

The Case for Dog Kennels on *Titanic's* Boat Deck

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Introduction

Over the years there has been considerable debate about the location of the dog kennels aboard *Titanic*. While there is no undisputable primary evidence for the location, this paper will make a circumstantial case that I believe is stronger than the alternatives.

The Debate

The debate is fairly simple. On one side is the evidence presented for the location being on F deck near the third class galley. The location on this plan was as was shown on the plan used for the Limitation of Liability hearings after the disaster. The location of the kennels on F deck is shown in Figure 1.

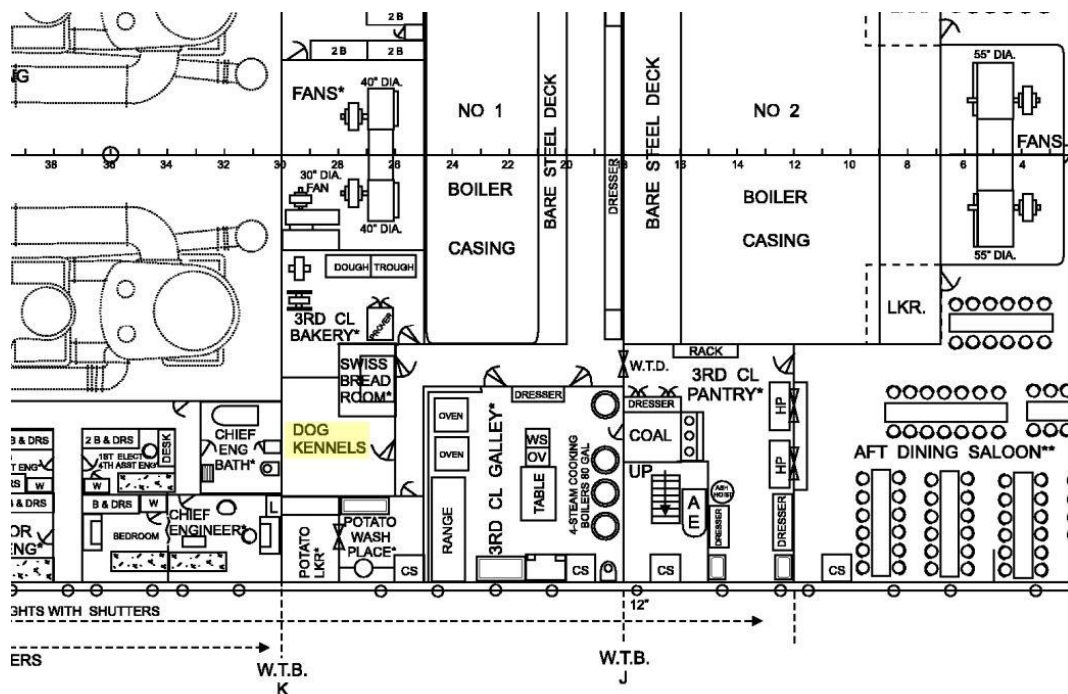


Figure 1

The evidence presented for this location is that it was indicated on plans used by the Limitation of Liability hearings and that it was closer to the butcher's shop whose responsibility it was to feed the dogs. The thing that makes this location curious is that the kennels would not be very near the butcher's shop. The butcher's shop was located on D deck port and the dog kennels on this plan are located on F deck starboard. So the proximity argument doesn't really hold up.

Since the plans provided by Harland and Wolff to the Limitation of Liability hearings are the primary basis for the belief that the kennels were located on F deck, we should examine the reliability of these plans. These plans have been the primary source of our knowledge of the general arrangement of decks and rooms on Titanic. These plans were redrawn and improved by Bruce Beveridge during the 2000s. Figure 1 is cropped from his redrawn plans. One sheet of the original plans used in the hearings is shown in Figure 2.

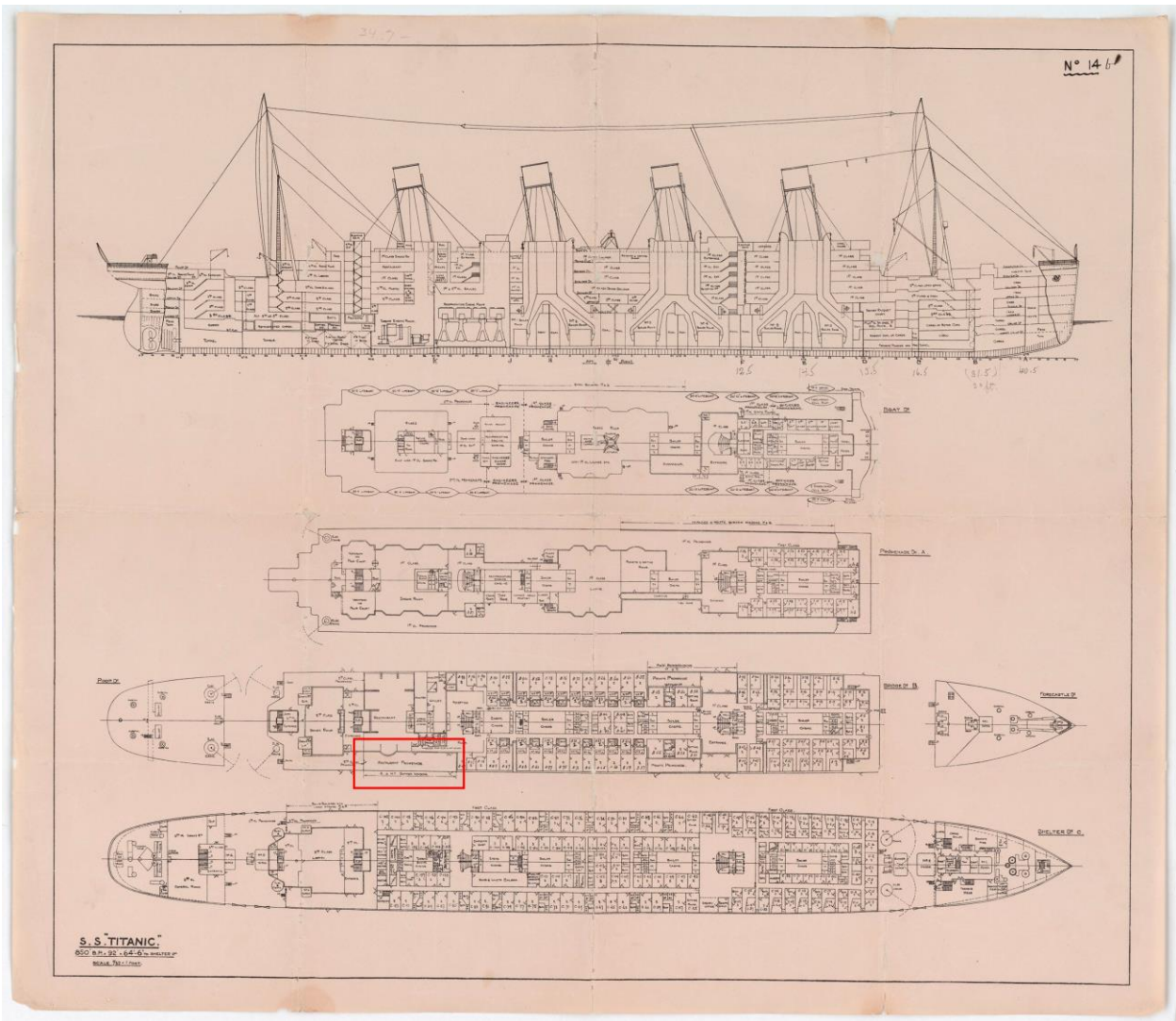


Figure 2

In Figure 2 I have outlined an area that needs to be discussed regarding the accuracy of the Limitation of Liability plans. I have outlined the area on C deck that we know was occupied by the Café Parisien. However in an enlargement of the outlined area in Figure 3 we see that the area is labeled “Restaurant Promenade”.

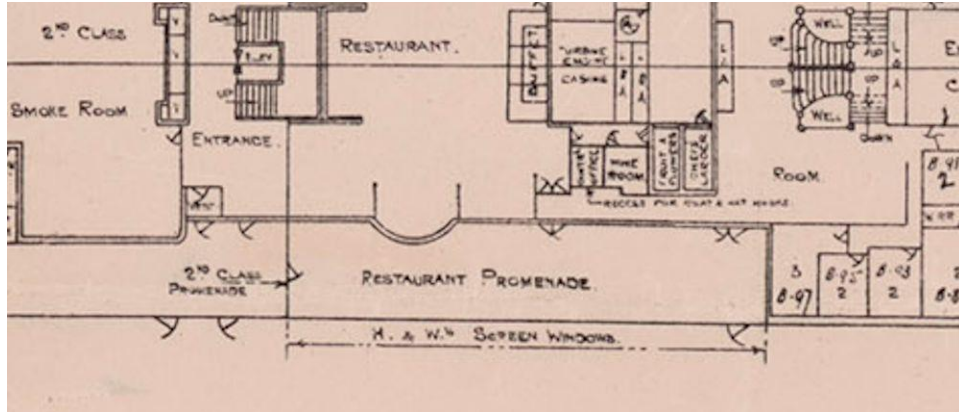


Figure 3

From this plan excerpt we can see that this plan must represent an earlier version of what was planned for Titanic. Apparently the area previously referenced was not originally planned for a Café Parisien but rather a promenade for the restaurant. Finding an anomaly like this on these plans is strong evidence that details on the plan are not as reliable as was once believed. We see that earlier details could be and in some cases were modified during fitting out. Unfortunately we don't have a later revised version if one was ever prepared. Therefore since the F deck location of the kennels is based primarily on a plan of dubious accuracy, I believe it should not be given much, if any, weight in this matter of the location of the kennels.

The Boat Deck Location

The boat deck location of the kennels that will be proposed is shown as the second class cloak room on the aft port corner of the deck house under the fourth funnel on the boat deck. From the same Limitation of Liability plans the location of the supposed second class cloak room is shown in Figure 5.

Go to next page

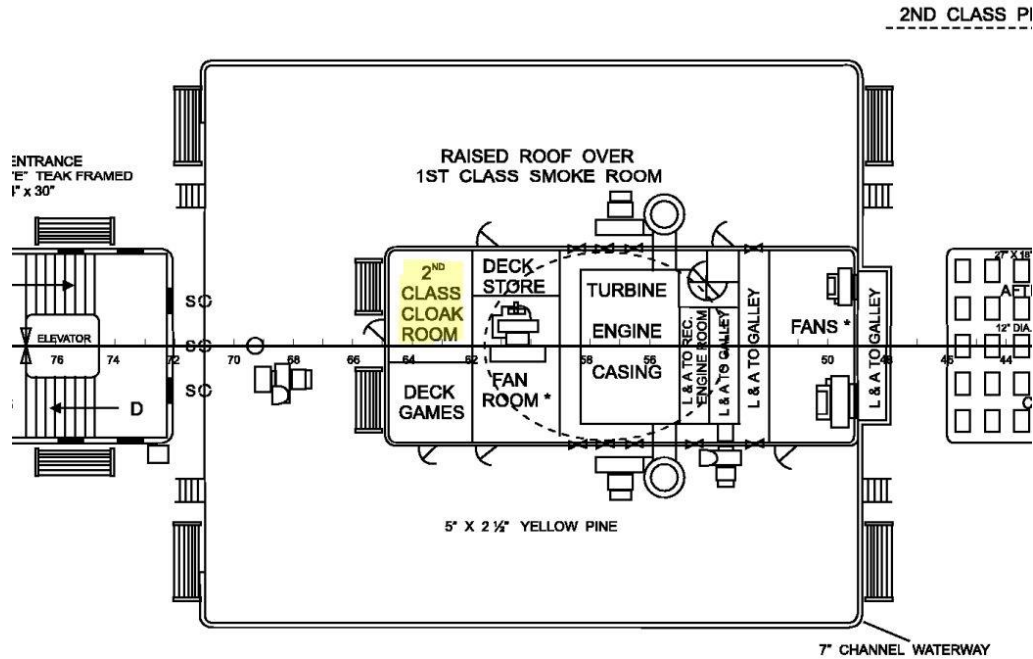


Figure 5

The Case for the Boat Deck Location

The case for the boat deck location of *Titanic's* kennels will be made from photos of the area. The first thing that is at variance with the Limitation of Liability plans is the fact that the plans show a standard door to the cloak room while the photographs show a Dutch door. In Figure 6 we see a photo of the door to this room. Various items of door hardware are indicated and as compared to a standard door which is indicated in the photo on the port side of the deck house.

Go to next page

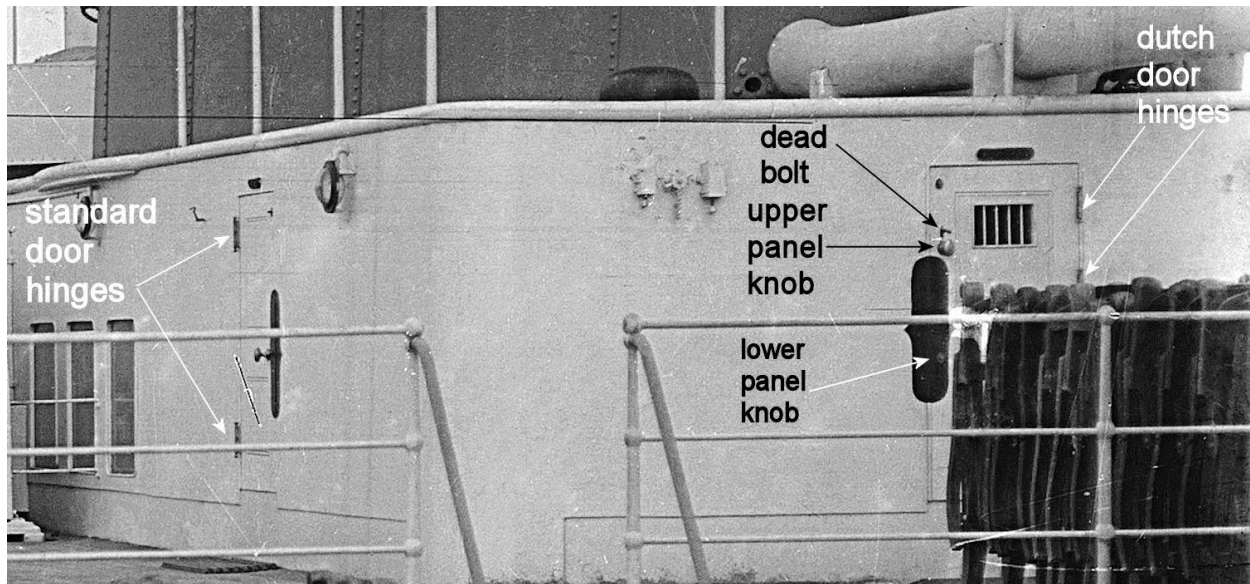


Figure 6

The presence of a Dutch door doesn't necessarily indicate that the door was for kennels rather than a cloak room. The Dutch door could have been used for an attendant to service passengers through. However there is one aspect of the door which I believe is the primary evidence for believing that this door opened to kennels. This aspect is the rectangular window in the upper door panel which had vertical bars in place. I believe that there was no glass in this opening. Bars of this nature were used in the well decks to protect porthole glass from damage by swinging cargo. There is no such danger in this area since we see other windows with no protection at all. A cloak room which is not in use with the door closed would have no need of any ventilation; however, kennels would. In the daytime, the upper panel of the door could be opened providing light and air. At night, the door could be closed with an opening for air being present.

Another consideration is that there are various cloak rooms on other promenades and none have Dutch doors but rather have simple panel wooden doors.

Olympic Evidence

In many aspects, *Titanic* was at the vanguard of changes which would later be made to her older sister *Olympic*. I believe this is the case with the kennels. In Figure 7 we see an *Olympic* plan from the 1920s showing the same location as is proposed for *Titanic* used for dog kennels.

Go to Next Page

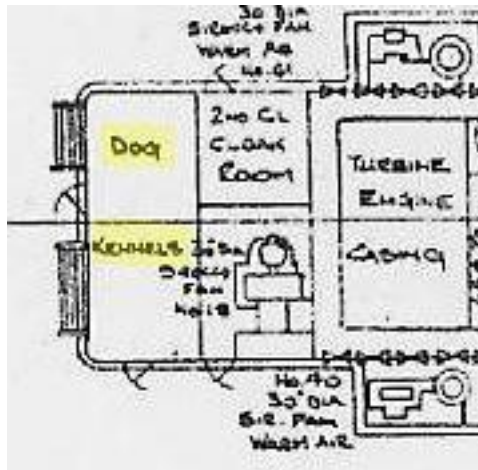


Figure 7

Further evidence of this being the location of *Olympic's* dog kennels is shown in Figure 8 where we see dogs outside the open door to the kennels.



Many passengers take their pets with them as traveling companions. They are well cared for in beautifully-located quarters.

Figure 8

Olympic's conversion of this room to dog kennels most likely happened during her 1913 refit. *Olympic's* configuration did have some differences. Instead of a Dutch door, *Olympic* had an outer standard wood door with a ventilation opening and an inner screen door. One aspect is that *Olympic* used the entire aft section of the deck house for the kennels. Whether *Titanic* did is speculative. The starboard aft room is labeled "Deck Games" on the Limitation of Liability

plans. However, because of doubts which have been cast on the Limitation of Liability plans, it is very possible that the kennels could have spanned the width of the deckhouse.

Passenger Reports

There are also passenger reports which seem to indicate that during the sinking someone may have released the dogs from their kennels. It is thought that it was most likely done at a boat deck location. There are other anecdotal reports of chickens being heard coming from some below decks location. There is no evidence that chickens were housed in the kennels. Therefore whether chickens were kept somewhere below decks does not prove anything about the location of the kennels. This article will not discuss these reports because the actual evidence from photographs is persuasive enough on its own.

Conclusion

Examination of high quality *Titanic* photographs has led me to the conclusion that the dog kennels were, in fact, most likely located on the boat deck of *Titanic*. Little beyond an annotated deck plan used at the Limitation of Liability hearings provides any support for the alternate location of the dog kennels on F deck. Errors in this plan suggest that it can't be considered reliable in determining the location of the kennels. This article does not presume to offer indisputable proof but rather attempts to provide the best circumstantial evidence for the boat deck location of the dog kennels aboard *Titanic*.