

April 25, 2024

Notice of Objection to Notice of Intention to Designate the Property
Address of property: 86 Mimico Ave, Toronto, Ontario

This submission is to list my objection to the proposed designation of our property as a cultural heritage asset for to the City of Toronto. Our opinions are based on the information contained in the Ontario Heritage Act, Sec 29 as outlined below:

“A property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest:

1. The property has design value or physical value because it,
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it
 - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
 - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
 - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
3. The property has contextual value because it
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
 - iii. is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).”

After reviewing the report presented to the Toronto Preservation Board, I am left wondering if the author has properly made the case for Historical designation of 86 Mimico Ave. The details provided are descriptive in nature as opposed to clearly outlining the historical case for this property. As I read the documents it has the feel of a decision looking for reasons as opposed to making the historical case of the property.

The Hogle family has been a long-time established member of the Mimico community since 1931 when Glencoe E. Hogle opened a funeral home in the area upon moving from Belleville after the depression. For three generations we have seen, been involved in and more importantly lived within the transformation of Mimico that you describe in your report. The context we can bring to the discussion has more depth and insight than the factual listings of transactions, owners and builders laid out in this report.

It is interesting to note that the report concedes that there is no mention of 86 Mimico Ave. possessing any qualities of historical or associative value as laid out in section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2). This is due to the rather limited and poor role that this particular property played in the everyday life of Mimico. By its own description it was purpose built as a bank that was only in existence for less than 10 years. During that time, pivotal or historic events transpired at this location. Of note, Glencoe E. Hogle was a lifelong member of the Royal Bank of Canada and our records

indicate that he banked on the branch located on Lake Shore Blvd for his entire time. This is not surprising since it is the Lake Shore Blvd area that was the main commercial hub of the area, making the branches closure in 1935 a forgone conclusion. Being a bank, in of itself, would not give credibility to any historical designation as at best it was a minor if not insignificant part of the branch network.

With respect to the Design or Physical Value of 86 Mimico Ave., once again it is important to look at the attributes as described in the report, in context of the community.

For the property to meet the threshold of having historic value, the Ontario Heritage Act is very clear of the considerations that need to be met:

“1. The property has design value or physical value because it,
i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.”

The attributes listed in the report of the “decorative cornice and parapet”, “brick quoining” with “stone sills and vertical brick voussirs” are not in any sense rare or unique. In fact, they are more representative of a design that is used through out generations of brick design. These attributes are found on many buildings regardless of the time period of construction. In fact brick companies display similar brick design techniques in current day marketing materials. Although fancy in their description, they are common in many places around the city. I believe this building design is more of a function of a low-cost construction methodology than it is of any particular period or style. The same design can be seen in buildings constructed on retail strips along any main thoroughfare of the city. In Mimico itself, it is the common design form of the buildings along the main commercial areas of Lake Shore Blvd and Royal York Rd. (formerly known as Church St.)

The report tries to give credence to the materials used in the construction as having significant historical value. The brick palette and use of buff stone, like the brick designs, do not have any historical context whatsoever. Buff stone and the colour of brick are not unique to this time period or is there use so rare that it creates a unique facade. These materials have been used for a long time and are continuing to be used in building design to this day.

That leaves the window design and the use of moulding design, at the one entrance, as having representative value according to the report. There is no doubt that the large main floor window is indicative of a commercial enterprise. One just has to look at any street facing retail design to see that having a large main floor window would be important to drawing interest from passers by. Again, this is in every retail design regardless of time period. One just has to look at the recently designed and built retail streetscapes to see this practice continued. With respect to the second floor window design, this would be common of any building that had living accommodations attached to a commercial enterprise below. The style only remains to this day due to the lack of care that was given to the building over the years in keeping up with modern window construction and maintenance.

The moulding design of the front door and main entrance, do enhance the visibility of the building. They do draw attention to the fact that it is the main entrance of the building during its brief time of commercial activity. Although not reflective of any structural or design period, the mouldings add to the esthetic appeal of the building. However, they are not of the threshold of a “high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit” as required by the Act. At best they are borderline upgrade compared to what was mis-characterized as a “stately” presentation in the report.

The report attempts to make the case for a Contextual Value to 86 Mimico Ave. in its argument for historical designation. The report tries to create a link between this property and maintaining the style of early twentieth century small-scale mixed use character of Mimico Ave. One would get the impression from this report that mixed use, small-scale buildings were rare or unique to the area. The truth is quite the opposite. Although Mimico Ave was at best a secondary commercial area to Lake Shore Blvd., the vast majority of businesses were small-scale mixed use types of buildings. That is why this style is so predominant not only on Mimico Ave but also Royal York Rd and Lake Shore Blvd. If the goal is to preserve the presence and connection to that period in Mimico’s history, it is those areas that have the historical context and significance to Mimico and it’s development, not this secondary thoroughfare.

The historical story of Mimico is rooted in the development of the railway to the north and the streetcar line in the south. It is about Mimico being the “cottage country” for the wealthy families of the city who would come to enjoy the beaches and swimming. So much so that they built magnificent estates (eg. Franchscini estate and Kilcooley Gardens), created a zoo, and supported many entertainment establishments as the Pickfair. These are the historical connections of Mimico.

The community has suffered for a long time from the lack of development of this property and others in the area. We understand, better than most, how this property and others have been a symbol of decay for the area and a negative reflection upon the community. I believe that the identifying of this property as part of the Mimico 20/20 Action plan was more of an attempt at preventing much needed development as opposed to protecting community heritage assets. The community is in great need of improvement to help lift it to the desired goals of the 20/20 Action Plan. I believe that placing a historical designation on this property would greatly hinder the potential of what can be done to improve our community. I am confident that there is great potential for the area. Our long-time commitment to the area is testimony of that. Let us work together to positively enhance the possibilities of the community while creating connections to our past. But let’s not do it without thought and understanding of the context of Mimico.

Based on these considerations, we would suggest that 86 Mimico Ave not be favoured with a historical designation at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Graeme Hogle