

## 1990 Columbia Avenue - Hunter Brothers Store



Hunter Brothers Store 2018

### **Heritage Register - Building**

- 1) **Historical Name:** Hunter Brothers Store
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Address:** 1990 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1905
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:**

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **Description:**

Hunter Brothers' Store is a single storey, brick building on the northwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Washington Street in downtown Rossland, B. C. It is a large building with a 60' frontage on Columbia Avenue and it extends up Washington Street for 115'. There are a

number of exterior entrances to the different shops in the building and related signage is painted on the various shop windows. A canopy extends across the front of the building and over the exterior entrances on Columbia Avenue.

### **Heritage Value:**

This building has the largest single retail space of any store ever built in Rossland. It is one of two brick commercial buildings built in the early days of Rossland (1905), that still exists today. (The City adopted a by-law requiring brick construction, shortly after the disastrous fire of August 1902 that destroyed all the many commercial wooden buildings on the first block of Spokane Street.)

This store is the second edition of a Hunter Brothers Store - the first built in 1895 on Columbia Avenue but on the south side and further west - likewise a commodious building which included importing, wholesaling and retail business.

Hunter Brothers' Ltd., (1905) for many years served the community's needs as a mercantile (department) store, with groceries, clothing and hardware.

The T. Eaton Co. continued this traditional use of the store for a short while after it purchased the store in 1959. Since the early 1960s, Hunter Brothers Store has been a grocery store for many years and then a hardware store. The interior space has recently been divided into separate retail spaces with their own street access on Columbia and Washington.

### **Character Defining Elements:**

- Location and footprint
- Dental detailing below roof line
- Brick construction material
- A Heritage Plaque beside the front entrance identifies this building as an important heritage building in Rossland

## **HISTORY**

### **A) HUNTER BROTHERS STORE - established 1905**

Hunter Brothers Store moved to a new store and location in 1905 - on the northwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Washington Street. This store was a single storey in height and covered an area of 60' by 110' - the biggest retail space in Rossland. The Hunter brothers retired in 1907 and formed a new company known as Hunter Bros. Ltd., under the general management of W. G. Ternan, who had been with the firm since 1897. A note in the 1938 Historical Issue of the Rossland Miners says that there were 4 departments, each with a manager; Ernest Morrison - (1899 - groceries) James Hunter Jr.,(1912) , Henry Singer (1919)and Thomas Supple (1923).

Richie Mann, a Rossland oldtimer, shared some memories of the Hunter Brothers Store:

“There was an entrance to the store from Washington Street, closer to the back of the building. The grocery section was in the northeastern section of the building. Hardware was in the southwest corner, clothing in the southeast corner. There was a large RCA Victor Dog on the top of a shelf which stood between the hardware and the clothing sections. There were

wires (like clotheslines) with small cans attached to transfer money back and forth from the different departments to the office.”

Archival pictures show the name, “Hunter Bros. Ltd.” across the front of the building and for a number of years, there was some rather interesting, large signage on the roof at the south east corner of the building.

At some point, an extension was built on the back of the building measuring 15’ by 90’. Hunter Bros. Ltd, closed as Rossland’s largest mercantile store in 1959.



Hunter Brothers Store c. 1910

### **B) 1ST HUNTER BROTHERS STORE - established 1895**

According to Harold Kingsmill in his 1897 “First History of Rossland, B. C.”, the Hunter brothers, James and Robert, experienced general merchants, came to Rossland in February of 1895 and were so impressed with the business activity they saw that they purchased the next day a lot on the south side of Columbia Avenue and set in motion the erection of their store. It would be two storeys in height, with basements and occupying all of the 30 by 100 foot lot. (located today where the swimming pool is.)

“The stock carried by Hunter Brothers is almost as diverse as are the needs of the community. That it is especially full and complete in all that pertains to miners’ supplies might be expected, but we may add that being agents for giant powder, Goodwin candles, Canton and Black Diamond steel, and other specialties of the miner, this firm sells both to dealers and to miners all over this and adjoining districts. The firm is also agent for McClary’s stoves and ranges.... The stock includes, as well, a full line of plumbers’ supplies and steam fittings. Hunter Brothers have a completely equipped tin and sheet metal shop, where tinware,

sheet ironware and galvanized iron pipe and other mining supplies are manufactured both to order and for the stock. The firm has also a commodious warehouse on the Red Mountain track and is able to receive and ship goods in quantities.”

**Signage and archival pictures:**

- See pages 65 and 66, “Rossland Centennial Album”, for pictures of the front of Hunter Brother Store built in 1895
- A panorama picture, looking east and probably taken from the rock bluff, (c.1899), shows the length of Columbia Avenue and the dense concentration of commercial buildings on either side. Atop one of the buildings on the south side of the main street and close to the photographer is a huge sign, perpendicular to the street, and seemingly extending the full length of the building: HUNTER BROS. BIG STORE.



1<sup>st</sup> Hunter Brothers Store on Columbia Ave on left c. 1900