

# STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## 54-68 KING STREET WEST



### Summary of Significance

☒ Design/Physical Value

☒ Historical Value

☒ Contextual Value

☐ Social Value

☒ Economic Value

☐ Environmental Value

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**Municipal Address:** 54-68 King Street West

**Legal Description:** PLAN 383 PT LOT 5 PLAN 401 PT LOT 2 PT LOT 7

**Year Built:** 1963

**Architectural Style:** Modern with influences from different eras of architecture

**Original Owner:** Bank of Nova Scotia

**Original Use:** Bank

**Condition:** Excellent

### Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

54-68 King Street West is a one-storey 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building, built in the Modern architectural style with influences from different eras of architecture. The building is situated on a 0.36-acre parcel of land and is located on the north side of King Street West, between Ontario Street North and Queen Street North in the City Commercial Core of the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the commercial building.

## **Heritage Value**

54-68 King Street West is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value in addition to its economic value.

### **Design/Physical Value**

The design and physical value of 54-68 King Street West resides in its architecture and physical construction. The building is a unique expression of Modernist architecture that also utilizes classical and neo-classical motifs. It is this sophisticated blending of different styles from varying eras that make the subject property a significant piece of architecture within the community. Through its material use and other detailing it also displays a high degree of craftsmanship. The façades are composed of Indiana limestone and green and white marble as well as bronze detailing. The building is only one-storey in height, but the ground floor possesses 30-foot-high ceilings which gives the appearance of two-storeys.

### **South (Front) Façade**

The front of the building faces King Street West, and is a limestone façade with five bays. The four bays off-set to the west are original, while the fifth to the east is an addition. The addition is identifiable by the differing colour of the surrounding masonry, and further it visually alters the composition of the front façade. The first and third bay from the west as well as the fifth bay addition are composed of a screen of twelve white marble panels set in bronze mullions, with triple windows below. The marble panels are arranged three across and four high, and where the mullions meets there is a projecting pyramidal decorative element. The second bay from the west contains glazed double-entrance doors flanked by a window and located above the entrance, a limestone slab inscribed with the Bank of Nova Scotia Coat of Arms. The first three bays and the fifth additional bay are framed by green marble. The fourth bay is limestone arranged in an ashlar pattern. A modeled cornice adds further interest to a flat roofline.

### **West (Side) Façade**

The west side façade faces Ontario Street North and is composed of five bays, evenly spaced and similar in appearance to the white marble bays on the front façade, with triple casement windows below. The molded cornice continues along the roofline.

### **East (Side) Façade**

The east side contains the new bay addition. The east façade directly abuts the adjacent property, and most of this façade is not visible. The molded cornice from the front and rear extends briefly on either side, before terminating. It then becomes a flat parapet.

### **North (Rear) Façade**

The rear façade is composed of white brick, except for a narrow vertical strip of limestone on the western side that is arranged in the same ashlar pattern as that of the front and west side façade. The molded cornice continues along the roofline. There is a small brick addition one-storey in height that contains a door – this is the only opening on the rear façade.

### **Historical Value**

The historic and associative values of 54-68 King Street West relate to its association with banking institutions, most significantly the Bank of Nova Scotia. The original building of this branch of the bank was established in 1912 and located north down the street, at the property municipally addressed as 100 King Street West within the Canadian Block. The bank moved from its original location to its

current corner location in 1926, into the building formerly known as the Merner Block. The Merner Block had been a bank since the turn of the century, being formerly occupied by the Union Bank prior to its occupation by the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Due to a need for increased space, the Merner Block was demolished in 1962 and replaced with the existing one-storey building. Construction of the new building began in 1963 and lasted approximately a year, and the branch's official reopening occurred early in 1964. The project cost approximately \$500,000 and provided almost twice the floor area as the original building. According to John S. Proctor, then the executive vice-president of the Bank of Nova Scotia, the new building reflected the continuously improving economic climate in Canada.

The bank was designed by Kitchener architect Carl Albert Rieder. Over the 47 years of his career, Carl Rider made significant contributions to the development of the Modernist style of architecture in Southwest Ontario and in the Waterloo County region specifically. His name can be linked to over 400 buildings, including collegiate and university projects, public buildings, ecclesiastical works, industrial facilities, and private residents that display innovative designs. Within Kitchener some of his most notable work includes Eastwood Collegiate Institute (1955-56), Highland Baptist Church (1958), and the Kitchener Public Library (1959-61).

In 1968 this branch location was selected to be one of fifteen branches to implement Scotiabank's new Cheque Guarantee Card, which was the first instance in which coloured photographic ID was used in banking operations. In 1969 it became the last branch in the area to stock gold in the form of coins, wafers, and bars. In 1995 it became the centralized location for Kitchener-Waterloo Commercial Business Activities, staffing specialized teams to service Mid-Market and Corporate clientele as well as the area's Independent Business sector.

This site and building have significant association with banking institutions, as well as association with programs and initiatives undertaken by the bank that reflect how such institutions and their processes have changed and developed over time. It reflects the economic client of both the area and, to some degree, the country at the time. Further, the building is a demonstration of the work and skill of an important local architect, who has been recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects for his contributions to the field.

### ***Contextual Value***

The contextual value of 54-68 King Street West relates to its importance in maintaining the commercial character of the surrounding area, as well as its physical, functional, visual, and historical link to its surroundings. The building is located at the intersection of King Street West – a primary road within the downtown core area – and Ontario Street, and it has occupied this site since 1926. It is within the Downtown Cultural Heritage Landscape, which is within the City Centre District and is an area that has historically been recognized as the heart of the downtown and a focal point of the Region. The area is occupied by a mix of uses, with hotels, banks, and other commercial enterprises being the original anchors of the commercial core. While this area has continued to evolve, many of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures remain today. In addition, the distinct architectural style of 54-68 King Street West and its location on a corner lot along a primary road makes the building prominently visible and easily recognizable.

## **Other Values**

### **Economic Value**

Within Canada, banking institutions act as both major employers and essential contributors to the Canadian economy, contributing approximately 3.8% to Canadas Gross Domestic Product. As of January 1, 2023, Scotiabank specifically has over 90, 000 employees and assets of over \$1.3 trillion. As such, branch locations possess and reflect economic value.

### **Heritage Attributes**

The heritage value of 54-68 King Street West resides in the following:

- All elements related to the construction and architectural style, including:
  - Limestone façade;
  - White marble panels set in bronze mullions;
  - Bronze mullions with pyramidal projection at each intersection;
  - Limestone slab inscribed with the Bank of Nova Scotia's coat of arms;
  - Moulded cornice;
  - Roof and roofline;
  - Windows and window openings; and,
  - Doors and door openings.

## **References**

- Steven Mannell, "Images of Progress 1946-1996: Modern Architecture in Waterloo Region"
- Kitchener-Waterloo Record, "Old Bank Building May be Replaced" (April 3, 1961)
- Kitchener-Waterloo Record, "Bank Official Sees Uptrend Continuing" (February 29, 1964)
- Kitchener-Waterloo Record, "K-W Commercial Business Activities now centralized as Scotiabank's K-W Commercial Banking Centre" (December 6 1995)
- Waterloo Historical Society, Volume 95



## Photographs



Front Elevation (South Façade)



Rear Elevation (North Façade)





Side Elevation (West Façade)



Detailing of White Marble Bays



Detailing of Limestone Inscription Above Front Entrance