2054 WASHINGTON STREET – BODEGA HOTEL

Heritage Register – Building

1) **Historical Name:** Bodega Hotel
2) **Common Name:** Rossland Light Opera Players (RLOP)
3) **Address:** 2054 Washington Street
4) **Date of Construction:** 1896/97
5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:** Western

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Bodega Hotel, originally used as a hotel and saloon, is located on the eastern side of the first block of Washington Street, north of the intersection with Columbia Avenue. These two streets define Rossland's historic and current downtown core. It is a two-storey wooden building constructed prior to 1898, in a style common to that era, with a peaked roof and false front, narrow frontage and extending deep into the lot (15 foot by 60 foot footprint).
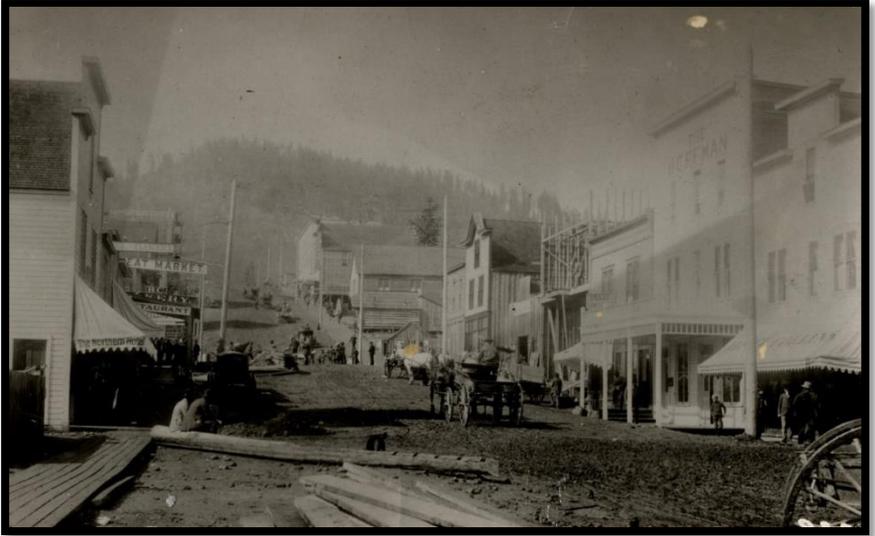
Heritage Value:

The first block of Washington Street, containing the Bodega Hotel, is the densest block of remaining turn-of-the century commercial buildings following the fires of 1927 and 1929 along Columbia Avenue. With its wood construction and western style of architecture, the Bodega Hotel is representative of the smaller hotels that were abundant during the gold mining boom of the late 1890s and early 1900s. According to an 1898 licence inspector's report to the city, it contained the prerequisite bar-room, "nicely fixed up," 12 bedrooms and one "dirty" water closet.

After the mining era ended, the Bodega Hotel was used for various enterprises including a restaurant, an ice cream parlor, and a jewellery store with apartments upstairs. From 1957 to 1983 it was owned by the Fraternal Order of Eagles. Since 1983 it has been the home of the Rossland Light Opera Players. Founded in 1951, the RLOP, is believed to be the oldest musical theatre company in BC. In 2013, a major restoration project of the building's facade was undertaken highlighting the authentic reproduction of original details, plus new paint on trim and walls. A plaque identifies it as one of Rossland's significant historic buildings.

Character Defining Elements:
- Location on Washington Street in downtown Rossland.
- Western style of architecture.
- Wooden construction.
- Original exterior features:
  - Western false-front style
  - set-back door entrance
  - transom window above entrance door
  - cargo doors
  - large display window
  - roof line cornice trim
  - large skylight
  - original window placement and trim
  - lower wall cladding
- Original interior features:
  - most of the original floor plan
  - moldings
  - tin bar room ceiling
  - original staircase to second floor
  - beaded board wainscotting

- transom windows above the second floor doors
- original support beams in basement – coal chute

Washington Street -Bodega Hotel (3rd building on right) c. 1897

HISTORY

The Bodega Hotel was built on Washington Street in 1896/1896, the early boom days of the Rossland mining camp. With the influx of men wanting work in the mines or in the townsite, the population of Rossland grew quickly. Often, accommodation was only available in hotels or boarding houses. Early homes at this time were best described as shacks, and sometimes tents.

The Rossland license inspector submitted a "Report on City Hotels" to the Rossland council on February 1, 1898, just ten months after incorporation. Rossland's population was around 7,000 and there were 39 hotels noted in the report.

The Bodega Hotel entry stated that the building was 15 feet by 60 feet and owned by Mr. H. McPherson. The lot was owned by A. Revsbeck and the "Holder of License" was Sid. Hobbs. Following is the list of rooms in the hotel, their dimensions and the inspector's comments:

- Bar-room 14' by 25', height 10' – clean and nicely fitted up
- 2 clubrooms adjoining bar

- Reading room 12' by 13'
- Dining room 15' by 30' and kitchen, 15' by 30' – both on ground floor and the dining room not in use.
- 10 bedrooms 10' by 10', height 8'6"
- 2 bedrooms 12' by 14', height 8'6"
- 1 water closet --- dirty

It is interesting to note that the building's dimensions could not have accommodated all of the rooms listed in the inspector's report — perhaps fewer bedrooms or smaller sizes of rooms?

At the end of Inspector William Harp's report, he wrote,

> *I beg to call the attention of the Board to the fact that none of the hotels are complying with the provisions of the Fire Escape Act 1894. I would also take the liberty of recommending that the attention of the Medical Health Officer be called to the condition of the Water Closets and back-yards of many of the hotels, so that they may, where necessary, be placed in a proper sanitary condition before the summer.*

The 1911 Tax Assessment Roll reveals that George Green and Alex Smith now owned the Bodega Hotel as well as the Hoffman House close by. Mr. Green apparently ran an ice-cream parlor in the Bodega, much to the delight of the many youngsters who visited his store.

George Green sold the building to Mr. Mueller in the early 1930s and it became known as the Mueller Block. Mr. Piper's jewelry store was located on the main floor with apartments upstairs. Rosie's Café, named after the Chinese owner, operated in the building from the mid-1930s until 1945.

In March of 1957, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Branch 10, Rossland moved into the hall and remained owners until September of 1983. The Rossland Light Opera Players then purchased the building and have remained its owners ever since.

In 2013 a major restoration project of the building's facade was undertaken by the ROLP. Where possible, original restoration work was completed. When not possible, an authentic reproduction of original details was done. These improvements, along with new paint on trim and walls, make this heritage building a standout in the

downtown today. So many building facades have changed over the past one hundred plus years in the commercial area and the Bodega is one of only a few that look today as it did when originally built!

As of 2021, this building continues to be the home of the Rossland Light Opera Players and upgrades continue as required.