

2288 Columbia Avenue – Court House



Court House 2009

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Court House
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 2288 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1901
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:** J.J. Honeyman

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Source: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes, June, 1980

Description:

The Rossland Court House National Historic Site of Canada is a substantial two-storey brick building located on a steeply sloping site that affords a commanding view over the

surrounding area and showcases its landmark status within the community. Constructed of buff brick over a stone basement, the building's distinctive design incorporates projecting tower sections on all four corners, three of which are crowned by steep tile-clad pyramidal roofs. The building's exterior wall surfaces are richly ornamented with polychromatic detailing. Its interior is beautifully preserved and distinguished by the wood panelled court room and massive stained glass window bearing the provincial coat of arms flanked by the coats of arms of colonial Chief Justice Matthew Baillie Begbie and colonial Governor James Douglas.

Heritage Value:

The Rossland Court House was designated a national historic site in 1980 because it is highly representative of a distinctive regional form of Canadian court house that emerged in British Columbia during the late 19th century.

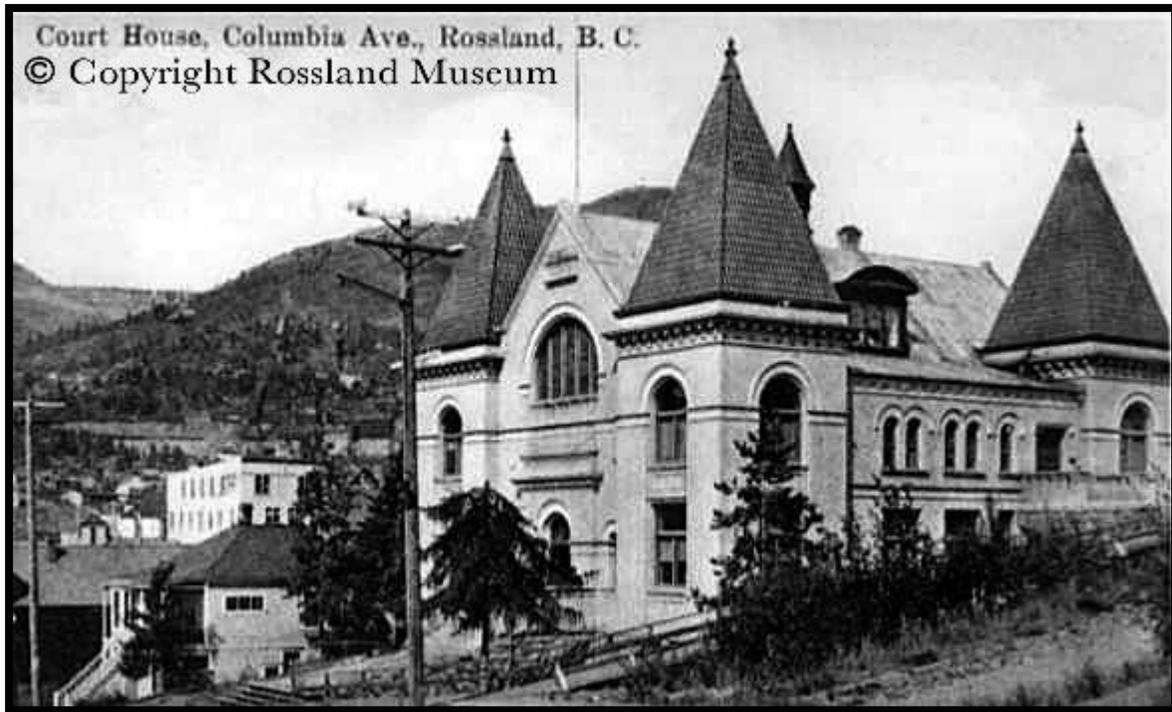
The province's early law makers strove to emphasize the English origins of the province's legal system in newly-settled regions in the wake of large waves of American miners and fortune seekers. In important mining centres such as Rossland, this intent was reflected in the design of a court house which served as a visual symbol of the Crown's authority. Wood-beamed ceilings, wood panelled walls and stained glass windows cast a solemn atmosphere over court proceedings, while court house exteriors were intended to convey a distinctly British character. Designed by Glasgow native J.J. Honeyman, Rossland's court house epitomizes this approach to court house design through its well-preserved exterior and interior.

Character-Defining Elements:

The key elements relating to the heritage value of this site include:

- the continuous function of the building as a court house;
- the footprint of the building and the historical relationship between the building and its site, including setbacks on Columbia and Monte Cristo street frontages;
- sightlines of the court house along Columbia Streets and throughout the community which contribute to its landmark status;
- site features, including the stone perimeter walls, walled entrance staircase and walkway;
- the exterior forms, massing, materials and design features of the building that contribute to its stature as an important regional landmark and as a visual symbol of authority, including:
 - the roofline and roof surfaces, including tiled pyramidal corner towers, finials, cupola, semi-elliptical dormers, gabled parapets;
 - original exterior brick and stone wall surfaces, including cut rubble stone basement, brick walls with polychromatic detailing in cut and carved stone and brick;
 - exterior decorative treatment including window and door openings and surrounds, the formal main entrance and side porch, decorative stone and brick wall and eaves elements including bracketed frieze, window panels, round-headed window and door hoods, string courses, and elaborately embellished entrance surround and entablature;
 - original doors and windows;

- symmetrical floor plan, notably second floor configuration containing main court room, judge's chambers, barristers room, law library, sheriff's office and smaller court room;
- original interior walls, ceiling and floor surfaces and door and window surrounds;
- court room and subsidiary chambers, including original fixtures, stained glass windows, wall and ceiling panelling, timber beamed ceiling with inlaid cedar panels;
- central hall with imposing main staircase with ornate newel posts and railings.



Court House c.1901

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Court House c. 1915