

2127-2120 Columbia Avenue – West Kootenay Power and Light Building



West Kootenay Power and Light Building 2009

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historic Name:** West Kootenay Power & Light Building
- 2) **Common Name:** Rossland Grocery, Rossland Hostel
- 3) **Address:** 2127 – 2120 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** c. 1896
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:** Vernacular Commercial

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The West Kootenay Power & Light Building is a wood-frame commercial building located on the south side of Columbia Avenue in the eastern portion of Rossland's historic downtown. It has the appearance of being two buildings attached to each other; the eastern portion of the building is two storeys, and the western portion is three storeys.

Heritage Value:

2120-2127 Columbia Avenue is valued as an early surviving wood-frame commercial building on Rossland's main street. Constructed c. 1896, this building reflects the first generation of buildings constructed to support the rapidly growing population that was striving to accommodate and maximize the prosperity associated with the discovery of rich gold-bearing ore in the surrounding mountains. Originally the location of an eclectic mixture of mining businesses, trades, lodging rooms, and professional offices, this place holds value as an example of the opportunistic nature of the boomtown era development when investors with money, built places for rent paying occupants.

The association of this place with the West Kootenay Power & Light for over 50 years is a central aspect of its heritage value. The WKP&L was responsible for the construction of the dam on the Kootenay River, and the construction of the 20,000 volt transmission line from the dam to the Substation in Upper Rossland, supplying power to the mines and the community of Rossland in 1898. The company is remembered for establishing the first hydro-electric project in BC, and at that time, the most powerful electrical distribution system in the province and the longest transmission line in the world. This historic place was the location of the company's headquarters from 1902 until 1930, but this premises continued to be used as WKP&L offices and a sales outlet for electrical appliances until the 1950s. The fact that the WKP&L established its headquarters and substation in Rossland is a reminder of the important administrative, economic, and executive position that Rossland held in the region at the end of the nineteenth century.

The later uses of this building as residences and a variety of commercial storefronts is also important as a reflection of the changing nature of small natural-resource towns in the later part of the twentieth century.

Character-Defining Elements:

- Original location on two commercial lots on the south side of Columbia Avenue in Rossland's historic downtown.
- The relationship of the building to the street and to the back alley.
- The vernacular commercial design of the building, and the flat roof structures of both wings.
- The wood-frame construction of the building and evidence of its wood cladding.
- The appearance of the building of being two structures joined together, with the eastern half being two storeys, and the western half being three storeys.
- Commercial storefronts at street level.
- The central doorway at street level, leading to the upper storeys.
- Original window and door openings on all façades.



W.K. Power and Light Co. (building on far right) c. 1933

Historical Information – chronology

Year	Event
1897	<p>City Directories for this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bauer & Parker Mining & Stockbrokers is listed at 110 East Columbia. • Pope Higgins, stenographer, is listed at 110 East Columbia. • Suckling Brothers, manufacturers' agents, listed at 110 East Columbia. • O.M. Fox & Co. Grocers (Otto Max Fox, Edward Lockwood, and Wm. Joseph Cusack) is listed at 110 East Columbia. • Pearl Gold Mining Co. (Bauer & Parker agents) listed at 110 East Columbia. • Lloyd Gold Mining Co. (Bauer & Parker agents) is listed at 110 East Columbia. • Queen Victoria Gold Mining Co. (Bauer & Parker agents) is listed at 110 East Columbia. • Slocan Lake Prospecting and Development Co. (Bauer & Parker agents) listed at 110 East Columbia. • Kohinoor Gold Mining Co. Ltd. (foreign) listed at 110 East Columbia. • Alexander Henry McKay, mining operator, listed at 112 East Columbia. • Anderson & Co., promoters, is listed at 112 East Columbia. • Crawford, Anderson & Co. mining is listed at 112 East Columbia. • Archibald Connell Sinclair, M.D. listed at 112 East Columbia. • Josie Mac Mining Co. listed at 112 East Columbia. • Silver Queen Gold & Silver Mining Co. (Anderson & Co. agents) listed at 112 East Columbia. • Mrs. Anna Stallings, Occidental Lodging House, listed at 112 ½ East Columbia. • H. Hoepfner, architect, listed at 112½ East Columbia. • Macfarlane & Roberts, Civil and Mining Engineers & Assayers listed at 112 ½ East Columbia. • W.D. Mackay, Provincial Land Surveyor, listed at 112 ½ East Columbia. • McFarlane & Co. assayers listed at 112 ½ East Columbia. • McGregor, Atkinson & Co., Land Surveyors, Mining Engineers and Brokers, are listed at 112 East Columbia. • A.E. Fraser & Co. clothing and men's furnishings is listed at 114 East Columbia. • Henry Harvey Smith, merchant tailor, listed at 114 East Columbia. • Moffat & Moffat Mining Brokers listed at 114 East Columbia. • Arlington Mining & Smelting Co. is listed at 114½ E. Columbia Avenue. • John M Booth, furniture, is listed at 116 East Columbia.

Year	Event
1898	<p>Lot 17 is owned by Thomas Hulme & J.B. Johnson. Hulme was a miner and Johnson was proprietor of J.B. Johnson & Co, Real Estate, Mining, Stock Brokers and Conveyancers. Lot 18 was owned by Hulme and a Miss H. (Helen) Keyes (who was a stenographer), but her portion was sold to the Mellor Brothers. The Mellor Brothers (John Wm. Frank and George) had a wallpaper, glass and paint business. Lot 17 has a building valued at \$700, and Lot 18 has a building valued at \$1200.</p> <p>WKP&L listed in city directory as being in the Trader's Block, East Columbia Avenue. The Rossland Water (RW&L) & Light Company was the first utility company to serve the city and the West Kootenay Power & Light (WKP&L) Company was the first major electrical company in the province, respectively. The two companies were co-located from their earliest beginnings, both at earlier locations elsewhere on Columbia Avenue, and here.</p>
1899	WKP&L listed in city directory as located at the corner of Columbia Ave and Lincoln Street.
1900	WKP&L listed in city directory as being in the Trader's Block, East Columbia Avenue.
1901	WKP&L listed in city directory as being located at 21 East Columbia Avenue.
1902	<p>Lot 17 is owned by the Mellor Brothers. Lot 18 is owned by Lorne Argyle Campbell and the Mellor Brothers. The building becomes the WKP & L headquarters. From this location, the company grew to supply power to the Smelter in Trail, Trail itself and communities and mines in the West Kootenays and Boundary areas of B.C.. In the following years, under the direction of president and general manager, Lorne Campbell the headquarters were moved to Trail in 1930.</p>
1904	Lot 17 is owned by Lorne Argyle Campbell. Lot 18 is owned by Mary Spahr Campbell.
1906	Both lots owned by Lorne A. Campbell.
1907	Both lots owned by Mary S. Campbell.
1908	Both lots owned by Lorne A. Campbell. He also owned lots 16 and 19.
1944	<p>2123 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossland Water & Light Company • West Kootenay Power & Light Co. <p>2125 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.L. McAllister – Robert Leonard McAllister was an operator for the WKP&L for over 30 years. • Mrs. L.E. Gilmour – Laura Elizabeth Gilmour was the widow of Thomas Scott Gilmour, a Rossland pioneer, who owned many of the local mines, including the Midnight Mine. She passed away in Vancouver in 1964. • Miss Georgina F. Martin • Miss Mabel Wilkie – was secretary for WKP&L

Year	Event
1946	2123 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossland Water & Light Company • West Kootenay Power & Light Co. 2125 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. R.L. McAllister • Mrs. L.E. Gilmour • Miss Georgina F. Martin • Miss Mabel Wilkie
1952	2123 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. S.E. Brown • West Kootenay Power & Light Co. 2125 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. R.L. McAllister • Mrs. Alice Chesham • Mrs. L.E. Gilmour • Miss Mabel Wilkie 2127 – Coventry’s Flower Shop
1953	2123 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reid’s Furniture & Appliances • WKP&L collection office 2125 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL McAllister • Miss I. Atkinson • Mrs. A. Chesham • Miss. M. Wilkie 2127 – Coventry Flower Shop
1956	2123 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reid’s Furniture & Appliances • West Kootenay Power & Light Company 2125 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. R.L. McAllister • Mrs. S. Churchill • Mrs. L.E. Gilmour • Miss Mabel Wilkie • M.J. Roberge • Dr. R.C. Jones 2127 – Coventry’s Flower Shop
1984	Building owned by Trico Holdings. Stores, from east to west: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossland Grocery • Rossland Arcade

Year	Event
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video Nine
2019	Stores, from east to west: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2129 - Rossland Grocery<li>• 2127 - Mountain Shadow Hostel (upstairs)<li>• 2125 - Ten Twenty Five Tattoo<li>• 2123 - Empty