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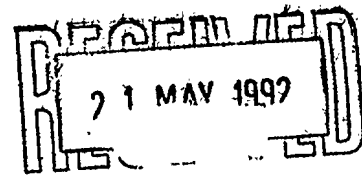
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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

MAY 26 1992

HERITAGE POLICY BRANCH

Nancy Smith



IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.18 AND
15 MERCER STREET

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

To:



Ontario Heritage Foundation

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto has passed By-law No. 347-92 to designate the above-mentioned property to be of architectural value or interest.

Dated at Toronto this 19th day of May, 1992.

Barbara G. Caplan
City Clerk

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No. 347-92. A BY-LAW

*To designate the property at 15 Mercer Street
(The Pilkington Glass Building) of architectural value or interest.*

(Passed May 4, 1992.)

Whereas by Clause 13 of Neighbourhoods Committee Report No. 6, adopted by Council at its meeting held on May 4, 1992, authority was granted to designate the property at 15 Mercer 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 15 Mercer Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property 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 property more particularly described and shown on Schedules 'A' and 'C' hereto, known as 15 Mercer 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 owner of the aforesaid property 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.

JUNE ROWLANDS,
Mayor.

BARBARA G. CAPLAN
City Clerk.

Council Chamber,
Toronto, May 4, 1992.
(L.S.)

SCHEDULE 'A'

In the City of Toronto, in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18 and 19 on the south side of Mercer Street according to Plan 57 and Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, according to Plan D-271 both said plans registered in the Land Registry Office for the Metropolitan Toronto Registry Division (No. 64).

The southerly limit of Mercer Street as confirmed under the Boundaries Act by Plan BA-1547 registered on June 11, 1979, as Instrument CT359919.

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Plan SYE2562 dated April 28, 1992, as set out in Schedule 'C'.

SCHEDULE 'B'

Reasons for the designation of the property at 15 Mercer Street (The Pilkington Glass Building):

The property at 15 Mercer Street (the portion with a convenience address of 31 Mercer Street) is designated on architectural grounds.

HERITAGE PROPERTY REPORT**Basic Building Data:**

Address:	15 Mercer Street (convenience address 31 Mercer Street; south side of Mercer Street near southwest corner of John Street)
Ward:	5
Current Name:	Pilkington Glass Building
Historical Name:	Pilkington Glass Building
Construction Date:	1938-39
Architect:	Horwood and White
Contractor/Builder:	none found
Additions/ Alterations:	name band, etched glass door panel, and metal door ornaments removed
Original Owner:	Pilkington Brothers (Canada) Limited
Original Use:	commercial (office building)
Current Use:	commercial (office building)
Heritage Category:	B
Recording Date:	January 1992
Recorder:	HPD:ka

HISTORY:

1. Mercer Street

The site of the present 15 Mercer Street was originally part of New Town, the area bound by Victoria, Front, Peter and Queen Streets, which was laid out in 1797 by government administrator Peter Russell as a westward extension of the original Town of York (founded 1793). Prior to the War of 1812, the land between Simcoe and Peter Streets became a select enclave where community leaders established their residences. Institutional uses were added in 1813 and 1829, respectively, when Government House and the third Parliament Buildings were established in the neighbourhood. During the remainder of the 19th century, the surrounding street pattern developed with the infill of residential and commercial buildings. Remnants of the railway system introduced in the 1850s include a surviving spur line extending from Spadina Avenue to Mercer Street.

Mercer Street was laid out in the mid-19th century when it was named for Andrew Mercer, a wealthy local landowner. By 1875, city directories indicate that the street consisted mainly of row houses, two of which survive in altered form at 24 and 33 Mercer Street. (The latter properties are included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.) In 1885, George Verral established stables at 11-13 Mercer Street. The Verral Cab, Omnibus and Baggage Transfer Company occupied the site until 1894 when the property was acquired by Pilkington Brothers Limited, manufacturers of British "polished plate and window glass, plain and bevelled mirror plates, rolled plate, fancy cathedral and coloured glass" (Might's Directory, 1895).

2. Pilkington Brothers Limited

Pilkington Brothers Limited originated in 1826 as the St. Helen's Crown Glass Company, located in the English coal-mining centre of St. Helen's, Lancashire. When the enterprise was acquired by brothers Richard and William Pilkington in the 1840s, the firm began to produce sheet glass, a commodity formerly dominated by less costly European imports. In the 1870s, more efficient technology and the addition of polished plate glass increased the company's productivity and led to a new concentration on exports.

Following its formation as a private limited company in 1894, Pilkington expanded its British and international facilities and formed partnerships with related and rival firms to explore contemporary technologies and to expand its markets. In the 1920s, Pilkington worked with the Ford Motor Company of Detroit to develop a new process for ribbon (safety) glass and they acquired the license for innovative PPG (Pittsburgh Plate Glass) machinery. In 1932, Pilkington assumed the British license for vitrolite (opal glass known by its American name and first manufactured in Britain in 1925), a product it produced until 1968. During the 1930s, Pilkington co-founded Glass Fibres Limited for the production of glass fibres (glass silk for weaving and fibres for insulation and reinforcement) and optical and ophthalmic glass. In the early 1950s, Pilkington invented float glass, a form of perfectly parallel and distortion free sheet glass. Pilkington became a public company in 1970 and adopted its current name of "Pilkington plc" in 1987. It functions as a holding company for numerous subsidiaries.

3. Pilkington Brothers (Canada) Limited

Toronto was chosen in 1893 for the location of Pilkington's second Canadian warehouse (after Montreal). The expansion of the Toronto facility was a reflection of the position of Canada as Pilkington's most important overseas market. Warehouses across Canada (excluding direct sales to Canadian importers) accounted for one-tenth of the total output of all types of glass manufactured by the company after 1900 and over 15 per cent by 1910. This success, and the desire to protect its rights to an untested drawn cylinder process for the production of sheet glass, led Pilkington to establish a factory and "model town" in Thorold, Ontario, a site chosen for its strategic location near the Welland Canal, on the main Canadian National Railway line, and close to the American border. The drawn cylinder process took years to perfect, so the Thorold factory experienced disastrous financial losses which threatened ongoing production in England and the survival of Pilkington. The plant closed in 1924.

Pilkington's acquisition of the Mercer Street property was probably influenced by the proximity of the site to the central industrial core (subsequently destroyed by the Great Fire of 1904). The warehouse was designed in 1894 by Scottish-trained architect D. B. Dick, whose previous commissions included buildings for the Consumers' Gas Company and the University of Toronto. In 1903, the local architectural firm of Burke and Horwood prepared plans for a proposed "Pilkington Brothers Building" at Queen and Simcoe Streets, a project which apparently was

never executed. Pilkington engaged Burke, Horwood and White, the firm's successors, in 1909 to design a complementary extension to the Mercer Street warehouse.

In 1922, Pilkington Brothers (Canada) Limited was established as a subsidiary of the parent firm. Four years later, the company's head office was relocated from Montreal to 17 Mercer Street. In 1938, Pilkington commissioned the architectural firm of Horwood and White, successors to Burke, Horwood and White, to prepare plans for a new office building adjacent to the warehouse. That September, E. C. Horwood applied for a permit to construct a two-storey brick building at an estimated cost of \$27,000. The drawings were revised in October, 1938, and the project was completed by February, 1939. According to the plans, the ground floor contained a showroom, the general office, and the headquarters of James Eustace Harrison, a leading Toronto businessman who served as the general manager for the Canadian operation from 1922 to 1945 (after beginning his lengthy tenure with Pilkington in 1891 as an apprentice at the original St. Helen's premises in England). The exterior and interior design incorporated many of the products distributed by the company, including glass tile floors, coloured vitrolite doors, panels, soffits and brackets, black plate glass stair treads and copings, windows of glass block, plate glass and wired glass, and a panelled etched glass entrance door. While the drawings for the design survive (Archives of Ontario, Horwood Collection, Number 1487), the project notes do not. A comparison of the interior to contemporary ventures in England which used similar materials (pictured in Vitrolite Specifications, a publication produced by Pilkington in the 1930s), and the dissimilarity of the scheme to other commissions accepted by Horwood and White, suggests that the design was strongly influenced by the parent company and the desired integration of Pilkington innovations.

Pilkington Glass (Canada) Limited occupied the Mercer Street property until 1969.

ARCHITECTURE:

The Pilkington Glass Building displays the smooth-faced surfaces, horizontal emphasis, contemporary materials, and decorative accents identified with the Art Deco style which was popular in Toronto architecture during the 1920s and 1930s. The structure, constructed of brick, concrete and steel, is faced with cut limestone and trimmed with steel, glass and copper. The two-storey building displays a rectangular plan.

The principal (north) elevation facing Mercer Street is divided into three bays. The centre bay is extended in each storey by elongated horizontal strip windows containing steel sash, glass blocks, and trios of steel-framed ventilators. The main entry, set at street level in the left (east) bay, features a recessed door with a glass-block transom and sidelights and a surround composed of black vitrolite. The original etched glass panel with monogram and the metal ornaments have been removed, and the coloured vitrolite street number has been replaced. In the right (west) bay, a cargo door with a multi-paned transom has been altered. In the upper storey, commercial windows with glass blocks balance the latter openings. Overhead, a name band with steel letters identifying "Pilkington Brothers (Canada) Limited" has been removed. The flat roof is marked by a decorated stone cornice with copper coping.

The east and west elevations abut the neighbouring structures. The rear (south) brick-clad wall is organized into two bays with horizontal strip windows containing glass blocks in the right (east) bay in both floors. A freight door placed in the left (west) bay at street level is balanced by a single window overhead beneath a brick cornice.

On the interior, significant spaces are the vestibule, lobby and stairway with glass tile floors, black glass stair treads, wall panels and pillars of etched and mirrored glass, black and coloured (pink) vitrolite finishes, and glass fixtures. The use of colour and reflective finishes creates a jewel-box atmosphere and a visually effective contrast to the solidity of the exterior.

CONTEXT:

The Pilkington Glass Building is located on the south side of Mercer Street, which runs parallel to and immediately south of King Street West in a short block between John and Peter Streets. The building is attached to the former Pilkington warehouse complex on the east (convenience address 19 Mercer Street) and to the remnant of a late 19th century row house on the west (now merged into the property by identified for convenience purposes as 33 Mercer Street). The Pilkington Glass Building forms part of the historic streetscape. The house

(built circa 1857) at 24 Mercer Street is also listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The Pilkington Glass Building is an integral reminder of the evolution of Mercer Street from the residential uses of the late 1800s to the industrial and commercial infill of the 20th century.

SUMMARY:

The property at 15 Mercer Street (the portion with a convenience address of 31 Mercer Street) is identified for architectural reasons. The building was constructed in 1938-39 according to the designs of the respected Toronto architectural firm of Horwood and White as an office building of Pilkington Brothers (Canada) Limited. The Pilkington Glass Building is an excellent example of period architecture integrating Art Deco elements on the exterior and the interior. The extensive and unique use of Pilkington glass products in an artistic manner makes the interior one of the City's most significant examples of specialized glass usage.

SCHEDULE "C"

MAP AREA 506-222

