



Conservation  
Review Board

Ministry of Tourism,  
Culture and Recreation

Commission des  
biens culturels

Ministère du Tourisme,  
de la Culture et des Loisirs

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June. 19, 1992

The Mayor and Members of Council  
City of Toronto  
City Hall  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Rowlands and Members of Council:

Re: **The Report of the Conservation Review Board  
Concerning 16 St. Thomas Street (Windsor Arms Hotel)**

This is a report to you as required under the Ontario Heritage Act concerning the proposed designation of the property at the above location for its architectural value or interest.

The matter was heard by the Board on April 24, 1992 as a result of an objection to the proposed designation for the reason of the architectural importance of the property.

#### Appearances

John Phillips appeared as solicitor for the City of Toronto and Ron Clark attended as an observer from the law firm of Fraser & Beatty. Mr. Clark presented the board with a copy of a letter from David Smith of Fraser & Beatty, solicitor for Edoken Canada Inc., the owner of the property. Mr. Smith advised the hearing that he had not received instructions to appear with an objection to the designation and therefore would not be appearing but he supplied the Board with a letter and a copy of his Notice of Objection dated April 22, 1991 and a report of the Toronto Historical Board's managing director to the Toronto Historical Board Preservation Committee dated February 19, 1991. (Exhibit 2)

Also in attendance at the hearing was George Berkoditz who is Assistant to the Director of Edoken Canada Inc. in Toronto. He attended the meeting as an observer only.

Attached to this report is a list of the exhibits to the hearing which were presented and to which will be referred hereinafter.

The property at 16 St. Thomas Street, commonly known as the Windsor Arms Hotel, is proposed for designation for architectural reasons alone.

The Windsor Arms Hotel was constructed in 1927 as an apartment hotel and was designed by the Toronto architect Kirk Hyslop. Hyslop had previously designed buildings in the area in conjunction with other architects. The scheme for the Windsor Arms reflected one of the prevailing nearby styles of the period and was believed to be designed to complement the gothic-inspired structures on the University of Toronto campus.

The Windsor Arms was designed in the neo-gothic style popular in the early twentieth century. The four-storey building features a U-shaped plan with three bays on St. Thomas street and 5 bays on Sultan Street. It is located on the north-west corner of St. Thomas and Sultan Streets directly south of Bloor Street West. The building is related in size, scale and period to the low-rise apartment blocks in the neighbourhood.

Constructed of brown brick with stone and cast stone trim, attention is focused on the principal (east) facade with the main entry. The wall is organized into wide bays by sculpted piers terminating in pyramidal roof ornaments. The entrance porch, entered in the lower storey, displays a shaped parapet, goldlettered name band, doorcase in the form of a Tudor arch, and a similarly shaped double-lead wood and glass door with sidelights. The south bay (and east bay of the adjoining south elevation) contains rectangular windows with transoms and stained glass. Openings in the north bay have been altered. Above the entry, a crest initialled "WA" separates two pointed-arch windows. The remaining rectangular fenestration, organized singularly and in pairs, displays hood moulds (apart from the fourth floor) and continuous sills. The horizontal accent is reinforced by string courses and dentilled cornice beneath the crenellated parapet. The long south elevation, facing Sultan Street, displays similar features, with a wide base, a second doorway shaped as a tudor arch, and rectangular windows set at varied heights. On the remaining walls, the openings reflect the internal arrangement.

The Toronto Historical Board ("THB") provided evidence that in its recent definition of "Heritage Properties in Criteria for Designation Exhibit 12 and 13" the THB takes into consideration architecture, history and environment. In the case of the Windsor Arms Hotel the historical comments are for background only.

The THB argued that the exterior design is important in this building. The U-shaped design had an open-space courtyard, which the previous owners had enclosed into what became known as the "Courtyard Cafe Restaurant". Architecturally this was a useful preservation of the original u-shaped design with contemporary design. It is a skillful blending of the old and new. The city has requested that the design intent be preserved and that the openness of the space be maintained.

The architectural significance of the Windsor Arms Hotel rests with the design of the period and of the building and of the skillful way in which the building and the private courtyard were preserved. Any alteration that would diminish the effect of the courtyard would be a negative one. The difficult question for this Board to answer is whether the courtyard space and the surrounding glass walls that enclose the courtyard should be designated.

As was pointed out by the solicitor for the city, the owners of the property did not object to the designation of the building insofar as the reasons for the designation relate to the exterior facade of the building. But does the enclosed courtyard come within the definition of the exterior facade of the building? It is the board's considered opinion after hearing extensive evidence from the witnesses for the city that the exterior facade would include the enclosed courtyard but that designation ought not to restrict the use of the space inside the courtyard.

The reasons for designation provided by the City of Toronto include important interior spaces such as the vestibule, lobby with stuccoed walls and beamed ceiling and the tea room with the decorative plastered ceiling and fireplace mantel. In addition to the exterior facade the city feels that these portions of the interior are architecturally important. The owner objected (Exhibit 2) to any designation of any of the interior. The Board concurs with the city on the importance of these interior design items.

The basement and dining room, grill and wine cellar, known as "Three Small Rooms" are modern interior spaces. The board does not find that there was adequate evidence to deem these rooms to be architecturally significant.

The City briefed the board on the neighbourhood with slides and background information on area and the character of the neighbourhood with views from Charles Street and other similar buildings in the neighbourhood. It also provided information about other existing apartment hotels in the Toronto area, in particular The Park Plaza Hotel on 5 Avenue Road which was begun in 1928, an older portion of which has been designated. Other hotels are 300 Jarvis Street and the Balmoral Apartments. The Windsor Arms Hotel had become known as a landmark in Toronto and as a meeting place in Toronto's social life.

The Board concurs with the designation, for architectural reasons, for this building. The architectural aspects of the building have been set out in the reasons for designation as far as the exterior of the building. The reasons also indicate the interior elements spaces that are to be designated. The Board hopes that the council will display flexibility in permitting alterations that do not have a major affect on the reasons for designation. The Board therefore supports the designation of the interior elements as indicated above and the exterior of the Windsor Arms Hotel.

The Board recommends as follows:

1. That the property be designated as of architectural value and/or interest.
2. That the reasons for designation refer to the interior spaces, the vestibule lobby with stuccoed walls, beamed ceiling and the tea room with decorative plastered ceiling and fireplace mantel and the exterior as is presently proposed.

3. That the exterior of the building with the enclosed courtyard be included in the designation of the property but that the interior of the courtyard not be listed in the reasons for designation.

Yours truly,

(Original Signed by)  
ELIZABETH BURNHAM  
Member

**Exhibits to the Conservation Review Board Hearing  
on Property at 16 St. Thomas Street, Windsor Arms Hotel**

Exhibit

1. Affidavit of Nancy Smith re publication of notice of hearing on April 7, 14 & 21, 1991
2. Letter of David Smith, Solicitor for EdoKen Canada Inc. delivered to the hearing with attachments Appendix A (Notice of Objection dated April 22, 1991) and Appendix B (report of the Toronto Historical Board's Managing Director to the Toronto Historical Board Preservation Committee dated February 19, 1991)
3. City Council Cl. 8 of the Neighbourhoods Committee report – adopted March 25, 1991 by Council of the intention to designate 16 St. Thomas Street (Windsor Arms Hotel)
4. City Council Report No. 7 Neighbourhoods Committee of May 27 & 28, 1991 adopted by council with objection of owner to designation included in the report and reference of the matter referred to Conservation Review Board for a hearing and report
5. Affidavit of Cheryl Robb as publications of notice by City of Toronto of intention to designate March 27, April 3 and 10, 1991
6. Copy of land title transfer dated October 30, 1989, No. CA057428 to present owner EdoKen Canada Inc. of Lot 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10, Plan 97, City of Toronto
7. Legal description (Schedule A) and a copy of sketch to illustrate Lots by Public Works and the Environment of official city address (16 St. Thomas)
8. Resumé of Kathryn Anderson - preservation officer, Toronto Historical Board
9. Toronto Historical Board - Heritage Property report on 16 St. Thomas St. dated February, 1991
10. Excerpt "Historic Interiors" with section on Windsor Arms Hotel in December 1990/January 1991 issue of Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario
11. Resumé of John Blumenson - Preservation Officer, Toronto Historical Board
12. Listing and Designation of Heritage Properties - publication of Toronto Historical Board
13. Criteria for Heritage Properties of Toronto Historical Board that include a building's architectural, history and neighbourhood context
14. Policy Statement on Interiors of Designated Properties adopted September 4, 1991.