



## News From MTI

Hello Mass Timber Colleagues!

## Historical Tall-Wood Toronto

*By Ross Beardsley Wood*

There is much to learn from the versatile and durable warehouse buildings that line the streets of Toronto's historic manufacturing districts. 'Historical Tall-Wood Toronto' is a research project creating an evidentiary database of late 19th and early 20th century vernacular brick and beam buildings that were built using the fire restrictive specifications of mill-construction. This ongoing research illustrates the trajectories of 42 prime examples of mill-construction and analyzes patterns in their development to create a [morphological index](#). The index provides a platform to reflect on this resilient typology so that principles can be extracted to inform contemporary means of production.



*Image Credit: Ross Beardsley Wood*

This research builds upon the work of Kenneth Koo at FPIInnovations and their 2013 report '[A Study on Historical Tall-Wood Buildings in Toronto and Vancouver](#)', which recognised mill-construction as a predecessor to mass timber and identified prime building examples in the two historic city centres. Koo's report set historical precedence for Ontario's Tall Wood Building Reference in 2017 and the 2020 National Building Code changes around building taller in wood. As a supplement to Koo's engineering report, this research examines formal and programmatic qualities of identified buildings through high-resolution ortho-corrected photography, geographic information system (GIS) mapping, and archival research by means of historic insurance maps, perspectival imagery, and newspaper clippings.

This body of evidence is a line of inquiry into a proven building technology. The research is currently in an auditing phase, while also preparing for a new inter-typological classification based on comparative studies in massing and siting, prior to archiving the dataset for handover to the Mass Timber Institute for publication as a resource. While this phase of research is concluding in December 2022, the index prompts a series of subsequent studies such as an evolution of change-of-use practices in relation to fire separations, computing vernacular specifications through graphic dataset parsing, and examining the practice of non-destructive large-scale additions.

## News From the Institute

### 1. TimberCon 2022

Save the date for [TimberCon 2022](#) on September 28-29<sup>th</sup>. Hosted in collaboration with The Architect's Newspaper, the conference will foreground exemplary timber projects across North America; identify best-case practices for their assembly; and spotlight emerging technologies within this exciting field.

## Other Updates

- The government [announced funding](#) for the Mass Timber Modular System Project led by EllisDon as part of the Green Construction through Wood Program
- [Register](#) for an online symposium on September 15th, co-hosted by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) and Pilot Projects Collaborative (Wood at Work).

- The Canadian Wood Council conducted a [full scale fire test](#) of a mass timber compartment.

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Mass Timber Institute Website



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