

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce

Location: 44 Main St. South, Seaforth, Ontario
Year built: 1905

SIMON POWELL OWNED this lot and the one behind it backing onto Victoria Street. He had a hotel stable on the back lot and this was the only building here until the Canadian Bank of Commerce was relocated and the present building was built in 1905.



The Canadian Bank of Commerce dressed with striped awnings.



The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce as it is today. The name was changed in 1961.

The CIBC building is a good example of the Classical Revival style of architecture. It is a 2½-storey red brick building with white stone accents. There are large quoins of white stone at the corners. The foundation is of rusticated stone. There are four engaged columns supporting the entablature and pediment which are made of wood. The deep triangular pediment is outlined by dentils. The entablature, as you can see in the above left photograph, once displayed the bank's name. The doorway, up three steps from the sidewalk, has a square stone projections topped by lights. The doorway is

flanked by rectangular windows topped by concrete straight-moulded labels with imitation keystone. Above the doorway, and the sign above it, is a cornice between the two central columns and projecting beyond the columns. The cornice is supported by three brackets. There are three square windows on the second floor placed between the columns. This impressive structure was built by Seaforth contractors. It cost slightly over \$10,000.

Long before The Canadian Bank of Commerce built the present bank, it opened a branch in Seaforth on

December 19, 1878. The bank was then located in the Dominion Block just south of the Commercial Hotel. The Dominion Block was built in 1874 by William Elliott and Alex Armitage. When it was completed later that year, what was then The Royal Canadian Bank and later the Canadian Bank of Commerce, moved into the north section of the three-store block. Joseph Brownell had a grocery store in the second part. William Elliott had a bookstore and telegraph office in the third section. This third part was used as a grocery store, the Salt Association office, and a liquor store, from the late 1870s until Russell H. Sproat opened his first flour and feed business here in 1909. For a number of years, he was in the grocery business with his brother, Ross J. Sproat. From then, until 1936, he had a shoe store here.



The Canadian Bank of Commerce in the Dominion Block at 94 Main Street South



In this photograph of c. 1915 the Dominion Block housed Beattie's Fair grocery, John Rankin's insurance and bonds agency, and Russell Sproat's Seed & Feed, a flour and feed shop.

The Dominion Block is red brick with an arcaded second storey—the windows are separated by pilasters linked by raised arches. The curved arch is echoed by the lighter brick window labels. Note the floral decoration on the frieze, and the cornice brackets. As you can see in the photograph above, the storefront cornice was arched above the central doorway.