



1195 12TH STREET STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

MARCH 2017

DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC 

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Rush House is located in the historic Ambleside neighbourhood of West Vancouver. Due to its position along the Burrard Inlet, this area facilitated the first European settlement in the 1870s and since then, Ambleside has transitioned from a small, fledging seasonal community to an active, mixed-use neighbourhood.

The Ambleside area was first officially settled by Europeans in 1873 when “Navy” Jack Thomas built a house that is located on Argyle Avenue near the foot of 18th Street. The Navy Jack Thomas House remains the oldest continually occupied house in the Lower Mainland. Welsh-born Navy Jack Thomas was the first Caucasian resident of West Vancouver and the construction of his home signalled the waves of settlement that would later arrive in Ambleside and West Vancouver.

Following this initial development, the area was slow to advance due to a lack of transportation options. Beyond the canoe, which itself was a treacherous option, there was no easy way to reach the shores of Ambleside. Beginning in the 1880s, a “Tent City” sprang up each May through September that was composed of camping Lower Mainland residents who were hoping to escape “The Big Smoke” of logging activities to the east and south. This seasonal community of campers was the primary residential development through the first decade of the 1900s, as access to the area continued to be restricted.

The establishment of ferry service from Ambleside to Vancouver in 1909 was a watershed event for the community and the future of West Vancouver. The community was finally accessible from the remainder of the Lower Mainland, and soon after the first ferry began plying the waters of the Burrard Inlet, the permanent residential development of Ambleside began. Only three years later, in 1912, the community of West Vancouver was incorporated. By 1915, West Vancouver was home to the first public bus service in Western Canada. This operation, which began as a service to help passengers travel to and from the ferry terminal was the predecessor to West Vancouver’s “Blue Bus.”

Development in the area was spurred by the booming economy of the Lower Mainland in the early 1910s. A subsequent economic decline, followed by World War I, slowed construction in the area, but by the 1920s, settlement and development began again in earnest. This interwar period saw the construction of the Rush House in 1923. War veteran, Frederick C. Rush and his wife, Janet, purchased the property, which constituted a 0.73 hectare farm. Frederick, originally from England, and Janet, originally from Scotland, arrived in British Columbia in 1920, upon Frederick’s retirement. Following construction of their home in 1923, the property was later subdivided into the surrounding residential lots as the neighbourhood grew. During the busy interwar period, community leaders were also actively promoting the Ambleside area for industrial development, due to its proximity to Burrard Inlet and direct access to major waterways. This plan ultimately failed, culminating in the 1926 Town Planning Act, which precluded industry in West Vancouver, allowing the municipality to focus on residential development. This defining piece of legislation paved the way for West Vancouver to remain a bedroom community as it grew through the twentieth century.



Major Frederick Rush, circa World War I or earlier, courtesy Ian Macdonald

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: RUSH HOUSE, 1195 12th STREET, WEST VANCOUVER



Rush House under construction, 1923, West Vancouver Archives 3267.WVA.PHO



Rush House, 1923, West Vancouver Archives 1368.WVA.RAH

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: RUSH HOUSE, 1195 12th STREET, WEST VANCOUVER



Rush House, circa 1920s, West Vancouver Archives 3270.WVA.PHO



Rush and Macdonald families at the house, Christmas 1925, courtesy Ian Macdonald

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: RUSH HOUSE, 1195 12th STREET, WEST VANCOUVER



Rush House, between 1923 and 1933, West Vancouver Archives 3264.WVA.PHO



Rush House and surrounding hay field, between 1923 and 1929, West Vancouver Archives 13265.WVA.PHO



Fred Fraser, Jim Fraser and Ian Macdonald on haystack at Rush House property, 1937, West Vancouver
Archives 3269.WVA.PHO

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: RUSH HOUSE, 1195 12th STREET, WEST VANCOUVER

Access to West Vancouver continued to be improved through the 1920s with the construction of the Second Narrows Bridge in 1925. Access was further improved in 1938, when the Lions Gate Bridge opened, spanning the First Narrows crossing and located significantly closer to West Vancouver and the growing Ambleside neighbourhood.

The exclusive, single-family atmosphere of the Ambleside area, which had persisted since the 1920s, was finally challenged in 1959 when the municipal zoning by-law was changed to permit the development of multi-family residential buildings. The implications of this change quickly manifested themselves in the form of high-density apartment towers; the first of which was constructed in West Vancouver by 1961. Through the 1960s and 1970s, numerous high-rise residential buildings sprung up in Ambleside. Many of these towers remain standing and unaltered today. Today, Ambleside is home to a diverse mix of buildings that represent the evolution of the neighbourhood, from houses constructed in the early 1900s to high-style examples of West Coast Modern architecture. The Rush House remains an early and excellent example of the type of housing constructed during the flourishing, albeit brief, period of development resurgence in West Vancouver in the 1920s.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



Historic Name: Rush House

Address: 1195 12th Street, West Vancouver, British Columbia

Original Owner: Frederick and Janet Rush

Date of Construction: 1923

Description of the Historic Place

Located at 1195 12th Street in the Ambleside neighbourhood of West Vancouver, the Rush House is a one and one-half storey Craftsman style house. Among the oldest buildings in Ambleside, the house is characterized by its gabled roofline, wrap-around verandah, cedar shingle cladding and its extensively landscaped setting.

Heritage Value of the Historic Place

The Rush House is valued for its association with the early development of West Vancouver's historic Ambleside neighbourhood; for its representation of the early residential properties of West Vancouver, first owned by the Rush family; and for its Craftsman style architecture.

The Rush House, constructed in 1923, reflects the early development of Ambleside, and represents one of the older, permanent European settlements in the area. The establishment of ferry service from Ambleside to Vancouver in 1909 initially opened West Vancouver to development, as it was

finally accessible from the remainder of the Lower Mainland. Construction in Ambleside was first prompted by the booming regional economy of the early 1910s. A subsequent economic decline, followed by World War I, slowed construction in the area, but by the 1920s, development activity, including the Rush property, had once again reactivated. The original agricultural usage of the property illustrates the once bucolic surroundings of Ambleside.

The Rush House is valued for its early expression of residential property in West Vancouver. First owned by the Rush family, composed of patriarch Frederick C. Rush, a World War I veteran and his wife, Janet, the property was originally part of a 0.73 hectare farm, reminiscent of early settler ambitions to tame the forested land. Frederick was born in England and Janet was born in Scotland; they arrived in British Columbia in 1920, upon Frederick's retirement. The property was later subdivided into the surrounding residential lots as the neighbourhood grew. Despite the surrounding growth of Ambleside, the Rush House property maintains its early twentieth-century residential character. The enduring, lush landscape of the house, including many original plantings and reflecting a traditional 'English' treatment, enhances its heritage value and is a vivid reminder of the early residential landscapes of West Vancouver.

The Rush House is an excellent example of the Craftsman style of architecture. Derived from the British Arts and Crafts movement, the Craftsman style promoted the honest use of natural and locally sourced materials and first became popular in British Columbia during the early 1910s. The enduring preference for the Craftsman style through the interwar era of the 1920s represents a nostalgic penchant for earlier, pre-war times. Featuring hallmarks of the style, including triangular brackets, an open verandah and cedar shingle cladding, the Rush House maintains its original integrity.

Character-Defining Elements

The elements that define the heritage character of the Rush House are its:

- Location along 12th Street in the Ambleside neighbourhood of West Vancouver;
- Situation on a corner site, set back from both street frontages;
- Residential form, scale and massing as expressed by its one and one-half storey height with wrap-around verandah, gabled roofline and multiple bays;
- Wood-frame construction with twin-coursed cedar shingle cladding;
- Craftsman style features, including triangular eave brackets, flared window surrounds, and battered porch piers and open wooden balustrade along the verandah;
- Original wooden-sash windows, with multi-pane casement and multi-pane double-hung assemblies;
- Two internal brick chimneys; and
- Associated landscape features, including original plantings.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

CURRENT CIVIC ADDRESS: 1195 12th Street, Vancouver

CURRENT LEGAL ADDRESS: Lot: 4 ex.W 50', Block: A, Plan: 7234, District Lot: 1065

ORIGINAL OWNER: Frederick and Janet Rush

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1923

REFERENCES:

WEST VANCOUVER ASSESSMENT RECORDS:

- Ward: 3 - 1924: 1.8 acres; Land: \$1,700; Improvements: \$4,500; Owner: Frederick C. Rush

BRITISH COLUMBIA VITAL EVENTS:

- Frederick Charles Rush; Event Type: Death; Registration Number: 1954-09-001838; Event Date: January 31, 1954; Event Place: Vancouver; Age at Death: 76.
- Janet Anderson Rush; Event Type: Death; Registration Number: 1975-09-001499; Event Date: January 11, 1975; Event Place: West Vancouver; Age at Death: 96.

PERSONNEL RECORDS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR [Library & Archives Canada]:

Attestation Records: Rush, Frederick Charles

- Rank: MAJ
- Date of Birth: 04/11/1879
- Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 8546 - 55
- Item Number: 617543
- Record Group: Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)

Rush, Frederick Charles

- Regimental Number: 15804-F-18
- Reference: RG9-II-F-10, Finding Aid 9-56, Volume 33
- Item Number: 640795
- Record Group: Imperial Gratuities