

## THE BANK OF TORONTO

58 Wellington Street East, at Church (NW), 1868  
1863 by William Kauffman

The Bank of Toronto was chartered by the Province of Canada on 18 March 1855. Earlier attempts had been made to found the bank as the Millers, Merchants, and Farmers Bank of Canada West, a name that indicates its support and explains the prominent role played in its affairs by the Gooderhams, whose family business (Gooderham & Worts) was at the time involved in both milling and distilling. The first office was in a rented building at 70 Church Street. (Though altered, it still stands.) So successful were the first six years of operation that in 1862, with the paid-up capital increased eight times over what it had been in 1855 and the shares fully subscribed, the directors announced the construction of a new head office at the intersection of Church and Wellington.<sup>70</sup>

The new building, designed by William Kauffman, cost \$46,590, but there can be no doubt that the bank received an impressive home rivalled by few of the other banks that crowded Toronto. Three storeys high, 64 feet wide on the Wellington Street façade and 100 feet on the Church Street façade, it was impressive in the streetscape for its sheer bulk alone. It was designed in

central axis of a symmetrical façade. Not only did Kauffman use just two arches; he also constructed twin columns on the centre axis, and on the upper levels of the façade paired the window frames to match the portico. However, the unique design is completely explained by the planning, which divides the building into two separate units, with the Bank of Toronto on the east side, next to Church Street, and the Quebec Bank on the west.

The exterior richness and detail were continued inside in the decoration of the banks' offices.\* All of the ceilings of the main rooms and ground-floor offices were richly detailed with plaster mouldings of interlocking roundels, ovals, and rectangles in a vaguely seventeenth-century style. These rooms were finished with massive and heavily moulded oak woodwork and the settings were completed by the surfacing of the walls with a thick layer of scagliola—a mixture of plaster, marble dust, glue, and a variety of colours, polished to imitate marble or granite—with a Sienna pattern in the banking room, white-veined marble in the Directors' Room, and green Syenite granite in the corridors and cashier's office. These interiors were conceived, like the exteriors, as an ensemble to impress the public and demonstrate the importance of this bank among the many other banks in the city. As he had done in the Masonic Hall (plate 60) and other buildings, Kauffman succeeded in creating work that was richly detailed, finely crafted, and personal.

As the Bank of Toronto grew, it took over more of the building. In 1884 the Quebec Bank moved out and a three-unit warehouse was built on the land to the west (designed by A.G. Macklin); it was connected to the Kauffman building to provide offices for the president, George Gooderham, and for his company. When the Gooderham & Worts Building (the 'Flat Iron' Building) was completed in 1891-2, the entire space was altered by Knox and Elliott for the bank.<sup>71</sup> By 1901, however, the building was again too small, and because further additions were not possible, the bank began to plan a new head office at King and Bay (plate 72). This was opened in 1913 and the old building became a branch bank and then a records centre, with some sections rented. Finally in 1961 the bank—known as the Toronto-Dominion Bank since a merger in 1955—demolished the 1863 head office and replaced it with a pavilion-like building that opened on 1 August 1962.

\*The original specifications for the interior and exterior construction are preserved in the Premises Department of the Toronto-Dominion Bank.