

2110 FIRST AVENUE – ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH



Heritage Register – Building

- 1) **Historical Name:** St. Andrew’s Church
- 2) **Common Name:** St. Andrew’s United Church and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
- 3) **Address:** 2110 First Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1898
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

St. Andrew’s Church is located on the northeast corner lots of the intersection of First Avenue and Queen Street in upper Rossland. The large, white stuccoed building with its red metal-clad, peaked roof and steeple overlooking downtown make it a prominent, heritage building. The main entrances to the sanctuary and the adjoining annex were originally reached by two sets of stairs coming from First Avenue.

Heritage Value:

St. Andrew's Church is valued as a place of spiritual and religious importance to Rosslanders since its construction and consecration in 1898. Originally built as a Presbyterian church, St. Andrew's became a United Church of Canada in 1925 when the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational faiths amalgamated.

The Annex, adjoining the Sanctuary on its western side, is of social and cultural significant to Rosslanders since its construction in 1912. It was built to meet the recreational and social needs of both the congregation and the community and its large, open space (30 feet by 50 feet) has continued to be well used by diverse groups for activities, events and gatherings.

Additions to the original church, the large annex in 1912 and the small annex in the 1920s, reflect increasing church attendance and involvement when the population of Rossland was fairly static. Perhaps the greatest increase was in the number of children. When the final, additional space was created at St. Andrew's, by digging out a basement under the large annex for Sunday school rooms in the 1940s, there were close to 300 children attending St. Andrew's Sunday school.

Architecturally, St. Andrew's Church is a typical church of its time; pitched roof, steeple on the front of the building with a bell, and windows of coloured or stained glass. St. Andrew's embodies religious, spiritual, social and cultural aspects of the community's past and present. The red metal roof and white stucco siding were installed on the building around 1951. Those changes made it an iconic presence in Rossland.

Character Defining Elements:

- Footprint including the sanctuary, large and small annexes.
- Steeple with bell.
- Coloured glass in windows.
- First Avenue entrances.
- Red metal roof and white stucco siding.
- Sitting on elevated property above the intersecting roadways.
- Plaque identifying St. Andrew's as one of Rossland's significant heritage buildings.



St. Andrew's Church c.1907

HISTORY

The Presbyterian Church was started by a young Presbyterian student, Hugh J. Robertson, and the following is his account:

Unable to secure lodging for the night, I applied to Constable Jack Kirkup persuaded a bartender to find a cot for me in the back room of the War Eagle Hotel. On Saturday afternoon my stuff arrived by freight wagon from Trail Landing and I soon had my tent pitched and my cot set up. The next thing was to see about holding a service. I managed to secure the use of a building that Mr. MacNaughton was building on the corner of Sourdough Alley and Spokane; it was to become a butcher shop. Some carpenters who were erecting it consented not to work on Sunday, so that I might hold a service there. I worked in the building arranging boxes and planks for seats, and a board across an empty barrel for a desk to give the place a semblance of a meeting house. Not yet able to get lamps for an evening meeting, we held an afternoon service. A congregation of about 35 persons assembled at 3:30. At that hour the teamsters were

coming down from the Le Roi and War Eagle mines with their 6 and 8 horse teams, hauling ore to Trail for shipment to a smelter in Montana. The clatter made by these outfits, so heavily laden as they came down the street opposite our place of meeting, the sound of loud voices, popping of corks and tinkling of glasses in the barroom just behind me opening into Sourdough Alley all combined to make a strange melody to accompany the preaching of the first sermon in this new town. Thus, was our mission inaugurated on the last Sunday of May 1895.

In 1895 there was also a Methodist congregation under Rev. D. D. Birks and Rev. Thomas Gee. Under their pastorate, a small church was built on the east side of Washington Street between First and Second Avenues. In mid-summer 1896, Rev. Charles Lander, President of BC Conference, became the resident pastor in Rossland. He had the church enlarged and turned around to face Washington Street. Freshly painted and papered, with wooden benches for seats, it was ready for dedication on May 4, 1897. This church was taken down in 1918.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was built in 1898, under the stewardship of Rev. D. N. Gardiner. In 1916 discussions were held regarding amalgamating the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations in St. Andrew's. In 1917 the union took place and a Methodist minister was chosen to lead the congregations on July 1, 1917. Consequently, the bell from the Methodist Church was moved to the steeple. Thereafter, the Methodists used the Presbyterian Church for their services. Interestingly, there were two entrances into the church. One entrance was used by the Methodists and the other by the Presbyterians. In 1918 the original Methodist church on Washington Street was taken down. In 1925, when the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches consolidated across Canada, the church became St. Andrew's United Church and the west entrance was closed off.

The building has a footprint of 45 feet by 60 feet with an open ceiling rising to approximately 30 feet and a steeple with bell rising to approximately 45 feet. The roof is shingled and there were two large entrance doors to the sanctuary facing First Avenue. Windows in the sanctuary and vestibule give the appearance of stained glass but the colour has been painted on the glass.

The “Large Annex”, attached to the Sanctuary, was built in 1912 to meet the recreational and social needs of the congregation and the community. Its footprint is 30 feet by 50 feet. In the 1920s, the “Small Annex,” 18 feet by 30 feet, was built as a Sunday school facility and meeting room. In the 1940s, a basement was dug out under the Large Annex to create still more Sunday school space for the 300 children attending. The large open area of the Annex has never been altered and has served Rossland for one hundred years as an activity center for community users; Cubs, Scouts, Playschool, Rossland Radio, etc. It was also used for church related events such as teas, dinners, funerals and wedding receptions.

In the early 1950s the original shingled roof was replaced with the hallmark red, metal roof and the wood siding was changed to white stucco. The “Stairway to Heaven” project to replace the steps leading to the sanctuary was completed in 2000. At some time in the past, the concrete walls on the frontage of Queen Street and First Avenue were constructed.

Due to a declining congregation in the early 2010s, a committee was formed to investigate leasing opportunities for the building. In 2017 Seven Summits Centre for Learning became long term tenants in the church, filling the building once again with children grades 8 to 12. Some cosmetic renovations updated the inside of the building making it suitable for classroom space. Additionally, planning and grant applications for upgrading the building began to maintain it as a community hub, while acknowledging its special heritage value to Rossland.

In 2018, the congregations of St Andrew’s United and Trail United formally amalgamated under the name Communities in Faith Pastoral Charge (CIFPC). Services alternated each month between the Rossland and Trail buildings.

Thanks to ongoing support from Columbia Basin Trust and Heritage BC, phase 1 of construction began in April 2020; digging out and stabilizing the foundation of the sanctuary and leveling the floor to allow multi-use of the space. Ongoing planning will address accessibility, mechanical and electrical upgrades as well as preserving key heritage features.