

Art Moderne Building
88 Lakeshore Road East

Cultural Heritage Assessment

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Culture Division
Community Services



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Executive Summary

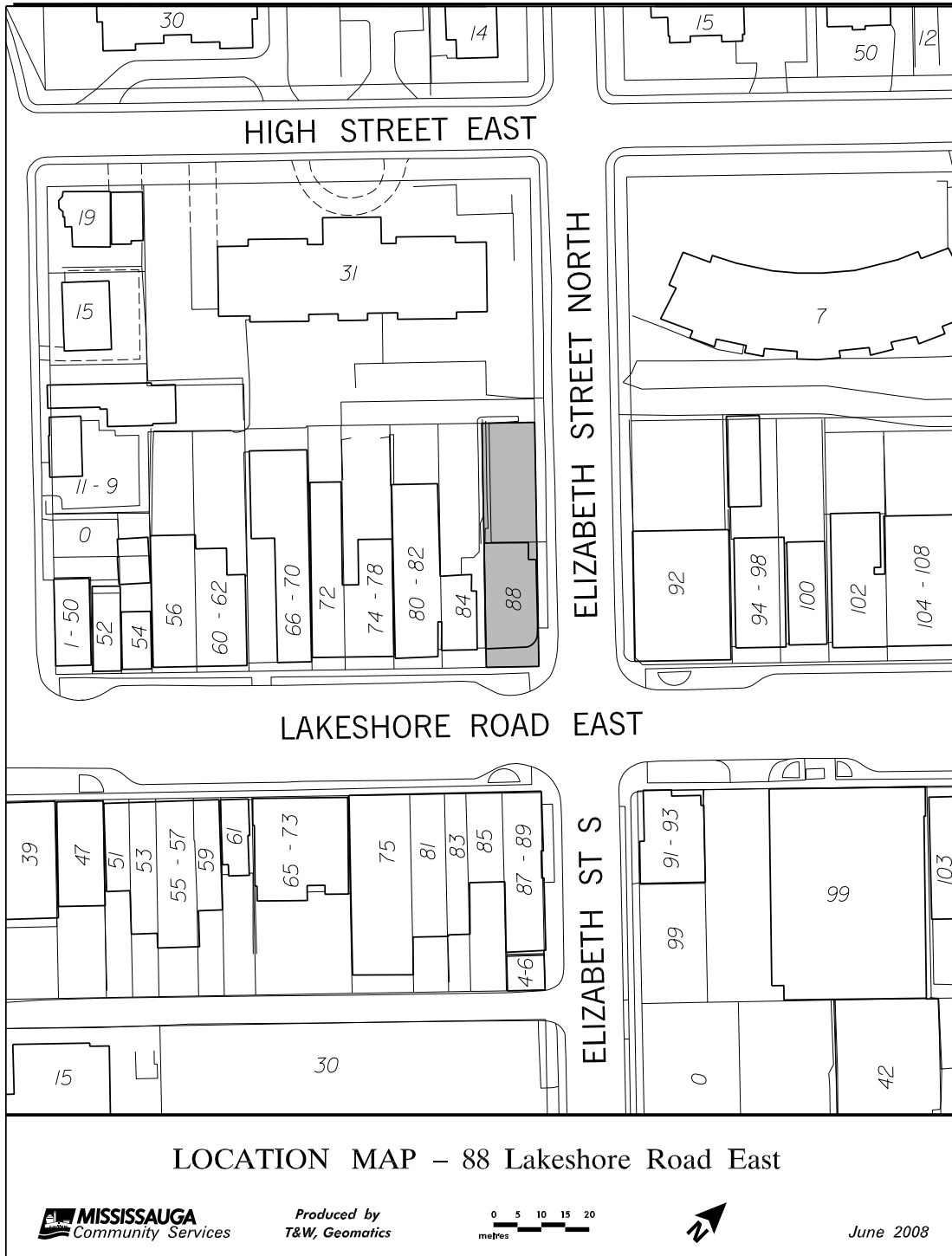
The City of Mississauga added the Art Moderne Building to the Heritage Register c. 1989. The property merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its physical/design, historical/associative and contextual value. The building is a rare example of Art Moderne architecture in Mississauga. It displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. The edifice demonstrates the work of Douglas Kertland, a significant Canadian architect. The property is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the area. It is physically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. The structure is a landmark.

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Location Map

The Art Moderne Building is located in Port Credit on Lakeshore Road East on the west side of Elizabeth Street North.



Cultural Heritage Value

In order to merit designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* a property must have physical/design, historical/associative and/or contextual value. Ontario Regulation 9/06 lays out the specific criteria:

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, or
 - 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, or
 - 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, or
 - ii) is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings,
or
 - iii) is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).

Historical/Associative Value

The Art Moderne Building has historical/associative value because it demonstrates the work of architect Douglas Edwin Kertland (1888-1982). (For images and architectural drawings of the edifice, see figures 1 thru 12, beginning on page 7.) The Dominion Bank purchased the property in 1947.¹ Kertland designed the subject structure by 1947.² It opened on Thursday, April 22, 1948.³ The general contractor was John Rae & Sons, Toronto. T. Purton & Son and John B. Smith & Sons were responsible for the stone and brick, and fixtures respectively.⁴

Kertland designed branches for the Dominion Bank in Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta from 1937 to the early 1950s.⁵ The Port Credit branch was one of eighteen Dominion Bank branches opened in Ontario from the end of the World War II to 1950.⁶ In 1955 the Dominion Bank amalgamated with the Bank of Toronto to become Toronto Dominion Bank.⁷ The Toronto Dominion Bank sold the building to the current owner, a numbered company, in 2002. This is the only building in Mississauga known to be designed by Kertland.

Although born in Toronto, architect Douglas Kertland moved to England as a child and was educated in architecture there.⁸ He returned to Toronto to practice with John M. Lyle. Kertland served as Captain of the Canadian Corps of Engineers in World War I. In 1926 he started his own architectural business.

Kertland became a significant Canadian architect. He was a popular house designer for developing well-to-do areas such as Forest Hill, Cedarvale, North Toronto, Moore Park and the Poplar Plains Road areas in Toronto.⁹ He also designed office buildings and hospitals. Kertland is probably best known for winning the commission to design the Automotive Building, at the Canadian National Exhibition, constructed in 1929. (See figure 13.)

According to his *Toronto Star* obituary, Kertland always did his own drawings.¹⁰ He was the President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 1956 and 1958. He became an honorary member of the Ontario Association of Architects in 1973 and was also an honorary fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

¹ Peel Land Registry Records.

² Drawing date, Ontario Archives.

³ "Village Welcomes New Dominion Bank Branch," *The Port Credit Weekly*, Thursday, April 22, 1948, 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Robert Hill, "Appendix B – Bank Architects," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada*, April 2009, http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/appendix_b.

⁶ Joseph Schull, *100 Years of Banking in Canada: A History of the Toronto-Dominion Bank* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Co. Limited, 1958): 183-4.

⁷ TD Bank Financial Group: Corporate Profile, <http://www.td.com/profile.jsp>.

⁸ "Douglas Kertland hospital architect," *Toronto Daily Star*, Friday, March 5, 1982; "Douglas E. Kertland: Architect headed national association," *Globe and Mail*, March 6, 1982; and Kertland, Douglas, "Biographical Sketch or Administrative History," *Archives of Ontario*, <http://ao.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/1152/1/1?RECLIST>.

⁹ "Residence for F. Stone, Russell Hill Road, D.E. Kertland, Architect," *Archives of Ontario*, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/on-line-exhibits/architecture/record-stone.aspx>.

¹⁰ "Douglas Kertland hospital architect."

Physical/Design Value

The building at 88 Lakeshore Road East has physical/design value because it is a rare example of the Art Moderne style in Mississauga. It also displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit.

Art Moderne architecture marks a transition between the historicizing architecture of the nineteenth century and the modern architecture of the twentieth. It flourished in Canada in the 1930s and 1940s when full-on Modern architecture had already emerged in Europe. Art Moderne was perhaps a more conservative step towards the simplified geometry of Modernism.

Art Moderne architecture is streamlined with a horizontal emphasis. Roofs and exterior surfaces are flat. Exteriors are also usually plain and light in colour. Being essentially one large rounded corner, the building exemplifies the Art Moderne style. The edifice includes a distinctive base, (cornice) band, recessed window surrounds, stone window sills and a monumental door surround. Windows continue around the corner; the roof is flat; and the walls are plain. All of these features are common to Art Moderne architecture. Mississauga has no additional Art Moderne built form.

The building exhibits a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. All of the elements, discussed above, that render the edifice Art Moderne, also contribute to the success of the concept of the building being one large rounded corner. The well crafted cut limestone with the minimal joinery provides a smooth façade, which the stylized rounded corner emphasizes.

On opening day the *Port Credit Weekly* described the Dominion Bank branch to be of “monumental scale” and “simple and dignified in architectural treatment.”¹¹ Originally the fenestration was more decorative. However, the large scale windows, with sidelights and transom at the entrance, still add to the grandeur of the edifice. Although altered, the windows and entry still retain the integrity of the architect’s design within the original apertures.

In addition to artistic merit, all of the building features are well crafted. They are aesthetically pleasing and have withstood the test of time. The overall building material is ashlar Indiana limestone, with brick on the less exposed west and north faces. The black band is polished terrazzo and the base is terrazzo.

A scan of other branches designed by Kertland, conducted by the TD Bank Financial Group Archivist, suggests that the Port Credit branch was unique. Images of other branches reveal some similarities; however, the Port Credit branch seems to have had its own distinctive look. (See figures 14 and 15.) Although there have been some changes to the building, compared to the archival drawings, the overall design remains intact.

¹¹ “Village Welcomes New Dominion Bank Branch.”

Contextual Value

The Art Moderne Building has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the Port Credit Village core along Lakeshore Road East. It is physically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. The edifice is also a landmark, as it is highly visible and unique in its form and style.

The building of the Dominion Bank structure contributed to defining the urban fabric of Lakeshore Road East in Port Credit. This commercial core existed before 1948. However, the more easterly portion, towards Hurontario Street, was a more recent phenomenon. In discussing the years 1935 to 1949, in his history of Port Credit, E.H. Firstbrook states that “commercial establishments grew up from the cluster of stores on Lakeshore Road east of the river eastward to the St. Lawrence Starch Co.”¹² (St. Lawrence Starch was east of Hurontario Street.) An article about the bank’s opening also suggests that the Dominion Bank contributed to extending the commercial strip. The *Port Credit Weekly* called the branch a “vital link to the district’s rapidly extending community business chain.”¹³

The subject structure played a role in defining the importance of the Lakeshore Road East strip. The Queen Elizabeth Way was built in the 1930s, making Port Credit a “commuter village” and taking “most of the through traffic from Lakeshore.”¹⁴ Built in the post war building boom, the Dominion Bank’s presence on Lakeshore Road signified the continued importance of this small urban centre. Upon its opening the Dominion Bank published an ad in the *Port Credit Weekly*, extolling its arrival as being “in keeping with the town’s growing importance.”¹⁵ The bank building’s continued existence, about halfway between the Credit River and Hurontario Street, the core of Port Credit’s commercial village, and its traditional scale, maintains and supports the small town urban fabric. The building was specifically designed for this site, and to address the corner location, taking advantage of this highly visible and accessible location.

As part of Port Credit’s commercial core, the subject building is physically and visually linked to it. The bank served Port Credit and, according to the *Port Credit Weekly*, Toronto Township.¹⁶ Accordingly, it is historically linked to its local surroundings and beyond.

With its striking facade and corner lot, the Dominion Bank building is a local landmark, highly recognized by the community. On its 50th anniversary, the *Mississauga Business Times* referred to it as “an architectural highlight along Port Credit’s main street.”¹⁷ The structure remains an anchor, highly visible on a commercial corner, and exhibiting a style unequalled on this commercial streetscape. The building has a strong and enduring presence at this intersection.

¹² E.H. Firstbrook, *The History of Port Credit* (Port Credit Library, 1970?), 8.

¹³ “Village Welcomes New Dominion Bank Branch.”

¹⁴ Betty Clarkson, *Credit Valley Gateway: the Story of Port Credit* (Port Credit Library, 1967), 201 and 202.

¹⁵ “The Dominion Bank... Comes to Port Credit,” *The Port Credit Weekly*, Thursday, April 22, 1948, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Mike Beggs, “TD celebrates 50 years in Port Credit,” *The Mississauga Business Times*, May 1998, page 19.

Conclusion

The Art Moderne Building merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its physical/design, historical/associative and contextual value. The building is one-of-a-kind in Mississauga. The city has no other examples of Art Moderne architecture. Well-designed and constructed, the edifice displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. The structure also demonstrates the work of Douglas Kertland, a significant Canadian architect. Finally, this local landmark is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the area. It is also physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings.



Figure 1: Douglas Kertland. Sketch Perspective, 1947, Ontario Archives.

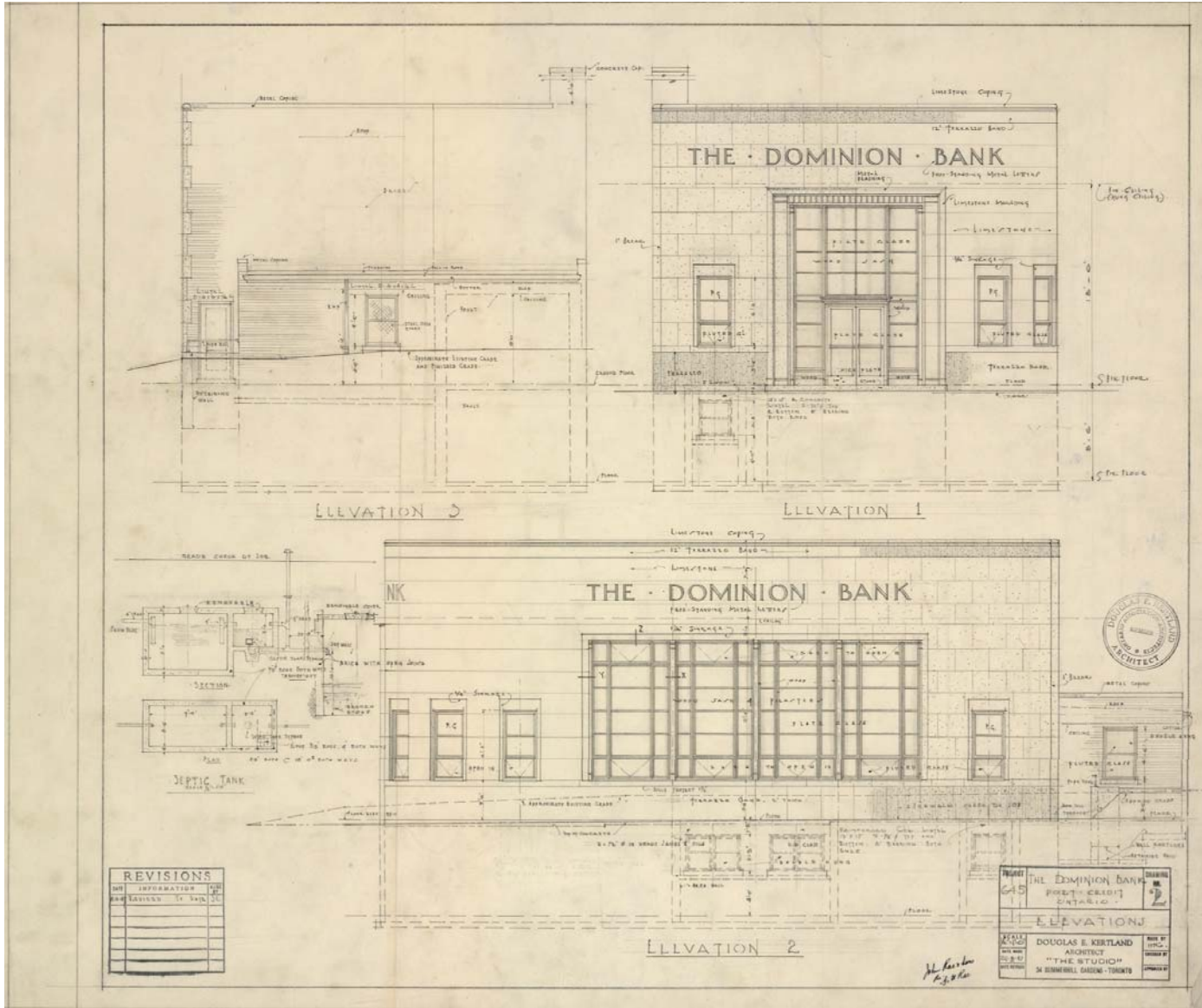


Figure 2: Douglas Kertland. Elevation, 1947, Ontario Archives.



Figure 3: View looking down Lakeshore Road, with Toronto-Dominion Bank, c. 1970.
Photo: Mississauga South Historical Society.



Figure 4: Southeast façade, 1989.



Figure 5: South face, 1989.



Figure 6: Long shot of southeast façade, August 2009.



Figure 7: Southeast façade, August 2009.

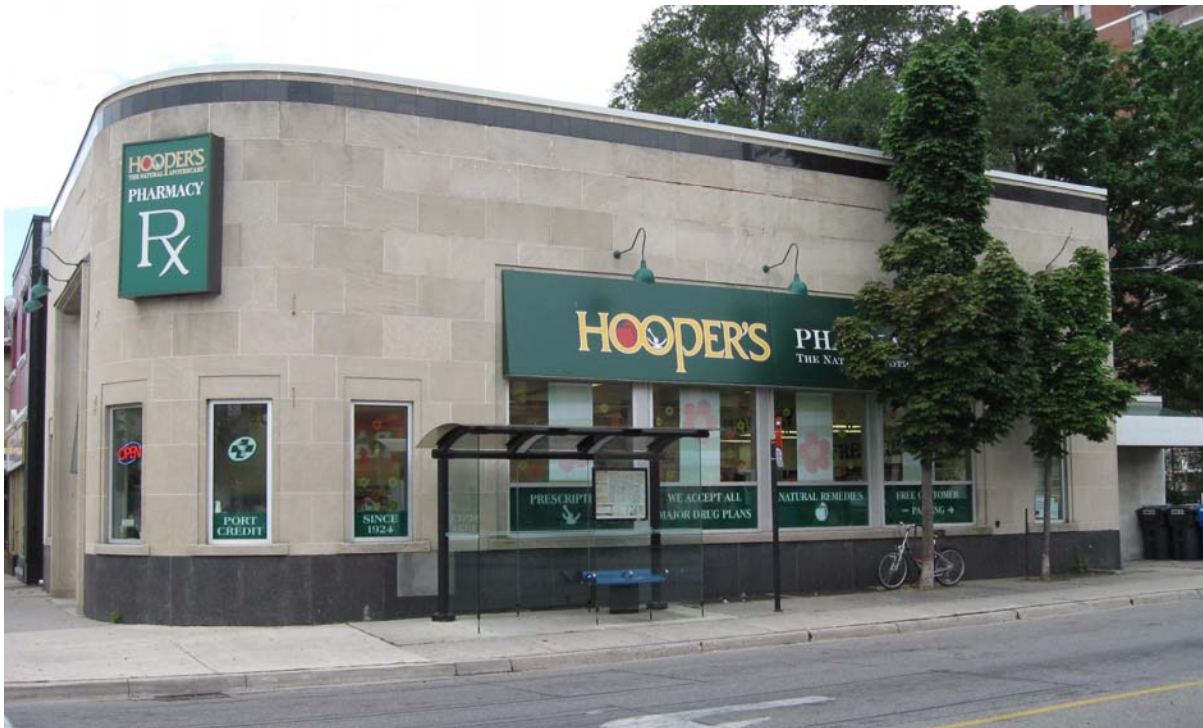


Figure 8: East face, August 2009.

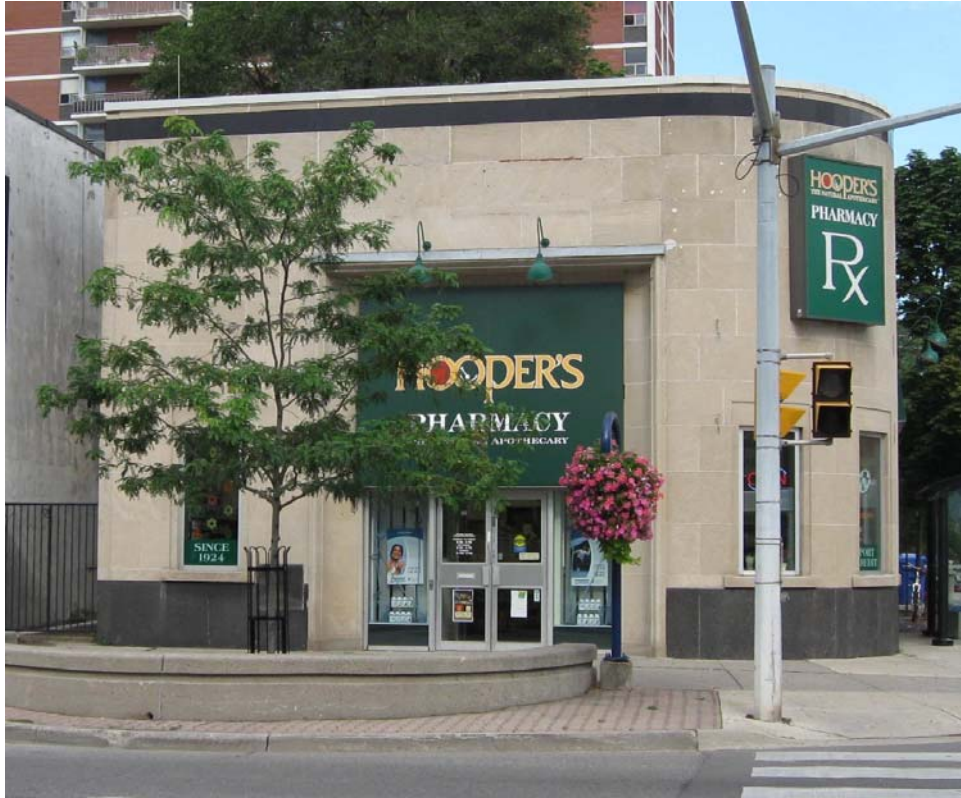


Figure 9: South face, August 2009.

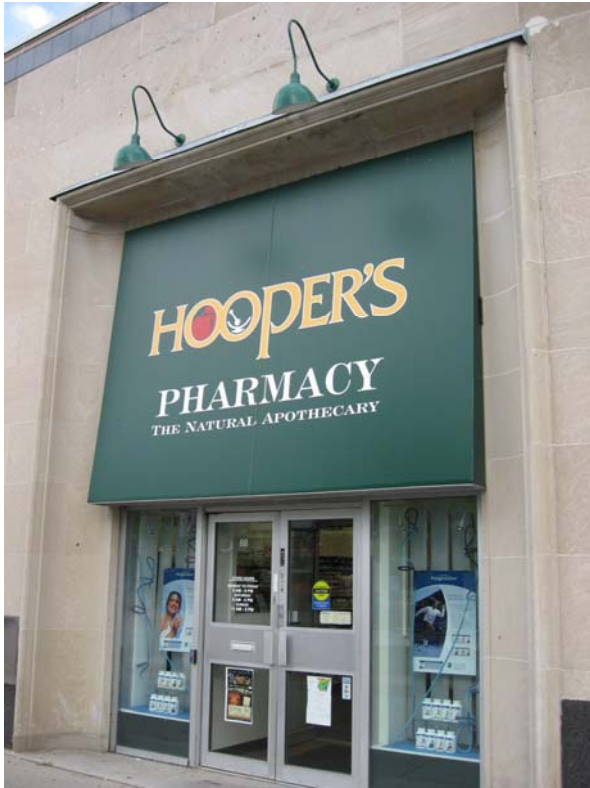


Figure 10: Detail of south face, August 2009.



Figure 11: Southwest face, August 2009.



Figure 12: Northeast face, August 2009.



Figure 13: Douglas Kertland, Automotive Building, c. 1929. Photo: Exhibition Place Archives.



Figure 14: Douglas Kertland, The Dominion Bank, Hamilton, 1951. Photo: TD Bank Archives.

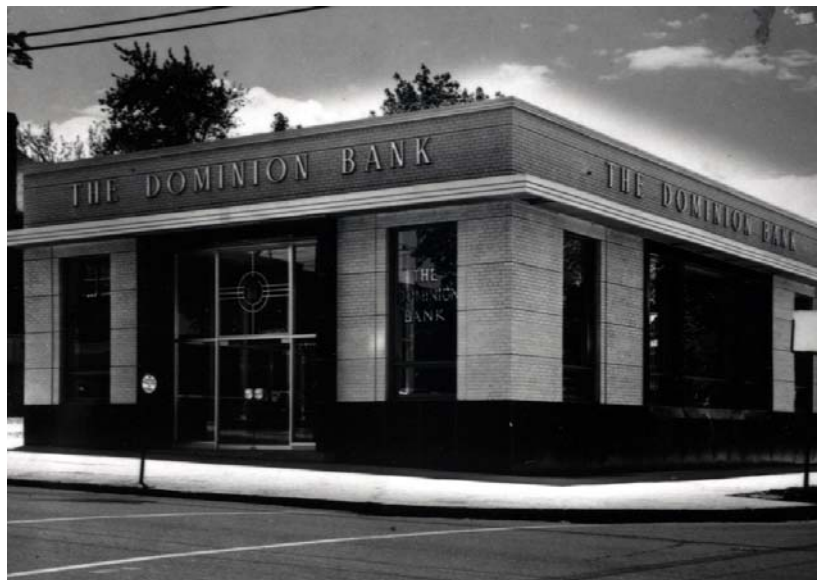


Figure 15: Douglas Kertland, The Dominion Bank, Kitchener, 1954. Photo: TD Bank Archives.

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