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THE WALKING TOUR GUIDE OF HISTORIC ELBOW PARK



The journey begins...

According to archive records, the first non-aboriginal man to appear and establish a permanent building in the territory of present-day Calgary was the American trader Fred Kanouse.

It was the spring of 1871 when Fred Kanouse established a whiskey trading post on the north side of the Elbow River. His post, financed by the owners of Fort Whoop-Up, was the northernmost of whiskey posts along the Whoop-Up Trail. Kanouse's trading post is described by W.B. Fraser in his publication of a history of Calgary.

In response to the alarming reports about whiskey traders, Sir John A. Macdonald decided to send 150 Mounties out west in 1873 to establish law and order. The number was increased to 300 before the Mounties went west. The result was profound — the Mounties' arrival in 1875 before the settlers resulted in a more peaceful conquest of land claims compared to the American Wild West.

Kanouse remained in Alberta and entered its history books as the first rancher to bring cattle into southern Alberta. He later retired in Washington state.

In 1912 Kanouse returned to Calgary to supervise the replica construction of Fort Whoop-Up for the first Calgary Stampede. When asked where the original location of his fort had been, Kanouse stated it was located just within city limits. The new subdivision of Elbow Park along the Elbow River was the southwest city limit in 1912.

THE EARLY HOMESTEADERS



An 1883 map of Calgary and its environs shows the location of early homesteaders. The homesteads of James Owens (East Elbow Park) and James Morris (in West Elbow Park) are included on the map. Morris received his land patent on August 11, 1885 and died in 1889. The James Morris homestead — an outbuilding at the back of 928 Sifton Boulevard still stands today.

James Owens, joined the North West Mounted Police in 1878 and received his land patent on August 11, 1885 for what is now known as East Elbow Park. He held the position of town assessor in 1887 during Mayor King's term of office.

In April of 1887, Owens started building a racetrack, clubhouse and stables on his property. It was soon ready and he donated the site for the 1887 Dominion Day Races. Deerfoot, a winning participant of the 440 yard race, quickly disappeared with the winning purse as the law pursued him. Owens died in the Holy Cross Hospital in 1893 at the age of 45 and was described in his obituary as "One of Calgary's old timers".

Alexander Gilmore was born in Quebec City in 1852 and joined the Mounties in 1878 at Fort Walsh. He received his land patent on December 7, 1881. The James Owens and Alexander Gilmore land grants were in the same section, township and range. When Owens died in 1893, Gilmore purchased his neighbour's adjoining property.

Gilmore worked as one of the first cowboys at the renowned Cochrane Ranch, established by Senator H.M. Cochrane. The ranch house erected in 1881 was the first in Alberta. Gilmore appears again in Calgary's historical records as a guest at the wedding of George and Louise King, the first wedding held in Calgary. He died impoverished in 1942 at the age of 90.

CALGARY'S BUILDING BOOM

Between 1905 and 1909 Calgary's growth was slow but steady. With increased agricultural productivity and the arrival of railroad industries, CPR train-repair shops promised in Ogden, economic development increased rapidly. Calgary's early industrialists and professional financial developers, the movers and the shakers, worked hard to shed its frontier image and be identified as a cosmopolitan city. In 1905 to 1909 the population grew from 12,500 to 29,265. In the heyday of its boom years, 1909 to 1913 the city grew from 29,265 to a population of 80,851.

THE EXTRAORDINARY FREDDIE LOWES

A few names stand out among developers, speculators and promoters of those boom years — one was Fred C. Lowes. The quintessential entrepreneur, Freddie Lowes epitomized Horace Greeley's famous quote, "go west young man" and represented the dreams of every westerner. His success story was highlighted locally, nationally and internationally.



Fred Charles Lowes was brash, flamboyant and generous. Among his many admirers was the famous Calgary satirist Bob Edwards. The publisher/journalist often wrote of Freddie and his exploits in his local publication called "The Eye Opener". The Crown Building, recently demolished by the City of Calgary, was home to the internationally popular gazette. Reported to be Calgary's first millionaire, Freddie was idolized in the press and became a living legend.

Although born in Ontario in 1880, Freddie let it be known that his parents came from "two old distinguished English families." Like many of the contemporary members of the city's entrepreneurial elite, Freddie promoted British institutions, ideas and fashions.

In 1907 Freddie started his own company, F.C. Lowes & Co., Insurance, Real Estate and Financial Brokers. By 1911, it was the largest and most successful real estate firm in the west with offices throughout Canada, United States and London England. He made a fortune on right-of-way land commissions for the Canadian Northern Railway Company. At the height of the boom his company had a staff of 400 employees

and an estimated worth of \$2,000,000. By 1913, Freddie was reportedly worth \$7,000,000.

Building upon his real estate success Lowes moved into land development. The neighborhoods he developed were expensive enclaves. His building restrictions ensured larger, better built homes than in other Calgary communities.

In 1912, Lowes became a founding member of Calgary's Planning Commission and in the same year he hired a prominent town planner from Seattle to develop his planning vision called Britannia. This was to be Lowes' ideal community with a picturesque street layout of wide treed boulevards following the curves of the Elbow River and surrounding hills and the beautification of the natural landscape. Although the plan was not implemented at the time, many of the ideas were used when he planned and developed the community of Elbow Park. His Elbow Park home was featured in a promotional pamphlet distributed world wide expounding the opportunities in Calgary.

Lowes made and lost a fortune in land speculation between 1906 and 1913. The beginning of World War I slowed British investment and other investors considerably. Firmly committed to Calgary, Freddie continued to invest in land development even though the market ground to a halt. He lost all his properties to taxes and his home the "Lowestoft" was demolished in 1966 in the Elbow Drive widening project. He died broke in Ponoka in 1950.

ANNEXATION OF ELBOW PARK

In 1906, prior to its subdivision, the area soon to be known as Elbow Park was owned by two ranchers, Colin George Ross and Felix McHugh. In 1907, these properties were subdivided and sold or brokered by F.C. Lowes & Co. Freddie Lowes retained direct ownership of some lots, particularly in Rosevale and Glencoe, while the McHughs also retained large blocks of land. The rest of the lots were sold to various investors. In some cases F.C. Lowes and Co. administered the holdings.

Freddie Lowes played a major role in the development and planning of present day Elbow Park including surveying and road building. His company continued to have holdings and operated in Elbow Park Real estate. Aside from his house, Lowes & Co. built only a few residences. Many lots changed hands frequently before house construction began in earnest in 1911.

BOOMS AND BUSTS

In 1911 Elbow Park's first wave of building was characterized by larger homes. The majority of the more palatial homes found in Elbow Park were built at this time. A notable cluster of houses built near the Glencoe Club was quite unusual for the area as sandstone construction was rare.

As Calgary's first suburb, Elbow Park was originally designed by Freddie Lowes to be a posh upper-class district. It instead developed along more modest lines. As the fortunes of Calgary dictated, the history of building construction in Elbow Park followed suit. After 1914, new housing starts dropped off significantly, curtailed by World War I, with very little activity from 1915 to 1918. It did not rebound until the building boom of the late 1920's, a boom again cut short by the depression.

Despite shortages in new building construction, a number of interesting homes were built in Elbow Park. A few modern looking homes were constructed in the early twenties, as well as some more contemporary modernist designs by architect George Fordyce were done in the late thirties on Sifton Boulevard and Elbow Drive.

During the depression in the thirties, a number of homes were temporarily converted to up and down suites, duplexes and bachelor suites. Generally opposed by the residents of area, rental suites were a limited development. All of these have since reverted back to single family dwellings.

The seventies saw the beginning of a new trend in Elbow Park — redevelopment. Older homes started to see either major renovations or additions or outright replacement. This trend accelerated into the 1980's and 90's as the community emerged once again into one of the most desirable, traditional character neighborhoods in the City.

THE ARCHITECTS OF ELBOW PARK

Among the city's earliest turn-of-the-century neighborhoods, Elbow Park is a unique heritage area nestled in the Elbow River valley in a park like setting. One aspect that sets Elbow Park apart from other older areas of Calgary, is the high proportion of homes designed by a recognized architect. This may be due to the fact that many architects lived in Elbow Park.



Some of the architects who built their principle residence in Elbow Park:

J.J. O'Gara, grandson of Bowes the government architect of the Parliament Buildings, was born in Ottawa, and arrived in Calgary in 1904. He and his partner Francis Lawson, designed St. Mary's Hall, the Lacombe Orphan's Home and several wings of the Holy Cross Hospital. He also designed the residence of E.B. Nowars at 3019 - 6 St. SW. O'Gara lived at 3033 - 6 Street SW.

William Paul Major was born in England in 1881, came to Calgary in 1910 and formed a partnership with the firm Lang & Dowler later to become Lang & Major. The firm was responsible for the McLean Block and St. John's church. In 1920, Major formed a partnership with Robert Stacey-Judd. Major designed his own residence, 611 - 34 Avenue SW. in the year of 1910.

Robert Stacey Judd was born in 1884 in England and came to Calgary in 1919 to work with W.P. Major. Although Major and Judd were responsible for many buildings in southern Alberta during their short partnership, Christ Church in Elbow Park is their only major work still standing.

John Stevenson born 1913, designed Mount Royal College, Calgary International Airport, Calgary Centre for performing Arts and the Stampede Corral. He lived at 709 Sifton Blvd. SW.

George Fordyce was born in Scotland and came to Calgary in 1907 and practiced architecture until 1920. Fordyce left a formidable record of work in Elbow Park, both in smaller bungalows and for their time some larger contemporary designs. He lived at 3011 6th Street SW.

John Alexander Cawston (1911 - 1966) was a Calgary-born architect who practiced architecture in 1946 with Steven, Cawston & Stevenson and later established his own firm. He was president of the Alberta Association of Architects in 1962 and in 1963. Cawston lived at 3408 8A Street SW.

63% of homes found through out Elbow Park today were built by 1930, 49% were built by 1920, 40% were built by 1914 and 1% built by 1910.



A walking tour . . .

ELBOW DRIVE

624 ELBOW DRIVE Garden House 1933 Designed by local architects George Fordyce and John Stevenson, built by developer-builder James Garden. This 1½ storey home illustrates Fordyce's design evolution as an architect, from the grand 1912 stone house to a Japanese influenced modern two-storey in 1920 to a simple gable stucco home in 1933. The Garden home was originally a rental property.



628 ELBOW DRIVE Garden House 1920 Another home built by James H. Garden and designed by George Fordyce. This modern-style Japanese influenced two-storey stucco home has a low hip roof and two prominent chimneys. The generous bow window is unusual in Fordyce's work, but relates well to the apse projections of its neighbor, designed seven years prior by Fordyce as well. Garden lived in this home for 9 years.

630 ELBOW DRIVE Garden House 1913 Designed by architect George Fordyce, built by and home to the prominent builder and developer James H. Garden. This two-storey, double-apse butterfly plan is reminiscent of the architectural style known as English Domestic Revival. The grand stucco and sandstone home with its prominent chimneys is an outstanding example of Fordyce's early work and stands in contrast to his later works at 628 Elbow Drive (1920) and 624 Elbow Drive (1933).

James Hay Garden born in 1881, came to Calgary in 1905. He is considered a major Calgary builder, active in Mount Royal, Cliff Bungalow, as well as Elbow Park.

Garden served as Alderman, planning commissioner and was the director of Riverside Lumber. Over the course of some fifteen years he developed the area around Garden Crescent and a section of Elbow Drive from Garden Crescent to 5th Street. His building activity was probably the most unified and he was also somewhat unique in having lived for short periods in all the homes he built.

636 ELBOW DRIVE Crawford House 1915 Built for Dr. T.H. Crawford (probably by J.H. Garden) this grand two-storey brick, stucco and half-timber structure stood as one of the most palatial homes built along Elbow Drive before 1920. Dr. Crawford was a leading physician, surgeon and president of the Calgary Medical Association. He practiced medicine with his neighbor Dr. Graham and then later served as City Council Alderman. Born in Ontario 1871, Dr. Crawford came to Calgary in 1902 and lived in his home until his death in 1925.

716 ELBOW DRIVE Graham House 1913 Built for Dr. William Graham and family by Hodgson, Bates, and Beattie. This 2½ storey brick and shingle house is an excellent example of a period architecture that delineates the character of Elbow Drive. It was along this strip of road that the name architects of the day built grand homes for many of Calgary's upper middle class residents. Dr. William Ezra Graham established a medical practice with another surgeon, Dr. T.H. Crawford. Born in Ontario in 1875, Graham came to Calgary in 1907 and lived in this home until his death in 1923.

3025 ELBOW DRIVE Campbell House 1912 This classic English, 2½ storey symmetrical brick house was built for Mary and William Campbell and later became home to F.L. Irving and family. The distinctly Georgian-style home, facing the Elbow River, has two full balconies across its façade at both the first and second floors. Irving is considered a Calgary pioneer industrialist. Born in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1883, Irving moved to Calgary in 1910 where he founded and operated Riverside Ironworks in the district of Riverside.

3041 ELBOW DRIVE Rouleau House 1910 Built by General Contractor Maurice E. Bowlen, this 1½ storey house with a bell-caste roof was home to Dr. Edward Rouleau who only lived in the house for one year before dying. Dr. Rouleau was one of Calgary's first physicians and the official jail surgeon of the NWMP. The area called Rouleau in the community of Cliff Bungalow-Mission was named after Dr. Rouleau and his brother Judge Charles Rouleau.

3207 ELBOW DRIVE Christensen House 1911 This unique two-storey brick, stucco and half-timber home has a bell-caste gable roof, corbelled chimneys and a veranda supported by ionic columns. Built for the Christensen family by the contracting firm of Doyle, Thomas and Christensen. Some other prominent homes built by the same firm were 3211 Elbow Drive and 323 Elbow Drive.

3216 ELBOW DRIVE 1936 This quaint clapboard-sided structure was originally built to provide change room facilities for bathers who favored this spot along the Elbow River as one of the best swimming holes. The building is currently used as a storage shed by the City of Calgary. Recent restoration efforts by the local community association have been undertaken to insure its preservation as a local landmark.



3403 ELBOW DRIVE Brennan House 1912 This two-storey brick, stucco and half-timber home with turret and canted stone columns was built for William Brennan. In 1919 J.J. Bowlen, a prominent

rancher, became the home's third owner. Born in P.E.I. in 1876, Bowlen moved to Calgary in 1918 and later was elected to the Alberta Legislature as a Liberal member in 1930. He became the first Roman Catholic to be elected into the legislature and in 1936 became leader of the Liberal party. In 1950 Bowlen moved his family to Edmonton where he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

3616 ELBOW DRIVE Downey House 1909 Built for H.L. Downey, a New Yorker and manager of Calgary Garage Co. this landmark house was one of the earliest homes built in Elbow Park. The surrounding property was beautifully maintained with a stone wall defining the property line. The property was later

subdivided although the original stone wall still remains. The two storey brick, stucco and half-timber Tudor-style home was one of the most palatial of early homes built in Elbow Park. The home was recently demolished.

3833 ELBOW DRIVE Peach House 1928 Designed and built by contractor Reginald Peach, father of historian Jack Peach. This 1½ storey home has exterior walls consisting of concrete block covered by stucco. Considered an interesting example of idiosyncratic style.

4014 ELBOW DRIVE McCaffery House 1911 Built by contractor Thomas McCaffery for his family. This house is a classic example of the two-storey double peaked and double-bayed clapboard homes built by McCaffery throughout Elbow Park and Cliff Bungalow Mission. Born in Ireland, McCaffery came to Calgary in 1901 and became a major builder of many early Calgary buildings. The home remained with the family until 1939.

EAST ELBOW PARK

322 ELBOW PARK LANE Woods House 1912 Built

for J.H. Woods who at the time was managing director and editor of the Calgary Herald. The large two-storey house called "The Gables"



remained in the Woods family until 1949. Hodgson and Bates, a firm that specialized in larger homes in Elbow Park and Mount Royal, designed the home in English Tudor-style, evident by its steeply pitched front dormers, stucco body and half-timbering details under its gables. Its large river front lot was later subdivided.

3802 5 STREET, Durrell House 1911 Built for the Durrell family by Alexander Pirie, architect of the Devenish Building. The style of this home is unusual for the community, as



it neither has a porch or front verandah. The house is reminiscent of the Eastern Seaboard Colonial style.



316 40 AVENUE
1912 Built by the prominent Swiss developer and home builder Jacob Knoepfi. This 1½ story home is an excellent example of the Craftsman Style, a popular design

style throughout Elbow Park at the turn of this century.

3902 4A STREET Chauncey House 1913 Built for H.R. Chauncey, this is a classic shingle and clapboard siding house typical of a two-story home for the period. Chauncey opened his own jewelry business in 1914. Later he served as an Alderman from 1936 until 1945 and became a founding member of the Calgary Kiwanis Club.

240 40 AVENUE Hess House 1921 Built for portrait artist Almon Hess who previously resided in Elbow Park at 3814 - 7 Street SW. between 1918 and 1921. Hess took proprietorship of E.B.Curlette Photographic Studio in 1914.

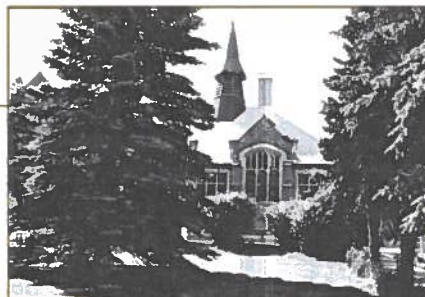
RIVERDALE AVENUE

1136 RIVERDALE AVENUE Drew House 1928 A two-storey flat roofed, Spanish California-style stucco house considered as contemporary design for its time. It is an excellent example of the trend in architecture during the late twenties and early thirties. Similar designs from the same period can be found throughout Elbow Park.

1232 RIVERDALE AVENUE Pollard House 1912 Built by Wallace Bogue for photographer Harry Pollard this 1½ storey home has 17 rooms and four large fireplaces. In 1938 the house was purchased by the trustees of the Strathcona School for Boys and operated as a private school until 1971.

SIFTON BOULEVARD

721 38 AVENUE Elbow Park School 1926 Overlooking the Elbow River along Sifton Blvd. and fronting 38th Ave. the school opened for classes September 1, 1926. The building was built to accommodate 350 students and contained eight classrooms. The assembly hall,



now the library, has an open beam ceiling constructed to look like an English country chapel.

Designed by Edmonton architect William Blakely and contracted by his brother Richard Blakely a provincial architect, the original brick design was almost replaced by sandstone during tenders due to cost concerns. Total construction cost \$100,000 in 1925; \$86,000 for materials and construction, and \$14,000 for land.

The school is similar in style to two other buildings, Christ Church Anglican in Edmonton and the Stony Plain Multicultural Centre in Stony Plain, both designed by W.G. Blakely and designated by the province as heritage sites. The buildings are in the same English Cottage or Picturesque-style as evident in the design of Elbow Park School.

928 SIFTON BLVD Morris Homestead 1883 A small gabled and shingled home stands at the rear of this property. Now relegated as an outbuilding for today's use, it is believed to be the original home of pioneer James Morris. He received his land patent on August 11, 1885, and died in 1889. The house appears on an early map of the area as the Morris Homestead. This structure is one of the few examples of homestead housing still standing within the city limits.

709 SIFTON BLVD Residence of local architect John Stevenson. Born in 1913 Stevenson enjoyed a successful architectural career leading to many prominent design commissions such as Mount Royal College, Calgary International Airport, Calgary Centre for performing Arts, as well as, the Stampede Corral.

609 SIFTON BLVD Designed by architect George Fordyce this modern looking foursquare stucco home evokes American Prairie-style design elements that are characterized by its low hip roof, simplistic cube forms and modern lines.

ELBOW PARK

3602 8 STREET Christ Church Anglican 1912 Four lots were donated by Fred C. Lowes and in 1912 work began on the church.



In 1921 architects William Paul Major and Robert Stacey-Judd designed a new 2nd storey addition. Now with a tapestry brick facing in an English Cottage or Picturesque-style the new church capacity stood at 350. In 1948, William Cawston did additional work and land to the south was acquired from the City of Calgary. In 1953 the vestry authorized another addition that extended westward over the basement and a bell tower was built. In 1962 the two-storey parish hall (south wing) was added.

3604 7A STREET AGT South Exchange 1928 In the 1920's Alberta Government Telephones embarked on the construction of a province wide long distance system and as a result built 30 new exchanges. AGT architect Peter Rule, supervisor of building, built the Elbow Park South Exchange. Although the structure served as an industrial building the design showed sensitivity and blended well with the surrounding residential area. Using an English Picturesque-style, Rule designed this building to appear as a small cottage with hipped roof, clinker brick, heavy wooden bracket eaves, round-headed windows and an arched main entrance. In 1970 the substation was sold and converted to a single family home.

611 34 AVENUE Major House 1914 This modest six room Shingle-style bungalow was designed by and home to local architect William Paul Major until 1920. Major was hired in 1921 to design a new addition for Christchurch the local Anglican parish.

3011 6 STREET Fordyce House 1924 Designed by and home to local architect George Fordyce. It is an excellent example, for its period, of the new modern bungalow with its low hip roof and stucco walls. The architect himself designed many of the interior fittings. Fordyce came to Calgary in 1907, practiced until 1920 and died in 1945, but his wife Blanche lived in the house until 1957.



3013 6 STREET 1911 One of the few homes erected by Freddie Lowes & Co. The simple modest 1½ storey shingle homestead-style structure was owned and rented out by Lowes & Co. until 1920.

3019 6 STREET 1911 Designed for the Nowars family by local architect J.J. O'Gara. A very unique design for its time, the house could be associated with today's more current contemporary style.

635 29 AVENUE Baird House 1912 One of six sandstone, stucco and half timber homes designed by J. Howard of Consolidated Home and Estate. This unusual 1½ storey home with its massive stone chimneys was originally used as a rental property.

637 29 AVENUE Butlers House 1912 Another of the six homes built by J. Howard of Consolidated Building and Estate. This 1½ storey sandstone, stucco and half-timber home features a magnificent apse. The home was originally used as a rental property.

3815 7A STREET 1912 Built by A.P. Young this is a typical example of the small CPR Shingle-style bungalow prevalent in Calgary's early communities. Young's small to medium sized homes can be found through out Elbow Park. The first three family owners of this home were all employees of CPR.

3014 GLENCOE ROAD Sanders House 1912 One of six sandstone homes built by J. Howard. This 1½ storey home incorporates an unusual brick combination with sandstone at the foundation. Home to Colonel Gilbert E. Sanders from 1912 until 1956. Sanders was born in 1863 in British Columbia and served with distinction in the 1885 South African Northwest Rebellion War and later served in World War I. In Calgary he served as Police Magistrate from 1911 until 1932.

3018 GLENCOE ROAD Quirk House 1911 One of six sandstone homes built by J. Howard before World War I. This 1½ storey house remained with the Quirk family until 1918 and was later sold in 1919 to Campbell Cornelius Snowdon, one of the city's first prominent wholesale oilmen. Originally from Montreal, Snowdon settled in Calgary in 1907 where he founded his oil business.