



Anderson Style Shop

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As you drive along Main Street in Kalispell, realize you’re driving through history. And 222 Main St. tells a long history of business and commerce.

In 1891, the Great Northern Railway chose Kalispell – instead of Demersville – as the location for a division point. The decision sparked the birth of Kalispell, but sounded the death knell for Demersville. Consequently, many businesses moved from Demersville to Kalispell – literally.

The two-story building first located at 222 Main Street was originally built in Demersville, about three miles away. It was first a grocery store and later the Pacific Union Tea Company. Around 1928, the address became known as the Anderson Style Shop. It was the namesake of its owner Carl Anderson, who founded the shop as

Kalispell's "headquarters for style and correctness" and "the newest, most modern ladies' ready-to-wear establishment."

In 1941,

Anderson razed the original, wooden building. He hired Fred Brinkman (1892-1961) – Kalispell's most prominent architect – to redesign the building as a modern showcase of style.

Brinkman was noted as an architect who "influenced the physical appearance of his hometown more than any other single person." His designs shaped Kalispell from the 1920s to the 1950s. Notably, Brinkman also designed the Kalispell City Water Department Building, the Cornelius Hedges Elementary School, and nearly a dozen other buildings in Kalispell listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Brinkman predominantly designed the building in "Style Moderne." The style shares common elements with "Art Deco," from which it partly evolved. It also shares elements with other contemporary styles such as "WPA Moderne," and "Nautical Moderne," as the sea lions flanking the crest near the roof line attest.

Various style elements and hints can be found throughout the building. Even a quick glance tells how this streamlined appearance, with no eaves, metal window and door trim, and light-colored face, is from a different era of style and circumstance. For example, the top floor features metal-framed, block windows (Style Moderne) and streamlined, symmetrical lines (more Art Deco). The original second-story window also featured a lighted "Anderson's Style Shop" sign scripted across the entire area (the sign is gone, but the brackets are visible).

The bottom floor features asymmetrical lines with large, metal-framed windows that wrap around the entrance: a fusion of Style Moderne and Art Deco design elements.

The building is also perhaps a fusion and reflection of Brinkman's architectural style and personal life. For example, style elements of "WPA Moderne" can be found

in the building. Incidentally, Brinkman, a former Army Corps of Engineers draftsman at the Panama Canal, served as Chairman for the “Decoration Committee” for the local President’s Ball Committee in 1934 – a year before President Roosevelt established and appropriated the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935 as part of his New Deal program.

The interior of the building was also notable. For example, articles newspaper article featured the “Nairn Inlaid Linoleum,” “Waterproof Tiling,” and “Smith Broadloom Carpeting” flooring. And Miller-Ford Electric advertised, “The Last Word in Lighting Fluorescent” to describe their lighting installation in the shop, displayed on August 20, 1941 (just months before the Pearl Harbor Attack, and the United States joined WWII).

The Anderson Style Shop building later became known as Joyce’s Style Shop, Ena’s Clothing Store, Mimi’s Bridal and Refinery, and Underground Books, depending upon who you ask. Today, the building is part of the Kalispell Main Street Historic District – and a landmark designed by one of Kalispell’s prominent architects and a unique example of Style Moderne in Northwest Montana.

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