

**188 Carson Avenue  
Royal Bank Building – 1928**



Front Elevation



Front and West Elevation



East Elevation

**Description**

The Royal Bank Building is a stately single storey brick building constructed in 1928 located on one of the most prominent and publicly visible locations on the southwest corner of Carson Avenue and Reid Street in Downtown Quesnel, BC. The historic place includes the building and the parcel of land it occupies.

**Heritage Value**

The Royal Bank Building is located in Downtown Quesnel which is the commercial and administrative center of the city. While not in its original form, the building is a physical reminder of the people and businesses that shaped the development of Quesnel.

The building is named for the Royal Bank. The bank has had operations in Quesnel since 1918 when it merged with the Northern Crown Bank located in a lean-to attached to Telesphore Marion's store on Front Street. The Royal Bank opened its new branch in this building in 1928. For more than thirty years it was the only banking facility in Quesnel. The building became affectionately known as the 'House of Commons' because of the bank's manager Ray Commons. He joined the Royal Bank when he was a young man and worked at various locations in the Province. Ray and his wife Mabel arrived in Quesnel in 1939. Ray became very involved in community activities and businesses. He served on the Hospital Board for six years and was involved in curling and golf organizations in the city. He was transferred to Nelson, BC after serving the citizens of Quesnel for twenty years.

The Royal Bank Building was purchased in 1972 by the City of Quesnel. The City used the building as the library until 1977. Since 1986, the building has been the Cariboo Observer Building. J. B. Daniel relocated the newspaper operation from Fort George to Quesnel. The first edition of the Cariboo Observer printed in Quesnel was on August 29, 1908. The paper was a staunchly conservative voice until 1917 when it broke away from political affiliations. The Cariboo Observer became a politically independent paper that took a strong stand on issues concerning Quesnel. The James Reid Estate General Merchants, Occidental Hotel, and Hudson's Bay Company were the only three advertisers in the Cariboo Observer in its early days. The main item of interest for the paper was local social events and the beaver trade. When land opened up for sale in the area, many people advertised their property in the Cariboo Observer. It remained the only publication in Quesnel until the Cariboo Digest began in 1945 and then the Quesnel Advertiser in 1952.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The character-defining elements of the Royal Bank Building include:

- an excellent example of a stately brick structure used for banking business;
- a large brick addition was constructed in 1953 that maintained the overall integrity of the original structure;
- beautiful red bricks with stone accents;
- a double wrap around cornice line in stone that draws the eye upward;
- several large windows with 20 panes showcasing strong symmetry;
- the stone steps at the entry and the flat roof maintain a stoic nature fitting of the building's original purpose;
- a significant weight on this prominent corner of the City's downtown business district.