

## 1973 Columbia Avenue – Burns Block



Burns Block 2009

### **Heritage Register - Building**

- 1) **Historical Name:** Burns Block
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 1973 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1905
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **Description:**

The Burns Block is a brick, 2 storey building on the south side of Columbia Avenue in the downtown of Rossland, B.C. A sign, "Associate Medical Clinic" extends across the front of the

building, between the 1st and 2nd floors. The 2 windows on the top floor facing Columbia Avenue are partially fronted with grill work.

The entrances to the main floor and to the top floor are side by side, under a recessed portion of the front facade. The address is 1973 Columbia Avenue.

#### **Heritage Value:**

- the Burns Block, constructed in 1905, is one of the few brick buildings built in the Rossland downtown area after the City by-law of 1902 was enacted requiring all commercial buildings to be constructed of brick. (The By-law came about because of the disastrous fire of August 25, 1902 that destroyed all the wooden commercial buildings along Spokane Street between Columbia Avenue and 1st Street.)
- This building is a reminder of Pat Burns, the man who established a string of commercial meat markets in many West Kootenay communities and mining camps of the 1890s, supplied with meat from his Alberta ranches and his local slaughterhouses. He went on to found the Burns Meat Packing Company - a firm that was well known throughout Western Canada in the 20th century.
- The Burns Block contained a butcher shop for over 70 years - from 1905 to 1977
- In 1977 the Burns Block became the Associate Medical Clinic of Rossland which has occupied the main floor since, with residential use on the top floor.

#### **Character Defining Elements:**

- original location and footprint
- Brick construction - visible under layers of paint
- Heritage Plaque beside entrance, identifying this building as one of Rossland's significant heritage buildings.



Burns Block (right of Hotel Allan)

## HISTORY

The Burns Block, on the south side of Columbia Avenue was built in 1905. It is a two storey building of brick construction. Today it stands alone, as fire has destroyed the once fine Allan Hotel on its east side and the buildings on its west side are gone -explaining the unrelieved side walls we see today. (N.B., windows have been added on the west wall). The owner of the lot and building was the P. Burns & Co., Ltd., owned by Pat Burns, a very successful businessman in the Kootenays with interests in the distribution and sale of meat.

Pat Burns' first business outlet in Rossland (1896) was on Spokane Street between Columbia Avenue and First Avenue - where the concentration of businesses was densest in the early days of the mining camp. On August 25,1902 a huge fire destroyed all the buildings on either side of this portion of Spokane Street and the businesses affected either relocated to new premises or went out of business. The manager of the Kootenay operations of the firm of P. Burns & Co., came to Rossland in September of 1902 and stated that they intended to build, but on a more centrally located site. The City by-law said that all new construction had to be of brick and the firm's representative said that this would be done but construction would wait until the spring of 1903 to optimize building conditions.

Burns & Co., continued to operate its wholesale and retail meat business in Rossland after the 1902 fire - advertising frequently in the Rossland Miner newspaper. See below for a typical advertisement that also shows the extent of the Burns business:

### **P. Burns & Co.**

#### **Wholesale Markets**

Rossland, Nelson, Trail, Sandon, Revelstoke  
Greenwood, Grand Forks and Vancouver

#### **Retail Markets**

Rossland, Trail, Nelson, Ymir, Kaslo, Sandon,  
New Denver, Silverton, Cascade City, Grand Forks,  
Greenwood, Phoenix, Midway, Camp McKinney,  
Revelstoke, Ferguson and Vancouver  
Fish, Game and Poultry in Season,  
Sausages of all kinds  
Wm. Donald, Manager Rossland Branch

The Tax and Assessment Rolls indicate that the present location of the Burns Block was purchased in 1905 and a building constructed in that year (30' by 66'). The building was assessed at \$3,500 (half of its value for taxation purposes) and the property at \$3,080.

The Burns & Co. butcher shop employed different butcher/managers over the years of its operation. The last one, Jim Wright, eventually established his own business across the street and down a block from the Burns Block and at this time (1944) the Burns building and business was sold to the then owner of the next door Allan Hotel - Joe Bielli. In that year Bielli went into business with Harold Elmes and the name of the meat business became the Butcheteria. The Elmes family lived upstairs in the building. (Mr. Elmes was a long time mayor

of Rossland and it is said that the building also served as City Hall as Elmes both lived and worked at this address.)

In 1977, the Medical Associates' Clinic bought the building and it has served as a clinic ever since, with apartments above.



P. Burns Butcher Shop interior c.1910