

2253 Washington Street - Agnew & Co.



Agnew & Co. 2018

Heritage Register - Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** Agnew & Co.
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 2253 Washington Street
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1900
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Agnew & Co. Building is located on the west side of Washington Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, in Rossland, B. C. It is a large, 2 storey building of wooden construction with a slightly sloping shed roof. The building is clad in blue horizontal siding with white trim and is flush with Washington Street. There are three entrances from the street with two of them recessed and under a canopy with a sign saying, "Rossland Inn".

Heritage Value:

For 40 years, from 1899-1939, the Agnew & Co. business served the community as a successful grocery, dry goods and mercantile store; built, owned and operated by George Agnew and then, his son-in-law, Oswald Bisson.

Its location is the northern limit of what has always been the commercial core of downtown Rossland. Strategically, a good business decision as the site was very close to the two railways (constructed in 1896) servicing Rossland and the store captured a large population living above the downtown commercial area.

Thanks to family research, we know details about the products, services and operation of Agnew & Co., which are representative of that period of Rossland business history.

The building has seen many different uses since the Agnew & Co. business closed in 1939. Part of it continued to be used as a family residence, then it was the home of Rossland Fuel & Supply, 1950-56, (lumber, coal and wood) and then for many years, an apartment block.

Exterior renovations have disguised the fact that the Agnew & Co. building was constructed in 2 stages, first in 1899 and then expanded in 1901. Demolition of a portion of the 1899 building happened in 1939, creating the footprint and building we see today, known as Agnew & Co. Since 1939, it has seen many uses. Today it houses the Rossland Inn.

Character Defining Elements:

- Location
- Original height and depth of building
- Frontage on Washington Street
- Heritage plaque on exterior identifying this building as one of Rossland's significant heritage buildings



Agnew & Co. 1901

History

In 1898, the Nelson and Fort Sheppard Railway (the Great Northern) owned Block 15, Lots 12 and 13. In 1900, George and Mary Ann Agnew purchased the land and constructed a building, valued at \$200 on Lot 13, the northern lot. There they started Agnew & Co. a combined grocery and dry goods store. By 1911 the business was thriving and the building was enlarged in order to accommodate the growing demand. The value of the building had escalated noticeably to \$1600. In 1919 Agnew transferred all the lots he owned (Lots 11-15) to his wife.



Agnew & Co. Interior 1914

In the early 1920's, the Agnew's daughter, Georgina, married Oswald Bisson. Bisson purchased the store from Agnew and continued the business under the same name, Agnew & Co. The elder Agnews left Rossland shortly after and moved south of the border. They invested the money they had made in the grocery business in real estate in Seattle and continued to prosper. Oswald Bisson ran the business until he retired in 1949.

Helen Mitchell, a native of Rossland, remembers how groceries were delivered around town in the early days: "by wagon in the summer, and by sleigh in the winter, by Mr. Nord, an employee who would often allow the kids to ride with him."

Charlie Daily, who owned a building supply store at another location then purchased Bisson's building for his supply store. Daily then sold to the Adams brothers who continued to operate a building supply store until the mid 1960's.

When the Adams left, the store remained vacant for a number of years, then later housed a novelty store for a short period of time. Tax assessment rolls are not available after 1970, so ownership details are hazy after this time.

Mr Doug Buhr was the owner of the building in 1985. Under his ownership, the building underwent a much needed facelift. The exterior of the building was revived without compromising its heritage appearance. In 2003 Ritchie Mann owned the building and sold it to the present owner, Peter Stuart. Peter ran it as short term and long term accommodation until 2015. In 2015 he renamed it the Rossland Inn and continues to run it as short term accommodation.