

Heritage Designation Brief

“Bank of Montreal”



130 Simcoe Street

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

June 2019

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

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| Street Address: | 130 Simcoe Street |
| Roll Number: | 040100007000000 |
| Short Legal Description: | LT 16 PL 116 TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH; LT 17 PL 116 TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH T/W R577551; PETERBOROUGH CITY |
| PACAC Application Review Date: | June 6, 2019 |
| Heritage Type: | Built Structure |
| Designation Type: | Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV |
| Designation Brief Completion Date: | May 2019 |
| Designation Brief Completed by: | Emily Turner |
| Comments: | |

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets **any one** of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 130 Simcoe Street has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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:

130 Simcoe Street is a unique example of mid-century modern commercial architecture in Peterborough. Constructed around 1960, it is one of a few modern buildings in downtown Peterborough and unique in its design, decorative elements, and craftsmanship.

ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

130 Simcoe Street displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its gold mosaic frieze and book-matched black marble panels along the Simcoe and Water Street elevations of the building.

iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

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:

The property has longstanding associations with banking in Peterborough and, specifically, the Bank of Montreal.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:

The subject property yields information on the development of modernism in Peterborough in the postwar period. It is one of a significant collection of exceptional modernist buildings in Peterborough.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community:

The subject property was designed by the local architectural firm Craig and Zeidler, most likely by Eberhard Zeidler. Zeidler was an important modernist

architecture both in Peterborough and in Canada, designing many local landmark buildings including the Memorial Centre and Beth Israel Synagogue.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

130 Simcoe Street supports the character of Peterborough's commercial downtown core. Although constructed in a different style and in a different time period than most of the surrounding properties, it maintains the rhythm and massing of the surrounding Victorian properties and supports the commercial character of the streetscape.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

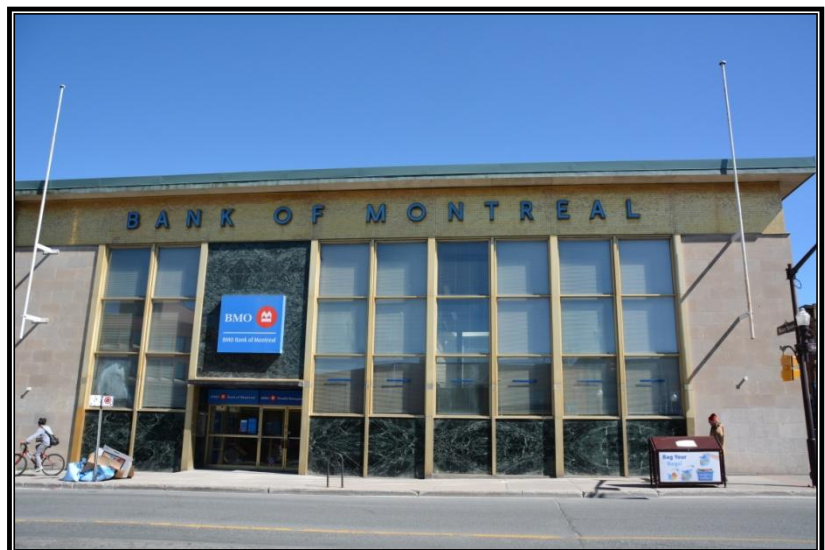
130 Simcoe Street is functionally and physically linked to its surroundings as the continuation the three-storey block along Simcoe Street between George Street North and Water Street.

iii. is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).

The subject property is a significant local landmark due to its stylistic distinctiveness and prominent location on a corner lot. It is a recognized and well-known building in the community.

Design and Physical Value

130 Simcoe Street has significant design and physical value as a unique example of modernist architecture in downtown Peterborough. Constructed in 1960 and designed by noted modernist architect Eberhard Zeidler, the property demonstrates key modernist design features and a high degree of craftsmanship in its exterior finishes. It was originally constructed as the Bank of Montreal and retains that function.



Modernist architecture emerged around the beginning of the twentieth century as a reaction to nineteenth century styles. While many nineteenth century styles, such as the Gothic and Classical revivals, actively looked to the past for stylistic inspiration, modernist architecture was based on the new construction techniques and materials and an idea that form should follow function.

Modernism rejected extensive ornament and focused on a minimalism approach

to design which emphasized the overall form and massing of the structure as opposed to the decorative details that had informed Victorian and Edwardian architecture. It became the dominant architectural style in the postwar period until around 1980; particularly in Canada, modernism did not come to prominence until after the Second World War, but had significant influence on the country's built fabric during this period. Modernist



buildings are characterized by their significant use of material such as glass, steel, and reinforced concrete and their clean horizontal and vertical lines.

The Bank of Montreal building was designed in 1959 and completed in 1960. It is a significant work of modern architecture in Peterborough and demonstrates the key feature of this important architectural movement. The building is a three-storey structure with a flat roof. Constructed of concrete with a stone facing, it is defined, particularly on the southern elevation by a glass and aluminum curtain wall with pilasters and book matched marble panels along the sidewalk and above the recessed entrance. The east elevation also includes similar features on a smaller scale.

There is also a curtain wall of similar design on the north elevation of the building, although without an entrance.

This design is highly typical of modernist architecture; the design features are stripped down and simplified with an emphasis on materials, as opposed to decorative details.



The building also retains its open plan banking hall which was included in the original design of the building, although it has been modified to allow for the creation of several individual offices within the main room of the bank. The interior is also modernist in design with open spaces, a lack of ornamentation, and a minimalist use of wood as a decorative feature.



The bank demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship in its gold tiled frieze and book matched marble panels. These are the building's key decorative features and speak to an extravagance of material not generally found in many modernist buildings, particularly in Peterborough where this style of structure tends to be

devoid of this kind of evident decoration, and in Zeidler's work as a whole. However, the use of this kind of decoration is not unknown in banking structures which were intended in the postwar period to display optimism and confidence in commerce and consumerism and the use of gold and marble both harks back to historic bank design and demonstrates wealth. The marble panels also have precedence in modern architecture: the most notable use them can be found in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion (1929). Van der Rohe, a director at the Bauhaus prior to its initial closure in 1933, integrated lavish stone panels, including book matched ones, into this design which became a key structure in the development of modernism in the mid-twentieth century and inspired features in major modernist buildings throughout Europe and North America.

One of the notable features of the bank as a modern building was the use of Classical-inspired massing and forms. Although stripped of decoration, the vertical pilasters, frieze and cornice are reminiscent of Classical design, historically the style in which banks were constructed because of the connections between Classical antiquity and banking that arose in the early modern period. The echoes of this historic style in a modernist building speak to Zeidler's understanding of the



wider context of bank design and place the building within a historic bank building tradition.



130 Simcoe Street is one of a number of modernist buildings that was constructed in downtown Peterborough in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, including a number of banks built on corner lots. Among these structures, however, the subject property is unique as a modernist building because of its developed decorative features and the way in which it integrates into the existing Victorian streetscape. Unlike other modern banks in downtown

Peterborough, the Bank of Montreal is a well-designed monumental structure that uses key features from the modernist movement in a design that complements the surrounding properties. It is also unique for its high degree of craftsmanship and attention to materials which is not found in other examples in the downtown core.

Historical and Associative Value

The property has historical and associative value as an important and longstanding banking institution in Peterborough. It also yields significant information regarding the development of modernism in Peterborough in the post war period and has significant value as the work of modernist architect Eberhard Zeidler who practiced in Peterborough between 1951 and 1962.



The present Bank of Montreal building was constructed in 1960 to replace an older bank that had been on the site since the late nineteenth century. Housed in an Italianate corner block, the property had been home to the Ontario Bank in the late nineteenth century which had been founded in Bowmanville in 1857 and had branches throughout Ontario and Quebec by the turn of the twentieth century. The bank closed due to fraud in its upper levels of management, by president George Cockburn and general manager Charles McGill, the latter of whom lived in Peterborough and worked at

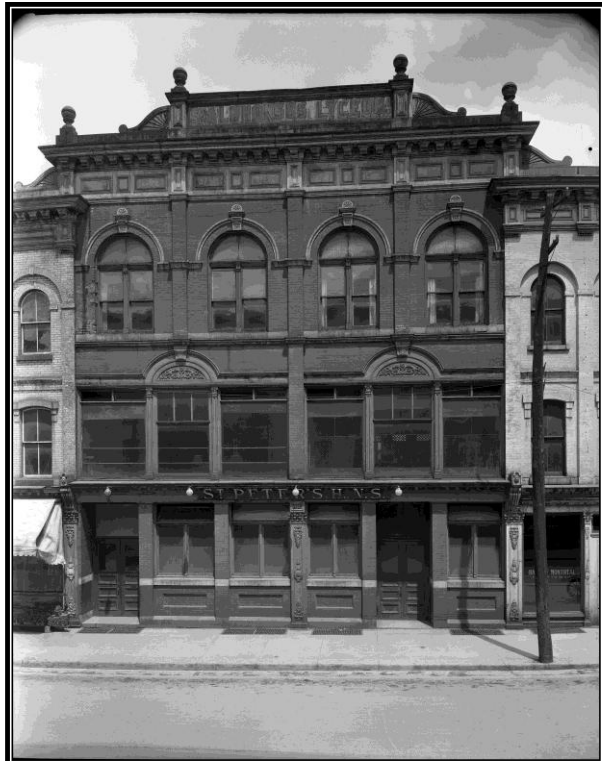
this location and spent five years in prison on various fraud charges. The bank was absorbed by the Bank of Montreal which took over its accounts, business and facilities, including the Simcoe Street location. The Bank of Montreal



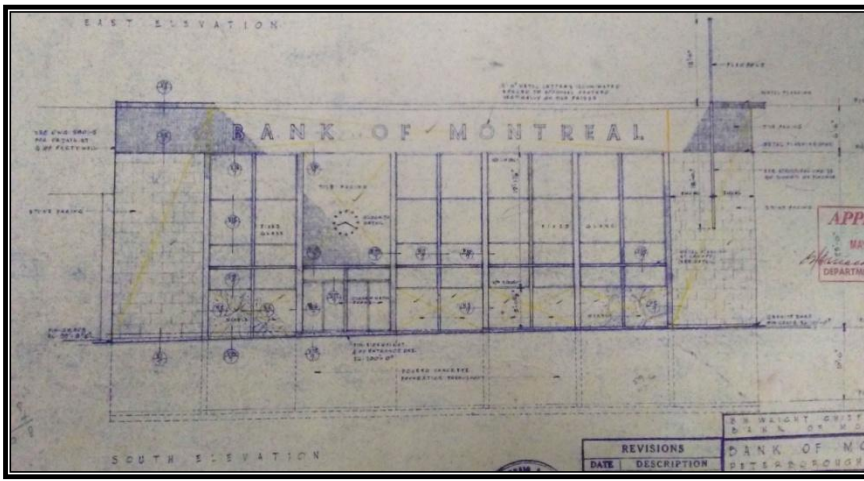
continued to operate in the older structure until the commissioned a new design from local architectural firm Craig and Zeidler to replace their existing building around 1959. The site on which the new building was constructed also contained two other nineteenth-century Italianate commercial buildings, including the elaborate St. Alphonsus Lyceum, which were demolished the make way for the new building.

The new building was constructed in the modernist style and was part of a growing wave of modernist buildings constructed in Peterborough during this

period. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, Peterborough developed a vibrant and important collection of modernist architecture of which the Bank of Montreal is one. These structures included buildings designed by Craig and Zeidler, as well as the significant modern landscape of Trent University designed by Ron Thom in the 1960s. As the city grew and developed in the postwar period, modernist buildings were constructed to herald a new and modern era separated from the industrial city of the past, particularly as new neighborhood developed and new industries, including the educational sector, emerged. While many modernist structures were constructed outside of the historic core of Peterborough in areas where the city was experiencing growth, there were also a number of institutions, notably banks, in the downtown that also wished to reflect this new modern era through their architectural fabric, leading to the reconstruction of a number of buildings in the downtown core in the modernist style. The Bank of Montreal and the Dominion Post Office are the two more notable, both of which were executed by Craig and Zeidler. The subject property yields significant information regarding the development of modernism in



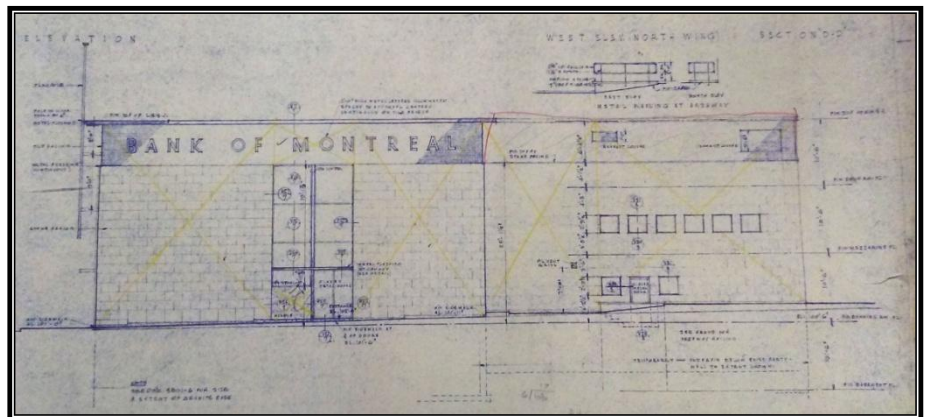
Peterborough as an important, landmark building by Craig and Zeidler which contributes to the new modernist landscape emerging in Peterborough during this period.



The subject property was designed by the firm Craig and Zeidler, most likely by Eberhard Zeidler who noted in later years that the bank was his design. Craig and Zeidler was a local architectural firm which completed a number of key modernist buildings throughout the city. The Bank of Montreal is an excellent example of Zeidler's work in Peterborough.

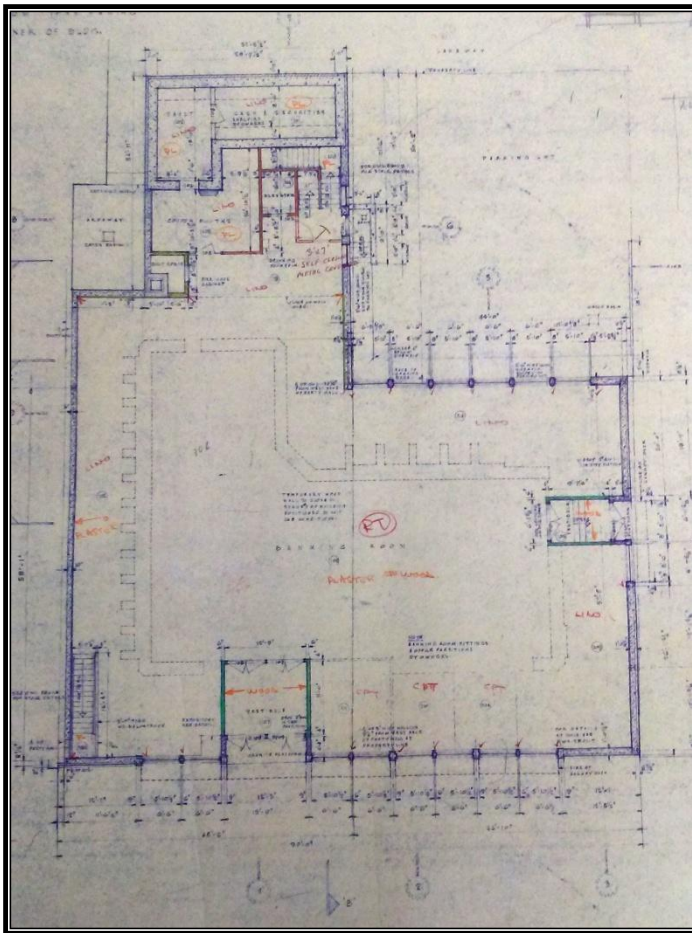
Zeidler is a central figure in the development of modernism in Peterborough in the 1950s and 1960s. Born in Germany and trained at the reopened Bauhaus in Weimar, he emigrated to Canada in 1951 and joined what was at the time Peterborough's only architectural firm, Blackwell and Craig, comprised of W.R.L. Blackwell and James Craig. Zeidler became a partner in the firm in 1955 and, two years later, Blackwell died and the firm became Craig and Zeidler. The firm moved to Toronto in 1962.

While in Peterborough, Zeidler designed a number of key modernist buildings which became landmarks within the city. These include the Memorial Centre (1954-55), Grace United Church (1954-1955), St. Giles Presbyterian Church (1953-54), and Beth Israel Synagogue (1964). In addition to these iconic buildings, he also designed a number of private homes and other structures in the modernist style. Zeidler even won his first Massey Medal for work he completed in Peterborough, on the Hamilton House, completed in 1955.



Zeidler's architectural influence extended beyond Peterborough and has been significant. Particularly with the firm's move to Toronto in 1962, he began to undertake larger projects in bigger centres some of which would become iconic

structures in Canadian modernist architecture. These include the Toronto Eaton Centre (1977-1981), the McMaster Health Science Complex (1972), and Ontario Place (1967-1971). In 1984, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada and also received the Order of Ontario.



The Bank of Montreal demonstrates some of the key features of Zeidler's work and is an important building within the catalogue of his Peterborough works. The airy openness of the banking hall, the small number of entrances, the transparency created through the glass and aluminum curtain wall, and the high modernist design features are all characteristic of his work. They also reflect the design of another building he completed in Peterborough at 130 Hunter Street West constructed in around 1956. Although on a much smaller scale than the Bank of Montreal building, 130 Hunter Street West, constructed as an office building, demonstrates many of the same characteristics including the overhanging cornice, the recessed entrances, and the pilasters. 130 Simcoe Street is an important example of Zeidler's work

in Peterborough. In the wider architectural context, it is also an important example of Zeidler's early work, before he moved to Toronto.

Contextual Value

The subject property has significant contextual value as a contributing property to the commercial character of Peterborough's downtown core. Located at the heart of Peterborough's downtown, it maintains and supports the commercial character of the area through its function, massing and form. The primary section of the building is constructed to the southern and eastern lot lines of the property and is a continuation of the streetwall along Simcoe Street that is comprised of three-storey commercial buildings. It is both functionally and physically linked to the surrounding properties as part of this three-storey commercial row.

Although constructed in a different style and during a different period than the surrounding properties, the Bank of Montreal building nevertheless retains the massing and form of the surrounding Victorian structures. It also echoes some of

the key features of the Italianate buildings that characterize most of the city's downtown, including the cornice and pilasters which have been simplified in the bank designed but maintained to continue the rhythm found along Peterborough's downtown streets.

The building also has significance within the context of the city as a whole as a key example of the modernist architecture that was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, the city developed a collection of excellent modernist architecture executed to a high degree of design and craftsmanship which, as a collection, forms an important part of its architectural heritage. The Bank of Montreal is a contributing property to this wider landscape of modernism across the city.

The bank is also a landmark building in the downtown. As one of few modernist building in a primarily Victorian downtown, it stands out and is a known and recognized structure within the community. Its prominent placement on a corner lot at an important downtown intersection enhance its landmark status as it is an anchor building along Simcoe and Water Streets, defining both of their streetscapes.



"The short statement of reason for designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Brief is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."

SHORT STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

130 Simcoe Street is an excellent and unique example of mid-century modern commercial architecture. Constructed around 1960, it displays key elements of themed-century modern commercial style, including the aluminum and glass curtain wall and minimalist use of decoration. It displays a high degree of craftsmanship in the gold mosaic frieze which extends around the south and east elevations of the building. The building was designed by German-born architect Eberhard Zeidler, Peterborough's most prominent modernist architect in the 1950s and 1960s who designed a number of iconic modernist buildings throughout the city. The property has important contextual value as part of the downtown commercial streetscape and continues the rhythm and massing of the three-storey commercial block along Simcoe Street. It is a landmark building in downtown Peterborough because of its notable stylistic features and its prominent corner location.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations and the roof including all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster, parging, metal, stone, and glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features:

Exterior Features

- Three-storey construction
- Stone facing
- Mid-century modern style
- Flat roof
- Construction to the south and east lot lines of the property
- Contiguousness to the abutting building to the west
- Wide eaves
- Cornice
- Gold mosaic frieze with "Bank of Montreal" text
- Fenestration including:
 - Aluminum and glass curtain walls
 - Square windows on the east elevation
 - Glass

- Window surrounds
 - Window openings and their associated elements including mould and trim
- Aluminum pilasters
- Marble panels, including book-matched panels
- Recessed entrances including:
 - Glass doors
 - Windows
 - Overhanging roofs
- Flagstaffs
- Depository
- Views to and from the subject property along Simcoe and Water Street