

Skid Lights for *Titanic's* First-Class Smoke Room

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Introduction

There is a general familiarity with the skid lights at the base of the outboard bulkheads of *Titanic's* officers' quarters which served the interior staterooms on *Titanic's* forward A deck. However, many are not aware of the skid lights which served *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom. This article will illustrate and describe the location of these skid lights and how they functioned.

Definition

A skid light is similar to a skylight but it provides indirect illumination rather than direct illumination like a skylight. A skylight has its panes oriented more or less in the same plane as the surface of the deck above the room for which they provided illumination. A skid light is located on a vertical bulkhead on the deck above the room for which they provided illumination. The light which they supply to the room on the deck below which they are located is indirect lighting.

Location of Skid Lights Serving *Titanic's* First-Class Smokeroom

The skid lights which supplied *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom were located on the outboard bulkheads of the deckhouse under the fourth funnel. Figure 1 shows two of these skid lights on *Olympic*.

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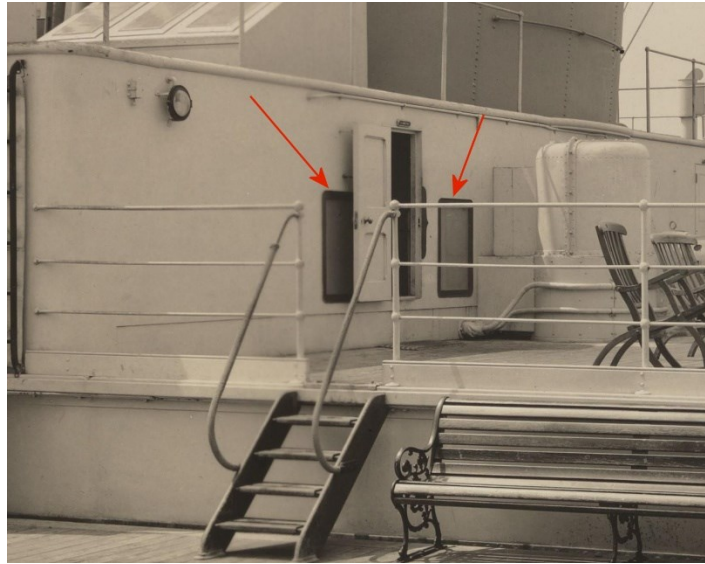


Figure 1

Skid lights over *Olympic's* first-class smokeroom (red arrows)

Figure 2 shows three of these skid lights on *Titanic*.

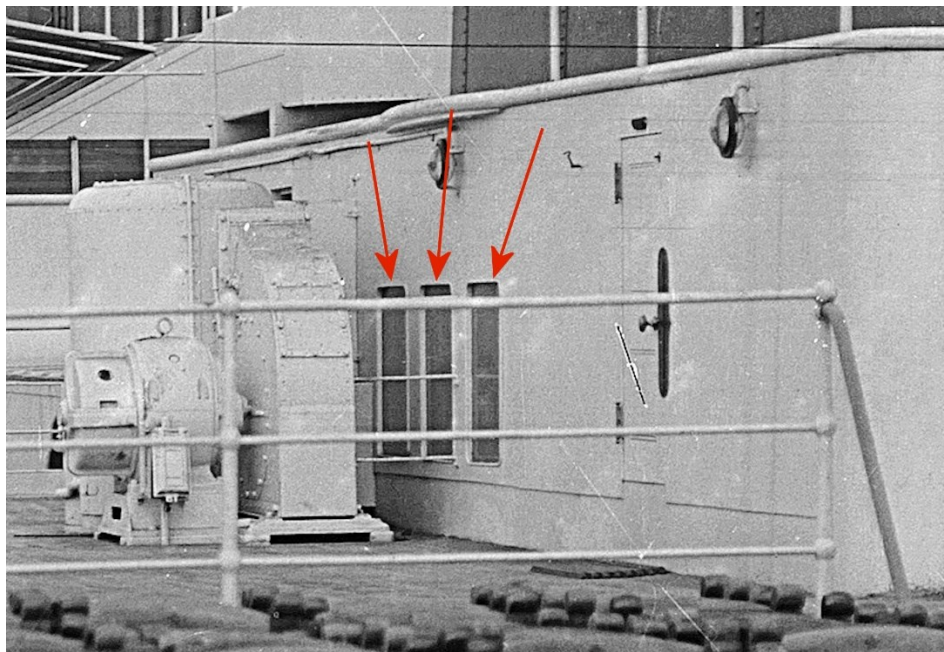


Figure 2

Skid lights over *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom (red arrows)

There were five skid lights on both port and starboard sides of the deckhouse under the fourth funnel. The locations are mirrored port and starboard. Figure 3 shows the locations of the skid lights on a plan view of *Titanic*.

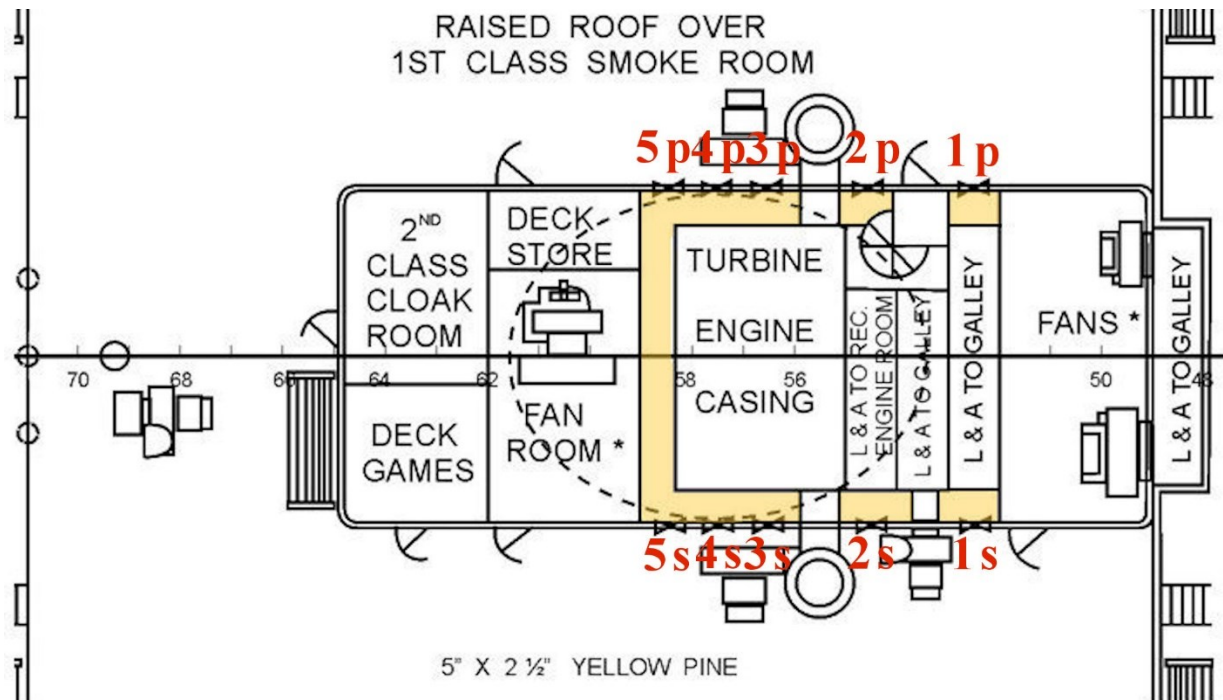


Figure 3

Skid light locations over *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom

The skid lights are numbered 1-5 proceeding from forward to aft and are designated either "p" or "s" for port or starboard. Figures 4 & 5 are elevation views of the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse under the fourth funnel.

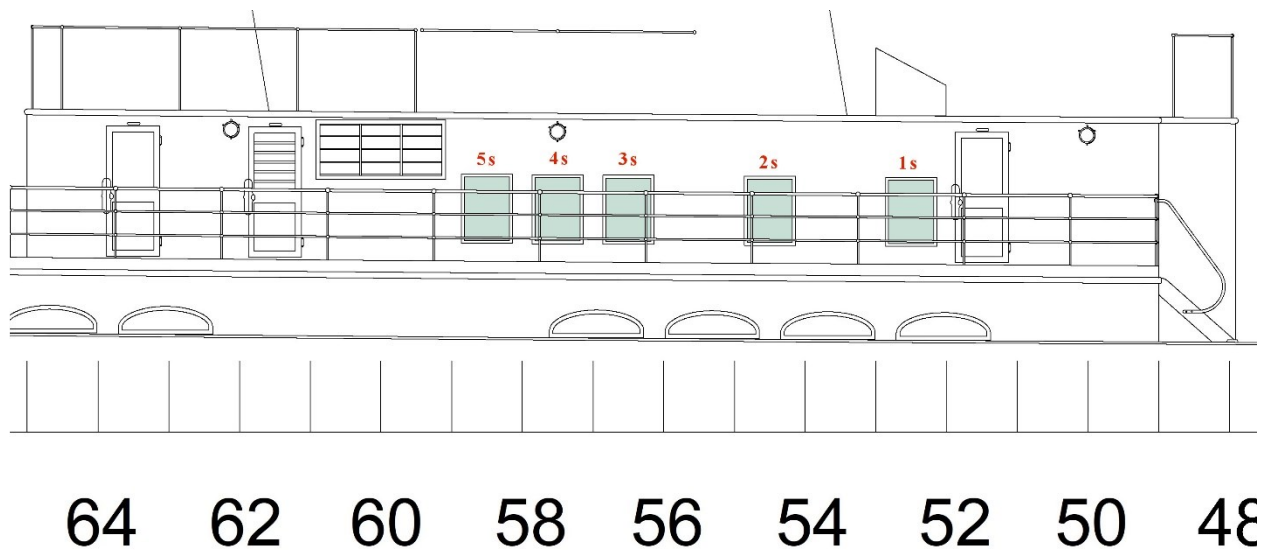


Figure 4

Starboard elevation of deckhouse under *Titanic's* fourth funnel

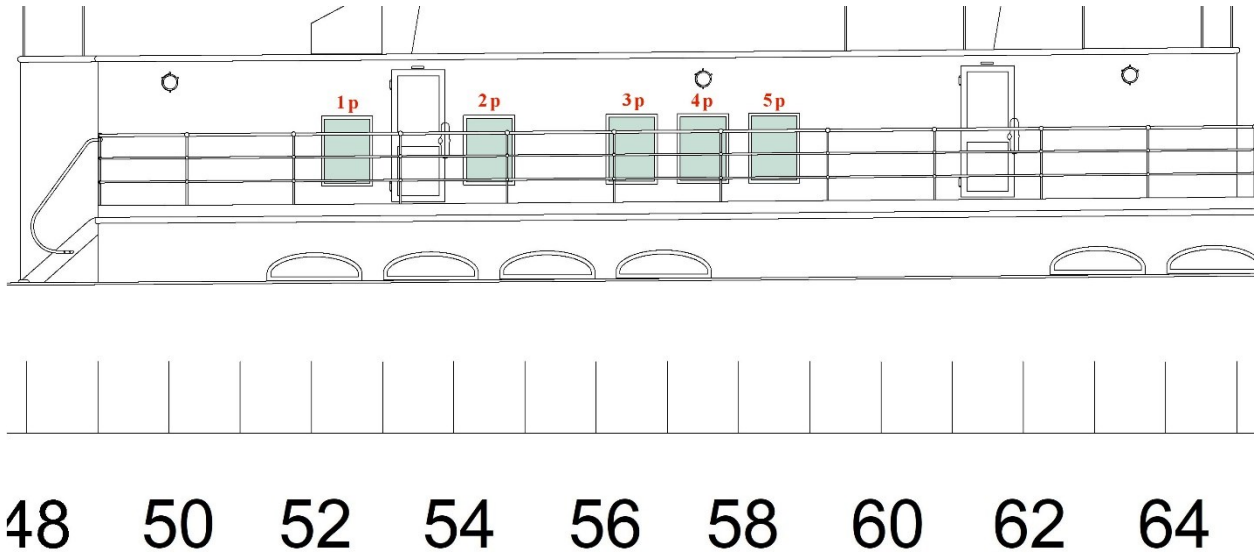


Figure 5

Port elevation of deckhouse under *Titanic's* fourth funnel

Area in First-Class Smokerroom Supplied by Skid Lights

Figure 6 shows a photo of *Titanic's* first-class smokerroom.

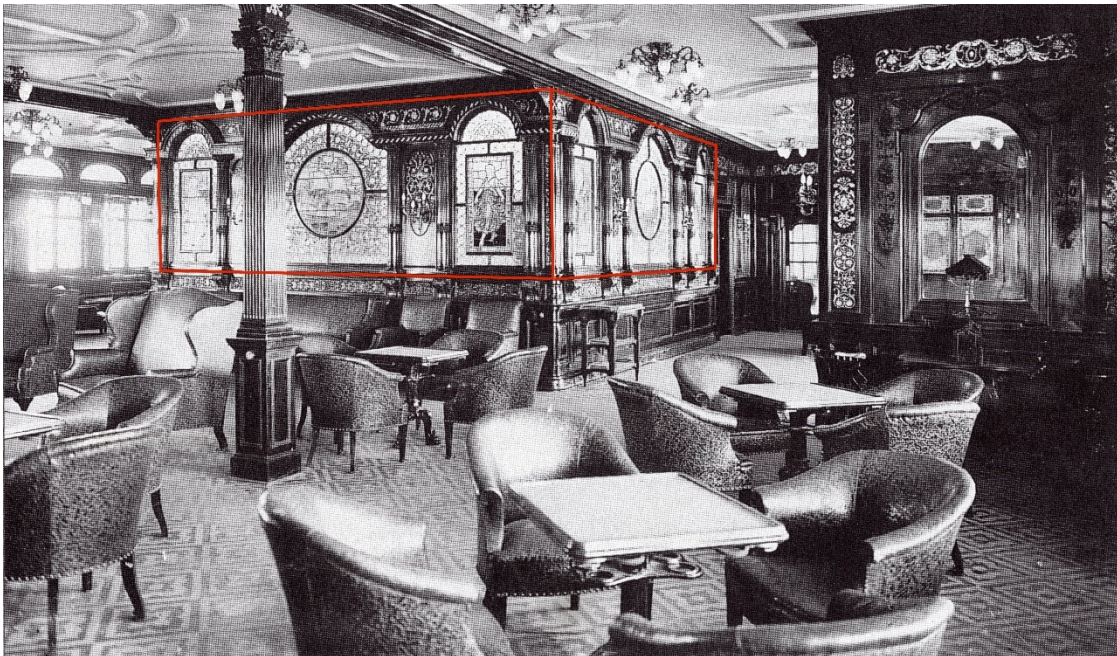


Figure 6

Titanic's first-class smokeroom

The skid lights allowed light to illuminate the back of stained glass panels which were placed around the area occupied by the turbine engine casing and other ducts. These windows are outlined in red in the photo.

Interior Path of Light from Skid Lights

Figure 3 shows a plan view of the deckhouse under the fourth funnel. Inside the deckhouse is a "U" shaped shaft highlighted in yellow. The skid lights admitted light to this shaft. This shaft descended down to A deck behind the stained-glass panels outlined in Figure 6. The location of the shaft in the smokeroom is highlighted in yellow in Figure 7.

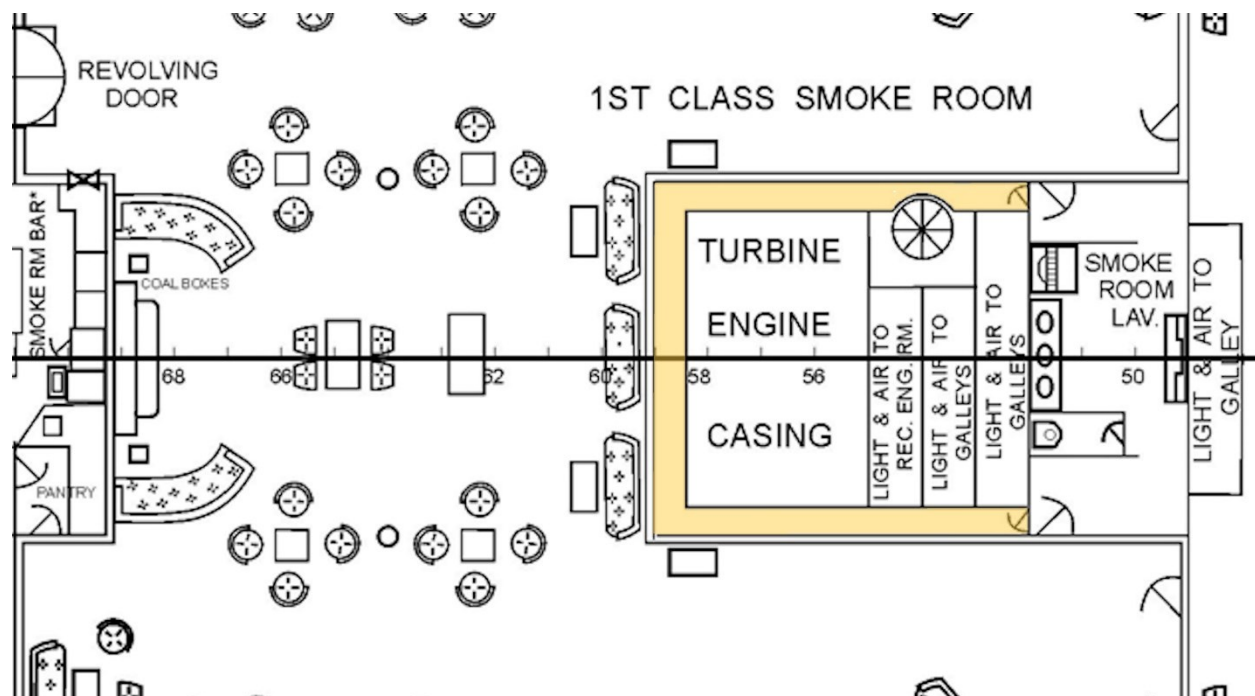


Figure 7

Plan view of *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom (light shaft highlighted in yellow)

Since the port and starboard exterior stained-glass windows of the smokeroom did not have exterior back-lighting at night, it is doubtful that there was any artificial back-lighting behind the stained-glass panels outlined in Figure 6 which were illuminated during daylight hours by the skid lights above.

Glass Used in Skid Lights

In order to maximize the light to the area behind the stained-glass panels supplied by the skid lights, the glass was "obscure" glass rather than transparent. Obscure glass has varying levels of translucency depending on the type of obscure glass used. The glass used in these skid lights

was most likely etched or “frosted”. Figure 8 shows a comparison between transparent and obscure glass.



Figure 8

Comparison between transparent and obscure glass

Summary

This article has explained the function and structure of the skid lights over *Titanic's* first-class smokeroom. Unlike the skidlights on *Titanic's* officers' quarters, these did not open to admit any air since none was required to illuminate the stained-glass windows in the smokeroom.

