

# The Case for Restaurant Galley Skylights on *Titanic*

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By Bob Read, D.M.D.

## Introduction

There has been much debate about whether *Titanic* had restaurant galley skylights on the forward roof of the deckhouse under the fourth funnel like her sister *Olympic*. This article will examine and make the case for restaurant galley skylights on *Titanic*.

## *Olympic* Evidence

From the beginning, *Olympic* had skylights over the restaurant galley on “B” deck. The early skylights had an air intake on their aft sides which ducted into the light and air trunk to the restaurant galley. Figure 1 shows this combination skylight/natural draft ventilator.



Figure 1

## Combination skylight/ventilator over early *Olympic*'s restaurant galley

During *Olympic*'s 1913 refit, the ventilation of the restaurant galley was upgraded. As part of the upgrade, the skylight/ventilator combinations were replaced with sealed, non-opening

skylights. The air intakes of the skylights were eliminated and a single 20 inch suction ventilator was added on the starboard side. Figure 2. Shows the modified port skylight on *Olympic in 1918*.



Figure 2

### Restaurant galley skylight on HMT *Olympic* in 1918

The ventilator and skylight configuration forward of the fourth funnel in 1918 was the same as it was after the 1913 refit. Figure 3 is a multi-view drawing of one of the replacement restaurant galley skylights. These skylights were steel and were non-opening.

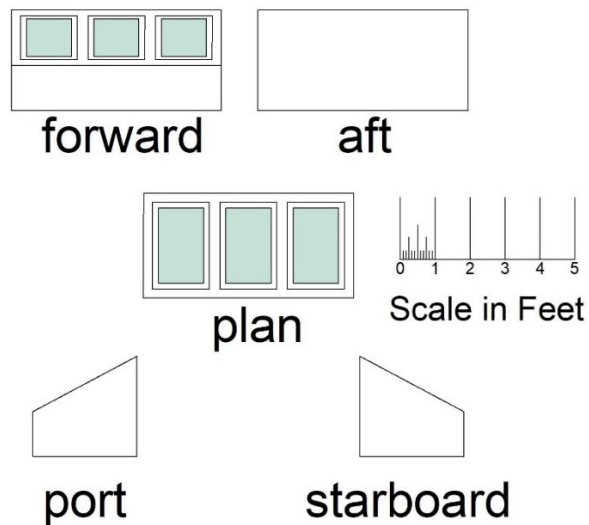


Figure 3

Multi-view drawing of restaurant galley skylights

## Direct *Titanic* Evidence

Direct photo evidence for either the presence or absence of restaurant galley skylights on *Titanic* is nearly non-existent. Researchers have used their imaginations with poor quality photos of both the ship before its maiden voyage and the wreck and are somehow able to “see” things in the photos which convince them that the skylights are there and others that it is not. I believe it can be reliably stated that there is no direct photo evidence that is definitive either way.

## Indirect *Titanic* Evidence

Harland and Wolff incorporated the restaurant galley skylights on *Olympic* for a definite purpose. The restaurant galley does not have access to natural light due to its inboard location. The restaurant skylight trunk provided both light and air to the galley. It apparently was found that exhausting air from the galley was more important than air delivery to the galley. Consequently, we see with *Olympic*'s original skylight configuration that during her 1913 refit that they eliminated the ventilation intakes from the skylights and added a 20-inch suction fan connected to the starboard skylight to exhaust air from the galley.

On *Titanic*, two 20-inch suction fans were connected to the light and air trunk to the galley as shown in Figure 4.

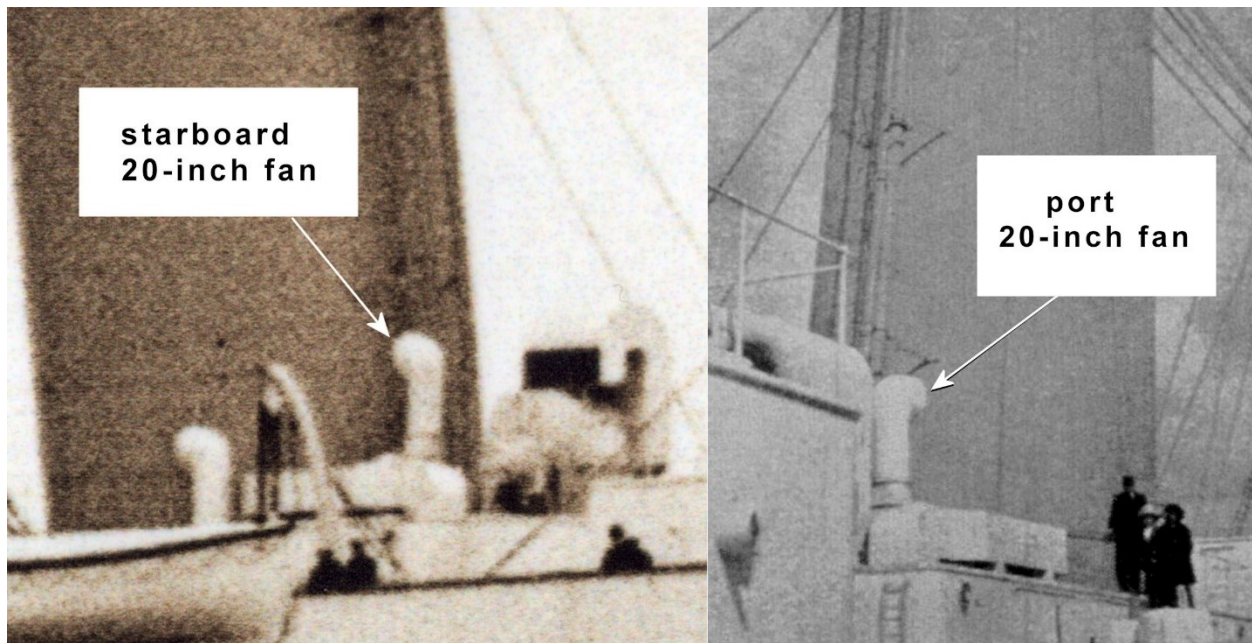


Figure 4

*Titanic*'s port and starboard 20-inch restaurant galley suction fans

Some have advocated that when the two 20-inch suction fans were incorporated on *Titanic* that the skylights were removed. Why would the restaurant galley skylights be removed on *Titanic*? There could only be about three reasons for eliminating the skylights.

1. The galley no longer required natural light. If this were true then we would have to explain why the restaurant galley skylights on *Olympic* were retained after her 1913 refit. Natural light is always desirable in a galley.
2. There was not enough room for the skylights with the addition of the 20-inch suction fans. Some use Figure 5 as proof that the skylights were eliminated on *Titanic*.

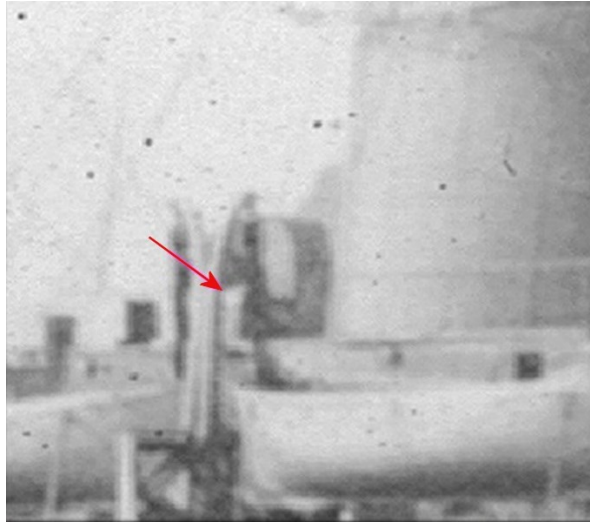


Figure 5

Red arrow pointing to conventional intake duct on *Titanic's* 20-inch fan

The logic is that since the 20-inch suction fans have standard intake ducts which draw from the deckhouse roof surface that the skylights would have to be eliminated. Figure 6 shows an arrangement where the standard 20-inch suction fans draw from the light and air trunk to the galley. The skylights are modified to be shorter in their athwartship dimension and the 20-inch suction fans draw directly from the light and air trunk through the top of the deckhouse.

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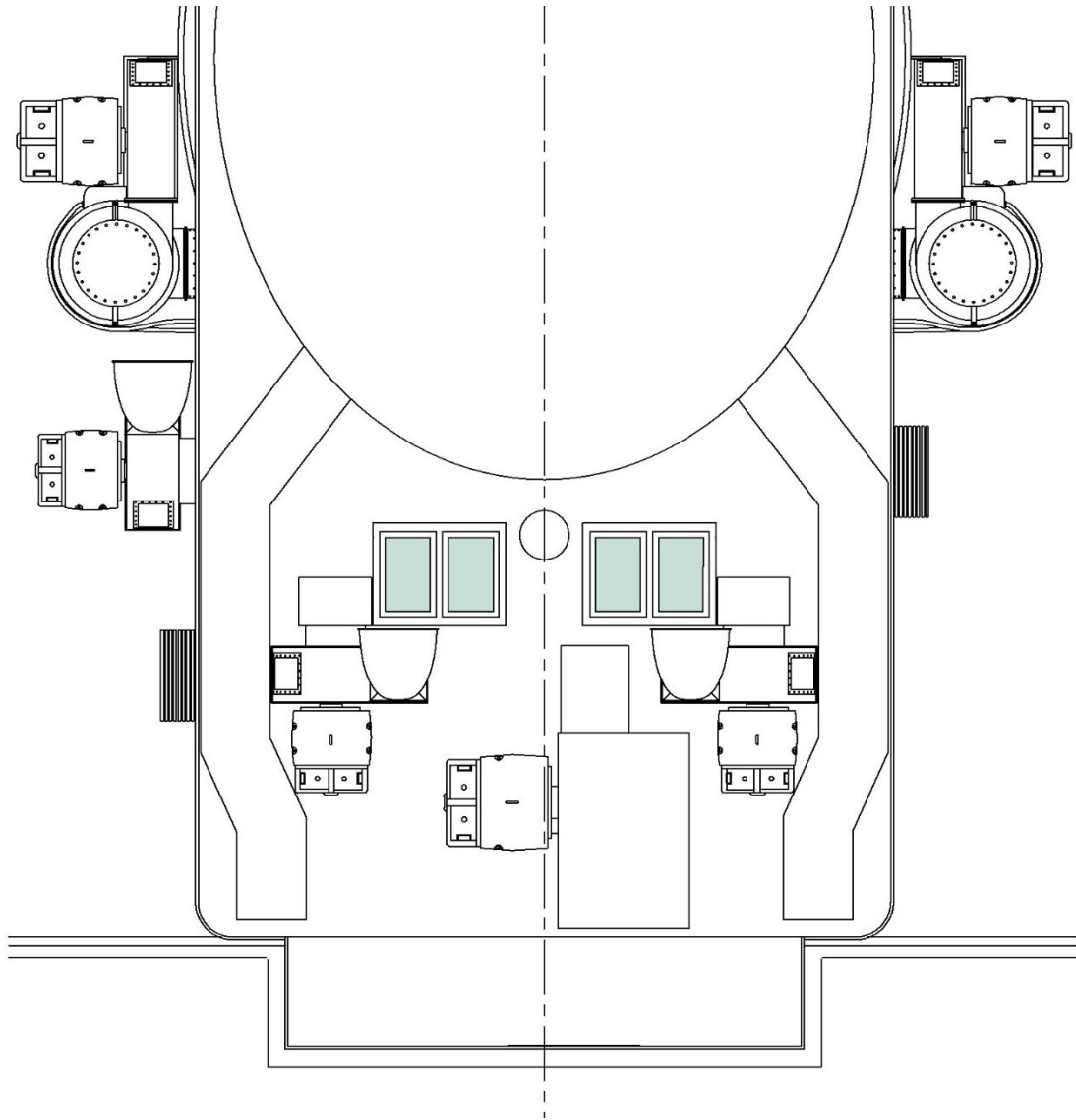


Figure 6

### Proposed arrangement of restaurant galley skylights on *Titanic*

3. The third reason to eliminate the restaurant galley skylights on *Titanic* would be if the galley had either been eliminated or moved. However, *Titanic* general arrangement plans show the galley in the same location on "B" deck as *Olympic*.

The three reasonable objections to the retention of restaurant galley skylights on *Titanic* are not really valid in light of available evidence. It would be much more difficult to come up with reasons for the elimination of the restaurant galley skylights than for their retention.

## *Britannic* Evidence

*Britannic* poses the same limitations of evidence as *Titanic*. The same lack of direct photo evidence for restaurant galley skylights exists for both the hospital ship and the wreck. Fortunately, there is indirect evidence which is similar to *Titanic*. No further indirect evidence for the presence of restaurant galley skylights on *Britannic* will be presented. If the indirect evidence for *Titanic* is insufficient then the indirect evidence for *Britannic* will lend no further weight to the *Titanic* argument.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this argument has been to present the case for the presence of restaurant galley skylights on the roof of the deckhouse forward of *Titanic's* fourth funnel. Lacking direct photo evidence, the case has been made using indirect evidence which relies heavily on photo evidence from *Olympic*. This indirect evidence makes a stronger case than any doubtful direct photo evidence from *Titanic*. With the state of the *Titanic* wreck as it exists in 2025, it is highly improbable that any new direct photo evidence will shed any further light on this matter.