: showing the west (left) and south (right) elevations of the Imperial Oil Building (Canadian Architectural Archives)



16. Archival Photograph, 1957: showing the entrance vestibule of the Imperial Oil Building (Canadian Architectural Archives)



17. Archival Photograph, 1957: showing the lobby of the Imperial Oil Building with the murals by Canadian artist York Wilson (Canadian Architectural Archives)



18. Photographs: showing the detailing of the murals in the lobby of the Imperial Oil Building depicting the Story of Oil designed by Canadian artist York Wilson (www.yorkwilson.com)