

1916 First Avenue – Glazan Block



Glazan Block 2017 – restoration in progress

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Glazan Block
- 2) **Common Name:** Seniors Hall
- 3) **Address:** 1916 First Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1902
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Glazan Block is located at 1916 First Avenue, Rossland B.C. This single-storey, flat-roofed structure measures 30' x 60' and sits on a level lot. Its significant brick construction can be seen on the exterior sidewalls. At the front, stucco covered the brick until 2017. At that time, the stucco was removed and a plan was put in place to repair the original brick. This historic place includes the building on its footprint.

Heritage Value:

Following the disastrous fire of 1902, the City of Rossland introduced a by-law requiring all new construction be made of brick. The Glazan Block was the first to meet this by-law, giving it heritage value. The original building, constructed in 1896 on the same lot, was wood-framed and sat on the western part of the City's first commercial area along Spokane Street, which included the famous "Sour Dough Alley" between First and Columbia avenues.

The building's designer included features in the facade, which make it of architectural value: a pediment extends from a parapet fronting the flat roof, topped by globes at the corners; arched windows grouped in pairs are divided by brick columns; and horizontal rows of brickwork in a colour differing from the main red brick run across it. The whole is relieved by inset and protruding brickwork.

Following its initial use as a new and used furniture store, the building was sold to the B.C. Telephone Company in 1909. That company used the building as an office and exchange until it sold the structure to the City of Rossland in 1958. Since then, it has been the home of the City's Senior Centre ever since.

Character Defining Element:

- Location on its original site in a former significant portion of the Downtown commercial area
- Original exposed brick exterior walls on east, west and south sides
- A plaque on front façade, which identifies the Glazan Block as a significant Rossland heritage building.



Glazan Block c. 1910

HISTORY

Pre 1898 - 1909:

The Glazan Block was built in 1902 by Samuel Glazan, to replace a building he owned on the same lot that was destroyed by the Fire of August 25, 1902 - a fire that wiped out commercial buildings on Spokane Street between Columbia and First Avenue and many on the north side of 1st Avenue between Spokane and Washington Streets.

Tax rolls and the 1897 Insurance Map of Rossland show that Glazan's original building was built prior to 1897, in the first permanent commercial area of Downtown Rossland to develop. (Sour Dough Alley was virtually gone by 1898.) It would have been of wood construction - a problem recognized by the City which prompted a new by-law written after the 1902 fire, requiring all new construction for commercial buildings to be of brick. Glazan rebuilt his building of brick apparently in the same year - 1902 and that brick building still stands today.

Newspaper accounts in the Rossland Miner Newspaper, (August 27th of 1902) report a petition by the burned out property owners to be allowed to build temporary places of business i.e., wood, galvanized iron on their lots. In the August 29th issue, Elmor Rolf, a well known contractor, provided the Miner with some thoughts on advantages of brick - they were available at Robson and Nelson yards, construction costs were higher but insurance costs lower. In September of 1902, there were two different articles that reported new brick buildings being planned. The September 24th issue of the Rossland Miner, titled, "Building Operations Under Way", says that the contract for the Glazan Block has been let to J. Wood for a one storey, 30'X60' brick building with a basement.

Business happened very quickly in Rossland in its early years! Fire destroys Glazan's business on August 25, 1902 and a September 14th issue of the Miner relates in an ad that Glazan is, "Again in Business":

S. Glazan - Makes the announcement that he is again in business, having opened up a store in the east and west rooms of the Oriental Block on First Avenue between Spokane and Washington streets. He is ready to purchase \$10,000 worth of new and second hand furniture, stoves, etc. He is prepared to furnish his old customers everything that is reasonable and reliable in the house furnishing line and invites their patronage.

The Rossland Tax rolls indicate that Glazan owned a building on Washington Street prior to buying the property and existing building(s) on 1st Avenue in 1898. The Tax Roll for 1910 shows the ownership of the property and building, Block 16, Lot #2, as B. C. Telephone Co., thus Glazan sold his place in 1909. (Tax rolls reflect the previous year.)

1910 - 1956:

The B.C. Telephone Company bought the Glazan Block in 1909 and made changes to the interior of the building and erected a sign in the upper portion of the front facade, saying "BC Telephone Company 1910". See archival picture above.

B.C. Telephone service to the community continued from this building until 1956 when automatic equipment for telephone service was installed in the building on the southeast corner of Columbia Avenue and Spokane Street in January (or May) of that year. Dial phones replaced the need for operators!

1957 - Present:

The old B.C. Telephone building was purchased for a nominal sum and became Rossland's B. C. Centennial Project. Sheila Corrado, in compiling information about Rossland's heritage buildings, wrote:

"Many volunteers such as Ike Glover, Jim Shellard, Harry Johns, Ernie Turner, Tom Steegstra and Henry Rodden sacrificed their time and energy and were responsible for converting the building into a club room for Senior Citizens. A campaign to "Buy a Brick for the Citizens' Club" proved successful and a memorial wall was built with the names of Rosslanders, both living and dead, inscribed on the bricks. The building was opened in August 1958 during the B.C. Centennial celebrations in Rossland."

**TELEPHONE/TELEGRAPH SERVICE
IN ROSSLAND**

Telephone and telegraph companies abounded in early Rossland. The Vernon and Nelson Telephone Company, the Canada Western Telephone & Telegraph Company, the Columbia Telephone & Telegraph Company which linked Rossland and Grand Forks in 1899, the C.P.R. Telegraph Company (1895), and at some point, the BC Telephone Company. Newspapers relied on telegraph services for much of their content and at one time, Rossland had 4 different newspapers! Harold Kingsmill wrote in, "First History of Rossland", that, "Half a dozen Eastern newspapers had special correspondents in the town, writing up the camp and town. The telegraph companies receipts were growing fatter daily with the reports that were being sent out."

A FEW NOTES: from Rossland Museum, "Telephone Talk" (1918), Sheila Corrado's, "The History of Rossland's Heritage Commercial Buildings" and Harold Kingsmill's "First History of Rossland".

The first telephone and telegraph exchange in our area was built by Colonel E. S. Topping and Mr. Frank Hanna, in March of 1895. The lines were strung on trees and connected Rossland, Trail Creek Landing and Waneta. It was then acquired by the newly formed Vernon & Nelson Telephone Company also in 1895. In Rossland, telephone lines were built to both the LeRoi and War Eagle Mines but there were problems - a call to the LeRoi also rang at the War Eagle and this interference was attributed to the mineralized ground in the area.

In May 1895, the first exchange was opened in a Rossland grocery store and shortly moved from there to another location in the rapidly developing downtown. The operator intercepted and placed all the calls that went through the exchange: because of this fact the whereabouts and personal business of the townspeople were often known by the operator. Divulging personal information over the phone was considered risky, especially if confidentiality was desired.

In the August 3, 1895 edition of the Rossland Miner newspaper, Model Livery & Feed Stable were the first to advertise a phone number, 8.

By late 1896, Rossland was booming and the demand for telephone service, especially to Spokane was also growing. Two determined American lawyers saw the potential and need for a line from Spokane to the border:

“Msrs. Oakes and Aris came to the rescue and built a single copper line to the boundary, where it joined a metallic line which was built from Rossland by the Canada Western Telephone & Telegraph Company. As soon as communication was established, business was rushing, the charge being \$0.75 per minute.” (from Telephone Talk)

In June of 1896, the Rossland Miner newspaper reported that a new air line between Trail and Rossland was constructed. In 1897 improvements were made to telephone service, including the move of the Rossland exchange:

“...The new quarters were shared with the C.P.R. Telegraph Company. A new switchboard was installed and all 30 foot poles on the street were replaced with 45 foot ones to insure currents.... Rumor has it that sometime between 1898 and 1910 the B.C. Telephone Company maintained an office and exchange in the Bank of Montreal building....” (Note:. The Bank of Montreal building had its official opening in January, 1900)



Glazan Block - 2009