

Father Pat Monument



Father Pat Memorial 2009

Heritage Register - Site

- 1) **Historical Name:** Father Pat Monument
- 2) **Common Name:** Father Pat Monument or Memorial
- 3) **Location:** in front of 2071 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1902

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Father Pat Monument is located on a sidewalk bump-out on the southwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Queen Street. It is a massive drinking fountain, made of granite and marble with a base approximately 5' x 5' x 5' with a central obelisk rising above, for a total height of 14 feet.

Heritage Value:

The Father Pat Monument honors Henry Irwin, an Anglican minister known affectionately as Father Pat, who served the community of Rossland from 1896 to 1899. It is valued because it perpetuates the memory of a man who was held in high esteem by all Rossland citizens for his tireless and caring efforts on their behalf. In early 1902, when news came back to Rossland of his death, a public subscription was immediately started and a committee formed to find the best way to recognize and honor Father Pat for his contributions to the community. The Rossland Miner newspaper provided coverage of all the deliberations and progress leading to the final decisions. The Monument was constructed in September of 1902 and an ambulance purchased for use at the mines.

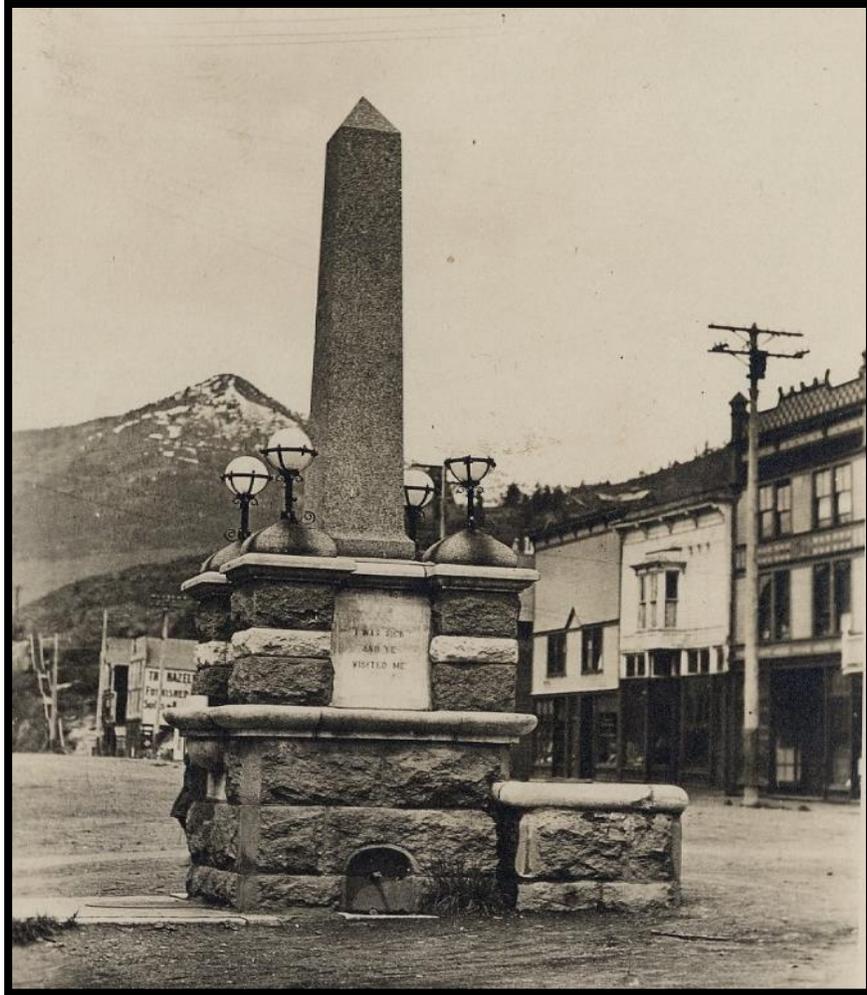
Father Pat's humanitarianism is conveyed through four panels of inscriptions and the fact that the Monument itself is a drinking fountain, providing separate places for people, horses and dogs to drink.

The Monument was designed by the Rossland architect, J. J. Honeyman, and is distinctive in its use of Rossland granite and Kaslo marble - two West Kootenay mineral resources. Power was conveyed to the Monument and the four corner globe lights were electrified.

The Monument continues to be valued by Rosslanders. It has been moved twice because of development issues, first from its original location in the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Washington Street, then to Esling Park and more recently, back to Columbia Avenue where it is a prominent feature of the revitalized downtown.

Character Defining Elements:

- Size and height
- Building materials of granite and marble
- Dog trough, horse trough and faucet
- corner globe lights, electrified
- inscriptions on granite slabs (originally marble)



Father Pat Monument c. 1910

HISTORY

The Father Pat Monument is an impressive stone monument dedicated to the memory of Henry Irwin, (affectionately known as Father Pat), an Irish, Anglican minister who served the community of Rossland so selflessly from January of 1896 to November of 1899.

A spontaneous subscription list was immediately initiated when Rosslanders heard of his death on January 3, 1902 and a Committee was formed to see to a fitting disbursement of the funds collected in order to perpetuate his memory. The money raised was used to purchase the finest ambulance available, (still at the Rossland Museum) and to build a memorial drinking fountain in Rossland's downtown area.

The Monument was designed by J. J. Honeyman, a well known Rossland architect who had recently moved to Vancouver. The Rossland Miner newspaper of Sunday, September 7, 1902 provides the following information.

"...to be built of Rossland granite and Kaslo marble, ...the two stones will make a pleasing contrast, the blue grey of the granite being relieved by

moulded string courses and tablets in the almost pure white color of the marble. The memorial is in the shape of an obelisk on a massive stone base, flanked by four corner pedestals.... On the north side of the monument is a drinking trough for horses, and on the south side a drinking fountain, the faucet being in the shape of a lion's head fitted in the center of a marble tablet, with the appropriate text, "I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink," inscribed around same."

There are so many stories told of Father Pat's time in Rossland - how he took his sermons to the bars, demanding attention; how he wasn't hesitant to use his fine boxing skills learned at Oxford to "communicate"; how he mingled with the miners over drink and with camaraderie; how his bed was often given over to those in need and how he cared for the needy, the poor and the rejected - tirelessly. His health was affected by his dedication to service but in 1899, he felt he should move on, "Rossland had become too civilized", and he wanted to go somewhere where he was needed more desperately. (Father Pat saw himself as a missionary, asking to serve in Rossland in its earliest days after losing his wife in childbirth in New Westminster.) He chose to go next to Fairview, a rough mining camp in B. C.'s Interior. His stay there was short - he was physically and mentally exhausted and his Bishop convinced him to go home to Ireland for a period of rest. It was on this trip home that Father Pat died in Montreal at the age of 42.

Father Pat undoubtedly had the respect of all Rosslanders in the earliest days of the community's development, regardless of their religious affiliations. This is demonstrated by the wide support for creating a lasting memorial for him. Not only was the finest ambulance purchased to serve the miners but an impressive drinking fountain in the Downtown was constructed. Added to this, when St. George's Anglican Church was built across from the Court House in 1910 to replace the old church, it was dedicated to Henry Irwin, "Father Pat".

Inscriptions on the Father Pat Monument:

- "I WAS THIRSTY AND YE GAVE ME DRINK"
- "I WAS SICK AND YE VISITED ME"
- "IN MEMORIAM - FATHER PAT- HE THAT WOULD WRITE AN EPITAPH FOR THEE AND DO IT WELL, MUST FIRST BEGIN TO BE SUCH AS THOU WERT; FOR NONE CAN TRULY KNOW THY WORTH, THY LIFE, BUT HE THAT HATH LIVED SO"
- IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE REV. HENRY IRWIN M. A. - FIRST RECTOR OF ST. GEORGES CHURCH, ROSSLAND - FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS FATHER PAT. JAN. 13, A.D. 1902

MOVING THE MONUMENT:

The Father Pat Monument was erected on the road allowance of Columbia Avenue, across from the Bank of Montreal, in the fall of 1902. At some point it was moved to Esling Park on Spokane Street - a park that was developed in the 1920s. The Monument stayed here for many years until the Esling Park Lodge was being constructed in the early 2000s and the Monument was relocated once again - back to Rossland's main thoroughfare, Columbia Avenue.