

Unseen Chapter

Kingsway



MotorHotel

www.drainsofmycity.com

The first and only time I was ever inside the Kingsway Motor Hotel was during its demolition.

I learned everything I know about the physical building from that single trip inside; and after some research, I found that the place has quite an interesting and colorful history.

“When it was built in 1959, an advertising feature described the Kingsway’s murals of Venice and other exotic places, the marble and the fine furniture. “No expense has been spared in decorating the expansive lounges and beverage rooms.” By the ’70s, it was known as the biggest beer barn in Edmonton, during the era when huge taverns ruled the city’s nightlife before the liquor board ordered them divided into smaller spaces. There were acres of tables topped with red terry cloth to soak up the draft.”

The Kingsway was home to a cheap hotel, a strip joint, several huge bars, and the source of countless memories for hundreds that passed through its doors.

“Many people knew the
Kingsway Motor Hotel in **life**.
I knew it only in
death.”

It is now a parking lot.



checking.



CHECKED IN: _____ No 3447

REGISTRATION CARD
Subject to Cancellation Without Notice for
Non-compliance with Regulations.

DATE _____ Room _____

NAME, 1 _____ No. Persons _____

2 _____ Please Write Address in Full Rate _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ Baggage _____

CITY _____ Remarks _____

LENGTH OF STAY _____ CAR LIC. No. _____

No responsibility is assumed by the
management for valuables not deposited.

CHECKED OUT: _____

Clerk _____

MAY 2003 It was Dogboy who tipped me off that some hotel next to the Kingsway Garden mall was being demolished. I went to scout the location, and found that a cheap fence had been erected around the building, and an entire wall had been ripped off. The demolition had been temporarily halted so that an asbestos removal crew could rip out the hazardous bits.

It was a window of opportunity, so Dogboy and I met later on for an early evening mission. Easily slipping through a gap in the fence, we passed between some trackhoes, stepping over the chunks of rubble, and went into the building through the missing wall. Since we entered near the front, we decided to check out the main lobby at the front of the building first.



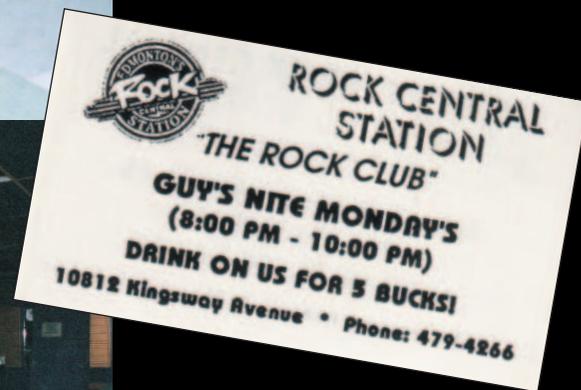
Many of the large front windows had been smashed in, and the main lobby was mostly empty except for the glass fragments on the floor. We bypassed a large main staircase in favor of a smaller door, that led into a former bar behind the main lobby. The room was big, with **a gaping hole were the trackhoes had ripped into the building.**

Some nice wooden chairs, with padded, upholstered seats and armrests were arranged around the scattered tables. For some reason, I remember this as the "trucker bar".

We went back into the main lobby, and took the big staircase down into the basement. We came into a set of rooms that had junk lying everywhere. One room that used to belong to maintenance was full with left-over wood, rolled carpet and pipe. Rooms that were full of every type of associatd bar junk: posters, glassware, coasters, promotional give-aways. And rooms that had just miscellaneous stuff: lightbulbs, an old security camera, hotel room keys, etc. I distinctly remember spending a good deal of time in a small room, under the main staircase; examining shelves full of thousands of different small objects. All of this left-over stuff was destined for a landfill.



I heard Dogboy exclaim, “*You gotta check this out!*” from the next room. I followed his voice, and stepped into a cavernous basement. The room, I think, occupied over half of the entire building's basement space, and used to be a single massive club. I counted no less than three bars, two medium sized dance floors, and dozens of tables. The basement was the former home of a club called **Rock Central Station**, according to numerous posters, giveaways and signage left around. On one table, we found a stack of old vinyl records from 1980s rock bands.



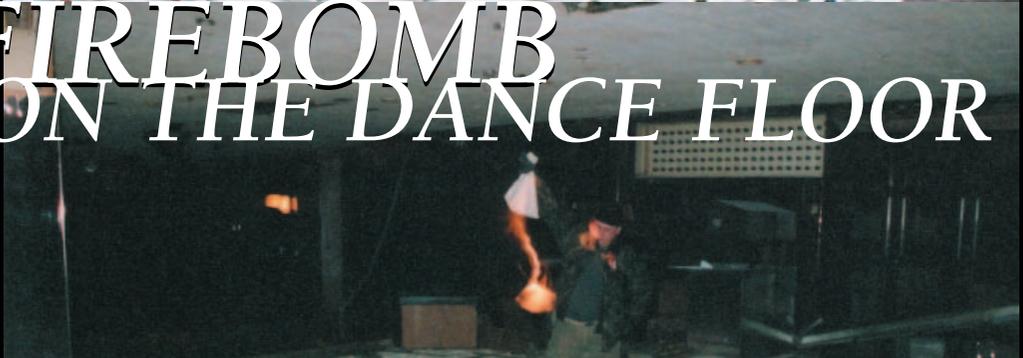
Purple was the dominant color, with lots of wood paneling and accents. There was an **odd pillar in the middle of one dance floor**, with light-studded beams radiating out from its top. The demolition had ripped out a chunk of the ceiling near one bar, and every flat surface in the room near the hole was covered in powdery white demolition dust. In the bathrooms located behind the bar, cologne or tampons could be purchased from small machines mounted on the wall.



We went through some doors at the back of the room, and took a large staircase up to the ground floor. Here, we found another bar, although not as big as Rock Central. What I remember most about this area is the dance floor. At one time, the floor would have been transparent, with *rows of colored lightbulbs* lit up underneath- no doubt very cool. Now, the floor covering (plexiglass, perhaps?) had been removed, leaving the lightbulbs underneath exposed.

DOGBOY DROPS A

FIREBOMB
ON THE DANCE FLOOR





the rules

- 13. There is to be no physical contact with patrons during your show.
- 14. You must stay inside the brass rail or \$100.00 fine.
- 15. No oil, water or fire shows without management authorization.

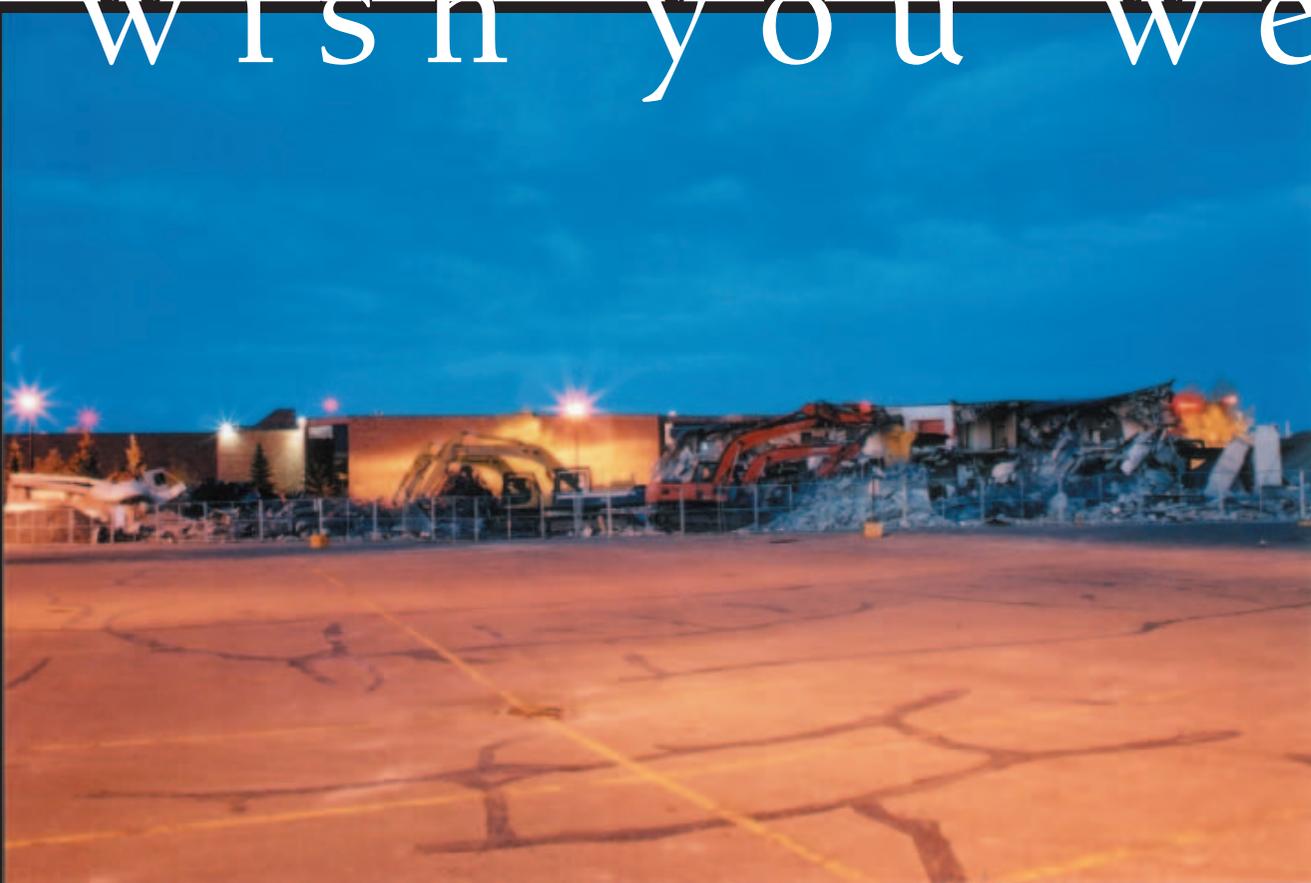
a strip joint known as PINKY's

From there, we wandered into a couple of back hallways. I went through a door, and suddenly found myself on a stage of some sort, in a room that had a wall missing. It was evidently **an old strip joint** - what other type of stage is equipped with shiny floor to ceiling poles? A stairway led into this foyer, from which a door opened onto the stage; this was probably how the strippers used to emerge. The stairway was interesting because past dancers had all left signatures and graffiti up and down the stairwell walls.

The stairs themselves led up to the second storey hotel rooms, if I remember correctly. Dogboy and I followed the corridor through the former hotel, checking out the rooms as we went. The old hotel rooms were small and mostly empty, a few had exposed plumbing or holes in the walls were stuff had been ripped out. The corridor led around, eventually taking us back to the main staircase at the front of the building. We passed by, and checked out a few rooms at the end of the hall. It was here that we found a room that was mostly empty except for a bunch of file folders on some shelves. This would normally be unremarkable, except that these files were full of photos of naked women. Turns out the strip club had kept files on all the strippers, with promo photos and signed contracts/waivers- "Pinky's Rules for Dancers".

After that, we went back down the main staircase into the lobby at the front. For a little while, we checked out the semi-demolished kitchen where we'd first entered. Finding nothing else, and since we'd already spent several hours inside the building, we decided it was *time to leave*.

wish you were



HERE

The End.