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THE LESTER B. PEARSON BUILDING

AN OTTAWA LANDMARK

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) was established in 1909 and was originally situated above a barbershop on Bank Street in downtown Ottawa. In 1914, headquarters moved to the East Block on Parliament Hill, where it remained for nearly 60 years. By the time planning for the new building began in 1964, the Department had far outgrown its existing facilities.

Considerable care went into the choice of a site. The location selected was on Sussex Drive, which forms part of the ceremonial route that links the residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor General to Parliament Hill. Across the street is the original headquarters of the National Research Council, as well as Earncliffe, once the home of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, later the British High Commission and now the residence of the British High Commissioner. Down the street on the east bank of the Rideau River is Ottawa's City Hall, and the embassies of Japan, France, Malaysia and South Africa are nearby on Sussex Drive, as are the residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor General.

The Lester B. Pearson Building was opened on August 1, 1973, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Designed by Brian Brooks of the architectural firm Webb, Zeraka, Menkes to meet a municipal height limit of 50 metres, the building comprises four blocks or towers containing some 56 000 square metres of floor space, connected by an enclosed lobby. The main entrance features four sets of bronze panelled doors designed by Toronto's Robert Hedrick; on the inside, just above the entranceway, is a hand-carved rendition of the Canadian coat of arms by noted Ottawa sculptor Art Price. The building also houses the only permanent display of international flags in Canada, representing 170 different countries.

The lobby and adjacent areas house a conference complex as well as a bank, library, Client Services Centre and cafeteria, which are open to the public and also used by those who work in the building. Visitors to the cafeteria will notice a unique work of art entitled *Veneration of the White Collar Worker*, by noted Canadian artist Gathie Falk.