

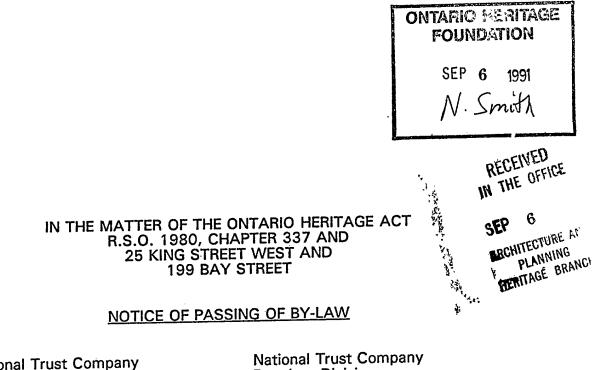
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To: National Trust Company c/o Blake, Cassels & Graydon Box 25 Commerce Court West Toronto, Ontario M5L 1A9 National Trust Company Premises Division P.O. Box 122 Head Office Commerce Court Toronto, Ontario M5L 1A2

Ontario Heritage Foundation

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto has passed By-law No. 467-91 to designate the above-mentioned properties to be of architectural value or interest.

Dated at Toronto this 3rd day of September, 1991.

Barbara G. Caplan City Clerk

### No. 467-91. A BY-LAW

To designate the properties at 25 King Street West (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Building) and 199 Bay Street (Commerce Court) of architectural value or interest.

(Passed August 12, 1991.)

Whereas by Clauses 14 and 15 of Neighbourhoods Committee Report No. 10, adopted by Council at its meeting held on August 12, 1991, authority was granted to designate the properties at 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street of architectural value or interest; and

Whereas the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historic or architectural value or interest; and

Whereas the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the lands and premises known as 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real properties and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks; and

Whereas the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" hereto; and

Whereas no notice of objection to the said proposed designation has been served upon the clerk of the municipality;

Therefore the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto enacts as follows:

1. There is designated as being of architectural value or interest the real properties more particularly described and shown on Schedules "A" and "C" hereto, known as 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street.

2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper land registry office.

3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owners of the aforesaid properties and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto.

ARTHUR C. EGGLETON, Mayor. BARBARA G. CAPLAN City Clerk.

Council Chamber, Toronto, August 12, 1991. (L.S.)

# SCHEDULE "A"

In the City of Toronto, in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Unit 1 on Plan D-106 registered in the Land Registry Office for the Land Titles Division of Metropolitan Toronto (No. 66).

Being Parcel Plan-1 in the Register for Section D-106.

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Plan SYE2513, dated August 6, 1991, as set out in Schedule "C".

### SCHEDULE "B"

Reasons for the designation of the properties at 25 King Street West (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Building) and 199 Bay Street (Commerce Court):

# Heritage Property Report

### Canadian Bank of Commerce Building and Commerce Court 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street

### March 1991

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### Attachments:

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I II IV V	Historical Photograph, Canadian Bank of Commerce Building extract, The Caduceus, July 1930 extracts, The Canadian Architect, March 1973 Location Map Architectural Practice of Darling and Pearson		
Basic Building Data:		Canadian Bank of Commerce Building	
Address:		25 King Street West (southwest corner of King Street West and Jordan Street)	
Ward:		6	
Current Name:		Commerce Court North	
Historical Name:		Canadian Bank of Commerce Building	
Construction Date:		1929-31	
Architect:		Darling and Pearson with York and Sawyer	
Contractor/Builder:		Anglin-Norcross, contractors; Harkness and Hertzberg, engineers	
Additions/Alterations:		west wall and interior altered in 1972	
Original Owner:		Canadian Bank of Commerce	
- Original Use:		commercial (office building)	
Current Use:		commercial (office building)	
Heritage Category:		Α .	
Recording Date:		March 5, 1991	
Recorder:		HPD:ka	
Basic Building Data:		Commerce Court	
Address:		199 Bay Street (southeast corner of King Street West and Bay Street)	
Ward:		6	
Current Name:		Commerce Court (consisting of Commerce Court West, South and East)	
Historical Name:		not applicable	
Construction Date:		1968-72	
Architect:		I. M. Pei and Associates with Page and Steele	

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Contractor/Builder:	V. K. Mason and Peter Kiewit Sons Company of Canada Limited	
Additions/Alterations:	unknown	
Original Owner:	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	
Original Use:	commercial (office building)	
Current Use:	commercial (office building)	
Heritage Category:	А	
Recording Date:	March 5, 1991	
Recorder:	HPD:ka	

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### HISTORY

#### 1. Canadian Bank of Commerce:

The Canadian Bank of Commerce (incorporated in 1858 as the Bank of Canada, and renamed to avoid confusion with the Bank of Upper Canada) began operations in 1866, with headquarters in premises at Yonge and Colborne Streets. William McMaster, the Senator and Baptist philanthropist who developed a fortune through wholesale dry goods, served as the first president. The Canadian Bank of Commerce absorbed five competing financial institutions between 1869 and 1911. By the 1920s, the bank had expanded from 42 Ontario branches to 791 divisions across Canada and in the United States, England, the West Indies, and the Bahamas.

In 1889-90, a head office was built on the southwest corner of King and Jordan Streets according to the designs of Richard Waite, an architect based in Buffalo, New York. The selection of the designer was indicative of a preference in Canada (particularly in financial circles) during the closing decades of the 19th century for American architectural firms known for their innovative spatial organization, early use of iron and steel, and interpretation of historical styles for contemporary purposes. In response to this situation, where foreign architects received a disproportionate share of the major contracts in Toronto, Canadian architects and designs were promoted zealously by newly formed organizations (the Architectural Guild of Toronto and the Ontario Association of Architects) and in periodicals such as The Canadian Architect and Builder and Construction.

In 1914, the Canadian Bank of Commerce decided to demolish the existing headquarters and replace it with a more substantial office building serving the bank and select tenants. These plans were delayed by the First World War, and afterward by post-war construction costs and uncertain labour conditions. The design for the head office is attributed to John Pearson of the established Toronto firm of Darling and Pearson, in association with York and Sawyer of New York City and James Nicholl of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Pearson (1867-1940) was born in Chesterfield, England and educated at Wesley College (University of Sheffield) and in Europe prior to immigrating to Canada in 1888. In 1891, Pearson and Henry Sproatt became partners in the local firm of Darling and Pearson, a title retained after Darling's death in 1923. While Darling and Pearson executed numerous commissions of note around the city (see Attachment V), the firm is identified foremost with projects for the University of Toronto over a twenty-year period. In recognition of this role, Pearson became the first Canadian to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Architecture from the University in 1932. Pearson also served as president of the Ontario Association of Architects (1926), was elected as an Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts (1929), and was made a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (1926) and of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1930).

In 1902, Darling and Pearson oversaw renovations to "Long Garth," the residence of Sir Byron Edmund Walker (knighted by King George V in 1910), who served as the president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce from 1907 until 1924. Darling and Pearson received the commissions for the Royal Ontario Museum in 1910-14 and the Art Museum of Toronto (later the Art Gallery of Ontario) in 1918, institutions founded with the support of Walker. After an interval wherein Darling and Pearson designed several branches of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and supervised extensive renovations to Waite's building, the firm was engaged for the new head office.

#### 2. Canadian Bank of Commerce Building:

Construction of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building began in July, 1929, following the issuance of a building permit for a structure with an estimated value of four million dollars. The design introduced a 34-storey edifice, purportedly the tallest structure in the British Empire upon completion. John Pearson embarked on the project with experience designing more modest skyscrapers. The Canadian Pacific Railway Building (1913) and Dominion Bank Building (1913-14), utilizing Classical organization and stylistic features, were constructed according to his plans on opposite corners at Yonge and King Streets. The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building, however, bears the trademark of his American associates: a tower ascending in a series of setbacks with Romanesque Revival detailing. York and Sawyer were regarded as the foremost New York City bank architects of the age, counting among their works the Federal Reserve Building of 1924. Prior to receiving the Toronto commission, the firm completed the Royal Bank Building in Montreal, whose appearance and height obviously attracted the attention of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Their role as design consultants for the Toronto project reflected the rules established by the Ontario Association of Architects, disallowing non-resident architects to undertake commissions without the involvement of an Ontario-based firm. Not surprisingly, the participation of York and Sawyer was ignored studiously in accounts of the project by the Canadian arts press.

The design for the Canadian Bank of Commerce, with a wide podium supporting a tower rising in tiers, was indicative of New York City skyscrapers built in the late 1920s onward, such as the Empire State Building (Sheve, Lamb and Harmon, 1929-31). The distinctive profile was not merely aesthetical, but obligatory following the passage of a New York City zoning by-law in 1916 (repealed in 1961), whereby setbacks were encouraged as a means of preserving natural light in the urban core. The form appeared in Toronto in other projects such as the Canada Life Assurance Building (1929-31, and never fully executed as intended) and the second Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario Building (1935 ff.), both designed by Pearson's former associate, Henry Sproatt, in association with Ernest Rolph.

The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building featured a modern steel and concrete structure utilizing 9300 tons of steel, 190,000 cubic feet of stone, and 6633 square yards of marble and tile. The building rose 465 feet from a bedrock foundation with four basements (descending to a depth of 65 feet) containing reinforced concrete vaults. Mechanical services, including the works for fifteen elevators, were housed in the top two floors, above an observation platform at the 32nd storey. The Montreal company of William Dawson provided all exterior carvings, apart from the main entrance, produced by the Donnelly firm of New York City. Canadian sculptor Emmanuel Hahn designed a World War I memorial for installation in the Main Banking Hall, a space purportedly modelled after the Roman Baths of Carcella and favourably compared to the Grand Concourse in New York City's Pennsylvania Station (McKim, Mead and White, 1902-11, now demolished). Murals in the adjoining Savings and Foreign Exchange Banks, areas recalling John Soane's interiors for the Bank of England in London (1788-1833), were executed by Arthur Crisp, the Hamilton-born artist who achieved success in New York City. The interior finishes employed various types of marble as the background for specially-designed Canadian- made furnishings.

The Canadian Bank of Commerce initially occupied the first nine stories of the new building, with executive offices on the fifth floor which incorporated the oak panelling, fireplace, and furniture from the old boardroom in the former head office. The President's suite, Directors' rooms, and a new boardroom were situated on the seventh floor, where French windows provided access to a terrace on the roof of the podium.

The opening of the premises on January 14, 1932 was heralded in Construction magazine, where "Sinaiticus" commented that "during the past ten years architecture in Canada, as elsewhere, has experienced a vital renaissance. In this new lease of life the architecture of Toronto has played a leading part, with the result that her newest large building is also her best, a splendid triumph of that wholesome and sane modernism which finds its roots in the tested and sure works of antiquity." The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building, considered the "newest and greatest addition to Toronto's increasing Manhattan-like skyline," was exalted for its tower which, "beautifully illuminated in the night time, is plainly visible from almost any point in the vicinity of Toronto within a radius of twelve or fifteen miles. There it stands, in the very heart of the city's financial district, a mighty beacon of progress and a prophecy of prosperity yet to come." By the 25th anniversary of the construction of the building, over 200,000 visitors had viewed the city from the observation deck. The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building remained the tallest structure in Toronto until 1964, when it was surpassed by the Toronto-Dominion Centre on the southwest corner of King and Bay Streets.

#### 3. Commerce Court:

In 1961, the Canadian Bank of Commerce merged with the Imperial Bank of Canada to become the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC). The Imperial Bank, incorporated in 1873, began operations following the financial depression of 1875. With Henry Stark Howland as the first president, the bank established its head office on Wellington Street, prior to a move to new premises at King and Bay Streets in 1936.

Following the amalgamation of the two financial institutions, the Directors of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce engaged the internationally recognized New York City firm of I. M. Pei and Associates, founded by Ieoh Ming Pei, as design consultants for a new office complex at the southeast corner of King and Bay Streets. While the firm (presently known as Pei Cobb Freed and Partners) now is identified with commissions such as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library (1964-79) and the John Hancock Tower (1973) in Boston, the East Building of the National Gallery of Art (1978) in Washington, D. C., and the addition to the Louvre Museum (1989) in Paris, their role in the Toronto project followed the completion of Place Ville Marie for the Royal Bank of Canada in Montreal (1956-65). This chronology provides an exact parallel to the involvement of York and Sawyer in the commission for the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building over thirty years before. In this instance, the Toronto firm of Page and Steele were the Canadian associates. Page and Steele, often in conjunction with Peter Dickinson, was responsible for many Modernist landmarks in Toronto, including the Benvenuto Apartments (1955) and the O'Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts (1956-60).

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce project, named Commerce Court, produced a four-part complex which retained the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building as Commerce Court North. A 57-storey tower (Commerce Court West) -- one floor higher than the tallest component in the neighbouring Toronto-Dominion Centre -- and two lower office buildings (Commerce Court South and East) were arranged around a level courtyard with a reflecting pool and trees. The design focused on the slab-form tower, reflecting the impact of the International Style on the later generation of New York City skyscrapers, initiated by the Lever House (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1950-52). Commerce Court West purportedly was built as the largest example of fully-welded steel frame construction, with the cladding secured by clips to allow the full movement of the structure. The technology employed insulated glass for climate control, provided heat through the lighting system and the presence of people, and treated the exterior skin as a vapour barrier. The design of the office building introduced vaulted loggias along sections of the street and courtyard elevations in an apparent reference to the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building.

The development of Commerce Court was predicated on the preservation of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building as an integral component of the site. The scheme involved alterations to the west wall and interior of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building. The Main Banking Hall was converted into an open-concept office area (the Officers' Platform), with new counters and tables composed, in part, from the original marble counters. A large open floor well, inserted to connect the building to the concourse level of the complex, incorporated the original bronze teller wickets in the balustrade.

Commerce Court, with the retention of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building, has been described as conveying "an awareness of time in the city, of a gradual accumulation of buildings, and of urban space -- extended or reshaped by changing uses and new construction. Standing here...it is possible to feel that this is a city whose past, present and future go hand-in-hand" (Toronto Observed, 281).

#### ARCHITECTURE

#### Canadian Bank of Commerce Building:

The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building combines the height, spatial organization, and technology of late 1920s skyscraper design with references (monumental scale, decorative richness, lavish use of materials, and wide round-arched openings) to the Romanesque Revival style of the late 19th century. The building, composed of structural steel and concrete, is faced with variegated Indiana limestone above a Coehill granite base. The structure rises 34 stories in a series of seven progressively reduced setbacks capped with copper coping. The design is unified by vertical piers which direct the eye upward, delineate the corners, and organize the fenestration.

A six-storey podium serves as a platform for a soaring tower which shares its width but is reduced in depth. On the principal (north) facade, the podium is divided into three extended bays. The centre bay, which is slightly recessed, contains a deep monumental compound arch with an enriched reveal carved in arabesques. Compound impost blocks, introduced here and repeated on the other elevations of the podium, reflect an integrated sculptural program depicting architecture and building, fishing, fur trading, grain growing, logging, mining, northern modes of transportation, and water travel. The arch, which is surrounded by a name band with deeply incised lettering, contains the main entrance. Above the bronze and glass doors and transom, an oversized dentilled lintel displays a row of medallions containing the coat-of-arms. The tympanum is filled with a stone bas-relief panel depicting Mercury (the patron of bankers) carrying the Caduceus or wand (symbol of the Canadian Bank of Commerce), flanked by female figures representing Commerce and Industry (or Knowledge and Progress), and backed by images of the new building with a lighthouse and boat, a grain elevator, and five Canada geese. Stone plaques with lions' heads appear on the wall surface near the crown of the arch, and large semi-circular windows with deep embellished reveals are set in the adjacent wall. Rectangular openings with multi-paned sash windows, some grouped and divided by stout Romanesque colonnettes, are placed symmetrically beneath an enriched dentilled cornice. The upper three floors of the podium feature window arcades combining semi-circular and rectangular openings with decorated aprons and arcaded corbel tables. Attention is focused on the centre bays, where the windows are divided by continuous enriched columns, while those in the outer bays are separated by piers.

The remaining elevations of the podium feature similar, symmetrically-arranged fenestration and the continuation of the sculptural program. A doorway centered in the rear (south) wall, with an elaborate stone surround and name band, provides access to the basement level. Other entries are set in enriched narrow rectangular recessions. The west elevation was obscured in part by abutting structures prior to their removal during the building of the Commerce Court complex. As a result, the recessed arched doorway with decorative impost blocks and the large semi-circular window are sensitive alterations to the west wall.

Above the seventh level, with its access to a rooftop terrace, the shaft of the tower contains fifteen stories of rectangular windows free of ornamentation. The remaining floors repeat the combination of window types introduced on the podium. At the 32nd storey, an observation gallery formed by a vaulted loggia can be identified from the street by the sculpted heads which crown the piers. These immense 14-foot-high forms (with 10-foot-long flowing whiskers), four per elevation, symbolize Courage, Observation, Foresight and Enterprise. In the words of "Sinaiticus", "on the romanticist design, which included reminiscences of the classical and suggestion of the purely modern, the heads are intended to symbolize the eternal vigilance of the financier looking all ways out over the country." The top floors form a penthouse covered by a hipped roof.

Significant interior spaces are the ground floor with its E-shaped plan. A vaulted and coffered entrance hall, leading to the Main Banking Hall, is cut transversely by an elevator lobby, whose bronze elevator doors incorporate maple leaf and wheat sheaf motifs. The Banking Hall, with dimensions of 145 by 85 feet, extends the full width of the building. It features floors of Italian travertine with marble inlay and walls of purple-hued "George Washington" limestone. Three monumental arched windows set in deep reveals in the south wall correspond to archways at the entrances from the lobby and the flanking Savings and Foreign Exchange Banks. Arches on the east and west walls feature decorative crests of the financial institutions absorbed by the Canadian Bank of Commerce. The central opening on the south wall contains the World War I memorial in a screen of Hauteville and Belgian marble. The hall rises over sixty feet under a vaulted ceiling, mixing octagonal and square coffers in a blue colour scheme with gold mouldings and buff connecting bands with running ornament. Massive bronze ceiling fixtures are suspended from monumental circular plaques.

The spaces on either side of the entrance hall, designed for the Savings and Foreign Exchange Banks, display similar finishes. Each ceiling contains an aisle of eight shallow domes (with indirect lighting) supported on Doric piers. Painted wall panels within the relief arches illustrate the evolution of transportation.

In 1932, the Toronto Star observed that the design for the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building signified "the great genius of John Pearson for creating a building as useful inside for what it was meant to do, as it is beautiful inside for what it was meant to express. It dominates Toronto as a tower of absolute beauty and strength."

#### **Commerce Court:**

Commerce Court exhibits the individual components, geometrical forms, and lightly textured, near colourless surfaces typifying the minimalist and sculptural approach of the architect. The principal tower, known as Commerce Court West, features curtain wall construction covered by ionized chrome glass and 1/8-inch stainless steel panels with a special sandblasted pebbled finish to produce a silver sheen. The tall rectangular slab, twice the height of its base, runs two bays on King Street and four bays on Bay Street. The podium, rising the equivalent of three stories, has a single continuous horizontal band of windows at ground level, interrupted by banks of revolving doors with name bands, and double-height rectangular panes above. The remaining floors contain vertical strips of rectangular windows. The transparent base reveals the ground level with its granite core and four banks of elevators. The interior displays a granite floor and stainless steel and glass finishes. The open void inside the north facade is pierced by a circular well with escalators descending to the below-grade rotunda with the banking hall.

Commerce Court South, a five-storey rectangular block oriented along Wellington Street West, and Commerce Court East, with a fourteen-storey plan set at right angles to the latter roadway, are constructed of steel and concrete and faced with massive modular limestone units to blend with the cladding on the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building. Portions of the courtyard and street elevations are articulated by heavy piers.

Commerce Court West is recessed from King Street West to allow an unrestricted view of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building from the intersection of King and Bay Streets. In addition, the simple shape and transparent surface of Commerce Court West enables the complicated outline and exuberant detailing of the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building to be viewed through and reflected against it. The subsidiary office buildings provide a visual link between the two bank towers, and share their neutral tones and vertical fenestration.

### CONTEXT

The properties at 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street form a complex bounded by King Street, Bay Street, Wellington Street West and portions of Jordan and Melinda Streets in the symbolic centre of the financial district of Toronto. The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building and Commerce Court share this important intersection at King and Bay Streets with Scotia Plaza and the Bank of Nova Scotia (built in 1949-51 to 1929 designs) on the northeast, the Bank of Montreal's First Canadian Place on the northwest, and the Toronto Dominion Centre on the southwest. With their varied heights, materials, and construction dates, the array of bank towers reflects the evolution of the area as the financial nucleus of Toronto.

#### SUMMARY

The properties at 25 King Street West and 199 Bay Street are identified for architectural reasons. The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building is an excellent example of a late 1920s skyscraper, distinguished by its threedimensional outline and Romanesque Revival detailing. The structure, designed as the tallest edifice in the British Empire upon completion, endured as the highest building in Toronto for over thirty years. The Canadian Bank of Commerce Building contains one of the finest banking halls in the city, and was preserved as an integral component of the Commerce Court complex. The latter project, the only example of the work of the internationally known architect I. M. Pei in Toronto, demonstrates the successful blending of old and new through the sensitive handling of materials, forms and site. The Canadian Bank of Commerce and Commerce Court are significant examples of period skyscrapers in Toronto, as well as important landmarks in the financial core of the city.

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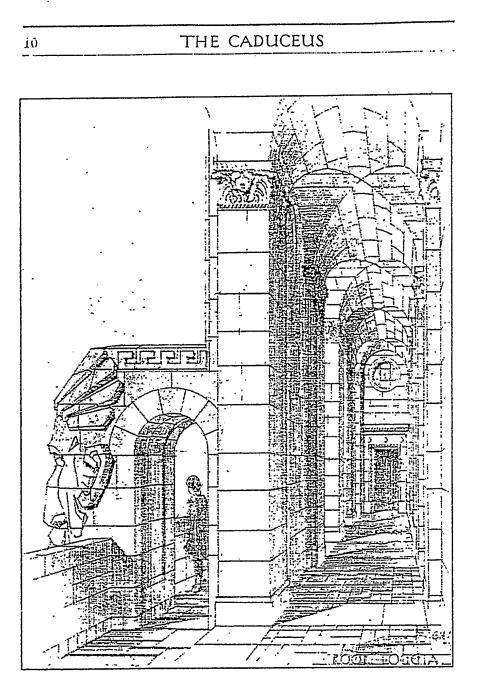
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ATTACHMENT I: Canadian Bank of Commerce Building - copy of coloured post card, circa 1960

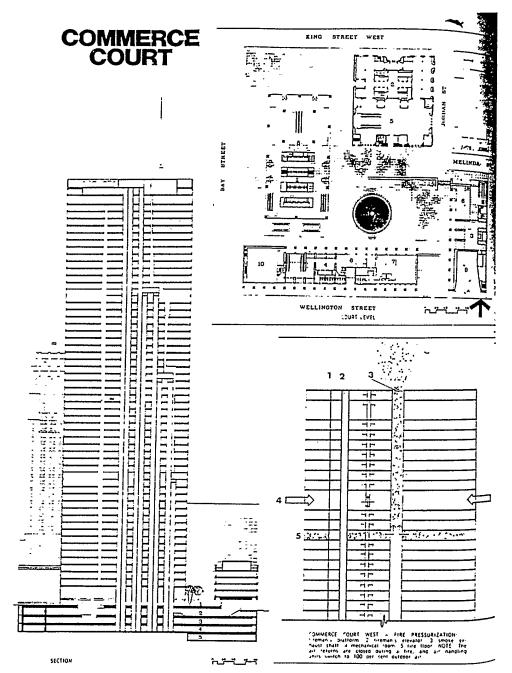
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The Giant Heads—The Architect's conception of the roof loggia and observation gallery in the new Head Office Building

ATTACHMENT II: extract, Canadian Bank of Commerce, <u>The Caduceus</u>, July 1930 - showing detailing on 32nd-floor observation gallery





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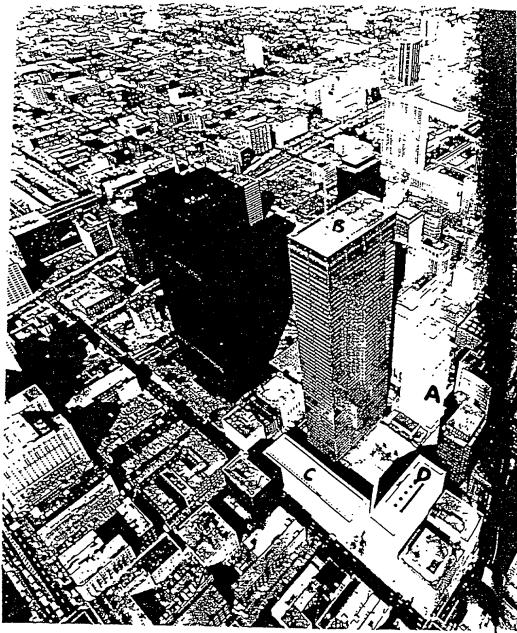
ATTACHMENT III -a

extract: The Canadian Architect, March 1973 showing elevation and site plan

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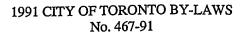
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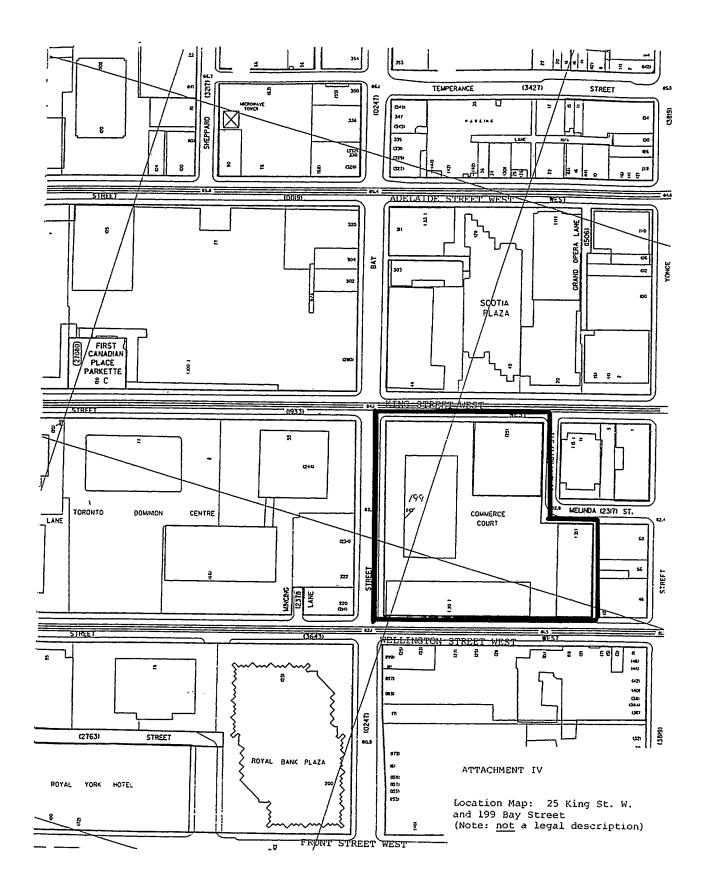


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ATTACHMENT III - b extract: The Canadian Architect, March 1973 showing Commerce Court following completion: A - Canadian Bank of Commerce Building (Commerce Court No B - Commerce Court West; C - Commerce Court South;
D - Commerce Court East

(note: Toronto-Dominion Centre to west (left); First Canadian Place and Royal Bank Plaza yet to be built)





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