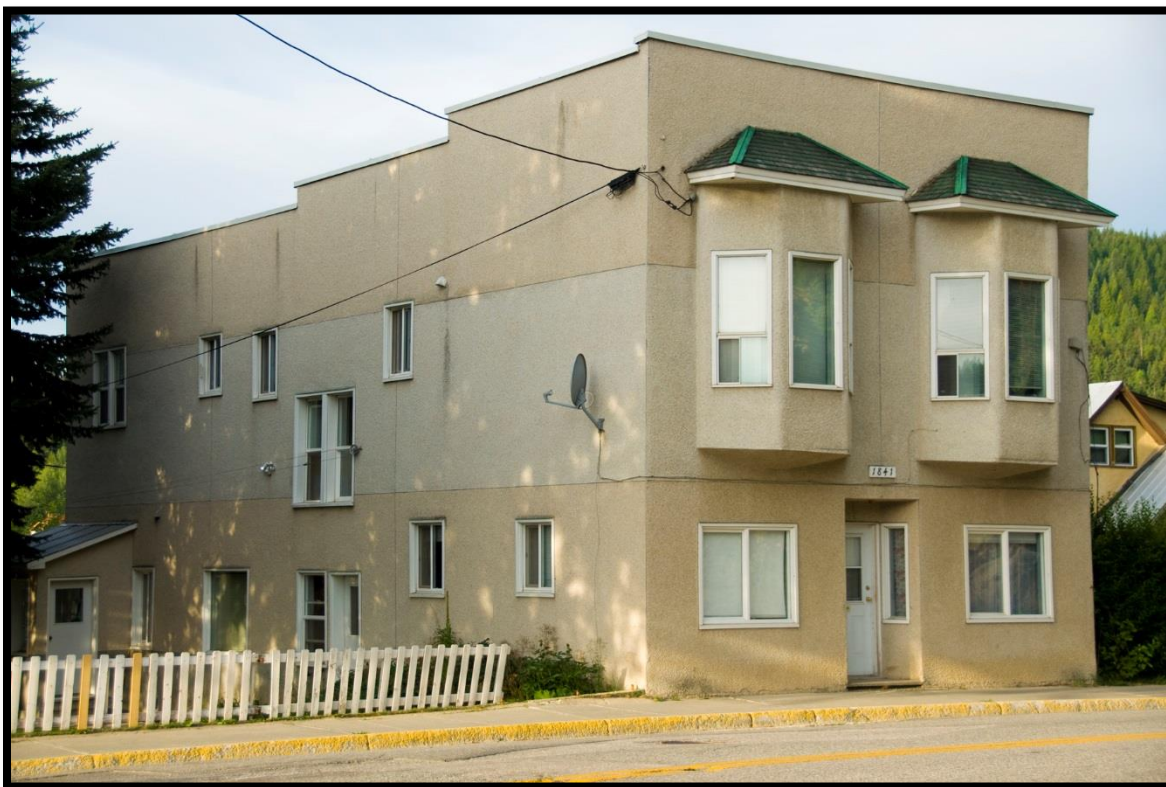


## 1841 Columbia Avenue - Lemon Block



Lemon Block 2009

### **Heritage Register - Building**

- 1) **Historical Name:** Lemon Block
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 1841 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1895
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE LEMON BLOCK**

#### **Description:**

The Lemon Block is located at the western end of Rossland's Downtown Core. It is on the south side of Columbia Avenue, west of Spokane Street, and across Hwy 3B from the Rock Bluff. The Lemon Block is a substantial, 2 storey building with a pitched roof and stuccoed facade. The building footprint is 30' by 100'. Two bay windows on

the second floor facing Columbia Avenue, are the most defining characteristic.

**Heritage Value:**

- The Lemon Block is the oldest, remaining heritage building in Rossland’s historic Downtown core.
- The Lemon Block was built in 1895 at the beginning of the construction boom years in Rossland’s early development as a townsite.
- The location of the Lemon Block marked the western road entrance to Rossland and was the western edge of the area where the first permanent commercial buildings were built in Rossland.

**Character Defining Elements:**

- original location and footprint
- 2 bay windows on the second floor



Lemon Block c.1895

**HISTORY**

The Lemon Block is the oldest remaining heritage building in Downtown Rossland, built in 1895 by R. E. Lemon. It is a two storey, flat-roofed, substantial building, 30’ by 100’, located

at the western end of Columbia Avenue where once the road to Northport began. 1894 and 1895 were the beginning years of more permanent type of business construction than found in Sour Dough Alley, in what was to become Rossland's Downtown Commercial Core. The Ross Thompson Townsite had become a legal entity in 1894, lots were for sale for \$30 a piece from the Township Company and the news coming from the evaluation of mining exploratory work pointed to extensive and high grade deposits of gold in Red Mountain. The Rossland Mining Camp was turning into the town of Rossland.

From, "First History of Rossland, B.C.", written by Harold Kingsmill, published in 1897, "About the same time too (spring 1895), 'Bob' Lemon the irrepressible one of the pioneer merchants of Nelson, Three Forks and other places in the upper country, arrived in town and bought the lot to the west of the War Eagle Hotel and commenced the erection of one of the very first lath and plastered buildings in the town. On the completion of the building, Mr. Lemon moved in one of the most complete stocks of mining supplies ever seen in the country, bringing it from his store at Three Forks, a town which upon the birth of Sandon as the natural supply point of the mines of Carpenter Creek, on the Slokan, was rapidly becoming deserted."

Indeed, R. E. Lemon was an enterprising and opportunistic business man. The Lemon Block was home to a number of businesses in the early years and perhaps provided family accommodation on the second floor, suggested by the curtains at those windows in an early photograph. The Lemon Block played a role in the famous battle of banks to be the first in Rossland. Both the Bank of British North America and the Bank of Montreal set up business in Rossland in April of 1896 in rented premises. The Bank of British North America opened on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> in a barber/bath shop on Columbia Avenue and further west, in the same block, the Bank of Montreal opened for business in the Lemon Block on Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. The Bank of Montreal shortly thereafter, moved to its own premises on the north side of Columbia Avenue with banking space on the main floor and accommodation above, then into the impressive Bank of Montreal building on the corner of Washington and Columbia in 1900.

The Insurance Map of Rossland, July 1987, labels the Lemon Block as the premises of an undertaker but also notes that dynamite was stored in the basement. We know that Bob Lemon was not a certified mortician in Rossland so perhaps the building was sold or yet another rental opportunity was pursued by the owner. The fact that dynamite was stored in the basement, suggests that the original purpose of the building was maintained – a mining supply business.

At some point in Rossland's history the Lemon Block ceased being a commercial building with living accommodations on the second floor and became simply an apartment building. Many Rosslanders have known this building for many years as the Gipman Apartments.