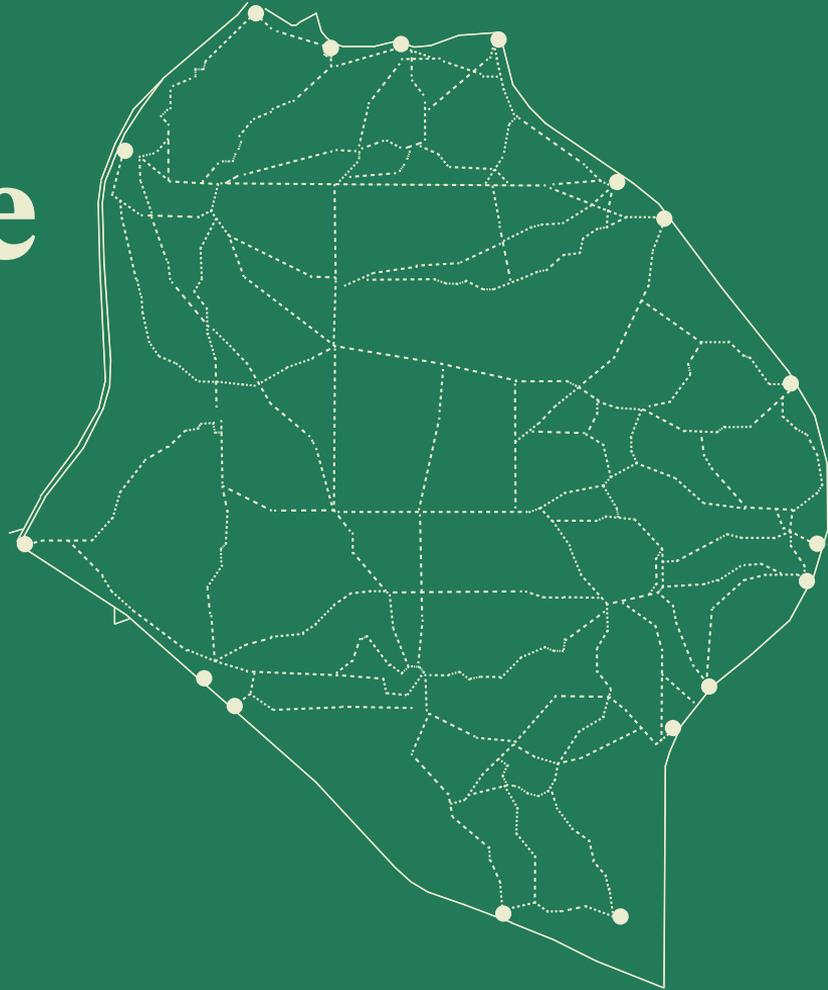
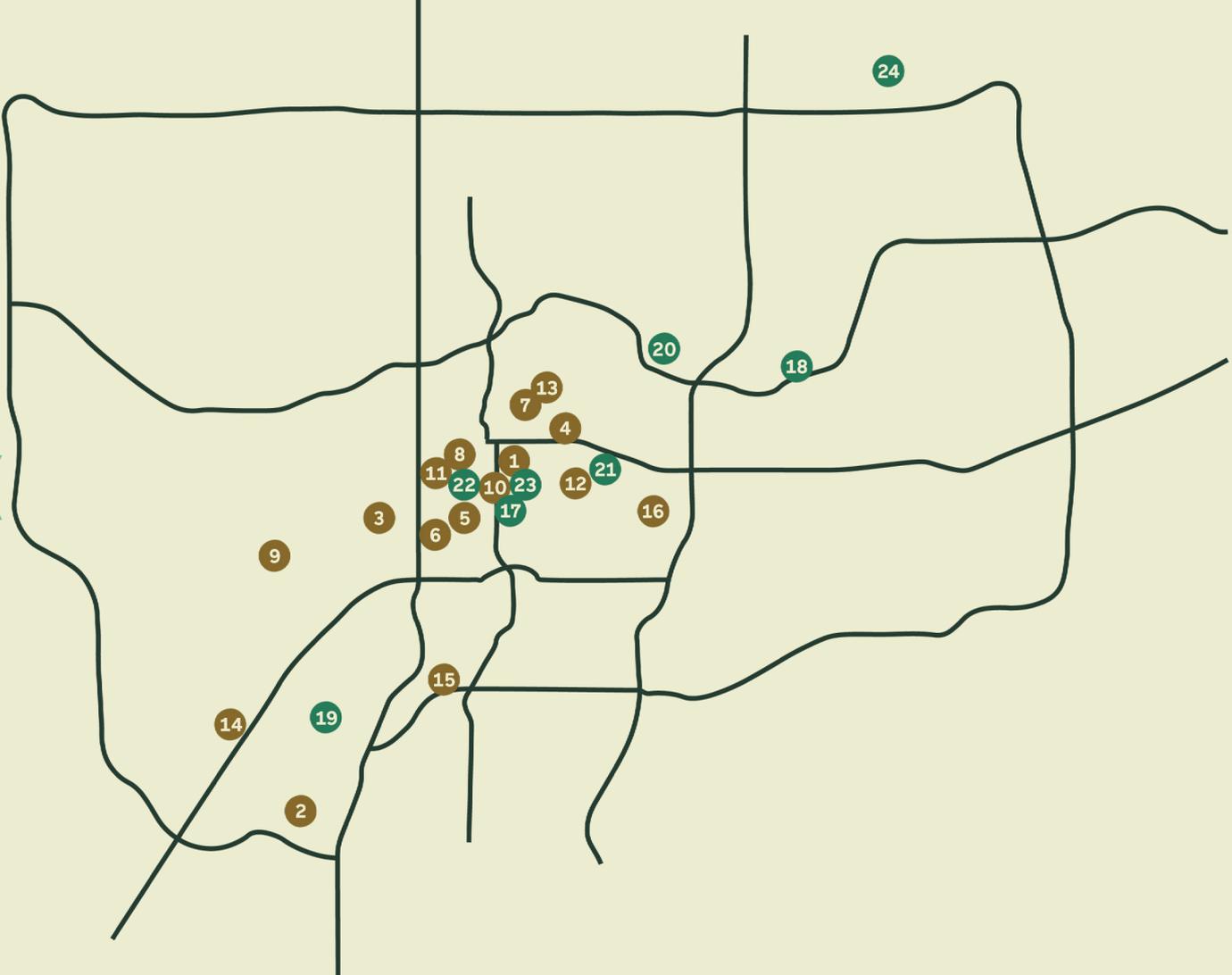


# The Parks That Made Calgary

A Heritage Calgary Self-Guided Tour







# Legend & Table of Contents

<b>Historic Parks</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>Other Notable Parks</b>		<b>34</b>
	William Roland Reader	2	17	Barb Scott Park	35
1	Central Memorial Park	3	18	Sue Higgins Park	37
2	Bowness Park	5	19	Dale Hodges Park	39
3	Confederation Park	7	20	Old Refinery Park	40
4	Reader Rock Garden	9	21	Stanley Park	42
5	Riley Park	11	22	Prince's Island Park	43
6	Senator Patrick Burns Memorial Rock Garden	13	23	Beaulieu Gardens	45
7	Scotsman's Hill	15	24	Ralph Klein Park	47
8	Sien Lok Park	17			
9	Nose Hill Park and Archaeological Resource	19			
10	Century Gardens	21			
11	Crescent Park	23			
12	Elbow Park Swimming Pool & Grounds	24			
13	Jefferies Park	26			
14	Ranchlands Hills Parks	28			
15	Edworthy Park	30			
16	Riveredge Park (Sandy Beach Park)	32			

Calgary is full of parks of all kinds. From manicured inner city parks to more natural landscapes in the suburbs, many of Calgary's parks tell a story about the city and those that made it what it is today. Some of these parks are on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources that Heritage Calgary helps maintain. Others are featured in this tour for their association with prominent Calgarians, significant events, or the development of Calgary as the city we know it as today.

# Historic Parks

# William Roland Reader

Calgary's emphasis on parks and a self-guided tour on those parks cannot continue without discussing one of Calgary's most important civil servants, William Roland Reader.

Reader served as the Superintendent of Parks, Cemeteries and Recreation for nearly three decades, from 1913 to 1942. Reader dedicated his life to Calgary, its parks, and its image, as he died a year after retirement at age 68.

Reader initially moved to Calgary with his family and worked as a landscaper. Reader moved to Calgary during its first major population boom, and he witnessed the city triple in size. The landscaper, who had also established a tree nursery, established the Calgary Horticultural Society.

Reader was a proponent of the City Beautiful movement, an urban planning policy that focused on the beautification of areas and monumental grandeur in cities. With the exception of Olmsted-designed neighbourhoods like Scarboro and Upper Mount Royal, Calgary's neighbourhoods followed a plain grid-pattern, which, while efficient, did not make for the most picturesque locales. Today, nearly two dozen streets are on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources due in part the beautification efforts of Reader.



# Central Memorial Park

1221 2 St SW

Central Memorial Park, originally known as Central Park, represents the second oldest park in Calgary. It was acquired by the Town of Calgary for park use in 1889, four years after Mewata Park -- Calgary's first dedicated parkland. Designation of the parcel for park use was a condition of its transfer from the Canada Northwest Land Co. (a Canadian Pacific Railway subsidiary) to the Town to resolve a taxation dispute. The site remained undeveloped and served as a municipal tree nursery until about 1906 when it began to take form with the erection of a bandstand and some basic landscaping. By about 1908, the site was landscaped with paths and plantings to create an 'ornamental park'. In 1912 the park was redesigned by the Superintendent of Parks, Richard Iwersen, in a formal arrangement to include the new library.

Central Memorial Park is valued as a pre-eminent example in Canada of formal Edwardian-era landscape design with a strict symmetrical arrangement of paths, beds, and lawns. The park is a Calgary showpiece, being singularly unique for its high degree of historical integrity and type of design. The centre of the park is distinguished by circular and geometric carpet (flower) beds, topiary spruce, specimen trees, lawns and paths - the Boer War monument known as 'The Horseman of the Plains' serves as the focal point. The carpet beds consist of showy and exotic plants

and brilliantly coloured annuals, which follow the park's historic planting records. The topiary spruce are extremely rare in Alberta with no other examples known to exist in the Province, dating from the Edwardian era. Making up the rest of the park is the library, lawns, additional paths and edges of shrubs and trees. In 1928 the design was revised to incorporate a cenotaph and plaza at the west end of the park to memorialize World War One.

Due to the central location of the park, its impressive design, and its historic civic and cultural uses, Central Memorial Park possesses heritage value as a city landmark. From at least 1906, the park was used as a ceremonial, gathering, and cultural space hosting concerts, celebrations, and other displays, as well as being a place of passive leisure. With completion of the library, new band shell, and the park's redesign in 1912, the park's status as a cultural space was further solidified. It subsequently became the community's showcase for numerous monuments, memorials and works of public art. In addition to the 1928 cenotaph, the Boer War monument - designed by the renowned Parliament Hill sculptor, Louis-Philippe Hebert - is prized as one of the most impressive works of historic sculpture in Calgary, and the earliest civic art commission. A fine World War One monument with a bronze statue of a soldier by Coeur de Lion MacCarthy stands in front of the library.

With the situation of the cenotaph and other memorials in the park, the site has become historically significant for the events

which occur in the park, particularly the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies, initiated at the site 1928. With the placement of the cenotaph, the name of the park was changed to 'Memorial Park'. The park has also been a place of celebration and was the site of the municipal Christmas tree.

The park had a substantial historical influence on the urban development pattern of early Calgary. Due to its central location close to residential areas, its vicinity became an exclusive

residential area in early Calgary. Early area property owners assumed that their properties would enjoy a handsomely developed neighbouring park, although this did not begin to materialize until about 1906. Surrounding the park were some of Calgary's finest homes, apartment blocks, and churches including the residences of 'cattle king', Patrick Burns (1903), brick maker, E.H. Crandell (c. 1904), grain trader, John McFarland, and N.W.M.P. officer Capt. Fred Bagley; the Marlborough Apartments; and First Baptist Church.



Image via: Peel's Prairie Provinces  
Central Park, Calgary, Alberta. Ca. 1940

# Bowness Park

8900 48 Ave NW

Bowness Park is valued as the preeminent leisure, public gathering, and recreational resort for Calgarians for over 100 years and has evolved through time with the community's needs. Bowness Park, established in 1911 by the City of Calgary, was initially developed as an urban trolley park at a time when family parties were in vogue. Situated at the end of streetcar lines, trolley parks were conceived by streetcar companies to encourage people to use their services on weekends and were a popular park type in the late 1800s to early 1900s in Canada and the United States.

The park was initially conceived by John Hextall (1861-1914), a solicitor, who envisioned developing the Bowness area as a high-end suburb known as Bowness Estates. In 1908, Hextall purchased a large area of the Bowness Rancho property, which included two islands that would become Bowness Park. In 1911, the Hextall Agreement was signed with the City of Calgary that saw the transfer of the islands and a bridge to the city for development as a park, in exchange for the extension of streetcar service to the area by 1912.

The park originally contained picnic areas, shelters, and camping cabins carved out of the largely treed, riparian landscape. In 1914, a man-made lagoon with adjacent shallow pond, and

connecting canal was constructed, which served as a skating rink in the winter and swimming in the summer. During the park's heyday, from the 1920s to 1950s, the park transitioned into a recreational and social hub with access to a deeper main swimming pool, boating, and skating. Facilities to support these activities included a dance pavilion (1919), a carousel built by Hershell Spillman Company (1919), a teahouse (1923), an orthophonic device in the lagoon that played music (1929), and Canada's first floating fountain (1928). In 1931, due to its popularity, the dance pavilion was enlarged to include a dining room - an area known as 'Twilight Corner'. In the 1960s, pathways were paved and lit, and the park's amusement rides were consolidated in one area, later known as Funland, which operated as until 1988.

Bowness Park is also valued as a designed landscape that showcases the integration of natural and managed landscapes, park buildings, and amenities. Bowness Park was developed based on recommendations from Thomas Mawson, internationally renowned town planner, who was hired to develop a plan for the city in 1913. As an advocate of the City Beautiful movement, Mawson believed that parks and green spaces were beneficial for the promotion of harmonious social order. His 1914 report called for the creation of a green belt on the south slope of the Bow River and his vision came to fruition in 1914, under the supervision of the city's Parks Superintendent, William R. Reader. During this early period of development to 1919, a lagoon, playground, and vernacular

structures were constructed and open grassed areas and natural forests defined. The park's design was based on the English tradition of tamed but natural landscapes. The park underwent a large redevelopment in the late 1950s to early 1960s, with the addition of Modern architectural-style buildings, including a new dance hall, a concession building (1958) and washrooms (1961) designed by J.H. Cook & Associates.

Bowness Park is also valued as a landmark as the foremost leisure and recreational resort in Calgary that serves as a collective memory for the community and for its bucolic quality that provides a vital link between people and nature.

Kiddies Bathing Pool, Bowness Park, Calgary. Ca. 1920-1923 via: Calgary Public Library, Williams & Harris Shared History Centre



# Confederation Park

2807 10 St NW

Confederation Park's heritage value stems from its development as one of the City of Calgary's major initiatives to celebrate the Canadian Centennial in 1967. It was dedicated in that year and serves to recall the pride and festivities which defined Canada's centennial year.

In 1965 the Centennial Ravine Park Society was established to advocate the development of the coulee as a park. This organization expanded its membership with individuals, business and service groups in the surrounding neighborhoods and throughout the city, raising support, funds, and contributions. This unprecedented populist effort was cited in the *Calgary Herald* as 'an indication of increasing maturity in Calgary'. Confederation Park recalls the community activism activity associated with the populist movements that were common in North America at the time.

The leader of the Society, Eric Musgreave, became a city alderman and was named Citizen of the Year in 1967 by the Calgary Jaycees as a result of his involvement in influencing the creation of the Park.

Another person of heritage value associated with the park is Harry Boothman, one of the most outstanding and

visionary Superintendent of Parks in the history of Calgary. In Boothman's transformative tenure as superintendent (1960-1976) he embraced and applied the values of the environmental movement emerging in the 1960s and those of populist movements, evident with his theme, 'Parks are for People'. His advocacy and political effectiveness significantly added to, and changed the approach to open space, parks and recreation in Calgary. The 1963 Calgary General Plan outlined a growth scheme for parks that included major development in north Calgary. Confederation Park followed from the plan's recommendations.

The design of Confederation Park is also significant. The park was created from what was considered a "wasteland" with few distinguishing features other than the land form of the coulee, the intermittent stream, and some remnants of the native landscape. The park is now considered an outstanding achievement in landscape design as seen in the variably grand and sheltered, verdant spaces formed by spectacular plantings. These spaces and features were intended for unstructured experience and activity. This illustrates a distinct trend away from ornamental parks to general purpose parks with emphasis on leisure and environment. While the park is naturalistic in its theme and in the natural associations of terrain, water and plants, the design concept is from the tradition of the romantic, picturesque landscape style originating in England in the 18th century.

A fundamental design element of the park, common in conservation practice today, but new at the time, is its function as an integral part of the storm water management system. Surface water collected from the surrounding area is piped to outfalls into the park, reaching the creek and lagoon, where the flows are detained, and the water is purified.

Confederation Park comprises other milestone design features in the evolution in park development in Calgary, including a regional pathway system, preservation of natural areas, and a golf course. The meandering paths in the park are early components of the regional path system which was established in the city, beginning in the late 1960s under the leadership of

Boothman. The intention to preserve portions of the landscape in natural condition within the developed park represents an environmental consciousness and respect for nature that is common today. The native grassland in the west section of the park, preserved within a developed landscape, is among the first of its kind in Calgary. The public golf course in Confederation Park was included in the park's development in response to popular demand.

Finally, the Park is valued for its highly popular Christmas light display at 14th Street, an event which has become a beloved tradition in the community.

Confederation  
Park flag plaza;  
Image via:  
Calgary.ca



# Reader Rock Garden

339 25 Ave SE

Reader Rock Garden is valued for its connection to William Roland Reader, who was Calgary's Parks Superintendent from 1913 to 1942 and is considered Calgary's most influential Parks Superintendent. The development of civic recreational spaces and beautification of streetscapes are key features of his legacy. Reader lined streets with trees, expanded the area of city parks, and designed playgrounds, parks, golf courses and tennis courts. He was also a founding member of the Calgary Vacant Lots Garden Club and the Calgary Horticultural Society. Reader's efforts did much to educate Calgarians about contemporary gardening principles and he wrote many articles encouraging citizens to beautify their surroundings. Through his dedication, he turned Calgary into what became known as the "garden city of the west."

Beyond his beautification efforts, Reader was internationally renowned for his horticultural expertise. Reader acquired seeds and plants from around the world, testing varieties to see what could survive in Calgary's difficult climate. Reader used the Rock Garden to test new, rare, and unique plant species and during his life the Garden held over 4000 different plant species. The quality of his plants and seedlings were recognized by

the prestigious horticultural agencies including Kew Gardens, London; the Botanical Gardens at Harvard; and the Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh.

Reader Rock Garden is also valued for its intricate and elaborate design. The design is based on the British Arts and Crafts Movement and contains influences of the late Edwardian era and early Civic Parks Movement of North America. The main concept was as a naturalistic rockery, an approach advocated by William Robinson (1838-1935) who was a prominent British gardener and writer that challenged the popular view held that it was necessary to include a formal element within a garden. Reader would have been influenced by the writings and ideas of both Robinson and another leading British garden designer, Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932). Robinson and Jekyll both argued for a variety of natural garden types, including water gardens, wild gardens, and rock gardens; all of which are represented in the Reader Rock Garden.

The design and use of local sandstone, subdued colours, and textural foliage in the garden all speak to Reader's familiarity with trends in gardening towards balanced, naturalistic landscape architecture. He laid out a network of walls, pathways and water features to create an intricate series of gardens with variety of garden types, with differing climatic conditions, moisture levels, and sunlight exposure. The garden is divided into areas

including the West Garden, South Slopes, Upper Garden, High Rockery, and Western Slopes. Reader kept meticulous records of these areas and assigned each plant bed a unique identifier. The West Rockery, south of the lawns of the house, was considered the most heavily planted part of the site, featuring 650 different types of plant species. His plan also included the construction of a sandstone entry arch at the base of the garden and a gazebo and house at the peak.

Reader Rock Garden is the most important legacy of Reader's work in Calgary and was the site of his home during his tenure as Parks Superintendent. As such, the site is intimately connected to the memory of William Reader and in 1944, following his death in 1943; the park was named "Reader Rock Garden" to honour his contributions to the city.

Reader Rock Garden also is valued as a symbol of the optimism and development of Calgary during the early 20th century. Reader constructed an internationally praised garden on what was originally a bare hill, demonstrating the potential for Calgary's parks and gardens. The garden was a showcase to educate people about the gardening and aesthetic potential of the prairie and foothills region of Alberta, particularly Calgary.



Image via: Calgary Heritage Initiative



Image via: Calgary.ca

# Riley Park

## 800 12 St NW

Riley Park's Heritage value lies in the association with Ezra Riley and William Reader, the planting design in the park, and the recreational activities available in the park.

Ezra Riley was a prominent figure in Calgary's early history. Ezra came to Alberta in 1888 to homestead a quarter section of land with his family. By the early 1900's the Riley Family had over 10,000 acres. Riley was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the Conservative Party from 1906-1910. In 1910 Ezra Riley subdivided the family land and created the community of Hillhurst. Riley donated part of the land to the City of Calgary to create the park that now bears his name.

William Roland Reader was Calgary's Superintendent of Parks and Cemeteries from 1913-1942. This was an important time in the development of Calgary as there was much migration and subsequent construction. Reader's goal was to develop Calgary into a destination of the west. His vision of Calgary was as a great city with high quality open space, including public parks, recreation facilities, and streets lined with trees and developed with landscaped areas, planted with ornamental shrubs and flowers. Riley Park was primarily designed and developed by Reader.

Reader's floral/planting design along 10th Street was influenced by the City Beautiful Movement in urban development/planning. The movement supported beautification, monumental grandeur, and formality to encourage order and harmony. Advocates of the movement believed the approach would promote a harmonious social order that would increase the quality of life and help to reduce undesirable behaviour.

Early in his career in Calgary, William Reader adopted this approach to beautifying the city. The intent was to illustrate that Calgary was a civilized city with high quality public spaces. He wanted to ensure Calgary was a city where civilized individuals would like to migrate. Reader's work included showpieces such as the Riley Park floral display which incorporated colourful floral displays with vibrant mixtures of annuals and perennials.

The majority of the park design (excluding the 10th Street floral display) was influenced more by the picturesque movement where an emphasis was placed more on informal, natural in appearance, and curvilinear design elements; the natural shape of the wading pool, the curvilinear pathway, and the natural in appearance planting along the edges of the park reflect this approach.

The planting along the west, south and north edges of the park is typical of park design from the 1910's, 1920's and 30's. During the early development of Calgary (and into 1940's) parks were thought of as refuges from the rest of the City. There were

typically dense plantings around the edges of parks to keep the dust and noise out of the park, and people in the park. This approach is in marked contrast to the way parks are designed today. Contemporary park design includes an emphasis on inviting people into the park and having transparency from the street. The dense shrub and tree plantings on the 3 edges of Riley Park illustrate typical park design in the 1910s 1920s and 1930s.

The park is also significant for the wide variety of leisure activities. Leisure and recreational areas are important in the establishment of a city as they allow citizens opportunities to gather for leisure and social engagement. Play structures were erected as early as 1912. The wading pond began construction in 1913; 1914 included a substantial toboggan run; 1917 a playground shelter. In 1919 three cricket pitches were developed along with a clubhouse (although it is noted that The Calgary and District Cricket League began playing in Riley Park prior to that). Specific Cricket tournaments worth noting include the 1922 Interprovincial Cricket Tournament, 1961 Canadian National Cricket Tournament, 1965 International Cricket Match -- Canada vs. the United States.



Calgary Tigers Rugby Game. 9 ca. 1904-1918, via: Calgary Public Library Williams & Harris Shared History Centre

# Senator Patrick Burns Memorial Rock Garden

1103 10 St NW

The Senator Patrick Burns Memorial Rock Garden is valued for location, design, and its connection to two prominent Calgarians Senator Patrick Burns, one of the 'Big Four' financial backers of the first Calgary Stampede, and Alex Munro, Superintendent of Calgary Parks 1949-1960. The rock garden was designed by Alex Munro in 1956 and was constructed using 20,000 sandstone blocks from the mansion of Patrick Burns. The mansion -- located at 510 13 Av SW - was constructed in 1901 and was demolished in 1955 to make way for a new entrance to the Colonel Belcher Hospital.

The Rock Garden is located off to 10 St NW on a sloping hillside south of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) campus. The land is rooted in Calgary history having first been occupied by Thomas Riley (1842-1909) who had homesteaded in the area since 1887. This land was subdivided into residential lots prior to the First World War and became the residential district of Hillhurst. The land was sold in 1910 when the City of Calgary annexed areas of farmlands surrounding the city. In 1919 the area became provincial government property as part of the development plan for the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, and became City of Calgary property in 1993.

The garden was designed by Alex Munro, Parks Superintendent for the City of Calgary, and a prominent figure in the Calgary gardening community, where he authored a weekly gardening column for the *Calgary Herald*, hosted a gardening radio talk show, and published a Calgary-area gardening book titled *The Calgary Herald's Gardening Book*. He was also a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society.

In England, rock gardens had been popular since the early 1900's and were part of the move away from the artificially 'extreme landscapist' styles of the Victorian period, to more naturalistic styles that celebrated local plants, rocks, and forms. In North America, a similar sentiment was growing amongst gardeners wanting to build viable, less labour-intensive gardens that featured native plants adapted to local climate and elevations. Alex Munro embraced this naturalistic style of alpine rock garden that celebrated native plants, rocks, and forms, using local repurposed sandstone for rock features, and local alpine plants such as blue spruce, flowering crabapple, highbush cranberry, rocky mountain juniper, oak, scots pine, and snowy mountain ash.

*The Calgary Herald's Gardening Book* provides helpful insight into Alex Munro's strategy and design for the Burns Memorial Rock Garden. The book describes in detail his ideal rockery design, construction, and maintenance, the results of which are still apparent in the garden today. He asserts "a piece of

sloping ground that might not be practical for other gardening could be converted into a fascinating rock garden”, and that a rockery should be completed with “one kind of rock, as it gives it a much more natural effect... the more jagged and uneven the rocks are, the better... tufa rock, sandstone, and limestone are about the three best procurable here”. The empty sloping land adjacent to 10 St NW was likely selected for development due to the unlikeliness that the slope would be used by the campus, and the opportunity for the re-use of several tons of jagged demolished sandstone. Alex Munro and J.A. Ingles, Custodial

Supervisor at the City of Calgary arranged to have 20,000 sandstone blocks from the Burns Mansion relocated, increasing the feasibility of the project that otherwise would have been more costly.

Construction of the Burns Memorial Rock Garden began in 1956 and was completed in a single season to allow the rocks and soils to settle. In 1957 the garden was planted with trees, shrubs, and alpine plants for a total of 15,000 plants overall and the final section of the garden was constructed in 1959.



Senator Patrick Burns Memorial Gardens, ca. 1963. Via Calgary Public Library Williams & Harris Shared History Centre

# Scotsman's Hill

## Salisbury St SW

Scotsman's Hill is a landmark of Calgary's skyline and the most distinctive geographical feature of the Ramsay community. The hill lies between a steep escarpment along the Elbow River and a valley to the east. Both the valley and escarpment are believed to be abandoned meltwater channels created around 12,000 years ago when ancient glacial Lake Calgary drained.

Scotsman's Hill is remarkable as a rare, intact hillside in the inner city. Its expansive natural slope recalls Calgary's frontier period when the landscape was dominated by river valley escarpments and gentle hills covered in fescue grasses. Until the latter part of the 19th century the grasses on the hill attracted vast herds of bison, which in turn attracted the First Peoples to the area. Although the bluff on Scotsman's Hill has been proposed as a former buffalo jump, there is currently no archaeological evidence to support this theory.

Scotsman's Hill possesses person value for its earliest landowners and homesteaders, Angus Fraser and Louis Roselle. The hill was called Fraser's Hill in Calgary's frontier days, and may have been named for Scottish-born Fraser. A Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) storeman, Fraser opened an outpost west of the city on the Bow River in 1874. When the RCMP established Fort Calgary in 1875, he relocated the post across the Elbow

River and eventually became Manager of the post in 1878. Since the HBC did not own the land around the Calgary post, from 1881 Fraser personally homesteaded 160 acres including the northern part of Scotsman's Hill.

Louis Roselle (1821-1891) and his wife Angelique, both Métis, were among the earliest settlers in East Calgary. They constructed dwellings, stables, a corral and a warehouse and cultivated three acres of land on and around the northern end of Scotsman's Hill. Louis had moved west from Montreal in 1842 to work as an HBC employee in Calgary. After 26 years of service in the west he worked independently, first as a buffalo hunter and later as a freighter. In 1880, he acquired land which spanned today's Ramsay and Inglewood from Métis homesteader Antonie Godin. Following the CPR's arrival in 1883, Roselle sold his claim to Wesley Orr.

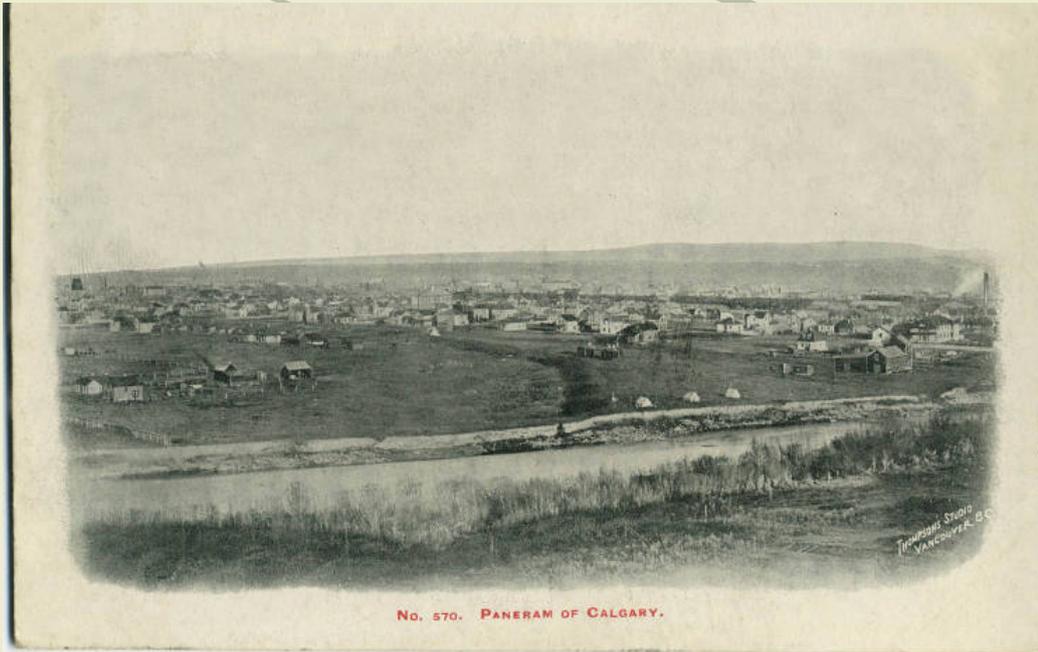
Scotsman's Hill is valued for its association with an early Ramsay quarry. Around 1894, the northern end of the exposed sandstone escarpment at the base of the hill became the Elbow River quarry which yielded blocks of hard grey sandstone. It was operated by John G. McCallum, a contractor from Scotland who operated a number of Calgary quarries.

For well over a century, the hill has served as an important recreational site for Ramsay residents. From the early 1900's the western slope of the hill, a dense brush of indigenous species such as wild rose and Saskatoon berry overlaid with a lattice

of pathways, was a favourite playground for local children. In the 1940s, the hilltop lots at the edge of the cultural landscape became a close knit community of Ramsay families, mostly railway employee households, who built their homes to take in skyline views. It was valued as an ideal place to raise their children, who said it was like growing up in the country.

As a vantage point to watch the rodeo and fireworks, Scotsman's Hill possesses event value for its association with the Calgary Stampede since 1912. With its excellent situation

overlooking the grounds across the river, as well as the early orientation of the grandstand, the hill quickly earned the nickname Scotsman's Grandstand for the economical folks who watched the Stampede without paying. This may also be the source of the hill's name. Around 1919-26 the Calgary Auto Club established the Sunshine Auto Camp at the base of the hill in a clearing next to trees along the Elbow River. The camp, operated by the Van Buren family, was a popular tourist destination for Stampede visitors and participants. The cabins and amenities were continuously expanded until the camp was purchased for Stampede use in 1955.



Panorama of Calgary.  
Ca 1906  
Via Calgary Public Library  
Williams & Harris Shared  
History Centre

# Sien Lok Park

100 Riverfront Ave SW

The lands that today comprise Sien Lok Park have been continuously used across centuries and cultures, first serving as a grazing and watering area for bison, and for shelter and navigation for the First Peoples who followed them. The area was subdivided and developed by settlers in the mid-late 1880s following the arrival of the CPR in Calgary, and was oriented as deep, narrow lots fronting the Bow River. Significant development occurred by 1889 including part of the Eau Claire-Bow Valley Lumber mill, and by 1911, wood-frame houses fronted the river and Riverfront Avenue. In the late 1940s Calgary Water Power Company rezoned the area, changing the context to light industry by the 1960s. The area's development as formal park land resulted from community-led activism in the 1970s, and returned the land to largely open space, with some constructed features.

Sien Lok Park is symbolic of the survival and flourishing of both Calgary's Chinatown and the downtown riverbank, which avoided destruction during the 1960s era of downtown urban renewal and 'parkway' projects that threatened the existence of Chinatowns across Canada. In Calgary this began with the 1963-64 Downtown Redevelopment Plan proposed by the CPR and City to move the railway to the south bank of the Bow River, and build a parallel 8-lane parkway. The project was successfully

fought by the Local Council of Women, led by Ruth Gorman, and supported by Alderman Jack Leslie. More proposals followed: a 1965 plan to extend Bow Trail through Chinatown; a 12-lane parkway on the Bow; and a 1967 plan to rebuild Centre Street Bridge. In 1968, Sien Lok (from wai sien gee lok 'to be charitable gives one the greatest happiness') formed to organize against the repeated threat of losing the Chinatown. Community leader Ray Lee was instrumental in forming Sien Lok, and restaurateur CH Poon also played a key role. Sien Lok helped mobilize the Chinatown community, and in 1969 organized a National Conference on Urban Renewal as It Affects Chinatowns, attended by representatives across Canada. As well, 20 community groups came together for the cause as the United Calgary Chinese Assn. Resultantly, the Bow Trail extension was put on hold in 1970, and in 1971 City Council moved to rehabilitate the Centre Street Bridge rather than rebuild it. In 1973 a final Bow Trail extension project was proposed as the 'Downtown East-West Penetrator', but was again successfully fought by the community through the Chinatown Development Task Force, led by George Ho Lem Jr.

The park possesses institution value for its association with Sien Lok, its namesake, and other Chinese societies for over five decades. During revitalization in the 1970s-80s, Sien Lok played a role in the riverbank areas' transition from light industrial to recreational use. A 1976 Chinatown Design Brief recommended that the City acquire land near the river for green space, and a core group including Ho Lem successfully lobbied The City to

purchase the land and begin work in 1979. Sien Lok raised funds for amenities like the terrace and pagoda entirely from some 700 individual donors. The park's red-brick entry arch and red metal benches and lampposts reflected the renewal of Chinatown's public realm.

In the early 1990s a license to occupy part of the park was proposed for the growing Chinese Elderly Citizens' Assn, formed in 1985, whose 2,000 plus members were challenged

to find a location for their purpose-built centre. Sien Lok initially protested the loss of park space, but a compromise was achieved in 1993: the centre was limited to the east end, and the park was approved to expand north into existing green space between Riverfront AV and the river. Phase 2 opened in 1999, landscaping the north portion in an open layout with pathways interconnecting sculptures and interpretation that commemorates Chinese settlement in Canada.



Sien Lok Park. Image via: [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca)

# Nose Hill Park and Archaeological Resource

6465 14 St NW

The Nose Hill Archaeological Resources are significant primarily for the link to the First Nations People and how they went about their daily lives - the activities, celebrations, events, etc.

It is evident this site has a rich cultural heritage relating to the pre-contact use of the hill over the last 9,000 years - including use as camp locations and as an excellent vantage point from which to visually survey the surrounding landscape. While many archaeological resources across the hill are well documented, other portions of the hill remain unexplored and little subsurface testing has ever been undertaken at these locations.

Nose Hill is a massive park in Calgary, home to the highest natural point in the city and is roughly three times the size of Manhattan's Central Park. The park is a natural landscape and a remnant of the Great Plains. It's a really rare and valuable landscape representative of Calgary's pre-settlement landscape, made up mostly of wild grasses, shrubs and a sparse amount of trees.

The park is a result of extensive efforts made by concerned Calgarians throughout the 1970s and 1980s as plans emerged to develop the hill for single family housing-based communities. At the time, Calgary was rapidly growing outward: the city's boundaries more than doubled between 1948 to 1979. Little of the natural landscape was being conserved. When plans for new development emerged, citizens in surrounding communities organized to block the development of the hill. Their efforts succeeded and in 1980, Nose Hill Park was formed and is now surrounded by 12 communities.

Nose Hill Park features hiking trails, native grasses, off-leash areas and plenty of wildlife, ranging from deer to prairie dogs/ pocket gophers, porcupines, coyotes, harriers and hawks, and more.

Nose Hill is made up of elevated bedrock, sand and gravel that was deposited by advancements and retreats of glacial ice from both east and west. Due to its prominence, Nose Hill has been a focal point for people for thousands of years, making it a significant archaeological resource in Calgary. Evidence of tipi-rings, stone tools, hunting implements and animal remains from successful hunts can be found throughout the park. Radio carbon dating has identified the oldest archaeological sites at being 8,250 years old. The Hawkwood Site, excavated due to the development of the adjacent community of Hawkwood, showed evidence of organized bison hunting.



# Century Gardens

827 7 Ave SW

Century Gardens is directly associated with Calgary's 1975 Centennial celebration. Incorporated in 1875, the city experienced a great deal of growth over the next hundred years, amassing a population of around 450,000 by 1975. Calgary celebrated its centennial in a variety of ways, and one of these was a park building initiative spearheaded by Century Calgary, the official coordinating agency for all centennial celebrations. Established in 1973, their goal was to create one hundred additional acres of parkland for the centennial year, focusing on large river valley parks, neighbourhood parks, individual parks and downtown parks. Several parks were created as a result of this initiative.

Century Gardens is closely associated with Eric Harvie, a local oil baron and philanthropist who had an immeasurable impact on the city of Calgary. Harvie practiced law in Calgary before making his fortune in the late 1940s. He was the owner of several lucrative oil wells, including Leduc No.1, which struck oil in February of 1947 and began the oil boom in Alberta. In the 1950s, after making over \$100 million, Harvie started giving back to the community. In 1956 he established the Devonian Foundation, and in 1966 he donated over 200,000 artifacts to the Government of Alberta, as well as a \$5 million endowment, providing for the establishment of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute,

precursor to the Glenbow Museum and Archives. It was a direct result of Harvie's philanthropy that the Devonian Group was created, which in turn built Century Gardens and donated it to the City of Calgary.

Century Gardens is directly associated with the Devonian Group of Charitable Organizations, an institution that had a large municipal impact. Established in 1973, the Devonian Group was an amalgamation of different charities founded by Eric Harvie and members of his family. The Devonian Group had a mandate to spend \$61 million over twenty-five years. Projects were completed throughout Alberta, and while the majority were parks, cultural and scientific projects were also undertaken. High profile donations within Calgary include Century Gardens, the Devonian Gardens, and large sculptures installed in various public places downtown. It was the Devonian Group that initiated construction and donated the \$3.2 million Century Gardens to the City of Calgary.

Century Gardens is also directly associated with J.H. Cook Architects and Engineers, who provided the design for Century Gardens. This Calgary-based architectural firm was established in 1956 by J.H. Cook, and is responsible for many prominent Calgary buildings, including the 1982 Nova Building, located beside Century Gardens, and for which J.H. Cook Architects and Associates won the Governor Generals Award for Architecture in 1984.

Century Gardens is a good example of a very uncommon type of landscape architecture in Calgary. Inspired by renowned American landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, Century Gardens heavily massed concrete and water features combine to create realistic and abstract expressions of nature, including nature as a form generating force. The design of Century Gardens also mirrors Halprin's theory that park design should include elements vital to human survival, such as water, shelter and clearly defined gateways. Century Gardens contributes to the contemporary landscape of its neighbourhood.

Century Gardens is a significant landmark in Calgary because of its distinctive character and design, as well as its prominent

location. Unique to Calgary for its abundant use of water and concrete, Century Gardens is located on the 7 Avenue C-Train line, and is therefore seen by thousands of commuters every day.

The unique design style of the park also acts as a symbol of Calgary's coming of age, and reflected the City's maturity through its modern contemporary design. The park recently underwent a redesign and had many aspects modernized, including a splash pad, wooden amphitheatre, and space for a food concession in the future. The redesign preserved the Brutalist water fountains and waterfalls.



# Crescent Park

1201 2 St NW

Crescent Park's value lies in the association with the recreational activities available in the park and for the planting design in the park.

Crescent Park developed over the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. The recreational components included a pleasure skating rink, a hockey arena, the North Hill Curling Club, lawn bowling, tennis courts, and baseball diamonds. All of these activities exist today except for lawn bowling. Recreational areas are important in the

establishment of a city as they allow citizens opportunities to gather for leisure and social engagement. The planting design includes dense planting around the edges of the 3 areas of the park. The edge and dividing planting design is typical of park design from the 1920s and 30s. During the early development of Calgary and into 1940s parks were thought of as refuges from the rest of the City. There were typically dense plantings around the edges of parks to keep the dust and noise out of the park, and people in the park. This approach is in marked contrast to the way parks are designed today. Contemporary park design includes an emphasis on inviting people into the park and having transparency from the street. The dense shrub and tree plantings on the edges of Crescent Park and the additional

dense planting rows within the park (to create 3 park areas) illustrate park design in the 1920s and 1930s.

The south third of Crescent Park also became an area of focus for ornamental planting. In 1937 a Coronation Planting was constructed in the SE corner of the park (no longer exists). During the 1940s ornamental plantings became more of a focus. In 1949 a rockery was constructed at the SE Corner (rock work still exists) and by 1951, the year of the royal visit, Crescent Park was known for its outstanding floral display.



Crescent Park Aerial Image. Via: Calgary.ca

# Elbow Park Swimming Pool & Grounds

3016 Elbow Dr SW

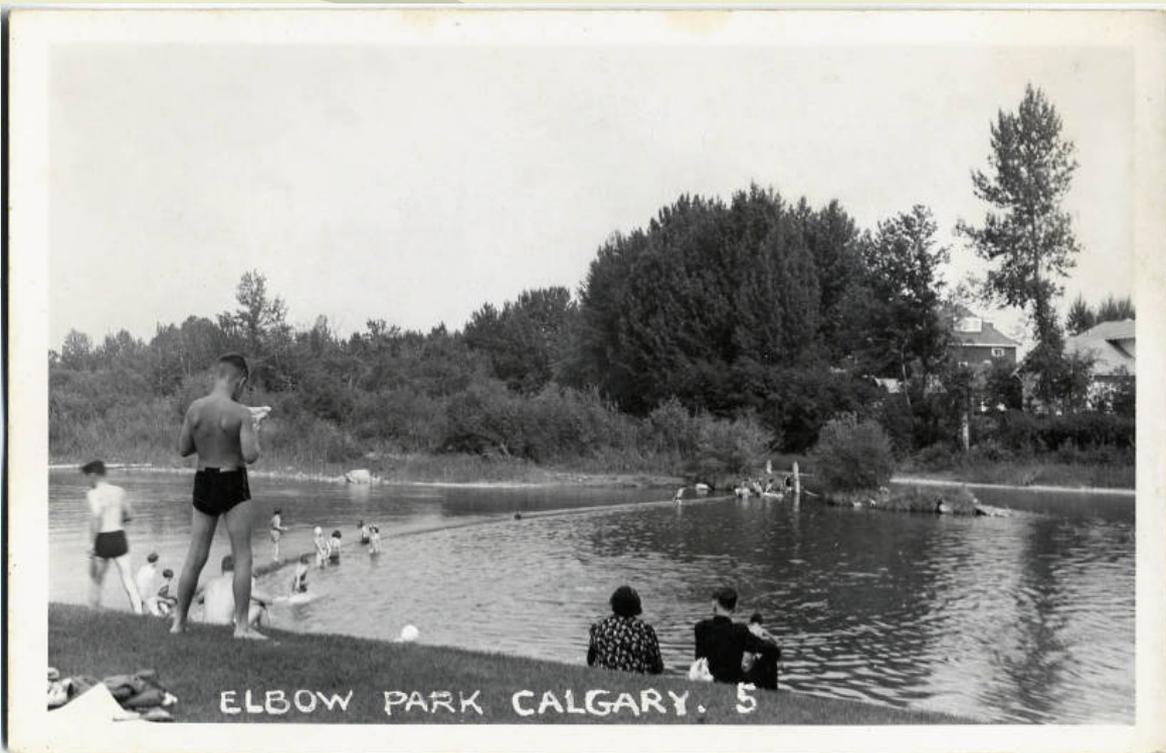
The Elbow Park Swimming Pool and Grounds is significant for the historical recreational activity associated with the site, being the first public swimming facility in Calgary. Residents had been swimming in this place, as well as others in the rivers in and around Calgary, from the earliest times. The provision of swimming facilities at this site in 1914, first with safety ropes and then construction in 1922 of the dressing rooms building, made the Elbow Park Swimming Pool distinctly attractive. The addition of booms in the river, play equipment (including an outdoor checker board), washrooms attached to the building, a fountain, pathways and ornamental plantings further enhanced the attractiveness of the Grounds. Until interest shifted to constructed swimming pools in the 1940s, the Elbow Park Swimming Pool was the most popular swimming place in the inner city and second only to the lagoon at Bowness Park in numbers of users. Attendance records for 1933 include the observation: 'the number at the Elbow Swimming [Pool] was so great that no record could be kept'. A prominent resident of the area, Leslie Sara, observed that the Elbow Park [pool] grounds were the 'Lido of Calgary'.

The Parks Department also established a winter recreation program in 1913 with development of skating rinks around the city.

Also, the dressing room building is significant for its vernacular design which constitutes a notable and unique example of a river-side swimming 'hole' change-room facility, and is the only structure of its type to exist within the city. The one-storey, wood-frame building features a simple side-gable-roof with extended slopes that shelter washrooms on one side of the building and form a veranda on the other; change rooms occupy the centre of the building and face the river. The building is simply finished with bevelled wood siding and exposed rafters, creating a harmonious, albeit utilitarian structure. Located adjacent to, and parallel with the Elbow River, it creates a strong outdoor spatial relationship with the water's edge and defines the beach. The matching change room entrances set within the open veranda create a direct linkage to the river bank and water.

Additionally, the Elbow Park Swimming Pool and Grounds is historically significant for its association with the pioneering Parks Superintendent, William Reader. This site was a prominent element of the public park land Reader conserved and established along the Elbow River in the context of his vision for the beautification of the city. While Reader's interests and achievements in horticulture and the urban landscape are well recognized, he was also an advocate of public recreation. He was himself a swimmer - a member of the Calgary Swimming

Club - and he directly initiated the first preparations for swimming at the Elbow Park site and led the further provision of facilities there. Reader aligned the use of the pool with the swimming programs of institutions like the YMCA and YWCA.



# Jefferies Park

1120 10 St SE

Jefferies Park, a distinctive recreational area which overlooks the Canadian Pacific Railway's main line and the industrial area to the northeast, symbolizes the working class roots of Ramsay where residents chose to live and raise their families close to their work. A high percentage of Ramsay's early residents worked in this industrial area for the CPR and other employers. This area of Ramsay was subdivided as plan A2 in 1887 by Wesley Fletcher Orr, an important Calgary politician and developer, and his partner Mary Schreiber. The park takes its character from this very early plan which included both residential and industrial development spanning the CPR tracks. Jefferies Park is located on twelve lots. Its western edge runs along a residential street, 10th (formerly Victoria) Street. To the east, the park narrows at its northern end, following the arc of Adelaide Street which parallels the CPR's main line as it curves southward. Until at least the 1920s the area between 10th Street and Adelaide Street was undeveloped. By the mid-20th century, industrial buildings were constructed immediately east of the park at its southeast corner, including an ink bottling company and a wholesale aluminum welders' supplies business (latter building is extant). Community histories also reference a nearby sash and door company named Guy's Factory, and a harness and saddle business, both later destroyed by fire. This intriguing setting of a playing field with views to the railway and industry

created a popular place for neighbourhood children to play and gather. At night they sat on the hill to watch the steam engines and would wave to them since many people in the community were train conductors.

Jefferies Park possesses person value for Ramsay residents James Edward (Ed) Jefferies (1888-1955) and son Raymond, prominent Calgary businessmen and philanthropists who made significant contributions to the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary. Ed was president of the Calgary Zoo and the Calgary Gun Club and on the executive of the city's Curling Club. Scottish born Ed Jefferies immigrated to Canada from Wales in 1907 and moved to Calgary in 1908, establishing himself in the construction business. In 1913, he and wife Helen moved to 1035 10th Street S.E., kitty corner from the park, to raise their family. Four sons joined him in his Inglewood-based business, Jefferies & Sons. By 1950 the company grew to a major operation which produced concrete products and graded sand and gravel, and provided excavation and contracting services. By 1961 the firm amalgamated to become a significant Calgary business, Consolidated Concrete Limited.

The Jefferies are also long-time Ramsay residents who are remembered for their generous contributions to the local community and to Jefferies Park. They acquired the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and sold the land to the City on the condition that it would remain a wildlife park, and Ed Jefferies donated sand and gravel to develop the Inglewood bowling green. For

decades, Ed and Ray flooded and cleared a skating rink in the park across from their home, and Ray donated a floodlight. Long time resident Dawn Ferguson recalls that children growing up in the area thought of the park as their second home. They played games until dark in the summer, and hockey on the rink in the winter. They would also go to the Jefferies home, to play on the large double lot where Ray had paved a tricycle pad, or be offered hot chocolate in the winter.

Jefferies Park has served as a skating rink, playing field and gathering place for Ramsay children since the early 20th century, and possesses activity value for its long association with childrens recreation. The Jefferies Skating rink was recorded on the City of Calgary Parks Department's recreation and rink lists from 1932 until the late 1950s, after which the Annual Reports did not list skating rinks.



Jefferies  
Park via:  
Calgary.ca

# Ranchlands Hills Parks

648 Ranchlands Ave NW

The heritage value of the Ranchlands Hills Parks is as a precedent setting example for suburban development in Calgary. High quality natural landscapes were accepted as open space and Municipal Reserve for the community.

The Ranchlands Hills are a small protected element of particular geological formations - "Knob and Kettle" glaciated terrain - occurring in an area of some 50 square kilometres north of and along Crowchild Trail in northwest Calgary. The native rough fescue grassland and aspen parkland vegetation of the hills in pristine condition, in combination with these geological features, are retained nowhere else within the urban fabric of Calgary.

The Ranchlands Hills Parks are the first case in Calgary in which land of environmental quality in its natural state, but otherwise developable, was accepted and dedicated as Municipal Reserve in a new residential neighborhood. The perception of their value and the undertaking to preserve these features as community amenities was initiated by the developer and their consultants (David Poppitt, Melcor Developments; George Gordon, architect/planner; Leonard Novak, landscape architect). It took the further vision of City of Calgary Parks and the Calgary Separate Schools to drive the unprecedented acceptance of these parks within

the city's administration. The developer's and planners' motive to reserve natural landscapes as parks was responsive to the emerging environmental movement and consciousness.

At the time, the dedication of park reserves and open space within new residential areas was an uncertain aspect of the urban development process. Historian Max Foran, in his book, "Expansive Discourses - Urban Sprawl in Calgary 1945 - 1978" says: "In the 1950s it was clear that community reserves in developing subdivisions meant school sites and little else. Unfortunately, even given a growing awareness of the stifling elements of the urban built form in the late 1960s and 1970s, this perception did not change." Developers were required by law to set aside 10% of developable land in a subdivision, for schools and parks. Normally even this provision was a matter of negotiation between The City and the development industry. The overall dedication of park reserve land in Ranchlands came to be about 13 per cent.

Foran observes further: "...the City had little abiding interest in preserving open space in its natural state, and even less if it was deemed developable". Furthermore, the City required land for school sites that was level and graded accordingly. It was therefore unusual even for the natural landscape of the Ranchlands central school site to be accepted and only minimally modified.

Subdivisions that soon followed the example of Ranchlands in the reservation of otherwise developable natural landscape were Hawkwood, Strathcona, and Edgemont.

The analysis, planning, and government approval of land with such characteristics as reserves was to become a standard procedure in Calgary, between the development industry and The City.

A small, but interestingly shaped glacial erratic was left in the park by the developer of the surrounding community. The erratic was used by the Bison as a “rubbing stone,” and the native people of this area relied on the Bison. The stone was left to commemorate this historical aspect of the land.

Prior to development, the land was used by Indigenous people for hunting (though there are no significant archaeological sites) and Europeans for grazing.

Image via: Calgary.ca



# Edworthy Homestead Lands and Quarries (Edworthy Park)

5050 Spruce Dr SW

Thomas Edworthy was an early pioneer and settler in the Calgary area. A prominent member of Calgarian society in its early years, Edworthy owned a significant swath of land to the west of Calgary. The Edworthy homestead land was settled at the beginning of Calgary's pioneer era in 1885 and is a rare surviving example of a pioneer homestead in Calgary. It is representative of the agricultural activities associated with the farms and commercial gardens that surrounded and defined Calgary in the early pioneer era. The upland was used for livestock ranching and cultivating hay fields. The lower escarpment and river plain was used for grain crops and market gardens. There are existing remnants of two irrigation systems. The irrigation systems supplied water to the home and barnyard site from a spring on the escarpment and the second, to the cropland and orchard trees on the river plain, from a river bank water bank intake, sluice and ditches. This technology indicates a committed approach to agricultural production. The commercial farm and its crops, notably potatoes, were important to the supply of food for the citizens of Calgary in the settlement era.

The Edworthy homestead land is also associated with sandstone quarrying which was one of the most important commercial ventures in Calgary's early history. The use of sandstone as a primary building material characterized Calgary from the 1880s through the 1909-13 boom, leading to Calgary being called 'Sandstone City'. Stone from the Edworthy quarries was used in many historically prominent buildings in Calgary, including the Norman Block, Pat Burns mansion, and the McKay house. Thomas Edworthy operated three sandstone quarries on the property. The largest quarry extended over some 15 acres on both sides of the main coulee, the others on the escarpment below. The quarry works were substantial with derricks to lift the stone and mechanized wagons on graded roads to carry the cut stone to the railway on the river flat below. The quarry operations by the Edworthy family ended with Thomas' death in 1904, with the quarries leased to and operated thereafter by others and known as Bowbank Sandstone Quarries until 1914. By 1962, the City began acquiring the Edworthy lands and conversion into park space.

While most other homestead lands from Calgary's early years have since been developed as the city grew, the Edworthy homestead lands remain largely undeveloped. The landscape of the homestead lands does not lend itself well to development; much of it is on a slope or a coulee and immediately north of a steeper cliff and closed off by the Bow River. A handful of homes have been built - including the Edworthy Residence - but aside from them, a road down the coulee, the CPR track and semi-

manicured picnic sites, the lands have remained intact since the closing of the quarries in 1914.

Today, Edworthy Park is a large and diverse park bordered by the Bow River, the community of Wildwood, and Sarcee Trail. On top of the bluff section of the park is an off-leash pet area that is landscaped naturally, with shelter belt trees lining the edge of the bluff, which is also treed. Down the park and closer to the river stand a series of picnic sites, bisected by the Canadian Pacific Rail line. Edworthy Park also includes the natural areas of Douglas Fir Trail and Lawrey Gardens directly south following the river. The Douglas Fir Trail park is a densely wooded escarpment rising above the Bow River. The terrain makes for some of

Calgary's best inner city hiking trails. The Douglas Firs that grow here are also the furthest east that species of tree grows as they are usually found on the coast and Rocky Mountains.

Further to the south of Douglas Fir Trail is Lawrey Gardens, a naturalized area named for a neighbour to the Edworthy's, John Lawrey. Lawrey operated a successful and well-known market garden and provided fruit for railway workers and early homesteaders. Parts of Lawrey Gardens today is built on debris from demolished buildings, including the Robin Hood Flour Mills, which stood where Gulf Canada Square is located today.

Harry Bothom Bridge in Edworthy Park. Image via: Calgary.ca



# Riveredge Park

1215 50 Ave SW

Riveredge Park is a rare surviving cultural landscape of undeveloped, former agricultural lands within inner-city Calgary. The park recalls the agricultural activity which defined early Calgary and occurred on the property in the late 1800 and first half of the 1900s. The land, cultivated by farmers and gardeners for decades, still displays discernable agricultural patterns and features: the large central planting field, a smaller triangular field and planted borders. Visible from the south-east and south-west; its distinctive, undeveloped character stands in contrast to the surrounding developed neighbourhoods.

From the 1880s through 1907 the land was directly owned by individuals involved with farming: Joseph Butlin, rancher and quarry operator, William Ford, livery stable keeper, and gardeners George Wells, William Hole, and James Anderson. Planted fields and hedgerows shown in 1920s-50s aerial photographs indicate Riveredge was likely also leased as agricultural land for the following decades. During this period, possibly 1930s, a small wood-shingle-clad cabin and adjacent shed built of rough-sawn lumber were built on the property on the banks of the Elbow River. The buildings were likely built for Dr. Leon Beauchemin, an owner at the time, who likely used the cabin for leisure purposes. The most westerly portion of the land, as the escarpment levels out, sits a cottage possibly also associated

with the agricultural uses. There were three outbuildings south, adjacent to the river, which are associated with the property, the longest in form said to be a chicken coop. The date of the cottage residence is unknown and it appears to be two attached smaller gabled-roof cottages. However, the wooden drop siding, sash windows and doors are indicative of an Edwardian or earlier building and both it and the out-buildings are extant in the 1924 aerial photograph.

In the late 19th century, the land was owned by Joseph Butlin (1858-1924), an important Calgary pioneer rancher, quarry operator and police constable during the city's earliest settlement period. Kingston-born Butlin came to western Canada with the North-West Mounted Police with the in 1874 Dufferin march to Fort MacLeod and served with the F Troop for six years, including five years at Fort Calgary and service during the 1885 North West Riel Rebellion. In 1875 he married Angelique Roussel (1859-46), daughter of Métis pioneers Louis and Angelique Roussel. In 1880 he left the force to establish a homestead and raise his family of ten children. In 1884 he was elected as an official of Calgary's first agricultural society which promoted farming and the city's natural beauty. By 1885 his twenty-seven acre ranch, which may have comprised Riveredge, had sixty cattle, seventeen horses and small stock, plus twenty-five broken acres, a barn, stable and farmhouse. By 1896, Butlin was employed by friend Patrick Burns as a butcher, and in 1901 he left to run a Burns slaughterhouse in Wetaskiwin. Riveredge Park has been associated with the day camp

movement for over four decades, is Calgary's first day camp for disabled persons and fourth day camp. In 1955 the park was acquired by eminent Calgary philanthropist and businessman Eric Harvie (1892-75), one year before the land was annexed. Between 1952 and 1956, through Glenbow Investments, Harvie worked with the City to establish a 'park for rest and relaxation in a natural setting', donating the lands currently known as River Park as well as funds for park management. The name Riveredge was likely taken from Harvie's Riveredge Foundation which he

established in 1967, named for his Calgary residence. In 1979 Harvie's Devonian Foundation sold the land to the City. Since 1982 the City of Calgary has leased the park to the YMCA and Between Friends to operate two separate day camps during the summer. The cottage residence on the most westerly portion of the land has been continuously rented to the same tenant since 1975.



Riveredge Park.  
Image via: Calgary.ca

# Other Notable Parks

# Barb Scott Park

1211 9 St SW

Barb Scott was one of the most outstanding and popular politicians in Calgary's history. First elected in 1971, Scott broke the 12-year long hiatus of female representation on Council. Before winning, the last woman to sit on Council was Isabella Stevens, who had served on Council from 1955 to 1959. In that time frame, Calgary was wholly represented by men.

Scott was born in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1931 and lived there for much of her early life, eventually earning a Masters in Urban Sociology from Boston University. Scott worked in Toronto and Edmonton before moving to Calgary in 1965, and by 1971, had already made a name for herself in Calgary.

When she ran in the 1971 election, she was fully aware that there had been a dearth of female representation on Council for some time, but chose not to run a campaign highlighting this. Rather, she made the point that she ran as a person and did not emphasize women's "liberationist" ideology. She ran to represent her ward and its needs, not just the women.

Scott ended up on Council for 24 years and was one of the longest-serving politicians in Calgary's history. On March 1, 1995, the *Calgary Herald* had a front page story announcing her retirement from Council after having won eight consecutive

elections. Scott had represented Ward 8 since 1977, when it moved to a 14 ward system. Before that Calgary used Single Transferrable Vote and Proportional Representation and had a six-ward system where each ward had two Aldermen, with Scott co-representing Ward 4.

Barb Scott Park is in the Beltline, in the heart of Ward 8. Located at the corner of 9 Street and 12 Avenue Southwest. It was built on the site of the former Central High School's field between 2013 to 2014, after the new CBE headquarters was built and incorporated the former high school. The park takes up roughly a third of the block and is focused around an off-centred oval, with the long ends pointing towards the southwest and northeast corners with walkways, benches, lighting and vegetation surrounding the grassy oval. In the winter month, the oval is often home to an outdoor rink that is heavily used. The landscaping blends seamlessly with that of the former high school's and the CBE headquarters'.

The park opened in June 2014, and it opened with an interactive piece of public art that has become a focal point itself in the area: the Chinook Arc. The Arc is a circular, cloudlike sculpture with a hole in the centre, and is covered in translucent plates with LED lights around the circumference of the sculpture underneath. The shape of the sculpture is meant to recall the historic streetcar loop that circled the neighbourhood before the streetcars were replaced by buses in the '50s. It also recalls the Chinook Arch weather phenomenon Calgary is accustomed

to. In the centre of the sculpture is a sensor that can pick up the colour of the light coming from a screen like that of a cellphone. This sensor then changes the colour of the LEDs at night. The Arc stands out particularly in the winter months, when the lights become more apparent earlier in the day. Its central location makes it a meeting point in the community as well. The Chinook Arc was designed by Creative Machines from Tucson, Arizona.

Barb Scott passed away in March 2014 at the age of 83. Scott had a lifelong desire and drive to help others realize their full potential, particularly the most vulnerable of the inner city. From seemingly small things like sidewalk cuts at intersections to safe houses for unhoused teens and a dental clinic specifically to help the homeless. While Scott passed away before the park officially opened, the former Ward 8 Alderman was honoured by Naheed Nenshi and City Council with the naming of this park.



Barb Scott Park and  
Chinook Arch  
Image via: Calgary.ca

# Sue Higgins Park

10371 15 St SE

Sue Higgins saw her first Council victory in 1977. She would go on to win many more times from 1977 all the way to the 1998 election. She retired in 2001 rather than seek re-election. Never a fan of the "Alderman" title, Higgins self-described as "Alder-Broad." She can be credited with starting the discussion regarding the title of Alderman, and whether it should be retired in favour of gender-neutral terms like Councillor. There is a gap in her time on Council from 1983 to 1986 as she ran for mayor but ultimately lost to Ralph Klein.

The "highly quotable" Higgins was seen as a straight-talker who was outspoken and blunt. Dale Hodges, who unseated Barb Scott as longest-serving individual on City Council, described Higgins as a force unto herself. Higgins would occasionally find herself at odds with other aldermen due to her blunt nature. She was an enthusiastic smoker and fiercely objected to non-smoking rules put into council. In 1978, she believed that she and other smokers should be allowed to smoke during late council meetings after dinner hours, to which one of her male counterparts, Pat Ryan, objected, suggesting she needed a soother, not cigarettes. In 2000, regarding an outdoor smoking ban, she said, "If the whole idea is to prevent pollution then don't drive your car outdoors because that pollutes my air a lot more than my cigarettes." (*Calgary Herald*, April 25, 2000)

Her first stint on Council was in Ward 14, but when she returned she did so in Ward 12, which is where the park in her name is situated.

Sue Higgins Park was originally established as Southland Park in 1994 at the interchange of Southland Drive and Deerfoot Trail, and covers 62 hectares of land between Deerfoot Trail and the Bow River. The main focal point of the park is its off-leash area, which is the largest in Calgary. The park was renamed on November 19, 2012 to honour Higgins after it became public information that she was fighting cancer. Her daughter, Maureen, said in the *Calgary Herald* that it was fitting that the outspoken Alderman was being honoured this way as Higgins was a fan of dogs.

The park rests on land that was originally used for farming and ranching by European settlers, which led to the reduction of native plant species in favour of ones cattle could digest. Native fescue was replaced with Awnless Brome Grass throughout the park. As the city grew, the land was no longer suited for ranching, and competing interests fought over what should happen to the land. Almost becoming a golf course, a citizens group effectively lobbied against the land becoming a golf course, and successfully championed a park that emphasized the rehabilitation of the area.



Sue Higgins Park's *Les Deux Chiens*  
Assis via Calgary Canine

# Dale Hodges Park

2111 52 St NW

Dale Hodges holds the record for longest serving Alderman/Councillor in Calgary's history. The only others that came close was Barb Scott at 24 years on Council and Ray Jones at 25 years. Hodges worked with over 50 different Aldermen and Councillors over those 30 years, and five mayors: Klein, Hartman, Duerr, Bronconnier, and Nenshi.

Before running for election in 1983, Hodges was a librarian with the Calgary Public Library between 1967 to 1983 before running

The long time Ward 1 Alderman and Councillor enjoyed a mostly stable career in office, though it was not without incident. The Hell's Angels used to operate out of Bowness, which Hodges not only represented as Alderman, but he also lived in Bowness. Hodges had worked for some time to push the biker gang out of his neighbourhood and succeeded in blocking the construction of a new clubhouse in Bowness. Hodges's involvement in this led to a former Hell's Angels' president, Ken Szczerba, plotting to blow up Hodges home. Aside from that, Hodges time on Council was fairly stable.

Dale Hodges Park was built on the former Klippert gravel pit and was seen as an excellent opportunity to restore the ecological integrity of the area. The park centres around the former gravel pit, which has been converted into a perfectly round storm water pond. The pond drains into man made wetlands adjacent to the Bow River, which cleans the storm water run off before it can enter the river system. The city touts the park's design as it makes the storm water treatment process visible to all and that it can reduce sediment entering the river by 50 per cent.

The park also features natural landscaping to encourage wildlife habitation, look out points on top of the bluffs, and a boardwalk. Dale Hodges Park connects to the Bow River Pathway system.



# Old Refinery Park

5305 Ogden Rd SE

A relatively new park in Calgary, Old Refinery Park represents the fairly hasty shift Calgary underwent in the latter half of the twentieth century. It also represents a mistake made by the City in that hasty shift.

As the name implies, Old Refinery Park was home to a refinery operated by Imperial Oil which operated from the 1920s to the mid-1970s. Despite overseeing an expansion in 1959, the refinery closed in 1976 and was decommissioned in the following year, and saw a housing development on the site in 1978. The refinery, which produced up to 2,500 to 3,000 barrels of gas each day, and on-site storage held up to 80,000 barrels worth of refined gas. The refining process, of course, left behind industrial by-product that was partially remediated, but not entirely.

The Lynnview Ridge community was developed on the site of the former refinery, but problems became apparent in 1985. Soil contamination becoming clear as oil byproducts were found oozing from the land in the adjacent Beaverdam Flats Park. Despite the issues becoming more and more apparent, it would take 16 years for environmental testing to be done, which found unacceptably high levels of lead in the soil of Lynnview Ridge. In response to this discovery, Imperial Oil offered to buy out

property owners in the affected area. Only 11 homes refused the buy-outs, and the houses still stand today. The rest of the neighbourhood was demolished: homes, roads, everything. While those were demolished, curb cuts from driveways curiously still exist on Lynnview Road, both between the houses that refused to go and on the stretch of the road that has seen all homes demolished. The trees along Lynnview Rise, the road that was demolished, also still stand, outlining where the road once was.

Remediation work formally began in 2014 and largely ended in 2018 - though as of that year water treatment was still ongoing. Homes that refused Imperial Oil's buyout deal were declared safe in 2009, and Imperial Oil entered a cost-sharing agreement with the City, with Imperial covering 60 per cent of the remediation.

As of 2019, the park is open to the public now as remediation work has completed. There were delays in the remediation process, as native plants that were brought in and planted to assist in the process took longer to take root. The end result of this process is an open, natural landscape that reflects Calgary's landscape before settlement, much like Nose Hill Park and Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Refinery Park represents a change in Calgary's industry, with refineries and manufacturing leaving for other towns and cities, while re-orienting itself towards the corporate side of the oil and gas boom of the after-war period. It also represents the

relatively hasty nature of this change, with the incomplete initial remediation work done on the site and the rapid attempt to redevelop the land without fully reclaiming the land from a half-century of heavy industrial use.

Refinery Park is now a natural park in Calgary. Some of the remediation done has converted parts of the parkland back to floodplains, which with periodic flooding allows the Balsam Poplar trees to thrive. Further inland, Trembling Aspens and various shrub species work as part of the remediation of the land. Even further inland, a mix of native and non-native grasses in the park's savannah grows on moguls and further assists with remediation while enabling wildlife to thrive.

Image via: 660News



# Stanley Park

4011 1a St SW

Stanley Park has been a mainstay in Calgary for over a century. The landscaped park rests in Parkdale, at the southern bank of the Elbow River as it meanders through inner Calgary before meeting with the Bow River. The park is home to numerous picnic areas and open greenspace. The park is dotted with various athletic fields: Rose Diamond is a baseball field with stands behind home base. At the other end of the park, there is a lawn bowling club. Between the two are a series of tennis courts, an outdoor pool, and a skating rink. A parking lot and a groundskeeping station jut into the park, hidden away by trees. The park is connected to the Elbow River Pathway, and the park is a popular place for people to relax in the river.

The naming behind the park is unclear. Old correspondence from City Archives shows that City officials have had trouble finding the naming origins of the park. It was founded in 1924, built by the firm F.C. Lowes & Co. as a way to attract more people to live in their newly developed community which was initially also named Stanley Park. Given the city's penchant for naming communities after other places (from Mount Royal to Richmond and Britannia) it is possible Stanley Park is named after the park in Vancouver by the same name, which was named after Lord Stanley, the 18th Earl of Derby.

In 1934, William Roland Reader, the Parks Superintendent that created much of Calgary's parks and streetscapes, consulted with a committee about the expansion of some parks and the subdivision of others. This led to the creation of some parks inside others, including one inside of Stanley Park. Slopes and cutbacks of some parks were modified and landscaped to become smaller parks within parks. In the North portion of Stanley Park, there is a smaller parklet along the ridgeline near the Southern Alberta Pioneers Memorial Building called Princess Obolensky Park.

Princess Tania Obolensky was a Russian aristocrat who fled during the revolution at age 11. The princess would eventually move to the Calgary area with her husband, Count Leo Von Kunigl, in 1931. The two had visited the Calgary area in 1924, as a story in the *Calgary Herald* talked about their visit to Banff Springs Hotel (newspapers.com August 18 1924). The Obolensky's originated from the Rurik dynasty and originated from Obolensk

The princess was a proud Calgarian, staying in Calgary when the Prince moved to South America during the Great Depression and the Second World War. Tania Obolensky would go on to open a successful clothing and gift shop called La Boutique

Princess Obolensky passed away in 1984 at her home in Calgary. In her memory, the parklet inside Stanley Park was dedicated in her memory and the impact she had on the community.

# Prince's Island Park

698 Eau Claire Ave SW

Prince's Island Park is located on a prominent island directly north of Calgary's downtown and the neighbourhood of Eau Claire. Often mistakenly called Princess Island Park, neither the park nor the island have any royal pedigree or royal association. Rather, the island and park take their name from Peter Anthony Prince, a Quebecois lumberman who came to Calgary in 1886 to establish the Eau Claire Lumber Mill. In 1889, Prince formed the Calgary Water Power Company to supply electricity for downtown streetlights. Initially powered by steam generators that burned waste sawdust, Prince would go on to build Calgary's first hydro-electric plant at the east end of the lagoon to replace the sawdust/steam generators.

When Prince founded the Eau Claire Lumber Mill, that company and the Bow River Lumber Company dug a channel - now the lagoon - which created the island. The land belonged to the Prince family after his death in 1925 until 1944. The land was then purchased in 1947 by the City of Calgary for redevelopment into parkland.

The island has served as an urban oasis since the 1950s, with the park being gradually developed over the next few decades. Aerial orthophotography of the city show the gradual development of the island, and while it opened as a park in the

1950s, it would not be until the late 1960s to early 1970s that much of the park took shape in a way that is recognizable today. Starting in the late '50s, pathways were added to the park along with a pedestrian bridge from Eau Claire between 1966 and 1969. More bridges and pathways would be added.

A concession stand was built on the island in the 1970s. While the concession stand did its job, it aged and an opportunity was presented to reinvision it. The River Cafe began as a humble, small service and summer only cafe in 1991 but expanded in 1995 to operate year-round as it does to this day.

The Chevron Learning Pathway represents a partnership between Chevron, the Parks Foundation and Calgary Parks. In 1999 the three organizations partnered to reclaim the eastern half of the island and restore it into a wetlands landscape.

Between 2001 and 2003 a permanent stage was built at the western end of the island and has been used to host numerous festivals, including the Calgary Folk Festival.

Much like Old Refinery Park, Prince's Island Park tells a story of industrial reclamation. While Old Refinery Park tells a story of lost trust, environmental damage and the importance of reclamation of heavy industry, Prince's Island Park had a cleaner journey, transforming from a lumber mill and yard into a half-manicured and half-natural urban oasis and a focal point for the city.



# Beaulieu Gardens

707 13 Ave SW

Beaulieu Gardens is a smaller, half-block sized terraced garden and lawn in Calgary's Beltline. The gardens are connected and associated with the Senator Lougheed Residence and the Lougheed family at large.

The Senator Lougheed Residence, also called Lougheed House and Beaulieu (French for Beautiful Place,) is an Eclectic Queen Anne Revival-style sandstone mansion that is the closest thing Calgary currently has to a Gilded Age mansion. Built in 1891, Beaulieu was built as a symbol of the influence and prestige that the Lougheed family had. According to the City of Calgary, the Lougheed property took up 2.8 acres of land, and had a carriage house, a stable, and a formal garden featuring a swan sculpture fountain. The total parkland and mansion currently occupies roughly the same amount of land as it did back then.

Sir James Alexander Lougheed came to Calgary in 1884 at age 30 from his hometown of Brampton, Ontario. Lougheed was Calgary's first lawyer along with a junior partner by the name of R.B. Bennett. Lougheed was quickly appointed to the Senate in 1889. He was also involved in real estate and development of the city, and was a founding partner of Calgary Petroleum Products, one of the main businesses involved in the Dingman strike of 1912. As Calgary's preeminent lawyer, an early senator

for the area, and a real estate speculator, Lougheed became wealthy fairly quickly and wanted to express that wealth. When he bought the land that he built his family home on, it was alone on windswept prairie. The home and surrounding land had a picturesque quality to it, with the octagonal tower standing out along with the steep pavilion roof and gable. The sandstone for the home was sourced from the Oliver Quarry (today a part of Shaganappi Point/Scarboro.)

In 1901, the City managed a deal with Lougheed to exchange land, which led to the creation of the Beaulieu Garden. The park and the home became symbols of the prestige and influence of the Lougheed family gained in Calgary's early days. The home and gardens were used by the Lougheeds to host numerous prominent people, including a Royal visit from the Duke of Duchess of Connaught and their daughter, Princess Patricia. The Duke, also called His Royal Highness Prince Arthur, was Governor General of Canada from 1911 to 1916. The Lougheed's also hosted the Duke of Windsor when he was the Prince of Wales. He would go on to become King Edward VIII.

Today, Beaulieu (and Lougheed House) is both a provincial and national historic site, a museum, and a restaurant. The gardens host events year round, including the Beltline Bonspiel, a winter festival; weddings; and garden parties.



# Ralph Klein Park

12350 84 St SE

Directly west of the Shepard Landfill is one of Calgary's most important parks when it comes to environmental protection, ecology and wildlife. Initially slated to be called the Shepard Wetlands Legacy Park given its locale, it was renamed at a dedication ceremony a year before it opened in honour of former mayor and premier, Ralph Klein. The park is the first to have been named for a former mayor of the city during his lifetime. Klein was the city's 32nd Mayor and oversaw the construction of the Saddledome and other Olympic venues along with the C-Train, and was famous for public mishaps and controversies. Klein as Mayor and as Premier of Alberta was one of the most defining politicians in Alberta for the 20th century.

Ralph Klein Park centres around a man-made wetland which was constructed specifically to clean and stabilize storm water before it enters the Bow River. This is especially helpful given the landfill directly west. The wetlands take up just over 30 hectares of land and has several stages of wetland before draining into a canal that meets the Bow River directly north of Dalemead. The park surrounds what is effectively an island with parking, picnic space and the Environmental Education Centre, which is LEED Platinum certified, meaning it is a high-performing building that reduces carbon emissions, saves on water, conserves energy and reduces waste.

Ralph Klein was born in 1942 in Calgary to a poor family. Spending time between living with his mother in Rocky Mountain House and his maternal grandparents in Calgary, Klein dropped out of high school in grade 11 and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force Reserves. After a year, Klein left and attended the Calgary Business College and then later Athabasca University. He worked at the Calgary Business College as a teacher and principal before working as a public relations official for the Southern Alberta district of the Red Cross and United Way.

By the '70s, Klein had become a radio and TV broadcaster in Calgary, as well as a columnist, which he used to launch his political career in 1980 when he ran for Mayor. He was seen as an underdog but managed to beat two big name candidates. His tenure saw him nicknamed as "the people's mayor" for his down-to-earth demeanor.

Klein was courted by a struggling Premier Don Getty, who needed star candidates to run provincially. In exchange for a cabinet position, Klein resigned as mayor and ran provincially, seeing City Council change hands to Don Hartman for a brief but tumultuous time. Klein went on to succeed Getty as premier and as of 2023 is the most recent premier to win multiple elections in a row. Klein served as premier from 1992 to 2006 when he resigned following a leadership review. After having one premier for 14 years, Alberta would go through seven in the following 17 years.



Image via: [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca)