

2038 Washington Street - Collins Hotel



Collins Hotel 2009 (yellow building)

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Collins Hotel
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 2038 Washington Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1896
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Collins Hotel is located on the east side of Washington Street, midway between Columbia and First Avenues in Rossland, British Columbia. It is a two and a half storey, flat roofed, frame building in the vernacular style and its south wall marks the edge of the alley that

separates it from the Bank of Montreal building. The historic place includes the building on its footprint.

Heritage Value:

The Collins Hotel is valued as being part of an original, dense streetscape of Downtown Rossland that dates back to 1897. (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.)

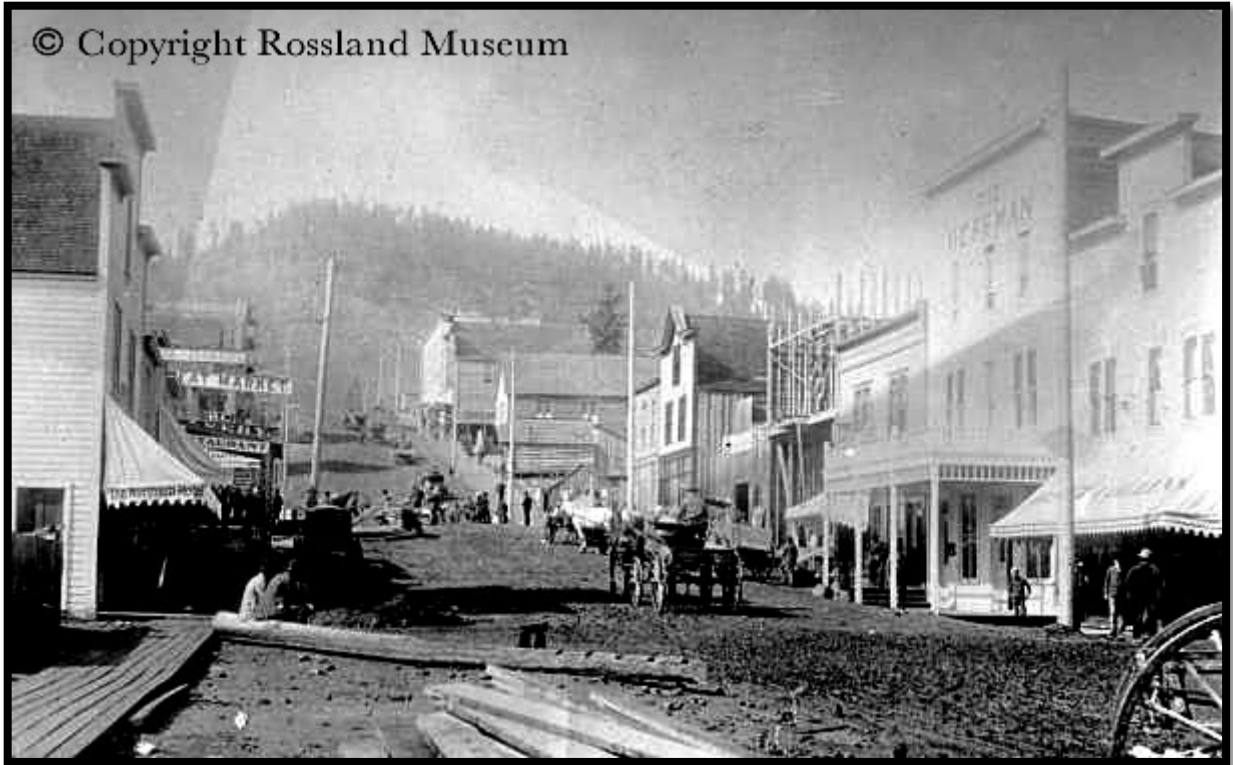
The presence of the Collins Hotel today acts as a reminder that hotels were the most common type of building in the Downtown during the boom years of construction, growth and mine development - the Collins Hotel being just one of forty Rossland hotels in 1900. The hotels played an important role in the early social history of the community, providing accommodation, often a place to eat and always a place to socialize in the barroom, for the newly arrived, business people and the traveling public.

The Collins Hotel is an example of a common characteristic of Rossland's Downtown buildings in that its use has changed many times over the years, reflecting changing needs and perceived business opportunities. The Collins Hotel and its neighbor, the Hoffman House, were joined in the 1930s to provide premises for a hardware store that operated until the 1990s with apartments replacing the bedrooms on the second floor.

Facade improvements in 2007 have enhanced the heritage character of the Collins Hotel and added to the visual appeal of Washington Street, supporting the historic ambiance of Rossland's downtown.

Character Defining Elements:

- location in the historic Rossland Downtown
- Part of the original commercial streetscape of Washington Street
- Original clapboard siding
- A second storey veranda across the front of the building
- A wooden awning supported by pillars at the curb edge, across the front of building
- A plaque identifies the Collins Hotel as one of Rossland's significant heritage buildings.



Collins Hotel (1st building on right) c.1897

HISTORY

The Collins Hotel, on the east side of Washington Street, (beside the Hoffman House) was built in 1896. It is part of the original downtown streetscape, never touched by the horrific fires of 1902, 1927 or 1929 that destroyed so many of Rossland's earliest commercial buildings. It was built at a time when the hastily constructed buildings of Sour Dough Alley were being replaced by more substantial ones. (The entrance to Sour Dough Alley was just across the street.) The Collins Hotel was a relatively large, wood frame, two and a half storey building with a flat roof. It was built as a hotel, providing accommodation, eating facilities and the requisite bar-room for the rapidly growing, mostly male population and the traveling public.

Although the Collins Hotel was considered one of the 40 hotels in Rossland prior to 1900, it did not receive hotel status as far as licensing was concerned. The City Bylaw of 1897 said that an establishment had to have 30 or more rooms, a dining room and met the provisions outlined in the Fire Escape Regulations before a Hotel License would be issued at a cost of \$100 for a six month period. Instead, the Collins Hotel had a Saloon License which allowed it to sell liquor on its premises and the cost was \$300 for a six month period.

The Licensing Inspector's Report of February 2, 1898 provides the following information about the Collins Hotel:

- owner of property and building - J. W. O'Brien
- Holder of License - J. W. O'Brien
- Size of building - 30'X90'
- Size of bar-room - 15'X23'
- Three club rooms, office in front
- Dining room - 13'X39'
- Kitchen - large and in the rear
- 14 bedrooms on the first (second) floor

Remarks made in the Report, say that the dining room was not in use and the bedrooms were under the management of Mrs. Muir. It noted that there was 1 water closet for the building and it was "filthy". Also, "Urinal none". The Report also refers to the fact that the attic was not furnished.

Tracking the demise of the Collins Hotel as a hotel and the changes in the use of the building is not complete. However, we do know that in the late 1920's the building's owner, Henry Wilkins closed the bar. At this point, half the building became Rossland's first Library.

In 1934 Jack Hackney bought both the Hoffman House and the Collins Hotel and ran Hackney's Hardware in both premises with accommodation above. In 1944 Sam Wise bought the buildings and the business and renamed it Wise's Hardware. In 1966, Jack Malchow bought the business and buildings and continued the hardware business under the name of Wise's Hardware.