

Big Plans for Picton's Grand Old Royal Hotel



The Royal Hotel – reinvented! Above and right: The preliminary logo and the first sketches of the proposed plan for the Royal. Both of these may change considerably during the course of the project. The second story balcony will return, and three new floors are planned on top.



Above: The Royal as it appeared in the 1960s. The balcony extending from the second floor was removed earlier, and much of the brickwork and facade detail obscured by paint. This was much in keeping with the style of the time.

Below: A view of Main Street looking toward the Town Hill. The cupola atop the Royal is just visible on the left, and it added a touch of class to the already-impressive streetscape.



The Royal Hotel has long been a landmark on Picton's Main Street. Since it was built in 1879, the grand old building has served as a stop-over point for stagecoaches, a comfortable roadside inn, a venue for fine dining, rooms for long-term and short-term residents, and as a favorite watering hole and dance spot.

The Royal has had an up-and-down history over the years, and rumours have always abounded that someone would buy the building and restore it to its 'glory days'.

Inside, the building was known for its 12-foot-high ceilings and ornate crown mouldings. Despite many changes to the front lobby, the staircase has maintained its position of dignity over the years.

Everyone agrees the building has always had potential but, until the recent announcement that Elliott Sage Design and Construction is acquiring it in Spring 2008, no-one has managed to realize that potential.

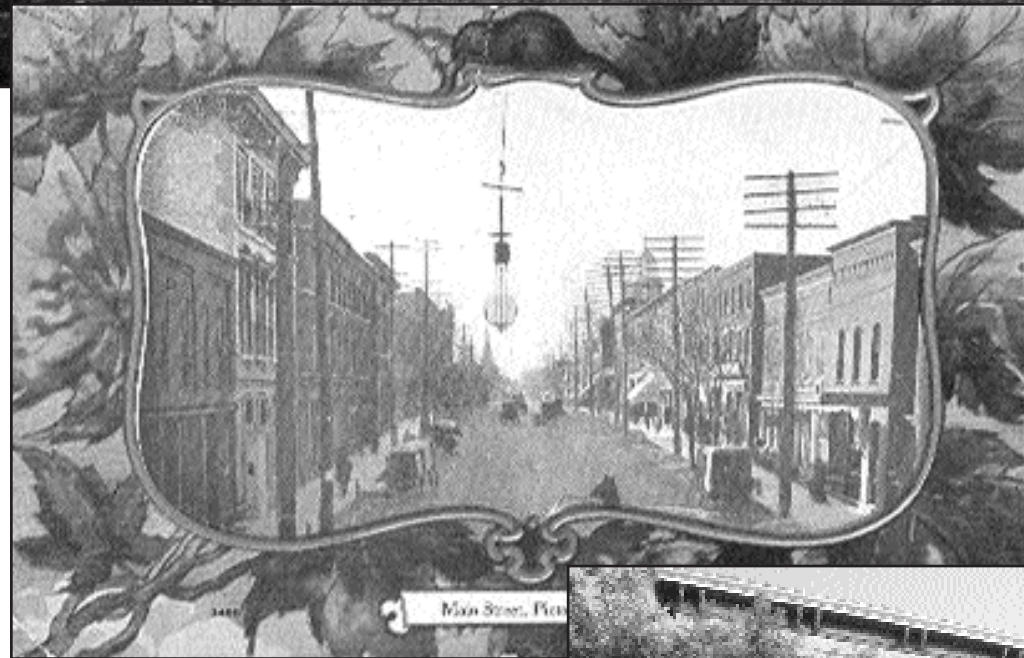
The Picton-based design company has a strong track record of top-notch building projects throughout the County, including the Town Hill Place condo project now under construction. They have



Left: An ad c.1930. Below: A brief history of the Royal appeared in December 1930, confirming the building date.

Right: Note the ornate windows and facade, which is now obscured by a monotone of paint.





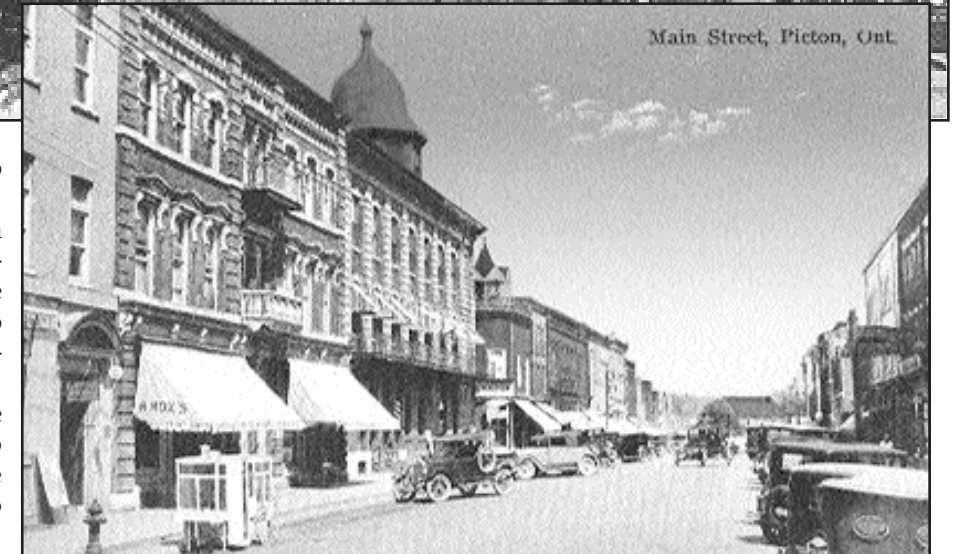
Above: Even in the early days The Royal was a natural gathering spot for groups. In this view the second-floor balcony is clearly seen. Note the deep drop from the sidewalk to the dirt street.

Left: Note the telephone poles on Main, almost obscuring the Royal cupola.

Below: The Royal today.



Photos courtesy Elliott Sage Design & Construction, Gudrun Gallo, Prince Edward Archives and the Ian S. Robertson postcard collection.



vowed to bring The Royal “back to its magnificent splendour.”

The general design, which appears on the next page, will likely undergo many changes as the project progresses, but plans are to have the first three floors transformed into a “sumptuous hotel,” and the top floors will become condominium units. You can also expect dining and dancing in the building, and possibly a rooftop jazz lounge.

Construction is expected to start in the Spring, and will once again alter the town streetscape. □

Top: Main Street looking west from the Town Hill. Note the horse-drawn buggies and carts wending their way along the dirt street.

Middle: The Royal around the mid-1900s, with awnings and cupola.

Right: A later view.

