

The **Highlands**
Historical Foundation

Alberta
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Edmonton
Historical
Walking
and
Driving
Tour

The **Highlands**

the within instrument is
Registered in the Land
the North Alberta Land
District of Edmonton in the
of 10th October A.M.
of June A.D. 1911
Book 45 Fol. 116

Alvin Hall
Registrar



of the City of Edmonton, Province of Alberta, Do
solemnly declare that this plan accurately shows
the land included therein, has been surveyed and
that the said plan prepared in accordance with
the provisions of the Survey Act, and was surveyed
on the 10th day of June 1911.



Wherever possible, historic names have been used for buildings, names which often do not correspond to their current owners or uses. Also, please note that many of the buildings on this tour



Ada Boulevard houses under construction, 1913. (GAI NA-1328-1136)

are privately owned and ought to be viewed only from the street. A map of the tour route is provided in the centre of this booklet. It takes about 1.5 hours to complete the tour.

Edmonton Historical Walking and Driving Tour

The Highlands

The Highlands contains some of Edmonton's best-preserved historic homes and streetscapes. Originally, its boundaries were 55 Street, 64 Street, 118 Avenue and the North Saskatchewan River. Conceived during the boom years before WW I, The Highlands was the brainchild of William Magrath and Bidwell Holgate.

In August 1910 the Magrath-Holgate real estate company announced plans for Edmonton's newest "high class" neighbourhood on land east of the city limits. John Alexander McDougall had bought the land in 1888. He filed the first subdivision plan, in June 1911, and it became part of Edmonton that December. To begin with, Magrath-Holgate acted as McDougall's broker, but by 1913 the company had bought him out.

To publicize the venture, Magrath and Holgate launched an ad campaign in the *Edmonton Bulletin* newspaper. Half, full and two page ads pronounced the superiority of the empty acreage. Fifty dollars in gold was offered as a prize for the best name. The contest ran through September 1910 and, after two days of discussion, 'The Highlands' was chosen as the best submission.

The contest was followed up with excursions to The Highlands. The healthful, beautiful setting, the ample size of the lots, and the \$2,500 minimum cost per house - to ensure the quality of the neighbourhood - were major selling points. In addition, connections with the city's street railway,



Cars at Magrath-Holgate office for tours to The Highlands, c. 1910.

(CEA EA-160-489)

electricity, water and sewer systems were soon to be made. Financing, through the Magrath-Holgate Co., was also available.

Unlike Glenora, Edmonton's other early "high class" subdivision, The Highlands was not regulated by legal restrictions. Instead, development was controlled by having buyers take out building permits before purchasing land. The road layout was also different. Promotions for The Highlands described "crescent streets"; this accurately describes Glenora, but The Highlands is almost entirely laid out in a grid pattern.

Edmonton's economy boomed in The Highlands' first years. Its population rose from 24,000 to 76,972 between 1909 and 1914, and demand for real estate was intense. Over \$35,000 of Highlands lots were sold the first day they went on the market. Magrath and Holgate spent over \$10,000 on improvements before 1912, but by October 1912, The Highlands still had few houses.

In November 1912, the Magrath-Holgate Company tried to turn things around by constructing 24 houses on speculation. On average, these cost twice the allowed minimum, and totalled over \$105,000,

a large sum in those days. In addition, a curling rink, a commercial block, and a small office were built. The number of houses was doubled, but since it had 516 lots, The Highlands was still very empty.

Magrath and Holgate made large personal investments in The Highlands. Their mansions became symbols of The Highlands, but by the time they were finished, the boom economy had gone bust. A world-

wide recession in 1913 took its toll on Edmonton, and WW I made things worse. As people left to seek better fortune elsewhere, the real estate market disintegrated. Large projects like the Highlands School, the Highlands Methodist Church, sewers, and street paving were put on hold. By 1915, foreclosures were common. Businesses and jobs disappeared, and people could not pay their mortgages. By the 1920s, the City was selling properties to recover unpaid taxes. The Highlands' biggest landowners, Magrath and Holgate, were not spared.

The Highlands survived despite its misfortunes to become a tightly knit community. Its streetcar connection and the Gibbard Block shops helped keep it alive. Some houses were divided into suites, and many were rented out. People trimmed their lifestyles, but moved within rather than out of The Highlands. Ironically, The Highlands' strength is at least partly due to its slow growth, stable population, and separation from the main part of the city. Today, the once-bare acreage has mature trees and a mature community that, while looking to the future, still values its past.

1.
**Gibbard
Block**
6423 - 112
Avenue

(1918)

The Gibbard Block has always been part of The Highlands in spirit, if not in fact. Technically, it was just outside the original western boundary of The Highlands. Thus, an amenity was added to The Highlands without compromising its exclusive character.

In September 1912 a “New Magrath-Holgate Block, To Cost \$30,000” adjoining The Highlands, was announced in the *Edmonton Journal*, and in November the company took out a permit to erect “Stores”. April 1913 saw Magrath, Holgate, and William T. Gibbard, president of the Gibbard Furniture Co. of Napanee, Ontario, become owners of this property. The building was named for the latter, even though Magrath had invested more in the venture.

In 1913 the Gibbard Block was described as “the latest idea in architecture, comfort, modern equipment and convenience”. A central gas plant provided cooking fuel, and each suite had a telephone and hot running water “night and day the year round”. Brick from Redcliff, Alberta was used for the exterior. Classical details including pilasters, brackets, a cornice, and contrasting sills and keystones, enriched the Gibbard Block’s appearance.

After a slow start, the nine suites and two storefronts were rarely vacant. Insurance salesmen, lawyers, teachers, packing plant workers, ministers, bank clerks, and policemen lived in the Gibbard Block. Often, they later moved to houses in The Highlands. Proprietors of the stores were also often Highlands residents, and sometimes lived in the Gibbard Block itself.

The original owners of the Gibbard Block parted with it in 1926. Ernst and Carole Eder became tenants in 1979, and began purchasing the block in 1985. The exterior is largely restored, the main floor is a restaurant, and a bed and breakfast hotel



The Gibbard Block, 1929. (GAINC-6-1304 a)

occupies the upper floors. The Gibbard Block was designated a Registered Historical Resource in 1992.

Cross 112 Avenue at the lights, go east two blocks and turn north on 63 Street.

2.
**Owen
Residence**
11227 - 63 Street

(1912)

When Gamet Meiklejohn, a “Lumberman”, bought this property in 1912, he already had a permit to put a \$2,500 house on it. The house became the Dominion Meteorological Service Office in 1914, but Meiklejohn owned it until 1918. Four Square

Style houses just like it can be found throughout Edmonton. The two-storey wood frame structure is clad with wood siding and shingles; its wrap-around porch was recently restored.

Eda Owen came to Edmonton in 1908 with her husband Herbert, a retired sea captain. They moved in when he became meteorologist in 1915. Soon after, he left to fight in WW I. Eda took over his duties, and when he died in a POW camp in 1917, she became station manager. Her routine began at 5:40 a.m. with readings from the 26 instruments in her front room, back yard, and on the roof. These included terrestrial radiators, hygrometers (moisture meters), maximum and minimum thermometers, self-recording rain and snow gauges, anemometers (wind gauges), thermographs



The Owen Residence, 1929. (GAI ND-3-4520 f)

and a solar thermometer. Over one hundred weather stations sent daily reports to Eda Owen in Edmonton. In turn, she sent two daily and one monthly report to Toronto.

Before WW I, few women held non-traditional jobs, and married women were often barred from paid employment. The war changed this somewhat, but women still rarely held technical jobs. Eda Owen's career was so extraordinary that she developed an international reputation as a result, and the weather station attracted visiting academics, explorers and aviators. As a widow, Eda was permitted to keep her job after the war. She retired in 1943 and died in Calgary in 1957. In 1989 Eda Owen's story was included in the exhibition 'The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada 1870-1940'. Phyllis Patterson, her granddaughter, has written a biography entitled *Eda the Weatherlady*.

In 1918 the Duncan family purchased the house, but Eda remained until 1944, the year after it ceased to be a meteorological station. Sandra and Jim Storey, owners since 1980, have meticulously restored the Owen Residence. It was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1993.

3.
Atkinson
Residence
11234 - 63 Street

(1912)

Magrath-Holgate & Co. took out a \$4,500 building permit for this house in November 1912 as part of its effort to stimulate construction in The Highlands. Ernest Morehouse, architect, designed it with two storeys, a pyramidal roof

and a wrap-around porch. Alterations have not obscured the Four Square Style of the Atkinson Residence.

Dr. William Atkinson came to Edmonton from Ontario with his family in 1912. The 1913 city directory - the first to include The Highlands - shows them at this address, but they did not purchase the house until 1915. In addition to his downtown medical practice, Dr. Atkinson provided medical services to the nearby Swift's packing plant, several coal mines, and insurance companies. An office for night emergencies was located to the right of the front door.



Atkinson Residence, 1993. (ACD)

Perhaps Dr. Atkinson's proudest achievement was his term as a Conservative MLA from 1930 to 1935. He spoke in favour of medicare, but did not have a chance to put his theories into practice. It has been suggested that the Social Credit government which followed was strongly influenced by Dr. Atkinson's ideas.

After 30 years, the Atkinsons sold this house. Of note among recent owners is Allan H. Wachowich, who lived here from 1969 until 1991. Wachowich was appointed District Court Judge in 1979 at the age of 39. Later, he was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench, and in 1993 was made Associate Chief Justice of that Court.

Go west two blocks on 113 Avenue.

4.
**Gimby
Residence**
11248 - 65 Street

(1913)

Anyone who recalls Canada's centennial in 1967 will recognize the Gimby name. In that year, Bobby Gimby was Pied Piper to Canada's children, and made the centennial theme song, "CA-NA-DA", familiar across the country.

Highlands oldtimers remember his grandparents as their neighbours.

Marian Gimby, Bobby's aunt, was also familiar to Highlanders. Born in Saskatchewan in 1903, she came to Edmonton with her parents in about 1912. She attended the University of Alberta, and received an MA in History from Oxford. Marian had along teaching career, was very active in The Alberta Teachers' Association, and became its first woman president in 1951.

Like the Gibbard Block, the Gimby Residence was just outside The Highlands' original boundaries. In an area with small lots and small houses, it was a large Four Square Style house on three lots. It cost \$3,500 and related more to The Highlands than to its immediate neighbours. The verandah has been removed, but otherwise the Gimby Residence is in nearly original condition. Charles Wellington Gimby got his building permit in June 1912, purchased the lots in February 1913, and was living at this address in that year.

C.W. Gimby had a variety of occupations. At one time he was a rancher, but from 1921 to 1928 he operated a 'Ford Service and General Repair' business called 'Gimby and Coburn' at 9654 - 106A Avenue. Although Gimby was no longer



Gimby Residence, 1993. (ACD)

involved, the business continued under the same name until 1944, and the building is still there.

In 1929 the Gimbys sold their house and two lots to Andrew Millar, the Provincial Chief Inspector of Mines. They built another home on their third lot, next door at 11242 - 65 Street. In 1933 Gimby retired, and the family left Edmonton in 1934. The original Gimby Residence has had few owners, a fact which has helped it retain its original character.

Retrace your steps east one block on 113 Avenue.

5.
**Highlands
United
Church**
11305 - 64 Street

**(1913,
1923-27)**

Highlands Methodist, the first church on this site, was erected in less than two months in 1913. It was a wood frame building clad with white clapboard with no special features that showed it was a church. At \$3,000, it cost less than most

Highlands houses. Though probably intended as a temporary building, it was not replaced until 1927. A history in the *Edmonton Bulletin* marked the December 11 dedication of the new church.

The Highlands United church originated in the parsonage, 11317 - 64 Street, on December 1, 1912, and opening services were held on that date...Early in 1913 services were conducted for a time in the curling rink...on October 19 the first church was dedicated. Later in the year extra rooms at the side and rear were added. [By 1921]

amplifier accommodation for both Sunday school and congregation became imperative. Finally it was decided to build a brick and concrete basement...to meet present needs. On August 15, 1923, the cornerstone was laid. Opening services were held on November 11...[Since 1925] there has been a growing demand...for better accommodation for the Sunday school, which has an enrollment of over 500, and for a more worshipful church auditorium.



The Highlands United Church, c. 1953. (PAA PA7712)

The Gothic Revival Style Highlands United Church designed by architect W.G. Blakey was very similar to his 1921 Christ Church Anglican in Edmonton's Oliver district. The steeply-pitched roof with cross gables, hip-roofed entrance porch, and the exterior stucco and half-timbering recall traditional English parish churches. Inside, scissor trusses supporting the roof and stained glass windows lining the walls continue the style of the exterior.

Two notable additions have been made to the Highlands United Church. A window of stained glass fragments collected from bombed European churches by Highlands pastor Rev. T.R. Davies during WW II was installed in 1948. In 1953 a new entrance was built at the south end of the church. Consequently, the 1927 church can best be seen from the sides of the building.

Go north on 64 Street.

6.
McLuhan
Residence
11342 - 64 Street

(1912)

Marshall McLuhan, born in Edmonton in 1911, lived here with his parents from 1912 to 1918. He received a Ph.D. from Cambridge in 1934, and taught English at various U.S. colleges before settling at the University of Toronto in

1944. His main interests were language and perception, and how the mass media manipulates them. He coined the phrase "the medium is the message", and was known for his views on television. Marshall McLuhan died in Toronto in 1980.



The McLuhan Residence, 1993. (ACD)

Herbert and Elsie McLuhan, Marshall's parents, purchased this land in August 1912, having already received a permit to build a \$3,000 house on it. Nesbitt & Morehouse designed, and Bailey & Berry erected the house. In line with its Craftsman Bungalow Style, the McLuhan Residence appears almost rustic. The exposed beams, cast concrete foundation, low-pitched roof, and large front porch columns are typical of the style.

Although the McLuhans moved out in 1918 and lived in Winnipeg by 1921, they owned this house until 1923. After 1923, it was rented out. Walter Husband, the tenant since 1929, bought the house in 1943. Before moving into the McLuhan

Residence, Husband lived in suite #2 of the Gibbard Block. He was salesman for the National Drug and Chemical Company. His relative, Herbert Husband, was proprietor of the Highlands Drug Store in the Gibbard Block from 1926 until 1944. Walter Husband sold the McLuhan Residence in 1956; he died in 1980 at the age of 89.

Go north on 64 Street to 114 Avenue. Turn east and go two blocks to 62 Street.

7.
Highlands
School
11509 - 62 Street

(1913-1920)

The formation of the 'Edmonton Highland School District', actually Beverly School District #2922, was announced in September 1910, just a few days before The Highlands went on the market. Two wood frame buildings were erected

that fall. One was a standard plan "Cottage School" with a classroom on each of its two floors, broad steps leading to the front entry, and a hipped roof topped with a flagpole.

When The Highlands joined Edmonton in 1911, the developers and the city agreed to build a new elementary school. A bid of \$144,440 for the building was accepted in August 1913. WW I intervened, however, and construction stopped at the first floor. To cope with growing enrolment, another wood structure was built near the cottage school, and the first floor of the new school was used after 1916. The Highlands School was finished in 1920, at a total cost of \$210,722. Upon completion, the second floor served as Edmonton's first teacher's college until 1923.

Early classes could be large: a 1912-13 Grade 1 and 2 class contained 78 pupils. In spite of the large classes, the unfinished building, and the stress of being at war, the school carried on. In 1915, a garden was organized as a patriotic effort. The principal and janitor erected a fence from material supplied by the Board, and teachers and students tended the garden. In the 1920s students began staying for the upper grades, creating a shortage of



Highlands Cottage School, 1914. (GAI NC-6-760)

high school classrooms. In response, Highlands was expanded to include intermediate grades in 1928, and in 1964 it was converted to a Junior High School to deal with the "baby boom" population.

The Collegiate Gothic Style Highlands School is a twin of the King Edward School in Strathcona. Both were designed by School Board architect, George Turner. A steel and concrete structure



Highlands School, before 1922. (ESBA)

underlies the brick and stone exterior. The crenellated parapets and central tower, oriel window over the main entry, and tudor arches over many of the windows and doors are characteristic of the style. Despite later additions, the school's main facade retains its original character.

Go south on 62 Street.

8.
Highlands
Community
League Hall
11333 - 62 Street

(1912, 1948,
1954-57)

William Magrath's favourite sports were curling and lawn bowling. Bidwell Holgate's two favourite "recreations" were curling and motoring. It is therefore not surprising to find a \$9,000 curling rink being built by the Magrath-Holgate Company in 1912.

It was located on the northeast corner of 113 Avenue and 62 Street. Magrath-Holgate owned this property until June of 1922, when like most of the rest of the block, it passed to the City of Edmonton under tax sale. Later, the city acquired the remaining privately-owned lots to complete the park.

The Highlands Community League was formed from the Highlands Parent-Teacher Association in 1921. In its first year, bowling greens and a baseball diamond were built, and a skating rink was operated on local tennis courts in the winter. The League had ambitions for a new, "larger facility - a step up from its present clubhouse". With prominent citizens such as A.U.G. Bury (see #11) on the executive, this seemed an attainable goal. However, lease problems, the Great Depression, and WW II succeeded one another to delay the project.

In the late 1940s a new clubhouse was finally built. Adby Demolition donated material salvaged from an internment camp in southern Alberta. The "Highlands Community League Memorial Centre" was named in honour of "local soldiers who were



The Highlands Curling Club, 1913. (GAI NA-1328-64308)



The Highlands Community League, 1993. (ACD)

killed in action in WW II." The 1912 clubhouse was removed in the early 1950s and a second new building, with changerooms on the ground floor and a members' lounge and caretaker's residence upstairs, was begun in 1954 and opened in 1957. Both later structures are still standing.

The Highlands Community League provided educational, recreational and self-government opportunities to Highlanders. Today it continues to do so for a population in excess of 1200 people.

Continue south on 62 Street. Cross 112 Avenue at the lights.

9.
**Chown
Residence**
11141- 62 Street

(1912)

At \$4,800, the Chown Residence was the most costly of the four houses on Grace (62) Street built by Magrath-Holgate & Co. The architect was listed as “Owner”, but Ernest Morehouse probably designed the Four Square Style home.

Russell Chown came to Edmonton from the Magrath’s home town, Belleville, Ontario, in 1912. Interestingly, 116 Avenue was originally Chown Avenue. Russell joined his parents and siblings, who had established Chown Hardware in Edmonton in 1906. He became secretary-treasurer of the company, and managed one of the two stores. On December 31, 1913 he purchased this house from Magrath-Holgate, just one block from his brother Leroy’s home at 11145 - 63 Street.

Russell Chown’s timing was bad. In 1913 Edmonton suffered a severe downturn, and so did Chown Hardware. In 1914, the business “...showed quite a large loss. The volume of trade [was] so reduced that the results cannot be expected to be profitable.” Despite the security Russell Chown provided by re-mortgaging his home in 1915, Chown Hardware was liquidated in May 1916. All the Chowns, except for Russell and his family, left Edmonton.



The Chown Residence, 1914. (PAA)



Chown Hardware, 1913. (GAI NA-1328-1480)

Russell’s fortune did not improve. In 1914 he was superintendent of the city Stores and Works Department, but the entire department was cut in about 1917. He then became a travelling salesman, but was unemployed in 1923, and was a labourer in 1924. At that point, Russell Chown gave up on Edmonton and probably returned to Ontario.

The Chown Residence also suffered a decline. It had cost Russell Chown \$7,000, but by 1916 its value was \$4,300. In 1922, Magrath-Holgate Ltd. foreclosed on Chown’s mortgage, and in 1924 the house was converted into two suites, resulting in some unfortunate interior alterations. Only in 1946, when it sold for \$8,000, did the Chown Residence regain its 1913 value. The Chown Residence was designated a Registered Historical Resource in 1993.

10.
**Humphreys
Residence**
11142 - 62 Street

(1912)

This was the first Highlands property to receive a City of Edmonton building permit. It was issued to the Magrath-Holgate Co. in March 1912, three months after The Highlands was annexed.

Herbert Baker paid only \$1,500 for the property in August 1912. He had gotten a \$5,000 mortgage in July, probably to pay L.A. Webb, contractor, to build the \$3,500 house.



Humphreys Residence, 1946. (HHF)

Baker moved out in 1914, and, in 1916, rented the house to Horace Leonard Humphreys, a teacher, and later Principal of McCauley School. Humphreys bought it from Baker in 1922. When Humphreys died in 1936, the house again became a rental property. Nathan Eldon Tanner, a Provincial MLA and Minister of Land and Mines during the 1930s rented it from 1937 to 1939.

Humphreys' daughter, Erica, married Adrian Magrath in the mid-1940s. They lived downtown for several years, but then moved to the house next door to the Humphreys Residence, 11136 - 62 Street. This house may have belonged to Adrian, or to his uncle William Hamilton, who had lived there with Adrian and his mother, Ada, after they left the Magrath Residence.

The Humphreys Residence has changed very little, and even retains its original caragana hedge. A Four Square Style house with minimal decoration, its diamond-paned upper window sashes and the wide bracketed eaves give the house a touch of whimsy. Recently, extensive renovations have been undertaken. Of note is the verandah, which replicates the original, with an addition around the side. In 1993 the owners of the Humphreys Residence received an award for their reconstruction from the Society for the Protection of Architectural Resources in Edmonton (SPARE).

Continue south on 62 Street.

11.
Bury
Residence
11122 - 62 Street

(1912)

Ambrose Upton Gledstones Bury was born in Ireland in 1869. He received an MA degree from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1890 and came to Edmonton in 1912. His sister Evelyn and her husband, Quint Owen, had come in 1903,

as had brother-in-law Herbert Owen (see #2) in 1908. A lawyer in Ireland, Bury registered as a lawyer in Alberta in 1913. After an unsuccessful bid to be an MLA in 1921, he served as a city alderman (1922-25), mayor of Edmonton (1927-29), MP for Edmonton East (1925-26, 1930-35), and district court judge (1935-44). He was also active in the Anglican Church and the Highlands Community League.



Bury Residence, 1993. (ACD)

Of his thirty-four years in Edmonton, Bury lived here for twenty-seven. He purchased the house in 1939, having rented it since 1919. When Margaret, his wife of forty-nine years, died in 1946, Bury sold the house and left Edmonton within a month. He died in Ottawa in 1951, but his funeral was held here, and he was laid to rest in the family plot at the Edmonton Cemetery.

Louis Wesley Heard lived in the Bury Residence from 1946 until 1984. Born in Saskatchewan in 1909, he became well-known during his eighteen

years as a Social Credit MLA from the 1940s to the 60s. He died in 1987 at age 78.

The \$3,600 Bury Residence cost much more than most Edmonton homes in 1912. However, it was the least costly of the twenty-four Magrath-Holgate & Co. November 1912 Highlands houses. Stucco obscures the original details, and changes to the porch have altered the front of the house, but the original Four Square Style can still be made out.

Continue south.

12.
Margaret
Marshall
Residence
11119 - 62 Street

(1914)

Katharine Tardrew “spinster”, received this lot in 1914, probably as a wedding gift, from Mary Tardrew “married woman”, who had purchased it that year. Katharine became “wife of William Pring Williams”, and in July

1914, he received a \$2,000 permit for this, the smallest lot in The Highlands. By 1916 they had moved out and in 1920, though their mortgage was only \$900, the property was transferred to their contractors, the Cottage Construction Company.



Margaret Marshall Residence, 1993. (ACD)

After 1916 the house was a rental property. Margaret Marshall began renting it in 1928, bought it in 1931 and owned it until 1952. She was a widow, and probably worked for a living. Between 1939 and 1941 she was an “inspector city relief”,

an “investigator city hall” and a “lady officer”. Before that, from 1927 to 1938, she worked with the Edmonton Journal Sunshine Society, including four years as President. A 1913 *Edmonton Journal* article described the Society:



Edmonton Journal Sunshine Department office, 1926. (GAI ND-3-3427)

...the main object is to help people to help themselves; to give them work, if they are able to do it, or to enable them in some way to “pass on” the Sunshine that is brought to them...Anyone can be a member of Sunshine - anyone who has even a smile to give. The membership fee is a kind act, and “passing on” kindnesses are your dues. You may never give a cent, and yet be the best Sunshiner in the city. Give what you can; it may be your time.

Picnics and drives in the country were arranged for poor children, and benefit hockey games, raffles, and Christmas toy and food drives were undertaken to help supply the needs of less fortunate Edmontonians.

The Margaret Marshall Residence is an excellent, well-preserved example of the Bungalow Style. Its cottage-like appearance is created by its low foundation, wide bracketed eaves and shingle exterior finish.

Continue south to 111 Avenue, turn west.

13.
Coach House
6229 - 111 Avenue

(1913)

In early 1913, when Bidwell Holgate received a permit to construct a \$10,000 garage with living quarters and William Magrath obtained a permit for a similar \$6,000 structure, garages usually cost from \$100 to \$300. Even in

The Highlands, houses rarely exceeded \$5,000. The Holgate garage, which matched the house, was demolished in 1962, but the Magrath garage - known as the Coach House - still stands.

Ernest Morehouse, architect of the Magrath Residence, also designed the garage. Like the mansion, it has a wood frame with a brick veneer exterior. Details, such as hoods and modillions, link the structures stylistically. For formal arrivals, the Coach House could be reached from Ada Boulevard via the mansion's covered drive-through porch, or porte cochère. More discreet entries could be made directly to the garage from 111 Avenue.



The Coach House, right, 1913. (GAINA-1328-64530)

Harry Cox, the Magraths' chauffeur, lived in the Coach House from 1914 until 1924. After 1925 the living space was rented out. Ada Magrath finally parted with the Magrath Residence and the Coach House in 1933. It then became the property of the City of Edmonton, and later of the Ukrainian

Catholic Bishop. Most of the original estate remains with the Magrath Residence, but parts, including the Coach House, were sold.

The Coach House became owner-occupied in the late 1940s. The two west-facing parking bays were probably replaced with large windows after that date. In 1990, architect Robert Spencer designed an addition which matches the original so well that only a line in the slate of the roof indicates the extent of the 1913 garage. The essence of the Coach House has been carefully preserved for those who look closely.

Retrace your steps east along 111 Avenue.

14.
Grierson Residence
6124 - 111 Avenue

(1912)

The Grierson Residence was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1983. It is named for Robert Walter and Allie Grierson, who bought it in 1916. R.W. Grierson was the younger brother of Edmund Grierson, the namesake of Grierson

Hill, Grierson Church on 82 Avenue, and owner of several early Edmonton hotels.

When R.W. Grierson started out in 1910, real estate was a good way to earn a living. By the mid-teens, however, the economic slump and WW I had made things much harder. Grierson continued in real estate, though the activities of his firm, R.W. Grierson & Co., were interrupted during the 1930s. He last appeared in the city directory in 1940, but his wife, Allie, kept this house until 1972.

The \$4,300 Grierson Residence was part of Magrath-Holgate's November 1912 development push. It was an important part of the streetscape on Jasper Avenue, as 111 Avenue was then known. The large properties on Ada Boulevard - especially the Magrath and Holgate Mansions - gave the houses on the north side of 111 Avenue river valley views, setting them apart from the rest of The Highlands, and giving them prestige second only to Ada Boulevard addresses.



The Grierson Residence, 1914. (PAA)

Typically, Edmonton's narrow lots resulted in houses with architectural details concentrated on the front. Though The Highlands had wider lots than elsewhere in Edmonton, the houses could still be quite one-sided. In contrast, the Grierson Residence has a wrap-around verandah, corner tower, swept dormer and Palladian windows, creating a distinctive design on two sides. Its proportions are less vertical, and details less profuse than textbook examples, but the Grierson Residence is closest to the Queen Anne Style of any home in The Highlands.

Continue east on 111 Avenue.

15.
Sheldon
Residence
6018 - 111 Avenue

(1914)

In June 1914, Carleton G. Sheldon obtained a \$3,500 building permit for this lot, and by 1915 he was installed as the first resident. American by birth, Sheldon went to university and taught in the U.S. before coming to Toronto in 1906. He

moved to Edmonton in 1913, and became general manager of the Western Foundry & Machine Co., of which William Magrath was vice-president. While Sheldon was general manager, the foundry made shell casings used by Canadian Forces in France during WW I.



The Sheldon Residence, 1914. (HHF)

In 1916 Sheldon became the business manager of the Humberstone Coal Company. Magrath may have had a hand in this move, since he and Holgate had marketed property for Humberstone. After 1922, Sheldon worked for Coal Sellers Ltd., but in 1932 he started his own company, the Sheldon Coal Co. He remained in the coal industry until his death in 1943; Sheldon Coal lasted eight years longer. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Sheldon seems not only to have weathered the Great Depression of the 1930s, but to have prospered.

The exterior of the Sheldon Residence is among the best-preserved in The Highlands. The broad sweep of the low-pitched gable roof, the wide steps to the full-width verandah, and the prominent central gable make this a good example of a Craftsman Bungalow Style house. Others Craftsman features include exposed rafter ends, the shingled exterior finish, the wide bracketed eaves, and the rusticated stone finish of the concrete foundation. The Bungalow Style was already popular in the United States - especially California - but was quite new to Edmonton in 1914.

Continue east.

16.
Mackenzie
Residence
6010 - 111 Avenue

(1912)

This house was built in 1912 by Magrath-Holgate & Co., at a cost of \$4,000. Its two-and-a-half storey gambrel-roofed design is unique in The Highlands. Extensive renovations, which did not change the shape of the house but altered its

style significantly, were carried out after 1926. A classically-inspired porch replaced the original full-width verandah; a balcony supplanted a second floor gable-roofed room; shed dormers became gabled dormers; and stucco covered up the wood siding.



The Mackenzie Residence, 1926. (HHF)

Until 1922, the house was a rental property owned by one of Magrath's companies. The most prominent tenant, Kenneth W. Mackenzie, lived here from 1916 until 1922. Mackenzie had become the first mayor of the newly incorporated city of Edmonton by acclamation on December 5, 1904. He reluctantly served for one year, after being drafted by some of the city's most prominent citizens.

Born in Ontario in 1862, Mackenzie worked on the family farm until an injury at age twenty caused him to return to school. He progressed from grade three to a teacher's certificate in just two years. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1893, Mackenzie moved west. He arrived in Edmonton in 1895 to be principal of College

Avenue High School. In 1898 he opened a book store, and helped establish Edmonton's public library.

When the Holgates were forced to move from their Ada Boulevard mansion, they purchased this house in 1922. This followed the local pattern of moving within the Highlands. Bidwell Holgate died in 1928, but Mrs. Holgate stayed another three years before returning to Ontario. She retained the property until 1938, at which time it was purchased by Dr. T.H. Field, son of James W. Field (see #19), who remained until 1951.

Turn north on 60 Street.

17.
Ward
Residence
11125 - 60 Street

(1912)

A \$4,600 permit for this house was taken out by Magrath and Holgate in November, 1912. The first occupants were Muriel and Edward (Harry) Ward. Originally from Hamilton, they came to The Highlands in 1913 by way of

Morinville, where Harry had a hardware store. In Edmonton, he worked at Alberta Marble & Granite Co. from 1913 to 1923. After fourteen years with the James Ramsay Co. department store, he returned to the stone business with the Independent Memorial Company.



The Ward Residence, 1993. (ACD)



1. Gibbard Block
2. Owen Residence
3. Atkinson Residence
4. Gimby Residence
5. Highlands United Church
6. McLuhan Residence
7. Highlands School
8. Highlands Community League Hall
9. Chown Residence
10. Humphreys Residence
11. Bury Residence
12. Margaret Marshall Residence
13. Coach House
14. Grierson Residence
15. Sheldon Residence
16. Mackenzie Residence
17. Ward Residence
18. Hooson Residence
19. Field Residence
20. Davidson Residence
21. Mitchell Residence
22. Holgate Residence
23. Magrath Residence
24. Ash Residence
25. Baker Residence
26. Highlands Golf Course
27. William Brown Residence
28. R.C. Marshall Residence
29. Ernest Brown Residence
30. Morehouse Residence

The Wards began living in this house in 1914, but, due to a difference of opinion with Magrath and Holgate over conditions of the purchase, only gained title in 1916. Despite the bumpy start and continuing disputes with the city over taxes, Muriel stayed until 1974, though Harry had died in 1949.

The imposing, even monumental, street presence of the Ward Residence results from the combination of the sloping roof and the pediment above the second floor recessed balcony. In 1912, the Bungalow Style Ward Residence was considered modern. It was well-equipped for its day, with electricity, running water, central heating, a "...coal bin (to supply the stove and furnace), a large cistern to collect rain water, and a cold cellar [where] garden vegetables and preserves were stored over the winter and spring."

Few changes have been made to the Ward Residence: a two storey bay window has been added to the north side; the roomy attic is now living space; and a two-storey garage designed to harmonize with the house was added.

Retrace your steps south on 60 Street.

18.
Hooson
Residence
11119 - 60 Street

(1912)

William Knight Hooson was 91 when he died on July 14, 1967. He had arrived in Edmonton in 1911. In 1916, he and a partner set up an insurance business, the Hooson-Racey Co., and in 1919 he branched out on his own with The

Hooson Company. The Hoosons moved into this house in 1932, purchased it in 1943, and the family still owns it.

Like its neighbour (#17), the Hooson Residence was produced by the Magrath-Holgate & Co. development initiative of November 1912. Interestingly, Magrath-Holgate did not obtain title to these properties until six months after the building permits were issued. On the same title



The Hooson Residence, 1993. (ACD)

were 45 lots, four of which the company built houses on. Of the 45 lots, only two had sold by 1915, and those without houses.

As the economy deteriorated, many Magrath and Holgate holdings were foreclosed on or seized for non-payment of taxes. By the early 1920s, their Highlands empire was in a shambles. The Hooson Residence was one of the few they managed to retain. In 1924 it was bought by Mabel Holgate, who owned it until 1940. The house had six tenants before 1932, when the Hoosons moved in, including Kenneth W. Mackenzie (see #16) who lived here in 1922-23.

Two features distinguish the Hooson Residence from its neighbours: its wide bellcast eaves, originally with decorative brackets, and the partially glazed wrap-around verandah. Continuity of occupation has contributed to the good state of preservation of this house. New siding has recently covered the original shingle and wood cladding, but the character of the Four Square Style Hooson Residence is still largely intact.

Continue south to 111 Avenue and turn east.

19.
Field
Residence
5610 - 111 Avenue

(1912)

James Williamson Field came to Edmonton in 1914 and moved into this house in 1915. It was yet another of the Magrath-Holgate houses developed in November 1912. At \$4,000, it was one of the least expensive of their houses, although well above the \$2,500 Highlands threshold.

In 1915, Field became the first proprietor of the Highlands Cash Grocery, subsequently Field's Cash Store, in the Gibbard Block (#1). In 1920 he left to open a pharmacy in another part of town. Field did not change his home address however, and he died in this house in 1933 at the age of 75. His daughter, Ethel Field, stayed on in the house until her death in 1975, and son Dr. T.H. Field bought the Mackenzie Residence (#16).

Ethel Field was born in Ontario, where she received her education and began her teaching career. In Edmonton she taught over a thirty year period at schools in Beverly, North Edmonton, and The Highlands. She is best remembered as an artist and art teacher. "[Her] first love was painting pictures, a subject she taught in evening classes. She excelled in native Indian portraits and her works are displayed in many fine art galleries."



*The Field Residence rear, under construction, 1913.
(GAI NA-1328-2999)*



The Field Residence, 1993. (ACD)

The Field Residence, like the Grierson Residence (#14), has Queen Anne Style elements. The pyramidal dormer roof, elaborate second storey gable above the front door, large brackets, wide eaves and vertical proportions all point to this style. Beneath these decorative elements however, is a Four Square Style house similar to many others in The Highlands.

Return west to 60 Street. Go south to Ada Boulevard, go east.

20.
Davidson
Residence
5650
Ada Boulevard

(1912)

At an estimated \$10,000 the Davidson Residence was the most extravagant speculative house erected through Magrath-Holgate's November 1912 development push. Except for the Gibbard Block (#1), it was the most expensive building

the company erected in The Highlands. Probably designed by Edward Morehouse, it exhibits a number of design features including wide eaves, an expansive verandah, a large second storey balcony, vertical proportions, a variety of finishes, and Palladian windows.

Changes made to the Davidson Residence over the years include the enclosure of the front balcony, and the addition of exterior stairs to the east side of the house. Though officially containing suites only



The Davidson Residence, 1925. (GAI ND-3-2929 b)

since 1982, the Davidson Residence had multiple occupants as early as 1944.

Stella Ritchie, wife of a realtor, bought the house in 1913. In the souring economy of the time, however, financial difficulties caused the house to revert back to Magrath & Holgate in 1919.

In 1924 the home became the property of Isabella and Adam Davidson. Adam James Davidson was born in Ontario in 1864. Raised on a farm, he had a life-long interest in dairying. In 1912 Davidson arrived in Edmonton, having first lived in Calgary for a few months. In 1920, along with his brother-in-law, he was involved in Magrath's Western Foundry & Machine Co. Ltd..

In the 1920s Davidson purchased a mine, located just east of The Highlands in the Beverly district, which he later leased to Magrath and Holgate's Bush Mines Ltd.. Clearly, business and personal associations in The Highlands could be very closely related. As he gradually retired from mining, Davidson was finally able to indulge his passion for dairying. Again in the Beverly district, he set up a cattle farm, and eventually served as the President of the Provincial Holstein Friesian Breeders' Association.

The Highlands was an ideal home for the Davidsons, offering a pleasant suburban setting and easy access to the city, only a short distance from their farm. When he died in 1945 at the age of 81, Davidson was still a "farmer", and had a herd of 69

purebred Holstein Friesians. After his death, the Davidson Residence passed to his daughter Cora, who finally sold it in 1981.

Go west on Ada Boulevard.

21.
Mitchell
Residence
6128
Ada Boulevard

(1936)

Two themes predominate in the long life of Frederick John Mitchell: politics and sports. One of Edmonton's longest-serving aldermen, he spent 24 years on City Council, from 1941 to 1964. He was deputy mayor for many years,

and in 1958, he acted as mayor for five weeks after the resignation of William Hawrelak. Mitchell excelled in tennis, and finally quit playing his second sport, badminton, at the age of 84. "I want to concentrate on tennis", he said, "and badminton interferes with my serving."



The Mitchell Residence, 1993. (ACD)

Mitchell was born on December 4, 1893 in Stratford, Ontario, and moved to Edmonton by 1914. After working at a variety of jobs, and serving overseas during WW I, he joined the Oliphant-Munson Collieries, later the Sterling Collieries, where he remained for thirty years. In 1936, Mitchell built this house, and when he died on December 25, 1979 at the age of 86, it was still his home. The lot cost Mitchell \$650. He bought it from the City of Edmonton, which had seized it from Magrath-Holgate for tax arrears in 1922.

The Mitchell Residence faces west, with large windows on the ground floor for the best views of the river valley. Its main point of interest is the hexagonal entrance tower with its nearly conical roof. The house has a picturesque, fairy-tale quality, a reaction, perhaps, to the harsh realities of the Great Depression. Less restrained examples of the type had very steeply pitched roofs, shingles applied in wavy lines to resemble thatching, bellcast eaves, and stucco textured to resemble stone.

Continue west on Ada Boulevard.

22.

**Holgate
Residence**

6210
Ada Boulevard

(1912)

Bidwell Holgate is remembered as the quieter partner in Magrath-Holgate & Co. Ltd. He was born in Ontario in 1877, came to Edmonton in 1908, and bought out J.H. Hart, Magrath's original partner, in 1909.

Holgate's timing couldn't have been better; Edmonton's real estate market was expanding at a phenomenal rate. After 1913, however, successful speculation was nearly impossible. Holgate's fortunes suffered, but unlike some of his contemporaries, he was not ruined.

Before the boom went bust, Holgate made large investments in The Highlands. In addition to purchasing lots and erecting houses on speculation, he invested heavily in his own home. Initially to cost \$19,000, Holgate eventually spent \$49,000 on his Ada Boulevard property, including \$10,000 for a garage with living quarters. The 1912 building permit listed Nesbitt & Morehouse as the architects, and Holgate as his own contractor.

The Holgate Residence served as an impressive symbol of the Highlands. In 1912, both Holgate and Magrath had the addresses of their unfinished Ada Boulevard homes printed in bold type in the city directory in an effort to improve sales in the Highlands.



The Holgate Residence, 1913. (GAI NA-1328-64527)

The style of the Holgate Residence is drawn from several sources. Half-timbering points to the Tudor Revival Style. The wide eaves, expansive verandah, and low-pitched gable roofs show an awareness of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's design ideas. The influence of the English Arts and Crafts movement, which relied on traditional materials and skilled artisans, can be seen inside the Holgate Residence. Leaded glass, wood panelling, built-in oak cabinets, murals, and ceiling decorations, both painted and in plasterwork relief, make the interior luxurious. Clearly, Morehouse was versed in current styles and had free reign to use the best finishes.

In 1920, the Holgates moved to a more modest home on 111 Avenue (#16). Contrary to local lore, the mansion was not seized for taxes, but was bought by an investment company in January of 1920. The Campbell family rented it for twenty-one years, and then the Holgate Residence was again owner-occupied. Holgate retired in 1923, and died suddenly in 1928 at the age of 50 while being treated for diabetes.

The house has remained a single family home with its character intact, but the estate which surrounded it has eroded over the years. A large portion passed to the City of Edmonton in 1959, and in 1962 the garage was demolished. Many grand Edmonton homes built prior to WW I were located close to downtown, and have since been demolished. The relative remoteness of the Holgate and Magrath

Residences saved them from a similar fate. The Ada Boulevard streetscape composed of the Davidson, Holgate, Magrath and Ash Residences is one of only a few that remain.

The Holgate Residence was renovated several times before 1983, but the changes - except those made to the kitchen - were generally sensitive to its character. Since 1983, the Holgate Residence has been owned by the Vanderwell family. Richard Vanderwell, an architect, has restored its original elegance. The house was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1987.

Continue west.

23.
**Magrath
Residence**
6240
Ada Boulevard

(1912)

William J. Magrath was well known in Edmonton. He was senior partner in the real estate firm of Magrath-Holgate & Co. Ltd., brought industry to Edmonton, owned a baseball franchise, and had political aspirations. Born in Ontario in 1870,

Magrath married there in 1894, but like many, he was drawn to the West. In 1904 he and his family came to Edmonton on the first train west from Battleford, Saskatchewan.



Bowling on the Magrath's lawn, 1918. (GAI NC-6-3695)

That's Where the West Begins

*Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where a smile dwells a little longer,
That's where the West begins.
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snow that falls is a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,
That's where the West begins.
Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where friendship's a little truer,
That's where the West begins.
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,
That's where the West begins.
Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts from despair are aching,
That's where the West begins.
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
Where a man makes friends without half trying,
That's where the West begins.*

(CEA)

This poem, printed just before WW I broke out, reflects the widely held view of the "Last Best West". The Edmonton Industrial Association, of which Magrath was then President, published it.

From 1904 until 1912, the West was good to Magrath. He started a real estate company, was president of several manufacturing companies, was active in the Methodist Church, was first president of the Alberta Curling Association, and had a Western Canada Baseball League team.

J.H. Hart became Magrath's partner in his real estate firm in 1906. The *Edmonton Bulletin* newspaper noted, in 1908, that there was "...no more reliable or highly respected firm operating in the west than is Messrs. Magrath, Hart & Company. [They] can truly be said to be business men of the strictest honour, and they belong to the class of real estate operators to whom it is absolutely safe to tie." The next year, Hart was bought out by B.A. Holgate, and Magrath-Holgate & Co. Ltd. was launched.

In 1912, Magrath and Holgate announced they had “quit business life” so Magrath could pursue “political ambitions”. He ran for mayor as a “progressive candidate” on a platform promoting industry, development, civic utilities, and openness in government. When he placed second in a three-way race, Magrath ended his political career and his retirement.

The Highlands was the most ambitious of the many subdivisions undertaken by Magrath-Holgate & Co. It came to be symbolized by the Magrath Residence on Ada Boulevard. Several acres originally surrounded this, “the most elegant private residence in the city of Edmonton.” Giant order classical columns across the main facade and a colonnade curving around the verandah and porte cochère are the most striking features of architect E.W. Morehouse’s design. The tile roof, wide cornice, and hoods above the windows reinforce the classical theme. Originally intended to be solid brick, Magrath economized by building of wood with a brick veneer. It was still not cheap, however. In total, the house and garage cost \$76,000 - a fortune in 1913.

Inside was “every conceivable modern convenience”: central heating, electricity, a swimming pool in the basement, burglar alarms on all the doors, telephones in every room, and a switch in Mrs. Magrath’s sitting room that controlled every light in the house. Luxurious materials were used, including mahogany, oak, Italian marble, Bohemian crystal, hand-painted silk and linen, plasterwork, built-in cabinets with leaded glass doors, and elegant furnishings acquired in Europe by Ada Magrath.

Unlike the Holgates, the Magraths did not leave their Ada Boulevard home willingly. After the economy soured in 1913, Magrath’s business activities focused on minimizing his losses. His ventures were cut short when, aged 51, he died in 1921. Ada Magrath held onto the house until 1931; the City of Edmonton bought it in 1933 for only \$1,050. She then lived in more modest Highlands homes, often with her son Adrian, until she died in 1941.

A museum and an art gallery were proposed as uses for the house, but it stood vacant until 1937, when suites were rented. Finally, in 1949, the Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop of Edmonton moved in, and the Diocese purchased the property in 1953. In 1975, the Magrath Residence became the first Edmonton building to be designated a Provincial Historical Resource.

Continue west.

24.
Ash
Residence
6256
Ada Boulevard

(1912)

William Thomas Ash and his family were the first occupants of this house in 1913. Mr. Ash, along with his brother Sidney, established the prosperous downtown ‘Ash Brothers Diamond Hall’ in 1907. In addition to

manufacturing “artistic jewellery”, they sold diamonds wholesale and provided watchmaking services.

Ash purchased the house in 1921, and sold it a short three years later, moving to Edmonton’s Oliver district. In 1928, the Ash Brothers jewellery store closed down, and the Ashes moved east to Toronto, where William Ash died in 1931. In 1927 the house was bought by Matilda Singer, wife of Philip, a Singer Sewing Machine Co. salesman. She retained title until 1962.

The house cost \$7,500 to build, and as with the other Magrath-Holgate residences of November 1912, the architect was probably E.W. Morehouse. It is, essentially, a large Four Square Style design, a hybrid of the Ada Boulevard mansions and more modest Highlands homes. Of note is the wrap-around verandah, which shades the south facing main floor windows from the sun and adds dignity to the design. The cast concrete blocks supporting the verandah were moulded to resemble rough chiselled stone.



The Ash Residence, c. 1920s. (HHF)

The interior of the Ash Residence has been renovated in recent years, but the exterior, although somewhat obscured by mature coniferous trees, has been retained.

Continue west on Ada Boulevard.

25.
Baker
Residence
6274
Ada Boulevard

(1927)

Herbert Baker was born in Yorkshire, England on December 10, 1866. He came to Canada in 1882 and worked for the Massey Manufacturing Co., later Massey-Harris, in Toronto. After a stint in Winnipeg, he moved to Edmonton as Northern

Alberta Manager in 1910. Baker retired in 1925, and served as a City alderman from 1927 to 1933.

Baker was a leading proponent of the Highlands Scenic Drive. Thought by many to be of limited use, and unsafe due to the instability of the slope, "Baker's Folly" remained controversial for many years. It ran through the river valley from 82 Street and Jasper Avenue to Ada Boulevard just west of 69 Street. Completed in the late 1930s, much of the work was done by hand by city construction gangs of unemployed men, or "relief workers", during the Great Depression. Later, erosion caused the road to be closed.



Massey-Harris Co., Edmonton, c. 1914. (GAI NC-6-684)

An early and consistent investor in The Highlands, Herbert Baker owned three homes in the subdivision (#10, #25, #28), built a house at 6326 - 111 (Jasper) Avenue, and probably owned other Highlands property as well.

In 1913, this Ada Boulevard lot cost Baker \$2,000. It stood empty until this \$6,000 house was constructed in 1927. Since then, the Baker Residence has been much altered. The main entry now faces south, but the west side was possibly the original front of the house. From that vantage point, the low-pitched gable roof and even lower-pitched extension (possibly a verandah) can still be seen. The centre gable, a few brackets below the eaves, some original windows, and two clinker brick chimneys hint that this was once a Craftsman Bungalow Style house.

Go west on Ada Boulevard to the top of the stairs to the Highlands Golf Course. Those who wish to can follow the path down to the Clubhouse.

26.
Highlands
Golf Course
6603
Ada Boulevard

(1929)

The Highlands originally had lots on the steep slope of the valley and across the flats to the river's edge. Most were not developed however, and eventually passed to the city of Edmonton. In 1929 an agreement between the City and the newly-created Highlands



Official opening of Highlands Golf Course, 1930. (GAI ND-3-5187)



Highlands Golf Course & Clubhouse, c. 1950s. (PAA PA 203/2)

Golf Club allowed the construction of a \$20,000 golf course and clubhouse on the site.

Original officers of the Highlands Golf Club included H.A. Parlee, President; Dr. Atkinson (#3), Vice President; W. Brown (#27), Secretary-Treasurer; and R.C. Marshall (#28) and H.L. Humphreys (#10), Directors. Prizes given out by the Club still commemorate these men.

The first sod was turned May 7, 1929, by Mayor A.U.G. Bury (#11). He emphasized that the course be available to people “of modest means”, not just the rich. He noted that the golf course was “...one of the few good things which have been made possible by the evil of the slump which we suffered in the years just ended, and which threw into the possession of the city the lands without which such developments would have been possible only at a prohibitive cost.”

The Highlands Golf Course has experienced many changes. The Highlands Scenic Drive, “Baker’s Folly” (see #25), was built along its northern edge in the 1930s, but was later closed. In the mid-thirties, tunnels of the Premier Coal Mine beneath the fairways caused depressions to appear. Although the mine closed in 1937, cave-ins continue to this day. Nine holes were added, doubling the course total to eighteen holes. Perhaps the most drastic change was the construction of the Capilano Freeway in the 1970s right through the middle of the course.

Return east to the corner of 64 Street and 111 Avenue.

27.
William
Brown
Residence
11108 - 64 Street

(1927)

William Brown’s first house, at 11304 - 64 Street, received the fourth building permit issued by the City for The Highlands. Brown, either alone or with his neighbour and occasional work- and house-mate, Cephas Sisson, developed

several properties in The Highlands over the next few years. In total they built nine houses, all on 64 Street. Of these, three were homes for either Sisson or Brown, and seven were speculative ventures, including numbers 11116, 11122, 11127, 11133 and 11141 on this block.



William Brown Residence, 1927. (ACD)

At \$4,500 this house was the last and most costly house Brown erected. The permit was issued in February 1927, thirteen years after the speculative houses. Brown was his own contractor, and both Brown and Sisson lived here from 1928 until 1931, the last year Sisson is in the city directory. In 1932 Brown sold the house and moved to a smaller bungalow - for which he had been the contractor - one block north. In the next thirty years, Brown moved three more times, but always within The Highlands. He was last noted in 1963.

The William Brown Residence is one of only a few Highlands houses faced with brick. The clinker brick, in combination with the stucco finish, the jerkinhead roofline, the window design, and the large entrance porch, create the impression of a traditional English cottage.

The William Brown Residence has had only a few owners since the 1930s. Its good state of preservation indicates both that its qualities are appreciated, and that it has been cared for.

Continue east on 111 Avenue.

28.
R.C. Marshall
Residence
6318 - 111 Avenue

(1912)

No building permit is recorded by the City of Edmonton for a house on this site, possibly as a result of an error in the placement of the building. In 1912, C.L. Freeman obtained a permit to construct a house on lot 16, block 1

of The Highlands subdivision. This house, first occupied by C.L. Freeman, rests on lot 17.

Herbert Baker bought this property in 1914, and lived here from 1915 until 1928, when his Ada Boulevard house (#25) was completed. Baker sold to Robert Colin Marshall, who stayed until his death in 1962. Marshall came from Calgary, where he had been elected an Alderman in 1917, and Mayor in 1919. Moving steadily up the political ladder, he was an MLA from 1921 until 1926. In Edmonton, Marshall did not enter politics,



Robert Marshall Residence, far right, 1913. (GAI NA-1328-64529)

choosing instead to pursue a business career. He was a partner in Crown Paving Co. Ltd., where he had started working in 1915, and in Alberta Concrete Products Ltd., until 1961. Both firms were "closely connected with the road and structural development of the city and province for several decades."

The Marshall Residence was quite different originally. It was a large Four Square Style house with wooden siding and a large verandah across the front. Plain in comparison to many of its neighbours, it had a minimum of decorative elements. This plainness lent itself well to remodelling in the Moderne Style. To accomplish this transformation, a two-storey addition was made to the front of the house and the exterior was faced with stucco. A full Moderne Style effect was not achieved, however, since the addition and the main house do not have flat roofs.

Return to 64 Street and go north.

29.
**Ernest
Brown
Residence**
11149-64 Street

(1912)

From 1919 to 1921 this was the home of photographer, historian, painter, and museum operator, Ernest Brown. Born in England at Newcastle-on-Tyne, he came to Edmonton in 1904. Once here, he “set

himself up in the business of photography” by purchasing an established photo studio and all the photographs he could. In 1914 he claimed without much exaggeration, “If it’s an old photograph, it’s mine.”

Brown took Alberta’s first X-rays in 1906. He also produced a number of paintings. The *Edmonton Bulletin* noted, in 1910, that all who viewed his portrait of the late King Edward VII agreed it was “...an exceeding clever piece of work especially [considering] that Mr. Brown did not commence it until little over a week ago.”

In the 1930s he operated the Brown Museum on 97 Street, where his collection was featured as *The Birth of the West Exhibition*. He had visitors from “Ireland to India”, as well as thousands of school children. Most of Brown’s photographs are now housed at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Brown died in 1951 at the age of 71. In 1973 his life was the subject of an award-winning Filmwest film entitled “Ernest Brown, Pioneer Photographer.”



Ernest Brown Residence, 1993. (ACD)

This house was built in 1912 for Clyde Dunham, according to designs by architect E. Kean. At \$2,600 it just exceeded the area’s \$2,500 cost requirement. Ambrose C. Faulkner purchased the house in 1914, but left for Saskatchewan in 1915. He retained ownership, however, and rented the house out. John W.H. Williams, who had lived in the Gibbard Block from 1917 to 1923, rented the house after Brown left. Faulkner retired to Edmonton in 1945, and lived here until 1961.

The Ernest Brown Residence may be the most rustic house in The Highlands. Its low profile, shingle siding, wide overhangs and large brackets below the eaves evoke a cottage in the country, not a formal house in town. A sympathetically-styled two storey addition at the back of the house was designed by the present owner and occupant, architect Dave Brookes.

30.
**Morehouse
Residence**
11153 - 64 Street

(1912)

Ernest William Morehouse, more than any other architect, influenced the early development of The Highlands. From 1912 until 1915, permits show he designed thirteen buildings in The Highlands, and as

Magrath-Holgate’s in-house architect, may have designed up to thirty more. At the time, no architect was listed on more Highlands building permits than Morehouse. His most prominent designs were the Gibbard Block (#1), the Holgate Residence (#22), and the Magrath Residence (#23).

Born in Chatsworth, Ontario in 1871, Morehouse trained as an architect in Toronto, starting as a contractor. After 1892, Morehouse lived in Chicago, Chatham, and Detroit, where he studied the design of factory buildings. When he came to Edmonton in 1910 it was to design and oversee the erection of a factory.

Morehouse first set up a design and contracting firm in partnership with Arthur Nesbitt, but in 1912 he struck out on his own, gaining local



Morehouse Residence, 1993. (ACD)

prominence. He served on the council of the Alberta Association of Architects in 1917, and four years later was its vice president. Morehouse left Edmonton in 1929 to return to Detroit, where he died in 1937.

Morehouse designed this \$4,500 Four Square Style house for himself in 1912. Sheathed in wood siding with corner boards, it has a bay window shaded by a hip-roofed verandah, and a glassed-in balcony centred above the main steps. The vertical emphasis of the design is reinforced by the dormer centred in the hipped roof.

Inside, the Morehouse Residence was well appointed. Bevelled glass, woodwork, brass fixtures, and stencilled patterns on the walls were among the aesthetic touches. A switch in the master bedroom which controlled all the upstairs bedroom lights recalls the Magrath Residence. The Morehouse Residence is of a type favoured by moderately well-off Edmontonians before WW I. It remains in a good state of preservation, inside and out. The Morehouse Residence was designated a Registered Historical Resource in 1987.

Turn west on 112 Avenue to return to the start point at the Gibbard Block.

Glossary

Arts & Crafts Style a style originating in 19th century England which emphasized hand-crafted traditional designs.

bellcast eaves which flare outwards in a bell shape.

classical architecture inspired by ancient Greek and Roman buildings.

clinker brick overfired brick with textured surfaces.

Collegiate Gothic Style a style popular for educational buildings in the 19th and early 20th centuries which was based on the tradition of medieval English colleges such as Oxford and Cambridge.

cornice a projecting decorative band at the top of a building. Can be of wood, stone, plaster or pressed metal.

Craftsman Bungalow a one-storey house, or a multi-storey house with a roof sloping towards the front and back, with details which are, or appear to be, handcrafted or rustic.

crenellation a notched parapet.

Four Square Style a house with generally cubic proportions, usually with a pyramidal roof and classically-inspired detailing.

gambrel roof a roof which has two slopes, or pitches, one gentle and one steep, on each side of the ridge-line.

giant order columns or pillars two or more storeys in height.

Gothic Revival Style a style developed in the 19th century, based on medieval models, often recognized by the use of pointed Gothic arches.

half-timbering a medieval method of construction. An exposed timber-frame wall filled in with rubble or brickwork, or one which appears to be constructed in this way by applying surface decoration.

hipped roof a roof which slopes in four directions.

hood a small roof projecting from a wall above a window or door.

jerkinhead roof a roof in which the top of the end of a gable roof is cut off by a small hip roof.

keystone the wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch; may be enlarged for decorative purposes.

Moderne Style a streamlined style popular in the 1930s and 1940s, characterized by rounded corners, smooth walls and geometric motifs.

oriel window a window projecting from an upper storey.

Palladian window a three-part window with a round-arched central opening and smaller side openings with flat lintels.

pediment the triangular end of a low pitched gable or a triangular element resembling it.

pilaster a shallow pillar projecting only slightly from a wall.

Queen Anne Style an eclectic late-Victorian style with varied rooflines, rich detailing, and generally vertical emphasis in proportions.

swept dormer a dormer which appears as a swelling in a roof.

Tudor Revival Style a style characterized by half-timbering, flattened pointed (Tudor) arches, shallow mouldings and extensive panelling.

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Edmonton Northlands

73 Street &
116 Avenue

Edmonton Northlands began its 114 year history in 1879 as the Edmonton Agricultural Society. It was the first local body with legal status in the Northwest Territories, and dealt with all civic issues until Edmonton was incorporated as a

town in 1892, at which time Society Vice President Matthew McCauley became mayor.

In 1910 the Society, renamed 'The Edmonton Exhibition Association', relocated its annual summer fair from Rosedale to its current site on what was then the eastern edge of town. The location was less than ideal since the ground was low and often muddy. In the winter of 1911 the swampy area known as Kirkness Lake was filled in with 5,000 yards of river gravel. Then the development of "The Grand Design", which included construction of the Grandstand, Manufacturers' Building, and Livestock Pavilion, later known as Edmonton Gardens, was begun. Although something was always going on at the Exhibition Grounds, it was in the summer when the fair was in progress, with its midway and shows of livestock and produce, that activity reached its yearly peak.

When the fair moved to its present location in 1910, there were very few residences in the vicinity. Before long developers recognized the potential of the area. The ties between Edmonton Northlands, as the Edmonton Exhibition is now known, and the surrounding communities have their roots in these early days. Some of the grand houses erected in The Highlands were home to prominent citizens who helped build Edmonton Northlands to its present stature.



The midway at Edmonton Northlands, c. 1930s. (EN)



A day at the races, 1914. (GAI NC-6-65871)

Cover Photographs:

The Highlands, subdivision plan, 1911.

The Gibbard Block, 1939. (GAI NC-6-1394a)