

RAILWAY DESIGN, ART & ARCHITECTURE



In the photo above, the Royal Alexandra Hotel is shown about 1920 with its enormous size compared to the surroundings. The main line tracks run behind the building while the station is at far right. (Cbk.1999.048.111)

The CARVED OAK FIREPLACE from the formal dining room of the *Royal Alexandra Hotel* (CPR - Winnipeg, Manitoba) 1906-71

This massive carved oak fireplace is displayed here as a first impression for visitors to signify that the museum interpretation is not mechanical or technical, but has more emphasis on railway design, art and architecture - a social history perspective.



This view of the formal dining room - the *Alexandra Room* - is shown looking towards the front (south) of the hotel. (circa 1920's)

The fireplace, in its original varnished oak is shown at the middle of the wall to the left.

The four oak entrance doors are opposite to the right, and two of these doors survived and are now located on the upper back floor of the museum at the entrances to the archives and boardroom.

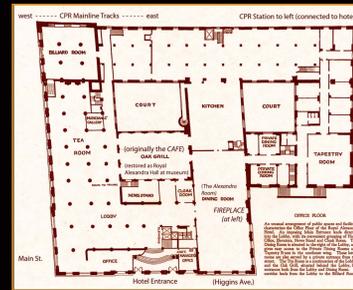


This view of the fireplace is a later photo taken in the 1950's and shows the fireplace painted an off-white with modern valances and curtains on the wall on each side, as well as modern table and chairs.

The original ceiling beams at the top can be seen above the modern window valances.

This painted version of the fireplace is what was saved and how it arrived in Cranbrook in 1999.

The paint was stripped and the entire fireplace revarnished by 2004.



This floor plan of the hotel dates from the 1920's showing the 1912 addition at the middle to upper right side.

The formal dining room is shown with the fireplace location noted.

The original *Grand Cafe*, which was renamed the *Oak Grill* in the 1920's, is shown adjacent to the dining room. This Cafe was also brought to the museum and restored as the *Royal Alexandra Hall* from 1999-2004, located in another part of this building on this main level.

The hotel entrance is at bottom of the plan and the railway tracks are at the top of the plan (behind the building).

The fireplace was from the main dining room - the *Alexandra Room* - of the Canadian Pacific Railway's famous Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, built in 1906. The dining room was a larger room than the hotel's *Grand Café* that has also been fully restored here and now called *Royal Alexandra Hall*, located in another part of this building complex.

When the Hotel was demolished in 1971, this fireplace and the entire Grand Café were saved by the contractor due to their great beauty. They were placed in storage for over 25 years in a semi-trailer in Winnipeg - virtually forgotten - until the Museum purchased the items in 1999. This was just in time for them to be incorporated into preliminary designs for new facilities at this new larger site, part of which were opened in 2004, although work is still continuing inside (as of April 2012).

Railway passenger car architecture, interior design and decoration is shown by vintage deluxe trains of different era that the museum has for visitors, while railway architecture is shown by the Royal Alexandra Hall, .

This new Museum building has been designed to represent a large railway station with a railway hotel connected to it. This would be in the context of a major urban centre that the deluxe trains would have serviced. The floor plan enhances the "approach to the trains" as seen through doors to the left of this room. This is how passengers would have experienced it and is an essential interpretive message here.

The original Railway Freight Shed (1898), the 2-storey wooden structure connected to the right of this room, is being developed for Cranbrook history and regional railway history. The glass signs around this Entrance Hall show all of the options.

The large poster on the lower part of the wall on the left side of this room details the museums' many historic railway displays for the public