



IMPERIAL BANK OF CANADA

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



9990 - JASPER AVENUE NW

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The Imperial Bank of Canada Building is a seven-storey Modern Classical building, which is reflected in its symmetry, volumetric massing, and regular fenestration. Its most notable decorative features are the transportation themed bas-relief panels above the corner ground floor windows, and the IBC monogrammed spandrels between the upper-level windows. It is located on the busy commercial street of Jasper Avenue, at the corner of 100 Street, and occupies 3 city lots in Edmonton's downtown core.

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 the 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 and 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 practiced 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 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's economic activity including banks, offices, hospitals, and gas stations. Some of their projects included the headquarters for Greyhound Bus Line terminals across Alberta and British Columbia, 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:

EXTERIOR:

- + landmark corner location at 100 Street and Jasper Avenue;
- + commercial form, scale and massing as expressed by its seven-storey height, with a 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 façades 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 the floor above, and quoins on the building edges;
- + transportation themed bas-relief panels above the corner ground-floor windows;
- + offset recessed entry door to the banking hall;

- + metal decorative monogrammed (IBC) spandrels on the two main façades and the alley façade; and
- + regular fenestration pattern including double-assembly double-hung windows on the upper storeys, similar windows of wider proportions in the end bays; and large fixed windows at the ground level.

INTERIOR:

- + marble columns and walls in the main lobby, stairwells, and elevator lobbies;
- + simple aluminum railings to the basement level and metal stair and rail details in the stairwells;
- + elevator doors and surrounds at the basement level and three vault doors, and bronzed ventilation grills; and
- + terrazzo floors at the basement level and in the stairwells.

Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 13603 in March 2004.



Visit edmonton.ca/historicresources to learn more

