

2044 Washington Street – Hoffman House



Hoffman House 2021

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Hoffman House
- 2) **Common Name:** Wise's Hardware
- 3) **Address:** 2044 Washington Street
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1896
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Hoffman House is located at 2044 Washington Street in Rossland, British Columbia. It is a mid-block, wooden framed, flat-roofed, 3 storey building with a full 30' frontage on Washington Street. The historic place includes the building on its footprint.

Heritage Value:

The Hoffman House is valued because it is part of the original streetscape of downtown Rossland that dates back to 1896. The Washington Street buildings escaped the horrific fires of

1902, 1927 and 1929 that destroyed so many of the early commercial buildings in other parts of the downtown.

The presence of the Hoffman House today, is a visual reminder that hotels were the most prevalent type of building in the downtown during the boom years of the gold mining era of Rossland's history. There were over 40 hotels in Rossland in 1900 and the Hoffman House is representative of the larger hotels, having had more than 30 rooms. It also had the required kitchen and dining room facilities and met the fire regulations and thus received hotel status in the eyes of the local licensing authorities. The Hoffman House bar-room was a popular spot for entertainment and socializing of locals and visitors.

The Hoffman House exemplifies the common characteristic history of many of Rossland's downtown buildings in that the usage of this building changed many times over the years since it was built. Amongst the most noteworthy of changes in usage, was the creation of a hardware store in 1934 when the Hoffman House and its neighbor, the Collins Hotel were purchased and became one business entity on the main floor of both buildings. The hardware business continued into the 1990s but under 3 different ownerships. Apartments in both buildings replaced the original hotel bedrooms on the second and third floors.

Improvements to the front of the Hoffman House in 2007 have replicated historical elements of the original facade, adding to the visual appeal of Washington Street, and supporting efforts to maintain the historic ambiance of Rossland's downtown.

Character Defining Elements:

- Location in the historic downtown.
- Original clapboard siding.
- Balconies on second and third floors as in the original façade.
- Wooden canopy formed by 2nd floor balcony - an original feature of the Hoffman that extends to the curb and supported by wooden pillars.
- Plaque on building frontage, identifies the Hoffman House as one of Rossland's significant heritage buildings.

HISTORY

The Hoffman House was built on Washington Street in 1896 by Harry McIntosh. There was a construction frenzy happening in Rossland at this time to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing population of this promising gold mining center. Accommodation of any sort was hard to find for the mostly male population and the Hoffman House no doubt served not only the traveling public but business people and workers who needed a place to stay until more permanent quarters could be obtained.

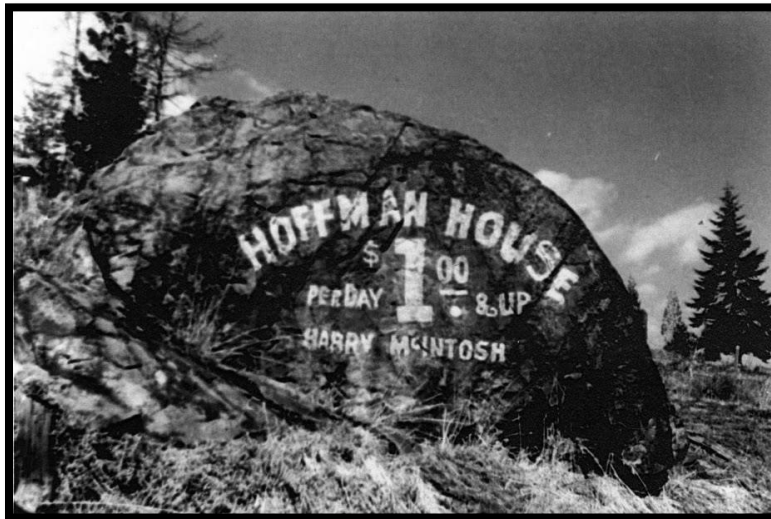
The Hoffman House was a licensed hotel which meant that it met the criteria of the City's Licensing By-law (1897) - more than 30 rooms, had an operating dining room and met the Fire Escape Regulations. The Hotel License cost \$100 and was valid for 6 months upon satisfactory inspection.

The Licensing Inspector's Report of February 1, 1898 provides the following information about the Hoffman House:

- owner of property and building - McKellar & McGaughey
- Holder of Hotel License - T. D. Hayden
- Size of building - 26'X70'
- Size of bar-room - 16'X20'
- Two club rooms
- Dining room - 13'X27'
- Kitchen - 13'X17'
- 11 bedrooms on the first (second) floor
- 14 bedrooms on the second (third) floor

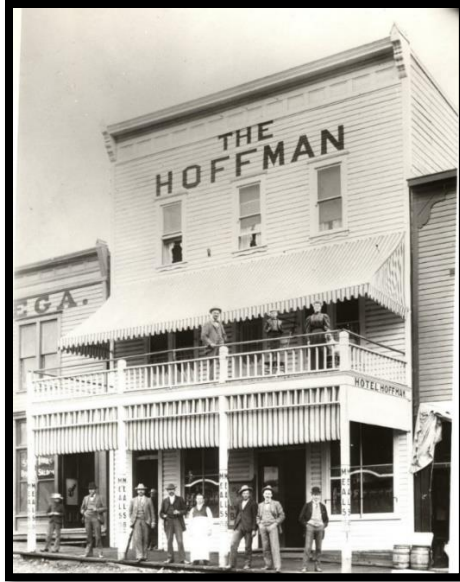
Remarks made in the Report, say that the dining room was not in use and the bedrooms, under the management of Mrs. McKellar, were neatly furnished. It noted that there were 2 closets upstairs and in good order and there also was a bathroom (which very few hotels had at this time). The two closets on the ground floor were "filthy" at the time of the inspection.

By all accounts, the Hoffman House had a very good reputation in Rossland's early days. It is interesting that whitewashed remnants of Hoffman House advertising are still visible on the rocks beside the railway bed of the Columbia and Western Railway for passengers to see as they approached Rossland from Trail.



Advertising on Columbia and Western Railway route

Apparently the Hoffman House had 4 bowling alleys at the rear of the building. They were destroyed by fire in 1913 and there is no evidence that such a novel and popular attraction was ever rebuilt.



Hoffman House 1905



Hoffman House c. 1944

Ownership and use of the Hoffman House changed many times over the past 100 years. George Green and Alex Smith bought the Hoffman House in 1911 and also later acquired the Bodega Hotel next door. At what point the building was no longer used as a hotel is not clear but in 1934 we do know that Jack Hackney bought the Hoffman House and the Collins Hotel and opened Hackney's Hardware Store in both premises. This business was later purchased by Sam Wise in 1944 who changed the name to Wise's Hardware. In 1966, Jack Malchow purchased the buildings from Sam Wise but kept the name of Wise's Hardware and continued that business until 1988. From 1989 to 1992 it became the Mini Hardware owned by Jim Ripling and then from 1993 to 1998 Max's Hardware owned by Max and Jill Spearn. John Greene took over the hardware business in 1998 and renamed it Rossland Pro Hardware. It

remained in this building until 2005 when it moved to the Hunter Brother building on Columbia Ave. At some point between 1997 and 2005, the building façade was returned to its original appearance.



Hoffman House and Collins Hotel - 1987