WINDSOR PARK NORTH PARK

8905 WINDSOR ROAD NW

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The Windsor Park North Park is a cultural landscape centrally located within the overall Windsor Park neighbourhood. The curvilinear triangular park site is approximately 1.57ha (3.88 acres) in size and is bounded on the north and east by Windsor Road, the Windsor Park school site to the south and 119 Street to the west. The Windsor Park North Park was designed and functions today as an ornamental landscaped park, and its great Sunken Garden/central lawn has been in use continuously since 1956 as an impromptu athletic field. The park features a wide variety of mature plantings and structural remnants from its original development in 1955.

HERITAGE VALUE

Indigenous use and settlement

The land that Edmonton was developed on was used by Indigenous peoples for millenia, as the North Saskatchewan River Valley and ravine systems were a source of shelter, travel, trade, materials and food. In 1670, the British Crown gave the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) a charter to trade in Rupert's Land, the enormous area that drained into Hudson Bay and in the late 18th century the company established a trading post along the North Saskatchewan called Edmonton House or Fort Edmonton. The company sold Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada in 1870. In 1876, the Canadian government signed Treaty 6 with Indigenous leaders in what is now Saskatchewan and the following year Indigenous chiefs in the Edmonton region signed adhesions to the treaty. Edmonton is also part of the Métis homeland. The river lot rural settlement pattern established along the North Saskatchewan River in the early 1870s was brought to the Edmonton area by the Métis and a number of the original river lot claimants were Métis.

Originally constructed between 1955 and 1956, the Windsor Park North Park is valued for its association with the development of the Windsor Park neighbourhood during the boom period in Edmonton in the years following the end of the Second World War. Windsor Park is located in

Amiskwaciwâskahikan (ᐊᒥᐢᑲᐧᒋᐋᐧᐢᑲᐦᐃᑲᐣ) on Treaty 6 territory, the territory of the Papaschase and the homeland of the Metis nation. As the area's fur trade was winding down, farming began to take on a greater importance in the lives of the people around Fort Edmonton. Many began staking claims to land in the Fort's immediate vicinity, farming in a river lot fashion. A staple of Metis culture, this style of farming allowed for access to the river, wooded areas, cultivated land, and provided space for hay lands as well. A government-approved survey in 1882 formalized the division of the land in terms of a river lot pattern, which is what the predominantly Metis population in the area at the time desired. The survey created 44 large lots across the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, most of which stretched east of the Hudson Bay Company reserve lands. Bounded on the north and west by the North Saskatchewan River, the location of what is now the Windsor Park subdivision was surveyed in 1882 as River Lot 3. Its neighbour to the east, River Lot 5, became the

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University of Alberta. The original title for River Lot 3 was held by Allan Oman. By 1910, it was owned by John McFadden. He sold his estate to Magrath, Hart & Company (later Magrath & Holgate) who, in turn, subdivided the land and resold it to investors in England making "several hundred percent" in return as a 1911 article in the Edmonton Journal reported.

Initial development of the Windsor Park neighbourhood

The brainchild of surveyors Alfred Driscoll and Richard Knight, the original design of the community, approved by the City of Strathcona in 1911, featured a circular lotting feature with an inner "King's Circle" and an outer "Victoria Crescent" surrounded by lots sited on a traditional gridiron pattern. In light of Windsor Park's adjacency to the nascent University of Alberta and no doubt indicative of the promoters' aspiration to attract professors and other notables, most of the streets were named after prominent universities: Oxford, Cambridge, McGill, Harvard, Stanford, Cornell and Yale. There was also a Dublin Avenue and an Edinboro Road, perhaps to appeal to Irish and Scottish investors. Only a fraction of the 1911 design for Windsor Park, however, was ever realized. Unfortunately for the British investors and local speculative buyers, the development boom occurring in Edmonton at that time collapsed in 1913, leaving most of the lots unsold and the area virtually undeveloped. While Edmonton's Town Planning Commission still saw great potential in the area, by 1930 there were only nine houses built, all on the eastern side of Windsor Park, beside the university. The area still resembled a mostly rural setting. Nothing was paved and there were no sidewalks, streetlights, or bus service.

Starting in 1944, Cecil Burgess (who until his retirement in 1939 was the head of the Architecture program at the University of Alberta, and who between 1929 and 1949 was a member of the city's Town Planning Commission) and Maxwell Dewar (City Architect at the time) began to champion "Modern" town planning and the "modern layout" that would "organize areas into neighbourhoods" and "relieve the monotony usually associated with the gridiron pattern." In March of 1946, Dewar released his "Report on the Status of Town Planning in the City of Edmonton" which outlined proposals for planned community homes, schools, public parks, playgrounds and shopping centres, noting "the new conceptions of neighbourhood planning have such an appeal today that it would not be consistent with the progressive attitude of this city if this phase of civic development went unheeded." By October 1947, several proposals for re-subdivision of "large areas into model neighborhoods" had been prepared for the City of Edmonton by Cecil Burgess, Max Dewar and Jean Wallbridge so that these areas could "receive the advantages of modern town planning." Wallbridge had returned to the Edmonton City Architect's Office in the summer of 1945 after a three year stint as a town planner in Eastern Canada, where she worked on the 1943 Master Plan for the City of Toronto and in 1944-45 on the Master Plan for the City of Saint John. It was explained to affected Edmonton property owners that "such a subdivision, in the opinion of the Commissioners, affords a much better layout for the district, provides more open space for public use and community facilities, lessens traffic hazards and provides a school area with accompanying park as well as a shopping district." One of the neighbourhoods under consideration through this process was Windsor Park.

The boom period after the end of the Second World War saw renewed interest in the Windsor Park area, and in 1945, the City initiated the process required to purchase dozens of lots from investors in order to replot the Windsor Park subdivision to stimulate development. In 1948, Jean Wallbridge, who was working in the City Architect's office as a draughtsman, or what would now be called an architectural technologist, despite being a registered (i.e. professional) architect and experienced town planner, completed a design to turn Windsor Park into the city's first comprehensively-planned "neighbourhood unit" and one of its first Modern subdivisions. Wallbridge's "modern layout" imparted a secluded feel to the neighbourhood tied to the contours of the river valley banks and centred on the large "common" green space at the heart of the neighbourhood, with the ornamental park at its northern tip (the eventual North Park). This central ornamental park, approximately 4 acres in size, was to be a key feature of the rapidly-developing community. Wallbridge had recently returned from a European town planning tour of classic English Garden Cities like Welwyn as part of a post-Second World

War reconstruction program, and Windsor Park's green common is an expression of the Garden City principles she encountered there.

Wallbridge left the City Architect's office in 1949, and her layout for the part of the subdivision lying south of 87 Avenue was revised by Town Planner Noel Dant and his associates prior to the development of south Windsor Park in 1953.

North Park design and development

The Windsor Park North Park is valued as an example of as a uniquely well-preserved expression of the ideal of the ornamental landscaped neighbourhood park, based on Garden City principles and other innovative approaches to horticulture and plantings. The registered plans for the site document that the configuration of the park was established by the City Architect's Office before Noel Dant started work as Edmonton's Town Planner in mid-October 1949 and established the City's Planning Department. Before Dant and his department, it was the City Architect's Office under Max Dewar (most notably through Wallbridge), under the oversight of the volunteer Town Planning Commission (including Professor Cecil Burgess), that led the design and drew up the plans for Edmonton's subdivisions. Most existing subdivisions in Edmonton, which were almost exclusively registered before the First World War, were laid out in a gridded pattern. Even Windsor Park's original 1911 subdivision was primarily gridded, although as mentioned above it did include some curvilinear elements.

Edmonton maps from the 1930s and early 1940s show the predominance of the grid pattern. Postwar planners decried the "monotony of the grid" and set about democratizing the curving streets and the green spaces that had been pioneered in exclusive subdivisions across North America as part of the pre-First World War City Beautiful movement and that harked back to designs such as Frederick Law Olmsted's 1868-9 layout for Riverside, near Chicago, Illinois. Thus Windsor Park got the natural, wide contoured curves along 119 Street and Windsor Road that set the North Park off and declared its uniqueness.

By the early 1950s, new development in the redesigned Windsor Park neighbourhood was well underway, and many of Edmonton's notable designers, scholars and city builders chose to locate their family homes in the community. A set of photographs taken in April 1952 shows neat modern bungalows lining Windsor Road and 119 Street in the background, but the undeveloped triangular parkland in front of them remains a flat, weedy, treeless morass. When the City decided in March 1953 to name an open space Coronation Park in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's upcoming coronation, Mayor William Hawrelak, who lived in Windsor Park, suggested the neighbourhood's bare, empty park as a possibility. The decision was made, however, to give the name to a larger park of city-wide significance. In May 1953, the City announced that Westmount Park, which the City had acquired in 1906 and which had originally been called the West End Park, would receive its third name as Coronation Park.

The Coronation Park episode nonetheless focused attention on the undeveloped triangular park space, the central community park for Windsor Park. With Parks Superintendent Sandy Patterson and Landscape Architect Bogdan Jablonski, City Architect Robert Falconer Duke began developing the initial layout for the site. Duke must have been aware that he was designing the North Park not only for the Parks Department and the fine new subdivision of Windsor Park (a district of "$20,000 and $30,000 residences"), but also for Mayor Hawrelak, Duke's former boss, architect Max Dewar, and Duke's fellow architects who made their homes in the community, including Gordon Aberdeen, George Lord, Gordon Wynn and Neil McKernan (who happened to live directly across 119 Street from the North Park). In view of these professional and personal ties, it seems likely that Duke put more than a little extra time and thought into his landscape design for the site. Architects and landscape architects often worked together to design park sites as a whole, and the North Park's landscape is the result of a fortuitous collaboration between Duke, Patterson, and Jablonski. Jablonski would have been responsible, in consultation with Patterson, for creating and executing the North Park's remarkable horticultural planting plan – and like Duke, both Jablonski and Patterson would have been acutely aware that they were to create a showpiece for the neighbourhood park of "His Worship Mayor Hawrelak."

In September 1954, the proposed landscape plan was approved by the City of Edmonton Parks Department under Patterson. The design was centred around a formal, symmetrical sunken garden, and included a great lawn, an ornamental fountain 40 feet in diameter, structured planting beds, and a long, low retaining wall at the south end, with wide, gracious concrete steps. In the informally landscaped parkland on either side of the formal sunken garden, the forms were fluid and organic: curvilinear "future walks" or pathways, varied elevations and naturalistic, informal glades of trees, lawns and shrubs were planned.

Trees and shrubs played a central role in the design of the North Park. Patterson and Jablonski's extensive knowledge of trees and shrubs (specifically trees and shrubs that would thrive in Alberta), their interest in botany and Alberta native species, and their familiarity with the principles of European-derived landscape design are evident in their expert embellishment of the North Park with a wide variety of trees and shrubs, planted in layers (to mimic nature) and to screen and establish views. Patterson and Jablonski would have considered things like eventual size, shape, form, positioning, hardiness, rate of growth, evergreen interest and fall colour when siting trees and shrubs for the site. All the trees and shrubs in the North Park today were planted as part of an architecturally-designed landscape. The heritage trees strike a dynamic balance between evergreen and deciduous species. The evergreens provide year-round screens and deciduous trees provide seasonal colour. Trees are used in the North Park both to frame and to block out views and to lead one's eyes around the designed landscape. Jablonski called shrubs the "backbone" of a landscape, and the shrubs in the borders of the formal sunken garden provide a setting for mid-range plants, and the repeated planting of lilacs (for example) creates visual reference points. On the "raised ground" running across the southern portion of the park there is an Olmsted touch: broad pastoral lawns studded with specimen American elm trees. Remarkably, the four-acre North Park boasts at least 27 types of trees and ornamental shrubs: 12 coniferous and 15 deciduous. It is notable that this variety of trees and shrubs is much more extensive than the list of Alberta's common trees and shrubs, although some of the trees and shrubs growing in the North Park are native to Alberta, including White Spruce, Tamarack, Shrubby Cinquefoil and Prickly Wild Rose.

On Patterson and Jablonski's watch, the Parks Department carefully labeled trees and shrubs in public parks, to illuminate Edmonton's botanical richness for the public. In 1950, Patterson wrote to the City Commissioners about this labelling. "We will use 500 to 700 labels per year" he wrote, "and if the plans for the arboretum go through, will use another 700 per year." The Parks Department's Nursery Maintenance and Operation annual report adds: "We received 182 different kinds of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, and a similar amount of perennials [and] . . . printed labels for the different species. This amounted to approximately 1500 labels."

More broadly, Patterson had also launched an elm tree planting campaign in the city in 1946, with the intent to create tree-lined streets throughout the city. Due to Patterson's campaign, the city of Edmonton is home to one of the world's largest concentrations of mature American elms. Forty of Patterson's original elms encircle the North Park in a breathtaking colonnade, providing a strong visual edge to the site and helping to create a more private, enclosed space in the interior.

Like trees and shrubs, flowers are an integral part of an ornamental landscape design. They animate and materialize the ground plan. The North Park is valued for its heritage of floral splendour (courtesy of Mayor Hawrelak and Jablonski) and the 1950s Parks Department's embrace of flowers to beautify Edmonton. Initially, flowers predominated in the North Park. In the early years, the trees were practically invisible saplings. A circular bed of flowers "160 feet from the steps" was proposed in 1955 as a placeholder for the future ornamental fountain. Jablonski selected the flowers for the site and worked out the planting plan on graph paper before it was finalized. Unfortunately, his planting plan for the North Park has not been located, but planting plans for other 1950s parks (such as Parkallen Park) and for private commissions (such as the planting plan for the Hawrelak House) give an excellent idea of what Jablonski's planting plan for the park must have looked like. Historic photos and descriptions provide ample evidence that the flowers in the North Park were bright, glorious and superabundant, and included snapdragons, marigolds, petunias and sunflowers. Ornamental annuals were a hallmark of the Parks Department in the 1950s, and some of

the favourite heritage combinations (like snapdragons and dusty miller, which were used in the North Park in 1958) were still being planted by the City in the 1990s, for example, in the formal beds in Hawrelak Park. Perennials (like peonies and delphiniums) and spring bulbs (including tulips and anemones) were also heavily planted. The peonies selected by Jablonski for the peony border encircling the sunken garden in the North Park were the Monsieur Jules Elie variety; several of them bloom there to this day. Of course, choices were also dictated by pragmatic concerns about what plant material would survive in Edmonton's climate, and the Parks Department under Patterson was always on the lookout to identify and procure a greater variety of plants that would thrive in Edmonton's severe climate and short growing season. The more extreme the climate, the more specific the plants, and the department did a lot of ground-breaking research and development of new "Edmonton friendly" flowers, trees and shrubs in the 1950s.

The North Park is a testament to the horticultural expertise, innovation and optimism of Edmonton's Parks Department, which had been re-established in 1947 after being part of the Engineering Department since 1913. Several plantsmen in the 1950s Parks Department had trained in the world-renowned Kew Gardens in England, and the City Greenhouse prided itself on flowers grown for Edmonton parks from "Kew Gardens seed."

Tucked away and hidden today behind mature trees and shrubbery, the most notable void in the North Park is also its centerpiece: the Sunken Garden and Great Lawn. A sunken garden gets its name from the fact that it is set some feet below the level of the main ground surrounding it. Sunken gardens were very popular throughout the Edwardian period in England, in the early 1900s. They provide a delightful, secluded area and a stunning use of space. The North Park's Sunken Garden creates a protected and relatively moist micro-climate on the Alberta prairie, a pragmatic as well as an aesthetic payoff. In the North Park, the formal, symmetrical sunken garden (with its Great Lawn and lilac borders) is clearly distinguished from the naturalistic, "picturesque" landscape that surrounds it on "raised ground."

The North Park features architectural elements that serve to offset the natural botanical features of the site and provide added interest. The defining architectural element on the site is the original Roman red brick wall with its original concrete aggregate wall caps and four wide,

gracious, unbroken concrete steps, designed by City architect Robert Falconer Duke. The retaining wall, located at the south end of the Sunken Garden, was constructed below grade, and parts at the four centrally-located concrete steps. The eastern and western ends of the wall taper from less than a foot at their extremities to around three feet at their apex on either side of the stairs. The wall appears to emerge into the Sunken Garden from the east, growing out of the earth, and to recede back into the earth at its western terminus, "married to the ground" in the Prairie architectural style. The thin Roman bricks and the open expanse of grass in the Great Lawn enhance the wall's serene horizontal lines. Duke was a master in the municipal context, and the garden wall and steps he designed for the North Park celebrate the long, low landscape of the Canadian prairies.

The autumnal colours of the terra cotta I-XL "broken face" Roman pressed brick and the weathered concrete aggregate caps on the wall evoke the "palette of the prairie." The rusticated finish of the bricks echoes natural textures (like the textures of tree bark) that are found in the North Park. The long, low profile of the retaining wall recalls the Prairie architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. The bricks in the existing wall are original, and were shaped and fired in Alberta from Alberta clay. As such, these I-XL red Roman bricks epitomize the idea of being "of this place" and are a testament to Duke's respect for local materials. Each pressed brick is imprinted with I-XL in the frog, clearly visible in places where the wall is missing pieces of its original concrete aggregate caps. Many of the original homes in the Windsor Park district were built with identical I-XL Roman bricks with a rusticated finish. Visually, the bricks in the wall connect and unify Windsor Park's residential architecture and the built features in the original landscape in the North Park.

The original cast concrete aggregate wall caps have a golden patina. A pair of parallel ridges runs down the center of each cap, emphasizing the horizontality of the wall. The coarse exposed

aggregate in the concrete caps (naturally rounded river pebbles in a variety of sizes and colours) is a signature of the 1950s Parks Department, and appeared for decades in the wood-aggregate park benches crafted in house by the City for its parkland.

The Standard Iron and Engineering company was founded in Edmonton as Standard Iron by Robert Macfarlane Dingwall in 1929, and was later incorporated with Dominion Bridge Co. Ltd. Two original heritage cast iron Standard Iron and Engineering drain covers (labeled "catch basins" on the original 1954 drainage and grading plan) are situated in the formal Sunken Garden, just north of the retaining wall. Raised lettering is visible which reads "Standard Iron and Engineering" in one direction and "Edmonton Date 1954" in the other. Further north in the Sunken Garden, there is an original manhole cover stamped "Trojan - City of Edmonton." There are several original manhole covers along the southern boundary of the park: one of these is stamped "Dominion Bridge Company LTD Edmonton Alt 1959" and another stamped "Dominion Bridge Company LTD Edmonton Alta 1964."

An original water meter pit box, including an iron cover with a pressed herringbone pattern and some interior plumbing, has been preserved on the northeastern edge of the North Park near Windsor Road. These water boxes were installed in virtually all the parks developed by the City in the mid to late 1950s. A signature of the Parks Department, they attest to the priority placed on watering to maintain lush park lawns and stunning carpets of blooms in public parks to beautify the city. Many neighbourhood parks, including the North Park, had underground irrigation systems and ornamental reflecting pools. An August 30, 1955, letter to the editor noted "this summer I believe the city parks department should be praised and they should be thanked for the grand job they are doing to make Edmonton an attractive city. Some of the little parks and triangles are simply lovely. The grass is well kept and the flowers are profuse . . . it is to be hoped that the mayor and aldermen will not attempt any curtailment of 'Sandy' Patterson's budget."

The Frost chain link fence that divides the North Park from the schoolyard further to the south was installed by the Edmonton Public School Board in 1953, prior to the development of the parkland. A Windsor Park resident wrote at that time "beautiful Windsor Park school . . . just completed in a pleasing design . . . grounds enclosed in a "frost" fence, a lot of time and effort have been put into transforming wild land into greensward for the benefit of the children who will attend when school opens in September." Many of the fence caps and a significant portion of the fence itself are still original.

The five "wood and concrete" brown painted benches in the North Park likely date from the 1980s, replacing the original wood and concrete aggregate benches visible in 1968 photographs. These benches were designed and manufactured by the Parks Department to pair harmoniously with the botanical textures and colours in Edmonton parks. The 1980 City of Edmonton blueprints specify that the concrete surface is "exposed aggregate NOT SANDBLASTED," specifically "pea gravel, natural, round," an earth-toned signature of the Parks Department.

The original design and construction of the park also included a flat roofed shelter, ornamental rectangular reflecting pool, seating, and drinking fountain on the upper lawn: these were demolished in 1968. The original design also envisioned a circular ornamental fountain at the northern end of the Sunken Garden and Great Lawn. In April 1956, Windsor Park residents opted out of the City's required $3,000 co-payment for the ornamental fountain, and that element of the proposed design was abandoned.

Institution/People

The North Park is also valued for its association with some of Edmonton's more noted architects, designers, and city-builders, including Cecil Scott Burgess, Maxwell Cameron Dewar, Jean Louise Emberly Wallbridge, Robert Falconer Duke, Alexander Campbell "Sandy" Patterson, Bogdan "Bob" W. Jablonski, Noel Buckland Dant, William Hawrelak and Pearl Shadro Hawrelak.

Cecil Scott Burgess

Cecil Scott Burgess was born in Mumbai, India, to Scottish parents. Burgess moved to Edmonton in 1913 and became the first and sole Professor of Architecture and University Architect for the fledgling campus at the invitation of the university President

Henry Marshall Tory. Professor Burgess was a beloved mentor and guiding light for his students, including Maxwell Dewar (who received his certification in 1931) and Jean Wallbridge, who received her Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1939, one of the first women in Canada to do so.

Professor Burgess was knowledgeable and passionate about modern town planning. In the summer of 1938, he traveled to Massachusetts to earn a certificate in Town Planning; the program was offered jointly by the MIT Department of Architecture and the American Planning and Civic Association. Burgess championed the importance of green space in a beautiful capital city. As an influential member of Edmonton's Town Planning Commission, Burgess was instrumental in the setting aside of the parkland that would become the North Park. From the 1920s through the 1940s, Burgess was a consistent and vocal advocate for the need for town planning in the province of Alberta. His service of 20 years with Edmonton's Town Planning Commission (1929-1949) allowed him to see many of his ideas and approaches implemented.

One of these ideas was the reservation of park land and open space as a basic feature of the city's planning approach. In 1944, Burgess submitted his list of 39 proposed Edmonton neighbourhood parks to the Town Planning Commission, for presentation to the City Commissioners. Burgess' list includes an entry for "Windsor Park – new park, 87-86 aves. 119-120 streets." Although the park's location was later modified by Jean Wallbridge, Burgess' 1944 list is the earliest known documented reference by the Edmonton Journal of what would become the North Park.

Burgess continued to serve on the Town Planning Commission until March of 1949, when he resigned to protest what he perceived to be the City's disregard for proper planning principles, especially related to a long-planned Civic Centre. He remained active in professional circles for many more years and in 1962 he was the first member admitted to what is now called the Alberta Professional Planners Institute. He died in Edmonton in 1971 at the age of 101.

Maxwell Cameron Dewar

As Edmonton City Architect between 1943 and 1949, and as a former student of Professor Cecil Burgess, Maxwell Dewar shared Burgess' passion for Edmonton parkland and championed the primacy of dedicated greenspace in the architecture of modern city planning. Dewar's commitment is demonstrated by the design for the subdivision of Windsor Park, created and drawn by Jean Wallbridge while she was working in the City Architect's office, which had a generous, elegantly-shaped green "common" at its core.

Dewar was born in Scotland in 1907. In 1921, his family (mother, father, 14-year-old Max and six siblings) made the Atlantic crossing to Canada on the Empress of Britain, landing in Quebec on May 7. They arrived in Edmonton shortly thereafter, and Max attended technical school. By

August of 1928, Max was an apprentice with MacDonald & Magoon, a leading firm of architects in Edmonton. He was admitted to Burgess' University of Alberta architecture program and was granted professional status in 1931. He joined the Alberta Association of Architects and worked independently until 1939, when he was hired by City Architect John Martland as Assistant City Architect. Four years later, upon Martland's retirement in 1943, he was appointed City Architect. As reported by the Edmonton Journal, it was announced at Martland's retirement luncheon:

> *"that Max Dewar, assistant city architect, will succeed Mr. Martland. The Mayor paid tribute to Mr. Martland for the way in which he had "groomed" Mr. Dewar to take over as head of the department. He said that upon many occasions Mr. Martland had been willing to "stay back in the shadow" so that Mr. Dewar could have the opportunity of learning by experience what the responsibilities of the head of the department would be."*

Sharing the philosophy of his mentor, Burgess, Dewar used his position to advocate for the importance of reserving parkland in the city's new subdivisions, including Windsor Park. In October of 1949, Dewar signed off on the line that delineated the full western curve of the North Park (along 119 Street). Shortly thereafter, in November 1949, Dewar resigned as City Architect as the City shifted from in-house architectural design to a model of hiring private firms to design its buildings.

In 1954, Dewar, now in private practice, chose a lot in Windsor Park as the location where he would design and build Edmonton's "home of the future" as home for his wife Mary and their children. The house was one of 10 "Trend Houses" sponsored across Canada by British Columbia's forestry industries that were intended to demonstrate the beauty, versatility and practical advantages of Western Red Cedar and Pacific Coast Hemlock lumber, Douglas Fir plywood, Red Cedar shingles, and Sidewall shakes. As a resident of Windsor Park, Dewar likely took a very active, personal interest in his former colleague and fellow architect Robert Falconer Duke's forthcoming designs for the neighbourhood park at the heart of Dewar's own neighbourhood. Sadly, Dewar died suddenly in April 1955. His widow Mary and children left the Windsor Park subdivision and moved back to their former home in Cromdale, by the Rat Creek Ravine.

Jean Louise Emberly Wallbridge

Jean Wallbridge was born in Edmonton, Alberta in 1912 to James Emberly Wallbridge and Mabel Louise Campbell. She grew up in Edmonton and studied architecture under Professor Cecil Burgess at the University of Alberta. Professor Burgess was passionate both about architecture and about town planning. His curriculum included dozens of lectures on town planning, and Wallbridge was his star pupil in the field. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1939 (one of the first women in Canada to do so, and one of only four women to graduate from the program in its 27-year history at the University of Alberta), Wallbridge worked as a draftsperson in Edmonton for a few years. In the March 1941 issue of the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada (RAIC) Journal, Cecil Burgess wrote: "Application for membership in the association [Alberta Association of Architects (AAA)] was made by Miss Jean L. Wallbridge, a graduate B.Sc. in Architecture of the University of Alberta. Her application was strongly endorsed by the firm for whom she has been working, and registration was granted." The AAA membership "not only signalled a formal acknowledgement of her professional standing but also positioned her as a pioneer in the architectural profession of Canada". She was only the third woman to do so in Alberta and the sixth in all of Canada.

At this time in Canada, most town planners were architects by training, and having studied both architecture and town planning under Cecil Burgess, Wallbridge was eminently qualified. Her subsequent professional development in the field was remarkable. In Toronto, Wallbridge worked for Eugenico Giacomo Faludi, who was designing and producing the 1943 Master Plan for the City of Toronto. In 1944, she relocated to work with James Campbell Merrett and P. Goguen on the Master Plan of the City of Saint John. "Working between the spring of 1944 and the plan's adoption in June of 1945, the team of three accomplished an astounding amount of work . . . the plan, an exhibition, numerous public talks, and radio programming to advertise the plan's process and proposals." Brilliant, creative, and with three years of professional town planning and two Master Plans (for the cities of Toronto and Saint John) under her belt, in 1945, Wallbridge returned to the Edmonton City Architect's Office. Dewar and Burgess were so impressed with her town planning ability and expertise that they quickly recognized her and deferred to her as the Technical Advisor to the Town Planning Commission.

Granted a two month leave of absence by Max Dewar in the summer of 1947 to further her professional development in city planning, Wallbridge joined a European town planning and reconstruction tour (focusing on the rehabilitation of communities after the devastation of the Second World War), studying classic English Garden Cities like Welwyn. Upon her return to Edmonton, Wallbridge incorporated Garden City principles into the "modern layout" she was designing for the Windsor Park subdivision, to replace Driscoll and Knight's 1911 plan. Wallbridge re-imagined, re-designed and replotted Windsor Park to include a large central green. The new design, rooted in Garden City principles, transformed Windsor Park into Edmonton's first comprehensively planned "neighbourhood unit" and one of its first Modernist subdivisions.

Wallbridge created Windsor Park's "modern layout" around a spacious green, intended to centre the community in shared activities. Land for the ornamental "pure park," an essential component, was reserved at the green's northern point. Other key amenities built on the public green included the Windsor Park Community League's "community centre" (designed by architect

Neil McKernan in 1952), the Windsor Park elementary school (designed by architect W.W. Butchart in 1953), athletic fields, two full sized hockey rinks, a children's playground and a "tot lot."

Wallbridge established the outlines of the North Park in her professional capacity as Technical Advisor to Edmonton's Town Planning Commission, to its Chairman, Cecil Burgess, and to City Architect Max Dewar. Bounded by Windsor Road on the east and 119 Street on the west, the park's distinctive curvilinear shape was an innovative, organic departure from the precise linear "checkerboard" grid pattern that predominated in the layout of Edmonton's streets and avenues at the time Windsor Park was plotted.

In the summer of 1949, Wallbridge resigned from the City Architect's Office. In 1950, she and her life and business partner, Mary Imrie (who had also worked with the City Architect's Office), launched a new architectural firm, Wallbridge and Imrie, the first female-run architectural practice in Canada. They opened a downtown office at 8 Merrick Block on Jasper Avenue. They called their practice "Architects Folles" and focused their work on projects often ignored by male architects. Wallbridge and Imrie practiced for over thirty years, taking on 224 projects, only 23 of which were non-residential. The bulk of their work involved the design of individual homes or other multi-unit residential buildings.

Robert Falconer Duke

Robert Falconer Duke's birth was registered in Birkenhead, England, in 1904. He made the Atlantic crossing to Canada as an infant with his parents and older sister on the Kensington in 1906. The family settled in Saskatchewan, in the Qu'Appelle district, and moved to Saskatoon in 1909. After he finished University, Duke trained in an apprenticeship at the well-regarded and prolific Saskatoon firm of Webster & Gilbert Architects, and later took further "extra-mural" (correspondence) studies in architecture from 1932 to 1934. Duke joined the Dominion (federal) Department of Public Works as a supervising ("District Resident") architect posted to Saskatoon. As supervising architect for the Dominion Department of Public Works, design of outdoor spaces, including public plazas and parks, would have been part of his responsibility and part of his skill set. Duke remained in Saskatoon at the federal Department of Public Works for eight years. One day in 1946, he must have spotted an advertisement in the RAIC Journal (to which he was a regular contributor, as the Saskatchewan correspondent), placed by Edmonton City Architect Max Dewar, who was ready to hire an Assistant. Looking for a change, Duke applied for the position of Assistant City Architect, and an offer was forthcoming. After some salary negotiations, Duke accepted Dewar's offer and moved his wife Madge and young daughter west to Alberta, starting his new job in June of 1946.

In the spring of 1948, when Dewar had a heart attack which required a significant period of absence, Duke was named acting City Architect. By June of 1948, Jean Wallbridge was working on plans for the freshly replotted subdivision of Windsor Park, and it was Duke who signed off on the line that delineated the elegant eastern curve of the ornamental parkland (along Windsor Road). Dewar eventually recovered and returned to the job until his resignation in November 1949. Duke was then named City Architect. In late 1950, Duke hired an award-winning young graduate from the School of Architecture at the University of Manitoba, William Paul Pasternak, as assistant City Architect.

One of Edmonton's most prolific and defining architects, Duke held the post of City Architect for 20 years. Duke is credited with the design of many of our most important Modernist structures including the Borden Park Swimming Pool and Bandshell (1954), the Glenora Substation (1956) and the Westwood Transit Garage (1960). The Number 4 Firestation (1954), the Rossdale Water Filtration Plant (circa 1955) and the Number 1 Firestation (1960) are other municipal architectural designs credited to Duke (either directly or in his capacity as supervisor of the City Architect Office), along with the Idylwylde Telephone Exchange (1952), the Strathcona Health Clinic (1952), the Idylwylde Health Clinic and Branch Library (1959), the Woodcroft Health Clinic and Branch Library (1955) and the City Civil Defense Shelter on 142 Street near MacKenzie Ravine, an underground bunker for the City of Edmonton (1953). Duke also oversaw the design of the 1960 Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium in Coronation Park in his role as City Architect. The building is an excellent and highly-regarded example of Modern Expressionist design. While Duke and

Assistant City Architect Walter Telfer stamped the construction plans, the actual design of the planetarium is attributed to architect Denis Mulvaney, who worked on Duke's team.

Once Edmonton had hired Noel Dant as Town Planner in 1949, the City Architect's office was no longer responsible for the design of subdivisions. But most of the other design needs of the city still fell into Duke's lap; indeed, as City Architect, Duke was frequently called on to produce designs for the Parks Department. In 1954, Duke, in collaboration with the Parks Department (including Patterson and Jablonski) turned his hand to landscape designs for the North Park, less than a block from Mayor Hawrelak's new home. The 1954 landscape drainage and grading plan shows that Duke used masses and voids to exploit the full potential of the triangular North Park site. From "raised ground" (grade) he introduced height in the form of gently contoured elevated shrub beds and carved out a formal sunken garden for depth. There are naturalistic eastern and western glades with curvilinear shrub beds where trees and spring flowering shrubs were planted in irregular drifts. Rolling, organic landforms and articulated terrain were intentionally constructed. Duke's design also included a proposed circular fountain feature at the north end of the sunken garden area, a brick retaining wall with steps at the south end, and a shelter structure along the south side of the park. While the fountain was ultimately not constructed, and the shelter was removed not long after its construction, many of the design features in Duke's plan are still evident on the site today.

Alexander Campbell "Sandy" Patterson

Alexander Campbell "Sandy" Patterson was Edmonton's first Superintendent of Parks, and when the Parks Department was amalgamated with recreation in 1950, he became Edmonton's first Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, a post he held until 1958. After Duke's initial design, the North Park in Windsor Park was constructed and planted on Patterson's watch, as evidenced by the 1954 landscape drainage and grading plan, which reads "The City of Edmonton Parks Department, September 1954." With landscape architect Bogdan Jablonski, Patterson oversaw the planting of thousands of flowers in the North Park, and he selected a remarkable variety of trees, including several of his favourite, the tamarack. Those specimen trees have matured beautifully and grace the North Park to this day. It is also thanks to Patterson that the site boasts 40 mature, perfectly-spaced American Elms, pillars anchoring the park's liminal space along 119 Street and Windsor Road and defining its southern boundary.

Patterson was the son of the late H.S. Patterson, Q.C., of Calgary. He served as a commissioned officer with the Royal Canadian Artillery in Italy, including the Ortona engagement, and northwest Europe. Patterson earned a Bachelor of Science and Botany and a Master of Science in Horticulture from the University of Alberta. During his time with the City, he oversaw the planning, design and building of many parks and green spaces during a period of rapid growth for Edmonton. He was known as a powerhouse within the City administration and the broader community. In October 1955, for example, the Edmonton Journal reported:

> *"This summer has been ideal for construction work and the Parks Department has accomplished more than in any previous year. About 200 acres in boulevards, neighbourhood parks and small amenity plots have been seeded to grass . . . over 5,000 trees and shrubs were planted this spring on boulevards and in parks. 170,000 bedding plants were set out in flower beds throughout the city. Work was started on eight neighbourhood parks and over 20 small plots and triangles."*

Patterson's achievements include the redevelopment of Borden Park, the original planting and concept for Mayfair (now Hawrelak) Park, keeping the development of the river valley to a minimum and the relocation of the Edmonton Valley Zoo to its current location. Patterson was an early proponent of the naturalization movement. Edmonton's continuing naturalization program has resulted in many naturally appearing and eye pleasing areas, particularly by thoroughfares and in the city's river valleys and ravines. Patterson was also known for his innovative use of native and hardy species in Edmonton parks.

Starting in 1950, Patterson had promoted the idea of an Edmonton Arboretum "in the south valley and slopes of the North Saskatchewan River" between the High Level Bridge and 116 Street, with a five-year goal of 1,200 "species and varieties" of "hardy native and exotic species and varieties of trees and shrubs,

and preservation of native flora on the wooded river bank" and an objective of "research, education and city beautification." In 1955, some of this arboretum energy was directed towards the North Park, where a variety of atypical species were carefully planted and labeled by the Parks Department.

A tremendous achievement of Patterson's was his single-minded pursuit of lining Edmonton's streets and boulevards with perfectly-spaced elm trees. In order to accomplish this, he first had to remove other mature trees (like Manitoba maples) that had been haphazardly planted and had often been planted too close together. This was politically unpopular, particularly with those individuals who had planted their own trees in front of their homes. It not only resulted in endless letters to the Edmonton Journal and articles about "the battle of the trees" but guerilla tactics by disgruntled citizens and vandals, who maimed and cut down Patterson's young elms with alarming frequency, including in the Windsor Park neighbourhood. Ultimately, Patterson prevailed, and thanks to his efforts, Edmonton has beautiful, mature elm trees lining the streets and avenues in many of the city's mature communities, including Windsor Park.

In September 1954, Patterson's Parks Department approved the landscape plan for the North Park. Work on the site began in May of 1955, the same year Patterson's ground-breaking "A Report on Active and Passive Recreation, Park and Open Space facilities within the City with recommendations as to immediate and future needs" was released, the first such report in Canada. This report singled out the North Park as prototype and "proof of concept" of the four-acre purely ornamental landscaped neighbourhood park, "a neighbourhood park . . . now being developed as a landscaped park . . . a pure park, landscaped only, no playfields, (i.e., no athletic fields or equipment)". The purpose of a "landscaped pure park" like the North Park, according to the report, was to "offer a place of restful contemplation."

By September 1956, a variety of saplings and a "galaxy of blooms" had been sited and planted under the expert eyes of Patterson and Jablonski. The North Park was the first ornamental neighbourhood park developed by the Edmonton Parks Department, as its prototype and "proof of concept." The North Park was followed by three more model 5-acre ornamental landscaped "pure" parks in the Parkallen, Montrose and Queen Mary neighbourhoods. According to Patterson, the purpose of these four exemplars was to "assess the public's reaction to them" before Town Planner Noel Dant "set land aside for these in the new subdivisions."

Bogdan Jablonski

Sometime prior to 1952, it had come to Patterson's attention that one of the Parks Department's recently hired "skilled laborers," Bogdan Jablonski, was much more: he was in fact an extremely talented, experienced, European-trained horticulturist and landscape architect. Shortly thereafter, Patterson (assisted by Town Planner Noel Dant, who needed someone with Jablonski's expertise to draw up landscape designs for the neighbourhood parks not only in his new subdivisions, but all the new parks throughout the city), began an ultimately successful campaign to have Jablonski promoted to Landscape Architect for the City of Edmonton, with a commensurate boost in salary. In September 1952, Jablonski (still classified as a laborer) produced a beautiful, hand-coloured landscape design for the house of "Mr. and Mrs. William Hawrelak . . . Windsor Park." The design must have been well-received, as within the year, Jablonski had been successfully reclassified as the City of Edmonton's first Landscape Architect.

Jablonski was born and raised in Poland, where he studied and practiced landscape architecture with high distinction. After seeing action in the Second World War with the Polish Army, he married Hilda Berry in Essex, UK in 1946. In 1951, Bogdan and Hilda arrived in Canada, and shortly thereafter, in Edmonton. Jablonski oversaw a remarkable horticultural program for the City Parks Department. The department needed plants well adapted to Alberta, so this effort included test greenhouses and nurseries and experimentation with seeds that would thrive under Edmonton's conditions and constraints: climate, growing season, soil and precipitation. It is likely that Jablonski and Patterson collaborated on the planting plan for the North Park. Jablonski was undoubtedly responsible for designing the North Park's spectacular floral displays, with the park becoming known as "The Flower Park."

At its official opening in 1958, Mayor Hawrelak had high praise for Jablonski's redesign of Borden Park, the city's first major postwar park development: "the mayor voiced high praise for Robert Jablonski, landscape architect with the city parks department, who designed Borden Park." Mayor Hawrelak "termed Borden Park 'a magnificent job' on the part of the parks department." In 1959, Jablonski took a leave of absence from his post with the City and earned his B.L.Arch (Bachelor of Landscape Architecture) from the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts, returning to Edmonton and to his position as Edmonton City Landscape Architect afterwards. Jablonski resigned from his position in the City of Edmonton in 1965, and accepted the position of Landscape Architect for the Ornamental Plant Section of the Plant Research Institute in Ottawa, the "main research centre for ornamental horticulture in Canada and . . . responsible for the development and maintenance of the Dominion Arboretum and Botanic Gardens."

A recommendation letter to the University of Oregon written by Patterson in 1958 for Jablonski's application captures the scope of his contributions to the city:

"*During a 6-year period he has:*

- *Completely designed a very fine 51-acre park*
- *Designed an 80-acre park on which construction has started*
- *Completely re-designed an 18-hole golf course to a 27-hole course*
- *Laid out 8 neighbourhood parks of about 5 acres each*
- *Laid out 20 playgrounds, including detailed design of 12 wading pools*
- *Designed about 100 small parks and traffic islands with acreages running from ¼ acre to 3 acres*
- *Laid out a planting scheme for over 5 miles of buffer strip along arterial roads running through the city*
- *Laid out the planting of about 7 miles of wide boulevard along riverbanks and ravines within the city*
- *Designed two major athletic fields, one about 26 acres, the other 60 acres, complete with landscaping*
- *Designed at 20-acre addition to an existing municipally operated cemetery*
- *Prepared preliminary sketches for a proposed 120-acre park, a 100-acre zoo, an 18-hole golf course and a number of small parks.*

All his work is, in my opinion, of the highest caliber."

As Patterson noted, "I have seen the work being done in Montreal, Toronto, Windsor, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Calgary, there is no one in Canada turning out better work."

William Hawrelak

The origins of the North Park are also connected with Mayor William Hawrelak and his wife, Pearl Shandro Hawrelak. First elected Mayor at the age of 37, Hawrelak served as Edmonton's Mayor from 1951 to 1959, 1963 to 1965, and 1974 to 1975. The development of Edmonton parks and beautification of Edmonton's streetscapes are key features of his legacy. His administration lined streets with elm trees, expanded the area of city parks, and oversaw the design of playgrounds, parks, gardens and golf courses. The design and construction of the North Park coincided with the early years of Hawrelak's euphoric first term (1951-1959), before any taint of future inappropriate conduct had emerged. He was dynamic, articulate, young, admired and popular. His star was ascendant during the period when the North Park was taking shape.

Hawrelak not only thought parkland was important for Edmonton, but he thought about parkland. For example, in a speech he gave at the dedication of Coronation Park, he said that since city-dwellers are "denied free contact with the soil, society has found it wise to set aside land" for parks and recreation areas. In planning a city, he added, it is necessary to foresee the needs of future citizens as well as those of today. While the demands of housing and industry are great it would be an injustice not to provide a release "for the citizen's yearning for the earth."

In the early 1950s, Edmonton was "an exuberant young city on the rise," and Mayor Hawrelak "was at the height of his power." Bill and his wife Pearl Shandro (daughter of Alberta MLA Andrew Shandro, and a civic dynamo in her own right) purchased a large corner lot in Windsor Park. There was family close by, as in 1950, Pearl's brother, Dr. William Shandro and his wife Rose, had built a beautiful Prairie style home in Windsor Park along the south ridge of the North Saskatchewan River. In late October 1952, Bill and Pearl and their young daughters moved into a new home they had planned and built at the southwest corner of 89 Avenue and 120 Street. This elegant stucco bungalow (8730 - 120 Street) was both their home and their base of political operations for decades. Hawrelak loved parks, and he took a very personal interest in the genesis of the North Park, just a block from his front door. In March 1953, Hawrelak proposed that the barren and yet unnamed "park in the Windsor Park district" be developed and dedicated "Coronation Park" in honour of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. His City Engineer was tasked with preparing a "PLAN OF GRID of CORONATION PARK", dated April 1953. On May 20, 1953, however, the Edmonton Journal reported a change in plans: "the park in Westmount district" had been selected instead for dedication as Coronation Park.

But the Coronation Park episode in the spring of 1953 had focused Mayor Hawrelak's attention on the development of his neighbourhood park, and together, City Architect Duke, Superintendent of Parks Patterson and Landscape Architect Jablonski soon created an exceptional landscape design for the site.

The North Park would provide greenspace for Mayor Hawrelak's family, friends and neighbours. Since Hawrelak walked a porous line between private and public spheres of influence, he may have envisioned creating in the 4-acre North Park a jewel of a municipal showpiece, a nexus of civic pride and boosterism. Hawrelak was the consummate politician, and as such, regarded public works (including parks) as a useful political tool that should serve political goals. Questions about how much money would be spent on the North Park, which materials, trees and flowers would be used, and who would design which aspects of the park were all likely influenced both by political and personal considerations.

The Hawrelaks clearly had a vested interest in the development of the site. Marigolds were planted in the North Park in profusion in the late 1950s, and subsequently became the "flower of Edmonton" in 1964. Coincidentally, they were also Hawrelak's favourite flower. "We want people to grow whatever flowers they like" said Hawrelak, "but we hope to highlight the marigold." Throughout history, beautiful gardens have been used to convey power. An "emblem of pride," the North Park was designed, planted, irrigated and tended by two full-time professional Parks Department gardeners to epitomize the best Edmonton had to offer. When "His Worship, Mayor of Edmonton" and "Edmonton's First Lady" entertained visiting dignitaries at home in their spacious new bungalow, perhaps the evening ended with a leisurely after-dinner stroll through the North Park's immaculately manicured "sunken garden," with its "galaxy of blooms."

Noel Buckland Dant

Noel Buckland Dant was born in England in 1914. He received a Diploma in Architecture from Cambridge, followed by Diplomas in Town and Regional Planning, and worked in England, Scotland and Eastern Canada before he became a senior planner for the city of Chicago. Plans for the "modern" replotted subdivision of Windsor Park had already been drawn up by Jean Wallbridge starting in 1947, and were finalized by City Council when Dant came on board as Edmonton's Town Planner in October 1949. Following in the footsteps of Cecil Burgess, Max Dewar and Jean Wallbridge, Dant endorsed a "town planned" approach for the city, with curvilinear street patterns leading to school sites and green spaces at the heart of neighbourhoods to encourage walking and social interaction.

Contemporaries noted that "plentiful park areas for a city's residents is one theme Mr. Dant stresses in planning." Indeed, in October 1952, Dant wrote a letter to Mayor Hawrelak, urging him to promote Bogdan Jablonski to City Landscape Architect, as "Mr. Jablonski is foremost and fundamentally a designer of parkland." "Today . . . every new residential area or neighbourhood unit has at least one neighbourhood park averaging 2 acres. On those on which a start has been made since 1949, there are now 33

neighbourhood parks . . . we now have on the drawing table designs for eight new Neighbourhood Units . . . Before the City has reached its built-up completion . . . there will be a further creation of fourteen Neighbourhood Units . . . It is quite obvious to me that the City has made a valuable acquisition in appointing a landscape architect to its personnel, especially one who is a designer of parkland . . . as such, I cannot more strongly recommend that consideration be given to the appointment of Mr. Jablonski as Landscape Architect for the City . . . under the supervision of Mr. Patterson of the Parks Department."

As a prelude to the construction of Windsor Park Elementary school, Dant finalized its boundary with the undeveloped parkland to the north in 1953. The North Park became the model of the "purely ornamental landscaped neighborhood park" that Dant would subsequently incorporate into the new subdivisions that he designed for the city, including (in 1955) the ornamental park in the Parkallen subdivision, Dant's first Edmonton "neighbourhood unit" (1950).

Landmark/Symbolic Value

The North Park in Windsor Park is further significant as a landmark site within the wider Windsor Park and University of Alberta communities. Centrally located beside the new elementary school, the site became a focal point for the rapidly-growing neighbourhood in the mid-late 1950s. Former residents who moved into a home across the street from the park as children have wonderful stories to tell. They recall how great it was to have a park nearby for Red Rover and Tug of War, and remember the stunning flowerbeds of brightly-coloured snapdragons, marigolds and sunflowers. The lush "great lawn" in the sunken garden provided space for games of hide and seek, kick the can, and even for two brothers to ride their pet Irish setters around while being pursued by other playmates. Former residents remember the great lawn in the sunken garden making a great sports field, especially when adjacent school lots were occupied. "The flower beds [the two long rectangular planting beds on the eastern and western sides of the sunken garden] made great, well-marked sidelines. A bunch of us in junior high school used to play there regularly – it was the perfect size for 3-on-3 touch football and of course the grass was nice and soft. We could play in our stocking feet. And, at that time, the drinking fountain was very handy. I have a vague recollection of being kicked out of the park by a city maintenance guy who didn't like us putting the flower beds in danger. But, of course, knowing the park was off-limits made playing there even more special." "It was Nirvana." "Down memory lane... I remember playing tag in the park as a child and hitting wire supports for fledgling trees. The sunken part with the big lawn was a natural amphitheatre for football games played by youngsters. Mayor Bill Hawrelak, our neighbor, lived on the SW corner of 89 Ave & 120 street. In retrospect, I think the reason Windsor Park was well endowed was his proximity to the park."

Elementary school students from the late 1990s and early 2000s also remember the great lawn in the sunken garden being regularly used as an important play space. "The sunken lawn provided for countless games of soccer, ultimate frisbee and football throughout our youth. It often served as a no-man's-land in games of capture the flag, as well as serving as the forum for three-legged races and egg relays at our Grade 3 year-end picnic." They too appreciated the park's flexibility and availability. "From May to July, when minor soccer occupies the school fields for most weeknight evenings, this space remains open for non-organized recreation. Indeed, where leisure on the school grounds is often restricted, leisure in the Flower Park remains unregulated and available to the community." The park's massive trees were treasured by local children – one climbable tree nicknamed "The Elephant Tree" was especially popular. Another, a ponderosa pine that had fallen on the ground and grown horizontally for decades, was affectionately nicknamed "The Banana Tree." Just blocks from home, the park "felt like another time and place." "For us, crossing the threshold from the schoolyard into the Flower Park was like entering Narnia." The naturalistic woods and hidden meadows on either side of the formal sunken garden lent themselves to endless games of make believe where children pretended to be elves, sprites, and other forest creatures. "In junior high, in the summer, a big group of us would go get candy and slushies and then hang out at the park pretty much every day, laughing and talking, out of earshot of our parents." At night, families came to stargaze together and watch the northern lights, shielded from the city's brightness by the towering pines, cedars

and spruce trees. The North Park has evolved into a beautiful, forested space. The large number and variety of trees has become a more dominant feature than the flower beds, while the appeal of the sunken garden's "Great Lawn" endures.

The North Park is valued as an emotionally resonant, meaningful historic place. It is valued as a beautiful, distinctive local landmark, a place of lasting pride for the Windsor Park and University of Alberta neighbourhoods, and a cherished collective memory for the extended community. Affectionately known as "The Flower Park" and "The Secret Garden," the North Park's ornamental gardens and open lawns not only offer a place for solitude and restful contemplation but have for generations been a place for social gatherings, impromptu sports and games, performances and celebrations of life's milestones.

In 2012, Canadian landscape historian Edwinna von Baeyer studied and admired the clear artistic vision expressed by the 1954 Edmonton Parks Department landscape design for the North Park. Von Baeyer explained that before 1880, municipal greenspace was rare. Providing beautifully landscaped, contemplative public greenspace was a feature of the City Beautiful movement that many Canadian cities embraced by the turn of the 20th century. But by the 1950s, "providing space for ["active"] public recreation was winning out over providing 'landscaped' ["contemplative"] public greenspace, which is what differentiates your Windsor Park." Thanks to Sandy Patterson, Bogdan Jablonski, and Robert Duke, and with the support of William Hawrelak and Noel Dant, the City of Edmonton valued, landscaped, and tended many ornamental "5-acre neighbourhood pure parks" throughout the city in the 1950s. The North Park is the only 1950s "5-acre neighbourhood park" in Edmonton preserved today as a "pure park."

In 2020, Michelle Reid, Cultural Landscape Lead for the City of Calgary Parks Department, and author of the City of Calgary's Cultural Landscape Strategic Plan (2011), concurred with Edwinna von Baeyer' assessment of Windsor Park's rarity. Based on her examination of the North Park's 1954 plans and a satellite photo of the site, Reid stated that in her opinion, classic "Picturesque" landscape elements (specifically the open, informal, asymmetric treed glades and lawns on the eastern and western sides of the formal sunken garden and great lawn) underpin the park's design. Reid observed that the 1954 Edmonton Parks Department design for the North Park shows open forms. The design is not "prescriptive," as were most parks that were designed in other cities in the mid-1950s. There is no softball diamond or tennis court to "prescribe" how people are expected to use the park, no equipment to suggest that there is an expectation that the park be used for a particular purpose. There is nothing to make you think, upon entering the park, "I really shouldn't be sitting here admiring the trees — I really should be playing volleyball. Or tennis." The North Park was designed to be a beautiful, contemplative green place in which park goers feel at liberty to choose how to spend their time in the park; somewhere all feel welcome and none feel out of place or excluded.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Parks Canada defines a cultural landscape as "any geographical area that has been modified, influenced, or given special cultural meaning by people, and that has been formally recognized for its heritage value." Cultural landscapes like the North Park in Windsor Park are historically-significant landscapes, important and irreplaceable. The North Park is a designed landscape, intentionally created by human beings.

A historic place communicates its significance through physical features known as character-defining elements that embody its value as a historic resource. Character-defining elements of a cultural landscape are usually inter-related, and they require protection. The North Park's character-defining elements are listed below according to categories specified in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Section 4.1, Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes). Land use, land patterns, spatial organization, visual relationships, circulation, ecological features, vegetation, landforms and built features all define Windsor Park's historic character and contribute to its heritage value.

Land Use

- Past and continuing use as an ornamental park, a place to experience the beauties of nature in the context of a mid-century designed landscape.
- Past and continuing use of the expansive green lawns for play. Most notably, past, and continuing use of the formal Sunken Garden's Great Lawn as an impromptu athletic field, and a cherished and highly-valued open space for active, informal recreational activities.
- Past and continuing use of the park by the community for gatherings, individual contemplation and a rendezvous and meeting place. Past and continuing use by the Windsor Park Elementary School, nursery school and day care for a range of activities and gatherings. Past and continuing use by staff and students at the University of Alberta for a range of activities and gatherings.
- Past use by the 1950s Edmonton Parks Department's horticulturalists, arborists, and plantsmen as a trial garden for a variety of novel types of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs, as a place of experimentation and testing to identify plant types suitable for Edmonton's regional horticultural conditions.

Land Patterns

- There is ample evidence of the integrity of the original park boundaries and siting between Windsor Road on the east and 119 Street on the west. The boundaries define the relationship of the park to the larger community as a separate entity. A Frost fence (1953) divides the North Park from the Windsor Park Elementary school yard and playing fields to the south. The boundaries are further established by the elm tree perimeter encircling the park (40 trees, planted in 1956), and the transitional, liminal lawn space that intervenes between the elm colonnade and the exterior set of shrub beds.
- Composition of the park by clearly defined different functional areas and distinct garden rooms. These include:
  - The formal, central, geometric, symmetrical Sunken Garden and Great Lawn.
  - The naturalistic, meandering eastern and western glades.
  - The central upper lawn and twinned beds of roses.
  - The liminal lawn space bordering the park, site of the elm colonnade.
  - The southern boundary comprised of shrub beds south of the east-west trail.

Spatial Organization

- Historic proportions and spatial volumes of the park remain largely undisturbed.

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS CONT...

- Park space is organized according to classic landscape design principles and is animated by the tension between formal and informal landscape areas. Siting and spatial organization of the planting beds is used to define the park's various components and to establish circulation corridors.
- Park space is organized into four clearly defined interior "garden rooms" each with its own character and spatial organization (the eastern glade, the western glade, the rose gardens and upper lawn, the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn) and encircled by a transitional space and belt of 40 superb perimeter trees (the elm colonnade). The largest and most distinctive of these spaces is the park's centerpiece, the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn, accessed by four wide steps within the retaining wall feature.
- The spatial volume of the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn is an outstanding feature of the North Park. Length, width, height and depth are defined by natural and human-made landscape features. Vertical planes are formed by towering trees, shrubs, excavated voids, constructed mounds of earth and the I-XL brick retaining wall. The ground planes are made of natural materials (earth and grass). An overhead plane is provided on the periphery by the tree canopy.

Visual Relationships

- A series of controlled views of the designed landscape opens as one crosses the park along the southern boundary, looking north. Perspective views include:
  - The elm colonnade and its associated transitional (liminal) space (the long curve of the lawn between the eastern row of elm trees and the eastern edge of the shrub beds).
  - The informal, naturalistic eastern glade.
  - The central vista of the stepped descent to the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn (framed by mirrored planting beds of Blanc Double de Coubert roses, a twinned pair of sentinel lilacs and a twinned pair of tall slender Eastern White Cedars).
  - The informal, naturalistic western glade.
  - The elm colonnade and its associated transitional (liminal) space (the curve of the lawn between the western row of elm trees and the western edge of the shrub beds).
- Perspective views are established from the northern point of the formal Sunken Garden, looking south: the unobstructed axial sightline across the open sweep of the Great Lawn towards the I-XL red Roman brick retaining wall, centered concrete steps, twinned rose beds, and twinned pairs of sentinel lilacs and vertical Eastern White Cedars.
- Perspective views are established from the south-central point of the formal Sunken Garden (the steps), looking north: the unobstructed axial sightline across the open sweep of the Great Lawn towards the heritage lilac border.
- A series of controlled views and vistas through breaks in the planting beds along 119 Street and Windsor Road offer hidden glimpses of the Great Lawn through the trees and shrubberies.
- Viewscapes are established throughout the park following the rules of pictorial composition with landscape elements located in the foreground (perennials), middle ground (shrubs) and background (large deciduous trees and conifers).
- Views into the community of the homes on 119 Street and Windsor Road from various points in the garden. The view south toward the Windsor Park Elementary school and playing fields (1953) establishes a visual connection between the park, the school and the children who go there.

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS CONT...

Circulation

- Built between 1954 and 1957, the sidewalk hugging the east side of the North Park (north of 89 Avenue) provides access to the park from the east as well as to the main entrance of Windsor Park Elementary school.
- Starting in 1952, aerial photographs capture images of a foot-beaten east-west path crossing the undeveloped parkland and aligned with 89 Avenue. A sinuous east-west pathway appears on the proposed 1954 blueprints but was never constructed. In 2012, the City of Edmonton replaced the existing "goat path" with an asphalt east-west multiuse trail.
- Primary entrances to the park are located:
  - Where 89 Avenue dead ends in the park at Windsor Road (eastern entrance).
  - Where 89 Avenue dead ends in the park at 119 Street (western entrance).
- The elm colonnade and open lawns at these entrances create a functional transitional space that allows people to move easily from the neighbourhood to the interior of the park and vice versa.
- There is a secondary entrance to the park where the lane running north from 118 Street at 91 Avenue abuts Windsor Road, heavily used by school children.
- The original stepped descent and ascent between the upper lawn and the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn facilitates and enables north central/south central circulation.
- Park-goers also circulate through the grassy gaps in the three northernmost wedge-shaped shrub beds in and out of the Sunken Garden.
- North/south circulation occurs back and forth between the school yard and the ornamental park through full-length openings in the Frost chain link fence along the southern boundary. These openings were originally conceived by Windsor Park Elementary school as an "opening in the steel playground fence . . . about 3' in width at the east side of the sewage pumping building, located on our north fence line" to "provide an extra access to our [school] grounds from the area to the north."

Ecological Features

- Ecological connectivity associated with a historic place can extend far beyond its established boundaries. The North Park is part of Edmonton's ecological network, and the continued health and vitality of the site's urban ecosystem requires the assurance of adequate sunlight, clean air, and water.
- Open sky and abundant sunlight support biodiversity and the lives of the plants, animals and insects who make their homes in the North Park, enhance the park's historic architectural features, preserve the park's mature trees and shrubs and inspire people to undertake outdoor activities on the site.

Vegetation

- Location, configuration and proportions of historic garden beds are all character-defining elements of the North Park. These planting beds were designed to realize an intricately-designed planting plan of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals, the selection of which was curated by landscape architect Bogdan Jablonski.
- Location, configuration and proportions of historic, open grass lawns or "greensward." The uncluttered central Great Lawn in the formal Sunken Garden is an outstanding park feature. The historic relationships between the Sunken Garden's formal planting beds and the open Great Lawn are fundamental to the heritage design.
- 27 different species of mature heritage trees (12 deciduous, 15 coniferous), some reaching heights of

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS CONT...

over 65 feet, including rare specimens not typically found growing in Edmonton parks like Austrian Pine and Eastern White Cedar.

+ The careful location of trees and shrubs is a character-defining element of the North Park. Hundreds of trees and shrubs were planted in 1956 to enclose different spaces in the garden. Bogdan Jablonski underplanted the trees with shrubs, as in nature, with an eye to future effects.

+ The colonnade of 40 perfectly-spaced 70-year-old American elm trees encircling the North Park's perimeter is a remarkable legacy of Alexander Campbell "Sandy" Patterson, the City of Edmonton's first Parks Department Superintendent, and his hard won "Battle of the Trees."

+ Heritage spring flowering shrubs include more than 100 lilacs in all shades, shapes and colours, Russian Almond, mock orange, and Blanc Double de Coubert rugosa roses. Heritage perennials (peonies like M. Jules Elie) also bloom in the park.

+ The English-style parkland character of the upper lawn with scattered specimen elm trees is a character-defining feature.

Landforms

+ The City Architect's Office and Edmonton Parks Department made a decision to significantly manipulate natural topography for aesthetic reasons when they designed and constructed the North Park. The existing topography of the park is the result of the extensive historic modification (through grading, excavation, mounding and planting) employed to carve out the formal Sunken Garden and Great Lawn and construct the shrub beds, hillocks and berms that define the eastern and western glades. The specifications for the human-engineered landforms, including elevations and contours, are documented on the 1954 site grading and drainage plan.

+ The Great Lawn is the formal centre of the North Park. Unencumbered simplicity is its essential characteristic. The lawns retain an extreme simplicity of form and materials as a meaningful contrast with the busier spaces near the periphery and as an elegant complement to the mid-century Modern architectural vocabulary of elements such as the retaining wall.

Built Features

+ Original iron drain and grate infrastructure, cast in the 1950s by Canadian and local companies including the Dominion Bridge Company and Standard Iron and Engineering Works.

+ Original iron water meter chamber and cover (impressed with a herringbone pattern), a signature of the 1950s Edmonton Parks Department.

+ Original Frost chain link fence (steel, heavily galvanized after weaving and protected with a zinc coating) with ornamental post caps has provided the boundary and demarcation between the ornamental parkland (to the north) and the Windsor Park Elementary school athletic fields (to the south) since 1953. Based in Hamilton, Ontario, the Frost Steel and Wire Company produced the first chain link fencing in Canada.

+ Low retaining wall of masonry construction, with a wide, central stair at the south end of the Sunken Garden.

+ Original I-XL broken face red Roman pressed bricks in the retaining wall (laid in a stack bond pattern), made in Medicine Hat, formed of clay dug from deposits along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. These "fancy" bricks were a signature of the 1950s Parks Department, originally also used (for example) in Parkallen (Ellingson) Park and Queen Mary Park. They are preserved in historic Borden Park, in the original park shelter and feature walls.

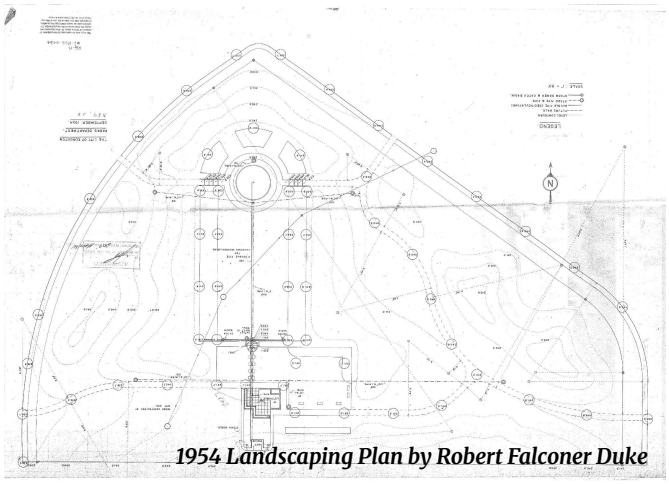
CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS CONT...

- Ornamental concrete work: original beveled cast concrete exposed aggregate wall caps and wide concrete steps integrated into the retaining wall. The coarse exposed aggregate (Alberta pea gravel in a variety of sizes and colours) in the concrete originated in Alberta's glacial and river deposits and is a signature of the 1950s Edmonton Parks Department.
- Five benches and one picnic table (brown painted wood and exposed aggregate), dating from the mid-1980s, constructed locally from blueprints in the City workshop. A wood and concrete aggregate bench in a slightly different style but identical location to one of today's benches is visible in a photograph of the park taken in 1968.

Setting

- The North Park's setting in the Windsor Park subdivision contributes to its significance as a cultural landscape by helping to explain its origins and subsequent development. The ornamental park was originally designed as an integral part and seamless component of the subdivision. Visual connections include:
  - 22 additional 70-year-old elms line the far sides of 119 Street and Windsor Road, echoing Windsor Park's elm colonnade. The vaulted canopy of branches creates an enduring heritage streetscape.
  - Split-face I-XL red Roman pressed bricks - identical to those used in the retaining wall in the North Park - are ubiquitous in Windsor Park's low-slung 1950s Prairie-style heritage bungalows, unifying the broader cultural landscape and embedding the ornamental park in the community.

1948 Subdivision Design by Jean Wallbridge



1954 Landscaping Plan by Robert Falconer Duke

Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 21455 in May 2026.

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