

Historical Development of Crescent Heights

Context paper compiled for the Calgary Heritage Authority

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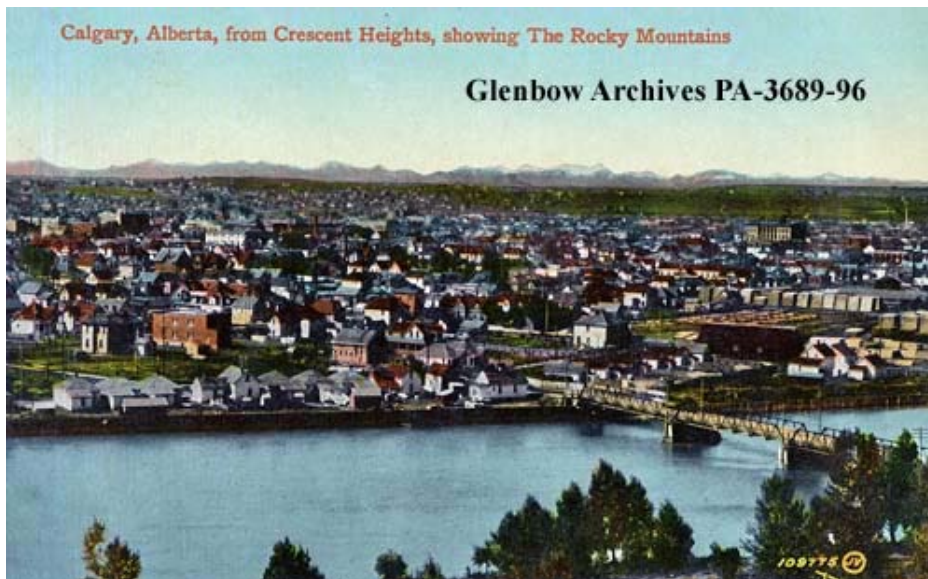
Historical Development of Crescent Heights

Executive Summary

Crescent Heights is one of Calgary's earliest residential suburbs, located just north of the Bow River along both sides of Centre Street. From its beginnings in 1906 as a rural suburb, Crescent Heights has developed into a mixed inner-city community distinguished by diverse single-family historic housing styles, mature street trees, and panoramic views of the city centre and Bow River valley. This paper outlines the major themes in Crescent Heights' development including its brief status as a Village between 1908 and 1910, early landowners and subdivisions, major transportation and commercial corridors, some of the key landmarks and institutions, and the evolution of the community's boundaries during the past century.

The context paper also includes a Statement of Significance for Crescent Heights that briefly describes the community and identifies its heritage values and character-defining elements. In addition to the context paper, a windshield survey was completed to identify all extant pre-Second World War structures in the community, and a selection of eight properties on Crescent Road were individually researched and evaluated.

From its beginnings in 1906 as a rural suburb of Calgary, Crescent Heights has been celebrated for the magnificent panoramic views it offers from above the steep bank of the Bow River.¹ It was this crest from which the North-West Mounted Police first set eyes upon the future site of Calgary in 1875.² This same point was promoted a century later for its “breathtaking view of the mountains and Bow Valley to the west, plus the glitter and sparkle of downtown Calgary.”³ Crescent Heights today is a desirable inner-city neighbourhood in north Calgary, with mature street trees, diverse housing types, vibrant commercial activity, a varied demographic, and a strong historical character.



View from Crescent Heights, showing original Centre Street bridge, ca. 1910.
Glenbow Archives, PA-3689-96.

Village of Crescent Heights

Located directly across the Bow River from Calgary’s city centre, the land that forms Crescent Heights today was homesteaded by John Thompson, Philip S. van Cortlandt, James Barwis and Alfred Beaudoin.⁴ In 1873 David and Reverend John McDougall charted Edmonton Trail, the eastern boundary of the community, which developed into an early mail and stagecoach route by 1881.⁵ With a ferry crossing

¹ See “Crescent Heights, Suburb of Unusual Attraction,” in *The Morning Albertan*, November 16, 1907, p.9.

² MacEwan, Grant. *Calgary Cavalcade: From Fort to Fortune*. (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art (1958), p.7.

³ *Calgary Herald*, Sept. 11, 1976, p.78.

⁴ See Calgary Public Library (CPL), Historic Map Collection, CALG 41, “Calgary, 1895”; and Gormley, Eric, “The Village and the City: Crescent Heights in the Early Years.” (Calgary: E. Gormley, 1986), p.3.

⁵ Dempsey, Hugh, “Calgary-Edmonton Trail,” in *Best of Alberta History*, pp. 80-81.

of the Bow, operated by George Hamilton,⁶ the route provided the regional ranching community with access to Calgary's stockyards after the completion of the CPR main line in 1883. However, the potential of the area as a residential district of Calgary remained limited during this time by the physical barriers of both the river and the steep bank of what was then referred to as the "North Hill."

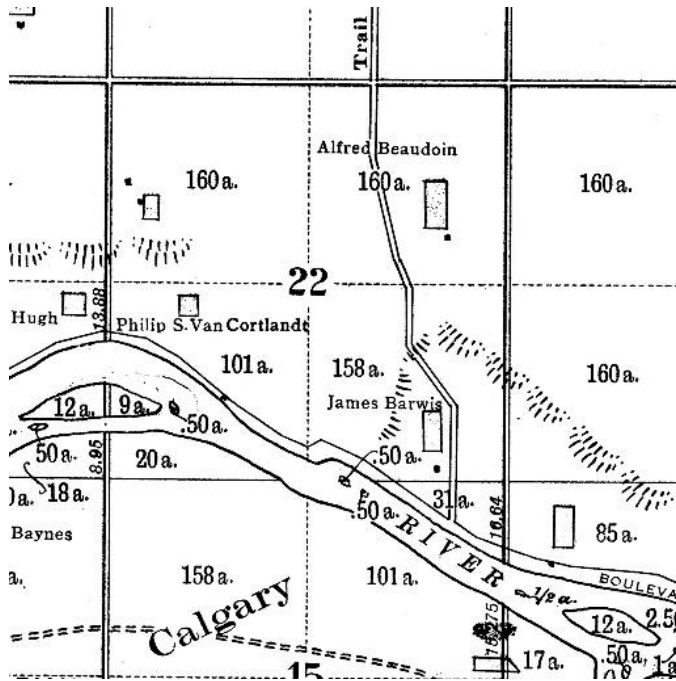


Figure 1: Detail of map showing property owners in the future Crescent Heights district, 1895; the northwest corner of Section 22 was later purchased by John Thompson. Calgary Public Library, Map CALG 41.

After the original Langevin Bridge was completed in 1890, land values north of the Bow appreciated significantly, and property owners began to sub-divide.⁷ In 1906, entrepreneur Archibald John McArthur purchased two adjacent quarter sections from John Thompson (NW quarter, Section 22) and Philip S. Van Cortlandt (SW quarter, Section 22). He filed a sub-division plan with the Province, registering the district as Crescent Heights, which he named for the crescent shape of the North Hill escarpment.⁸ McArthur built his own house near the brow of the hill,⁹ and opened a real estate office selling one-acre lots to speculators, between what are now 13 and 16th Avenues, and 4th Street NW and 1st Street NE. These properties were in turn

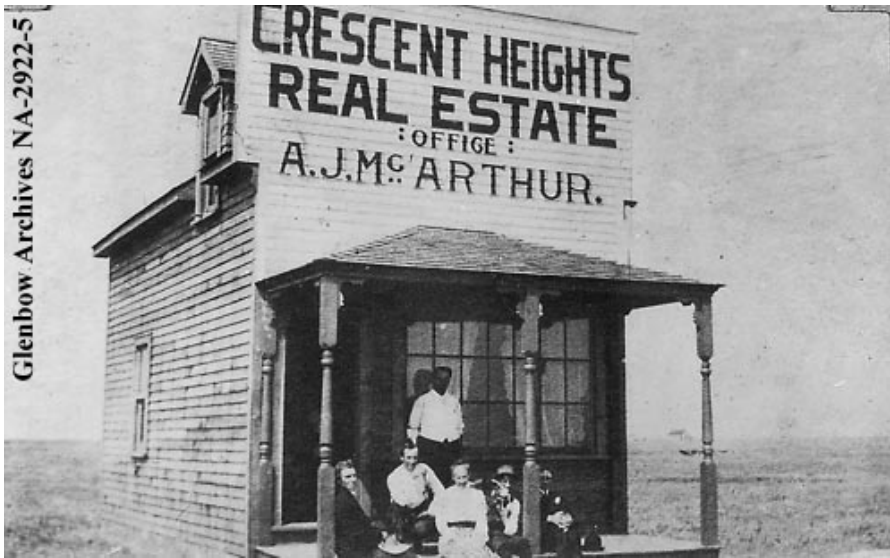
⁶ *The Calgary Daily Herald*, April 24, 1920, p.31; there was also a ferry operated by Samuel Fogg at the Centre Street crossing, beginning in 1882.

⁷ Gormley, p.4.

⁸ *Morning Albertan*, November 16, 1907, p.14.

⁹ The house remained in the McArthur family until 1949 and was demolished in the 1960s; an LDS church now occupies the lot at 202 Crescent Road; see Calgary Public Library, Local History Room, "A.J. McArthur," unpublished manuscript by Marg McCready, p.4.

sub-divided into fourteen 25' lots each [see Figure 2].¹⁰ To attract business away from Edmonton Trail and closer to his own holdings, McArthur organized the Bow River Bridge Company with a view to connecting his property with downtown Calgary. Ahead of its completion in July 1907, the *Herald* carried ads advising that “the bridge is well underway and property is going to move across the river. Now is the time to buy.”¹¹



A.J. McArthur’s real estate office building on North Hill, ca. 1907. Glenbow Archives, NA-2922-5.



Original Centre Street Bridge, 1908. Glenbow Archives, NA-1547-5.

¹⁰ Gormley, pp.6-7.

¹¹ CPL, Clippings File, Calgary Districts: Crescent Heights. The *Calgary Daily Herald*, “Crescent Heights Lots,” March 21, 1907, n.p.

With lower-priced lots than those in Calgary, residents trickled into the district, clustering near the section road, later 16th Avenue. Residents decided to form a village and a school district, and on May 1, 1908 the Village of Crescent Heights was incorporated.¹² Its boundaries stretched from 8th to 24th Avenues NW, and from 4 Street NW to 1 Street NE [see Figure 2]. This included the original Crescent Heights subdivision to the south and the Balmoral subdivision to the north of the main business corridor along both sides of 16th Avenue. The post office, general store and fire hall, doubling as the town hall, were located near the corner of 16th Avenue and 1st Street NW, while a small professional district was established along 1st Street NW. This included the homes and offices of physician John Butterwick, architect Robert Mitchie, and real estate developer Norman Duckworth.¹³ The Village was served by a number of churches, including the Crescent Heights Methodist Church (1908), the St. Michaels and All Angels Church (1909), and the Baptist Church (1909).¹⁴ In the southwest corner of the village, McArthur reserved a 12-acre block for a future Baptist College, which never materialized but later became the site of Crescent Park.¹⁵



McArthur Residence, 1911, Glenbow Archives, PA-951-3

¹² Gormley, p.11.

¹³ *Henderson's Calgary Directory, 1910*. The Duckworth home still stands at 1403 1 Street NW; see Sanders, Harry, *Historic Walks of Calgary*. (Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2005), p.507.

¹⁴ The original wood frame Baptist church was later moved and converted for use as a residence located today at 1006 1st Street NW. See Gormley, p.18; and Reeves, Kate and Melnyk, George, ed., *Rosedale Stories: A Community Remembers*. (Calgary: Rosedale Community Association, 2000), p.85.

¹⁵ Glenbow Archives, Spencer Cumming Fonds, M-1938-52: A.J. McArthur Estate, 1910-12; and Gormley, p.20.

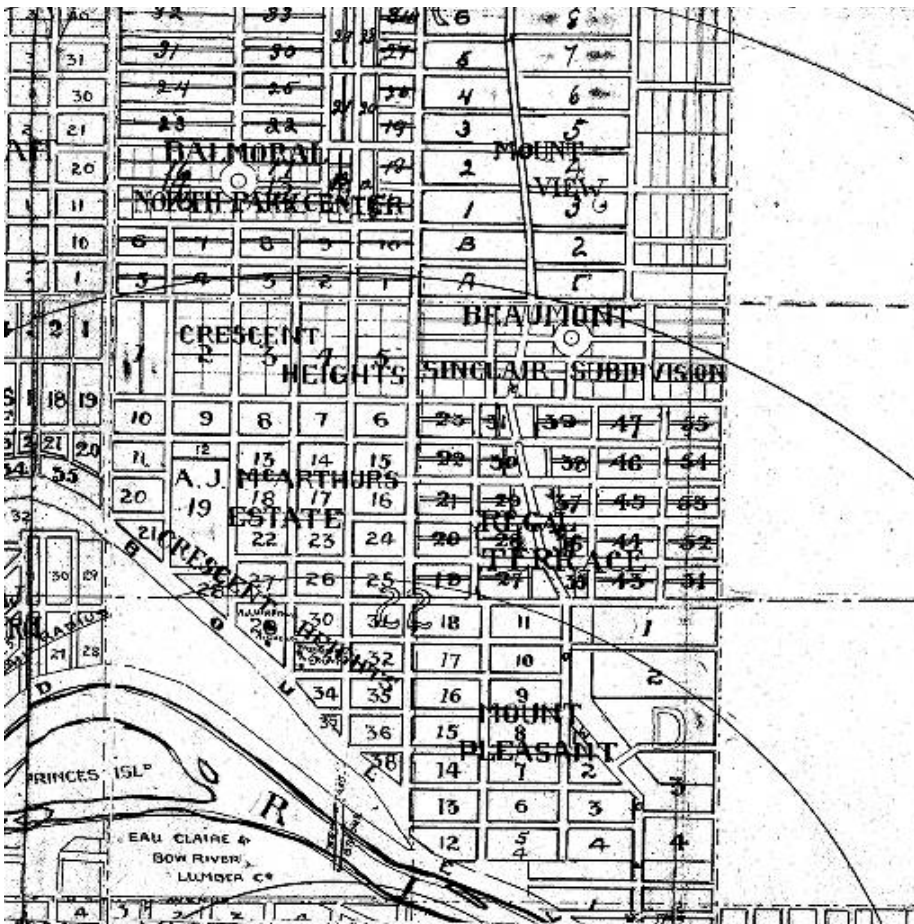
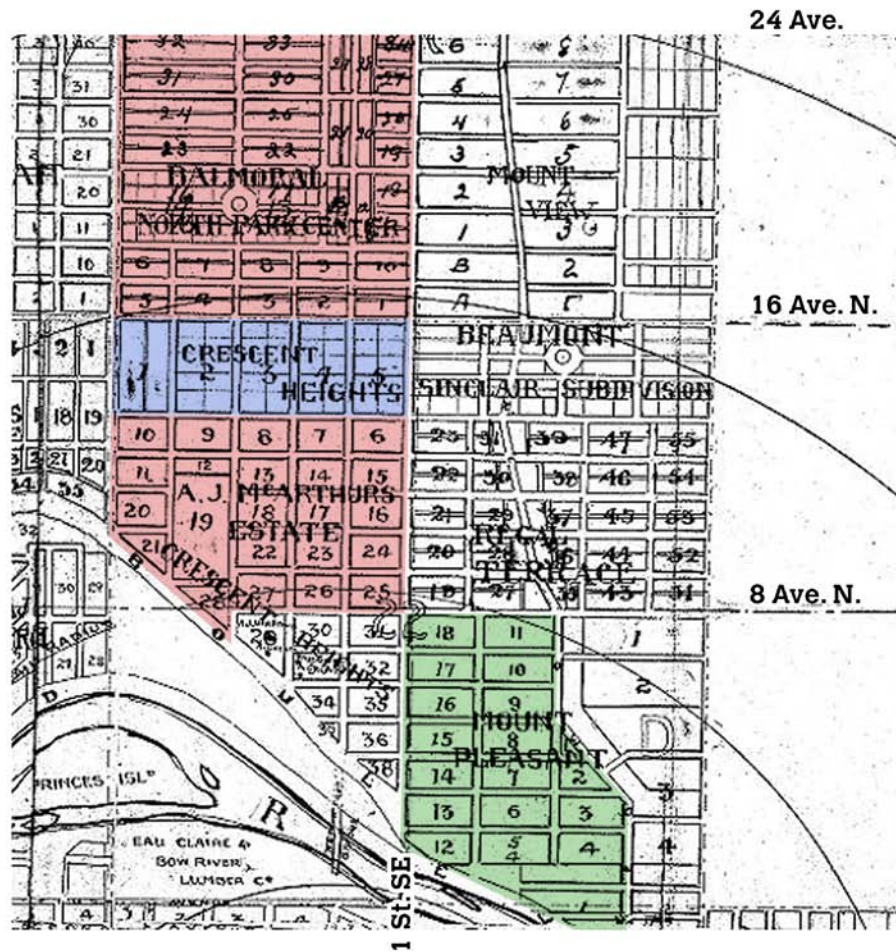
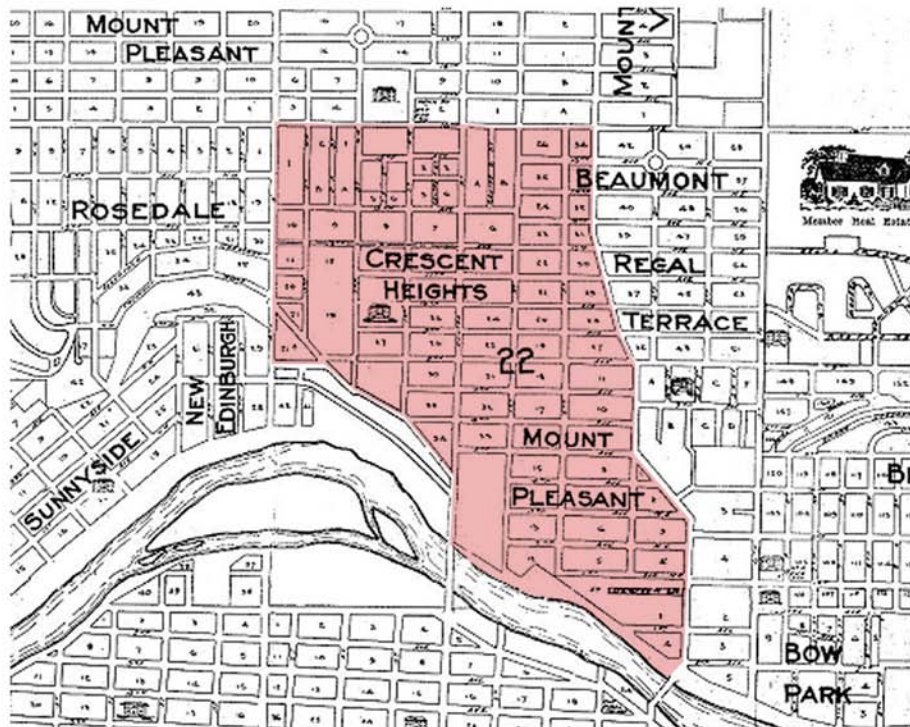


Figure 2: Detail of map showing Crescent Heights subdivision, 1907. The first lots for sale were those shown as “Crescent Heights” and numbered 1 to 10. The Village of Crescent Heights encompassed subdivisions marked “Balmoral/North Park Center,” “Crescent Heights,” and “McArthur’s Estate.” After the Village’s annexation to the City in 1910, Balmoral and Crescent Heights became separate communities. Calgary Public Library, Map CALG 6.



- Original Crescent Heights Map Sub-division, ca. 1907
- Boundaries of Crescent Heights Village, 1908-1910
- Mount Pleasant Sub-division (annexed to City 1907)

FIGURE 2



Modern community of Crescent Heights (1950's - present)

FIGURE 3

During this time, the City of Calgary was in the midst of a real-estate boom that saw its population rise ten-fold between 1901 and 1911.¹⁶ The one thousand residents living in Crescent Heights by 1910 were mainly of Canadian, British and American descent, and over half were employed in building occupations.¹⁷ Without a street railway system to easily access industries or businesses south of the river, employment options were limited. Further, Crescent Heights did not have the tax base to provide essential services such as water, sewer and lights.¹⁸ Swayed by the promise of public utilities, the Village of Crescent Heights made application to be annexed by the City of Calgary in 1910.¹⁹

When the Province passed the Greater Calgary Bill on January 1, 1911, Crescent Heights became a suburban city neighbourhood. The Village was divided into two communities, including Balmoral, north of 16th Avenue, and Crescent Heights to the south. The city's boundary extension also included the adjacent subdivisions to the east, of Beaumont and Regal Terrace.²⁰ Within about a decade, Crescent Heights would absorb the sections of those communities west of Edmonton Trail.²¹

The City had previously annexed the area south of 8th Avenue, both east and west of Centre Street North, in 1907.²² The southeast corner of modern Crescent Heights, known at the time as Mount Pleasant (entirely distinct from today's community of Mount Pleasant), remained a separate neighbourhood until the mid-1950s when it too was absorbed into Crescent Heights.²³ Comprising the area south of 8th Avenue, between 1st Street NE to Edmonton Trail [see Figure 2], the land in historic Mount Pleasant had been purchased in bulk by Bert Stringer and A. A. Dick in 1904 and subdivided that same year.²⁴ The area developed a distinct character based on its proximity to the manufacturing district, anchored by Riverside Ironworks, to the culturally diverse communities of Bridgeland and Riverside, and to the Langevin

¹⁶ Melnyk, Bryan P., *Calgary Builds: The Emergence of an Urban Landscape, 1905-1914*. (Edmonton: Alberta Culture/Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1985), p.21.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.21-24; also CPL Clippings File, Calgary Districts: Crescent Heights; "Crescent Heights In Great Need of Water," *Morning Albertan*, June 15, 1910, n.p.

¹⁸ "Crescent Heights in Great Need of Water."

¹⁹ Foran, Max, "Land Speculation and Urban Development: Calgary 1884-1912," in Klassen, Henry and Rasporich, Anthony W. *Frontier Calgary: Town, City and Region, 1875-1914*. (Calgary: University of Calgary, McClelland & Stewart West, 1975), p.211.

²⁰ Foran, Max, *Calgary: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: J. Lorimer and National Museum of Man, c.1978), p.98, showing boundary extensions.

²¹ See CPL, Map Collection, CALG 141 (1911-12) showing separate communities, and CALG 119 (1924) showing the west portions of the communities included in Crescent Heights; exact date not confirmed.

²² A physical reminder of this evolution are the two extant 1910 sidewalk stamps on the corners of 6th and 7th Avenues and 1st Street NW, bearing the streets' original names (Somerville, and Lincoln – misspelled Linclon).

²³ See CPL, Map Collection, CALG 15 (1954) identifying Mount Pleasant as a separate community; and CALG 50 (1958) showing it as part of Crescent Heights.

²⁴ "Mount Pleasant: A Very Promising Suburb," *Morning Albertan*, November 16, 1907, pp.9-10.

Bridge. It had its own commercial corridor along 4th Street NE that was home to early business establishments including the Armour and Reliance Blocks.²⁵ To this day the community association boundaries of Crescent Heights and Bridgeland-Riverside overlap in this area.

As part of its 1907 expansion, three years prior to annexing Crescent Heights Village, the City had also reserved a wide strip of land along the top bank of the North Hill, to be developed into a tree-lined boulevard.²⁶ First referred to as Rosedale Crescent or Rosedale Boulevard, the name of the street was changed by 1915 to Crescent Road, reflecting the shape of the escarpment. It developed before the First World War as a scenic roadway that encompassed both the Crescent Heights and Rosedale sections, up to the 700-block where the street ended.²⁷ While the section west of 4th Street NW was technically located in Rosedale, the whole boulevard was commonly included in the community of Crescent Heights until Rosedale eventually filled in, beginning in the late 1920s. The boulevard was home to some of Calgary's successful entrepreneurs including newspaper editor William M. Davidson, printer John McAra, and realtors Luther Courtice, Arthur Baalim and William Madden.²⁸ Other notable residents near the bluff were land developers John Steinbrecker, and A.J. McArthur, founder of Crescent Heights Village.²⁹ In general, however, Crescent Heights south of 12th Avenue remained sparsely settled through to the mid-1920s and was the last area in the community to develop.³⁰

²⁵ Sanders, Harry M. *Historic Walks of Calgary: Ten Walks to Points of Historical Architectural Interest*. (Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2005), p.481; and Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association, "Community with a View: A Heritage Tour of Bridgeland-Riverside." (Calgary: Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association, 1989), pp.17-19.

²⁶ *Morning Albertan*, November 16, 1907, p.10.

²⁷ See Calgary Public Library, Map CALG 141, 1911-12, showing original subdivision plans for Rosedale in which Crescent Road ends at Block 33.

²⁸ See *Henderson's Calgary Directory, 1914*; note that Crescent Road extends into the community of Rosedale, but its evolution during this period encompassed both the Crescent Heights and Rosedale stretches of the boulevard.

²⁹ See CPL, Map Collection, CALG 6 (1907), which shows both McArthur's and Steinbrecker's homes. The 1914 *Henderson's Directory* gives Steinbrecker's address as 820 1 Street NW; it is still standing today at 720 1st St NW.

³⁰ Gormley, pp.30-31; see also University of Calgary, National Airphoto Library, Aerial Map CA 111 88, 1924, University of Calgary Library Reference 82 O 7 1924, http://contentdm.ucalgary.ca/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/airphotos2&CISOPTR=41536.

Glenbow Archives NA-4658-7



Sheep grazing on present site of Crescent Heights High School, ca. 1914-1918. Glenbow Archives, NA-4658-7.

Accessibility was a major factor in the development of communities north of the Bow, and transportation routes largely determined settlement patterns during the early 20th century. Along with McArthur, landowners in both Crescent Heights and Mount Pleasant had invested in the Centre Street Bridge as well as a new roadway north along Centre Street.³¹ The bridge, still privately owned in 1910, proved contentious after the annexation of Crescent Heights, when its heavy use necessitated costly repairs that the City refused to make. To appease ratepayers, the City extended the street railway system in 1911 across the Langevin Bridge, up 4th Street NE and west across 16th Avenue, finally making Crescent Heights a viable residence for downtown workers.³² The original bridge at Centre Street, purchased by the City in 1912, gave way in the spring floods of 1915 and was replaced the following year by the current structure.

³¹ *Morning Albertan*, November 16, 1907, p.10.

³² CPL Clippings File, Calgary Districts: Crescent Heights; Dempsey, Hugh, "The Privately owned Centre Street Bridge," in *Business in Calgary* (May 1994), pp.26-29.



First streetcar in Crescent Heights district, June 22, 1911. Glenbow Archives, NA-1694-1.

Development of Crescent Heights, 1920s-1950s

Crescent Heights south of 12th Avenue filled in substantially during the brief economic boom of the late 1920s. The paving of Centre Street North at this time helped boost real estate sales in the district to record levels.³³ In contrast to the one and a half to two and a half-story homes constructed near 16th Avenue and on Crescent Road prior to the First World War, the majority of residences built during late 1920s boom were modest bungalows and semi-bungalows built on small 25-foot lots. Still more affordable than other communities to the south, with the exception of the higher-priced view lots along Crescent Road, Crescent Heights nevertheless established itself as a respectable community during the interwar period, with many young, new homeowners.³⁴

³³ See *Calgary Herald*, September 22, 1928, p.17.

³⁴ Gormley, p.32.



Aerial photograph of Crescent Heights district, 1924, University of Calgary Library, CA 111 88. 16th Avenue is the major road on the north side of the image, Centre Street is on the east side, and Crescent Road curves along the bluff to the south. 4th Street in the middle is the dividing line between Crescent Heights and contemporary Rosedale to the west.

Recreational activities in Crescent Heights focused on the community's two main parks, also developed during the interwar period. In 1922 the City acquired the proposed Baptist College grounds from A.J. McArthur's widow, opening Crescent Park in May 1923 as the first park north of the Bow.³⁵ Two years later the North Hill Community and Athletic Association began leasing a strip at the north end, which became a popular venue for curling, skating and other community sports.³⁶ Mount Pleasant Park (later Rotary Park), located east of Centre Street on six acres also acquired from Catherine McArthur, opened in 1924.³⁷ In addition to having two

³⁵ "Much Personal Interest Taken in Newest Park," *Calgary Daily Herald*, May 8, 1923, p.11.

³⁶ City of Calgary Corporate Records and Archives (CCCRA), City of Calgary Parks Department Annual Report, 1925, p. 414; viewed August 7, 2013 at <http://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Corporate-records/Archives/Parks-Department-Annual-Reports/Annual-Report-1925.pdf>.

³⁷ CCCRA, City of Calgary Parks Department Annual Report, 1924, p. 362; viewed August 7, 2013 at <http://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Corporate-records/Archives/Parks-Department-Annual-Reports/Annual-Report-1924.pdf>; note that the name of the park was changed in the 1930s to Rotary Park.

formal parks, Crescent Heights residents enjoyed the mixed blessing of the nearby “Sunnsyside Hill.” Known since 1990 as McHugh Bluff in honour of early landowner Felix McHugh,³⁸ the escarpment was often used by local children for go-carting or cave-digging before the Second World War.³⁹ However, these activities ended when frequent hill slides in the 1930s and 40s endangered homes along Crescent Road, and the City was forced to take measures to stabilize the slopes.⁴⁰



Construction crew at new Crescent Heights High School, October 1, 1928. Glenbow Archives, NA-4550-1.

Crescent Heights High School, perhaps the community’s most prominent institution, was built adjacent to Crescent Park in the late 1920s. The Calgary Board of Education had organized the school in 1913, hiring the future Premier William Aberhart as its first principal in 1915. After nearly fourteen years operating from Balmoral School as Crescent Heights Collegiate Institute, Aberhart moved his students and staff into a brand new three-story brick building on 1st Street NW, in 1929.⁴¹ Well-known for its music, theatre and sports programs, CHHS became a destination for students throughout the surrounding rural district.⁴² The school is associated with a number of prominent Calgarians including Douglas Harkness,

³⁸ Reeves, p.80.

³⁹ CPL Clippings File, Calgary Districts: Crescent Heights; Jarvis, John G., “Homemade Fun,” *Calgary Herald Neighbors*, March 24-30, 1993, p.4.

⁴⁰ See “Hill Sliding at Calgary,” *Leader-Post*, June 7, 1932, p.2; “Electrical Process May Halt Slides,” *Calgary Herald*, May 21, 1948, pp.1, 10; “Costly Sunnsyside Slides,” *Calgary Herald*, May 13, 1960, p.1; and Reeves, pp.78-80.

⁴¹ Johnson, LPV and MacNutt, Ola J., *Aberhart of Alberta*. (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, 1970), pp.38-41.

⁴² For example, see Read, Tracey, *Acres and Empires: A History of the Municipal District of Rocky View No.44*. (Irricana: Tall Taylor, 1983), p.314; and Hymas, Kay, ed., *Akokiniskway, “By the River of Many Roses.”* (Rosebud: Rosebud Historical Society, 1983), pp.155, 260, 400, 590.

CHHS teacher and later federal minister; John Laurie, CHHS teacher and First Nations advocate; students Mary and Catherine Barclay who founded the Youth Hostel Movement in Canada; and, more recently, Ralph Klein, CHHS student and later Premier of Alberta.⁴³



William Aberhart at his office desk, ca. 1935. Glenbow Archives, NB-16-201.

In addition to the roof blowing off the high school in 1936 during a major windstorm, one of the most significant events for Crescent Heights was the 1939 visit of Queen Elizabeth and King George. The route for the royal procession crossed Centre Street Bridge and wound its way along Crescent Road between 1st and 5th Streets. In preparation for the visit, the City planted trees and hung flags along street lamps.⁴⁴ The visit reinforced the status of Crescent Road as a destination within Calgary, as newspapers reported that the drive had offered the royal couple their first good view of the Rocky Mountains.⁴⁵ Two decades later, Crescent Road was still being promoted as a show street and a must-see viewpoint for visitors to Calgary.⁴⁶

⁴³ See Morrison, Elsie C and Peter N.R., *Calgary 1875-1950: A Souvenir of Calgary's 75th Anniversary*. (Calgary: Calgary Publishing Co., 1950), p.95; Dahlie, Betty, "The Youth Hostel Movement: The Barclay Sisters," in Foran, Max and Jameson, Sheilagh, eds, *Citymakers: Calgaryans After the Frontier*. (Calgary: Alberta Historical Society, Chinook Country Chapter, 1987), p.250; and Smith, Donald B., "A Good Samaritan: John Laurie," in Foran and Jameson, *Citymakers*, pp.263-267.

⁴⁴ Reeves, p.31.

⁴⁵ *Calgary Herald*, May 27, 1939, p.8.

⁴⁶ "Incomparable Hilltop Site," *Calgary Herald*, July 10, 1965, p.24; and *Calgary Herald*, July 8, 1968, p.31.

Early commercial activity in Crescent Heights had been centered along 16th Avenue, particularly after the streetcar route was introduced in 1911.⁴⁷ Though a new Red and White streetcar line was installed up Centre Street in 1919,⁴⁸ there were still no commercial buildings on the street south of 14th Avenue by 1925.⁴⁹



Centre Street Bridge, ca. 1925, showing streetcar tracks. Glenbow Archives, NA-3752-13.

Within a few years, however, Centre Street emerged as a second major commercial hub in the community, with a dual role as an important downtown traffic route. By 1930 there were grocers, barbers, confectioners, and a variety of professionals located primarily on the east side of Centre Street.⁵⁰ Other notable facilities included the first branch location of the Calgary Public Library, which opened in 1943.⁵¹

⁴⁷ In the 1910 *Henderson's Directory* there are no listings on 16th Avenue NW for commercial establishments; by 1912 there are jewelry, clothing and shoe stores, barbers, grocers and the long-standing Chesney's Hardware.

⁴⁸ Sanders, Harry. *Calgary Transit*. (Calgary: City of Calgary for Calgary Transit, 2009), p.60.

⁴⁹ Gormley, p.32; and *Henderson's Calgary Directory, 1925*.

⁵⁰ *Henderson's Calgary Directory, 1930*.

⁵¹ *Calgary Herald*, 18 February 1943, p.9.



Calgary Public Library, Crescent Heights Branch, ca. 1940s. Glenbow Archives, PA-3487-9.

Development of Crescent Heights: 1950s-Present

By the mid-20th century, Crescent Heights was a fully developed, comfortable community with a mixed character that included middle-class homes in the northwest and southeast sections, more substantial properties along the bluff, and modest bungalows in between. As with other inner-city neighbourhoods, however, the population began to decline and age after that point as young families migrated toward newer, more outlying suburbs.⁵² Meanwhile, the atmosphere of the community's major commercial strips also began to change. 16th Avenue developed more intensely after it became part of the Trans-Canada Highway in the 1950s.⁵³ Peters' Drive-In, established in 1964 at 219-16th Avenue NE, remains today as a symbol of the street's transformation to a busy, automobile-oriented corridor. New office complexes were built on Centre Street during the 1970s, along with a number of service stations and auto repair shops that made the street less pedestrian-friendly and more regional than local in orientation.⁵⁴

⁵² City of Calgary, *North Bow Design Brief*. (Calgary: City of Calgary Planning Department, 1977), p.31.

⁵³ Ibid, p.27.

⁵⁴ Ibid, and City of Calgary, Community and Downtown Planning Commission, *Crescent Heights Area Redevelopment Plan*. (Calgary: City of Calgary, Community and Downtown Planning Commission, 1997), pp.51, 61.



Welcome Esso service station, at 315-16 Avenue NW, 1955. Glenbow Archives, NA-5093-86.

In the 1970s, a significant number of apartment units were built in Crescent Heights, primarily in the southeast section of the neighbourhood.⁵⁵ However, residents resisted pressure for more multi-family housing developments. The Crescent Heights Community Association was formed in June 1975,⁵⁶ and took on a significant role in advocating for residents' interests. In 1977 City Council approved the North Bow Design Brief to identify ways to attract and retain families in the neighbourhood; at the same time the City's planning department promised a "special study" to address the community's opposition to higher density development. Crescent Heights received Neighbourhood Improvement Program funding in April 1978, and the following summer the Special Study for Crescent Heights was approved by City Council.⁵⁷ Subsequent rezoning helped to protect the neighbourhood from infill development, and to maintain lower density development in areas of the community.⁵⁸

For the past century, Crescent Heights has managed to retain much of its appeal as a desirable community with convenient access to the downtown core. Featuring three major traffic arteries, including 16th Avenue, Centre Street and Edmonton Trail, it nevertheless has a quiet, laid-back feel in its interior residential blocks. Despite the loss of many significant historic resources in recent decades, there are

⁵⁵ City of Calgary, *Crescent Heights ARP*, pp.11, 16.

⁵⁶ Dale C. Stamm, "The Impact of Community Strategies Upon Planning Policy in Calgary," Master's Degree Project, Faculty of Environmental Design. (Calgary: Faculty of Environmental Design, 1979), p.73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 86, 89, 92.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.17, and Glenbow Library, Clippings File: Calgary Subdivisions NW – Crescent Heights, Bergen, Bob, "Northwest residents win infill housing fight," *Calgary Herald*, March 15, 1988, n.p.; see also City of Calgary Planning Department, *North Bow Special Study*. (Calgary: City of Calgary Planning Department, 1979), and City of Calgary, *North Bow Design Brief*.

still a great variety of homes and streetscapes that refer back to the community's development as an early residential suburb of Calgary. Crescent Heights was first promoted as a healthy and scenic alternative to city living; today it is a well-treed, mature community that preserves a unique character – and still commands a spectacular view of the valley below.

Appendix 1: **Statement of Significance – Crescent Heights Community**

Description

Crescent Heights is one of Calgary's earliest residential suburbs. It is bordered by the Bow River, 16th Avenue N, 4th Street NW and Edmonton Trail NE. Incorporated in 1908 as the Village of Crescent Heights, the community was annexed to Calgary in 1910 and experienced its first phase of growth before the First World War, followed by a second phase of development during the late 1920s. A mixed inner-city community, Crescent Heights today is distinguished by its diverse single-family historic housing styles, mature street trees, and panoramic views of the city centre and Bow River valley.

Heritage Values

Crescent Heights has heritage value as an early residential suburb of Calgary that first developed during the real-estate boom of 1906 to 1913. Investor Arthur J. McArthur purchased two adjacent quarter sections on Calgary's "North Hill" in 1906, and began selling lots in the new subdivision of Crescent Heights. Two years later, residents formed the Village of Crescent Heights, which was subsequently annexed in 1910 by the City of Calgary. More affordable than other suburbs to the south, but cut off by the river and steep hill from downtown business and industry, Crescent Heights was slow to develop until the streetcar was introduced along 16th Avenue NW in 1911. After a prolonged economic downturn that spanned from 1913 through to the mid-1920s, the community filled in during the interwar years and established itself as a comfortable neighbourhood with a mixed demographic and a range of housing styles.

Crescent Heights also has landmark value for its well-known scenic boulevard, Crescent Road, which stretches into the neighbouring community of Rosedale. First settled by well-to-do entrepreneurs between 1911 and 1914, Crescent Road became a showpiece in the city for its views of the mountains and Calgary's city centre. With its advantageous location at the top of the bluff, the street housed radio pioneer W.W. Grant's CFCN "Voice of the Prairie" radio station, and was featured as part of the 1939 Royal Visit parade route. Since the mid-20th century Crescent Road has continued to be a popular sightseeing and recreational destination, as well as a desirable residential street.

In addition to its symbolic and landmark values, Crescent Heights also has heritage value for its association with well-known residents such as A.J. McArthur, founder of the Village of Crescent Heights; Mary and Catherine Barclay, who established the Youth Hostelling movement in Canada; and more recently, media magnate Jim Shaw. After Crescent Heights High School opened in 1929, the community was associated with the school's principal, William Aberhart, teachers John Laurie and Douglas Harkness, and students such as Ralph Klein, all of whom made significant contributions to politics and social reform.

Character Defining Elements

- the community's street grid pattern, illustrating distinct phases of land subdivision; in particular, the long north-south city blocks in the northeast portion of the community, the narrow east-west blocks south of 13th Avenue, and the irregular blocks on either side of Centre Street;
- extensive tree cover and mature vegetation including elm, birch and aspen street trees;
- layout and vegetation of Crescent Park and Rotary (formerly Mount Pleasant) Park, in particular the Plains Cottonwood "heritage tree" near the tennis courts in Crescent Park, at 1201-2 Street NW;
- diverse historical housing styles including groupings of one and a half and two-story wood frame Edwardian gable-front houses in the community's northwest and southeast sections; as well as rows of modest, predominantly stucco-clad interwar-era bungalows between 13th and 8th Avenues, both east and west of Centre Street;
- continuous role of 16th Avenue, since before 1910, as the main commercial strip in the community;
- identity of Centre Street as an important commercial corridor bisecting the community; and as a central artery into downtown Calgary from the north;
- 1910 sidewalk stamps showing original street names at intersections of 1st Street, and 6th (Somerville) and 7th (Linclon *[sic]*) Avenues NW;
- community landmarks including Crescent Heights High School (1929 with later additions); Sharon Evangelical Lutheran Church (1932); Crescent Heights Library (1939); and the North Hill Presbyterian Church (1913, 1930 with later additions);
- early residential buildings including 1006 – 1st Street NW (the original 1909 frame Baptist Church); and 720 – 1st Street NW (John Steinbrecker residence, originally constructed ca. 1903);
- viewscape of the Bow River valley and city centre from atop the escarpment along Crescent Road; and continuous use of the bank above the escarpment for recreational and sightseeing purposes; and
- character of Crescent Road as a desirable residential location, including building setbacks, mature vegetation, and unique single-family housing styles.