

## Summer 2010 ALG

### The Corner of Sixth and Columbia Streets

Since New Westminster's earliest days, the corner of Columbia and Sixth Street has been used for government purposes. In 1859 a colonial assay office and accompanying mint were established there to process gold and eventually strike coins from it. Only a few coins were struck at the mint before it was closed in 1862; today they are extremely rare.



#### **New Westminster Mint and Assay Office, ca. 1861**

View of the early city from Lytton Square, showing the Government Treasury and Assay Office at the corner of Columbia and Mary (Sixth) Streets and the Government Bakery, opened in 1859 by Phillip Hick.

*NWMA IHP4304*

This building also acted as the community library until 1883 when a new brick post office was constructed on the site; eventually a new city library joined the post office here in 1891. Unfortunately both the library and post office were destroyed by fire in 1898.



**City Hall and Post Office, ca. 1923-1927**

Post Office, City Hall building and the Dominion Building at the corner of Sixth and Columbia Streets. The fire department has moved, replaced by Fraser Furniture.

*NWMA IHP7858*

Two years later, a new city hall had been constructed one lot in from the corner, and in 1901 a Dominion Building was completed directly on the corner. This building acted as a post office until the late 1950s. In 1953 City Hall had moved to its present location on Royal Avenue, and by 1958, both the old City Hall and Dominion Buildings had been demolished to be replaced by the office structure seen there today. The building continued to act as a post office, Veterans Affairs Office and customs office until the late 1990s.

Today the corner of Sixth and Columbia is home to the New Westminster Police Department. In 2000, the building was renovated to allow the police to move from City Hall on Royal Avenue to Columbia Street. A museum honouring the history of the New Westminster Police Department was added into the foyer of the station to commemorate one of the oldest police services in Western Canada. (Update 2021: the museum is no longer there.)



**New Westminster Police Station, 2011**  
Corner of Sixth and Columbia Street.  
*Photo courtesy of City of New Westminster*