

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



**MOSES STAUNTON BUILDINGS
838-844 YONGE STREET, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

November 2014

1. DESCRIPTION



Above: view of the west side of Yonge Street, south of Yorkville Avenue and showing the properties at 838-844 Yonge in the centre of the block (identified by the **arrow**); cover: east elevations of the Moses Staunton Buildings (Heritage Preservation Services, 2014)

838-844 Yonge Street: Moses Staunton Buildings	
ADDRESS	838-844 Yonge Street (west side between Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue)
WARD	Ward 27 (Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 355, Lots 3 to 6
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Yorkville
HISTORICAL NAME	Moses Staunton Buildings
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1876
ORIGINAL OWNER	Moses Staunton, merchant
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial
CURRENT USE*	Commercial * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	None identified ¹
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION	Brick cladding with brick, stone, wood and metal detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	See Section 2.iii
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 2. iii
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	November 2014

¹ No architect or building is identified at the time of the writing of this report. Building permits do not survive for this period and no reference to the properties was found in the Globe's tender calls

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the properties at 838-844 Yonge Street, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether they merit 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
1852	Robert A. Parker acquires a track of land on the west side of Yonge Street between present-day Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue
1853	The Village of Yorkville is incorporated
1856	Parker resides on Yonge Street, north of Sydenham (Cumberland) when Brown's Directory is compiled
1862	The first surviving tax assessment roll for Yorkville records Parker's widow on the property ²
1873	Mrs. Parker still resides on Yonge Street when Yorkville's assessment roll for is compiled in 1873 for 1874 taxes
1874 Jan	Plan 355 is registered by the Parker Estate, subdividing the lands on the west side of Yonge Street in the block south of William Street (Yorkville Avenue)
1874 May	Moses Staunton, Jr. acquires Lots 3-5 under Plan 355 from Parker's executors
1875	Staunton is listed in the assessment rolls at 43 Yonge Street
1876 June	Staunton is identified in Yorkville's last surviving assessment roll for 1877 (with information compiled the previous year) as the owner of "four unfinished stores" between 39 and 47 Yonge
1876	A bird's eye view of Toronto illustrates the block with the subject properties
1883 Feb	The City of Toronto annexes Yorkville
1883 Sept	In the first tax assessment roll for St. Paul's Ward (incorporating Yorkville), Staunton owns four brick stores where the three southerly units are rented to a dry goods merchant, a fruiterer and a hardware store operator
1884	The first Goad's Atlas to include Yorkville shows Staunton's buildings
1885 Sept	Staunton is recorded as the owner of the properties when information is compiled for the assessment roll for 1886 taxes
1886 Sept	Staunton has sold the properties, which are recorded in the assessment roll (for 1887 taxes) as "738-744 Yonge"
1889 Sept	The present street numbering system is in place, with the unit at 840 standing vacant when the taxes for 1890 are assessed
1974 Mar	The properties at 838-844 Yonge Street are listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties

² An incomplete series of tax assessment rolls for the period 1862-1877 survives for the Village of Yorkville

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yorkville

The properties at 838-844 Yonge Street are located in Yorkville, which originated as a suburban village prior to becoming the first municipality annexed by the City of Toronto in 1883. Nearly a century earlier when Toronto was founded as the Town of York in 1793, the area between present-day Bloor Street and Eglinton Avenue was subdivided into 100-acre farm lots that were accessed along concession lines and side roads. Yonge Street was surveyed during the same period as the main route from York to the northern hinterland, although portions of the road remained impassible for many years. An inn (the future Red Lion) was established on Yonge, north of the first concession line (Bloor) in the early 19th century and later became a popular hostelry for travellers passing through a toll gate near the intersection. On the northwest corner of Yonge and Bloor, York's first non-denominational cemetery opened in 1826 as the York General Burying Ground (commonly known as Potter's Field, it was marked on Cane's map of 1842, which is attached as Image 2). However, by the 1830s the first brick yards and breweries were operating in the ravine and along the watercourse that crossed Yonge Street north of Bloor, resulting in the subdivision of the adjacent lands for housing, shops and services.

By the mid 19th century, the steady development of the hamlet on Toronto's northern border was facilitated by an omnibus running directly from the Red Lion to Toronto's St. Lawrence Market (Image 3). Incorporated as the Village of Yorkville in 1853, the community's official boundaries were set at present-day Bloor Street, Sherbourne Street, Walker Avenue and a line near Bedford Road (Image 4).³ Yorkville's population doubled between 1851 and 1861 and, during the latter year the introduction of the first horse-drawn street railway offered more reliable connections to the city. Yorkville boasted 5000 residents in 1881, two years prior to its annexation by the neighbouring City of Toronto.⁴

During the 20th century as a Toronto neighbourhood, Yorkville evolved from a stable residential community to a primary cultural and commercial destination in the city. The widening of Bloor Street east and west of Yonge Street by 1929 displaced many small-scale proprietors who were drawn into the Yorkville neighbourhood where much of the residential building stock was converted to commercial uses. The decline of the area after World War II made it an affordable enclave for artists. In the 1960s (when the construction of the subway line along Bloor Street resulted in further redevelopment), Yorkville was a beacon for Toronto's music scene and "hippie culture". The following decade witnessed the community's transformation into a high-end shopping destination, supported by the conversion of remaining residential buildings into shops or their

³ As shown on historical maps and atlases, Yorkville's boundaries encompassed parts of today's South Rosedale and the East Annex

⁴ With Yorkville's annexation as St. Paul's Ward, two streets required new names, with Sydenham becoming Cumberland Street and William renamed Yorkville Avenue. They anchor the block where the subject property is found and remain primary commercial streets in the Yorkville neighbourhood

replacement by low-scale mixed use developments that included York Square and Hazelton Lanes. In the 1990s, part of Yorkville was designated as one of Toronto's first heritage conservation districts. Additional properties were recognized on the City's heritage register, including the Fire Hall No. 10 (incorporating the tower from the 1876 Yorkville Fire Hall and the coat-of-arms from the 1860 town hall), the original Olivet Congregational Church (now the Heliconian Club, 1876), and the Moses Staunton Buildings at 838-844 Yonge Street, all of which were associated with the 19th century Village of Yorkville.

838-844 Yonge Street

The subject properties on Yonge Street, north of Bloor Street West in Yorkville stand on land originally surveyed as Lot 21 in Concession 2 from the Bay, which was granted to military veteran and politician, David William Smith in 1798. The acreage was acquired by John Elmsley, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, whose widow sold a large tract along Yonge Street to Levi Fairbanks in the 1820s.

In 1852, Robert A. Parker, a Yorkville merchant acquired part of Fairbanks' land on Yonge Street, midway between present-day Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue.⁵ Parker's family residence was in place by 1856 (when he was first recorded at this location in the city directory) and illustrated behind a picket fence in an archival photograph dating to 1860 (Image 5).⁶ Parker's widow, Margaret occupied the premises until 1873, prior to the registration of Plan 355 on the Parker Estate (the plan is attached as Image 6 and its development illustrated in Image 7).

Moses Staunton, Jr. (1839-1902) acquired Lots 3-5 under Plan 355 from Parker's Estate in May 1874. Staunton's father founded M. Staunton, wallpaper manufacturers and importers in 1856. Renamed M. Staunton and Sons in 1868, the company's factory was relocated to Yorkville in the late 19th century (Image 11).⁷ While Moses Staunton, Jr., was recorded on the subject property in 1875, by the next year "four unfinished stores" were identified in the tax assessment roll. Staunton rented the premises to a series of commercial businesses before selling the properties a decade later. The new owners included Joseph Woodsworth at present-day 842 Yonge, who operated a hardware business on-site until the early 1900s. In the 1920s, a Dominion grocery store occupied the same premises. The Moses Staunton Buildings are illustrated in the historical images found in Section 6 (including those numbered 12-16).

⁵ Parker bought and sold additional land in Lot 21 where he also registered plans of subdivision prior to his death in 1858

⁶ The photo shows commercial buildings immediately north (right) of the Parker residence, which were replaced in 1891 by the current structures at 846-848A Yonge, as well as the Bostwick House (c. 1855) at present-day 850 Yonge, which was updated in 1885 for Charles Frogley's bakery

⁷ Merged with another business in 1873, the company became known as Staunton's Limited after 1900

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Current photographs of the properties at 838-844 Yonge Street are found on the cover and in Sections 2 and 6 of this report.

The Moses Staunton Buildings comprise a row of four adjoining three-storey commercial buildings with exuberant architectural detailing drawn from the Italianate and Renaissance Revival styles popular for commercial buildings near the close of the Victorian era. With their scale, setback, cladding and decorative details, the Moses Staunton Buildings complement the neighbouring structures in the block that share their late 19th century vintage. Clad with brick and trimmed with brick, stone, wood and metal, the brickwork has been painted (or paint washed) on the units at 838, 840 and 842 Yonge. The northernmost unit at 844 Yonge displays the original pattern brick detailing with buff brick highlighting the red brick walls. The end walls (north and south) of the four buildings rise above the rooflines as fire walls.

On the principal (east) elevations of the row, each building extends three bays with the outer corners marked by piers with corbels at the roofline, apart from 844 Yonge, which is missing the original parapet and cornice (the originals are seen in the archival photograph attached as Image 15). The metal and wood cornices on 838, 840 and 842 Yonge incorporate dentils, brackets and mouldings. In the first (ground) floor, 844 Yonge displays its original storefront detailing, while those on the other three buildings retain the vintage wood pilasters and brackets. In the second and third stories of each building in the row, trios of segmental-arched openings with stone sills are highlighted by brick labels with keystones and corbel stops. Band courses with dentils extend across the facades of all three buildings at the sill levels (the original windows have been replaced). The side walls of 838 Yonge (south) and 844 Yonge (north) are shared by the neighbouring buildings to the north and south. The rear (west) extensions are not identified as heritage elements.

i. CONTEXT

The location of the properties at 838-844 Yonge Street is shown on the property data map attached as Image 1. The Moses Staunton Buildings are found on the west side of Yonge Street near the centre of the block between Cumberland Street (south) and Yorkville Avenue (north). This section of Yonge Street was initially developed prior to the annexation of Yorkville by the City of Toronto and contains an intact group of late 19th century commercial buildings. The Moses Staunton Buildings and their neighbours face east where the Albert Britnell Bookstore (1928) at 765 Yonge, between Bloor Street East and Asquith Avenue is also a recognized heritage property. The block with the Moses Staunton Buildings ends at Yorkville Avenue on the north, where the Yorkville Branch of the Toronto Public Library (1907) at 22 Yorkville and Fire Hall #10 (1889) at 34 Yorkville are proximate to the subject property and recognized on the City's heritage

register.⁸ Further west, between Bay Street and Avenue Road, parts of the former Village of Yorkville were designated as the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District in 2002.⁹

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 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	N/A

Representative and Early Example of a Style and Type with a High Degree of Craftsmanship –

The Moses Staunton Buildings have cultural heritage value for their designs as fine representative examples of commercial buildings with a high degree of craftsmanship where the original decorative detailing was drawn from the popular architectural styles of the late 19th century. The buildings were designed and constructed as a row of commercial buildings that forms part of an intact block on Yonge Street in the former Village of Yorkville.

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	X
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

Community – The properties at 838-844 Yonge Street are also valued for their historical association with the Village of Yorkville (1853-1883), which was an incorporated municipality prior to its annexation by the City of Toronto. When the Moses Staunton

⁸ The fire hall incorporates the tower from the earlier village fire hall, as well as the coat-of-arms from the Yorkville Town Hall, demolished in 1941. Further west on Yorkville Avenue, several 19th century house form buildings are recognized on the City's heritage register (with some also designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act), including the property at 100 Yorkville that was converted into a private hospital and became the first location for Mount Sinai Hospital

⁹ http://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/city_planning/urban_design/files/pdf/hcd_yorkville_proposal.pdf

Buildings were constructed, they were part of the commercial district along Yonge Street serving the brick yards, breweries and related industries that formed the basis of the community.

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

Character – Contextually, the Moses Staunton Buildings contribute to the character of Yonge Street, north of Bloor Street where they reflect the late 19th century development of the area at the time it evolved from an independent village to a city neighbourhood along the important corridor known as Toronto's "main street."

Surroundings – The Moses Staunton Buildings are also historically, visually and physically linked to their surroundings on Yonge Street where they are integral parts of the intact group of contiguous late 19th century commercial buildings that extends along the entire block on the west side of the street from Cumberland Street to Yorkville Avenue and marks the east entry into the commercial heart of the former Village of Yorkville.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the properties at 838-844 Yonge Street have design, associative and contextual values as important commercial buildings with period detailing that are historically associated with the former Village of Yorkville and support the character and setting of the block on Yonge Street between Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue with the intact group of late 19th century structures that includes the Moses Staunton Buildings.

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources

- Abstract Index of Deeds, City of Toronto (Yorkville), Plan 355, Lots 3-6
- Abstract Index of Deeds, York Township, Concession 2 from the Bay (West), Lot 21
- Archival Photographs, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Historical Board, and <https://chuckmantorontonostalgia.wordpress.com/2013/01/23/postcard-toronto-yonge-street-n-of-bloor-yorkville-town-hall-nice-version-early/> (individual citations in Section 6)
- Assessment Rolls, Village of Yorkville, 1862-77
- Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, St. Paul's Ward, 1884-92 and Ward 3, Division 3, 1893 ff.
- Browne, Map of the Township of York, 1851
- Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York, 1946 ff.
- Cane, Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, 1842

City of Toronto Directories, 1851 ff.
Decennial Censuses of Canada, 1871-1891
Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923
Gross, Bird's Eye View of Toronto, 1876
Liddy, Plan of the Incorporated Village of Yorkville, 1882
Miles and Company, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York, 1878
Staunton's Letterhead, Toronto Public Library Ephemera, 1905
Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Atlas, Vol. 1, 1965

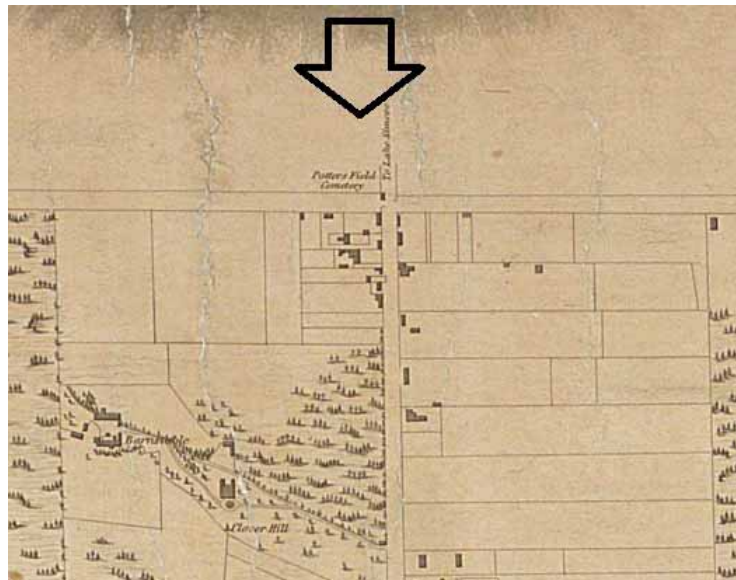
Secondary Sources

Arthur, Eric, Toronto: no mean city, 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986
Blumenson, John, Ontario Architecture, 1990
Dendy, William, Lost Toronto, 2nd ed., 1998
Hutcheson, Stephanie, Yorkville in Pictures 1853-1883, 1978
Leung, P., "Wallpaper Identification Marks and the Names of Manufacturers Marketing
Wallpaper in Canada," Research Bulletin, November 1980
McHugh, Patricia, Toronto Architecture: a city guide, 2nd ed., 1989
Mulvany, C. Pelham, Toronto: past and present, 1884
Staunton Family Records, www.ancestry.ca

6. IMAGES¹⁰ – the **arrows** mark the location of the subject properties

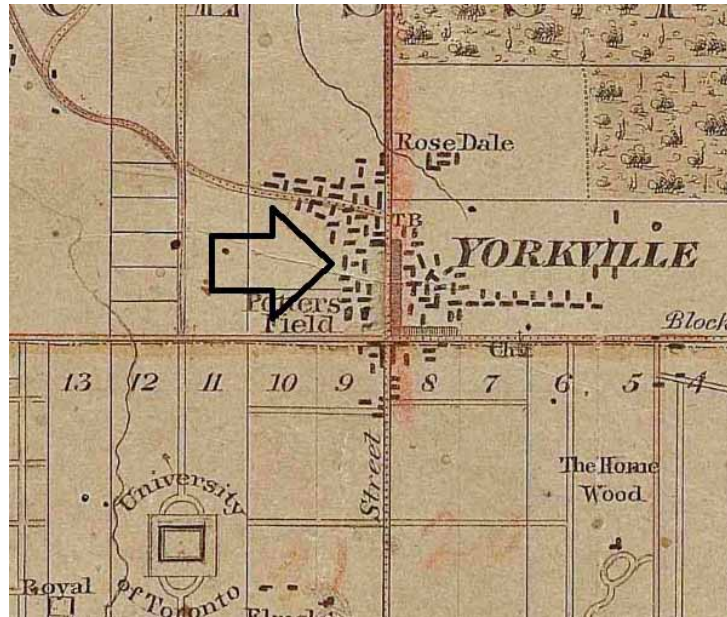


1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the block on the west side of Yonge Street between Cumberland Street (south) and Yorkville Avenue (north) where the properties at 838-844 Yonge are located.

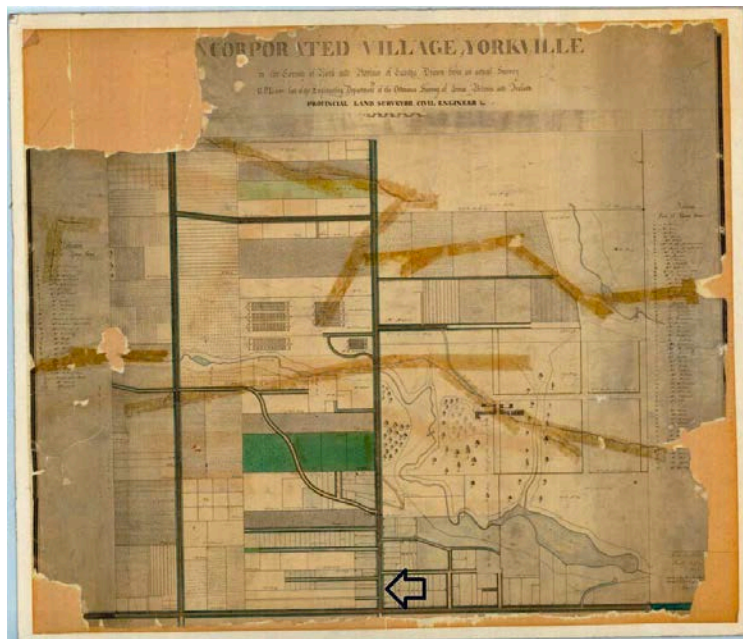


2. Cane's Topographical Map of the City of Toronto, 1842: showing the area where Yorkville was developed adjoining Potter's Field and north of the City of Toronto boundary at the first concession line (Bloor Street)

¹⁰ Additional maps and atlases tracing the development of Yorkville (but not reproduced here) are available, including those via <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/>



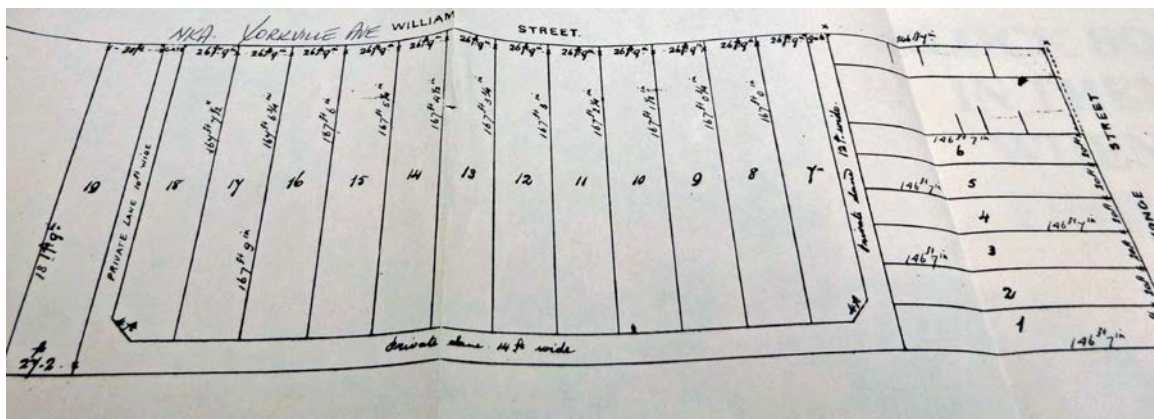
3. Browne's Plan of the City of Toronto, 1851: showing the development of the community at the south end of Township Lot 21, two years prior to the incorporation of the Village of Yorkville (other archival resources indicate a mixture of residential, commercial and small-scale industrial buildings along Yonge Street and Davenport Road)



4. Liddy's Plan of the Incorporated Village of Yorkville, 1852: showing the subdivision of the lands, including those along the west side of Yonge Street where the subject property was subsequently developed



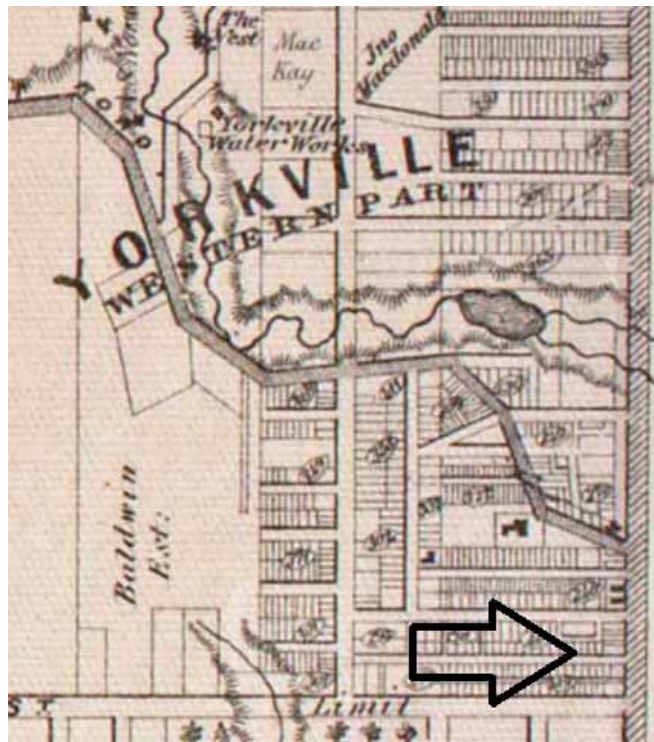
5. Archival Photograph, Yonge Street, Yorkville, 1860: showing the status of the block south of present-day Yorkville Avenue where the entrance to the street is marked by the **arrow** and the Moses Staunton Buildings were subsequently developed on the portion of the Parker Estate marked by the picket fence (Toronto Public Library, Item 1985)



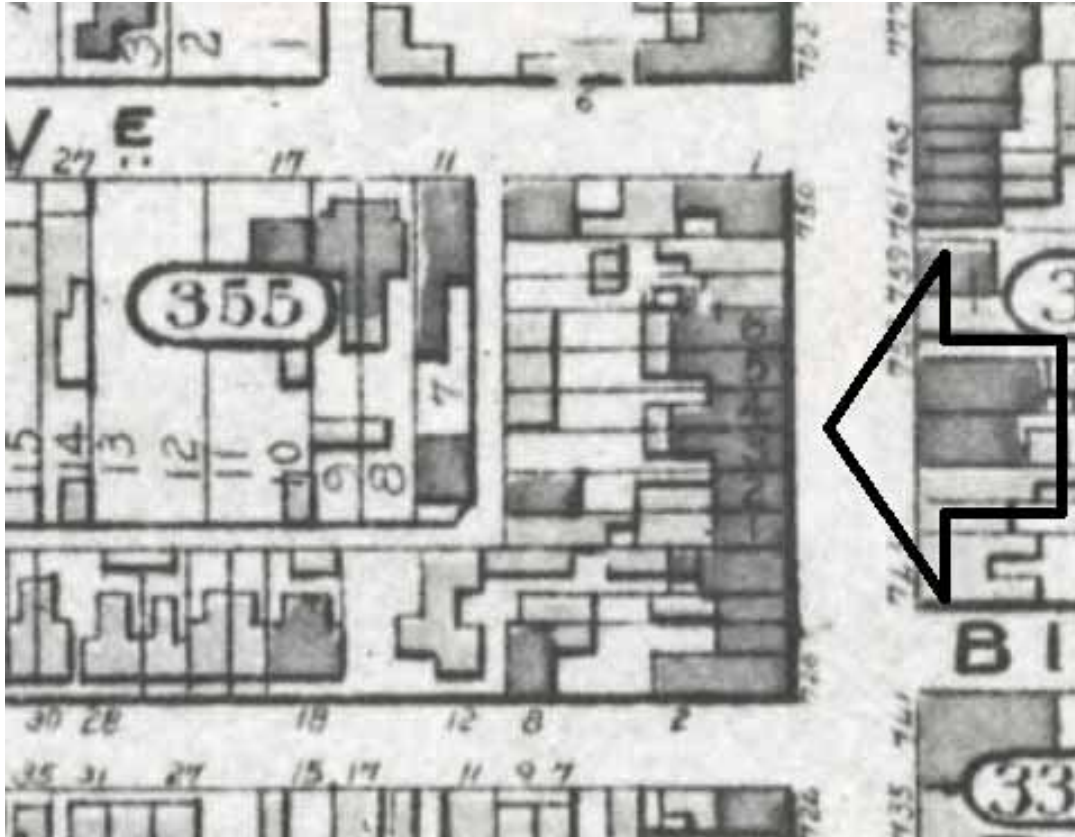
6. Plan 355, Yorkville, 1874: showing the subdivision of R. A. Parker's property on the west side of Yonge Street where the Moses Staunton Buildings were constructed on Lots 3 to 6 (Toronto Land Registry Office)



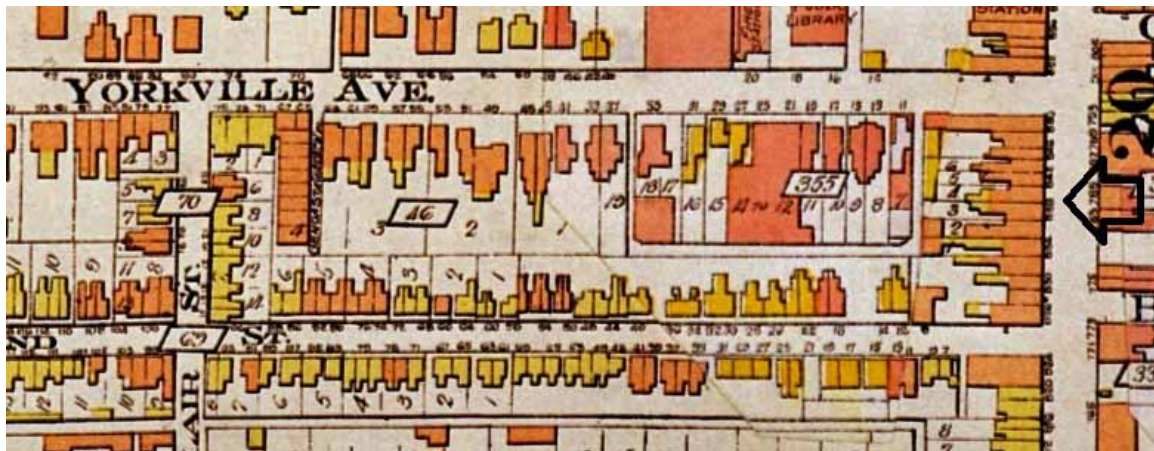
7. Gross's Bird's Eye View of Toronto, 1876: showing the west side of Yonge Street where parts of the block between present-day Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue contained the subject properties



8. Miles and Company's York County Atlas, 1878: showing the layout of Yorkville west of Yonge Street prior to its annexation by the City of Toronto (only major landmarks including the Yorkville Town Hall and St. Paul's Church on Yonge Street are marked on the map)



9. Goad's Atlas, 1884: showing Yorkville following annexation where the subject properties are in place on Lots 3-6



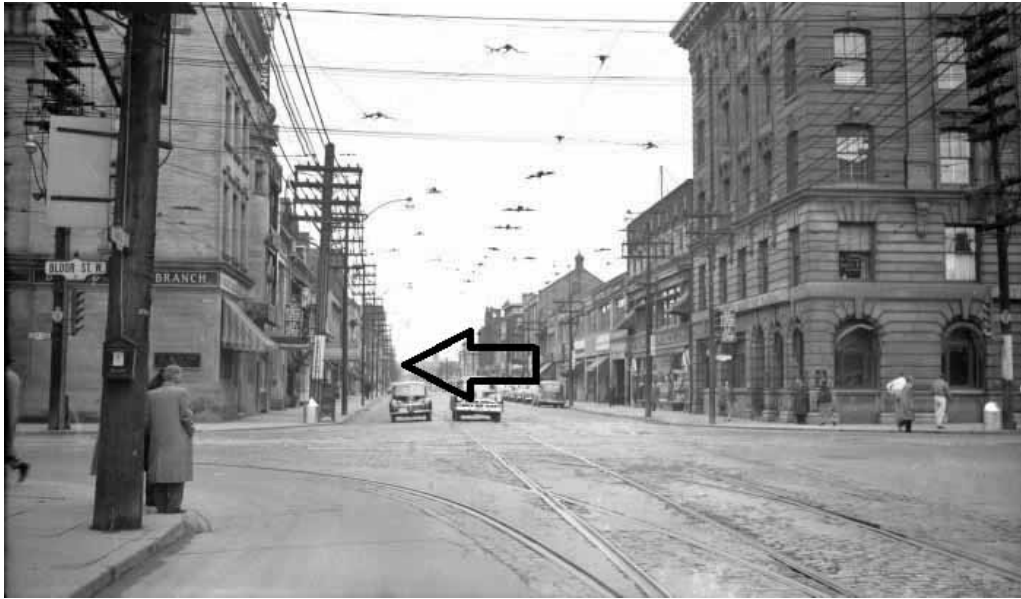
10. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1912: showing changes in the block, including the brick-clad rear (west) wings on Moses Staunton Buildings since the last update



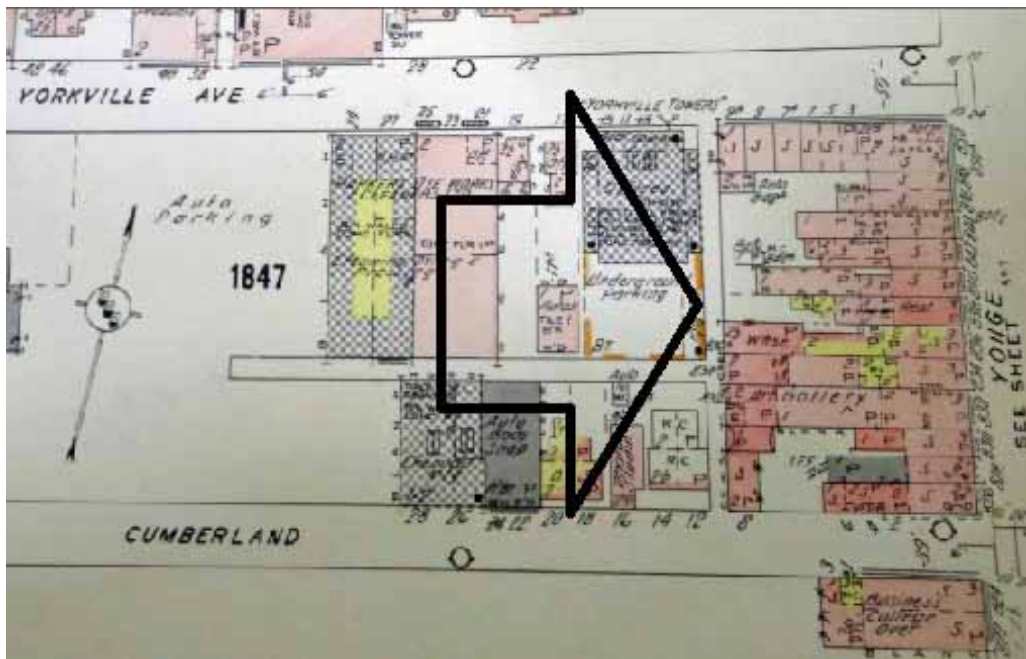
11. Letterhead, Stauntons Limited, 1905: incorporating an illustration of the Yorkville factory operated by the Staunton family and located north of Davenport Road (Toronto Public Library, Ephemera, 1905)



12. Postcard, Yonge Street north of Bloor Street, c. 1907: showing the Moses Staunton Buildings on the left and the proximity of the block of commercial buildings to the Yorkville Town Hall with its landmark clock tower (destroyed by fire in 1941) (<https://chuckmantorontonostalgia.wordpress.com/2013/01/23/postcard-toronto-yonge-street-n-of-bloor-yorkville-town-hall-nice-version-early/>)



13. Archival Photograph, Yonge Street north of Bloor Street, 1953: the low-rise buildings along the street, including the block between present-day Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue (identified by the **arrow**) where the subject properties at 838-844 Yonge Street are found (Toronto Reference Library, Item #1966)



14. Atlas, Underwriters' Survey Bureau, 1965: showing the status of the properties at 838-844 Yonge in the block on the west side of Yonge Street



15. Archival Photographs, 1974 (above) and 1982 (below): showing the Moses Staunton Buildings at 838-844 Yonge Street before and after the removal of the cornice on the unit at 844 Yonge (Toronto Historical Board)



16. Archival Photograph, 1982: showing the west side of Yonge Street, south of Yorkville Avenue (right) where the properties at 838-844 Yonge are found midway in the block (Toronto Historical Board)



17. Current Photographs, 2014: showing the Moses Staunton Buildings at 838, 380 and 842 Yonge Street (left) and the northernmost unit at 844 Yonge (right) (Heritage Preservation Services)