



IMPERIAL BANK OF CANADA 9990 - JASPER AVENUE

Description of Historic Place

The Imperial Bank of Canada Building is valued as an excellent example of the Modern Classical style, for its association with architects Arthur J. Everett of Toronto and the Edmonton firm of Rule, Wynn and Rule, and as a symbol of the long-term history of the Imperial Bank of Canada in Edmonton.

Heritage Value

Built between 1951 and 1954, the Imperial Bank of Canada Building is an excellent example of the Modern Classical style. The Modern influence is reflected in its abandonment of traditional ornamentation and the use of Art Deco-influenced references to modern symbols of progress - relief sculptured airplanes and trains above the corner ground floor window openings. Traditional elements such as cornices, pilasters and quoins persist in the design, but are abstracted in shallow relief. The building displays a particularly elegant use of superior quality materials, including Indiana limestone and black granite on the exterior and several different types of marble on the interior.

The Imperial Bank of Canada Building is valued as an example of the work of Toronto architect Col. Arthur J. Everett (1891-1983). Born in Toronto, Everett trained with prominent architects Darling & Pearson, who acted as the bank architects for the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Everett practised in Toronto from 1912-1930, and in 1931 became Chief Architect of the



Imperial Bank of Canada, a position he held until 1955. Local supervision of the construction of this bank was undertaken by the prominent Edmonton firm of Rule, Wynn and Rule. The firm had been established in 1938 by John Ulric Rule (1904-1978) and Gordon K. Wynn (1910-1994); John's brother, Peter Leitch

Rule (1913-1964), joined the firm the following year. With offices in both Edmonton and Calgary, the firm became one of the leading architectural practices in western Canada, designing nearly one thousand projects for every aspect of Alberta economic activity, including banks, offices hospitals, and gas stations. Some of their projects included the headquarters for Greyhound Busline terminals across Alberta and B.C., the Rutherford Library at the University of Alberta (1951), and the McMahon Stadium (1960) in Calgary. The firm was also commissioned by Ireland's Guinness family to design the Elveden Centre (1959-1964) in Calgary, which was, at twenty-seven storeys, the tallest building west of Toronto.





Furthermore, this building is a symbol of the presence of the Imperial Bank of Canada at this location since 1891. The Imperial Bank of Canada began in Toronto in 1875 and expanded across Canada, opening their first branch outside Ontario in 1880. The Imperial continued its pioneer banking activities in the West, opening its first branch in Calgary in 1886 and in Edmonton in 1891. During the economic boom of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the financial needs of clients grew exponentially, and the original bank building at this location was demolished in order to construct this larger and more modern building. In 1960 the Imperial Bank merged with the Canadian Bank of Commerce and continued to operate from this location until 2000.

Character Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Imperial Bank of Canada Building include its:

- landmark corner location at 100 Street and Jasper Avenue;
- commercial form, scale and massing as expressed by its seven-storey height (with basement) and symmetrical cubic massing;
- flat roof with straight raised parapets;
- steel-frame construction, clad with Indiana limestone and black granite on the two main façade and buff brick on the north and east (alley) façade;
- Modern Classical details such as a simple dentilated cornice; stone string course separating the ground level from floor above; and quoins on the building edges;

- exterior features such as: the transportation themed bas-relief panels above the corner ground floor windows; metal decorative monogrammed (IBC) spandrels on the two main façades and the alley façade; and offset recessed entry door to the banking hall;
- regular fenestration including double-assembly double-hung windows on the upper storeys with one horizontal muntin in each sash; similar windows of wider proportions in the end bays; and large fixed windows at the ground level;
- interior features such as marble columns and walls in the main lobby, stairwells and elevator lobbies; simple aluminium handrails between the main floor and the basement; metal exit stairs with terrazzo treads and landings, metal newel posts, metal spindles and wood rails in the stairwells; elevator doors and surrounds at the basement level; bronzed ventilation grills; terrazzo floors at the basement level; and three vault doors.

