

2054 Washington Street – Bodega Hotel



Bodega Hotel 2013

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Bodega Hotel
- 2) **Common Name:** Rossland Light Opera Players (RLOP)
- 3) **Address:** 2054 Washington Street
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1896/97
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Bodega Hotel, originally used as a hotel and saloon, is located on the eastern side of the first block of Washington Street, north of the intersection with Columbia Avenue, the two streets that define Rossland's historic and current downtown core. It is a two storey wooden building constructed prior to 1898 in a style common to that era with a peaked roof and false front, narrow frontage and extending deep into the lot (15' by 60' footprint).

Heritage Value:

The first block of Washington Street containing the Bogeda Hotel is the densest block of remaining turn-of-the century commercial buildings in Rossland due to the huge fires of 1927 and 1929 that destroyed many buildings along Columbia Avenue. With its wood construction and Western style of architecture, the Bodega Hotel is representative of the smaller hotels that were abundant in the downtown area of Rossland during the gold mining boom town days of the late 1890's and very early 1900's. According to an 1898 Licence Inspector's Report to the City, it contained the prerequisite bar room, "nicely fixed up," 12 bedrooms and 1 water closet, "dirty."

After the gold mining days ended the Bodega Hotel was used for a variety of business enterprises such as a restaurant, an ice cream parlor, a jewellery store and apartments upstairs. From 1957 to 1983 it was owned by the Fraternal Order of Eagles. Since 1983 it has been the home of the Rossland Light Opera Players which were founded in 1951. It is believed to be the oldest musical theatre company in British Columbia. In 2013, a major restoration project of the building's facade was undertaken with authentic reproduction of original details along with new paint on trim and walls. A plaque identifies it as one of Rossland's significant historic buildings.

Character Defining Elements:

- Location on Washington Street in downtown Rossland.
- Western style of architecture.
- Wooden construction.
- Original exterior features:
 - Western false-front style
 - set-back door entrance
 - transom window above entrance door
 - cargo doors
 - large display window
 - roof line cornice trim
 - large skylight
 - original window placement and trim
 - lower wall cladding
- Original interior features:
 - most of the original floor plan
 - moldings
 - tin bar room ceiling
 - original staircase to second floor
 - beaded board wainscotting
 - transom windows above the second floor doors
 - original support beams in basement - coal chute



Washington Street -Bodega Hotel (3rd building on right) c. 1897

HISTORY

The Bodega Hotel was built on Washington Street in the early boom days of the Rossland Mining Camp, probably in 1896. The population of Rossland was growing very quickly at this time and with the influx of many men wanting to find work in the mines or in the townsite, accommodation was often only available in hotels or boarding houses. Early homes at this time were best described as being shacks and tents apparently were also in use.

The Rossland License Inspector submitted a "Report on City Hotels" to the Rossland Council on February 1, 1898 - the City having been incorporated just 10 months earlier. At that time, Rossland's population was around 7,000 people and there were 39 hotels noted in the report.

The Bodega Hotel entry stated that the building was 15' by 60' and owned by Mr. H. McPherson. The lot was owned by A. Revsbeck and the "Holder of License" was Sid. Hobbs. Following is the list of rooms in the hotel, their dimensions and the Inspector's comments:

- Bar-room 14' by 25', height 10' - clean and nicely fitted up
- 2 clubrooms adjoining bar
- Reading room 12' by 13'
- Dining room 15' by 30' and kitchen, 15' by 30' – both on ground floor and the dining room not in use.
- 10 bedrooms 10' by 10', height 8'6"
- 2 bedrooms 12' by 14', height 8'6"
- 1 water closet --- dirty

It is interesting to note that the building's dimensions could not have accommodated all of the rooms listed in the Inspector's Report - perhaps fewer bedrooms or smaller sizes of rooms?

At the end of Inspector William Harp's report, he wrote,

"I beg to call the attention of the Board to the fact that none of the hotels are complying with the provisions of the Fire Escape Act 1894. I would also take the liberty of recommending that the attention of the Medical Health Officer be called to the condition of the Water Closets and back-yards of many of the hotels, so that they may, where necessary, be placed in a proper sanitary condition before the summer."

The 1911 Assessment Roll reveals that George Green and Alex Smith now owned the Bodega Hotel as well as the Hoffman House close by. Mr. Green apparently ran an ice-cream parlor in the Bodega, much to the delight of the many youngsters who visited his store often.

George Green then sold the building to Mr. Mueller in the early 1930's and it became known as the Mueller Block. A jewelry store owned by Mr. Piper was located on the main floor and there were apartments upstairs. In the mid-1930's, the building became known as Rosie's Cafe, named after the Chinese owner and operated until 1945.

In March of 1957, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Branch 10, Rossland moved into the hall and remained owners until September of 1983. The Rossland Light Opera Players then purchased the building and have remained its owners ever since. In 1984, they were the first building owner, to make use of grant money available for facade improvement as part of the Downtown Revitalization Program.

In 2013 a major restoration project of the building's facade was undertaken by the Rossland Light Opera Players. Where possible restoration work was completed. When not possible, an authentic reproduction of original details was done. These improvements along with new paint on trim and walls make this heritage building a standout in the downtown today. So many building facades have changed over the past one hundred plus years in the commercial area and the Bodega is one of only a few that look today as it did when originally built!

As of 2021, this building continues to be the home of the Rossland Light Opera Players and they continue to make upgrades as required.