



NATIONAL ARCHIVES PA208892



DAWSON CITY MUSEUM

POST OFFICE

FULLER'S DAWSON LEGACY

Fuller designed six government buildings in Dawson City during his two and a half year term of residence. Five of Fuller's Dawson buildings including the telegraph office (Millen House), the post office, the Commissioner's Residence, Administration Building and the Court House the are still standing. Fuller's public school burned in 1957.

Optimism over the Yukon's future was high in the early 1900s and these buildings reflect the confidence and maturity felt in the community. The history of the Administration Building parallels Dawson City's evolution from an overgrown mining camp, to a prosperous capital, and finally an exciting tourist attraction in the heart of the Klondike.

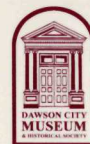


YTG

THE RESTORED COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FURNISHED FOR A SITTING OF THE TERRITORIAL COUNCIL. THE CHAMBERS ARE STILL USED BY THE CIRCUIT COURT.



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Yukon
Business, Tourism and Culture

OLD TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



YTG



THE FEDERAL BUILDING

Before gold was discovered in the Klondike in 1896, the North-West Mounted Police was the official dominion presence in the Yukon. After an influx of mostly American gold seekers in 1898, the Canadian government extended their control by increasing the number of officials, and constructing impressive federal buildings.

The Yukon was created in 1898 as a Canadian territory separate from the North West Territories. A Commissioner and advisory council were appointed to govern the territory. Commissioner William Ogilvie was instrumental in having the Administration Building constructed and twelve of the Yukon's Commissioners had their offices here over the years. Later amendments to the Yukon Act allowed the residents more say in their affairs and the first wholly elected advisory Territorial Council sat here in 1908.

The population of Dawson City declined after the gold rush and the post office, territorial court, and the customs and telegraph services took up residence in the Administration Building. It housed federal and territorial officials until 1953 when the territorial capitol was moved to Whitehorse, leaving a small number of government officials occupying part of the main floor.

This was the only active government building in Dawson City from 1924 to the mid-1960s and it also housed various other temporary occupants including the school and the radio station.

“THE MOST IMPOSING BUILDING IN THE NORTH...”

Construction of the Administration Building was authorized in July 1901 and the building was completed and occupied by 60 civil servants on December 1 of the same year. It accommodated Commissioner Ross and his advisory staff, the Yukon Council Chambers and other departments including the very important office of the mining recorder.

The 836 m² building is an example of Neoclassical architecture. A prominently decorated central gable pediment and cornice is reflected on each side of the formal façade and in the pedimented window hoods above the ground floor openings. Classical pilasters sub-divide the two recessed bays.

The building was equipped with electricity, telephone service, and seasonally running water. It was heated with wood, and during the first full winter season of 1902/03, about 549 cords of wood were consumed over 8 months by the poorly insulated structure.

The Yukon Territorial Government purchased the Administration Building in 1976 and in the 1980s sponsored a major renovation and exterior restoration project. Public facilities were added and much of the interior was altered, but the front façade remains as Department of Public Works architect Fuller designed it. The main lobby, staircase and the Council Chambers were restored and the panelling and coffered ceiling in the north gallery was refurbished.

The Dawson City Museum and Historical Society has occupied the Old Territorial Administration Building since 1962. The building was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 2002.