



HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS OF DOWNTOWN EDMONTON

JUNE 2004





The Hudson's Bay Company put Edmonton on the map over 200 years ago in 1795 when it built Edmonton House, Edmonton's first permanent settlement and trading post for the first inhabitants who hunted and fished along the North Saskatchewan River. On October 8, 1904, Edmonton was incorporated as a city.



There are four Historical Walking Tours of Downtown Edmonton in this booklet. They can be followed individually or in sequence.

- TOUR I HERITAGE TRAIL**
TOUR II JASPER WEST AND
WAREHOUSE
DISTRICT
TOUR III DOWNTOWN AND
RICE HOWARD WAY
TOUR IV JASPER EAST



Fort Edmonton, 1871. (CEA EA-128-3)

Background historical information appears at the beginning of the booklet, and a general introduction and a route map precede each of the tours. Historical connections between buildings are noted in the text. Wherever possible, buildings are referred to by their original name, or by the name of the original occupant or the most prominent occupant. Oftentimes these do not correspond to their current owners or occupants.

Please note that some of the buildings on these tours are privately owned and ought to be viewed only from the street.



HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS OF DOWNTOWN EDMONTON

Anthony Henday, a Hudson's Bay Company explorer, passed near the site of present-day Edmonton in 1754. His trip was part of the Hudson's Bay Company's interest in establishing direct contact with the native population of the interior rather than depending on native middlemen to bring furs to posts located on Hudson's Bay. This change in policy was caused by competition from free traders and other companies such as the Montreal-based North West Company. Throughout the 18th century, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company established a series of posts westward along the North Saskatchewan River valley in search of new supplies of furs. In 1795, as part of the process, the North West Company established a post called Fort Augustus at the site that would eventually become the City of Edmonton. The Hudson's Bay Company immediately followed suit by establishing a post nearby. It was named Edmonton House after an estate near London, England, belonging to the Company's Deputy Governor. Both companies employed many French Canadians and French-speaking Métis, and during the early years, French was the most commonly spoken language



*Jasper Avenue looking west from about 96 Street,
1894. Jasper House Hotel third from right.
(PAA B5562)*



Jasper Avenue looking west from 99 Street in ca. 1910s. (GAI NA-3213-10)

at Fort Edmonton. However, when the two companies amalgamated in 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company post was retained, as was the name Fort Edmonton, and the North West Company connection with Montreal was severed.

After the amalgamation, Fort Edmonton increased in importance under the leadership of Chief Factor John Rowand to become the distribution centre for the whole northwest, and, with the opening of the Fort Assiniboine Trail in 1824, it became a major supply stage on the Hudson's Bay Company's trans-Canada route. After 1870, when the area became part of the new Dominion of Canada, the character of the settlement began to change. In 1871, legislation finally made it possible for private individuals to claim ownership of land in what had formerly been the exclusive preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. Shortly thereafter, Edmonton came into being as an entity separate from the fort and outside the secure boundaries of the palisade. During the 1880s there was a great



influx of English-speaking settlers, and soon the French Canadians and Métis were outnumbered. Nevertheless, a vibrant and prosperous francophone community remained and played an important role in the city's development.

The Hudson's Bay Company received a land grant of 3,000 acres around most of its posts as part of the agreement by which it relinquished commercial rights in the region and handed over jurisdiction to Canada. In the case of Edmonton, the boundaries of this tract of land, known as the

Hudson's Bay Reserve, roughly corresponded to 101 Street on the east, 121 Street on the west, the North Saskatchewan River on the south, and 127 Avenue on the north. At first, the H.B.C. declined to subdivide its reserve, and as a result, the town of Edmonton developed some distance away from the fort. Its first significant building – a Methodist church – was erected in 1871 about one mile from Fort Edmonton, just beyond the reserve's eastern boundary. Within a few years, straggling along the top of the cliff, Jasper Avenue emerged as Edmonton's main street. The centre of town initially developed on 97 Street and Jasper Avenue, but after 1881, things changed. That year the Hudson's Bay Company decided to subdivide its holdings west of 101 Street and south of Jasper Avenue, thus opening up a new direction in which the town could develop. In the following year a settlement survey was undertaken, finally making longstanding land claims official.

The establishment of the northern terminus of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway on the south side of the river in 1891 prompted Edmonton to



incorporate as a town in 1892. Years of rivalry – not always friendly – ensued between Edmonton and South Edmonton as the two communities grew during the prosperous years before World War I (WWI). South Edmonton was incorporated as the town of Strathcona in 1899. Edmonton was incorporated as a city in 1904 and became capital of the new province of Alberta in 1905. Strathcona became the site of the province's university in 1907, and was incorporated as a city in the same year. The competition came to an end in 1912 however, when Strathcona and Edmonton were amalgamated.

Edmonton was a lively place before WWI. In 1901, the town could boast of only 2,626 inhabitants, but then the population exploded, rising to almost 30 times that number by 1914. Business boomed – especially the real estate business. Construction in wood was still the norm in 1899, and false-fronted stores sprang up in a sometimes uneven line along Jasper Avenue east of 101 Street. Within 10 years brick, concrete and steel had become the standard building materials, and development had moved westward along Jasper Avenue into the Hudson's Bay Reserve.

Almost overnight, Edmonton took on the appearance of a mature city. When the Hudson's Bay Company decided to sell the remainder of its reserve in 1912, Edmonton was at the height of its early prosperity. The city's boundaries had expanded in all directions, and commerce and commercial construction were booming. It was during the last five years or so before WWI that Edmonton developed the skyline which would exist for the next 40 years.



The speculation in real estate which made many of Alberta's pioneers wealthy eventually reached excessive proportions, and the bottom dropped out of the market in 1913. The combination of a worldwide economic slump and the outbreak of WWI resulted in a drastic drop in Edmonton's population as thousands left to join the army or the search for greener pastures. It was many years before the city recovered, and in the interim little new building took place.

Recovery came in the 1940s when, during WWII, Edmonton became the base of operations for the construction of the Alaska Highway. Prosperity was ensured with the discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947, and Edmonton entered a new cycle of economic and physical growth. The city boundaries were enlarged, and new construction was initiated in the downtown area. Many historic buildings were replaced by modern structures as the pace of development accelerated. Gradually the downtown core was transformed. Some old buildings remained, however, and were renovated for new uses. These give a glimpse of Edmonton's beginnings and provide a vital link with the past.



*View east on Jasper Avenue from 100A Street, 1947.
(PAA BL1387/3)*



TOUR I HERITAGE TRAIL

As part of PRIDE, the Program to Improve Downtown Edmonton, the City of Edmonton and the Rotary Clubs of Edmonton introduced the Heritage Trail project in the early 1980s. The Heritage Trail is a tree-lined outdoor exposition that approximates the original path from the Hudson's Bay Company Fort to the settlement of Edmonton. Plaques and sites of historical importance to the city line its route. The route of the Heritage Trail, which is indicated by red sidewalk pavers, is followed by part of this tour.

This tour begins at the Macdonald Hotel, on the SE corner of Jasper Avenue and 100 Street, and encompasses the area between Jasper Avenue and the edge of the river valley, from 100 to 109 Street. It includes 11 sites, is about 1.5 km in length and takes about 1.5 hours to complete.

Upon completion of this walk you can continue to Tour II, which begins at the MacLean Block on the NW corner of Jasper Avenue and 107 Street. Or, if you wish to do only this section of the tour, catch an eastbound bus on the south side of Jasper Avenue at 109 Street, or take the LRT (northbound), entrance on the west side of 109 Street, south of 99 Avenue, to return to the centre of downtown.



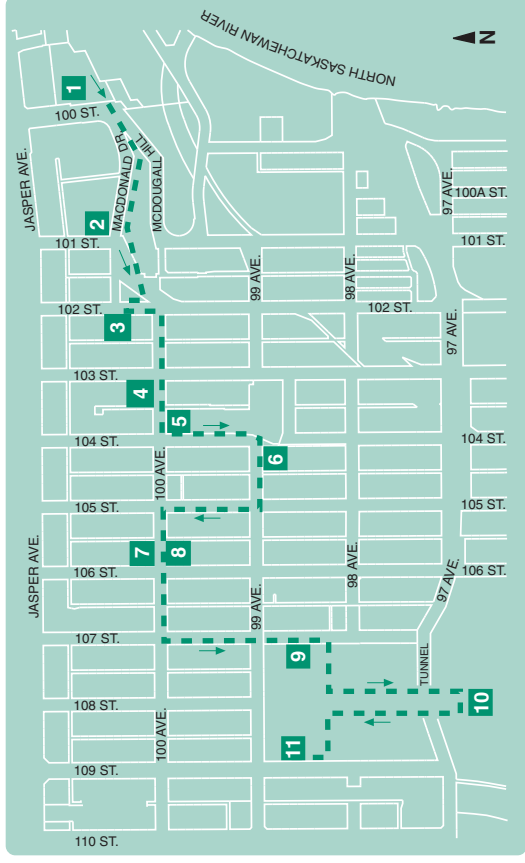
Edmonton's skyline in 1930. (CEA EA-288-10)

Tour I Heritage Trail

1. Macdonald Hotel (1912-1915)**
2. McDougall United Church (1909)*
3. Salvation Army Citadel (1925)*
4. Masonic Temple (1931)
5. Gariepy House (1902)*
6. McKay Avenue School (1881, 1904)*
7. The Arlington (1909)
8. Land Titles Office (1893)*
9. Federal Public Building (1955)
10. Legislature Building (1907-1912)
11. Bowker Building (1931)

* Indicates presence of an *Edmonton Historical Board plaque* highlighting the building's history.

** Indicates two plaques.





I-1. MACDONALD HOTEL (1912-1915)

10065 - 100 STREET

The Macdonald Hotel can no longer claim to be one of Edmonton's tallest buildings, but, due to its prominent site on the edge of the river valley and its unique design, the "Mac" remains one of the city's best known landmarks. The Montreal firm of Ross and MacFarlane, which also designed the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg (1911-1913) and the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa (1912), were contracted to design the Macdonald Hotel. Conceived in the best tradition of Canada's famous railway hotels, the Macdonald was built between 1912 and 1915 at a cost of \$2.25 million for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Steel and reinforced concrete form the skeleton of the hotel, which is hidden beneath an elegant skin of Bedford Indiana limestone and sheet copper roofing. Elements of French Renaissance architecture can be seen in the hotel; turrets with high-pitched roofs and finials are among its most distinctive features, and the mixture of arcades and corbelled balconies complete the image. Long known as Edmonton's most elegant and popular hotel, the Macdonald was returned to its former glory by



*The Macdonald Hotel soon after completion.
(CEA EA-10-133)*



renovations and restoration which were completed in 1991. The hotel was designated as a Municipal Historical Resource by the City of Edmonton in 1985.

I-2. MCDUGALL UNITED CHURCH (1909)

10086 - 101 STREET

At the time of its construction in 1909, this fine brick church was known as McDougall Methodist Church in honour of Edmonton's first Methodist minister. After Canada's Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches formed the United Church of Canada in 1925, the name was changed to its present form. McDougall United Church was designed by a well-known local architect, H.A. Magoon (see also I-3, II-10, -11, III-3, -5). Architecture that copied historical models was very popular in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. This church is designed in the Italianate Style, a revival of the architecture of Renaissance Italy. McDougall United Church cost \$85,000 to build and could seat up to 2,500 people. It was the third church on this site. The original church was built of



The first (left) and third (right) McDougall Churches, 1920s. (CEA EA-10-372)



logs by Rev. George McDougall in 1873 and was the first building of note outside the walls of Fort Edmonton. The second, a wood frame church, was constructed in 1892 and demolished after the construction of the brick church. The first church has been moved to Fort Edmonton Park where it has been restored and is on view.

I-3. SALVATION ARMY CITADEL (1925)

10030 - 102 STREET

The Salvation Army was founded in England in 1865 in response to the social ills spawned by the industrial revolution. As the name implies, the Salvation Army is organized on a military model, so it is only natural that its meeting hall, the Citadel, be designed along the lines of a fortress. Magoon and MacDonald, architects (see also I-2, II-10, -11, III-3, -5), chose clinker bricks for the facade of the Citadel and incorporated turrets in their 1925 design to give it a rugged, castle-like appearance. Polychrome tiles lighten the mood, and the towers in the centre of the facade echo the



The Salvation Army Citadel, 1943. (PAA BL528)



design of many small Albertan churches (see photo, I-2). Thus the dual function of the Citadel as a Christian stronghold and a centre of social outreach was expressed in the design of the building. The Citadel was converted to house the city's first professional live theatre in 1965. The new Citadel Theatre at 9828 - 101A Avenue was opened in 1976, and since that time the Old Citadel, as it is now generally known, has seen various uses.

I-4. MASONIC TEMPLE (1931)

10318 - 100 AVENUE

In the 40 years which followed the formation of Edmonton's first lodge in 1893, another 12 or so had been constituted, but no



*The Gothic Revival Style Masonic Temple, 1931.
(PAA BL93)*



substantial meeting hall had been built. The new Temple provided quarters which were well worth the wait. Built in 1931 to a design by an Edmonton architect, William G. Blakey, it cost the Masons \$170,000. The Temple's Gothic Revival Style design was chosen for its ties with the medieval origins of the Masonic Order. But the architect omitted the drafty corridors and damp walls typical of the historic prototypes, in favour of the romantic and elegant aspects of the design. The exterior of the Temple is lavishly decorated with gothic tracery, canopied niches intended to shelter statues, and cast stone detailing. The offices, meeting rooms, auditorium and banquet hall are finished in oak and mahogany panelling and had tiled floors, bronze fittings and stained glass windows. The Temple is a modern building in historically-inspired packaging.

I-5. GARIEPY HOUSE (1902)

9947 - 104 STREET

Joseph Hormisdas Gariepy came to Edmonton in 1892, and through astute business practice and investment in land, became one of the town's leading citizens. Built in 1902, his brick



The Gariepy House in 1904. (PAA B4543)



mansion is one of only a few structures remaining from the period before Edmonton was incorporated as a city. Gariepy, who was originally from Montreal, probably chose the old-fashioned Second Empire Style for his house because of its French origins. The original wrap-around verandah is now gone and a wing as large as the house has been added to the east, but it is still possible to recognize the French style. In particular, the mansard roof with through-the-eaves or wall dormers and the corner turret with porthole dormers have been preserved and evoke the original character of the house. Gariepy sold the house to John A. McDougall in 1923, who in turn sold it the following year to the Sisters of Charity of the Providence General Hospital. Since that time it has served as a convent and has been known as Rosary Hall.

**I-6.
MCKAY AVENUE
SCHOOL
(1881, 1904)**

10425 - 99 AVENUE

Edmonton's first school outside the Fort was erected on this site in 1881. The land was donated by the Hudson's Bay Company and



The McKay Avenue School before the 1912 expansion. (CEA EA-10-868)



most of the \$968 needed to construct the wood frame school was collected through public subscription. The original school stands at the southwest corner of the schoolyard, and is the first prominent manufactured lumber building in Edmonton. In 1905, the eastern two-thirds of McKay Avenue School was completed in brick and sandstone, and the western third was added in 1912. The school's namesake was Dr. William Morrison MacKay, a Hudson's Bay Company surgeon from 1864 to 1898. The misspelling of his name became literally carved in stone when the sandstone panel bearing the school's name arrived reading "McKay". A high point in the school's history came in 1906-1907 when the third floor assembly hall was rented to house the first two sessions of the Provincial Parliament. Both the schools on this property have been designated Provincial Historical Resources; the 1904 McKay Avenue School received this stature in 1976, and the 1881 School followed in 1983.

I-7. THE ARLINGTON (1909)

10524 - 100 AVENUE

Between 1904 and 1914, Edmonton's population expanded from 8,350 to 72,516 people. The Arlington, built in 1909 by a "syndicate of local capitalists," was among the largest, most favourably located and luxurious of the apartment blocks constructed in response to the housing problem which developed during this period. Central heating, gas stoves, private bathrooms, an elevator, and built-in furniture including Murphy beds, dining tables, desks, buffets and bookcases were among the amenities provided. In the context of the day, when rooming houses were the most common alternative to single family houses, this was luxury indeed. The relative simplicity of the Arlington's exterior is perhaps the result of



*The Arlington soon after completion, 1910.
(PAA B4220)*

budgeting, or of the “lightning” speed with which the building was erected. Within the space of a few weeks the steel frame clad in brick was thrown up by as many as 25 bricklayers and 50 carpenters at a time. Nevertheless, the Arlington manages, through pleasing proportions and restrained classical detailing, to create a dignified and imposing presence on the street. The Arlington has been restored and designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 1998, and as a Provincial Historic Resource in 1999.

I-8. LAND TITLES OFFICE (1893)

10523 - 100 AVENUE

In 1891, the railroad from Calgary to Edmonton was terminated on the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River, and a new community called South Edmonton was established there. A trend became apparent in 1892 when the federal government decided to move the office issuing land registration documents from Edmonton, where it had been for many years, to the south side. A band of angry Edmontonians, led by the Mayor, detained the wagons carting the effects of the



The original appearance of the Land Titles Office, 1902. (PAA B4443)

office away, with the result that the office remained in Edmonton. In 1893, the new “Land Registration and Crown Timber Offices” were built. With walls of brick 18 inches thick and roofed in galvanized iron, it was an attractive and impressive addition to the town. Despite alterations made during the two world wars, when the building served as a meeting hall for various military units, the essential character of the Office, with its jerkinhead roofline and central entrance gable flanked by hipped gables, can still be detected. The Land Titles Office was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1977.

I-9. FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDING (1955)

9820 - 107 STREET

Although it was designed in 1930, the Federal Public Building was not actually constructed until 1955. The federal department of Public Works drew up the plans for this building, which was intended to house all the departments of the federal government operating in Alberta. It is one of Edmonton’s few Art Deco style buildings. The massing of the building is simple and its outlines crisp.



Exterior ornament is restricted to the uppermost part of the facade, and to the area surrounding the main entrance. While the chevron is a motif characteristic of the Art Deco Style, the manner in which it is employed in this building is rather more restrained than usual. The metal ornament surrounding the main entry and the interior decoration of the entrance foyer, however, more nearly conform with the exuberant use of colour, rich surfaces and precious materials generally associated with Art Deco designs.



The Federal Public Building in 1957. (PAA Ws149/1)



I-10. LEGISLATURE BUILDING (1907-1912)

10801 - 97 AVENUE

In Europe, the presence of a dome typically indicates that a building has religious significance, but in North America, domes are also commonly associated with seats of governmental power. Three of Canada's provincial legislative assemblies meet in buildings similar to the Alberta Legislature. Derived from design theories which originated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, this type of Classical Revival Style architecture called for a symmetrical plan and formal classical elevations. A.M. Jeffers, the Provincial Architect who designed the Legislature, chose a T-shaped plan, and devised a Beaux-Arts facade with a rusticated base, a formal entry with a columned portico, paired columns for the wings, and of course, a large dome with a cupola. Calgary sandstone was used on the exterior, and the rotunda was finished in marble from Italy, Pennsylvania and Quebec. Surprisingly, the steel-framed dome is clad in terracotta. It took about six years (1907-1913) and approximately \$4 million to construct and furnish the Legislature Building.

Guided tours of the interior of the Legislature Building are available. Times are posted near the entrance.



The Legislature Building and the High Level Bridge (left) nearing completion, 1913. (CEA EA-24-11)



I-11. **BOWKER BUILDING** (1931)

9835 - 109 STREET

Though it matches the Legislature Building (I-10) in style, the Bowker Building was actually constructed in 1931, almost 20 years later, and just one year after the Art Deco Federal Public Building (I-9) was designed. For Cecil Burgess (see III-1), the University of Alberta architecture professor who drew up the plans for this dignified and sophisticated Beaux-Arts Style office block, historical allusions and not modernity were the main concern. Manitoba limestone, which is harder and can be more finely sculpted than sandstone, was chosen for the exterior of the Bowker Building. Especially fine are the Corinthian columns which circle the building, and the Alberta coat of arms and carved head of a native man located in the open-pediment above the main entry. Originally costing almost \$1 million to build, the Bowker Building underwent renovations and refitting in 1980 which totalled seven times that sum. A sixth floor was added to the top of the structure; clad in a copper mansard roof, this expansion is almost undetectable from the ground level.



The Bowker Building in 1931. (PAA BL67)



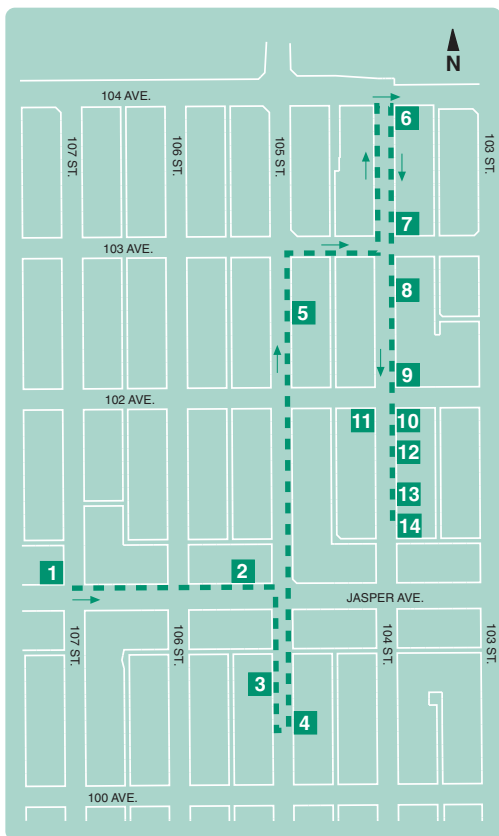
TOUR II JASPER WEST AND WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

The historic western edge of Edmonton's downtown was the location of wholesale and warehouse buildings which served as a storage area for the city's retail businesses. The bulk of this tour comprises buildings constructed during the pre-WWI boom period. They reflect the optimism and enthusiasm with which investors developed the newly available Hudson's Bay Reserve land west of 101 Street. Today the storage function originally performed by the early warehouses has been moved to new buildings on the outskirts of Edmonton, and alternative uses have been found for many of the historic buildings on this tour.

This tour begins at the MacLean Block on the NW corner of Jasper Avenue and 107 Street, and contains the largest concentration of historic buildings in the downtown core. It includes 14 sites, is 1.75 km in length and takes about 1.5 hours to complete. Upon completion of this walk, you can continue to Tour III, which begins at the Birks Building on the NE corner of Jasper Avenue and 104 Street.



*View north on 104 Street from Jasper Avenue, 1914.
(CEA EA-500-247)*



Tour II Jasper West and Warehouse District

1. MacLean Block (1909)
2. Jasper Block (1909)
3. Expert Cleaners (1950s)
4. First Presbyterian Church (1911)*
5. H.V. Shaw Building (1914)*
6. Mercer Warehouse (1911)
7. Horne and Pitfield Building (1911)
8. Canada Consolidated Rubber Building (1913)
9. Revillon Building (1912-1913)*
10. McKenney Building (1912)
11. Metals Building (1914)*
12. Phillips Building (1912)
13. Great West Saddlery Building (1911)*
14. Armstrong Block (1912)

* *Indicates presence of an Edmonton Historical Board plaque highlighting the building's history.*



II-1. **MACLEAN BLOCK** (1909)

10702 JASPER AVENUE

Some of Edmonton's finest brickwork can be seen in this commercial and residential block. Roundheaded arches on the ground and third floors and elaborate brick detailing imitate the stone architecture of Renaissance Italy, indicating that architect James Wize chose the Italianate Style for the MacLean Block. Built in 1909 for Dr. James Douglas MacLean, a successful local physician and surgeon, the building cost \$35,000 to construct. By far the most westerly of any commercial block in Edmonton's central core at the time, the MacLean Block was a speculative venture which tied the downtown in with the developing government centre located a few blocks to the south. By having commercial spaces on the ground level, offices on the second, and apartments on the top floor, MacLean diversified his sources of income and diminished his risk. In the late 1970s, the facade of the MacLean Block was refurbished and the interior completely gutted and rebuilt to house modern commercial and office spaces.



The MacLean Block one year after its construction, 1910. (PAA B4228)



II-2. **JASPER BLOCK** (1909)

10516 JASPER AVENUE

The career of John Kelly paralleled those of many of Alberta's first successful businessmen. Whatever their training or background, the timely purchase, development and sale of land and buildings formed a common thread in the histories of Edmonton's early success stories. Kelly was working as a blacksmith in 1902, but by the end of the decade he had made the crucial leap to real estate and development. The Jasper Block of 1909 was one of his projects (see also III-6). Designed by architects Hopkins and Wright (see also II-7, -12) and built at a cost of \$30,000, the three-storey building had space for commercial outlets at the street level and apartments above. The facade of the Jasper Block, though not ornate, is well balanced and enlivened by a stone nameplate set into the parapet, arcaded brick detailing just below the cornice, and stone string courses defining the three floors. It is a good example of the simple, yet pleasing commercial architecture typical of early Edmonton. The Jasper Block was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2004.



The Jasper Block (right) in 1910. (PAA B4229)



II-3. EXPERT CLEANERS (1950s)

10050 - 105 STREET

The Expert Cleaners building is one of a very few examples of International Style architecture from the 1950s remaining in Edmonton. It follows the aesthetic guidelines developed by the functionalist school of design which originated in Europe in the 1920s but reached its peak of popularity 30 years later. Of particular importance to the early development of the style was the idea that a building's form or design should be a direct and rational result of its function, or use. By the fifties however, aesthetics had superseded rationalism, and though the buildings still resembled those actually designed to be functional, it was style rather than use which had become the most important consideration. The Expert Cleaners building demonstrates this later phase of the International Style. Though it is devoid of ornament, it is not designed purely for function. Beautiful marble faces the bottom floor, and a grille, originally suspended over the driveway, served no apparent use – even though it seems to be derived from the covered carriage porches found in former architectural styles.



The Expert Cleaners building in 1988. (PDD)



II-4. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1911)

10025 - 105 STREET

The First Presbyterian Church was built in 1911, and officially opened in 1912. Reverend D.G. McQueen was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Edmonton between 1883 and 1930. He was the first moderator of the Alberta synod of the Church and became the first national leader of those Presbyterians who did not join the United Church of Canada when it was formed from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist churches of Canada in 1925. Though not the oldest church of this denomination in Edmonton, First Presbyterian was certainly the largest and most costly structure of its kind. Able to seat over 1,200 people, this Gothic Revival Style building cost \$172,455 to construct – over twice the original estimate of \$85,000. Through the use of numerous large Gothic windows, the Edmonton architectural firm of Wilson and Herrald were able, despite the size of the building, to design a church which was monumental, but not ponderous. The First Presbyterian Church was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1978.



*The First Presbyterian Church, c. 1915.
(CEA EA-10-561)*



II-5. H.V. SHAW BUILDING (1914)

10229 - 105 STREET

In the days before cigarettes, cigars were big business. Harry Shaw's Edmonton Cigar Factory was manufacturing one million cigars per year in 1908, after being open only seven years. Six years later, Shaw was one of the largest employers in Edmonton and could afford his own building. By 1917, 90 people were working in his factory. The H.V. Shaw Building was not only trend-setting, as it was the second fireproof, reinforced-concrete warehouse in the district, but it was eye-catching as well. Brick and stone were laid in alternating bands to form the voussoirs of the top floor arched windows and in a check pattern in the parapet to draw the eye to the stone nameplate with date. The blank side walls served and still serve as billboards for hand-painted advertisements. Despite the popularity of the house brand 'Major Reno' and 'La Palma' cigars, the company suffered setbacks after WWI and moved to another location in 1921, when Shaw sold the building. The H.V. Shaw building was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001.



*The H.V. Shaw cigar factory and warehouse, 1921.
(GAI NA-1328-66444)*



II-6. MERCER WAREHOUSE (1911)

10363 - 104 STREET

In 1911, a four-storey block was built on the southeast corner of 104 Avenue and 104 Street opposite the Canadian National Railway yards. It was an uncomplicated building designed for use as a warehouse: it was rectangular in plan and the elevations were unadorned. The loading bays were located at the rear on the east side of the building, conveniently facing towards the railway spur running down the alley. John B. Mercer, in the wholesale business in Edmonton since the 1890s, sold liquors, cigars and wines from a store located on Jasper Avenue before building this functional warehouse to store his stock. Many changes and alterations to the original design of the Mercer Warehouse can be detected. Among the most obvious are the loss of the fourth storey (possibly through fire), the addition of the loading bays which have been punched through the north wall, and the three-storey matching annex built on the south side of the warehouse.



The Mercer Warehouse in 1914. (GAI NC-6-1124)



II-7. HORNE AND PITFIELD BUILDING (1911)

10301 - 104 STREET

Foley Brothers, Larson and Company of Winnipeg entered the wholesale grocery business in Edmonton in 1905. After several years, a new warehouse was needed to store their staple and fancy groceries, biscuits, confectioneries, and tinned and bottled goods. It was designed by Edmonton architect E.C. Hopkins (see also II-2, -12) and constructed at a cost of \$40,000 in 1911. The Campbell, Wilson and Horne company, another wholesale grocery firm from Winnipeg, bought the warehouse in 1913 and occupied it until 1957. In 1943, the company and building name changed to Horne and Pitfield Ltd. The original building, which consisted of the first five bays on the corner, was expanded twice. In 1923, a two-storey, five-bay addition was made to the north side, on top of which two more storeys were built in 1947. These changes would be almost undetectable if different brick hadn't been used in the later construction. Careful proportions and large windows, not ornament, are the principal architectural features of the Horne and Pitfield Building.



The original Horne and Pitfield Building (right) and its larger annex (left), 1958. (PAA Ws184)



II-8. CANADA CONSOLIDATED RUBBER BUILDING (1913)

10249 - 104 STREET

David Ker of Victoria, B.C. built a brick warehouse on this location in 1912. It was designed by Edmonton architect Roland Lines (see III-7, -8, IV-9), cost \$55,000 to erect, and burned to the ground in January, 1913. The misfortune of D. Ker was the good luck of the Canada Consolidated Rubber Company, however, and later that same year the same construction company which built the Macdonald Hotel (I-1), the Canadian Stewart Company of Montreal, was engaged to erect this warehouse and did so in the space of two months. The replacement warehouse cost \$110,000 – twice as much as the original. Bricks are laid to simulate a dentillated parapet and a



*The Canada Consolidated Rubber Building (left), 1933.
(PAA BL150/1)*



rusticated entrance. Stone is used to accent the nameplate, door details, window sills and lintels. Windows on the central stairwell are offset from the floor levels to emphasize the vertical elements of this design. This building made a grand venue for the company's "rubber and felt footwear, waterproof clothing, rubber belting, hose, packing, automobile and carriage tires, druggists rubber sundries, etc." The Canada Consolidated Rubber Building was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001. The building has been restored and has a new life as the Cobogo Lofts and sold as condominiums.

II-9. REVILLON BUILDING (1912-1913)

10221 - 104 STREET

Established in 1723, the firm of Revillon Frères of Paris, France, traded first in furs and then expanded into wholesale and retail goods as well. Edmonton became their centre of operations in the Canadian west in 1902, and by 1912 they had 96 stores scattered about the country. At the time of its construction in 1912-1913, the Revillon Building was the largest and most sophisticated warehouse in western Canada. Constructed of reinforced concrete, it



The Revillon Building, 1922. (GAI ND-3-881)



had all the modern amenities, including electric hoists, an electric passenger elevator, an automatic telephone exchange, pneumatic tubes for sending written messages within the building, and spiral shipping chutes. Winnipeg architect James McDiarmid designed the Revillon Building as well as the two-storey 1920 addition which could support an additional 18 floors. His contractor brother, John, also of Winnipeg, built the original structure for \$300,000. In 1986, a prize-winning design linked the renovated Revillon Building with the 1910 Ross Brothers Hardware Building to the east to form the Boardwalk complex.

II-10. MCKENNEY BUILDING (1912)

10187 - 104 STREET

A resident of St. Albert and MLA for the riding of Clearwater, Henry William McKenney was a prominent figure both in business and public affairs. He purchased this property in 1903, but it was not until 1912 that the McKenney Building was begun, making it a precise contemporary of the neighbouring Revillon Building. Archival photographs show the two buildings rising simultaneously on



The McKenney Building (right) one year after completion, 1913. (PAA B4944)



opposite sides of 102 Avenue. Nevertheless, the McKenney Building belonged to a different era of building technology. Whereas the Revillon used modern materials and methods, the McKenney was a simple brick shell with wood floors. The local architectural firm of Magoon and MacDonald (see I-2, -3, II-11, III-3, -5) drew up the plans for the \$40,000 warehouse. It was a spare and functional three and one-half-storey building capable of upward expansion by one more floor. Most of the facade's stone detailing was removed during renovations in 1979, making even more salient the most prominent feature of the McKenney Building: the pedimented entry inscribed with its name.

II-11. METALS BUILDING (1914)

10190 - 104 STREET

Development gradually moved west from the eastern edge of the Hudson's Bay Reserve at 101 Street – especially after the land sale of 1912 – and by 1914 the east side of 104 Street from Jasper Avenue to 104 Avenue was heavily developed with substantial brick warehouses. Contemporary maps and photos show the west side as residential and at least partially overgrown



The Metals Building in 1971. (HRMB 71-R15-3)



with native trees. After 1913, a slump developed in Edmonton's economy, bringing construction to a virtual halt in the city and for many years the Metals Building stood alone on the west side of 104 Street. The architectural firm of Magoon and MacDonald (see also I-2, -3, II-10, III-3, -5) designed this plumbing supplies warehouse and it was constructed at a cost of \$45,000.

Although the combination of recessed window panels and pilasters relate this building to the Revillon Building (II-9), the Metals Building belongs to the same generation of construction as the McKenney Building (II-10). An Art Deco Style annex was added to the south in 1927 (demolished in 1995), and the whole complex was renovated in the 1970s. The Metals Building was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2002.

II-12. PHILLIPS BUILDING (1912)

10169 - 104 STREET

The Phillips Building features generous use of windows and clean, simple lines typical of the Commercial Style of Architecture. Its external walls are made of sand-lime brick burned by the local Alsip Brick and Supply Company.



*The Phillips Building, c. 1913.
(Edmonton: Alberta's Capital City - 1914 at CEA)*



Located on the southern edge of the city's original warehouse district, the building was first utilised by Western and Cartage Company for the storage of manufactured goods. Interestingly, by using the latest technology of the time, the architect/builder firm of Purcell and Foote designed and constructed the Phillips Building as one of the first fireproof structures in Edmonton.

In the 1960s, the Phillips Building was severely altered with a façade of metal cladding, marble and beige stone, masking its original look for nearly 40 years. In 2000, the building was slated for demolition. However, due to a public outcry, the building was saved from the wreckers ball and was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001. The building was converted as residential condominium lofts, with its front façade restored to its original 1912 appearance.

II-13. GREAT WEST SADDLERY BUILDING (1911)

10137 - 104 STREET

Both the Great West Saddlery Building and the original portion of the Horne and Pitfield Building (II-7) were designed by the Edmonton



*The Great West Saddlery Building, c. 1912.
(GAI NC-6-345)*



architect E.C. Hopkins (see also II-2) and constructed in 1911, so it is hardly a surprise that they appear so similar. Such differences as exist are minor: the Saddlery Building is one storey taller, has a slightly more ornate cornice, and is not built on a corner lot. Even the estimated cost of construction (\$40,000) was the same for both buildings. However, the Saddlery, which was constructed first, cost two and a half times as much to complete. Perhaps some lessons were learned on this project which helped reduce costs on the later building. Based in Winnipeg, the Great West Saddlery Company dealt in wholesale leather goods, including harnesses, saddles, shoe fittings, mitts, gloves, trunks and bags. Surprisingly, the company was able to retain ownership of this property until 1958, well after the days of the horse were over and the bulk of its original merchandise was obsolete.

II-14. ARMSTRONG BLOCK (1912)

10125 - 104 STREET

Reginald and Herbert Armstrong built the Armstrong Block as a speculative venture. The family printing business, on the site for many years, was moved to make way for the construction of a new building in 1912. Built according to plans by architect D. Hardie at a cost of \$88,000, it was unique on 104 Street in that its upper floors were devoted to offices and apartments rather than warehouse space. A comparison of the north wall of the Armstrong Block with the south wall of the Great West Saddlery Building (II-12) is revealing. The Saddlery Building rises vertically from the property line, but the Armstrong Building is stepped back on the third and fourth floors. This setback was intended to allow light and air to reach the apartments on those floors in the event



that another building similar to the blank-walled Saddlery be constructed on the intervening lot. Also interesting are the four stone escutcheons topping the pilaster strips which punctuate the facade, and a fifth in the parapet inscribed with an “A” for the builders of the block. The Armstrong Block was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001. The building continues to provide retail on the ground floor with apartments above.



The Armstrong Block, 1927. (GAI NC-6-335)



TOUR III DOWNTOWN AND RICE HOWARD WAY

The civic centre concept illustrated below shows a city very different from the one which exists today. There is, however, a certain continuity which is the result of the historic structures that have been preserved and, in many cases, restored. In the downtown area, Jasper Avenue, which always was and still is Edmonton's main thoroughfare, became the city's banking and business centre after about 1910. Rice Howard Way, composed of Rice (101A) Avenue and Howard (100A) Street, was an important shopping area which featured Ramsey's Department Store after 1911, and has been converted to a pedestrian area. Churchill Square is the focus of Edmonton's civic centre. Although the Square is a relative newcomer in terms of the city's history, it has a precedent in the market square, which formerly occupied the site of the Centennial Library.

Approximately 1 km in length, this tour gives an overview of the development of the city's heart – its central business, banking, shopping, municipal government and cultural district. It includes 11 sites and takes about one hour to complete. The tour begins at the Birks Building, on the NE corner of Jasper Avenue and 104 Street. Upon completion of this walk, you can continue to Tour IV, which begins at the corner of Jasper Avenue and 97 Street.



Civic centre concept, 1962. (CEA EA-10-2713)



III-1. **BIRKS BUILDING** (1929)

10123 - 104 STREET

The Birks Building was designed by Nobbs and Hyde, an architectural firm of national significance. Percy Nobbs, who collaborated with Cecil Burgess (see I-11) on the Birks Building, also designed the original master plan for the University of Alberta. Details such as the cornice indicate a link with past styles, but the streamlined appearance and curved corner places the Birks Building firmly on the road to the Moderne Style of architecture (see also III-2, The Bay). “A distinct compliment to the structural and architectural dignity of this city” according to *The Edmonton Journal*, the Birks Building attracted 5,000 people to its grand opening in 1929. Costing about \$350,000 to build, it was a marvel of rich materials and modern technology. Two storeys were originally planned, but when it became apparent that there was a demand for offices with such features as a built-in compressed air system (meant specifically for medical practices), another two were added on top. Only one other Birks Building of this type exists in Canada – in Montreal.



The Birks Building in 1951. (PAA Ks242)



III-2. THE BAY (1938-1939)

10230 JASPER AVENUE



The Bay soon after completion, 1939. (PAA BL261)

Fur trading was the original and exclusive activity of the H.B.C., but as settlers arrived, this was expanded to include providing supplies for the newcomers. Over the years, the variety and volume of goods increased, and the premises needed to house them grew proportionately. The first store was opened in 1890, in a small rented wood-frame building at 98 Street and Jasper Avenue. In 1893, “the Bay” moved to a slightly larger structure of the same type, followed in 1905 by a three-storey brick building on the same site at the northeast corner of Jasper and 103rd. Finally, in 1938-1939, this Moderne Style department store was constructed. The Winnipeg architectural firm of Moody and Moore was responsible for the design of The Bay, which was carried out in Tyndall limestone, black granite, stainless steel and glass block. A third storey was added to the original two-storey building in 1948. In 1954, the building was doubled in size through an expansion to the north. Its eye-catching design and carved historical panels made the Bay an instant and enduring landmark in Edmonton. In 1991-1992 the building was converted to allow for other businesses to share the premises with The Bay. It was designated by the City of Edmonton as a Municipal Historical Resource in 1989.



III-3. CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE (1929)

10102 JASPER AVENUE



*The Canadian Bank of Commerce, 1930.
(CEA EA-10-223)*

Traditionally, banks were built in classical styles of architecture which implied stability, security and permanence. This building was one of Edmonton's last and best examples of this tradition. An *Edmonton Bulletin* article praised the Commerce Bank as "one of the most up-to-date and complete banking institutions in the dominion" and went on to remark very favourably on its design. J. Horsbarch of Toronto was the architect responsible for designing the \$400,000 Edwardian Classical Revival Style bank, and its execution was



handled by the Edmonton firm of Magoon and MacDonald (see also I-2, -3, II-10, -11, III-5). Horsbarch's inspiration came from the palaces of the merchant princes of the Italian Renaissance, which this building resembles in many aspects. It has a symmetrical design in which the ground floor and quoins are rusticated, and the detail of the stonework diminishes towards the top of the building. Classical elements such as columns, an entablature, balconets at the fourth floor windows and antefixae on the edge of the roof complete the impressive design.

III-4. **MOSER AND RYDER BUILDING** (1910)

10169 - 101 STREET

The Moderne Style face of this building belies the fact that it was actually constructed in 1910. As originally designed for Almer Moser



The Moser and Ryder Building (in 1910) before its facelift. (PAA B4180)



and Ernest Ryder, its namesakes, the Moser and Ryder Building was a Classical Revival Style structure bearing no resemblance to the present facade at all. A balustraded parapet, dentillated cornice, carved stone wreaths and rusticated pilaster strips and quoins were among its most notable features. In the early forties, a fire caused extensive damage to the building, and after changing hands in 1944, the Moser and Ryder Building was remodelled to house the Walk-Rite Style Shoppe Ltd., “Edmonton’s Smart Shop for Women.” Glass block and precast concrete replaced all but a telltale few of the building’s original classical features; those which remain can be seen on the alley side of the building. In 1984, further renovations were undertaken and chrome-framed, plate-glass windows installed in the place of the glass block. Despite these changes, the Moser and Ryder Building remains one of Edmonton’s finest examples of the Moderne Style.

III-5. RAMSEY BUILDING (1927)

10048 - 101A AVENUE

From the beginning, the Ramsey Building was intended as an extension to the neighbouring Kelly Block. Nevertheless, it does not resemble the Kelly Block closely in style or in height. Built at a cost of \$150,000 in 1927 for James Ramsey, Edmonton’s “Merchant Prince,” this was the last extension he made to his already large department store before selling the business (but not the building) to the T. Eaton Company in 1929. It was designed by the firm of Magoon and MacDonald (see I-2, -3, II-10, -11, III-3), one of Edmonton’s most active and successful architectural offices. The lower portion of this building emphasizes the horizontal, providing a solid-looking base for the building. Strong vertical elements divide the



facade into two bays which are in turn divided into the three-part windows characteristic of the Chicago Commercial Style. The cornice and parapet capping the Ramsey Building are smaller than is generally found in that style, however, making this a unique and interesting design.



*The Ramsey Building (centre) c. 1930.
(CEA A86-118)*



III-6. **KELLY BLOCK** (1915)

10040 - 101A AVENUE

James Ramsey was born in Michigan in 1864 and grew up in Ontario. Soon after his arrival in Edmonton in 1911, Ramsey opened a store in the Tegler Building (now replaced by the Bank of Montreal). Within a short time, more area was needed, and in 1915, John Kelly, the blacksmith/real estate developer who built the Jasper Block (II-2) in 1909, built the eponymous Kelly Block to provide it. Designed by architect Van Sichen, the new wing was soon a landmark on the corner of Rice (101A) Avenue and Howard (100A) Street. Pilasters, modernized capitals and a stylized metal cornice, as well as polychrome bricks enliven the long facade. Ramsey finally bought the Kelly Block in 1925 for \$100,000 – the same amount John Kelly paid to build it. By 1927, with the addition of the Ramsey Building, the Ramsey Department Store was taking up most of the block. Two years later Ramsey sold the stock and goodwill of his store to Eaton's, and 10 years later, passed away at his winter home at Nassau in the Bahamas.



*The Kelly Block (centre), c. 1928.
(A86-118 City Archives)*



III-7. UNION BANK (1910)

10053 JASPER AVENUE

The Union Bank building is the only pre-World War I bank remaining in downtown Edmonton. Typically, banks were constructed in a classical style at that period. Ancient Greek or Roman architecture served as a pattern for most, but the inspiration for the design of the Union Bank was the Italian Renaissance. *The Edmonton Bulletin* described it as “a somewhat new departure in bank buildings in Edmonton.” Telltale features include the rusticated ground floor, the combination of open-bed pediments with oversize keystones above the second floor windows, and the open-topped segmental arch pediment and heavily rusticated pairs of columns which originally framed the entrance. The facade of local pressed brick and Indiana limestone concealed a modern, fire-proof, steel and brick structure. The Union Bank was designed by Edmonton architect Roland Lines (see II-8, III-8, IV-9), and built in 1910 at a cost of \$60,000. It is interesting to compare this building with the contemporary Canada Permanent Building (III-8), which was also designed by Lines. The Union Bank Inn was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 1996.



The Union Bank in 1912. (CEA EA-10-222)



III-8. CANADA PERMANENT BUILDING (1910)

10126 - 100 STREET

Roland Lines was the architect who designed this sophisticated little building (see II-8, III-7, IV-9). Comparison with the Union Bank building (III-7) reveals the same masterful handling of classical elements. Here, however, Lines has found his inspiration in the Baroque period. The greater vertical emphasis, and the greater concentration on details indicate this change of style. The increased and even exaggerated use of decorative elements such as swags in the parapet date stone, the first floor spandrels, and the urns which look like topiary bushes perched on the balustered parapet, enliven the design and point to a Baroque source. The segmental arch pediments, the larger of which



*The Canada Permanent Building, 1911.
(CEA EA-246-135)*



has an open top, and decorated Ionic order pilasters complete the image. Built at a cost of \$65,000 for the Canada Permanent Mortgage Company, this building was stylistically unique in Edmonton at the time of its construction, and remains a one-of-a-kind today. Though dwarfed by its modern neighbours, the Canada Permanent Building manages to hold its own. It was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1995.

III-9. MCLEOD BLOCK (1913-1915)

10136 - 100 STREET

The McLeod Block became an instant Edmonton landmark when it was completed in 1915. The crowning glory of Kenneth McLeod's career as a businessman and developer, this was the city's tallest building at



The McLeod Block, one of Edmonton's first skyscrapers, c. 1915. (Edmonton: Alberta's Capital City - 1914 at CEA)



the time, a distinction it retained for almost 40 years. McLeod came to Edmonton from Ontario in 1891, and by 1913 was successful enough to be able to finance this \$600,000 venture. The McLeod Block is a virtual replica of a building which McLeod had seen in Spokane, Washington. He even hired the same man, John K. Dow, to design it. Terracotta provides detail at the windows, cornice and corners, and matching glazed brick is used as a veneer over the rest of the facade. Perhaps the most eye-catching feature of this memorable building is the cornice with its decorative row of antefixae above, and modillions and polychromed frieze below. The classical vocabulary, so successful in smaller buildings such as the Bank of Commerce (III-3), was deftly adapted to the larger scale of the highrise McLeod Block. It is now the best remaining example of Edmonton's skyscraper designs of that period and was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1995 and as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001.

**III-10.
CHURCHILL
WIRE CENTRE
(1945-1947)**

10003 - 103 AVENUE

At one time, Sir Winston Churchill Square was ringed by a grand collection of civic buildings from the earlier part of this century. These included the Civic Block, the Courthouse, and the Post Office. Today, the Churchill Wire Centre building is one of the last historic buildings to face the Square. Edmonton's first municipally-owned telephone building was built on part of this site in about 1907. Despite the construction of an addition in 1921, demand for telephone service was such that eventually an entirely new and significantly larger building was required. It is this building which remains today and lends a dash of architectural style to the Square across the street.



The Churchill Wire Centre in 1949. (PAA BL1655)

The Churchill Wire Centre was designed in 1945 by Max Dewar, the City Architect at the time, as part of a large - unrealised - scheme for the civic square. It is one of the few Moderne Style buildings remaining in the downtown and exhibits many of the typical features of this type of architecture. Of special note are the black granite base, the regular rhythm of windows and pilasters, the stylized cornice and dentils and the chevron motifs in the spandrels. Flattened, fluted pilasters flank the corner entry and the white terrazzo finish on the exterior, the stainless steel detailing and glass block are characteristic of Moderne Style building materials. Above the door is a carving, in low relief, of a figure standing on a globe holding lightning bolts aloft - a popular image of the day intended to represent the idea of long-distance communication using electricity. This building was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 1998.

**III-11.
IMPERIAL BANK OF
CANADA
(1952)**

9990 JASPER AVENUE

The Imperial Bank of Canada first opened its doors on this site in 1891. Archival photographs show that in 1892 a modest brick



building housed the bank. In about 1906, it was replaced by a much larger and grander structure. Perhaps the most striking feature of the new bank was its Classical Revival Style entrance portico. Supported by giant order columns three storeys tall and elevated on one-storey high plinths, it dwarfed pedestrians and was a very powerful presence on Jasper Avenue. In 1950 this bank, in turn, was demolished to make way for an even larger building, completion of which was delayed until 1952 by a shortage of structural steel. The Edmonton firm of Rule, Wynn and Rule designed this Moderne Style bank, along with company architect, Col. A.J. Everett. Note the relief panels showing trains and planes, the metal spandrels with the bank's logo, and the quoins and pilasters stylized as bands of rectangles. Indiana limestone and black granite provided the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce with a slick, geometric silhouette until the year 2000. Today, the building is owned by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce and houses the World Trade Centre. It was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2004.



The Imperial Bank of Canada in 1954. (PAA Ws31)



TOUR IV JASPER EAST

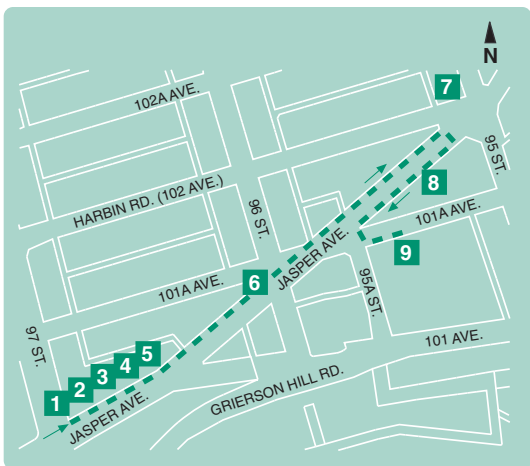
Edmonton's first commercial centre was on 97 Street and on Jasper Avenue east of 101 Street. The buildings detailed in this section of the tour represent the eastern-most extent of this commercial development. Having escaped the intense redevelopment experienced by the city core, the Jasper East area provides one of the most complete and unaltered early streetscapes in Edmonton.

This is the shortest of the four tours in this booklet, having nine sites over a distance of about 0.75 km and requiring about 0.75 hours to complete. The tour begins at the Goodridge Block on the NE corner of Jasper Avenue and 97 Street.

Also of interest in the vicinity is the Edmonton Convention Centre (9797 Jasper Avenue), which has a Visitor Information Centre.



Looking east on Jasper Avenue from 99 Street in 1912. (PAA B4774)



Tour IV Jasper East

1. Goodridge Block (1912)*
2. Jasper House Hotel (1882)*
3. Gem Theatre (about 1908)
4. Ernest Brown Block (1912-1913)*
5. Pendennis Hotel (1912)
6. Gibson Block (1913)*
7. Edmonton Auto Spring Works (1924)
8. Jasper Avenue East, South Side (pre-1913)
9. R.N.W.M.P. Headquarters (1912-1913)*

* *Indicates presence of an Edmonton Historical Board plaque highlighting the building's history.*



IV-1. **GOODRIDGE BLOCK** (1912)

9696 JASPER AVENUE

The construction of the Goodridge Block in 1912 was accompanied by a great deal of excitement. As excavations for the foundations of the new structure were being carried out, the west wall of the adjacent Jasper House Hotel (IV-2) started to crumble and fall into the hole. Crowds gathered to observe the catastrophe, but disaster was ultimately averted when the Hotel was propped up with large timbers. Leonard Goodridge was the owner of both Jasper House and the new excavation, and he was doubtless relieved when the former did not end up in the latter. Construction continued uneventfully, and the result was a handsome three-storey brick building costing \$40,000. The junction of Jasper Avenue and Namayo Avenue (97 Street) was the heart of Edmonton's original business district. By 1912, however, commercial development was creeping westward on Jasper into the Hudson's Bay Company Reserve, leading eventually to the decline of the Jasper East area. This shift in the centre of the city explains how the Goodridge Block survived subsequent building booms and still stands



The Goodridge Block, 1914. (GAI ND-6-1055)



today. Extensive restoration and renovation took place in 1993, and the Goodridge Block was designated as a Municipal Historical Resource by the City of Edmonton in that same year.

IV-2. JASPER HOUSE HOTEL (1882)

9692 JASPER AVENUE

In continuous operation on this site since 1882, the Jasper House Hotel, now known as the Hub Hotel, was Edmonton's second hotel and has the distinction of being the oldest such establishment remaining in the city. It began as a two-storey, gable-roofed wood frame building with a brick veneer – the only brick building between Winnipeg and Vancouver, and until 1891 the only one in Edmonton. By 1884, the hotel had expanded to almost twice its original width to accommodate the expanding patronage it was receiving. A third storey extended the building up to its present height in 1907, and a rear wing in brick replaced an earlier wood-frame structure in 1912. These latter changes were made by James Goodridge, who bought the property in 1893, though he may have managed it from an earlier date (see IV-1 and IV-3). Goodridge was prominent in the life of early Edmonton, serving on the first town



The Jasper House Hotel in 1890. (PAA B5560)



council in 1892 and having a hand in the organization of many of the city's institutions. Little of the original Jasper House Hotel remains, but its facade retains the configuration of earlier days.

IV-3. GEM THEATRE (ABOUT 1908)

9684 JASPER AVENUE

The Gem is one of Edmonton's oldest theatres built especially for the purpose of showing movies. Constructed in about 1908 for the same family which owned the Jasper House Hotel (IV-2) and later built the Goodridge Block (IV-1), the Gem was distinguished by its asymmetrical, classically-inspired street frontage. Elements indicating this classical styling are the pillars which can be seen at each extreme of the facade and the pediment above the door at its western end. The storefronts which originally flanked the main entrance of the theatre are long gone, the awnings, windows and signage removed. Numerous posters above and around the door and a painted signboard flanked by electric streetlights were all that originally indicated the theatre's entrance, but at



*The entrance to the Gem Theatre, no date.
(PAA B4490)*



some time – probably in the 1940s – a Moderne Style marquee with neon signage was added. Over 80 years after opening, and despite the conversion of the basement after WWII to house a boxing club known as the “Gym below the Gem,” the essence of the original Gem Theatre is still evident. The Gem Theatre was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 1999.

IV-4. ERNEST BROWN BLOCK (1912-1913)

9670 JASPER AVENUE

Also known as the Brighton Block, this building was originally named after Ernest Brown, its builder and one of Edmonton’s most prominent early photographers. Many of the illustrations used in this booklet were taken by Brown, who came to Edmonton in about 1904. This block was constructed in stages, and actually consists of two separate buildings (see photo IV-5). The section to the right, or east, was completed in 1912, and its mirror image western half was added in 1913. Local architect James Henderson drew up the plans for this \$30,000 project. A brick and stone veneer conceals the brick and steel frame structure of



The Ernest Brown Block, c. 1913. (PAA B4237)



the building from the street. Variety and interest is provided in this relatively simple design by stone details such as the keystones in the upper windows, the dentillated cornice and the alternating bands on the eight pilaster strips which punctuate the facade. The Ernest Brown Block retains most of its original character; even the slogan, “Everything Photographic” on the parapet crowning the building has been restored. The Ernest Brown Block was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001.

IV-5. PENDENNIS HOTEL (1912)

9660 JASPER AVENUE

The exact date when this property first became the site of a hotel is not known, but it is apparent that the Pendennis, like the Jasper House Hotel, evolved and grew over a period of time. In 1907, Nathan Bell became associated with it as the manager. He bought half the property the present hotel stands on in 1908 and in 1911 purchased the rest. *The Edmonton Journal* noted that Bell “was the first hotel operator to purchase his site and building.” Bell was well known as a hotel proprietor, and the Pendennis’ dining room, according to *The Edmonton Bulletin*, was “admittedly one of the best in the city.” A mortgage in 1912 indicates



The Pendennis Hotel in 1912. Note half-finished Ernest Brown Block, left. (PAA B4329)



the date when a new facade by the Calgary architectural firm of Lang, Major and Co. was added. It featured a classically styled metal cornice and voluted brackets, swags, pilaster strips, a round-arched main entry and a segmentally-arched pediment capping the subtly projecting central bay. The economic slump after 1913 and prohibition in 1916 combined to put Bell out of business, and in 1920 the Pendennis was repossessed by his mortgage company. This building was designated as a Municipal Historic Resource in 2001.

IV-6. GIBSON BLOCK (1913)

9608 JASPER AVENUE

William Gibson, a realtor who listed his profession as “Gentleman” on the certificate of title for this property, is the namesake of this eccentrically shaped building. The first flat-iron block - so-called because its wedge-shaped floorplan was reminiscent of the household appliance - appeared in New York in 1902. Such buildings became popular across North America before WWI as a means of salvaging real estate previously considered unusable. Architect A.W. Cowley designed the Gibson Block, constructed in 1913, in the characteristic triangular plan shape to fit an



The Gibson Block in 1914. (GAI ND-6-923)



awkward lot unsuitable for a standard office building. Turkish Baths occupied the basement and the ground floor commercial retail shopfronts were girdled with a continuous wall of glass. In 1914, the Gibson Block was sold and the offices on the upper floors were converted to apartments. The name of the building changed to the Schubert and Wenzel Block, but was changed back at some date. Other flatiron blocks were built in Alberta, but this is the finest example. The Gibson Block was designated a Registered Historical Resource by the Province in 1978, and was purchased by the City of Edmonton and designated as a Municipal Historical Resource in 1994. It was also upgraded to a Provincial Historical Resource in that year, and was extensively renovated and restored by the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation to serve as a women's shelter.

IV-7. EDMONTON AUTO SPRING WORKS (1924)

9502 - 102 AVENUE

The Edmonton Auto Spring Works is first listed in the City Directory in 1924. It is probable that this building was constructed in that



*The Edmonton Auto Spring Works, 1939.
(CEA EA-160-1163)*



year. In the following year, the Edmonton Auto Radiator Works was also listed in the same building. Businesses dealing with the sales and service of automobiles proliferated after WWI, displacing livery stables in Edmonton's Directories. This building was part of that trend. It also illustrates a trend in architecture. Like the Birks Building (III-1), which was a blend of earlier styles of commercial building and the Moderne Style, the Edmonton Auto Spring Works building mixes the false-front architecture of the livery stables with a taste of the Moderne Style. Stucco serves to streamline the traditional lines of this building, giving it a "cleaner," more geometric appearance. Thus did Edmontonians ease their way into the 20th century of machines and modern architecture.

IV-8. JASPER AVENUE EAST, SOUTH SIDE (PRE-1913)

9523 - 9535 JASPER AVENUE

Little is left today which would indicate that Jasper Avenue East was once as developed on the south side as the north. The image below, as well as the photos on page 3 and page 10 show



The buildings which occupied the present site of the Convention Centre in 1957. (PAA B5053)



that this was the case. Hotels, laundries, a newspaper office, a picture framing shop, and a movie theatre, among others, could be found stretching from 100 Street east as far as 95 Street. Most have now vanished. Cliffe Street, situated south of Jasper Avenue and east of 99 Street, is gone without a trace, the victim of progress and erosion. The earliest record of 9523 Jasper Avenue indicates that in 1913, a tinsmithing business occupied the building. At some time a coat of stucco and some radiator-like fins transformed it into a Moderne Style building. In contrast, the pre-1907 building at 9535 Jasper Avenue has retained some of its original pressed metal siding. Both buildings have seen better days, but are valuable as the last vestiges of a bygone era.

**IV-9.
R.N.W.M.P.
HEADQUARTERS
(1912-1913)**

9530 - 101A AVENUE

In 1874, Fort Saskatchewan became the first base of the North-West Mounted Police in the area – a choice encouraged, if not wholly determined by a clash of personalities between the Chief Factor at Fort Edmonton, and the



*Edmonton's R.N.W.M.P. Headquarters in c. 1932.
(CEA EA-0-5)*



Mounties' commanding officer. In 1904, King Edward VII conferred the prefix "Royal" on the police force, and in 1909 the Mounties finally moved their headquarters to Edmonton. Known as the Edmonton Barracks, this building was erected in 1912-1913 according to designs by architect Roland Lines (see II-8, III-7, -8). It contained 10 cells for male and two for female prisoners, a padded cell, a recreation room, five bedrooms for sergeants, 20 cubicles for constables and a tunnel leading to the river valley. Built at a cost of \$70,000, the battlemented and towered brick Barracks was tangible evidence of the presence of the law in Edmonton. The patterned brickwork of the original Barracks, as well as the fine stone entry to the later west wing can best be seen from the courtyard. Officers and their families were housed in cottage-like rowhouses – now demolished – on the south side of the courtyard.



GLOSSARY

antefix an ornament derived from the leaf-shaped tiles which, in the architecture of ancient Greece, were placed upright at the edge of a roof to hide the ends of the roofing tiles.

arcade a series of columns joined by arches.

Art Deco Style a style popular during the 1920s and 30s. Used colourful geometric and naturalistic motifs for decoration and was generally formal and angular in design.

balustrade a series of short posts or balusters connected by a rail and used as a protective barrier or decoration.

battlement a notched parapet.

bay a regularly repeated spatial element defined by vertical supports.

Beaux-Arts Style A classically-derived style originating at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. Emphasizes symmetry and monumentality.

capital the topmost feature, usually decorated, of a column or pilaster.

cast stone cement cast to resemble stone.

Chicago Commercial Style an architectural style developed in Chicago around the turn of the century. Specific to tall office buildings and having distinctive windows divided into three side-by-side panes.

Classical Revival Style architecture which uses elements of ancient Greek and Roman buildings.

clinker brick brick which has been overfired to produce textured surfaces.

corbelled a projection or series of stepped projections in masonry or brick built out from a wall to support the eaves of a roof or some other feature.

cornice any projecting decorative moulding along the top of a building wall or arch.

cupola a small dome.

dentil a small rectangular ornament, usually found in rows below a cornice.

Edwardian Classical Revival Style the style of Classical Revival architecture popular during the Edwardian era (early 20th century).



elevation the vertical part of an architectural design. The view of a building from the side.

entablature a combination of decorative elements, of which the cornice is one, which form a wide band at the top of a wall or above a row of columns or pilasters.

escutcheon a shield-shaped ornament.

finial an ornament which is situated at the point of a spire or at the end of a gable.

gable roof a roof with two sloping surfaces and an inverted v-shaped cross-section.

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

Gothic Revival Style architecture, especially of the 19th century, which is based on medieval models.

gothic window window which is pointed at the top.

hipped roof a roof having a sloping surface instead of a vertical gable end. Often resembles a pyramid in shape.

Italianate Style architecture, especially of the late 19th century, which is based on that of Renaissance Italy.

jerkinhead roof a roof form in which the top of the end of a gable roof is cut off by a secondary slope forming a hip.

keystone the wedge-shape stone found at the apex of an arch, often oversized or decorated for aesthetic effect.

lintel a horizontal beam or stone above an opening such as a door or window.

mansard roof a roof having a double slope. The upper slope has a low pitch, while the lower slope is steeply pitched.

Moderne Style a style popular after the 1920s. Similar to Art Deco, but without ornament. Sometimes called Streamline Moderne.

modillion a small ornamental bracket found below a cornice.

parapet a low wall projecting along the edge of a roof, which may be embellished or decorated.



pediment a low-pitched gable edged with classical mouldings. Often decorated, usually found above a door or window.

pilaster a shallow pier or pillar projecting only slightly from a wall.

pillar a square column.

plinth a platform or podium.

porthole dormer a round window resembling a porthole projecting from a roof and having its own roof.

portico a porch, the roof of which is supported by columns or pillars. Often with a pedimented roof.

quoin stones at the corners of a building usually employed as decorations or for reinforcing the edge of a wall.

rusticated masonry having strongly emphasized recessed joints and smooth or roughly cut block faces.

Second Empire Style a style originating in France in the late 19th century. Mansard roofs are a characteristic feature.

segmental arch an arch which uses a smaller segment of a circle than half a circle.

spandrel in multi-storey buildings, the panel between the top of a window and the bottom of the window above it.

string course a horizontal band of stone or brick which encircles a building.

swag a semicircular ornament resembling draped fabric or a garland of flowers.

through-the-eaves dormer a dormer at the edge of a roof which rises vertically from the wall of a building and breaks through the line of an eave.

tracery the ornamental intersecting stone- or woodwork, often found in gothic windows.

turret a small tower.

volute a spiral or scroll-shaped decoration.

voussoirs the bricks or wedge-shaped stones composing an arch over a window or doorway.



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