

2063 Washington Street – George Owen Wholesale Liquors



George Owen Wholesale Liquors 2019

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** George Owen Wholesale Liquors
- 2) **Common Name(s):** Rossland Meat Market, Washington Apartments, Gold Rush Bookstore
- 3) **Address:** 2063 Washington Street
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1914
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:** Edwardian Commercial with Victorian elements

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The George Owen Wholesale Liquors building is a two storey, wood-framed commercial building with a false-front appearance located on Washington Street in the historic downtown of Rossland, BC. It has two bay windows on the upper storey, two street entrances and a verandah with support columns at street level, which extends over the sidewalk.

Heritage Value:

The George Owen Wholesale Liquors building is valued as a surviving second-generation commercial building that reflects the early evolution of Rossland at the beginning of the twentieth century. Constructed in 1914 by George Owen on the former site of the Rossland-

Trail Livery Company's stables, this place demonstrates how Rossland was growing and changing from a mining camp to a modern city at that time.

The heritage value of this place lies in the varied commercial and residential uses it has hosted throughout its history. The building's first use as the George Owen Wholesale liquor store, speaks to its boomtown mining roots. In 1927 the Insurance Map shows the building as vacant. In the intervening years, it appears that the building was divided in half with apartments on the upper floor. In 1930, the building was sold to a German immigrant Herman Knabe, proprietor of the Rossland Meat Market reflecting Rossland's cultural diversity. The Rossland Meat Market was on one side and Gene Ferraro had a shoe store on the other side (both on the street level). In 1936, the owners were listed as James Wright (butcher) and James Daly (medical doctor). Over the years, there were various businesses at this location including a grocery store, butcher shop, insurance office and medical practice. In 1969, Albert and Gladys Heier purchased the building and changed it to residential units which continued into the 1980's. In 1983, the building received a facelift, with a new paint job and a new sign with special attention paid to incorporating a heritage theme. This speaks to the evolving economic realities of the city, specifically eras when commercial ventures in a downtown building would have been less viable than residential uses. Its return to its original mixed-used commercial and residential function in the late twentieth-century is reflective of the ever-changing and cyclical nature of Rossland's economy, which gives the community its strong boomtown identity.

This building is also significant as a 1914 wood-frame commercial building that in recent decades has re-embraced heritage-inspired Victorian elements of the boom town aesthetic, as a response to a downtown restoration wave initiated in the 1980s, which has helped to rebrand Rossland as a historic town and a cultural tourism destination.

Character-Defining Elements:

- Original location on Washington Street in Rossland historic downtown core
- Continuous commercial use since 1914 and residential use since the 1930s
- Commercial siting of the building right at the property line, with no setback from the sidewalk.
- The "false-front" appearance of the building, with an extended, decorative parapet
- Its two-storey form, with a tall cornice space above the second storey windows.
- Commercial storefront at street level, with a door to the upstairs apartment at the northern end of the front façade.
- Its wood-frame construction.
- Elements of its original 1914 design, including two windows on the upper storey, commercial storefront at street level, and entrances and windows in its rear façade facing the alley behind.

History

In 1884, this location was the home of Pioneer Stables owned by Geo. Baker & Co. It was the first livery in the Rossland camp and provided horses for the Rossland-Trail stage coach with 20 to 25 horses being kept there. They also boarded horses by the week or month. The 1897 Insurance Map continues to show a "Livery" at this location. Over the next 10 years, the ownership and name of the livery changed frequently but in 1906-07, it was listed as the Rossland Trail Livery Co.



George Owen Wholesale Liquors, 1932 2nd building on left

In 1908, ownership changed to George Owen but no building was recorded on this site until 1914, when the tax rolls show a building with a value of \$1000 on this lot. The registered business was George Owen Wholesale Liquors. At some point the first floor was divided in half and apartments were on the upper floor. Many different commercial businesses occupied the ground floor over the years until 1969 when Albert and Gladys Heier purchased the building and changed it to full residential apartments. The building became known as the Washington Apartments.

In 1989, the ground floor was changed back to a commercial enterprise, the Goldrush Bookstore owned by Almeda and Terry Miller. Since then, a bookstore cafe under various names and proprietors over the next decade, returning to its namesake Gold Rush Bookstore and Tea House in 2016. The upper floor is a single three bedroom apartment.

