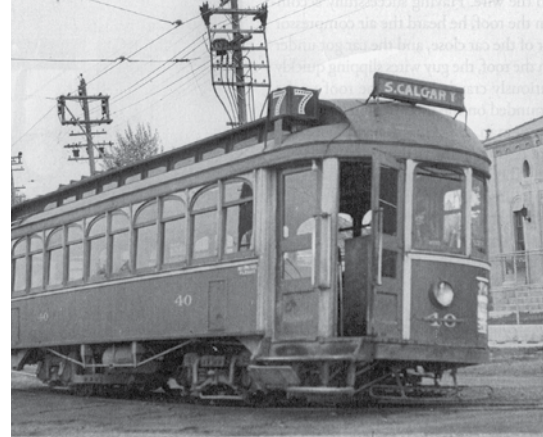




A LOOP IN TIME

*A History of the Marda Loop Neighbourhoods
Historical Context Paper*

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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Historical Context Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

This historic context paper on Calgary’s Marda Loop area is a collaboration of the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area (BIA) and Heritage Calgary, with the support of the Marda Loop Communities Association, the Province of Alberta’s Municipal Heritage Partnership Program, and the City of Calgary’s Main Streets project.

Dozens of volunteers and community members contributed their stories, photographs, and efforts to this history, and we thank them all. A special thank you is owed to our tenacious researcher, writer, and Marda Loop resident Harry Sanders.

May *A Loop In Time* enlighten and inform, and inspire remembrance, story telling, heritage conservation and interpretation, and appreciation of the Marda Loop communities.

Bob van Wegen
Executive Director
Marda Loop BIA

AUTHOR’S NOTE

Before reading the history that follows, please be aware of the following housekeeping notes. To readers already familiar with Calgary’s history, the use of the address component “SW,” a stand-in for “southwest” and a reference to the city’s quadrant system, will appear anachronistic when used in reference to the first half of the 20th century. At that time, streets and avenues in the future Marda Loop communities would have ended in “W.” or “West” in common usage until about mid-century. I have backdated the quadrant designation for consistency and ease of understanding.

Whenever a building appears in the text, I have done my best to indicate the relevant street address. Readers will notice that some of these addresses are underlined; this indicates that the building was extant at time of writing.

Endnotes are limited to the attribution of quotations or to additional exposition as required. I have not included a selected bibliography section, but a comprehensive bibliography is available from the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area website and from Heritage Calgary.

– Harry M. Sanders

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Oblique aerial of the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs) looking north toward Richmond and the Knob Hill water tower.

ONE SUMMARY

The subject area is bordered to the north by 26 Avenue SW, to the south by 50 Avenue SW, to the west by Crowchild Trail SW, and to the east by 14 Street SW. It also includes River Park, a city park that extends east from 14 Street SW to the Elbow River between 38 Avenue SW and 50 Avenue SW.

This area comprises the neighbourhoods served by the Marda Loop Communities Association—Altadore, Garrison Woods, River Park, and South Calgary—as well as part of Richmond, a neighbourhood served by the Richmond Knob Hill Community Association. For the sake of simplicity, this report refers to the entire subject area as the Marda Loop communities.

The boundaries of the area have their origins in the Alberta Township System (ATS), a land surveying model applied to this region in the 1880s.¹ The survey and the land divisions that resulted from it were part of the colonization process that transformed this region from the traditional lands of the Treaty 7 Nations into Canadian territory. Following the treaty-signing in 1877 and the near-extinction of the once-vast bison herds, Indigenous nations were compelled to settle on reserves, and their former lands were made available for colonization. Completion of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1885 facilitated colonization.

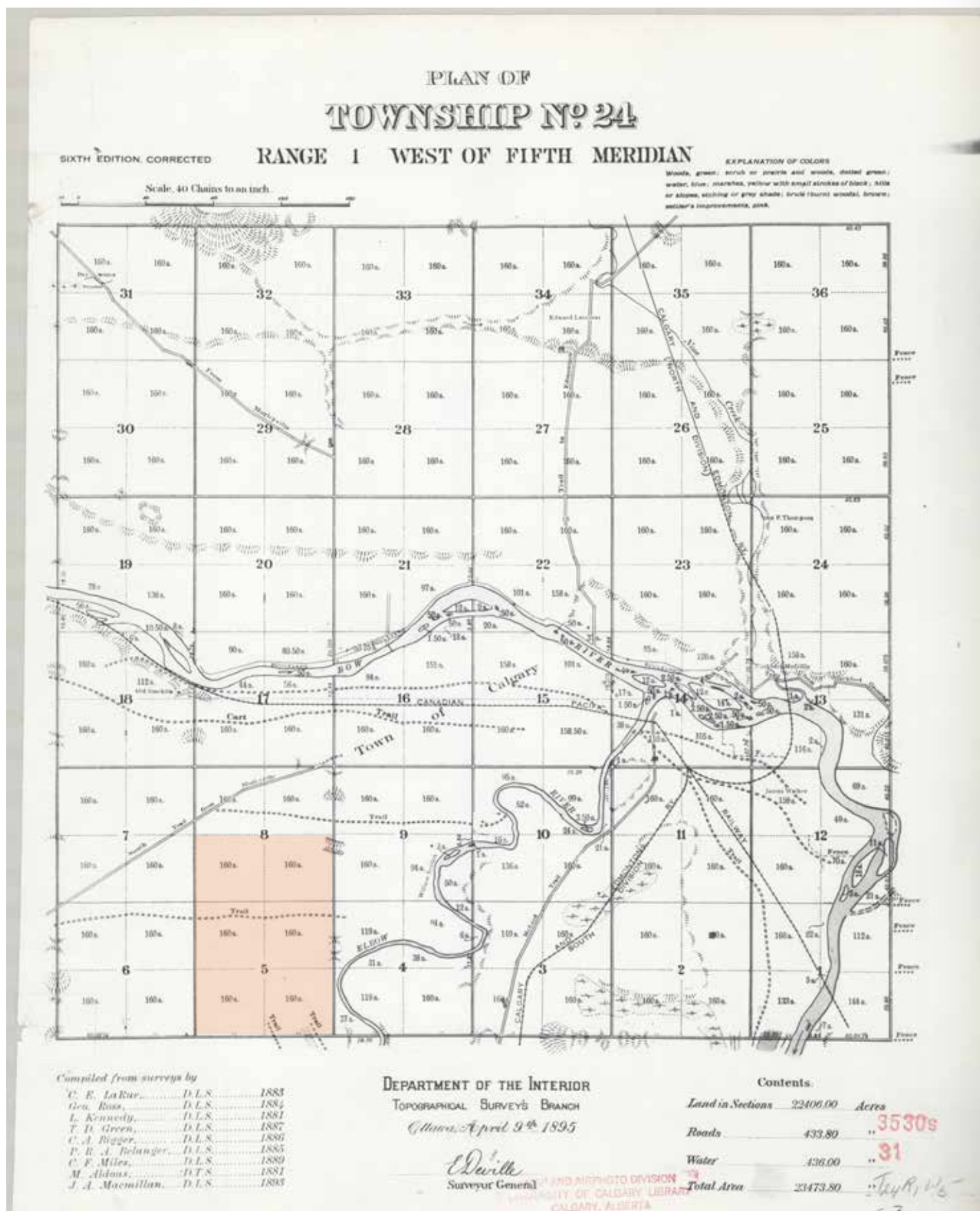
NAMING MARDA LOOP

“Marda Loop” was the winning entry in a 1985 naming contest. “Marda” comes from the Marda Theatre, a local cinema that opened in 1952 and was named for its original owners, Marc and Mada Jenkins. “Loop” refers to the spot on 33 Avenue SW where trolley coaches turned around for the return portion of the No. 7 transit route. The overhead line that powered the electric vehicles formed a loop at this point. The name originally belonged to the local Business Revitalization Zone, but it has since become identified with a wide area of southwest Calgary that includes Altadore, Garrison Woods, River Park, South Calgary, and part of Richmond.

Land was subdivided into one-square mile blocks called sections and further subdivided into 160-acre quarter-sections. Agricultural settlers could obtain a quarter-section, known as a homestead, for a nominal fee. Certain sections were reserved from settlement for educational purposes or as land grants to the CPR and the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC).

Sections were grouped into townships, each comprising 36 sections. Townships were numbered sequentially within ranges (imaginary east-west bands of townships) and with respect to the nearest meridian of longitude. The Town of Calgary, which was incorporated in 1884, originally comprised portions of sections 14, 15, and 16 in Township 24, Range 1 west of the Fifth Meridian (i.e.,

Oblique aerial view looking southeast toward Currie Barracks, the Currie PMQs, and Altadore, 1969. Matthews Studio & Photo Lab Ltd., photographer.



Plan of Township No. 24, Range 1, West of the Fifth Meridian, 1895, by the Department of the Interior, Topographical Surveys Branch.
The shaded orange rectangle highlights Section 5 (Altadore, Garrison Woods, River Park) and the south half of Section 8 (Richmond, South Calgary).

Township 24-1-W5M). The subject area comprises Section 5 and the south half of Section 8 within the same township.

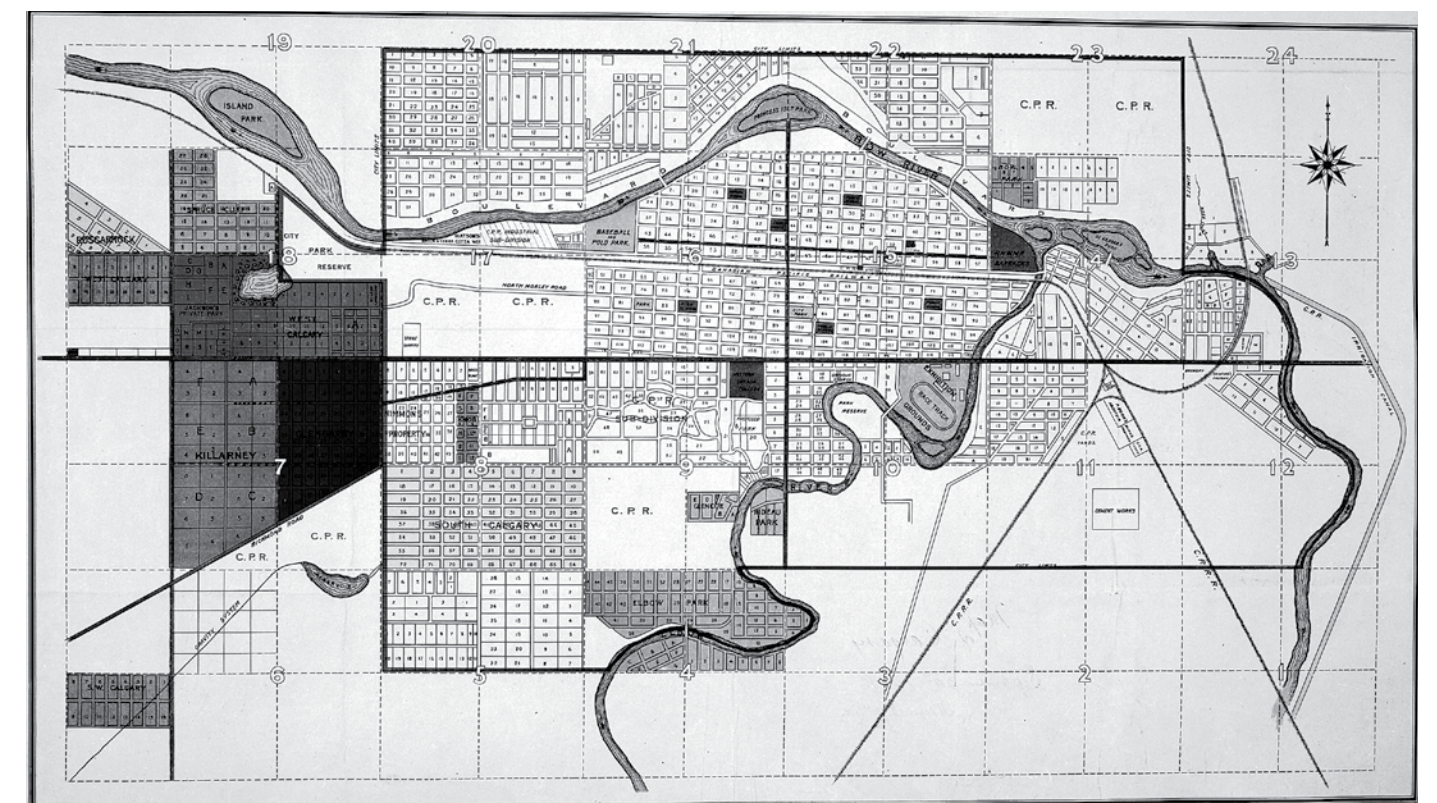
Before 1907, the entire subject area lay outside of Calgary's corporate boundaries. As a colonial entity, Calgary began in 1875 as a North-West Mounted Police post two years before the signing of Treaty 7. By the time the CPR arrived in 1883, Calgary had developed as an unincorporated settlement in Section 14, on the site of the future Inglewood neighbourhood. The CPR laid out a new townsite on its own property in Section 15, in what is now downtown, and the settlement moved west to the new townsite at the beginning of 1884. Calgary was incorporated as a town later that year, and it became a city in 1894.

Between 1901 and 1913, Calgary enjoyed phenomenal economic, physical, and population growth. Hundreds of thousands of agricultural settlers poured into the Canadian west. As a hub of north-south and east-west railway traffic, Calgary quickly became a regional distribution and manufacturing centre. Its population grew tenfold between 1901 and 1911. The City limits expanded, taking in a vast area that included the villages

of Roulevauville (the future Mission district) to the south and Crescent Heights to the north. A streetcar system, established in 1909, allowed the development of distant residential subdivisions and industrial areas.

It was in this context that the subject area was annexed, subdivided, and initially developed. In 1907, Calgary annexed land in all directions, including the subject area as far south as 42 Avenue SW. A larger annexation in 1910 extended south to 50 Avenue SW, bringing into the city limits the remaining portion of the future Marda Loop communities. The 1910 annexation pushed the city limits outward to the very boundaries of Township 24-1-W5M.

South Calgary and part of Richmond lie within the south half of Section 8, which stretches from 26 Avenue SW south to 34 Avenue SW and from 14 Street SW west to Crowchild Trail. It includes Knob Hill, a height of land that slopes southward toward 33 Avenue SW, where it levels off. Section 8 was granted to the HBC in 1885. Businessman George Thomas Callander Robinson (1869–1958) subdivided the south half of the section in 1906; in time, it comprised the city neighbourhood known as South Calgary.





A South Calgary (Route 7) streetcar makes its way south along the 1100 block of 1 Street SW toward the Marda Loop communities, April 9, 1944. The streetcar linked the area to other parts of the city and made it practical to live so far from the city centre.

At an unknown date, likely in the 1950s, the western portion of that area became part of the new Richmond neighbourhood.

Altadore, Garrison Woods, and River Park are in Section 5, which is bounded by 34 Avenue SW to the north, 50 Avenue SW to the south, 14 Street SW to the east, and Crowchild Trail to the west. This section was granted to the CPR in 1890. The CPR sold each quarter-section to separate buyers. In the context of Calgary's pre-First World War real estate boom, speculators purchased smaller portions of these quarter-sections and subdivided them for sale as residential properties.

By 1909, some of the early buyers defaulted on their property taxes. That year, the local school district, Spruce Vale School District No. 209, offered some 126 lots at auction as a tax recovery measure. Nonetheless, suburban

development of the Marda Loop communities began in this period. From the beginning, the area was defined by a grid pattern of streets and avenues and light, scattered development of detached homes on 25-foot lots, churches, corner stores, and a public school (initially South Calgary Cottage School, which was quickly succeeded by King Edward School).

The First World War (1914–18) was central to public and private life in this period, as much at the community level as it was across the city, the country, and much of the globe. Many of the district's families contributed husbands or sons—or both—to the Canadian or British armies. A significant number of those men did not return.

Up to and during the war, the district continued to grow following patterns established before the conflict. New detached



A group of cadets at King Edward School, circa 1920s.

houses, some still extant, added to the existing housing stock. This period saw the emergence of commercial districts along 14 Street SW and 34 Avenue SW and the establishment of a neighbourhood store that remains extant at 2718–17 Street SW.

Athletic, cultural, and social clubs formed during this period, many of them associated with the war effort. The South Calgary Ratepayers' Association, a forerunner to the Marda Loop Communities Association, was one of many such neighbourhood organizations established during the war.

After the war and into the 1920s, the neighbourhoods grew, albeit slowly. Some of the detached homes built in this decade remain extant. Two new grocery stores, the Altadore Grocery and Irwin's Grocery, joined the already-established Hillside Grocery and Summers' Grocery and Confectionery. John W. Grant, who grew up in South Calgary in the 1930s and published a memoir in 1975, equated the population of the district with the clientele of those four stores.

The streetcar route, the new South Calgary High School (which was housed in King Edward School), and The City's development of South Calgary Park contributed to neighbourhood identification and cohesion. South Calgary cricket and football teams were formed, and sports too contributed to community identification and spirit.



The Glenmore dam, reservoir, and water treatment centre still lay outside the city limits when this photograph was taken in 1950.



Soldiers exercise at Currie Barracks parade square, 1940.

In the Great Depression of the 1930s, the context for the Marda Loop communities was the city's stagnant growth, the economic hardship of its people in a depressed economy, and the publicly-funded measures designed to relieve some of these conditions. These included two massive projects on lands adjacent to the district: The Glenmore reservoir, dam, and waterworks; and Currie Barracks.

The presence of the waterworks south of the district led to the emergence of 16 Street SW as a highway linking this district to the waterworks, which still lay outside the city boundaries. Tommy's Service Station, built

on this route around 1932 or 1933 and extant as the Stevo Auto Clinic (3505-16 Street SW), is a legacy of this phenomenon.

Construction of the Permanent Force Barracks began in 1934 and was completed, in its first phase, in 1936. The base was renamed Currie Barracks in 1937. Before long, the base became an important association for the neighbourhoods, with implications for residents (military personnel who lived in the subject area), commerce, and identity (businesses began to use the name Currie).

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 saw the conversion of nearby Currie Barracks from a cavalry base to an infantry training base. The Salvation Army established a canteen facing Currie Barracks from across 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail). The canteen, which was built on the future site of Garrison Woods, established a direct connection between the base and the subject area. It functioned as a social and cultural centre that involved both the base community and the civilian residents of the area. Base personnel provided clientele for businesses in the district, and some military personnel lived in the Marda Loop communities. As in the First World War, area families were affected by the conflict, notably through enlistment and service of husbands and sons (some women also enlisted).



The city experienced a housing crisis during and after the war, and, in this context, in 1941 a building permit was issued to convert an aviary on 33 Avenue SW into a dwelling. After the conflict ended, wartime housing was evidently constructed in South Calgary and Altadore.³

Four significant trends greatly affected the area in the oil boom years that followed the war: A prosperous economy resulting from the war's end and the discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947 and Redwater in 1948; expansion of the district's military footprint

Altadore was being built up with new homes when these older houses were moved from elsewhere in Calgary to 4916-21 Street SW and 4920-21 Street SW in 1954. Nearby residents criticized the old houses as eyesores. Jack De Lorme, photographer.



School opens in Altadore, September 1955. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

in the form of the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs); the transit system's conversion from streetcars to trolley coaches; and the general postwar movement of residents from the inner city to more distant subdivisions like South Calgary and Altadore.

In the late 1940s and into the 1950s, new construction typically included one-storey, stucco bungalows located on 50-foot lots, low-rise apartment buildings, and two-storey retail buildings. Hundreds of single family homes and duplexes were built in South Calgary and Altadore. New commercial districts emerged along 33 Avenue SW, which had become a transit route following the conversion from streetcars to electric trolley coaches in 1948, and on 42 Avenue near 20 Street SW, where residents of the Currie PMQs offered a market for new businesses. Similarly, the 14 Street SW business district extended north to 26 Avenue SW and south to 35 Avenue SW, the 33 Avenue SW business district extended westward toward the new Currie district, and the 34 Avenue SW business district projected southward onto 18 Street SW.

Late in the 1950s, River Park became a new feature of the subject area, both the natural park by that name (eventually known

primarily as a dog park) and the adjacent residential area. That tony neighbourhood resulted from a compromise that allowed part of the proposed park to be developed as a residential district with a different planning regime than the rest of Altadore.

The western edge of the Marda Loop communities changed physically in the mid-1960s with the conversion of 24 Street SW into the Crowchild Trail freeway. The district was impacted again in the early 1980s when Crowchild was widened to six lanes. At that time, The City built an overpass at 26 Avenue SW and a diamond interchange at 33 Avenue SW. Interchange development and realignment of the avenue replaced the westernmost block of the 33 Avenue SW business district.

In 1983, the opening of a government-operated retail outlet in the Currie PMQ district (CANEX, abbreviated from Canadian Forces Exchange System) signalled a challenge to the business community. In response, community business operators formed a business association. Within a few years, that organization was reconstituted as the city's second Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), a type of entity newly-created by the province. The organization's brand, Marda Loop,

Altadore and River Park, lower left, developed as far south as 50 Avenue SW, the southern boundary of the Marda Loop Communities. This oblique aerial photograph, looking northeast toward the city centre, was taken April 11, 1985. Jim Hall, photographer.





ultimately became the umbrella identity for most of the subject area's several communities. The BRZ's summer festival, first held in 1985, has become the neighbourhood's signature annual event, Marda Gras. The BRZ became the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area (BIA) in 2017 as a result of revised provincial regulations.

In the final two decades of the twentieth century, the defining phenomena were a population decline in the area and the closure of Canadian Forces Base Calgary (which included Currie Barracks) in 1998. The closure announcement, which was part of the March 6, 1996 federal budget presentation, generated fear that the district would wither from the loss of the base and the military

families who lived in the PMQ area. Initially, local businesses suffered a considerable loss of business. In time, Canada Lands Company's transformation of the Currie PMQs into Garrison Woods, a more densely-populated residential district with a commercial component, reinvigorated the entire district.

Notes

- 1 The ATS is a variant of the Dominion Land Survey, a model used in other Canadian jurisdictions.
- 2 The abbreviation "W.T.H.," referring to Wartime Housing, appears on dozens of assessment history cards for homes in Altadore and South Calgary. In many cases, the annotation has been inexplicably crossed out.

Looking northeast toward 33 Avenue SW east of 20 Street SW during one of the first Marda Gras celebrations, 1996. Marda Loop Business Improvement Area

Looking southeast toward the intersection of 20 Street SW and 33 Avenue SW, 1999. Note the Marda Loop traffic signal structure and street banners. David Lazaorwych, photographer.



Oblique aerial view of River Park at the southeast corner of Altadore, August 1974. Bill Onions, photographer.



Bird's eye view of Calgary, 1910, showing the lightly-developed Marda Loop communities area. H.M. Burton, artist.

TWO

LANDSCAPE, INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS, AND AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT



Bird's eye view of Calgary, 1910, showing the lightly-developed Marda Loop communities area. Notable features to the west of the district include Richmond Road (identified here as South Morley Trail) and the South Calgary Reservoir. H.M. Burton, artist.

Calgary is located on the traditional territories of the people of the Nations that made Treaty 7. This includes: the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Regions 5 and 6.

Landscape and Indigenous foundations

It was here, according to traditional belief,

that people were created and where Indigenous peoples had always lived. At least one traditional creation story involves the two rivers that converge in Calgary, the Bow and Elbow. The area at the confluence of these two rivers was an inseparable part of the land that Indigenous peoples knew intimately. It was important as a meeting place and as a place of seasonal inhabitation. It lay within the wintering range of migratory bison that were the staple food of the region. The confluence provided shelter for winter camps, breezes and sheltering hills that offered relief from summer heat and insects, plenty of wood and water, and an excellent ford at the Bow

River. The Blackfoot called this place Moh'kins'tsis, the Tsuut'ina, Gut'sis'tsi, and the Îethka Nakoda, Wincheesh-pah. The Nēhiyawēwin, a Treaty 6 Nation also known as the Plains Cree, called it Otos'kwunee.

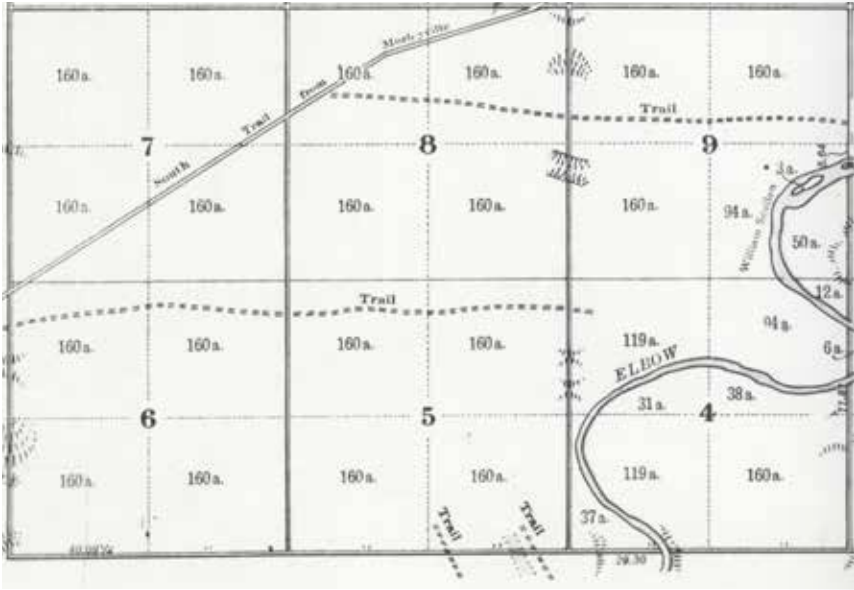
Agricultural use and urban development, which preceded the passage of the Alberta Historical Resources Act (originally known as the Alberta Heritage Act) in 1973, has widely disturbed physical evidence of Indigenous life in present-day Calgary. Nonetheless, archaeological work in the city has provided evidence of bison kill sites, adjacent bison processing sites, and campsites.

The confluence and its surrounding area was part of broader patterns of seasonal inhabitation and trade routes. When non-Indigenous fur trade companies opened trading posts at Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House in the 1790s, those places became destinations for semi-annual trade expeditions and sources for tools, weapons, and other necessities. Colonial trails, and some modern city roads and rural highways, derive from Indigenous trails. These include Macleod Trail (which began as part of the Old North Trail, an ancient north-south travel route) and Blackfoot Trail (which began as the route to the fur trade posts). One such trail, shown on an early township map of Calgary, parallels 34 Avenue SW in the future Marda Loop communities.

Colonial transition

Treaty 7 was signed in 1877. From the federal government's perspective, this was a land surrender that legitimized the subsequent colonization of the land through railway-building and non-Indigenous settlement. This was not the understanding of the Indigenous treaty-makers. Nonetheless, within a few years, the vast bison herds that sustained Indigenous peoples here were eliminated, and the Treaty 7 Nations were made to resettle on separate reserves. In time, their movements were restricted through a pass system that had no legal basis.

To facilitate agricultural settlement, the Dominion Land Survey divided this land, along with the broader region, into 640-acre sections, 36-section townships, and ranges made up of townships. Homestead applicants could apply for quarter-section farms and an



additional quarter-section as a pre-emption. Certain sections were reserved for educational use or were granted to corporate bodies such as the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).

The future Marda Loop communities lay within the south half of Section 8 and the whole of Section 5 in Township 24, Range 1 west of the Fifth Meridian (i.e., sections 8-24-1-W5M and 5-24-1-W5M). The district comprises Knob Hill (a height of land that extends south from present-day 26 Avenue SW between 14 Street SW and Crowchild Trail) as well as the lower-lying area to the south.¹ The lowlands extend south to 50 Avenue SW (the present-day boundary with the North Glenmore neighbourhood). The HBC was granted Section 8 on July 17, 1885. This section extends from 17 Avenue SW south to 34 Avenue SW and from 14 Street SW in the east to Crowchild Trail in the west. In 1886, the company sold the north half of the section (i.e., north of 26 Avenue SW) to William Nimmons (1831–1919) and his wife, Isabella Nimmons (née Gray, 1831–1922). The Nimmons established a farm, market garden, and sandstone quarry. Their property later became the neighbourhoods of Bankview, Knob Hill, and part of Richmond. On April 29, 1890, the HBC sold the south half of Section 8 (from 26 Avenue SW south to 34 Avenue SW) to Thomas Somerville Charters (T.S.C.) Lee (1858–1926), a rancher, entrepreneur, and insurance and real estate agent.

Detail from the 1895 township plan showing transportation patterns. The road marked “South Trail from Morleyville” corresponds to present-day Richmond Road SW. Future research has the potential to identify the east-west trail across sections 5 and 6 located south of present-day 34 Avenue SW.



Thomas Somerville Charters (T.S.C.) Lee (1858–1926) photographed as part of his polo team, 1894. Lee owned the south half of Section 8, the future South Calgary and part of Richmond, from 1890 until about 1906. W.E. Wing, photographer.

The CPR was granted Section 5 at some date during or before 1890. This section extends south from 34 Avenue SW to 50 Avenue SW between 14 Street SW in the east and Crowchild Trail in the west. The railway company quickly began selling portions of this section in quarter-section parcels.

Before 1907, these lands lay entirely outside of Calgary's corporate boundaries, and they became part of an agricultural district. Even after most of the area was annexed and residential and commercial development began, farms and other agricultural operations remained present in the district for many years.

The earliest-known farm was established in 1902 in present-day Altadore and Garrison Woods. George Brydon (1858–1935), a farmer from Neepawa, Manitoba, moved to Calgary in 1901 with his wife, Catherine (née McRae, 1865–1928), and their six children. The following year, Brydon bought the northwest quarter of Section 5, a 160-acre parcel, from the CPR. This parcel comprised the area from 34 Avenue SW south to Flanders Avenue/42 Avenue SW between 19 Street SW and Crowchild Trail. The Brydons lived on the property and operated it as a dairy farm until they sold it around 1907.²

Next, French-born dairyman George Baptiste Minard (1879–1964) operated the farm until

around the 1930s. Minard and his wife, Annette Marie (1883–1952), worked in Paris for Marquis Raoul de Roussy de Sales and Marquise Marie Therese de Roussy de Sales. The Minards moved to Canada with their employers around 1906, settling first in High River and then in Calgary. The Minards lived in the farmhouse at 2313–33 Avenue SW as early as 1920 and as late as 1929. George Minard later worked as a gardener for the Calgary Golf and Country Club.

Christian Damgaard (circa 1884–1946), a Danish immigrant, operated the farm in the early 1930s. Later occupants of the farmhouse include George Gage, salesman Frank W. Haggarty, and grain buyer Hubert Haggerty in the 1930s, and Ted Adams and Gertie Alice Pomroy in the 1940s.

The second of the two earliest-known farms in the district lay immediately to the south. Sometime between 1903 and 1906, Erich Friedrich Carl Brackman (1878–1918) purchased 80 acres in the southwest quarter of Section 5 (the north half of the southwest quarter) from the CPR. This parcel comprised the area from Flanders Avenue/42 Avenue SW south to about 46 Avenue SW between 19 Street SW and Crowchild Trail.

Eric Brackman, as he became known, was a market gardener originally from Freidland, Mecklenburg, Germany. He and his wife,



George Brydon, n.d.



This 1924 aerial photograph shows the lightly-developed character of the Marda Loop communities. Brackie's slough, the large body of water at centre left, is clearly visible, and so is the drainage feature that leads to it from the east. The slough in the bottom right of the photograph is the future Verna Reid Park.



This photograph, identified as “Brackmans House, South Calgary,” likely depicts the farmhouse at 2368–42 Avenue SW.

Juliana (née Schneider, 1886–1961), and their children established a dairy farm, and they lived in a house later addressed as 2368–42 Avenue SW. A remnant of their farm, known locally as Brackman’s slough or Brackie’s slough, is now Flanders Park. A few years

after Eric’s death, Juliana married John Francis Dahm (1887–1929). After she was widowed a second time in 1929, Juliana sold the property and moved to a newly-built South Calgary house at 3001–14 Street SW. Her son, Eric, and his family lived next door at 3005–14 Street SW. (See also pages 53–54 for the Brackman/Dahm family.)

Further east, the Altadore Nurseries (14 Street SW between 36 Avenue and 37 Avenue SW), began operating by 1913. It was owned by the Prime family—Albert V., Harry P., Leslie John, and William O.

From about 1929 until 1934, John Peter Lurges (1882–1934) operated the Feathered Farm on his property at 3915–14 Street SW. This operation produced furs and poultry.

Future research has the potential to determine land use in South Calgary and Richmond (in the south half of Section 8) before the area was subdivided for residential development. It was likely used for agricultural purposes. Just as there were dairy farms to the south in Section 5, there was at least one dairy farm to the north—the Lincoln Dairy (1436–26 Avenue SW), which was established by 1912.

As late as the 1930s, some residents in this



Eric Brackman, n.d.

The former Brackman dairy farm is visible in the lower-right corner of this oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks, looking northwest, taken in the 1930s.



area kept cattle. In his 1975 memoir about growing up in South Calgary in the 1930s, John W. Grant recalled:

Another sign of spring in our part of old South Calgary was the appearance of cows. A lot of people kept cows in those days and these animals were usually picketed near their owners [sic] homes or at least in sight of home.³

In Grant’s recollection, Dorothy Sinclair (who lived at 2207–30 Avenue SW) and William and Margaret Milner (who lived at 2209–30 Avenue SW) picketed their cows in the block between 20 Street and 21 Street SW from 31 Avenue to 32 Avenue SW. Mrs. Goodwin (likely the wife of Frank Goodwin, who lived at 2025–30 Avenue SW) picketed her Jersey cows in the same area but east of 20 Street SW.

Heritage value

- The Marda Loop communities have activity value as the site of early dairy farms in the Calgary area.
- The communities have person value through the personalities of its early dairy farmers, George and Catherine Brydon and Eric and Juliana Brackman.

Character-defining elements

- Knob Hill (the physical hill)
- Pre-development creek and slough areas, including an old creek that remains visible at or near River Park.
- River Park, which comprises an undeveloped plateau above the Elbow River, an escarpment leading down to the riverbank, and a riverbank area at the base of the escarpment.

Places of interest

- N/A

Interpretive opportunities

- The parking lot at Safeway Garrison Woods (2425–34 Avenue SW) recalls the open space that would have characterized the Brackman dairy farm on the same site.
- Flanders Park (4220 Passchendaele Road SW) maintains the open space that characterized “Brackie’s slough.”
- The sidewalk marker that indicates the crest of Knob Hill (2022–29 Avenue SW).
- The old creek visible at or near River Park recalls this former creek and other water features in the area.
- Picketing of family cows (both sides of 20 Street SW between 31 Avenue SW and 32 Avenue SW).⁴

Notes

- ¹ The name Knob Hill originally referred to a residential subdivision created on the hill in 1906. The hill is not usually referred to as Knob Hill, but at least two historical references, both from 1913, suggest that it might have been so named in the past. See “New City Engineers Study Calgary’s Water Problem; Water Tower for Knob Hill,” *Morning Albertan*, 1 March 1913, 1 (“At the commissioners’ meeting yesterday afternoon tenders were opened for a 100,000-gallon water tower on Knob Hill to increase the pressure for fire and domestic purposes in the southwest.”) and “Water Storage Tank on Nob [sic] Hill,” *Morning Albertan*, 3 April 1913, 1 (“Plans were completed yesterday for the water storage tank on Knob Hill, and the work of excavation will be started next week by the waterworks ddepartment.”).
- ² The Brydon family later built and lived in the extant Brydon Residence at 1915–12 Street SW in Mount Royal, which is on The City’s heritage inventory.
- ³ John W. Grant, “Vignettes of Old South Calgary,” in *Past and Present: People, Places and Events in Calgary* ([Calgary]: Century Calgary Publications, 1975), 365.
- ⁴ Coincidentally, the cows from Terry Gregoraschuk’s 1999 installation “Scene and Heard on Fourth” were later displayed outdoors in this area (on the southeast corner of 21 Street SW and 31 Avenue SW.)



Sidewalk marker at 2022–29 Avenue SW, May 26, 2024. Harry Sanders, photographer



Oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks and the Currie PMOs, looking west, n.d. C.N. Ross, photographer.



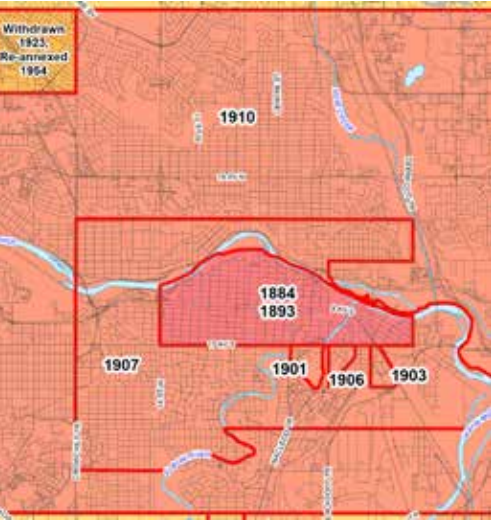
THREE

SUBDIVISIONS, PLANNING, AND NEIGHBOURHOOD IDENTIFICATION

Between 1901 and 1913, Calgary enjoyed phenomenal economic, physical, and population growth. Hundreds of thousands of agricultural settlers poured into the Canadian west. As a hub of north-south and east-west railway traffic, Calgary quickly became a regional distribution and manufacturing centre. Its population grew tenfold between 1901 and 1911. The city limits expanded, taking in a vast area that included the villages of Rouleauville to the south and Crescent Heights to the north. A streetcar system, established in 1909, allowed the development of distant residential subdivisions and industrial areas. It was in this context that the future Marda Loop communities were annexed, subdivided, and initially developed.

In 1907, Calgary annexed a large area that pushed its northern boundary from the Bow River to 8 Avenue NW/NE, south from 17 Avenue SW/SE to 42 Avenue SW (west of the Elbow River) and 34 Avenue SW/SE (east of the Elbow River), east from 15 Street SE to the Elbow River, and west from 14 Street SW to 24 Street SW (present-day Crowchild Trail). The annexed area included all or parts of present-day Alyth, Bonnybrook, Crescent Heights, Hillhurst, Sunnyside, Inglewood, Ramsay, Mission, Cliff Bungalow, Mount Royal, Riverside, Scarboro, and Sunalta. It also included the future South Calgary and the north half of Altadore and Garrison Woods as far south as 42 Avenue SW.

A larger annexation in 1910 pushed the northern boundary from 8 Avenue NW/NE to present-day McKnight Boulevard, south to 50 Avenue SW/SE, east to present-day Barlow Trail, and west from Crowchild Trail to 37 Street NW/SW. This brought into the city limits the remaining portion of Altadore and Garrison Woods. The 1910 annexation was commonly known at the time as “Greater Calgary.” It filled out the city limits on all sides and aligned Calgary’s area with the whole of Township 24-1-W5M.



Detail of annexation map showing the 1907 annexation that included Section 8 (comprising Bankview, Knob Hill, Richmond, and South Calgary) and the north half of Section 5 (including parts of present-day Altadore, Garrison Woods, and River Park).

The future Marda Loop communities as depicted in Thomas Mawson’s *Calgary: A Preliminary Scheme for Controlling the Economic Growth of the City* (1914).



Development of the Marda Loop communities began in this period. Dozens of early buyers soon defaulted on their property taxes, and the local authority—Spruce Vale School District No. 209—offered the lots at auction as a tax recovery measure.¹ However, development, slow at first, proceeded. From the beginning, the area was defined by a grid pattern of streets and avenues and light, scattered development of detached homes on 25-foot lots, churches, and corner stores. The grid street layout on Knob Hill (in today’s Richmond and South Calgary) contrasted with the development pattern in adjacent Mount Royal to the east, which is situated on the same hilltop. There, the CPR (which owned the quarter-section) developed an exclusive neighbourhood with curvilinear streets that followed natural landscapes.

Land use

There were great expectations of growth in southwest Calgary during the pre-First World War boom. But by the 1930s and into the 1940s, residential development was sparse, concentrated in the eastern part of South Calgary, mostly in the blocks around King Edward School and near 33 and 34 avenues east of 19 Street SW. Areas were often gap-toothed with rows of pre-First World War homes and empty lots side-by-side. Rural uses persisted in the area, which was very much the edge of town.

The City of Calgary’s first zoning bylaw was implemented in 1934. The zoning map identified all of South Calgary (including today’s Richmond), and the future Altadore area as far south as 40 Avenue SW, to be “Two Family” meaning detached single family and duplex and semi-detached dwelling were permitted on every lot. (In contrast, Elbow Park was Single Family and the Beltline mostly Multiple Dwelling, with apartments allowed.) There were also a few lots designated Local Commercial, which were generally pre-existing commercial sites. The rest of the area, including the future PMQ, was not designated on the zoning map.

Growth and development eventually resumed in the 1940s, accelerating after the Second World War and the Leduc oil strike. In the older developed areas of Marda Loop, new

houses started to fill empty lots next to 1912-era homes, and plans were made for suburban expansion into Altadore. Aerial photographs show major change between 1948 and 1953. There was very little development in Richmond even in 1948, but by 1953 both South Calgary and Richmond were built out. To the south, Altadore was built out between 16 and 20 streets SW as far south as 42 Avenue SW, with construction progressing rapidly as far as 49 Avenue SW. The Currie PMQs were completed in this period.

In response to rapid growth, the Province of Alberta established a Town and Rural Planning Act in 1950, empowering municipalities to create General Plans and modern planning regimes. An update to Calgary’s 1934 zoning bylaw was needed, but in the meantime the City exercised its development approval powers in a manner that was described as “Interim Control”; development was looked at within guidelines, rather than more strictly controlled by “zoning.”² The 1952 Interim Zoning Guide map identified virtually all of the Marda Loop area (except for the Currie PMQs) as “R2 General Residence,” broadly permitting one family dwellings, two family dwellings, three and four family dwellings, and multiple family dwellings. The block where the Marda Theatre was being built, at 20 Street and 33 Avenue SW, was identified General Commercial.

A 1956 map for the proposed new zoning by-law more closely defined areas of residential density: An east-west band between 33 Avenue SW and 36 Avenue SW (roughly), also including the north side of 33 Avenue SW west of 19 Street, was designated R-3 and R-4, allowing modest apartments. This zoning was also placed north of 29 Avenue SW east of 18 Street SW to 14 Street SW; in the northeast corner of South Calgary and neighbouring Bankview. The rest of South Calgary, Richmond, and most of Altadore was designated R-2, Two Family. The new River Park subdivision, south of 38 Avenue SW and east of 16 Street SW, was designated as RR – 1 Restricted One Family Residential District, the same zoning as Elbow Park. The new Zoning Bylaw was finally implemented by city council in 1958.

It is unclear to the extent City planning efforts, as represented in the zoning maps

specifically, directed development or described “facts on the ground” in retrospect. In any case, by 1957 the whole area was essentially built out. Multi-family buildings were built in the “Apartment” areas defined by the 1956 map with few outside exceptions. Regardless of R-2 zoning, South Calgary, Richmond, and Altadore built out typically as single-family bungalows and cottages—the most common and popular form of development in Calgary’s mid-century suburbs, but there were some “two family” examples also. River Park built out as large single homes on large lots as intended.

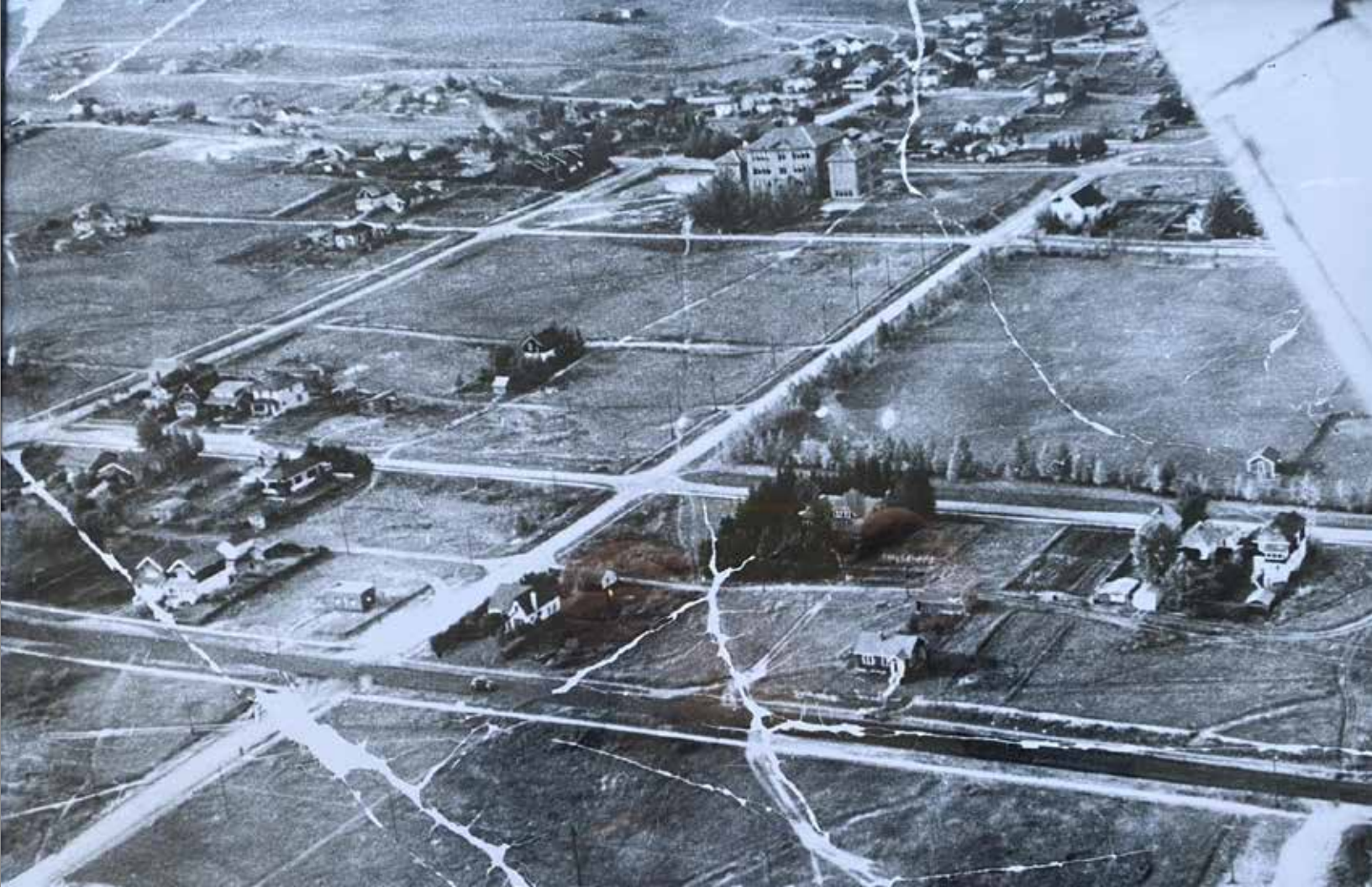
R-2 zoning would yet have its day. A major built form change started in the late 20th century with the advent of “skinny” infills. Typically, a house on a 50-foot lot was torn down and replaced with two 17-foot-wide houses on two 25-foot lots. “I think there are about a dozen in South Calgary,” said Craig Reid, the local alderman for Ward 11, in 1979. “And from what I can tell it is just starting to become a trend.”³ Infill development continued throughout in the 1980s and 1990s, and as rules and consumer

preferences evolved “attached infills” eventually became more common than the stand-alone “skinnies”. Infill activity was strongest in the older areas of Marda Loop, notably South Calgary, and later expanded to Richmond and Altadore. In the early 21st century, infill redevelopment transformed most of the area except for River Park with its single-family zoning.

The final major planning change of the 20th century that impacted Marda Loop was the

This oblique aerial photograph taken in the 1920s, looking northwest toward King Edward School, shows the gap-toothed early development of the neighbourhood.

Infills began to change the character of the housing stock in the 1970s. These examples at 1823 and 1825–29 Avenue SW, photographed July 17, 2025, were both built in 1979. Bob van Wegen, photographer.



comprehensive development of Garrison Woods under a “new urbanism” planning scheme.

Neighbourhood identification

The neighbourhoods that make up the Marda Loop communities initially developed at different times, and they have their own characteristics and identity.

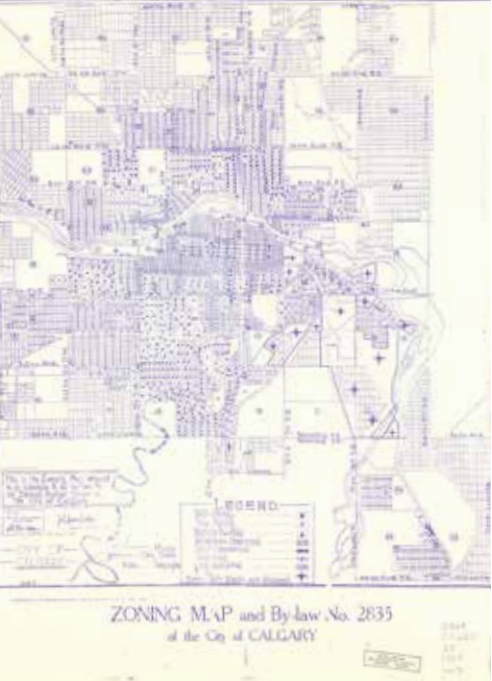
South Calgary

The name “South Calgary” does not appear on Plan 4479P, which owner George Thomas Callendar Robinson (1869–1958) registered on May 7, 1907.⁴ This singular plan subdivided the entire south half of Section 8, which now includes both South Calgary and part of Richmond. The subdivision imposed a strict grid pattern on this portion of Knob Hill, including its summit and its slopes. Most of the building stock has changed over time, but the street pattern remains intact.

The original street and avenue numbers in Robinson’s plan, generated without reference to The City’s own numbering sequence, were likely never used.⁵ They included First Avenue (now 26 Avenue SW) south to Eighth Avenue (now 33 Avenue SW), and Second Street (now 22 Street SW) east to Ninth Street (now 15 Street SW), with both present-day Crowchild Trail and 14 Street SW indicated as “Road Allowance.” The future main business strip—33 Avenue SW—was designated as 8 Avenue, an unintentional parallel to the main commercial street in downtown Calgary, 8 Avenue (also known as Stephen Avenue).

As development began, the neighbourhood quickly adopted the City’s numbering scheme. The only named road in the subdivision plan is Werner Street, which is now 34 Avenue SW at the south edge of the section. Bernard Werner, who in 1906 registered the first subdivision in the future Marda Loop communities (Plan 2256N in Altadore), is the likely namesake.⁶

In 1945, a new subdivision plan (Plan 5614FO) was superimposed on Plan 4479P. This non-contiguous plan, spread out over five blocks in South Calgary, had the effect of replotting lots to allow for the construction of wartime housing.



Calgary’s first zoning map (above) accompanied By-law No. 2835 of 1934. The detail below shows the Marda Loop area.



As a community name, South Calgary appeared early and was used by community and sports organizations as early as the First World War. John W. Grant, who grew up in the area in the 1930s, provided his own definition in a memoir published in 1975:

Did you live in the old pre-war south Calgary? I am referring to the South Calgary that was roughly defined as being in the area encompassed on the north by 26th Ave. S.W. SW, 24th St. on the west, the Elbow River on the south and 14th St. on the east. This was the South Calgary I grew up in, give or take a few blocks on either side of the above-mentioned streets and avenues.⁷

Neighbourhood organizations had been established in Calgary since at least the 1920s, but the community association model really grew in the mid-20th century with the establishment of many new communities and the Federation of Calgary Communities in the late 1950s. At around this time, the City advanced a community/neighbourhood model in large part to organize local activities, develop community facilities, and organize minor sports.

The South Calgary Community Association was incorporated in 1957, around the same time as the establishment of the Federation of Calgary Communities. Besides the present South Calgary, the area covered by the community association extended into the northern part of Altadore as part of that community’s buildout.

Richmond

The northwest corner of the Marda Loop communities, west of 20 Street SW and north of 33 Avenue SW, was part of the original South Calgary subdivision. By the 1950s, it was included in Richmond, a separate community that extended west of 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail) and north of 26 Avenue SW, beyond the subject area.

The Richmond Community Association was registered as a Provincial Society on June 16, 1954. Knob Hill was added to the name at a later date. Richmond School (2701–22 Street SW), which opened in 1950 as Richmond Road School, is the neighbourhood’s likely namesake. Richmond Road was so named by 1912, but the origin of the name is unknown.

The road was part of a cart trail that led from the Mission district in Calgary to Mîni Thnî (formerly known as Morley) northwest of the city. The transformation of 24 Street SW into Crowchild Trail in the late 1960s severed Richmond Road and bisected the Richmond community.

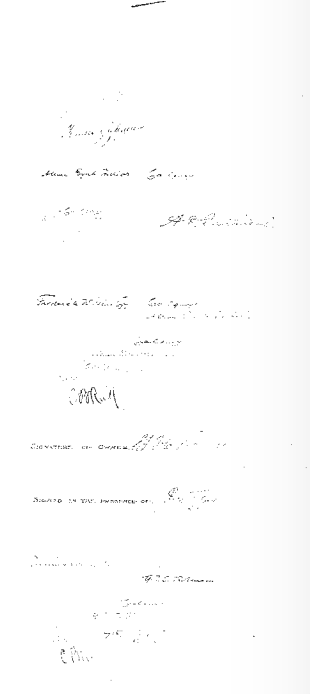
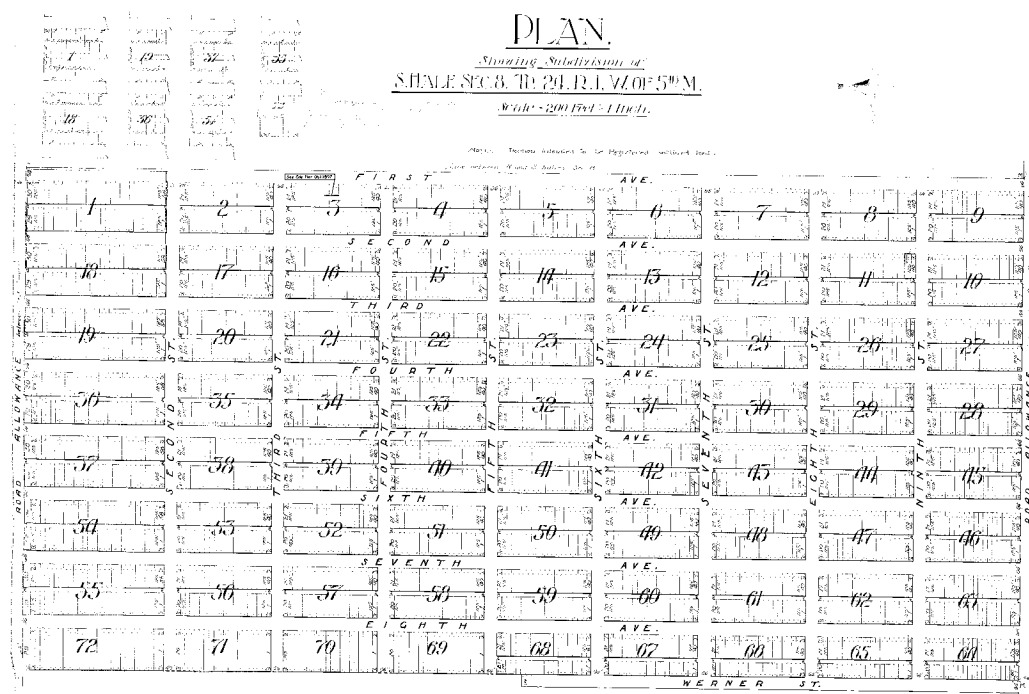
One of the key founding meetings of the Federation of Calgary Communities was held in December 1958 at the Richmond Community Hall, with about 30 communities in attendance. The bisection of Richmond following the development of Crowchild Trail reinforces the close association of the southeast part of Richmond with the Marda Loop area.

Altadore

Unlike South Calgary and Richmond, where a unitary subdivision applied to an entire half-section, Altadore was subdivided in a fractured pattern. The CPR sold each quarter-section separately, and these properties were split up further among multiple owners who, among them, registered dozens of subdivision plans. Uneven road alignments in Altadore are likely rooted in this fractured subdivision pattern.

Oblique aerial view of Altadore, looking west, circa 1980s.





The first known occurrence of the name Altadore for this area appeared in a July 13, 1906 *Daily Herald* advertisement placed by the Great West Land Company for lots in “Altadore Addition.” The first subdivision map to use the name was associated with Plan 3092P, which owner William Nicholson registered on April 3, 1907. There is no known record of the name’s meaning. It might be a combination of Alberta (abbreviated as Alta) and gold (derived from the French); alternatively, it could be “High Gold” and derived from Italian, Latin, or Spanish.

Initially, the name Altadore applied to only a portion of the present-day neighbourhood. Other named subdivisions in the area included Godlonton, Great Northern, and Katonah.

Efforts to create an Altadore community association began in 1955. That year, a building (presumably a surplus wartime hut) was moved there from Mewata Park in support of community programming. The hut was evidently placed near the southeast corner of 50 Avenue SW and 16 Street SW. The site, which eventually included a rink with lights, was reclaimed by the City and became part of Glenmore Athletic Park in 1962. A 1961 merger created the River Park-Altadore Community Association, which covered the south half of Altadore. Boundary overlaps with the South Calgary Community Association caused some confusion before the

two organizations amalgamated in 1975. By 1980, it was called the South Calgary-Altadore Community Association.

Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs)

From 1948 to 1952, the Department of National Defence developed the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs), a new neighbourhood for servicemen stationed at Currie Barracks and their families. The department acquired the land for this purpose. The Currie PMQs were developed in the context of a post-Second World War DND initiative to develop PMQs for married servicemen and their families across Canada and on international postings. The neighbourhood was designed according to the Radburn Plan, a design concept developed in the United States in the 1920s. The concept involved curvilinear streets that provided vehicle access to the backs of houses, which faced each other across a common green that had no road or vehicle access.

The neighbourhood had its own community hall, and the CFB Calgary Married Quarters Community Council was incorporated in 1983.

The closure of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Calgary in 1998 led to the depopulation of

Plan 4479P, the original subdivision for South Calgary and Richmond.



Businessman and two-term city councillor George T.C. Robinson (1869–1958) subdivided the south half of Section 8 in 1907. This subdivision became South Calgary and part of Richmond.



Commercial real estate map showing South Calgary, Altadore, and the South Calgary Reservoir and gravity line that fed it from the Elbow River. City of Calgary, Alberta, 1908, by I. Hammond Litho. Co./Hatfield & McLaren.

the Currie PMQs and the site’s redevelopment as Garrison Woods. In 2000, the former community hall was repurposed as Lycée Louis Pasteur (4099 Garrison Boulevard SW), a private bilingual school later renamed Lycée International de Calgary. The building remains extant as part of the campus, but it has been altered beyond recognition.

River Park

This small, upscale residential area was developed in the 1950s as the result of a compromise over the creation of the large adjacent park, also named River Park. This narrow residential development was created under different planning guidelines than the older, adjacent Altadore. River Park had its own community association between 1958 and 1961 before it amalgamated with its Altadore counterpart.

Garrison Woods

Following the 1998 closure of Canadian Forces Base Calgary, which included Currie Barracks, Canada Lands Company—



Oblique aerial view of Richmond looking east, September 26, 1963. Viscount Bennett School appears in the right foreground; Richmond School and Richmond Community Hall appear at centre left. Between them, at centre left in the photograph, is the convergence of 26 Avenue SW (oriented east-west), 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail, oriented north-south), and Richmond Road (oriented northeast-southwest).

a federal crown corporation—redeveloped the Currie PMQs as the residential Garrison Woods neighbourhood. It comprises green spaces, parks, and squares, and a mixture of older buildings (two historic schools and refurbished military houses relocated in denser configurations) as well as new residential and commercial construction. Garrison Woods Safeway and the shops on the opposite side of its parking lot were inserted at a late stage in the design. Garrison Woods is a prominent example of New Urbanism, and it won a national planning award from the Canadian Institute of Planners. It became part of the South Calgary-Altadore Community Association.

Marda Loop

In 1985, the newly-established South Calgary Business Revitalization Zone created and adopted the name Marda Loop. It was located on 33 Avenue SW and 34 Avenue SW between 17 Street SW and Crowchild Trail. The BRZ’s boundaries covered parts of Richmond, South Calgary, and Altadore where these communities intersected at this focal point of the area. Within two decades, the wider district became known as Marda Loop. The simplicity of the Marda Loop name, in contrast to the unwieldy combination of existing community names, likely contributed to its rapid adoption. In 2011, the South Calgary Community Association renamed itself the Marda Loop Communities Association.

Heritage value

The differential development patterns and origins of the Marda Loop communities have symbolic value (Pre-First World War speculation, military housing, exclusive homes opposite River Park)

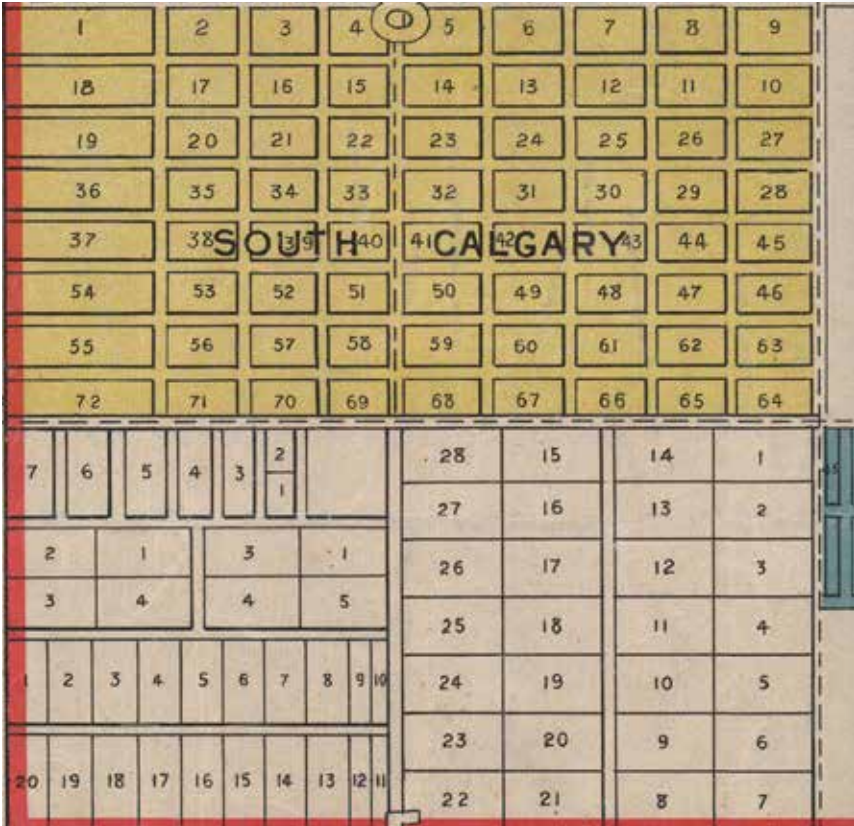
Character-defining elements

- Original grid street pattern overlaid on a hillside in Richmond and South Calgary
- Fractured development pattern in Altadore
- Remnant of Currie PMQ street pattern in Garrison Woods.

THE ORIGINAL RICHMOND

The name Richmond appears on a pre-First World War commercial real estate map, but not in its present location. In 1902, Charles Frederick Riches (1879–1938) and partner John Moore bought an 80-acre parcel at the southwest corner of today’s Marda Loop communities from the CPR. The property was located between 19 Street SW and 24 Street SW (today’s Crowchild Trail), from 46 Avenue SW south to 50 Avenue SW.

Riches soon bought out his partner, and during the pre-First World War boom, he registered a nameless subdivision that appears on the map as Richmond. Whether this subdivision was named for Richmond Road or for Riches himself remains a mystery.



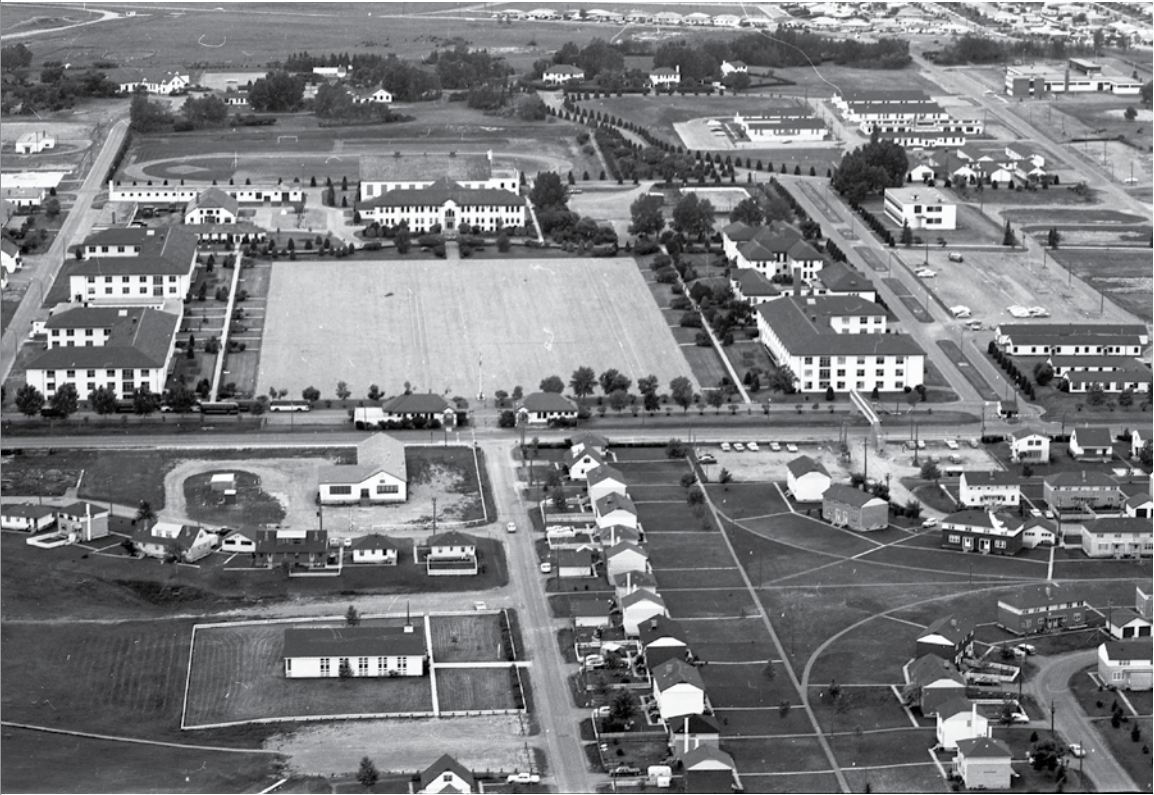
Places of interest

- Richmond School (2701–22 Street SW)—first new school building since King Edward School opened in 1913.

Interpretive opportunities

- Signage and/or activities focused on the planning and development history of the Marda Loop communities

Detail from commercial real estate map showing South Calgary and Altadore (south to the 1907–10 city limit at 42 Avenue SW). Altadore is unnamed and fractured in appearance, with the future Garrison Woods indistinbuishable from the rest of the district.



Oblique aerial view of Currie MPQs, looking west toward Currie Barracks, 1967. Bill Onions, photographer.

- Interpret planning history with reference to select remnants of design patterns (eg. road misalignment in Altadore, remnants of Radburn Plan in Garrison Woods (eg. Somme Boulevard SW, Somme Manor SW, and part of Cambrai Avenue SW).
- Relocated/refurbished PMQ housing in Garrison Woods.

Notes

- 1 Established in 1890, Spruce Vale (or Sprucevale) School District No. 209 operated a school west of Calgary (in Section 13-24-2-W5M) on Bragg Creek Road west of 69 Street SW. Later renamed West Calgary School District No. 209, it operated the school until 1930. The school site is now within the city limits.
- 2 For a discussion of this, see Max Foran, *Expansive Discourses: Urban Sprawl in Calgary, 1945–1978* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2008), Chapter 3.
- 3 Jack Spearman, “Infill house development—blessing or blemish?” *Calgary Herald*, November 26, 1979, B2.
- 4 An earlier proposal to subdivide this half-section was not realized. Thomas A. Hatfield (1855–1926) and Robert J. McLaren (circa 1865–1952), the partners in the real estate firm Hatfield and McLaren, had intended to subdivide this property in 1906. However, the loss of valuable development property to road allowance requirements led the partners to withdraw from the project. Both men later relocated to Vancouver.
- 5 The original designations had some legal status as late as 1982, when The City used them (along with their present-day counterparts) in advertising a proposed street-closure bylaw as part of Crowchild Trail widening.
- 6 He might have been Bernard Werner (1864–1944) of Edmonton.
- 7 Grant, 347.



Oblique aerial view of River Park at the southeast corner of Altadore, August 1974. Bill Onions, photographer.

Oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks and the Marda Loop communities, looking northeast, 1963.



FOUR

TRANSPORTATION AND SERVICES



The establishment of Calgary's municipally-owned streetcar system in 1909 and its rapid extension made the existence of the Marda Loop communities practical and possible.

By 1912, the Calgary Municipal Railway (CMR) built a stub line along the 14 Street SW hill south from 17 Avenue SW. That year, a grocery store and a meat market opened along the line in the vicinity of 14 Street and 26 Avenue SW. By 1913, the streetcar line formed a loop around South Calgary, extending west along 26 Avenue SW, then south on 20 Street SW, east on 34 Avenue SW, and then north again on 14 Street for the return journey home. (An abortive line on 32 Avenue SW, westward from 14 Street, was partially built in 1913 and then dismantled at a cost of \$200.) When the CMR adopted route numbers, the South Calgary route became Route No. 7.

The streetcar system was important to the community for several reasons. Streetcar service made it possible to live in a distant

subdivision and commute to work downtown or in another part of the city. Streetcar routes evidently prompted commercial growth as happened at 14 Street and 26 Avenue SW when service first began, and then along 34 Avenue SW when the loop was completed and that avenue became the return route.

The street railway was also a significant employer. Many residents of the Marda Loop communities worked for the CMR (and for the Calgary Transit System and then Calgary Transit, as the transit system was renamed in 1946 and 1970 respectively). For example, John Thomas Hawkins (1891–1917), who lived in the extant Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW), was a streetcar conductor who usually worked on the South Calgary route. James Emmons (1879–1963), a CMR carpenter from about 1923 until he retired in 1947, lived in the extant Emmons Residence (1612–30 Avenue SW).

John W. Grant, who grew up in the neighbourhood in the 1930s, documented the experience of riding the South Calgary

A South Calgary streetcar makes its way north on 14 Street SW, August 15, 1945. The extant Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW) is visible in the background to the left. The building was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2024.



The Emmons Residence (1612–30 Avenue SW) was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2024. James Emmons worked as a carpenter for the Calgary Municipal Railway for 24 years while living in this South Calgary house.

streetcar in a memoir he wrote in 1975. He described, in great detail, the climb up the steep 14 Street SW hill, the dips and elevations westward along 26 Avenue SW, and other aspects of the route. The streetcar often stopped at Grant's corner (so named for Grant's family that lived at 2032–34 Avenue SW), where it turned eastward on 34 Avenue SW from 20 Street. Grant described this as well:

At Grant's corner, the conductor often took a short break. First he lit his pipe, then he stoked his wee stove, emptied the hot ashes into a nearby snowbank causing great clouds of steam to arise.

At certain unspecified times, he would drain the big tank under the trolley. A hot greyish-green mixture used to come hissing out under considerable force. All of the small fry were understandably curious about this fearsome concoction.

Strange to relate, no matter how often you asked and no matter how many different conductors you asked about the nature of this horrible, hissing mess, their invariable answer was that it was porridge, and would you like some.

With all his little chores completed and his pipe tapped out, we would patiently wait for any last minute stragglers running for the street-car.¹

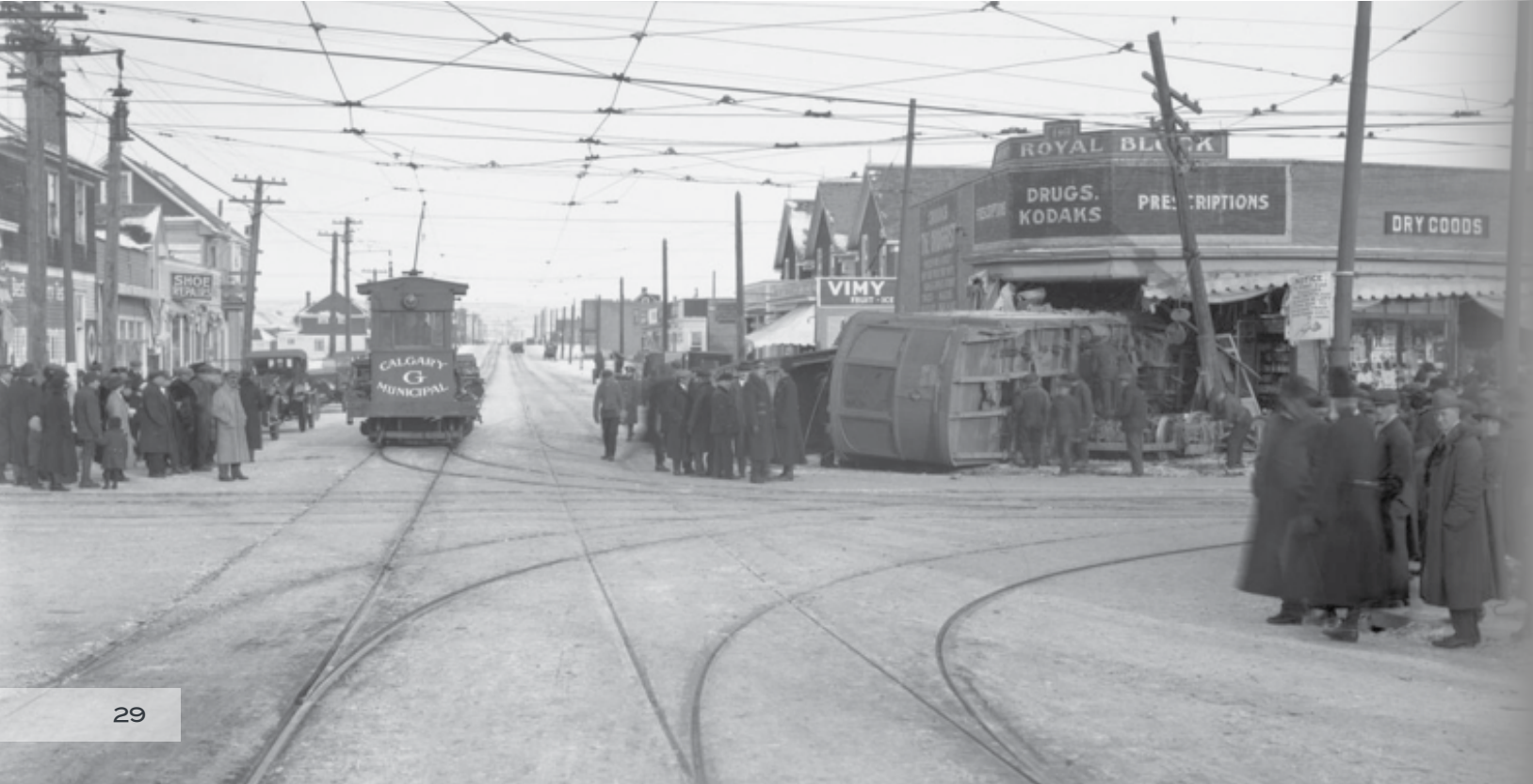
The onetime “Grant's corner” is now the site of a public art and sound installation that commemorates the neighbourhood's streetcar history. “Call and Response” was installed in 2023 on the year-old Martel Block (2040–34 Avenue SW). Architect Jamie Clark of Systemic Architecture Inc. designed the installation's physical component, which comprises three bells attached to the underside of a roof projection at the corner of the building. The form of the bells evokes aspects of streetcar design such as brass fittings and round extruded shapes. The installation's auditory component, composed by Lindsay Clark with assistance from Vic Florencia, interprets the sounds of the streetcar system. “We wanted to create a sound that captures the historical sounds of Marda Loop,” Lindsay Clark explained:

With high, crisp, and warm tones, the streetcar bell creates a unique tonal palette from which music can be composed. The 20 unique musical compositions created for this project follow a “call and response” format, before striking the hour. These compositions emulate the concept of two street cars communicating to each other as they pass by on “The Loop.” The compositions are treated with a shimmering decay effect to reference both the echoing of bells throughout the streets of Marda Loop, and to indicate the passage of time. The hour tones themselves are



Call and Response, a public art and sound installation on the Martel Block (2040–34 Avenue SW) at the former “Grant's corner.” Photographed July 2, 2024.

Car No. 68, a South Calgary streetcar, after it hit Crook's Drug Store (1428–17 Avenue SW), December 15, 1919. The photographer is facing north along 14 Street SW at the intersection with 17 Avenue SW. W.J. Oliver, photographer.



A trolley coach can be seen turning around in the South Calgary Loop in this oblique aerial view looking northeast from Currie Barracks, 1963. Three extant landmarks are visible in this photograph:

- 1 the transit loop;
- 2 Currie Taxi (later Mike's Auto Service, 2442–34 Avenue SW);
- 3 Currie Plaza (2403–33 Avenue SW);
- 4 the future site of Safeway Garrison Woods (2435–34 Avenue SW).

composed of a two-tone bell strike, again referencing the two different “Loops.”²

On occasion, accidents on the South Calgary line delayed transit schedules and affected passengers' time. For example, on November 23, 1917, a streetcar derailed at the corner of 14 Street and 26 Avenue SW and knocked over a telegraph pole. A decade later, on December 6, 1927, ice on the tracks caused a streetcar to derail on 20 Street near 31 Avenue SW, and the car hit a snowbank. The streetcar line was blocked for hours.

Calgary's most infamous streetcar accident involved the South Calgary route. On December 15, 1919, the South Calgary streetcar lost control on the 14 Street SW hill and crashed into a drugstore on 17 Avenue SW. Hoarfrost made the rails slippery that morning, and as the car picked up speed going down the steep hill, the motor-conductor lost control of the car. The passengers included several district residents, among them Robert Dougherty McWilliam (1868–1919) and his son Alex (1898–1988). Both lived in the Summers Block, and both were postal service employees heading to work at the downtown post office. Robert was the accident's sole fatality; Alex was injured, but he recovered.

Richard Taylor, who owned the Phoenix Press print shop, was on the streetcar with his sons Harry, Sydney, and Richard, and they were all lightly injured. The Taylors lived in the extant James and Louie Taylor Residence (1736–32 Avenue SW).³ (See also pages 55–56 for the Taylor family.)

Other area residents on the streetcar included George Howard of 1509–26 Avenue SW, George Cornfoot of 1708–34 Avenue SW, and letter-carrier George Mann of 2028–34 Avenue SW.

An eerily similar accident occurred on January 29, 1946, when a South Calgary streetcar lost control descending the 14 Street SW hill, again because of ice on the tracks. This time, it collided with a Beltline streetcar at 17 Avenue SW, resulting in six injuries but no deaths. Passengers on the South Calgary streetcar included Harry Gardiner of 1819–29 Avenue SW and J.B. Faulkner of 2239–33 Avenue SW. Following that accident, transit superintendent Charles Comba notified city council that newer streetcars, which were built of light steel, were not used on this route because they were not equipped to stand the uphill climb. Comba emphasized, according to the *Albertan*, that “[all] precautions are being taken to avoid further accidents on the 14th St. W. hill and the best equipment is operating on the South Calgary route.”⁴

The streetcar route remained unchanged from 1913 until 1948, when it was removed. This was part of a four-year (1946–50) phased conversion of the transit system from streetcars to a combination of electric trolley coaches and gasoline-powered buses. The CMR was renamed the Calgary Transit System (CTS) in 1946, and the first conversion, on the Crescent Heights route, took place in 1947. South Calgary was included in the second phase of conversion. The last run of the No. 7



Four residents of the James and Louie Taylor Residence (1736–32 Avenue SW)—Richard Taylor and his sons Harry, Sydney, and Richard, Jr.—were on the ill-fated South Calgary streetcar on December 15, 1919. The house was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2011.



A South Calgary trolley coach makes its way north down the perilous 14 Street SW hill, 1972. Bill Herriot, photographer.

streetcar occurred on November 27, 1948. Buses served the neighbourhood temporarily until the inauguration of the No. 7 trolley coach service on February 6, 1949.

Like the streetcar route it replaced, the trolley coach route entered the neighbourhood from the north along 14 Street SW. Unlike the streetcar route, which formed a loop around South Calgary, the trolley coach route was a stub line that simply reversed its course after reaching its end point. The route was simple—south along 14 Street to 33 Avenue SW, then west on 33 Avenue to the end point just west of 22 Street SW.

The choice of 33 Avenue SW for the trolley coach route was another departure from the old streetcar line, which had followed 34 Avenue SW. Available sources give no clear reason for the change. Since 33 Avenue SW had better potential for road alignment across 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail), it is reasonable to assume that this was the basis for the decision.

Trolley coaches were rubber-wheeled like buses. But, like streetcars, they were electrically-powered via trolley poles that projected from the roof of the vehicle and made contact with overhead electric wires. Because the new South Calgary trolley coach route was a stub line and not a circle route, it required a turnaround loop so the vehicle could reverse its direction and retrace its route on the return journey. That loop was located on the south side of 33 Avenue SW

just west of 22 Street SW. Irene Horn, the neighbourhood resident who won the Business Revitalization Zone’s naming contest in 1985, based the “Loop” portion of her suggestion (“Marda Loop”) on this trolley coach loop. Horn recalled that the loop had neither a shelter nor a bench.

CTS inaugurated transit service in Altadore on January 5, 1953. This was accomplished by extending the trolley coach route south along 20 Street past 33 Avenue. The extension was delayed while The City and the federal government negotiated over funding for storm sewer drainage in the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (Currie PMQs)



Proposed stations from *Transit for Calgary's Future*, 1968.



Oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks (foreground), the Currie PMQs (above right), and the 33 Avenue SW business district west from 20 Street SW, 1963.

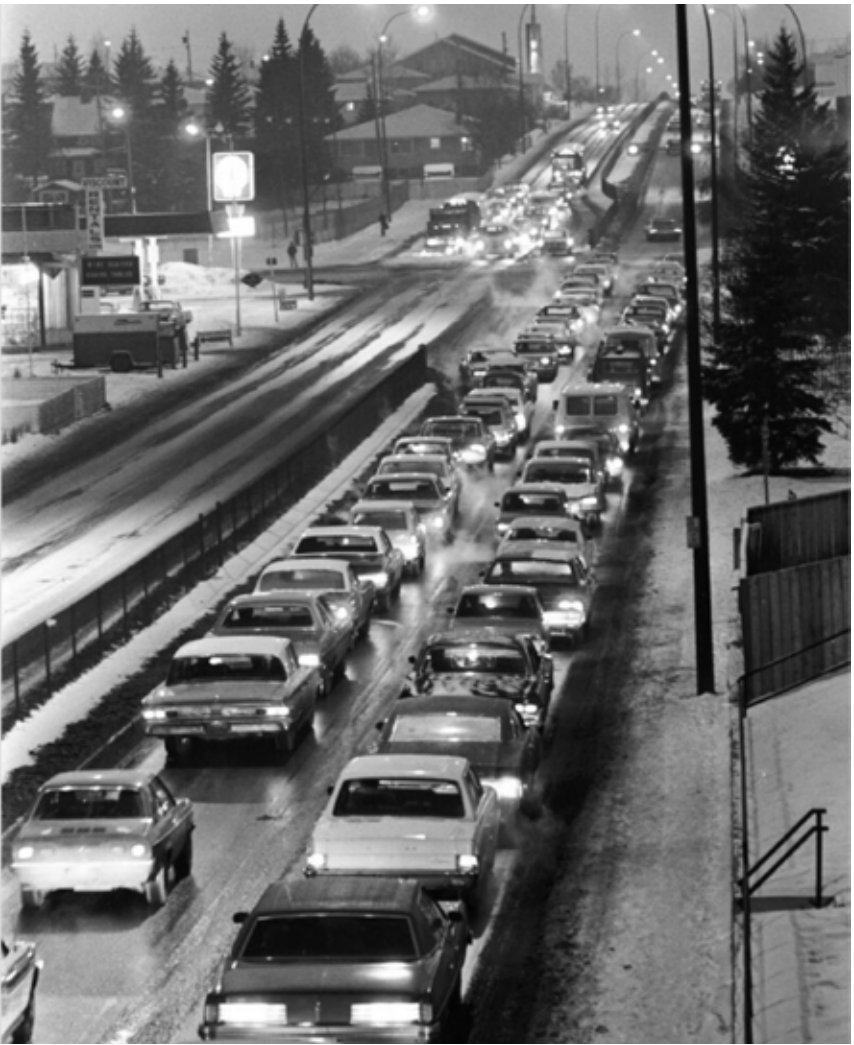
neighbourhood (today’s Garrison Woods). The storm sewer was required to drain the area once known as Brackie’s slough (the future Flanders Park). The No. 7 route was now “split” with some trolleys going to the original loop and others going south down 20 Street SW to a second loop at 24 Street SW and 54 Avenue SW.⁵

A 1968 consulting report, *Transit for Calgary's Future*, foresaw a heavy-rail transit system for Calgary by 1986. The consultants, Simpson and Curtin, placed a possible future west leg of the system along 26 Avenue SW, with its South Calgary station in the present-day playground at the northeast corner of 20 Street and 26 Avenue SW in Bankview. In the event, city council approved a light rail transit system in 1977, and the West LRT line was inaugurated in 2012 on a more northerly route along 10 Avenue and 17 Avenue SW.

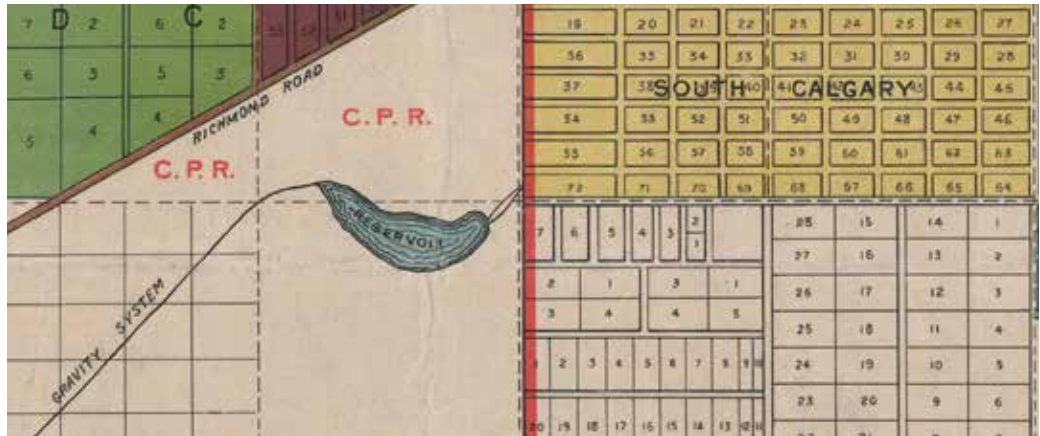
In 1974, Calgary Transit phased out its electric trolley coach fleet. The South Calgary route was converted to diesel buses on March 7, 1975. The turnaround loop was retired, with all buses going down 20 Street SW.

Roads

After the Second World War, Calgary expanded southward from the Glenmore reservoir and water treatment plant, which were constructed south of Altadore in the early 1930s (see below under Utilities). In 1946, city council approved a plan to construct a bridge deck atop the Glenmore Dam. Once



Looking southeast along Crowchild Trail toward 26 Avenue SW, 1973. In 1982, Crowchild was widened at this point, and an overpass replaced the intersection. Grace Lutheran Church, visible in the distance, was demolished to make way for an on-ramp to northbound Crowchild. Roger Pierce, photographer.



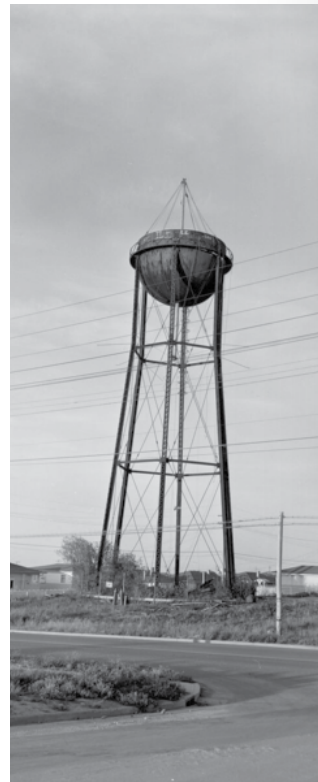
South Calgary Reservoir shown adjacent to South Calgary and the future Garrison Woods, 1908. I. Hammond Litho. Co./Hatfield & McLaren.

completed, the bridge connected 19 Street SW in Altadore with 14 Street SW south of the reservoir. The single-lane bridge was controlled by traffic lights at each end. By 1960, newspaper advertisements for the Marda Theatre indicated “Direct Access Via Glenmore Dam” for the convenience of moviegoers to the south.

By about 1976, the dam and bridge needed rehabilitation, which took place in 1978. The City contemplated widening the bridge to two lanes and, in 1979, resolved to build a two-lane bridge elevated above the existing bridge deck. The South Calgary Community Association objected strongly and successfully. In 1980, The City closed the bridge to traffic permanently.

The development of 24 Street SW into the Crowchild Trail freeway in the mid-1960s had a significant impact on the communities. It affected traffic patterns, and it severed community linkages on either side of the freeway, such as the link between Currie Barracks and the Currie PMQs, and it placed a busy freeway between Viscount Bennett High School to the west and its students in the Marda Loop communities to the east.

In 1967, 33 Avenue SW became the main east-west connection across Crowchild Trail with a level intersection; before that time, 33 Avenue had ended at 24 Street SW, and the route west from that point followed 32 Avenue SW. This development, which occurred nearly two decades after the transit route



The Knob Hill water tower just before its demolition, 1956. Rosettis Studio, photographer.

Steel feedermain, South Calgary Park, 1962. Looking northwest to the South Calgary community hall (behind the pile of dirt) and, beyond that, King Edward School.

shifted from 34 Avenue to 33 Avenue SW, further reinforced the status of 33 Avenue SW as a main street.

Also in 1967, The City built an overpass across Crowchild Trail at Flanders Avenue SW linking the Currie PMQs to Currie Barracks. When Crowchild was widened to six lanes in 1982, the project included an overpass at 26 Avenue SW and a diamond interchange at 33 Avenue SW.

Utilities

In 1907–09, The City built the Gravity Water System, which largely supplied Calgary’s water needs until the 1930s. The system involved an intake on the Elbow River at Twin Bridges, west of Calgary, and a flume that brought Elbow River water via gravity to the South Calgary Reservoir, which was located west of the communities on the site of Richmond Green. The reservoir was later reconstructed as a sub-surface reservoir, and it remains in operation as the Currie Reservoir.

In 1913, as a follow-up to the gravity project, The City built a 100,000-gallon water tower on the east side of 24 Street SW at 30 Avenue SW. The tower remained a local landmark until its demolition in 1956.



The former City-owned powerhouse at 1515–34 Avenue SW functioned as a Scout Hall from about 1939 until at least 1961. This 1955 photograph shows fire damage caused by arson.

In 1916, The City proposed extending service pipes (as opposed to the more expensive main pipes) to South Calgary, allowing households to access water services for a one-time hookup fee of approximately \$600.

Construction of the Glenmore dam, reservoir, and water treatment plant a short distance to

Substation No. 4 (1508–34 Avenue SW) was designed by architect D.S. McIlroy and built by contractors Carlson and Richards. This extant, decommissioned substation was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2010.



the south in 1930–33 had a significant impact on the Marda Loop neighbourhoods. The massive project supplemented the gravity system and was a source of employment for some area residents. As an example, Liverpool-born Jim Atkinson (1904–1999), who grew up in South Calgary and was one of the first students at King Edward School, drove a team of horses as part of the construction project.

Development of the waterworks led to the emergence of 16 Street SW as a highway linking this district to the facility, which lay outside the city boundaries until the 1950s. Another direct impact of the waterworks system on the neighbourhood was the construction of a Waterworks Pumping Station (3411–16 Street SW) around 1972.

A powerhouse at 1515–34 Avenue SW, built at an unknown date, was decommissioned by 1939 and turned into the 7th Boy Scout Troop Hall.

The Electric Light Department built Substation No. 4 (1508–34 Avenue SW) in 1930; it was expanded to the west in 1958 and eventually decommissioned.

Around 1951, the electrical utility built a regulating station (1914–42 Avenue SW) in Altadore. This structure is evidently no longer extant.

Services

Since 1910, the Calgary Fire Department has served the Marda Loop communities from Fire Hall No. 5, which was originally located



The third Fire Hall No. 5 (3129–14 Street SW) was designed by architects Stevenson & Dewar and built by contractor Burns & Dutton. It stood adjacent to South Calgary Park from 1952 until 2012.

at 1138–17 Avenue SW in Lower Mount Royal. The earliest-known fire alarm in the area occurred on May 4, 1912, when firefighters attended a blaze at the South Calgary home of Sydney C. Jenkins and his family (1805–27 Avenue SW). The second Fire Hall No. 5 (1629 Scotland Street SW) served the area from its Scarboro location in 1922–52.

In 1951, The City provided land from South Calgary Park to provide space for a new Fire Hall No. 5 (3129–14 Street SW), which was built in 1951–52. The Parks Department maintained the grounds, including a flower garden. In 1956, the Parks Department planted tulips using bulbs donated by the South Calgary Kiwanis Club.

Fire Hall No. 5 was the oldest in the city still in operation when it was replaced in 2012. The new structure, built adjacent to its 1952 predecessor, was officially opened on November 1, 2012. At the ceremony,

On June 5, 1956, an explosion and fire occurred at the Calgary Power substation in North Glenmore Park (now Enmax Substation No. 10, 5119–14 Street SW) immediately south of Altadore. The explosion was heard throughout the neighbourhood, and it caused a widespread temporary power outage. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

dignitaries were presented with bricks from the 1952 structure which was then already being demolished.

The Fire Department had another connection to the area. Charles A. Harrison, Calgary’s fire chief from 1964 to 1972, lived at 1802–30 Avenue SW in South Calgary from the 1940s to the 1970s. He was an active member of the South Calgary Community Association.

On one occasion in 1951, a service that might have been expected from the Fire Department was rendered by the Electric Light Department. Residents were outraged when a cat was stranded atop a pole on 30 Avenue SW for days and no action was taken. On Mayor Mackay’s order, the Electric Light Department executed a successful rescue.

Heritage Value

- The Marda Loop communities have symbolic value as pre-First World War subdivisions made possible by the introduction of the street railway.

Character-defining elements

- Commercial presence and mainstreet character of 14 Street SW, 33 Avenue SW, and 34 Avenue SW, due in part to association with transit routes.

Places of interest

- George Howard Residence (1509–32 Avenue SW). Howard was on the ill-fated streetcar that crashed into Crooks Drugs in 1919.
- Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW). Home of Robert D. McWilliam, who was killed in the 1919 streetcar crash.
- James and Louie Taylor Residence (1736–32 Avenue SW). Three members of the family were on the ill-fated 1919 streetcar.
- Charles A. Harrison Residence (1802–30 Avenue SW). Harrison was Calgary’s longtime fire chief.
- Substation No. 4 (1508–34 Avenue SW), built in 1930 and expanded in 1958.
- The Waterworks Pumping Station (3411–16 Street SW), built in 1972

Interpretive opportunities

- The grassy slope west of the condominium building at 2419–33 Avenue SW is the site of the trolley coach loop that informs the name of Marda Loop.
- The Knob Hill water tower site (north side of 30 Avenue SW at Crowchild Trail) might present an opportunity to interpret this former city landmark. However, the exact site of the tower is likely now part of Crowchild Trail.
- The Electric Light Department’s extant Substation No. 4 (1508–34 Avenue SW) presents an opportunity to interpret the building itself (a 1930 structure and 1958 addition, and former adjacent garden) as well as the provision of electricity to the neighbourhood.
- “Grant’s corner” (the northeast corner of 20 Street SW and 34 Avenue SW) presents an opportunity to interpret the rest-stop point of the South Calgary streetcar route. The “Call and Response” art installation on the Martel Block maintains this association.
- The pocket park at 34 Avenue SW adjacent to Garrison Safeway, constructed in 2025, presents an opportunity to interpret the effect of Crowchild Trail development on the district.
- Design elements of Fire Station No. 5 built in 1912 recall elements of its now-demolished 1952 predecessor. Souvenir bricks were retained and can be used, along with the present structure, to interpret the former one. Existing historical interpretation of the 1952 firehall can be supplemented.

Notes

1 Grant, 355.
2 Systemic Architecture Inc., “New Public Art Titled ‘Call and Response’ Inspires an Immersive Journey Through Marda Loop’s Historical Soundscapes,” press release, 4 October 2023.
3 The younger Richard Taylor became the father of diplomat Ken Taylor, who was Canada’s ambassador to Iran in 1977–80 and played a key role in the rescue of six U.S. embassy staff members during the Iran hostage crisis in 1979–80.
4 “Only Sturdy Trams On S. Calgary Run,” *Albertan*, 3 August 1946, 11.
5 The second loop is extant at Crowchild Trail SW and 54 Avenue SW where it remains the turn-around point of the No. 7 route.



Oblique aerial view of Currie PMOs, looking west toward Currie Barracks, 1967. Bill Onion's, photographer.

FIVE MILITARY



For most of the 20th century, a significant military complex was located adjacent to the Marda Loop communities. Currie Barracks became operational in 1936, and it closed, along with the rest of Canadian Forces Base Calgary (abbreviated as CFB Calgary), in 1998. Proximity to Currie Barracks resulted in significant military associations for the neighbourhoods, both direct and indirect.

Canadian military activity on the future Currie Barracks site began more than two decades before the base was constructed. In the summer of 1911, militia training took place in a tented encampment at Reservoir Park, the site of the South Calgary Reservoir (see page 34-35) located immediately north of the future Currie Barracks. From 1912 to 1914, training occurred south of Reservoir Park on the future barracks site.

Following the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, military training was relocated approximately five kilometres southwest to the

newly-established Sarcee Camp on land leased from the Tsuut'ina Nation. From 1914 until 1934, there was no known military association with the future Currie Barracks site.

It is unclear if proximity to the Reservoir Park and Sarcee Camp training centres increased the military associations of the Marda Loop communities. Nonetheless, there were many such associations in the neighbourhoods long before Currie Barracks opened.

During the First World War, members of many neighbourhood families served in uniform. A single place of interest, the extant Summers Block (2715-14 Street SW), offers multiple examples.

Charles J. Summers (1873-1959), a grocer, built the residential-commercial Summers Block in 1913 and lived next door with his family in the extant house at 2713-14 Street SW. His eldest son, Arthur C. Summers (1895-1916), worked in the family-owned store in the building before enlisting in 1915. Private Summers served with the 50th Battalion and was killed in action in 1916.

Soldiers in training at Reservoir Park, 1911.

Private Arthur C. Summers was killed in action in 1916. His father, Charles J. Summers, built the extant Summers Block. This photograph was published in the *Calgary Daily Herald*, November 23, 1916.



John Thomas Hawkins (1891–1917), a streetcar conductor who usually worked on the South Calgary route, lived upstairs in the Summers Block with his wife and daughter. Private Hawkins also served in the 50th Battalion, and he was killed in action in 1917.

Private Robert D. McWilliam (1871–1919) and his son Alex McWilliam (1898–1988) survived their service in the war, and they lived in the Summers Block after their return home. Both men were passengers on the South Calgary streetcar that crashed into Crooks Drugs in 1919; Robert was the only person killed. (See also pages 28–31.)

Boys too young to enlist could join the cadets. Military cadet training was an important part of public school life before and during the First World War. As he did at public schools across the city, Captain Alex Ferguson (circa 1877–1944), a physical education instructor for the Calgary School Board, trained cadets at King Edward School. In 1916, boys at the school won the Herald Cadet Trophy, a coveted prize. After the war, cadet training continued at both King Edward and South Calgary High School (a separate institution that operated in the King Edward School building from 1918 to 1928). The high school students won the provincial championship in a shooting competition in 1920.



During the war, community organizations held social events, often at King Edward, to raise funds for causes like the Red Cross or tobacco purchases for soldiers. Such organizations included the South Calgary Social Club, the South Calgary Patriotic Club, and, after the war ended, the South Calgary Returned Soldiers' Club. On at least two occasions during the war, women gathered in a Summers Block apartment to sew together for the Red Cross.

For many years after the war, the Altadore Grocery (1927–34 Avenue SW) served as an unofficial recruiting centre for the 50th

The Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW), seen here in 1979, was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2024. A.E. Ellison, photographer.

Cadets in front of King Edward School, 1914.



Oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks construction, looking northwest, July 25, 1935. A corner of the future Currie Permanent Married Quarters, which eventually became Garrison Woods, appears in the lower right corner. The road separating this area from Currie Barracks (left) and the South Calgary Reservoir (right) is 24 Street SW, the future Crowchild Trail.

Battalion, an infantry unit that was part of the 103rd Regiment—Calgary Rifles (the forerunner of the King's Own Calgary Regiment). The shop's longtime owner, First World War veteran Gordon S. Purdy (1890–1953), helped persuade many local boys to join the battalion, in which his sons Stanley (1916–1981) and Douglas (1920–1942) served. Both sons fought in the Second World War; Douglas was killed in action at Dieppe.

The Permanent Force Barracks, as Currie Barracks was known until 1937, had been proposed as early as 1919, but its development was postponed. In 1934, in the context of the Great Depression, Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's Conservative government introduced the Public Works Construction Act, a program of 118 capital projects across the country. Bennett was the member of parliament for Calgary West (which included the Marda Loop communities), and Calgary's Permanent Force Barracks was the second-largest appropriation on the list. Bennett had loosened the purse strings in advance of the next federal election, which his government lost in 1935. The first phase of the barracks was completed in 1936, and, in 1937, the complex was named in honour of General Sir Arthur Currie (1875–1933), who commanded



General Sir Arthur Currie, the namesake of Currie Barracks.

the Canadian Corps in 1917–18 and was the first Canadian to do so.

Currie Barracks was originally home to a cavalry regiment, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), abbreviated as LdSH (RC). (Specifically, the barracks was home to the regiment's Headquarters and "B" Squadron.) For most of the Second World War, the barracks functioned as an infantry training centre.

The barracks quickly became an important association for the neighbourhoods. The most direct association was the expansion of the

Looking east through the Currie Barracks gates toward the future Currie Permanent Married Quarters, November 17, 1936.



military footprint east across 24 Street SW into the future site of Garrison Woods.

The first such proposal was announced in December 1939, just months after the outbreak of war. The *Calgary Herald* reported that a new barracks for Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) instructors, pilots, and airmen would be built directly east of the Currie Barracks entrance gates. Presumably, this proposal was associated with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, a massive scheme to train British and Commonwealth military pilots in Canada that was agreed upon that month. In the event, the air force complex was developed south of Currie Barracks and became RCAF Base Lincoln Park.

The first practical extension of the military's footprint into the Marda Loop communities came in 1941, although it was indirect. That year, the Salvation Army—which had been designated as an auxiliary service in the war effort—built a canteen directly east of the Currie Barracks parade square to support the barracks' personnel and their families and friends. It was built on City-owned land in an undeveloped subdivision (Plan 2690AH) that had been created from the Brydon dairy farm (see page 14). The City provided the site on a rental basis, free of charge.

The Salvation Army Red Shield Hut (4004–24 Street SW), as it was called, was one of two such facilities in the city and about 100 located across Canada and overseas. The first to open in Canada was the Currie canteen's companion at Mewata Barracks, which was

situated at Mewata Park (1220–9 Avenue SW, renamed Cowboys Park in 2024). Such facilities offered civility and comfort intended to sustain morale. The one at Currie featured an auditorium, a dry canteen, a coffee bar, a library, a recreation and games room, and a quiet room. As a social and cultural centre that involved both barracks personnel and area residents, the canteen established a link between the city's military and civilian spheres. When the facility closed in 1946, a year after the Second World War ended, the *Herald* assessed its contribution:

4,162,470 men and women visited the centre, 3,110,950 were served with meals, 267,235 attended the shows, concerts and other entertainment features, 1,780,200 doughnuts were made, 158,255 personal services were rendered and 3,875,000 sheets of notepaper and 174,000 envelopes were used.¹

Lily Williamson, a Salvation Army member who lived at 2215–28 Avenue SW in present-day Richmond, worked at the canteen for six years and reportedly made every one of those doughnuts.

In 1947, the former canteen was converted into Currie Elementary School. The building eventually became a community hall and post office. It was gutted by fire in 1960 and was evidently repaired or rebuilt.

A second wartime activity led to a small, direct footprint in the Marda Loop communities for a quasi-military organization. The Calgary Mounted Constabulary (CMC), a home guard unit, was constituted in 1939

The former Salvation Army Red Shield Hut was gutted by fire in June 1960.



Calgary Mounted Constabulary, circa 1940–45. Joe Rosettis, photographer.

under joint military and police authority. Its membership comprised local horsemen who were ineligible for regular military service. Members were sworn in as special constables. They used their own horses for their duties, which included patrolling the Glenmore Dam.

The CMC established two stables, one at the Mount Royal Riding Club and the other in “South Calgary” supervised by Trooper Archibald Currie. Presumably, it was located at his Altadore home at 4301–17 Street SW.

In 1942, during the city's first test blackout of the war, CMC troopers patrolled southwest Calgary from a field headquarters near the water tower. Their purpose was to ensure compliance with the exercise. The only refusal was from a house in South Calgary (in the 1900 block of 32 Avenue SW) where a party was being held. Police sent a prowler car as a result of CMC's report, and the house was blacked out.

Direct association of the Canadian military and the Marda Loop communities began in 1946. That year, the Department of National Defence (DND) negotiated with The City for the purchase of 103 acres of City-owned land on the former Brydon farm, including the site of the Salvation Army Red Shield Hut. The property comprised present-day Garrison Woods as far south as 42 Avenue SW. That autumn, The City applied to cancel the

subdivision plan for the area and revert it to acreage in preparation for the sale.

DND proposed three alternative developments for the site or a combination of any or all of them:

- Married quarters and schools for use by army personnel and their families
- A permanent barracks similar to Currie Barracks
- Armouries for use by the reserve army

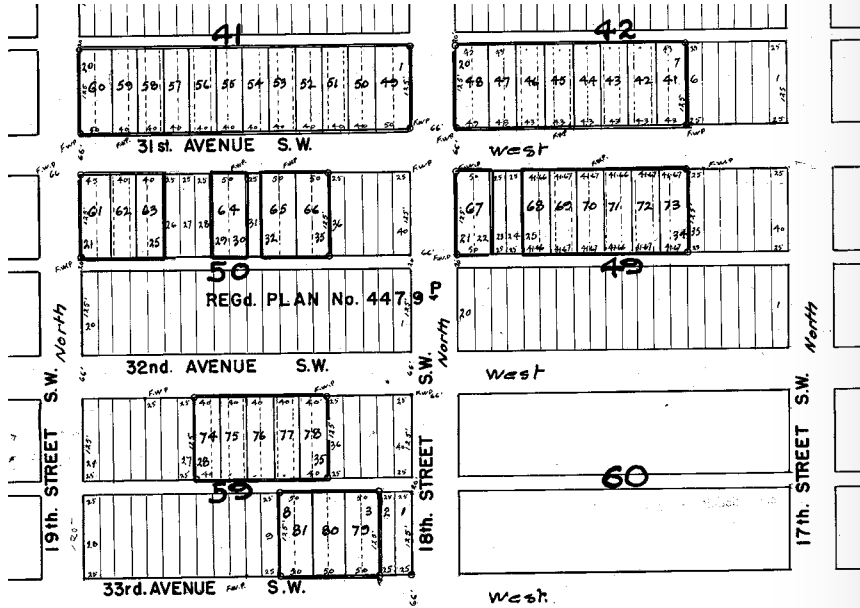
In the event, DND developed the area as the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs), a new residential neighbourhood for married service personnel and their families. This was part of DND's national post-war policy of building PMQs for military personnel and their families.

The original plan for Currie Barracks, as indicated in a 1934 proposed site plan, had called for a residential district to be built for military personnel immediately north of the parade square precinct. Only one of these structures, a four-unit terrace for married non-commissioned officers, was built. Two married quarters for a senior officers were also constructed in the 1930s. Had the married quarters as proposed in 1934 been realized, it might have obviated the need to develop the Currie PMQs after the Second World War.

The return of LdSH (RC) in 1946, and the arrival in the city of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) the same year, made clear the need for PMQs. Both regiments were garrisoned at Currie Barracks. Meanwhile, wooden army huts built at the barracks and elsewhere in the city during the war were converted into temporary married quarters.

These events took place in the context of a national housing shortage that had begun during the war. In 1941, Ottawa established a crown corporation, Wartime Housing Limited (WHL), to build and manage rental housing for war workers and military veterans. Early in 1945, the corporation began studying local housing conditions as part of a national survey.

That spring, WHL announced its first Calgary project, for 200 homes to be built in Glengarry, Manchester, and Tuxedo Park. In August, The City began surveying City-owned property in South Calgary and other neighbourhoods with a view to building an additional 300 homes. Shoquist Construction Company was contracted to build these houses, including 41 dwellings in South Calgary (on 31 Avenue, 32 Avenue, and 33 Avenue SW between 17 Street and 19 Street SW). Building permits were issued in April 1946, and these houses were occupied by the summer of 1948. By that time, WHL housing



in the Marda Loop communities also included, in addition to the Shoquist Construction homes:

- Seven homes at 27 Avenue SW and 22 Street SW
- Two homes at 33 Avenue SW and 19 Street SW
- Six homes at 34 Avenue SW and 21 Street SW
- Eight homes at 35 Avenue SW and 14A Street SW

In 1945, Plan 5614FO was overlaid on the original South Calgary subdivision (Plan 4479P). It replotted existing lots to allow for Wartime Housing Limited homes to be constructed.

Oblique aerial view of Currie Barracks and the Currie Permanent Married Quarters, looking west, n.d. Brackie's Slough (the future Flanders Park) and the storm sewer underneath it are visible in the lower left corner. C.N. Ross, photographer.



Presumed Wartime Housing Limited dwelling at 1823-31 Avenue SW, photographed July 17, 2025. Bob van Wegen, photographer.

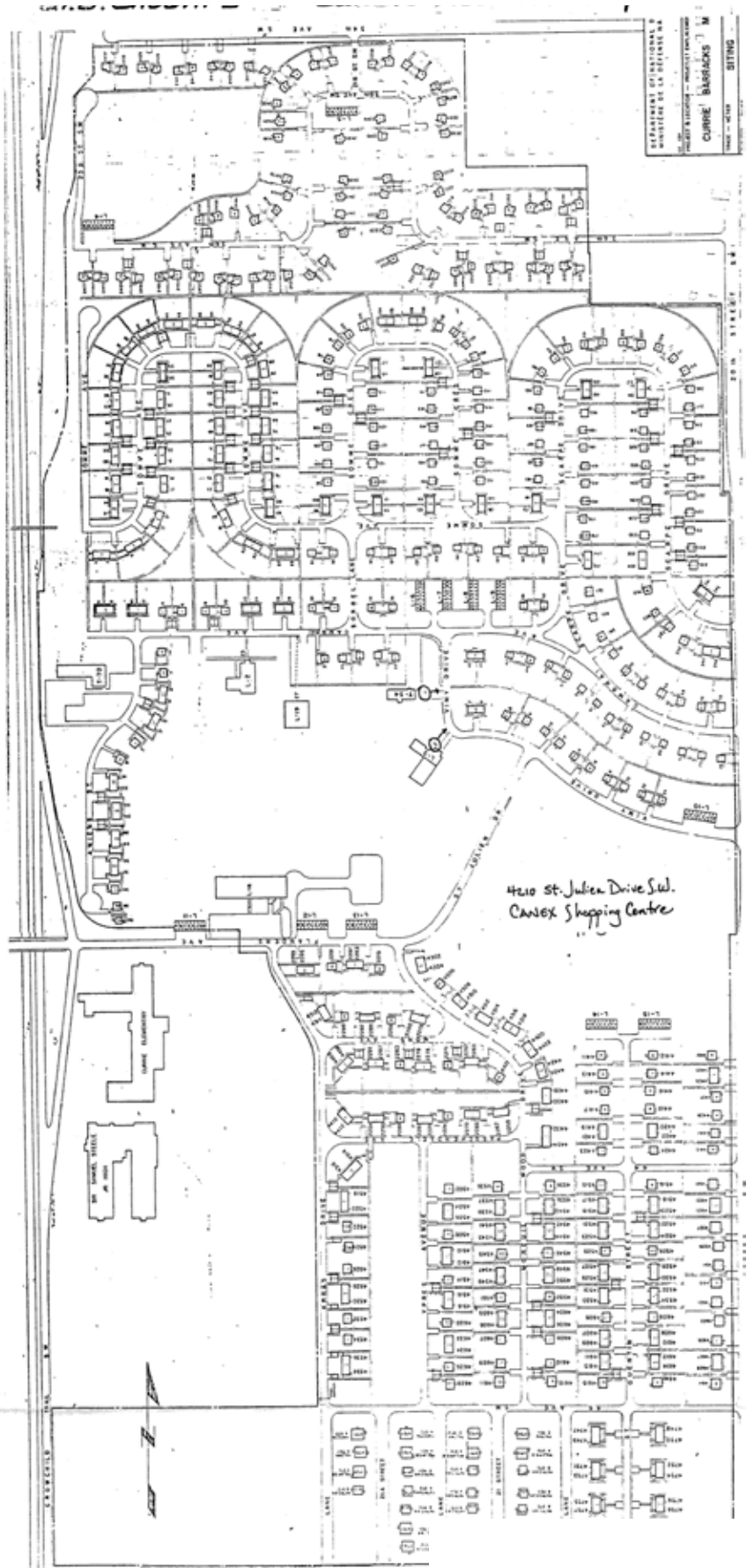
- Four homes at 35 Avenue SW and 15 Street SW

WHL houses were built from a set of standard plans and were of lower quality than commercially-built homes. In 1947, WHL was integrated into another crown corporation, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and WHL homes were sold to their tenants.

Late in 1946, a short-lived proposal to move Military District No. 13 from Calgary to Edmonton cast doubt on the development of PMQs. With that proposal reversed, DND purchased the development site and had it re-surveyed. Building permits for the first 100 units were issued to Bird Construction Company in May 1948, and the houses were ready for occupancy in January 1949. Sgt. H.B. Mulligan, along with his wife and their three sons, became the first residents in the Currie PMQs.

The housing units were constructed in three main phases: 100 units in 1948, 250 in 1949-50, and 211 in 1950-52. In 1949, DND proposed expanding the PMQs north into present-day Richmond by acquiring an additional 304 privately-owned lots between 22 Street and 24 Street SW from 34 Avenue SW north to 27 Avenue SW. Instead, the PMQ area was expanded south on land acquired between 42 Avenue SW and 47 Avenue SW around 1950. Twenty-five more units were built in 1981. In the late 1960s, some of the houses had to be demolished to accommodate the widening of 24 Street SW, which then became the Crowchild Trail expressway.

The urban plan of the Currie PMQs "was developed on the garden city ideals as typified in the Radburn city plan," according to Lorne Simpson, The City's heritage



Plan of Currie PMQs, circa 1980s.



Military housing in the Currie PMQs, looking northeast toward the 33 Avenue SW business district (top), circa 1980s.

consultant who studied the PMQs at the time of the base's shutdown in the late 1990s.² (See also page 87.) Simpson pointed out the following elements of the Radburn plan evident in the PMQs:

- The separation of pedestrian and motor vehicles with dedicated circulation and priority of use given to pedestrians.
- Each house has two fronts; the “rear” of the house was oriented to the roadway while the “front” of the house opened onto a communal green space with pedestrian paths.

Simpson also commented on the military's design influences:

- There are approximately 13 standard floor plan types and building forms. These were developed by the military. They comprised single family and semi-detached units.
- Around the individual units there is open space (ie. there are no fences which define individual properties). This was rigorously enforced until recent times and is one of the striking features.

Streets in the neighbourhood were named for First World War battle honours of LdSH (RC), PPCLI, and, later, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (QOR of C), which had a battalion garrisoned at Currie Barracks from 1953 until

1968. The original names comprised:

- Arras Drive SW
- Amiens Street SW
- Cambrai Avenue SW
- Flanders Drive SW
- Mons Avenue SW
- Moreuil Wood Drive SW
- Passchendaele Drive SW
- St. Quentin Street SW
- Somme Avenue SW
- Somme Crescent SW
- Vimy Drive SW
- Ypres Avenue SW

Other names later added include:

- St. Julien Drive SW
- Scarpe Drive SW
- Sorrel Lane SW

(When CFB Calgary closed in 1998, the City of Calgary Heritage Advisory Board, a forerunner to Heritage Calgary, recommended that these street names be preserved in future development.)

Other improvements were later added, including:

- Currie Elementary School, 4414



Above: Deobald family home in the Currie PMQs, late 1980s. Below: PMQs under construction, ca. late 1980s.



Crowchild Trail SW), 1952 (which later became Master's Academy)

- Turner Arena, circa 1953
- St. George's Chapel, a Protestant chapel, 1956 (later incorporated into Lycée International de Calgary, 4099 Garrison Boulevard SW)
- St. Maximillian Kolbe Chapel, a Roman Catholic chapel, 1956
- Currie Junior High School (4520 Crowchild Trail SW), 1957 (renamed Sir Sam Steele Junior High School; later retrofitted as the Museum of the Regiments and eventually renamed The Military Museums)
- Garrison Curling Club, 1962 (damaged by fire, 1967; rebuilt, 1988; later moved adjacent to Calgary Centennial Arenas)
- A community centre (n.d., later incorporated into Lycée International de Calgary (4099 Garrison Boulevard SW)³

Other recreational facilities included a hockey rink and a skating rink on the future site of Garrison Woods Safeway (2425-34 Avenue SW).

Development of the PMQs drove commercial growth in neighbouring areas. By the early 1950s, the business district on 33 Avenue SW, mostly along the south side of the avenue, extended all the way to 24 Street SW. A new commercial area developed along 42 Avenue SW in the block east of 20 Street SW. And in a phenomenon that started before the development of the PMQs, some local businesses adopted the name Currie, beginning with the Currie Inn restaurant (1925-34 Avenue SW) by 1945 (see sidebar on page 106).

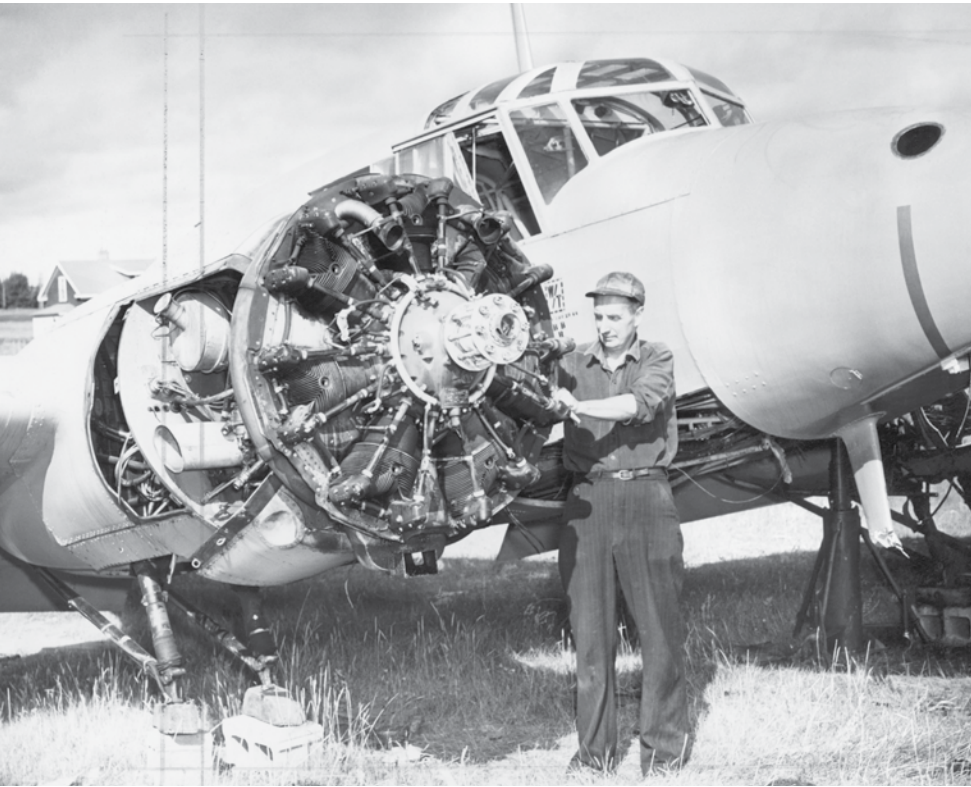
Military families living in the PMQs became a significant clientele for area businesses. In 1983, DND opened its CANEX retail outlet (a government-operated concern, abbreviated from Canadian Forces Exchange System) in what is now the west end of Flanders Park. Competition from CANEX evidently prompted local business owners to work cooperatively, which contributed to the formation of the South Calgary Businessmen's Association, a forerunner of the Marda Loop Business Revitalization Zone (later renamed the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area (see page 121-122).

Apart from the military families that lived in the PMQs, proximity of the Marda Loop communities to Currie Barracks likely resulted in a greater concentration of military families in the area than in other parts of the city.

There were other linkages between the military and the Marda Loop communities. When the Governor General, the Earl of Athlone, made an official visit to Currie Barracks in 1941, his motorcade made its way through the district along 14 Street SW and 33 Avenue SW en route to the base. In one 1948 example, free bus service to the PPCLI's Trooping of the Colour ceremony was provided from 20 Street SW and 34 Avenue SW. And on at least one occasion in 1956, members of the QOR of C paraded from Currie Barracks to St. George's Chapel.

Proximity to the military sites had its hazards. On March 22, 1944, two student pilots who were training as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan crashed their planes into each other over Altadore, and both aircraft crashed in the area of 17 Street and 42 Avenue SW. Both student pilots were killed. When Currie Elementary School opened in 1952, it became a flight hazard for pilots taking off from a particular runway at RCAF Base Lincoln Park. The runway had to

After the Second World War, painter Austin Wright (1906-1976) purchased 19 surplus aircraft through the War Assets Corporation for \$200 each and began dismantling them in the backyard of his Altadore home at 2021-36 Avenue SW. Wright sold floodlights and hydraulic systems to farmers, instruments to aircraft companies and private pilots, propellers to collectors and former RCAF plots as souvenirs, and other parts to racers for use in remodelling "souped-up" racing jalopies.⁴ This photograph was published in the *Calgary Herald* on September 9, 1947. Harry Befus, photographer.



be retired. In 1983, Peter Dixon uncovered a buried Second World War artillery shell under his porch at 1742–35 Avenue SW. Police evacuated residents in a 1.5-block radius for 90 minutes while they investigated. In the event, the shell turned out to have been a dud.

Many personalities from the Marda Loop communities' history exemplify the strong connections between the military and the neighbourhoods. Examples include Ian Willoughby Bazalgette (1918–1944) and George Sydney Trenter (1926–1951). Squadron Leader Bazalgette, who grew up at 2020–35 Avenue SW in Altadore, died in France in an heroic attempt to save two injured members of his air crew. He was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. Sgt.-Major Trenter, who died while serving with the PPCLI in the Korean War, lived with his family at 238 Somme Crescent SW. He is the earliest-known resident of the Currie PMQs to have been killed in action.

In 1995, the federal government announced that CFB Calgary would be closed. Since its formation in 1968, CFB Calgary had included Currie Barracks. The closure took effect in 1998, and it occasioned a comprehensive redevelopment of the Currie PMQs by Canada Lands Company, a crown corporation that manages property for the federal



A military house being moved as part of Garrison Woods development, circa late 1990s.

Landscape architect Jim Laidlaw designed Garrison Square Park, seen here in an undated photograph. The text of an interpretive panel at Garrison Square Park (see sidebar, page 48) explains the park's purpose and design.

government. The area's Radburn plan was abandoned, and refurbished PMQ houses and duplexes were repositioned in a denser configuration alongside newly-constructed houses. Apart from one small area, landscape architect Jim Laidlaw designed all phases of Garrison Woods, as the Currie PMQs area was renamed.

Apart from a small military footprint

remaining in Currie Barracks (and The Military Museums in Garrison Woods), the Canadian military withdrew from Calgary in 1998. The Military Museums, which opened in the former Sir Sam Steele Junior High School in 1990 as the Museum of the Regiments, maintains the historic military connection to the area. So too do these features in Garrison Woods established by Canada Lands:

- Original Currie PMQ street names on reconfigured streets.
- Garrison Square Park (201 Garrison Square SW), which Canada Lands developed as a memorial to Currie Barracks and the Currie PMQs.
- The Garrison Woods Legacy Walk, which comprises outdoor plinths supporting plaques that describe the battle honours for which Garrison Woods streets are named. An interpretive panel mounted on the exterior of Garrison Woods Safeway illustrates the route of the Garrison Woods Legacy Walk and tells the story of the Currie PMQs.
- Two interpretive panels mounted outside the Garrison Woods Safeway that tell the story of General Sir Arthur Currie and the Currie PMQs.

Heritage value

- Garrison Woods has activity value through its origin as a neighbourhood created for married soldiers and their families.
- The neighbourhood has institutional value through its close historical association with DND and the Canadian military, which created the neighbourhood and supplied married soldiers and their families with homes and a community.

Character-defining elements

- Proximity to the former Currie Barracks
- Original street names reflecting the First World War battle honours of regiments garrisoned at Currie Barracks
- Some original street configurations retained
- Adaptive re-use of original military housing

GARRISON SQUARE PARK

Text of Canada Land Company's interpretive panel:

Garrison Square Park was designed and constructed as a monument to the memory of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Calgary, Currie Barracks, with special recognition to the men and women who served at the base and with units in the Calgary area. The park also pays tribute to the ongoing struggle of Canadian soldiers to keep peace around the world.

The design is based on a double spiral which envelops the park and represents opposing forces in war. One spiral is defined by sandstone blocks listing battles in which Calgary-based units have fought. United Nations service is also recognized. The other spiral consists of Thunderchild crabapple trees. The deep pink flowers and bronze red leaves represent the blood spilled in war. Together, the battle blocks and trees stand in silent tribute.

The raised central plaza, with its four spiral ramps, portrays the hope to achieve a final resolution of conflict. The sandstone posts and steel structure encloses and protects the focal point of the park, a central oak tree, the symbol of rebirth and life.

The design of the park represents the Canadian desire to ensure peace and prosperity for all while illustrating the sacrifices made to achieve that goal.

Places of interest

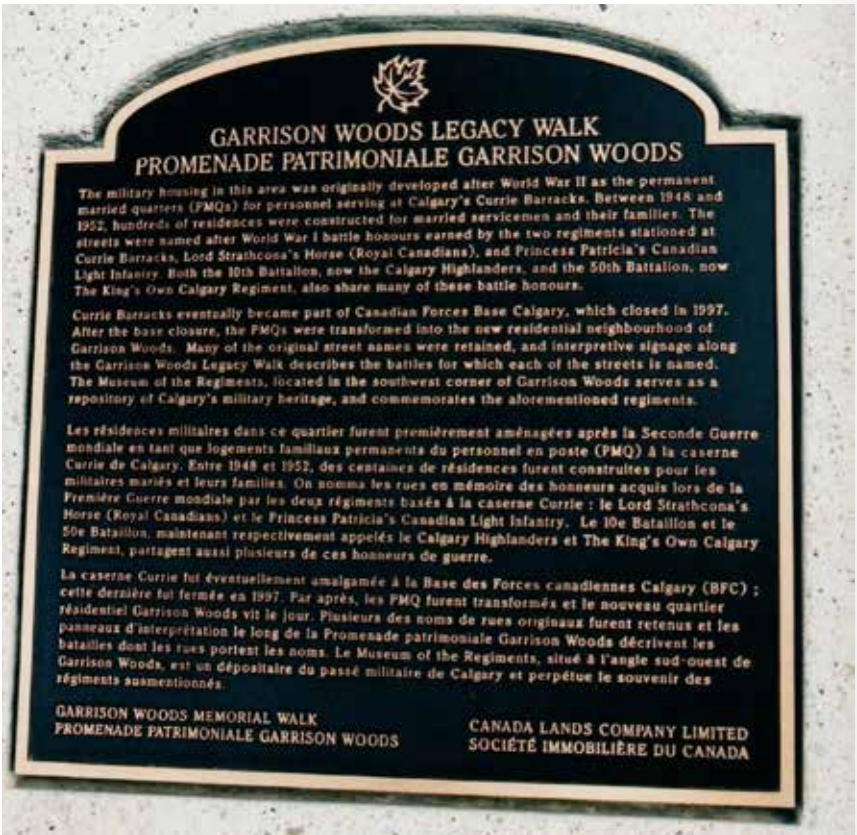
- 1705–34 Avenue SW, built in 1912. This was the longtime home of Herbert G. Hibbs (1880–1978), who served with the PPCLI during the First World War.
- 1719–33 Avenue SW, built in 1910. During the Second World War, this was the home of Major Richard A. Butterworth, who was on the staff of A16 Canadian Infantry Training Centre.
- 1741–34 Avenue SW, built in 1914. During the Second World War, this was the home of the Rutter family, a multigenerational military family. Sgt. Thomas B. Rutter (1888–1968) worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs until he retired in 1945. His son Spr. Denis Rutter (1920–1944), a dispatch rider with the 13th Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers, was killed in action in the Italian campaign.
- George H. Shaw Residence (1907–34 Avenue SW). Shaw served in the First World War.



Canada Lands Company placed this monument at the south end of Garrison Boulevard SW where it intersects with Flanders Avenue SW and Passchendaele Road SW. It commemorates units, headquarters, and training establishments that were garrisoned at Currie Barracks. Landscape architect Jim Laidlaw designed the monument and the traffic circle in which it is set. Harry Sanders, photographer.



- James McLennan Residence (1742–35 Avenue SW), built in 1914. In 1983, Peter Dixon uncovered a buried Second World War artillery shell under his porch.
- 1734–34 Avenue SW, built in 1910. This was almost certainly the home of Oxfordshire-born George Grafton (ca. 1882–1955), who fought in the South African War before moving to Canada in 1913. Grafton served with the 12th Canadian Mounted Rifles during the First World War, and he was the RCAF barrack officer at Currie Barracks during the Second World War. Henderson’s lists Geo. Grafton at this address in 1917–18. Another First World War veteran, Stanley Curtis Johnson (ca. 1896–1965), lived here in his final years.⁶
- 1743–34 Avenue SW, built in 1914. During the Second World War, this was the home of Eric Arthur Seal, who enlisted in the RCAF.
- 1834–34 Avenue SW, built in 1910. At the time Private Joseph Townsend was killed in action in 1917, this was the home of his wife and their two small children.
- 1913–34 Avenue SW, built in 1914. In 1916, this house reportedly became the home of newlyweds Captain W.S. Stewart and his bride, the former Lillian Mae Tipping.⁶ Stewart settled in Calgary after being injured in the First World War. The Military Hospitals Commission appointed him as officer commanding its discharge depot in the city, and he distinguished himself through his dedicated service in the position. But in 1918, he was exposed as a fraud. He was actually William Stitt, he had abandoned his wife and family in Toronto, and he had not served in the military (although five of his ten children had). Stitt was sentenced to four years at hard labour in the Edmonton penitentiary. Decades later, this house was the home of Elba May Johnstone when her husband, L/ Cpl. William Edward Johnstone (1929–1952), was killed in the Korean War while serving with the PPCLI.
- 2026–34 Avenue SW. In the late 1920s, this was the home of Corporal Frank H. Hawes (circa 1883–1954) of No. 13 Detachment, Royal Canadian Ordnance



Corps. Hawes was also scoutmaster of the 7th Calgary Troop.

- 2141–34 Avenue SW, built in 1914. Edward A. Clark served with Lord Strathcona’s Horse at the time he lived in this house in the late 1930s. By 1944, this was the home of Edwin George Smith (circa 1878–1950), who served in

Interpretive plaque for Garrison Woods Legacy Walk.

The Canada Lands Company’s interpretive plaque mounted on the exterior of Garrison Woods Safeway outlines the path of the Garrison Woods Legacy walk. It also includes a photograph of General Sir Arthur Currie for whom Currie Barracks was named.



both world wars (with the 82nd Battalion in the First World War and the Edmonton Fusiliers in the Second World War). After his discharge during the Second World War, Smith worked at the No. 10 Repair Depot as part of its civilian staff.

- Charles J. Summers Residence (2715–14 Street SW), built in 1912. Private Arthur C. Summers lived here with his parents before he was killed in the First World War.
- James W. Francis Residence (3510–21 Street SW), built in 1914. Francis was likely the soldier referenced in this classified ad in the *Herald* dated Sept. 8, 1915: “Wife of a soldier going away on Monday lost plain gold wedding ring, dated 1904 and initials inside. Finder please return to 3510 Twenty-first street southwest or phone M6191.”⁵ This house later became the home of William Colby Burns (circa 1893–1948), who had served with the 3rd Field Ambulance during the First World War.
- 3715–14A Street SW, built in 1914. This was the home of Walter Crawford and his family (see sidebar, page 57) during his active service during the First World War.⁷ From about 1930 to 1963, this was the Platt family residence. Percy Platt (1881–1947) had served with the 8th Field Ambulance during the First World War and later worked as a caretaker at the Department of Veterans’ Affairs office in the Burns Building.
- Currie Elementary School/Master’s Academy (4414 Crowchild Trail SW), built in 1953.
- Extant examples of Victory Housing (War-time Housing Limited houses).

- St. George’s Chapel and Currie PMQs community centre (now part of Lycée International de Calgary). (The chapel will be demolished in 2025, and the communiy centre has been altered beyond recognition.)

Interpretive opportunities

- The site of a 1944 military air crash (17 Street and 42 Avenue SW)
- Representative examples of original homes in the Currie PMQs, which have been remodelled and relocated.
- Cenotaph at Menin Gate in Gateway Garrison Woods (3546 Garrison Gate SW), a residential/commercial complex.
- The former identity of the area as Currie. Canada Lands Company’s interpretive plaque on Safeway Garrison Woods includes a photograph of General Sir Arthur Currie.



The wife and children of Private Joseph Townsend lived at 1834–34 Avenue SW when he was killed in action in 1917. This photograph was published in the *Herald* on November 23, 1917.

Notes

- “Salvation Army Canteen Centres Close This Week,” *Calgary Herald*, 24 June 1946, 12.
- Lorne G. Simpson, letter to Rob Graham, Heritage Planner, March 25, 1997.
- The community centre remains extant as part of the Lycée, but it is indistinguishable from newer construction.
- “Painter Makes Living Salvaging Old Planes,” *Calgary Herald*, 9 September 1947, 3. In 1954, Wright’s son Harvey married Florence Pipella, a sister of local businessmen George and Charles Pipella (see Chapter 10).
- “Lost and Found,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, 8 September 1915, 2.
- The *Herald*’s account of their wedding, published June 27, 1916, indicated that “Mr. and Mrs. Stewart will reside at 1913 Thirty-fourth avenue west.” However, a later, detailed account of their life in Calgary does not list this address. (“Fake Officer is Given Four Years on Bigamy Charge,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 March 1918, 13.)
- Henderson’s *Calgary City Directory 1918* lists Crawford as follows: “Crawford Walter Lab City h 3715 14a St W (active service).”

Looking southwest along Crowchild Trail toward 26 Avenue SW, 1973. Roger Pierce, photographer.



SIX BUILDING SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

This section attempts four purposes: to track the changing ethnic demographic of the Marda Loop communities over time; to identify examples of extended families that lived in the district or multigenerational families that lived there over time (making the case that this was a district amenable to such phenomena); to identify institutions that promote the social good as they were introduced to the district; and to identify notable Marda Loop residents who contributed to building community life.

Indigenous associations

As with the rest of southern Alberta, the future Marda Loop communities were part of the traditional territories of the Nations that made Treaty 7 in 1877. To date, research for this context paper has identified no specific associations between Indigenous peoples and the subject area from pre-settlement times, with a single possible exception. An 1880s Township map shows an unidentified east-west trail through present day Altadore and Garrison Woods, parallel to 34 Avenue SW. Future research might be able to establish whether that was an Indigenous or Métis trail.

The Tsuut’ina Nation, the geographically closest of the Treaty 7 Nations to Calgary since their reserves were established, has no tradition of precontact association with this area. However, there are many documented historical associations since the settlement



City visitors from the Tsuut’ina Nation could find a meal and an overnight stay at the Kelly residence (2138–33 Avenue SW) in South Calgary. The house later became Kaffa Coffee House, and, eventually, the Farmers House restaurant. It was demolished in 2017.

period began. Two such examples relate to rodeos.

Tsuut’ina members held a rodeo on their reserve on August 5, 1924, and Calgarians were invited to attend. Drivers from Tsuut’ina parked their cars at the end of the South Calgary streetcar line so they could drive Calgarians to the reserve and then back to South Calgary at the end of the day.

Before the construction of Currie Barracks in the mid-1930s, members of the Tsuut’ina Nation crossed through the neighbourhood on buckboards or saddle ponies en route to or from the annual Calgary Stampede. Some stayed overnight at the Kelly residence (2138–33 Avenue SW), where they could also obtain a meal. John W. Grant, who spent his childhood in South Calgary in the 1930s, recorded a sad comment about this encounter in his memoir published in 1975: “We never spoke to them and they never spoke to us.”¹

Early diversity

Grant attests to the district’s homogeneous population on two occasions in his memoir. “As I recall, the population of pre-war South Calgary was mostly white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant,” he writes with reference to his own experience of the district in the 1930s. “I don’t recall any coloured folks living in the area, and I remember there were very few non-British Europeans.”²

Grant later repeats the point for emphasis:

As previously mentioned, the population of old South Calgary was for the most part white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and our days were accordingly reckoned as much by the Church Calendar as by the Gregorian calendar.³

Three points of entry introduced minority populations to the Marda Loop communities, although not necessarily as residents: land ownership; educational institutions; and commerce.



William Thomas Daniel (W.T.D.) Lathwell (1876–1932), a longtime city lawyer, served briefly as Ward 2 alderman in 1911 and ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1916. Lathwell subdivided Plan 2901P in Altadore in 1906, and he taught at South Calgary High School in 1922–23. E.B. Curlette, photographer.



Ho Lem (1870–1960), a founding figure in the city’s Chinese-Canadian community, owned a 1.5-acre parcel in Altadore in 1907. In the 1950s and 1960s, his son Charles Ho Lem (1913–1991) owned and operated Currie Cleaners at 2137–33 Avenue SW in South Calgary. Frank A. Halliday, photographer.

The earliest city tax records available are from 1908, representing assessment from the previous year, when present-day Richmond and South Calgary, as well as Altadore and Garrison Woods south to 42 Avenue SW, were annexed. Herman Bercuson (1882–1958), a Jewish furniture merchant, owned several undeveloped lots in South Calgary,⁴ and Ho Lem (1870–1960), a founding member of the city’s Chinese-Canadian community, owned an acre and a half in Altadore. In time, Chinese-Canadian and Jews became the most identifiable exceptions to the dominant European demographic in the area.

South Calgary High School, an institution created in 1918, operated in part of King Edward School for the first 10 of its 11 years of existence. Its student body came not only from the Marda Loop communities but also from adjacent districts. A small number of Jewish and Chinese-Canadian students were among those brought in from outside of the area. In 1928–29, for example, South Calgary High students included Israel Abrahamson, Mozah Goldberg, Cecil Horwitz, Kee Wing, and Yee Wing.⁵

The third entry point was commerce. The earliest Jewish families to live in the neighborhood were successive owners of Hillside Grocery (2718–17 Street SW),



Brackman and Bock families during a visit to Germany, n.d. Eric Brackman stands in the back row (second from right), and Juliana Brackman is seated in the front row (second from left) with their daughter Ida on her knee. Martin Boch is seated in the front row (centre), and Ida Bock is seated next to him (second from right) with their daughter Margaret on her knee. Betty Brachmann stand between Martin and Ida Bock.

beginning with the Aisenstats in the mid-1930s, the Sheinins in the late 1930s, and the Switzers in the 1940s. Samuel Aisenstat (1897–1974), Cecil Sheinin (ca. 1903–1976), and Max Switzer (1900–1982) and their families lived on the premises and owned and operated the store.

The first Chinese-Canadian merchants in the district were market gardeners who came to sell wholesale produce to local vendors or made door-to-door retail sales throughout the neighbourhood. South Calgary was part of the marketing route of the Koo family, which had a market gardening operation on the future site of the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary from the 1920s to the 1950s. Three of the Koo children moved to the Marda Loop communities by the 1950s where they, or their spouses, established businesses. By the 1950s, a significant minority of business operators in the district were Jewish or Chinese-Canadian.

Extended families

The Marda Loop Communities have several examples of families with multiple branches or multiple generations (or both) living in the district. Marriages connect three such families: The Brachmanns (including the Bocks and the Dahms); the Cuells; and the Taylors (including the Worsnops).



Hannah Elizabeth (Annie) Gale (née Rolinson, 1879–1970) and her son Bill outside their house at 1717–27 Avenue SW, 1914. Both Annie and her husband Bill were active members of St. Mark’s Anglican Church. Annie was president of the Women’s Guild, and Bill reportedly helped save the congregation from folding. Annie established the South Calgary Women’s Ratepayers Association, the first such women’s organization in Canada. The Gales moved out of the neighbourhood in 1918, within weeks of Annie’s election to city council as the first female alderman in Canada (and the second in the British Empire).



Novelist Winnifred Eaton Reeve (1875–1954) was an early North American author of Asian descent (her mother was Chinese) to write and publish English-language fiction. In 1920, Reeve rented a house at 1737–26 Avenue SW as a summer pied-à-terre away from her ranch northwest of Calgary. There she wrote the novel *Sunny-San*, which was published in 1922 under her pen name, Onoto Watanna.



Back row: George and Emily Cuell (back row, far left and far right, respectively) with their daughter Eveline Fockerd (née Cuell, front row, left) and at least two of their grandchildren, Robert Eakin (front row, centre left) and Annie May Fockerd (front row, centre right)

Brackman, Bock, and Dahm families

Eric Brackman (né Erich Frierich Carl Brachmann, 1878–1918), a market gardener from Freidland, Mecklenberg, Germany, moved to Calgary in 1902 and boarded at the home of Johannes Christian Scheneider and his wife, Christina (née Weber). In 1905, Eric married their daughter, Juliana (1886–1961), and they had six children who lived to adulthood. The Brackmans settled on an 80-acre property the future Garrison Woods, where they lived in a farmhouse later addressed as 2368–42 Avenue SW. They initially operated a market garden, and they eventually began a dairy operation with about 20 cows.



Possibly the house at 1620–33 Avenue SW, home of Eveline & Ernest Fockerd and Ada & Robert Gordon Eakin, n.d.

During a visit to Germany in 1910, the Brackmans encouraged Eric’s sister Ida (1880–1962) and her husband, Martin Bock (1883–1943), to join them in Calgary. The Bocks arrived in 1911, and they settled on a ten-acre parcel at 4637–21 Street SW, near or adjacent to the Brackmans.

Eric Brackman died in 1918. In 1924, Juliana married John Francis Dahm (1887–1929), a farmer originally from Kenora, Ontario. John’s widowed mother, his sisters, and his brother, Aloysius Bonaventure (Allie) Dahm (1893–1958), also settled in Calgary. In 1920, Allie Dahm married Susan May Cuell (1897–1987), and the couple lived at 1822–34 Avenue SW in South Calgary. They later moved to 2609–17 Street SW in nearby Bankview.

After her second husband’s death in 1929, Juliana moved to a newly-built house at 3001–14 Street SW in South Calgary (on the future site of the Spider Block). In 1948–53, Juliana’s son Eric Brackman, Jr. (1918–2003) lived next door at 3005–14 Street SW with his wife, Ida (née Schulz, 1916–1998), and their children.⁶(See also pages 14–15.)

Cuell family

Susan Cuell, who was married to Juliana Dahm’s brother-in-law Allie Dahm, was part of the extended Cuell family that came from southeast England and settled in the Marda Loop communities early in the 20th century.



Frederick S. Buchan (1878–1940) was born in Banffshire, Scotland, and he moved to Calgary in 1911. From 1924 until his death, Buchan served as Calgary’s city treasurer. He lived with his family at 1526–34 Avenue SW (pictured below) with his family for many years.



Former Altadore resident Frank Leslie Woodman (1888–1967) was principal of Western Canada High School from 1938 until 1954. Woodman his wife Stella (1888–1953) owned and lived in the extant Craftsman-style house at 3806–19 Street SW from 1919 to 1924. While living in Altadore, Woodman taught physics at Crescent Heights High School and then at Central Collegiate Institute. He served as a coach, referee, and timekeeper for student athletics, and he was declared the city’s Sportsman of the Year in 1959. That year, Woodman Junior High School in the Haysboro neighbourhood was named for him. Jack De Lorme, photographer.



Fockerd residence (1707–34 Avenue SW), 1955.

Her parents, Charles Cuell (1877–1956) and Susan Maria (née Johnson, 1879–1971), came from Portsea, Hampshire. They arrived in Calgary in 1908 and settled in South Calgary, living initially at 1729–33 Avenue SW. They later moved to 1531–28 Avenue SW.

Like their daughter Susan, three other children of Charles and Susan Cuell lived in the Marda Loop communities as adults. Jessie Cuell (1899–1948) married George T. Lambourne, and they lived at [1717–32 Avenue SW](#). Dorothy Cuell (1906–1960) married Andrew Rae, and they lived at 4111–17 Street SW. Charles H. Cuell (1910–1986) continued to live with his parents and, later, with his widowed mother, at 1531–28 Avenue SW. Marjorie Cuell (née Squance, 1915–2014), who married Charles and Susan’s son John (1912–1985), owned and operated the Stork Shop (2033–33 Avenue SW), a landmark children’s clothing store in the Patterson Block, for over 20 years.



Herbert and Barbara Taylor Residence (3214–17 Street SW).

Not long after Charles and Susan left England for Calgary, Charles’ older brother George Cuell (1864–1951) and his wife, Emily (née Langrish, 1863–1938), did the same. George and Emily first lived at 3721–14A Street SW in Altadore by 1915. They later moved to [1712–33 Avenue SW](#), across the street from Charles and Susan.

Some of George and Emily’s children also stayed in the neighbourhood. Jessie Cuell (1889–1970) married Ernest Wall, and they lived at 1620–33 Avenue SW. Eveline Cuell (1896–1978) married Ernest Fockerd (1887–1968), and they lived at 1707–34 Avenue SW. Gladys Cuell (1902–1993) married Sidney Taylor (1902–1994), and they lived at 3715–15A Street SW in Altadore and later at 1602–33 Avenue SW in South Calgary. Ada Cuell (1904–1970) married Robert Gordon Eakin (1905–1973), and they lived at 1620–33 Avenue SW. Ada was killed in her home by a burglar.

At least one third-generation family member. lived in the Marda Loop communities. Bernice Fockerd, Ernest and Eveline’s daughter, married Richard Vincent Cass, and they lived at 4001–17 Street SW in Altadore.

Taylor and Worsnop families

Sidney Taylor, who married Gladys Cuell, was part of another extended family in the district. He was a son of printer Richard



John W. Grant (1922–1988), foreground centre, grew up at [2032–34 Avenue SW](#) with his sister, Jessica, and his brothers, Gordon and Douglas.. Grant’s memoir, published in 1975 as *Vignettes of Old South Calgary*, is a key source on the history of the neighbourhood. Front row, L–R: Douglas Grant (1925–1991); John W. Grant; Jessica Gordon (née Grant, 1915–2005). Standing: Gordon Grant (1917–1986).



Carl Cummer (1903–1989) lived at 1807–28 Avenue SW for many years beginning in 1939, which spanned his tenure as assistant city clerk and then as city clerk between 1955 and 1963.

Taylor (1869–1950) and a nephew of building contractor James Taylor (1881–1961) and shoemaker Herbert Taylor (1877–1962). All three Taylor brothers were born in Pontefract, Yorkshire, England, and all three moved to Calgary—Herbert in 1911, James by 1912, and Richard in 1913.⁷ Richard and his family came over on the Canadian passenger liner *Empress of Ireland*, which sank a year later in the St. Lawrence River with the loss of over a thousand lives.⁸

James established a partnership with fellow builder Anthony Brown. The partners built a number of brick houses in the city before the First World War, particularly in Cliff Bungalow and Mount Royal. In 1912, they built James’ personal residence, which remains extant at [1736–32 Avenue SW](#) and was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2011. Brown’s home, a brick house built in 1913 at [1623–29 Avenue SW](#), also remains extant, and it was added to the inventory in 2024.

At the same time that Brown and Taylor built James’ house, they also constructed two cottages on the property. James lived in the main house with his wife, Louie (née Warsnop, 1883–1966), their children, and Louie’s widowed mother. Herbert, who operated a shoe-repair shop on 17 Avenue SW and served with the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps during the Second World War, lived in the cottage at [3214–17 Street SW](#) with his wife, Barbara (née Bullock, 1880–1980) and their children, and it remained their home for



James and Louie Taylor Residence (1736–32 Avenue SW).



Richard and Annie Taylor Residence (3216–17 Street SW).

over 50 years until Herbert’s death. Richard initially lived in the cottage at [1736–32 Avenue SW](#) with his wife, Annie (née Jones, 1873–1952) and their four sons. Both cottages were added to the inventory in 2011.

Around 1917, James and his family moved to Riverside, California. Richard and his family then moved into the main house, where they remained until 1942, when they retired to Victoria, B.C. Richard owned and operated Phoenix Press from 1913 until 1942.

At least one of Richard and Annie Taylor’s children, Sidney Taylor (who married Gladys Cuell), remained in the neighbourhood (see above under [Cuell family](#)).

Louie Taylor’s brother Walter Worsnop (1881–1968) lived at [1908–34 Avenue SW](#) in Altadore with his wife, Mary Hannah (née Higgins, 1881–1970) from their arrival in Calgary in 1913 until his death. Walter operated the Worsnop Shoe Repair Shop from 1913 to 1939 and later worked for Dominion Bridge and then Henry Birks and Sons Ltd., a jewellery firm.

Social institutions

The earliest-known example of social housing in the Marda Loop communities dates from 1948, when the Town Planning Commission approved rezoning for the Order of the Eastern Star to build six duplexes in a crescent formation at 33 Avenue and 21 Street SW for seniors’ housing. These dwellings were built



Charles A. Harrison (1912–1998), Calgary’s fire chief from 1964 to 1972, was an active member of the community and served as president of the South Calgary Community Association. The Harrison family lived at [1802–30 Avenue SW](#) from the 1940s until the early 1970s, when the family moved to Pender Island, B.C. This photograph was taken in 1955. Jack De Lorme, photographer.



Clarence Mack (1920–1974) was a longtime broadcaster in the city, a seven-term alderman beginning in 1955, and a 1965 challenger for the mayoralty. He lived at 2031–32 Avenue SW with his family from about 1950 until he moved to Salmon Arm, B.C. in the early 1970s. This photograph was taken in 1959.

THE CRAWFORD FAMILY



FRANK S. CRAWFORD
Operator No. 23
Mr. Frank Crawford was born in Calgary in 1914. He attended King Edward School and also the vocational section of Victoria School. Upon leaving school during the depression years he worked as an apprentice carpenter for a short while and then obtained employment with Imperial Oil Company. In 1942 he commenced service with Your Transit System as an operator and at the present time is on the Windsor Park - Thorncliffe route with Saturday and Sunday off.
Frank enjoys woodworking and fishing and is a member of Northminster United Church. He will be pleased to welcome you aboard his coach and assures you of a smooth safe trip to your destination.

Transit Topics, February 2, 1959

communities. Frank married one of his regular passengers, Dorothy Torrance (1928–2006), who lived at the time with her parents in the boarding house that they owned at 1619–24 Avenue SW in Bankview. The Crawfords later lived at 4123–16A Street SW in Altadore before moving to Tuxedo Park by 1962. Frank retired as driver #2.

Ernest (1916–1959) lived at 4211–17 Street SW in Altadore in 1939–40; by the 1940s, he lived a block from his boyhood home, in his case at 2010–43 Avenue SW, evidently next door to Frank. Ultimately, Ernest and his wife, Margaret, lived with their two children at 2221–29 Avenue SW in Richmond. Ernest worked for Imperial Oil, an employer he shared with his brother George and his brother-in-law Stephen Payne (who married Walter and Elizabeth Crawford’s only daughter, Betty).¹⁰

In a 21st-century postscript, Donna Crawford (née Goodman), Frank and Dorothy’s former daughter-in-law, moved to Garrison Woods in 2003. Dorothy’s daughter, Robyn Crawford, later did the same.

Around 1910, Walter Crawford (1880–1922), his wife, Elizabeth (née Spurgeon), and their son Walter came from England and settled in Altadore, where they lived at 3512–14A Street SW. In 1916, the growing family (three more children were born in Calgary) moved to 1526–27 Avenue SW. They also lived briefly at 2501–14 Street SW in nearby Bankview and 3715–14A Street SW before they settled at 4236–20 Street SW. The elder Walter was a shipper for Barber-Ellis, a paper manufacturing company. During the First World War, he served overseas with the 82nd Battalion.

The Crawfords lived directly across 20 Street from Brackman’s Slough (the future site of Flanders Park). On November 6, 1922, Walter and his young son Frank went skating on the frozen slough, which was not yet completely frozen over. The ice broke, and Walter fell into the water and drowned.

As a widow, Elizabeth worked at the Hudson’s Bay Company store downtown, and the family remained at 4236–20 Street SW (also rendered as 2004–42 Avenue SW) for many years. She evidently remarried and became Elizabeth Hayter.

As adults, at least three of the Crawfords’ children—Walter, Frank, and Ernest—had connections to the Marda Loop communities.

Walter (1906–1980) lived in the family home at 2004–42 Avenue SW with his wife, Mary, as late as 1932. They later moved to Vancouver.

Frank (194–1992), who had been skating with his father on that tragic night in 1922, later lived at 2004–43 Avenue SW in the 1940s and 1950s, just a block from his boyhood home.⁹ In 1942, he became a Calgary Transit System operator, and he drove the Route 7 trolley coach that served the Marda Loop



Joseph Louis (Joe) Rosettis (1911–1965) was already a well-known Calgary photographer when the house at 3804–15 Street SW in Altadore became the Rosettis family home and his photography studio. Born in Glasgow, Scotland to Lithuanian-immigrant parents, Rosettis worked for Kodak in Toronto and then toured the world as a photographer for Associated Screen News. He was a *Calgary Herald* staff photographer from 1940 until 1944, when he started his own studio. In the early 1960s, Eric Harvie engaged Rosettis to establish the Glenbow Museum’s photo lab. Rosettis continued working for Glenbow, and he donated his photographic oeuvre to the institution. Eric Bland, photographer.



Edward M. Bredin (1914–2012), a longtime resident of River Park (4219–14A Street SW), served as Calgary’s city solicitor from 1951 to 1958. Bredin prepared the bill that incorporated the Calgary Community Foundation, for which he waived his legal fee. He was a brother-in-law and neighbour of Mayor Ross Alger.

on land that was leased from The City for a 30-year period, and they were demolished or removed around 1983. The site was later redeveloped as a commercial property.

Calgary’s second privately-owned nursing care home, the Meadowbrook Private Hospital, opened in an extant purpose-built facility (1941–42 Avenue SW) in Altadore in 1961. Noreen King, a former Calgary General Hospital nurse, was the managing director and supervisor. Evelyn Kennedy, who had worked at the Lacombe Home in Midnapore, became night supervisor and lived in the building. Alderman Ted Duncan was chair of the hospital’s board of directors. In 1997, the complex became Elderberry House, a seniors’ assisted living facility.

The John Howard Society, an organization that assists ex-convicts, maintained a Calgary office in the Nevan Apartments (2025A–33 Avenue SW, suites A–B) as early as 1959 and as late as 1960. Craig Reid (1921–2009), the area’s future longtime city councillor and the namesake of Craig Reid Park in Altadore, was executive director of the John Howard Society of Alberta when he moved to Calgary in 1961.

Recovery Acres Calgary Society, a substance use disorder treatment facility founded in 1973, moved from the Mission neighbourhood to 1835–27 Avenue SW by the mid-1980s.

The Alberta Seventh Step Society officially opened a community residential centre at 1824–27 Avenue SW on July 3, 1977. Federal Solicitor-General Francis Fox attended the opening ceremony. The Society was established in 1974 and was originally located in the YMCA.

Heritage value

- The Marda Loop communities have person value through the individuals and families identified in this chapter who represent diversity, extended families in the neighbourhoods, and who contributed to community in the neighbourhoods and in the wider city community.
- The communities have activity value through the work of social agencies that have been located in the area.

Character-defining elements

- N/A

Places of interest

- Hillside Grocery (2718–17 Street SW), built in 1912—successive ownership by Jewish families
- Frederick S. Buchan Residence (1526–34 Avenue SW)
- James and Louie Taylor Residence (1736–32 Avenue SW)
- Herbert and Barbara Taylor Residence (3214–17 Street SW)
- Richard and Annie Taylor Residence (3216–17 Street SW)
- Charles A. Harrison Residence (1802–30 Avenue SW)
- Other extant residences of longtime families.

Notes

- 1 Grant, 377.
- 2 Grant, 348.
- 3 Grant, 353–54.
- 4 For example, Bercuson and his wife, Hattie (née Cohen, circa 1888–1954), owned Plan 4479P, block 29, lots 1–6 and 35–40 in 1907. This property included the future site of the extant Emmons Residence (1612–30 Avenue SW), which was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 2024.
- 5 Cecil Horwitz (1911–1968) later became a founding figure of the Beth Israel Synagogue, which planned initially to build its facility in Altadore. In the event, the synagogue was built in Kelvin Grove.
- 6 Carol Lentz remembered that Eric and Juliana’s daughter Ida (1910–1981) and her husband, William Douglas Irvine (1909–1972), lived next door to 3001–14 Street SW, presumably at 3005.
- 8 Richard Taylor’s family had at least two more dramatic encounters with history. In December 1919, Richard and his four sons—Henry, Sidney, James, and Richard, Jr.—were en route to work at the Phoenix Press when the South Calgary streetcar on which they were travelling lost control on the 14 Street hill, jumped the tracks at 17 Avenue SW, and crashed into Crooks’ Drug Store, killing one of the passengers. (See page 29–31.) Richard Jr.’s son Ken Taylor (1934–2015) was the Canadian ambassador to Iran when the American embassy was overrun by protesters in 1979. Taylor played a crucial role in rescuing six American embassy employees in the months that followed.
- 9 *Henderson’s* lists Frank Crawford at 2004–43 Avenue SW in 1943, 1947, 1950, and 1955. In 1987–88, the Calgary Glenmore La Leche League, an organization to support nursing mothers, met at this address.
- 10 George R. Crawford lived at 2323–17B Street in Bankview (1936, 1939–40) and 2439–28 Street SW in Killarney (1943, 1947, 1950, 1955).



Glenbow Archives NA-2864-17541

Mayor Ross Alger, 1977. The Alger family lived at 4815–14A Street SW in River Park for many years, and Alger served as president of the short-lived River Park community association. The Algers lived within a block of the Bredins; Lois Alger and Nan Bredin were sisters. Bill Herriot, photographer.



Syd Kahanoff, businessman and philanthropist who established the Kahanoff Foundation, lived at 2427–28 Avenue SW in Richmond.



Oblique aerial view of the Currie PMOs, looking southwest, 1967. Note Currie Elementary and Currie Junior High (later renamed Sir Samuel Steele Junior High), centre left.

SEVEN EDUCATION

The Marda Loop communities have a varied educational history, including public, separate, and private institutions ranging from grade school to the post-secondary level.

In 1912, the peak year of Calgary's pre-First World War boom, Calgary Protestant Public School District No. 19 commenced four new sandstone school projects. (The administrative body was later renamed the Calgary School Board, and in 1973 it became the Calgary Board of Education [CBE].) King George, Ramsay, and Sunalta schools were built to an identical plan prepared by Hugh McClelland with William A. Branton's assistance. King Edward School (1720–30 Avenue SW), with its 19 classrooms and three cupolas, was a larger variation of the same plan and the largest school in the city when it was built on land acquired for the purpose. A building permit was recorded on March 29, 1912, and the estimated cost of construction was \$172,000. The contractor was Doyle, Thomas & Christensen Ltd. The stone was quarried from the Oliver quarry near the modern intersection of Crowchild Trail and 17 Avenue SW.

While King Edward School was being constructed in 1912–13, area pupils attended the purpose-built two-room South Calgary Cottage School (1839–33 Avenue SW). The

cottage school was rendered surplus after King Edward opened, and the school board leased it to South Calgary Presbyterian Church from 1914 to 1917. In 1917, the building was relocated to 3636–7 Street SW in Elbow Park, where it became the Elbow Park Cottage School. Its final use was as Strathcona School for Girls.

King Edward School opened on November 1, 1913, with future Alberta premier William Aberhart (1878–1943) as its first principal. The next principal, Thomas Arthur Florendine (1883–1975), held the post from 1915 to 1940. Florendine lived in South Calgary and served as organist and choirmaster at nearby St. Mark's Anglican Church. Another notable faculty member was P.N.R. Morrison (1912–1993), a teacher who went on to become a longtime city councillor in 1946–63.

Esther Martin (1868–1936), a teacher at King Edward, was appointed vice-principal in June 1915. Months later, she was elected president of the Women Teachers' Association of Calgary. Martin was qualified to replace Aberhart as principal when he left the school that year, but her gender prevented such a promotion. In 1916, evidently due to a drop in enrollment, the number of classrooms in use were reduced, and Martin was transferred to Hillhurst School.



The former South Calgary Cottage School, shown here in 1965 at 3636–7 Street SW, where it was moved in 1917 for use as Elbow Park Cottage School. The building had been enlarged since its time as South Calgary Cottage School. In its final incarnation, it was used as Strathcona School for Girls.

Looking north toward King Edward School with students posing outside, circa 1914. The original west wing, left, was demolished in 1978. The school was added to the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources in 1982.





Grade 6 class at King Edward School, 1916. The teacher standing at the back of the room is Etta E. Clint (1880–1959).

Early in 1914, residents of Godlonton, Katonah, and South Altadore—all subdivisions within the Marda Loop communities but some distance south of King Edward—petitioned the public school board for a new school to accommodate the 50 school-age children in their vicinity. The matter was referred to the board's building committee, but no action appears to have been taken. Until the 1950s, Altadore students had to make the long trek to King Edward School.

Beginning in September 1918, King Edward School shared its building with the newly-created South Calgary High School.¹ Earlier that year, public school board superintendent A. Melville Scott had predicted that there would be 170 more high school students in the fall than there had been in the previous school year. Dr. Scott proposed two alternative remedies. The first solution involved adding one Grade 9 teacher to King Edward and one Grade 9 teacher to each of three other schools. The second alternative was to transfer the existing branch high school, which was then located in Sunalta School, to the larger King Edward School.

In the event, school board trustees voted in July 1918 to create a third public high school (after Central High School and Crescent Heights High School) and locate it in King Edward School. In September, the new institution was named South Calgary High School. King Edward School shared its building and campus with South Calgary

High for the next decade. Thomas Edwin Adelbert (T.E.A.) Stanley (1869–1947) was South Calgary's principal throughout its existence.² Notable alumni included oilman Carl Nickle and broadcaster/historian Jack Peach. Peach attended a 75th anniversary alumni reunion in 1987.

In September 1929, South Calgary classes were transferred to the new Western Canada High School in the Cliff Bungalow neighbourhood. Transfer classes evidently retained the South Calgary identity for the 1929–30 school year. T.E.A. Stanley served as principal of Western from 1929 to 1938.

In 1931, King Edward became the forerunner of intermediate (junior high) schools in Calgary, grouping together grades 7, 8, and 9. The junior high system was officially adopted and expanded to other city schools by 1934.

During the Second World War, King Edward School shared its building and campus with southern Alberta's teacher training college, the Calgary Normal School.

Before 1945, teacher training in Alberta took place at normal schools outside the aegis of the provincial university. In Calgary, the Alberta Normal School opened in 1906 in Central School (a sandstone school later known as James Short School). The institution was quickly renamed the Calgary Normal School, and it moved to a purpose-built facility (now the McDougall Centre) in 1908. In 1923, it again moved to a new purpose-built facility in what is now Heritage Hall on

the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) campus in Hillhurst. The Normal School shared the building and campus with the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (a forerunner to SAIT and the Alberta University of the Arts).

In 1940, the Hillhurst campus was temporarily repurposed for use by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan's Wireless School. As a wartime measure, the Calgary Normal School was moved temporarily to King Edward School. Both institutions shared the same building and campus. The Normal School opened in King Edward in September 1940 with W.H. Swift as the new principal. Instructors included Miss Olive M. Fisher (English), G.K. Sheane (science and mathematics), and W.D. McDougall (social studies).

The teacher training college left King Edward after June 1945, and it returned to its Hillhurst campus as the University of Alberta Faculty of Education, Calgary Branch. As branches of additional University of Alberta faculties and departments were added, the institution developed into a complete branch campus—the University of Alberta, Calgary (UAC). In 1966, UAC became the autonomous University of Calgary.

King Edward School was expanded through two unsympathetic additions on the east and south sides of the building, a gymnasium and new Home Economic And Industrial Arts rooms (1956) and a library and laboratory (1967). The original sandstone west wing was demolished in 1978 because of a dangerous crack in the outer wall connecting it to the main building.

In September 1999, King Edward School began a bilingual program in English and Mandarin. The school finally closed in 2001, and it was later transformed into cSpace Marda Loop, an arts incubator that opened in 2017. The additions were demolished and a new west wing was constructed. The property was subdivided, and new residential complexes flanking the school were built on the east and west sides of the block.

Around 1946, the public school board established Currie Elementary School for the children of armed forces personnel. Initially, 16 pupils attended this institution. A second classroom opened in 1947 in the former Salvation Army hut (on the future site of Garrison Woods). The school expanded incrementally until 1952 when the extant school building ([4414 Crowchild Trail SW](#)) was constructed.



Thomas A. Florendine, seen here at King Edward School in 1968, was principal of the school from 1915 to 1940. Bob Leckie, photographer.

Looking northeast toward King Edward School, n.d. Note the now-demolished addition on the south side of the building and the absence of the original west wing, which was demolished in 1978. The unsympathetic additions were demolished and a new, glass-surfaced west wing constructed between 2012 and 2017 as part of the building's conversion into cSpace Marda Loop, an arts incubator.





Oblique aerial view of the Currie Permanent Married Quarters, looking southwest, 1967. The long building in the lower right corner is the former Salvation Army Red Shield Hut (repaired or rebuilt after a 1960 fire), which housed Currie Elementary before its purpose-built campus opened. The buildings in the upper left corner are Currie Elementary School (now Master's Academy) and, in the very corner of the photograph, Currie Junior High School (now The Military Museums). The photograph shows the Flanders Avenue overpass being built across Crowchild Trail.

Although Currie Elementary was operated by the Calgary School Board, its student body was made up exclusively of children who lived in the PMQs, including Roman Catholic children. The school was built on military land, but the property was transferred to the school board in 1956.

Currie Elementary closed after the 1996–97 school year in advance of Canadian Forces Base Calgary's closure in 1998, and its campus was declared surplus. Canada Lands Company, a federal crown corporation tasked with redeveloping the Currie PMQs as Garrison Woods, wanted the campus to remain an educational institution. City council redesignated the site as Direct Control to allow for this. Master's Academy, a newly-formed private Christian school, purchased the former Currie Elementary in 1997 and began classes for Kindergarten through Grade 8 that September. Additional grades were added later.

In 1950, two years before Currie Elementary moved into its purpose-built campus, the public school board built and opened

Richmond Road School (2701–22 Street SW), which was quickly renamed Richmond School or Richmond Elementary School. This was the first new school building in the district since King Edward opened in 1913.

Next, the public board built and opened Altadore School (4506–16 Street SW) in 1952. For pupil Shirley Ager, the new school meant a six-block walk to school instead of a 19-block one from her Altadore home to her old school, King Edward.

Around 1950, the Catholic school board acquired a block-length property on the south side of 33 Avenue SW between 20 Street and

The Bennett and White Construction Company built the extant Richmond School, seen here circa 1950. Lorne Burkell, photographer.



21 Street SW, evidently as a future Catholic school site. Instead, the board sold the land (which was quickly developed as a business district) and chose a different site for St. Raymond Elementary School (4416–16 Street SW), which opened in 1954. In 1969, St. Raymond became Calgary's first English-French bilingual school.

The school closed in 1980 due to low enrolment. Its campus then became the home of Centre Français, a French-language cultural institution. L'île-de-France, a French immersion preschool, opened in the building in 1981. The campus later housed Lycée Louis Pasteur, a private French and bilingual school. (In 2000, this school moved to a newly-built campus at 4099 Garrison Boulevard SW in Garrison Woods, where it was renamed Lycée International de Calgary.) In 1996, the former St. Raymond facility became home to Rundle Academy, an independent school for pupils with diagnosed learning disabilities.

In 1957, the public school board opened a second school building in the Currie PMQs for use as a junior high school. The Currie Junior High School program predated its purpose-built facility, and it was almost certainly housed in the adjacent Currie Elementary School before it moved into its own building (4520 Crowchild Trail SW). The junior high was originally meant to be built east of Currie Elementary, but in the event it was built to the south. In 1956, the Department of National Defence (DND) transferred the adjacent campuses of Currie Elementary and Currie Junior High to the Calgary School Board as a single parcel of land.

In advance of the 1972 federal election, Minister of State Pat Mahoney (the Liberal member of parliament for Calgary South) announced \$800,000 in National Defence funding to renovate and expand Currie Elementary and Currie Junior High schools as well as Sarcee Elementary. Mahoney was defeated, but the funds he announced might have contributed to several improvements to the school the following year, including a new library, two science labs, and new classrooms,

The similar names of Currie Elementary and Currie Junior High caused some confusion. With the improvements to the school in 1973, Currie Junior High's administration recognized an opportunity to change the



School opens at Altadore School, September 1955. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

institution's name. It became Sir Samuel Steele Junior High School, named for the former North-West Mounted Police officer who commanded Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment during the South African War (1899–1902).

The school closed sometime before 1988, and its site was subdivided from the Currie school lands and returned to DND control. The building and site were repurposed and dedicated in 1990 as the Museum of the Regiments. The institution was later renamed The Military Museums.

The Calgary School Board opened a second new school in 1957. Clinton Ford School (5003–20 Street SW), an elementary, was named for the new Chief Justice of Alberta, Clinton J. Ford (1882–1964), who had been appointed to the post earlier that year. Clinton Ford Elementary School closed in 1989. In 1990, the campus became home to the CBE's Alternative High School. The Alternative High School Society established the school in 1974, and it became a CBE institution the following year.

The I.L. Peretz School, a private Jewish school established in 1928, moved from its Victoria Park building to a new campus in Altadore (1915–36 Avenue SW) in 1958. The school was one of many I.L. Peretz schools in Canada and the United States named for Isaac Leib Peretz (1852–1915), a Polish-

Jewish writer and playwright. The sod-turning ceremony took place on May 11, 1958, and the school moved in November. The school offered elementary and junior high school programs, including Hebrew- and Yiddish-language instruction.

After the 1986–87 school year, the I.L. Peretz School amalgamated with the Calgary Hebrew School to form the Calgary Jewish Academy. The new institution made its home at the former Hebrew School campus in Kelvin Grove. The Calgary Waldorf School next occupied the former Peretz School building from 1987 until 2002. Established in 1985, the Waldorf School previously held classes in the Sunnyside Community School building.

In 2002, the Waldorf School moved to a new purpose-built facility in the northwest Cougar Ridge subdivision. The Altadore building was demolished in 2004 and replaced by a residential complex.

The most recent school built in the district, Dr. Oakley School (3904–20 Street SW), opened in 1959 as a public elementary and junior high school. It was named for Dr. Geraldine Oakley (1890–1948), a longtime senior medical officer for the public school board and The City’s health department.

The Oakley Centre, a program for gifted students seeded by a \$1-million donation from the Kahanoff Foundation, was located at Dr.

Oakley School from 1981 to 1987. Students in grades 3–9 from across the city were enrolled in the program. Alumni include former mayor Naheed Nenshi, food writer and broadcaster Julie Van Rosendaal, and Kevin Allen, historian of Calgary’s LGBTQ+ community. In 1987, the program moved to Queen Elizabeth High School, where it was renamed the GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) Program.

Other nearby schools

Many pupils from the Marda Loop communities attended schools in other nearby neighbourhoods. Viscount Bennett, a public junior and senior high school, opened in 1957 in Richmond, opposite 24 Street SW from the portion of Richmond within the Marda Loop communities. The school closed in 1985. In 1968, Central Memorial High School (5111–21 Street SW) opened in North Glenmore just opposite 50 Avenue SW from Altadore.

Heritage value

- The Marda Loop communities have activity value through the continuous presence and function of educational institutions in the district since 1912. This activity has included: grade-school and higher education; public, separate, and private education; and special

I.L. Peretz School (1915–36 Avenue SW), 1962. The building later housed the Calgary Waldorf School. It was demolished in 2004 and replaced by condominiums. Rosettis Studio, photographer.



programs such as classes for children from military families, Alternative and Waldorf education, the Oakley Centre for gifted students, instruction in Mandarin, Hebrew, and Yiddish, and the city’s first English-French bilingual program.

- The communities have institution value through the longtime presence and operation of public, separate, and private educational institutions associated with their institutional authorities (i.e., school boards), as well as individual school institutions. The Marda Loop communities also have institutional value deriving from the five-year presence of the Calgary Normal School, forerunner of the University of Calgary, on the King Edward School campus during the Second World War. The building’s unusually large size compared to other public schools enabled this use.
- The Marda Loop communities have landmark value through the presence of the former King Edward School, the city’s largest school at the time it was built and situated on a prominent, highly-visible hilltop.

Character-defining elements

- King Edward School, a Classical Revival-style sandstone school built in 1912–13 and a remnant of its schoolyard
- Five extant schools built in the 1950s and relatively unaltered (Richmond, Altadore, Rundle Academy, Alternative High School, Dr. Oakley), along with their intact schoolyards

Places of interest

- King Edward School (cSpace, 1720–30 Avenue SW), built in 1913 and the oldest existing school in the neighbourhoods.
- Richmond Road School (Richmond School, 2701–22 Street SW), built in 1950 as the first new school in the district after King Edward
- Currie Elementary School (Master’s Academy, 4414 Crowchild Trail SW), built in 1952

- Altadore School (4506–16 Street SW), built in 1952 as the first school in Altadore.
- St. Raymond Elementary School (Rundle Academy, 4416–16 Street SW), built in 1954 as the only Roman Catholic school in the Marda Loop communities.
- Currie Junior High School (The Military Museums, 4520 Crowchild Trail SW), built in 1957 and later renamed Sir Samuel Steele Junior High School.
- Clinton Ford School (Alternative High School, 5003–20 Street SW), built in 1957.
- Dr. Oakley School (3904–20 Street SW), built in 1959.

Interpretive opportunities

- The former site of South Calgary Cottage School, now the location of Harrison Apartments (3470–18 Street SW), offers an opportunity to interpret the story of the first school in the Marda Loop communities.
- The former site of the I.L. Peretz School/Calgary Waldorf School, now the location of a condominium complex (1909–36 Avenue SW), offers an opportunity to interpret the story of Jewish education and Waldorf education in Calgary.
- Interpretive panels can be placed at extant schools to interpret their history and the story of their namesakes. Heritage Calgary (as the Calgary Heritage Authority) installed a Community Heritage Plaque at King Edward School in 2011.



Community Heritage Plaque placed on King Edward School in 2011.

Notes

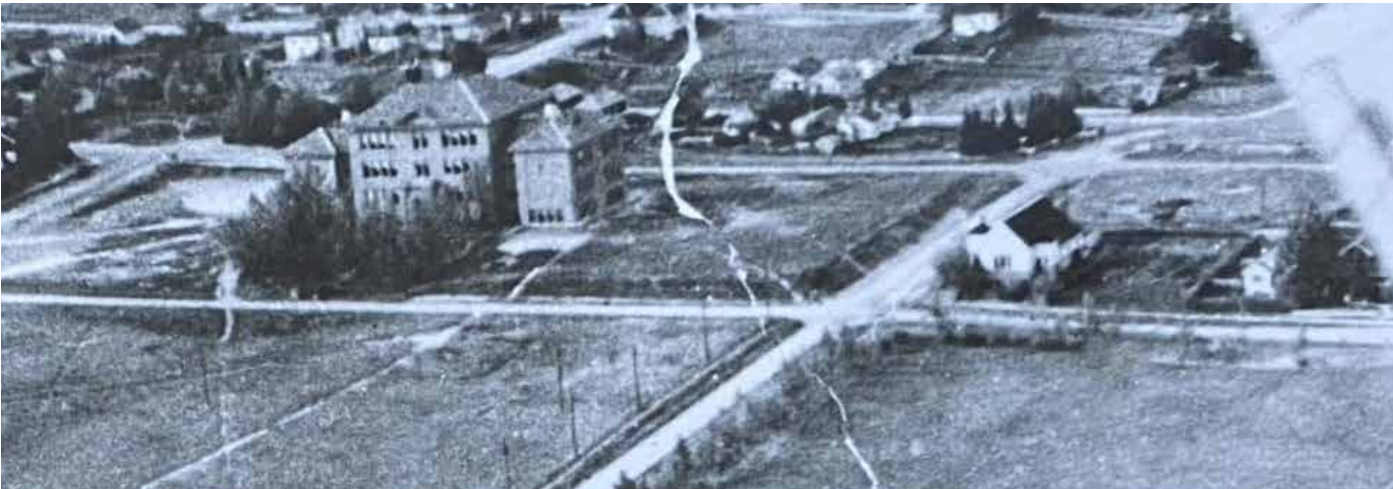
1 The name of South Calgary High School was revived briefly in 2004 as the temporary name of a new institution at 55 Sun Valley Boulevard SE in the Sundance neighbourhood. That school opened in 2005 as Centennial High School.

2 T.E.A. Stanley designed his own home in Lower Mount Royal, which is on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources as the McCutcheon Residence (1740–10 Street SW).

The two chaplains at Currie Barracks, Capt. R.H. Dobson (Protestant, left) and Capt. James S. McGivera (Roman Catholic, right) pose outside one of the two new chapels, April 1956.



EIGHT
RELIGION



Detail from oblique aerial view of South Calgary, looking northwest, circa 1920s. The hand-drawn yellow arrow indicates South Calgary United Church (1638–30 Avenue SW) a block east of King Edward School. In 1957, the United Church sold the property to a Dutch Reformed congregation, and it is extant as Marda Loop Church.

Religious congregations in the Marda Loop communities have a long history and a meaningful place in the lives of residents. Membership offers spiritual nourishment, an opportunity to participate in social and cultural life at the community level, and a vehicle for good works and volunteer efforts.

United Church of Canada

Before the United Church of Canada was formed in 1925, the main Protestant denominations in the region and the country were Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Years before these groups effected nation-wide church union, some congregations on the prairies, including a few in Calgary, held discussions and took action. This resulted in the formation of the first United Church congregation in Calgary, South Calgary United Church, in 1918.¹ The congregation’s two forerunners were South Calgary Methodist Church and South Calgary Presbyterian Church.

South Calgary Methodist was the first church in the Marda Loop area. The congregation held services even before its new sanctuary opened on July 7, 1911. The Trustees of South

Calgary Methodist Church acquired a building site at the northeast corner of 20 Street and 34 Avenue SW, and it ultimately became the location of the church at 2000–34 Avenue SW. “Even at the beginning of its history the church had difficulties,” wrote Reverend Dr. W.J. Collett decades later,

for after the foundation was laid it was discovered that it had been placed on the wrong lots. There was no basement so no great problem involved in moving the church to its legal site.²

Reverend Dr. George W. Kerby (1860–1944), the recently-retired minister of Central Methodist Church and the founding principal of Mount Royal College (now Mount Royal University), led the first services held after the opening on Sunday, July 9.³ Regular services were initially conducted by John W. Birchall; by 1912, Erick L. Anderson had become the congregation’s pastor. The building quickly proved to be too small, and an addition was completed by early 1912.

The following year, South Calgary Presbyterian Church was established. Services were first held in a private residence, then in the former South Calgary Cottage School (at the southeast corner of 18 Street



The Martel Block (3409–20 Street SW) stands on the former site of South Calgary Methodist Church, which remains extant at 1638–30 Avenue SW as the front portion of Marda Loop Church. (Photographed on October 29, 2024.) Harry Sanders, photographer.



Harrison Apartments (3470–18 Street SW) stands on the former site of South Calgary Cottage School, which operated in 1912–13 and then housed the South Calgary Presbyterian Church from 1914 to 1917. (Photographed on October 29, 2024.) Harry Sanders, photographer.

and 33 Avenue SW) from 1914 to 1917, and, finally, in King Edward School. Reverend Archibald Oswald (A.O.) MacRae (1869–1963) was the congregation’s final pastor. MacRae was the founding principal of Western Canada College, which operated on the future Western Canada High School site from 1903 to 1926, and he wrote *History of the Province of Alberta*, a two-volume work published in 1912.

In 1918, a joint Methodist-Presbyterian committee in Calgary decided to unite the two South Calgary churches and two churches in Springbank. The united congregation in South Calgary was placed under the administration of the Presbyterian church. (Conversely, the united congregation in Springbank was placed under Methodist administration.) All of this occurred seven years before Congregational, Methodist, and most Presbyterian churches in the country formed the United Church of Canada in 1925.

The new South Calgary United Church, as the congregation was named in 1918, began meeting in the assembly hall at King Edward School. “It was customary for the Presbyterians to sit on one side of the hall and the Methodists on the other,” Dr. Collett wrote in 1975.⁴

By early 1921, the congregation had paid off the mortgage of the South Calgary Methodist Church building. By the end of the year, it had constructed a new sanctuary at the northeast corner of 16 Street and 29 Avenue SW. “The building formerly occupied by the Methodist Church was moved to the new site to be part of the new church,” Collett wrote.⁵

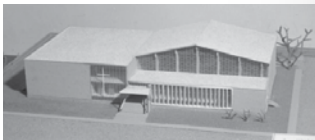


The new South Calgary United Church (1638–30 Avenue SW) was formally opened on December 11, 1921.

In 1954, the church established a Sunday school at Altadore School. Within a year, the new Altadore United Church had been formed and had begun holding services at the school, in at least one private home, and, on several occasions in a “drive-in” church at the Chinook Drive-in Theatre on the future site of Chinook Shopping Centre.

The congregation acquired a site at 16 Street and 48 Avenue SW, where it held a sod-turning ceremony for its new building in September 1955. But the church was never built, and the congregation instead amalgamated with South Calgary United the following year. The merged congregation was named Southminster United Church.

Marda Loop Church (former South Calgary United Church, 1638–30 Avenue SW), photographed July 17, 2025. Bob van Wegen, photographer.



Architect’s model of Altadore United Church, which was never built. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

Sod-turning ceremony for Altadore United Church at the corner of 16 Street and 48 Avenue SW, September 25, 1955. The church was never built. Jack De Lorme, photographer.



The new Southminster United Church, 3818–14 Street SW. Christian Education Building, left, 1962; interior of the new church, below, 1964.



JOHN W. GRANT’S MEMORIES

John W. Grant’s 1975 memoir about growing up in South Calgary includes the following extracts about church life.

The spiritual needs of the residents of old South Calgary were attended to by either the vicar of St. Mark’s Anglican church or by the minister at the South Calgary United Church.⁶

[Thanksgiving] is a time for a bit of thankful reflection, and what better way was there to evidence your thankfulness than to attend the Church’s Harvest Festival. In fact a lot of people attended the Harvest Festival at St. Mark’s one week and the next week they went over to enjoy the one at South Calgary United Church.

The little churches were always beautifully decorated for this very special service. Everyone contributed something to the decorating; such as fruit, nuts, vegetables, sheaves of green or even bunches of grapes.⁷

Some lady was always delegated to bake a loaf of bread. This was no ordinary loaf—no sيرة, it was huge and was specially shaped and decorated, and in the church it was afforded a very special place of honor.

There were extra flowers placed all around the inside of the church; the ends of the pews were decorated with sheaves of grain, while every shelf, sill or ledge carried some offering of fruit or vegetables. It was a fine sight and very stirring in its simplicity and in the spirit of thanksgiving it engendered. Then, with Mr. Florendine at the organ, you joined in the singing of the grand old harvest hymns.

During the announcements the minister would advise that the Parish Harvest Supper would be held on such and such a night during the following week. This was what you had been waiting for and immediately your salivary glands were stimulated with mental visions of the forthcoming feast.

Yes, the Parish Harvest Supper was looked forward to in gleeful anticipation. What a night! What a feed! What fun, to be followed, maybe, by a magic lantern show.

Then came Armistice Day. If you attended your local church you were probably joined in worship by the Cubs, Brownies, Scouts and Girl Guides. If you went downtown to church there would probably be a militia unit attending your church, and later on, there would be a March Past followed by a parade to the Cenotaph.⁸

The population of old South Calgary was for the most part, white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and our days were accordingly reckoned as much by the Church Calendar as by the Gregorian calendar.

We were as conscious of the seasons of the church as we were of the natural seasons. As could be expected, the season of Advent filled one with warm feelings and good intentions.⁹

The folks who lived in old South Calgary had their full share of grief and bitterness, but somehow they managed to survive and rise above their hardships. They held socials, dances, and whist-drives in church halls. They went on hay-rides and had fun on skating parties and enjoyed life as best they could.¹⁰

In 1957, Southminster United sold its historic church at 1638–30 Avenue SW (see below under Dutch Reformed) and moved to Altadore, where the church had built a new Christian Education Building. Services were held there until 1964, when the congregation dedicated its adjacent sanctuary (3818–14A Street SW), which was designed by architects J. Stevenson & Associates. This building remained the congregation’s home until around 2003, when it was sold (see below under Christian Reformed). At that time, Southminster merged with two other congregations (Riverview and Westminster) to form the new Living Spirit United Church. The merged congregation initially moved into the former Riverview United Church in Britannia. This move marked the departure of the United Church from the Marda Loop neighbourhoods.

Anglican

St. Mark’s Anglican Church began as a mission church of St. Stephen’s Anglican Church, a congregation located in the Connaught neighbourhood. The Anglican Bishop of Calgary presided at the dedication of St. Mark’s on October 6, 1912. In 1917, South Calgary resident and future city councillor Annie Gale became the first president of St. Mark’s Parish Guild.

At an early date, the congregation built a parish hall, St. Mark’s Hall (1804–33 Avenue SW), and it became an important social centre for the neighbourhood. In 1923, St.



“St. Marks from 33rd Avenue and 1800 Block, 16 May 1933.” Alfred Crocker Leighton, artist. Pencil on paper. Photograph by David H. Brown, Libraries and Cultural Resources, University of Calgary. The relationship of this artwork to the church building is unclear. It is possible that the artwork depicts the church hall and not the church itself.



“One of the last photographs of St. Mark’s Church and Hall,” according to *St. Mark’s [Anglican] Church, 1912–1962, 50th Anniversary*, the congregation’s 50th anniversary booklet published in 1962.

The second St. Mark’s Anglican Church (1802–33 Avenue SW), 1962. The steeple was added at a later date.



Mark’s congregation rented the house at 1801–33 Avenue SW for use as a rectory. Sometime between 1927 and 1931, the church was re-oriented 180 degrees to conform to “high church” specifications. An addition to the church built by volunteer labour was dedicated on November 30, 1927.

The congregation grew after the Second World War, and on May 14, 1952, a sod-turning ceremony was held for a new 500-seat church adjacent to the existing building. The new church at 1802–33 Avenue SW was dedicated in 1953; the cornerstone was laid on September 19, 1954, and the church was consecrated on April 23, 1967. The original building remained extant until at least 1954.

In 2006, declining membership led to a merger of St. Mark’s with St. Philip’s Anglican Church, which had been established in Elboya in the 1950s. The former St. Mark’s church became St. Mark’s and St. Philip’s Anglican Church.

Lutheran

In the 1950s, two new Lutheran congregations were established in the Marda Loop communities: Killarney Lutheran (later renamed Grace Lutheran) in Richmond and Messiah Lutheran in Altadore.

Killarney Lutheran began in 1950 with worship service and Sunday School held in the new Richmond School. The congregation was formally organized in 1951, and in 1952, construction began on a church building at 2455–30 Avenue SW on a site purchased from The City.

The original building, designed by architects Blakey, Blakey, and Ascher, was a flat-roofed hall constructed with the intention of building a proper sanctuary later on the north side of the property. The original sanctuary was dedicated on July 5, 1953, and an adjacent parsonage (2451–30 Avenue SW) was built in 1955.

In 1956, Killarney Lutheran was renamed Grace Lutheran. Within a few years, the church was inadequate for the growing community. In 1962, the original building was sold and moved offsite, and a larger sanctuary was built to replace it. The new church was dedicated on November 4, 1962.

The church survived the creation of Crowchild Trail SW in the 1960s, but it now



The *Calgary Herald* published this photograph of the original Grace Lutheran Church (2455–30 Avenue SW) on September 16, 1961.



The second Grace Lutheran Church (2455–30 Avenue SW), 1962.



Messiah Lutheran Church (4615–16A Street SW), 1962. After the congregation dissolved in 1969, the building became the First United Pentecostal Church. In its final use, the building housed the Christian Deaf Centre from 1982 until at least 1987.

had a sound wall and freeway next to it. The congregation moved to its current location (3610 Sarcee Road SW) in early 1982. Later that year, the Richmond building was demolished for construction of the 33 Avenue SW overpass on-ramp to northbound Crowchild Trail.

In 1954, Sister Helen Eriksson organized a Lutheran Sunday School at Altadore School and began holding services in the school's auditorium. The Augustana Lutheran Synod, a North American body begun by Swedish immigrants, formalized the congregation as Messiah Lutheran Church. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on June 5, 1955, and the congregation's new sanctuary at 4615-16A Street SW in Altadore was dedicated in 1956.

Membership dwindled in the following years, and the congregation was dissolved in 1969. The sanctuary then became the home of First United Pentecostal Church (see below under Pentecostal). In 1982, the building's Lutheran association resumed when it became the new home of the Christian Deaf Centre, a congregation founded in the city in 1974 under the sponsorship of the Cross of Christ Church of the Lutheran Church of Canada. The congregation remained in this building until at least 1987. The church building was evidently demolished or removed in the 1990s.¹¹

Church of the Nazarene

The South Calgary Church of the Nazarene (1939-33 Avenue SW) was formed in 1952



This photograph of South Calgary Church of the Nazarene was published in the *Calgary Herald* on June 1, 1963. Built in 1952, it housed its original congregation until the late 1990s and then served as Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church from 1997 to 2015. It was later demolished.



Altadore Baptist Church cornerstone-laying ceremony, December 13, 1953. Jack De Lorme, photographer.



The former South Calgary Church of the Nazarene site was redeveloped by Sarina Homes. Avenue 33 (1935-33 Avenue SW), a residential-commercial building designed by FAAS Architecture, was completed in 2017. Photographed on October 29, 2024. Harry Sanders, photographer.



Altadore Baptist Church Christian Education Building (4304-16 Street SW), 1954. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

and dedicated its small new church building on December 28, 1952. The first pastor was Rev. Roger Williams.

By the late 1990s, membership had dwindled to only ten members, and the congregation disbanded. The building was sold in 1997, and it became the home of St. Peter the Aleut, an Orthodox congregation (see below under Orthodox). The building was demolished for redevelopment around 2015, and the Orthodox congregation now shares a building with St. Mark's and St. Philip's Anglican.

Baptist

For Baptists in the district, the nearest church was First Baptist Church in the Beltline. On November 23, 1952, Baptist Sunday School services began at Altadore School, and the Baptist church purchased lots on which to build a neighbourhood church. William A. Branton, the Calgary School Board's building superintendent, was a member of the Baptist church and assisted in these projects.

Altadore Baptist Church began as a mission church of First Baptist, and it eventually became an independent congregation.

The initial construction project was a Christian Education Building (4304-16 Street SW). The sod-turning ceremony took place on July 19, 1953, followed by the cornerstone-laying ceremony on December 13, 1953. The building was dedicated on January 10, 1954.

The congregation next built and dedicated an adjacent sanctuary (4304-16 Street SW), which was dedicated on February 1, 1959. The Dominion Construction Company built the new church edifice. A residential component was added in 1962.



The two chaplains at Currie Barracks, Capt. R.H. Dobson (Protestant, left) and Capt. James S. McGivera (Roman Catholic, right) pose outside one of the two new chapels, April 1956.

MILITARY CHAPELS



This undated photograph, looking west, shows the relative positions of Currie Barracks, the former Salvation Army Red Shield Hut, and the two chapels built in the Currie PMQs in 1956. The gates of Currie Barracks are visible at the top centre. The J-shaped former Red Shield Hut is shown on the near side of 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail) from the barracks gates. The Chapel of St. George, centre, is shown fronting Cambrai Avenue SW, the road leading east across 24 Street SW from the barracks gates. Christ the King Chapel can be seen in the left foreground. C.N. Ross, photographer.

From 1941 to 1946, the Salvation Army Red Shield Hut (4004-24 Street SW) operated in a field directly east of Currie Barracks. Among its social and cultural amenities, the facility included a chapel. Ten years after the Red Shield Hut closed, its setting had been developed as the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs), and the military built two new chapels there—the Chapel of St. George (Protestant) and Christ the King Chapel (Roman Catholic). These buildings replaced older facilities in Currie Barracks. Both were completed and dedicated in 1956.

The two chapels “will differ only slightly,” the *Calgary Herald* reported at the time:

The Catholic chapel, for instance, will boast a choir loft while its Protestant counterpart will retain meeting rooms and chimes. The chimes, incidentally, will actually be a public address system through which recorded chimes will be piped.¹²

Along with religious services and rites of passage, the chapels were associated with church parades that took place between the barracks and the chapels.

The two chapels remained in operation until the closure of Canadian Forces Base Calgary in 1998. Christ the King Chapel was demolished as part of the development of the Garrison Woods neighbourhood in 1998-2004. The Chapel of St. George became part of the new campus of Lycée Louis Pasteur (4099 Garrison Boulevard SW), a private bilingual school that was later renamed Lycée International de Calgary). The chapel, repurposed as the school's maternelle (day-care centre), was demolished in 2025.



The First Christian Reformed Church stood at 3704–15A Street SW in Altadore from 1957 until sometime after 2003, when it was demolished and replaced by condominiums.

Roman Catholic

In 1954, the Roman Catholic school district opened St. Raymond Elementary School (4416–16 Street SW) in Altadore, and mass was said at the school on Sundays. In 1961, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary established St. James Parish (which included Altadore) and formally opened it at St. Raymond School.

Some years earlier, the diocese acquired ten contiguous lots on 19 Street SW in Altadore with the evident intention of building a church. However, as the city grew further to the southwest, the diocese instead built St. James Church in North Glenmore, the next neighbourhood to the south. The church was completed and solemnly blessed in 1966. The Altadore property was sold and became the site of the Plaza 34 strip mall (3504–19 Street SW). (See also the Military Chapels sidebar on page 74 for Christ the King Chapel in the Currie Permanent Married Quarters.)

Jewish

By the 1950s, many Jewish families lived in the Marda Loop communities. In 1957, the Beth Israel Synagogue in the Mission district proposed building a new facility in Altadore. In the event, the synagogue was built in Kelvin Grove, where it was dedicated in 1960. However, the I.L. Peretz School (1915–36 Avenue SW), after its completion in 1958,

introduced an institutional Jewish presence to the neighbourhood. In 1959, Sabbath services and services for the festival of Shavuot were held in the school’s auditorium, evidently because the new Shaarey Tzedec Synagogue in the Mission district was not yet completed.

Dutch Reformed

The Calgary Reformed Church began holding services in 1954 at St. Paul’s United Church in Victoria Park. On August 3, 1957, services moved to the former South Calgary United Church (1638–30 Avenue SW; see above under United Church of Canada), which the congregation had acquired, and it became the church’s long-term home. The congregation was renamed Calgary Community Reformed Church in 1981 and Marda Loop Church in 2019.

Christian Reformed

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, a Protestant Calvinist denomination, was established in 1857 by Dutch immigrants. In Calgary, the First Christian Reformed Church was organized in 1952, and it initially held services in the Beltline neighbourhood. The congregation acquired a building site in Altadore and held a cornerstone dedication ceremony on November 16, 1957. Services began in the new church at 3704–15A Street

SW in January 1958. Dutch-language service took place Sunday evenings.

Around 2003, the congregation acquired the former Southminster United Church (3818–14A Street SW), and, in its new sanctuary, the congregation was renamed River Park Church. The 1957 building was sold and redeveloped as condominiums.

Non-denominational

In 1956, the Believers Meeting Room was located at 1926–28 Avenue SW, which was at that time the home and business address of industrialist William Woods (see page 106). This was an offshoot of the Plymouth Brethren, a community of Christians that began in England and Ireland early in the 19th century.

Pentecostal

Pentecostalism is a late-19th century Protestant religious movement. The city’s first Pentecostal congregation was evidently the Pentecostal Tabernacle (928–8 Avenue SW), which was built in 1928 on the future site of the Medical Centre Building (908–8 Avenue SW), an extant city-wide historic resource that now houses the University of Calgary’s downtown campus.

In 1969, the First United Pentecostal Church (also known as the United Pentecostal Church) acquired the former Messiah Lutheran Church in Altadore (see above under Lutheran). The congregation had been formed in 1967, and it initially held services in the Crescent Heights neighbourhood. As late as 1979, the church was still located in the former Messiah Lutheran, which was originally addressed as 4615–16A Street SW and later renumbered as 1730–46 Avenue SW. In 1982, the building was rededicated as the Christian Deaf Centre. The building was demolished at an unknown later date and redeveloped as a residential property.

Orthodox

St. Simeon Mirotocivi Serbian Orthodox Church, an Orthodox congregation formed in 1960, renovated an existing house at 2001–31 Avenue SW and opened it as its new

sanctuary in 1971. The building was replaced in 1986 by a purpose-built structure, and the adjacent Serbian Orthodox Hall was completed the following year. The hall became the venue of Serbian Days, an annual festival launched by Calgary’s Serbian community in 1987.

In 2014, the congregation moved to a new, much-larger church in De Winton, a hamlet 25 kilometres south of Calgary. The church property on 31 Avenue was subsequently redeveloped as the site of three detached homes.

A second Orthodox congregation moved to Marda Loop in 1997. That year, Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox parish acquired the former South Calgary Church of the Nazarene at 1802–33 Avenue SW, which then became the congregation’s Temple.

Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church was established in 1990 to provide an English-language Orthodox church for faith members in Calgary. The congregation moved again in 2015, this time to nearby St. Mark’s and St. Philip’s Anglican Church (1802–33 Avenue SW; see above under Anglican), where it shared worship space with the existing Anglican congregation on a lease arrangement. The move was accompanied by a procession ceremony to the new Temple on June 6, 2015.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

For neighbourhood members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known



The former South Calgary Church of the Nazarene (see page 71) was the Temple of Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church from 1997 to 2015.



St. Simeon Mirotocivi Serbian Orthodox Church (2001–31 Avenue SW). The church began as a converted house and was replaced in 1986–87 by a new sanctuary and community hall.

colloquially as Mormons), the nearest church is the Calgary Stake Centre (2021–17 Avenue SW), which was dedicated in the adjacent Bankview neighbourhood in 1956. Marc and Mada Jenkins, the original owners of the Marda Theatre, were Latter-day Saints. The theatre’s name derives from their own first names (MARc and maDA), and the neighbourhood identity was inspired by the name of their theatre (see pages 106–107 and 122).

Longtime Altadore resident William Atkinson (circa 1886–1967), a CPR employee, was an Elder of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (renamed the Community of Christ in 2001) while living at 2026–34 Avenue SW in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1941, Frederick A. Smith, a retired official of the church (and a grandson of its founder, Joseph Smith), visited Calgary and stayed at Atkinson’s house.

Heritage value

- The Marda Loop communities have activity value through the longtime activities of religious organizations in the area.
- The communities have institutional value through their association with religious institutions (such as the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary, etc.) and the individual congregations in the area.
- The communities have landmark value through the landmark churches in the area.

Character-defining elements

- Small-scale churches in a residential setting

Places of interest

- South Calgary United Church/Marda Loop Church (1638–30 Avenue SW), built in 1912 and moved to present site and expanded in 1921.

- St. Mark’s Anglican Church (1802–33 Avenue SW), built in 1952.
- Southminster United Church/River Park Church (3818–14A Street SW), built in 1957.
- Altadore Baptist Church (4304–16 Street SW), dedicated in 1959, and its Christian Education Building, dedicated in 1954.
- St. Raymond Elementary School/Rundle Academy (4416–16 Street SW), built in 1954. Site of Roman Catholic mass, circa 1954–66.

Interpretive opportunities

- Original site of South Calgary United Church on 34 Avenue SW (site of Calgary’s first United Church)
- Religious buildings, former and extant, can be interpreted.

Notes

1 Another United Church in present-day Calgary was also formed in 1918 through the union of a Methodist church and a Presbyterian church, but these were located in Springbank, which was outside the city limits at that time.

2 W.J. Collett, “The United Church in Calgary,” in *The Search for Souls: Histories of Calgary Churches* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975), 709.

3 Early assessment rolls show that Dr. Kerby owned multiple undeveloped lots in the Marda Loop communities.

4 Collett, 709.

5 Collett, 710.

6 Grant, 348.

7 Grant, 350.

8 Grant, 352.

9 Grant, 353–54.

10 Grant, 379.

11 Public notices in the *Calgary Herald* in 1993 and 1997 provide clues to the fate of the building, or at least the property. A 1993 notice regarding DP93/1606 indicates “Change of Use from Church to Offices & Child Care Facility/Mazimum 15 Children, R-2 (published August 5, 1993, p. B2). A 1997 notice regarding “Building Permit Changes” reads “1732 46th Ave. S.W. Christopher Robin School (published September 8, 1997, p. C2).

12 Wilf Blair, “March Past,” *Calgary Herald*, 14 April 1956, 38.



This photograph of South Calgary Church of the Nazarene was published in the *Calgary Herald* on June 1, 1963. Built in 1952, it housed its original congregation until the late 1990s and then served as Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church from 1997 to 2015. It was later demolished.



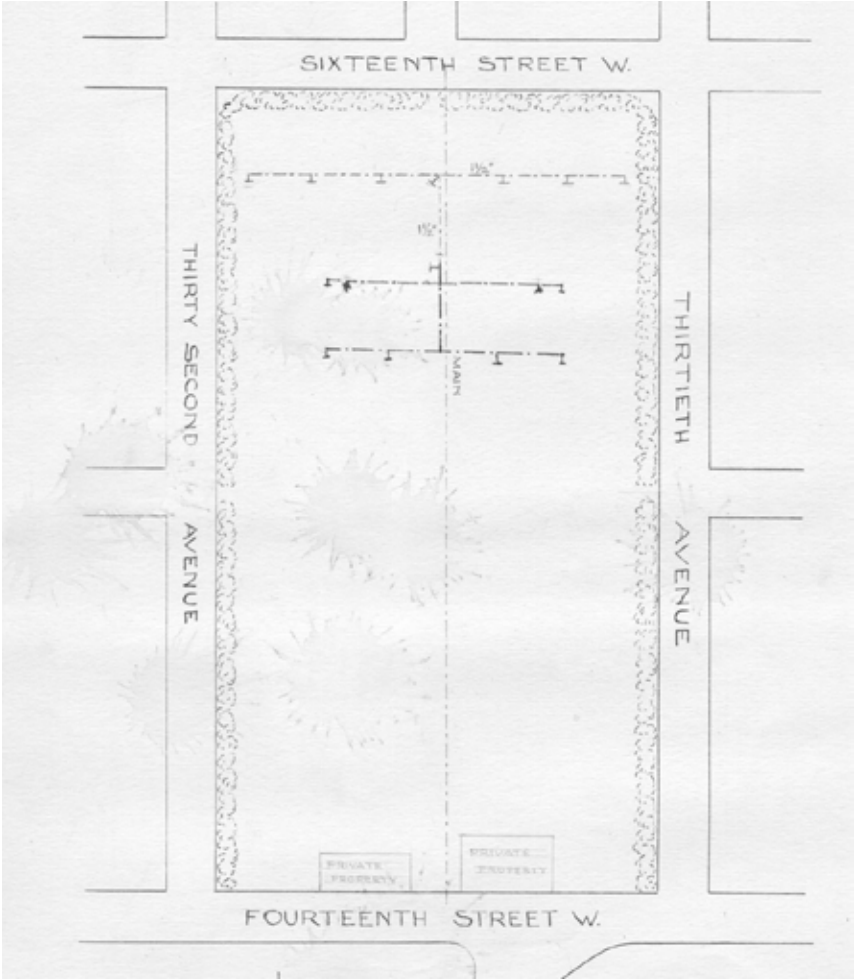
New Kinsmen pool opens in South Calgary Park, 1955. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

NINE

PARKS, RECREATION,
AND CULTURE LIFE

The earliest organized cultural and recreational activities in the Marda Loop communities were associated with church organizations and King Edward School. Men's, women's, and children's groups associated with South Calgary Methodist and South Calgary Presbyterian churches (and their successor congregation, South Calgary United) often held their social and cultural events, including concerts, at King Edward. So did St. Mark's Anglican Church, although St. Mark's also held events in its parish hall. The local Masonic Lodge, established in 1920, also met in St. Mark's parish hall.

Athletic, cultural, and social clubs formed during the First World War, many of them associated with the war effort. The South Calgary Athletic Club, for example, hosted three dances at King Edward in 1918, but that is the extent of its known existence and activities. Other such organizations included patriotic and service organizations that supported servicemen and held cultural or fundraising events at King Edward. Meanwhile, residents of South Calgary, Glengarry, and Killarney established a southwest Calgary forum in 1919 to engage in "the open discussion of all matters relating to the well-being of the community."¹



Plan of South Calgary Park, circa 1930.



In his 1914 plan for the future growth of Calgary, landscape architect Thomas Mawson proposed a circular park for Knob Hill.

The South Calgary Community Club was organized early in 1920, and it held dances at King Edward, complete with an orchestra in attendance, well into the 1920s. At the club's Hallowe'en dance at the school in 1923, the costume-judging panel comprised Mayor George H. Webster, Alderman Annie Gale (a former resident of South Calgary), and former City Solicitor Clinton J. Ford.

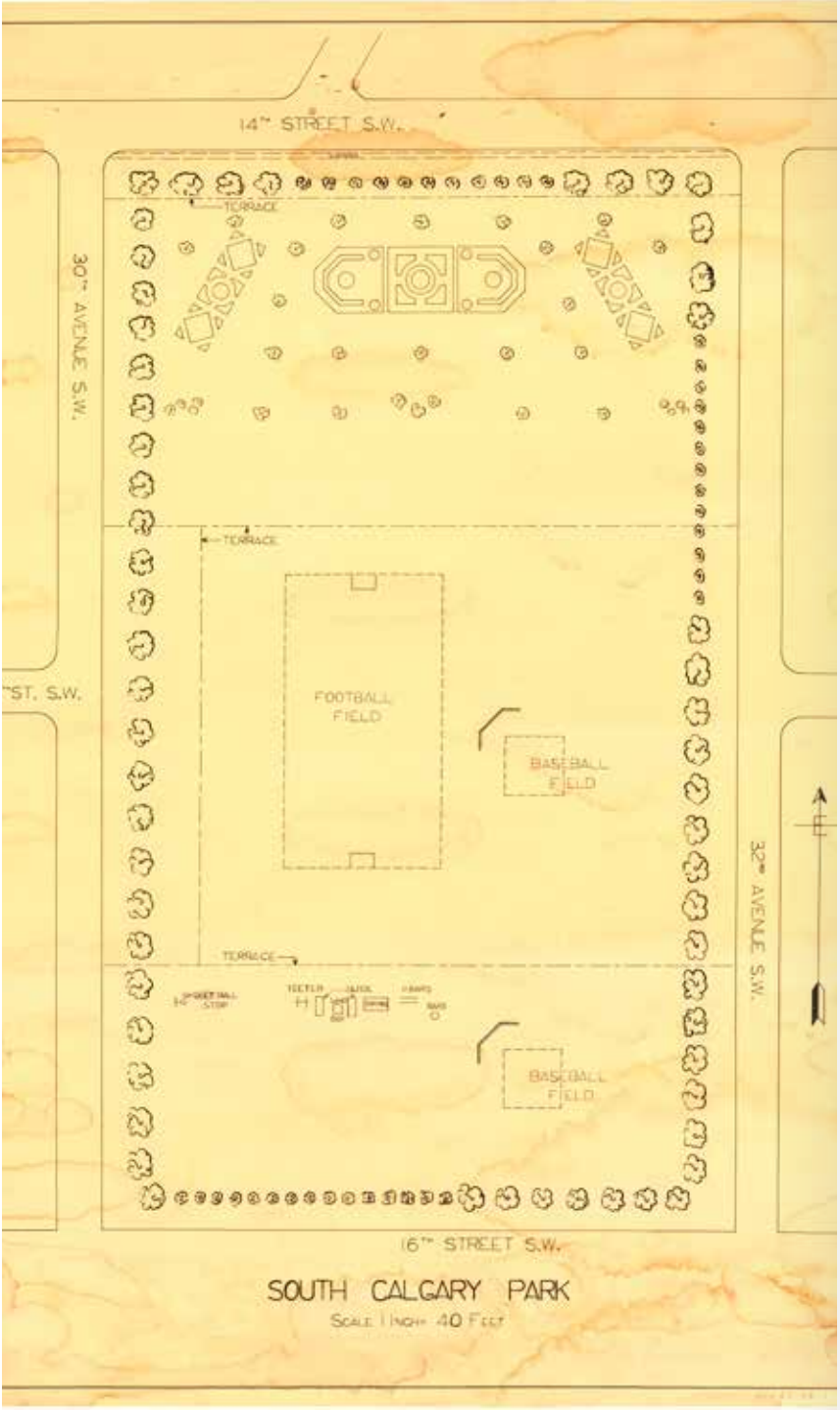
Student presentations at the school provided a taste of culture to the community. The Christmas concert in 1916, for example, included folk dances, songs, a display of cadet skills, and an operetta. When King Edward doubled as South Calgary High School from 1918 to 1929, it also became home to the South Calgary Literary Society, which students formed in the high school's first year.

The South Calgary High School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) was formed by 1922, and it was evidently a cultural force in the neighbourhood. The PTA sponsored a school fair on at least one occasion (in 1923), and PTA meetings included musical programs as well as lectures by the likes of Dr. H.H. Bingham of First Baptist Church ("Education and Character"), chief librarian Alexander Calhoun of the Calgary Public Library, University of Alberta Professor S.R. Laycock ("The Measure of Intelligence"), and H.P.O. Savary ("The French Regime in Canada").

In 1921, the South Calgary Brass Band was formed, and it rehearsed and met at the South Calgary United Church. Despite keen interest at the time, there is no evidence that the organization lasted long.

The original South Calgary subdivision plan did not contain any space for parks. The future South Calgary Park, established around 1923, appears on the subdivision plan simply as a block of building lots. But the district remained lightly developed in this period, so there were wide-open spaces available for recreation.

John W. Grant, who grew up in the neighbourhood in the 1930s, provides an informal example in a memoir published in 1975. As many as a hundred children at a time played in the undeveloped block from 19 Street to 20 Street SW between 34 Avenue and 35 Avenue SW. "The beauty of it all was that not one of these activities was organized," Grant recalled. "The kids joined in from



blocks around, played together, and the old folks kept their distance.” Grant also describes excursions that he and other children made to Sandy Beach, a natural area by the Elbow River east of the neighbourhood that was developed as a park decades later.

The City of Calgary Parks Department had begun to provide services in South Calgary by 1920, when the district first appeared in

Plan of South Calgary Park showing added amenities, n.d. (probably 1930s).

the department's annual reports. By that time, the department maintained a playground and employed women to work there as playground supervisors. The facility was likely on the King Edward School grounds, but it is possible that it was located in the present South Calgary Park.

South Calgary Park development was underway in earnest by 1923, when the Kiwanis Club of Calgary selected the park as the location for all of its privately-donated tree plantings for Arbour Day that year. Acting Mayor Dr. T.H. Crawford planted the first of the trees planted in the park that day. This was the beginning of a long association between the Kiwanis Club and parks in the Marda Loop communities. The Parks Department introduced tennis in South Calgary Park in 1924.

In the early 1920s, the Parks Department budgeted for improvements for cricket, football (likely meaning soccer), and skating in the area, but these improvements were not made in South Calgary Park. Instead, South Calgary Athletic Grounds—located two blocks south at 14 Street and 34 Avenue—became the venue of football games as early as 1921 and cricket in 1922 after the formation of the South Calgary Cricket Club that year.³ The exact location of the athletic grounds is unknown, but available evidence points to the southeast corner of the intersection, placing the facility within the present Elbow Park neighbourhood.⁴

St. Mark's Recreation Club, a tennis club formed in 1921 by members of St. Mark's



The South Calgary Cricket Club, founded in 1922, operated in the South Calgary Athletic Grounds, a facility believed to have been located across 14 Street SW from Altadore in Elbow Park.

Anglican Church, established its own tennis courts on the west side of 16 Street SW south of 42 Avenue SW in present-day Altadore.

Another separate facility was developed in 1926. That year, the South Calgary Community Club established a skating rink at 17 Street and 28 Avenue SW. It was likely on the northwest corner, where The City owned contiguous vacant lots. The community rink was officially opened by Mayor Webster and the club's honorary vice-president, L.H. Fennerty, on January 8, 1926.

Residents had at least one unofficial skating rink. This was on the frozen slough on the present site of Flanders Park (4220 [Passchendaele Road SW](#)) in Garrison Woods. The site was known colloquially as Brackman's

The *Calgary Herald* documented the construction of the South Calgary Community Hall (which remains extant as the Marda Loop Communities Association Hall, 3130-16 Street SW) in this item published on December 12, 1951.



New Kinsmen pool opens in South Calgary Park, 1955. Jack De Lorme, photographer.

Slough or Brackie's Slough for the late Eric Brackman who farmed nearby (see pages 14–15 and 54). A fatal accident occurred there in November 1922 when Walter Crawford fell through the ice and drowned (see page 57).

Calgary's 7th Boy Scout Troop was established by 1912, and by 1920 it was headquartered in South Calgary, where it met at St. Mark's Parish Hall. From about 1939 until at least 1961, the troop used a former powerhouse (1515–14A Street SW) as its Scout Hall (see pages 34 and 35). The City-owned building was repaired after it was damaged by arson in 1955.

During the Second World War, a temporary new cultural institution was introduced to the neighbourhood. The Salvation Army's Red Shield Hut, a hospitality facility for soldiers at Currie Barracks, was built on the future location of Garrison Woods. Along with food and drink, as well as chapel services, the hut became a venue for musical concerts. (See pages 41, 42, 63 and 74.)

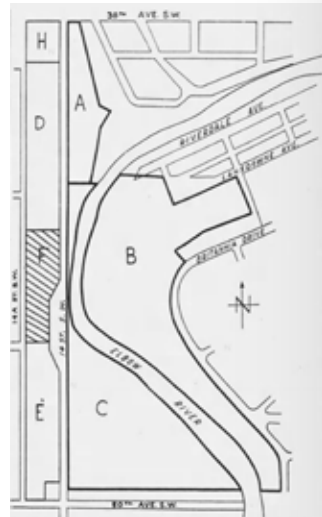
A local businesswoman also provided an amusement for young people in the district. For 25¢ per day, children could rent a Shetland pony from Maude Ovans (née MacGregor, 1884–1967), who lived in Bankview and operated a riding academy near the future site of HMCS Tecumseh, the

naval training base at 17 Avenue and Crowchild Trail SW in Richmond.

In an early postwar manifestation of cultural life, the South Calgary 'Teen Centre was established in 1946 and accommodated in St. Mark's Hall. The centre's program included dances, and all area residents aged 13–19 were welcomed. "The centre was formed with the intention of providing leisure time activities popular with 'teen aged youth,'" noted the *Calgary Herald* following the organization's first dance.⁵

After the war, in 1948–52, the Department of National Defence (DND) developed a new neighbourhood on the future site of Garrison Woods. The Currie Permanent Married Quarters, commonly known as Currie or as the Currie PMQs, was developed for married servicemen and their families. Detached houses and duplexes were laid out on the Radburn plan, which grouped sets of houses together around a common green space where neighbour children could play with each other. (See also pages 42–45.) As a planned community for families with children, the PMQs included tot lots and a playing field with a baseball diamond (in the northwest portion), a grassed open space with a basketball court (in the centre portion), and tennis courts and playing fields

Calgary Herald map showing proposed River Park, 1950s. "H" shows Eric Harvie's property; The City owned "D" and "E." Harvie wanted The City to buy Parcel "F" and combine it with the others to establish the park.



adjacent to the schools that were built in the 1950s.

In 1951, the South Calgary Community Club built the South Calgary Community Hall (3130–16 Street SW) in South Calgary Park. Contemporary newspaper accounts suggest that it was an original structure, but longtime area resident Gerry Stotts recalls that it was constructed from two decommissioned military huts acquired for the purpose by Martin Vernon (1934–2017), a paint contractor and a longtime Altadore resident and community activist. (Mike Vernon, one of Martin's sons, became a longtime goaltender for the Calgary Flames hockey club.) In the 1970s, under the presidency of Stotts' wife, Sally Stotts (née Schamber, 1933–2017), the community association enlarged the facility.

The community association itself, and its many recreational and cultural offerings at the community hall over the years, added to the district's rich community tapestry. One early manifestation was the association's sponsorship of a midnight showing of the 1950 film *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the relatively-new Marda Theatre on May 17, 1953. In another example, the community hall was transformed into an art gallery for three days in November 1956.

The community club held summer carnivals in the park in 1950 and 1951, and community children staged a carnival in 1958 in conjunction with a city-wide sports competition being held in the park. Beginning in 1952, the community hall and adjacent skating rink were the joint venues of annual ice carnivals.

The South Calgary Kiwanis Club, established in 1950 (and evidently also known as the South West Calgary Kiwanis Club), resumed



Calgary Public Library, Alexander Calhoun Branch, n.d.



Kiwanis' longstanding association with South Calgary. The organization was actively involved with the Pedal Club, a bicycle-safety club for children that met in King Edward School in the early 1950s. In 1953, South Calgary Kiwanis built a wading pool in South Calgary Park and donated it to The City. The club donated tulips that were planted in the Fire Hall No. 5 garden in South Calgary Park in 1956.

The South Calgary Kiwanis Club, in partnership with The City, built a second wading pool in 1956, this one in Kiwanis Park (3815–16 Street SW) in Altadore. Altadore residents had petitioned The City in 1952 to create a park in place of the slough at this location, and Kiwanis was involved in the park's development.

At the time, Kiwanis Park was one of three parks in Altadore. In 1956, Altadore resident Agnes M. Spensley (née Young, 1920–2011) itemized the neighbourhood's parks in a letter-to-the-editor published in the *Calgary Herald*:

Newly-completed Kinsmen Municipal Arena, 1972. It was located immediately north of the South Calgary Pool. A parking lot now occupies its former site. This photograph was published in the *Calgary Herald*, February 15, 1972.

I have lived here nearly thirteen years, and ten of those years trudged over a mile (no buses) to South Calgary park, hoping that when Altadore was developed we would have our own park areas. So we have—approximately five acres; two acres at 16th Street and 37th and 38th Avenues; two acres at 47th and 48th Avenue and 17th Street and one acre between 15th and 16th Streets on Acton Avenue.⁶

The first two-acre park identified in Spensley’s letter became Kiwanis Park. The second is likely Craig Reid Park (1908–47 Avenue SW), which was named in 2021.⁷ The one-acre park that Spensley identifies is Verna Reid Park (1625 Acton Avenue SW), a former slough that was also named in 2021.

A much-larger new park, River Park, was created in the 1950s. Around 1953, Eric L. Harvie (1892–1975), a well-known businessman and philanthropist, made an offer to The City to encourage development of a large, natural park at the eastern edge of Altadore. The area he proposed stretched from 38 Avenue south to 50 Avenue SW between 14 Street and 15 Street SW. In combination with park development at Sandy Beach in the river valley immediately to the east, this would make for a large park area.

Harvie was motivated by a desire to provide Calgarians with adequate park space and the belief that such park space had not been reserved in older-developed parts of Calgary. Harvie offered to donate a 2.5-acre parcel of land that he owned in the proposed park area plus \$100,000 for park development. Harvie

wanted The City to turn the 80 acres that it owned (acquired through tax arrears from the late developer Frederick C. Lowes’ estate) into part of the park, and he wanted The City to acquire a further 40 acres from a private owner.

Harvie’s offer met with a lukewarm response. Some city councillors thought the park was unnecessary, and they preferred the idea of selling the City-owned land for development purposes. They wanted Harvie’s donation to accrue to development of the new Glenmore Park around the Glenmore Reservoir instead. Ultimately, a compromise allowed the development of River Park. The park was established only as far west as 14A Street SW; the western half of the proposed park area was instead developed as River Park, a tony residential addition to Altadore.

Calgary Public Library

In 1951, Chief Librarian W.R. Castell (1908–2004) met with local residents in King Edward School at their request. Following the meeting, residents decided to circulate a petition to request a branch library. The local effort was led by Harold E. Woodman (1891–1974), who lived at 1806–32 Avenue SW and operated a hardware store in nearby Bankview.

Meanwhile, in 1952, the Calgary Public Library launched its bookmobile service, which included a weekly stop at South Calgary Park. The Alexander Calhoun Branch library (3223–14 Street SW, also addressed as 1508–32 Avenue SW) was soon constructed in the park’s southeast corner. It was designed by architects Cook and Bouzan

Looking east along 33 Avenue SW toward 20 Street SW during Marda Gras, 1996.



Garrison Square Park in Garrison Woods, seen here in an undated photograph, was designed by landscape architect Jim Laidlaw as part of the Garrison Woods development in the early 1990s.

and built at a cost of \$30,000. Mayor Don Mackay opened the library officially on March 24, 1954. The branch’s namesake, founding librarian Alexander Calhoun (1879–1979), attended the ceremony. The building included a bas-relief mural, the work of Calgary artist Luke Lindoe (1913–2000), on one of its brick walls.

The library was demolished in 1985, shortly after a new, adjacent library building (3223–14 Street SW) was opened. The wall section with Lindoe’s bas-relief was retained and remains extant as a stand-alone structure next to the parking lot. The new building was designed by architect Ken Hutchinson, who was a finalist in the 1982 Alberta Architecture awards for the library project. In 2018, the Alexander Calhoun Library was renamed the Giuffre Family Library.

More recreational facilities

Two other service clubs contributed to facility development in South Calgary Park in the 1950s. The Kinsmen built Kinsmen South Calgary Swimming Pool (3130–16 Street SW), which was turned over to The City and officially opened on July 8, 1955. The following year, the Lions Club contributed funds to build Calgary’s first outdoor artificial ice rink, which opened in South Calgary Park in November 1956. The rink was located immediately north of the swimming pool, and it was meant strictly for playing hockey; the venue became part of a community junior hockey league. A separate, natural-ice rink in South Calgary Park, added around the same time, was available for leisure skating.



“Charged Line,” a sculpture by artist Jill Anholt, was installed at Fire Station No. 5 in 2014 as part of The City’s public art program.

By 1983, design flaws in the Kinsmen Municipal Arena became apparent, and The City began negotiating with community groups to transfer ownership and control of the building, irritating the Kinsmen inadvertently by neglecting to notify the organization of these developments.

One of the community representatives negotiating with The City was engineering contractor Gerry Stotts. The matter became a moot point when the arena’s roof collapsed in the summer of 1983. Stotts then became part of the effort that led to the formation of the South West Arenas Society and, ultimately, the development of the Calgary Centennial Arenas in the future Garrison Woods neighbourhood.

In 1983, seven community organizations, two minor hockey associations, and Canadian Forces Base Calgary founded the arenas society with the purpose of developing twin arenas on land leased from DND. The arenas were intended to replace the ruined Kinsmen Municipal Arena as well as the military base’s 33-year-old Turner Arena. The project was completed and opened in 1986 as the Calgary Centennial Arenas. The facilities were available for use by member organizations and Mount Royal College (later renamed Mount Royal University in 2010). In 2010, the Calgary Flames donated land to build a third facility on the property, and the complex was renamed the Flames Community Arenas at that time.

Another facility, the Garrison Curling Club (2300 Flanders Avenue SW) was built in 1962 and largely destroyed by fire in 1987. It was rebuilt the following year, and it was later relocated to a site adjacent to the Calgary Centennial Arenas.

Marda Gras

The Marda Gras festival, a distinctive cultural event in the district, was created by the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area in 1985. On August 24 that year, the Marda Loop BRZ (as the BIA was then known) hosted Summerfest, a daylong event on a vacant lot at the southwest corner of 21 Street and 33 Avenue SW (the former site of the Order of the Eastern Star residences that had been built in 1949). By 1987, this annual event was called Marda Gras Day, and it was later renamed the Marda Gras Street Festival.



Museum of the Regiments /The Military Museums

The Calgary Military Museum Society was formed in May 1987, and it launched a project to convert the vacant Sir Samuel Steele Junior High School into a museum. A \$945,000 federal grant for its project was announced on September 30, 1988. The Museum of the Regiments was dedicated on August 11, 1989, and it was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on June 30, 1990. The complex was later expanded to accommodate the Naval Museum of Alberta, and, in 2006, the institution was renamed The Military Museums.

Karma Local Arts Lounge

Perhaps the final significant cultural addition in the 20th Century was the privately-owned Karma Local Arts Lounge (2139–33 Avenue SW), a bar and accoustic music venue established in 1998 by Soren Borch, Lynn Thorimbert, and Marty Park. Performers included musicians Laurie Matheson, Tom Phillips, Mike Stack, Tim Williams, and Ian Tyson. Bruce Springsteen reportedly attended a performance at Karma while in town to give a concert at the Saddledome. Karma closed in 2006, and the building was gutted by fire in 2017 and subsequently demolished. Karma’s owners also founded the Ironwood Stage & Grill in Inglewood.

HM Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the Museum of the Regiments in 1990. This photograph, taken on May 25, 2005, shows her unveiling a plaque at the dedication ceremony of the museum’s Queen Elizabeth Atrium. Paul Chiasson, photographer.



Cover of *Sunny-San*, a novel that Winnifred Eaton Reed wrote in a rented house at 1737–26 Avenue SW during a five-week period in 1920. The book was published in 1922.

Public art

“The Bug,” a folk-art installation, was first displayed in the area in 1988 when auto mechanic Tony Mangat placed it outside The Mechanic’s (3001–14 Street SW), an automotive repair shop that he owned and operated. The artwork comprised the body of a 1972 Volkswagen Beetle suspended above the asphalt by metal spider legs that were attached to it. Mangat acquired it in 1986 from an automotive concern that was going out of business. “The Bug” advertised The Mechanics’ specialty, repairing Volkswagens. The Mechanic’s has been demolished and its site redeveloped, and “The Bug” has been relocated to the roof of a low-rise commercial building (2513–14 Street SW) in Bankview.

Other examples of public art include the Luke Lindoe bas-relief outside the Giuffre Family Library and “Charged Line,” a sculpture by artist Jill Anholt installed at Fire Station No. 5 in 2014 as part of The City’s public art program.

Personalities

Several personalities have contributed to the cultural richness of the Marda Loop communities, either as residents of the district or through their activities there. Examples include musician Fernleigh (Floyd) Vernon, novelist Winnifred Eaton Reeve, artists Roland Gissing, Elizabeth Allen, and Andie C. Wicherts, and publisher Judith Galbraith.

Floyd Vernon (circa 1887–1946), a Calgary Fire Department carpenter originally from Plymouth in Devonshire, England, lived at 1911–34 Avenue SW in 1914. After serving overseas during the First World War, he toured the world as assistant bandmaster with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police band. Vernon later toured the United States as part of John Philip Sousa’s band.

In 1920, Winnifred Eaton Reeve (1875–1954) rented a small house at 1737–26 Avenue SW, and there she wrote the novel *Sunny-San* in a five-week period that year. Reeve and her husband Francis Reeve (1879–1956) ranched near Mini̇ Thni̇ (formerly Morley) northwest of Calgary, and this house was one of Winnifred’s pieds-à-terre in the city. *Sunny-San* was published in 1922, and it was the last novel published under her nom-de-plume, Onoto Watanna. Winnifred’s mother was

Chinese, and she was an early North American author of Asian descent to publish English-language fiction. A 1977 donation from the Francis F. Reeve Foundation, which both Winnifred and Francis had established, led to the construction of the Reeve Theatre at the University of Calgary.

Roland Gissing (1895–1967), a Canadian landscape painter, lived in a fourplex at 2121–26 Avenue SW in Richmond in 1956. Born in Gloucestershire, England, Gissing was educated in Edinburgh and moved to western Canada in 1913.

In the late 1970s, artists Elizabeth Allen and Andie C. Wicherts established the Station Studio (4008–16 Street SW), Calgary’s first cooperative printmaking studio, in Altadore. The two women were founding members of the Alberta Printmakers’ Society. Allen came from England and Wicherts from the Netherlands. In 2011, both received an Immigrant of Distinction award, an honour sponsored by Immigrant Services Calgary.

In the late 1980s, Judith Galbraith operated her eponymous publishing house from her extant home at 1502–32 Avenue SW. Galbraith Publishing published children’s books, poetry, and short stories.

Heritage value

- The Marda Loop communities have activity value through the long history of community sports and recreational activities in parks and other recreational facilities.
- The communities have activity value through the Marda Gras, a distinctive cultural event in the city since the 1980s.

Character-defining elements

- Many parks and recreational facilities in a residential setting.

Places of interest

- South Calgary Swimming Pool (3130–16 Street SW)
- Giuffre Family Library (3223–14 Street SW)
- Station Studio (4008–16 Street SW)

- Flanders Park (2440 Passchendaele Road SW)
- Craig Reid Park (1908–47 Avenue SW)
- Verna Reid Park (1625 Acton Avenue SW)
- Kiwanis Park
- River Park
- South Calgary Park
- Garrison Square (201 Garrison Square SW)

Interpretive opportunities

- South Calgary Park (development history of the park, its structures, and its activities).
- River Park (both the park and the neighbourhood).
- The bas-relief by artist Luke Lindoe outside the Giuffre Family Library (there is a small card there already)
- “Charged Line,” a public art sculpture by artist Jill Anholt (with Michelle Wong) installed at Fire Station No. 5 in 2014.
- The spider figures on the east retaining wall of the Spider Block (3007–14 Street SW) provide an opportunity to interpret the building’s name, which was inspired by the site’s long association with “The Bug.”
- Former sites of athletic grounds, etc.

Notes

- 1 “New Forum for S.W. Calgary,” *Calgary Daily Herald*, 6 November 1919, 9.
- 2 Grant, 380.
- 3 Early newspaper accounts refer to the facility informally as the South Calgary grounds. The name South Calgary Athletic Grounds appears in the Parks Department’s 1925 annual report.
- 4 Newspaper accounts from before and after construction of Substation No. 4 (1508–34 Avenue SW) in 1930 place the athletic grounds at 14 Street and 34 Avenue SW, which evidently rules out the possibility of the northwest corner as the athletic grounds site. Description of the cricket ground location in 1933 (when its clubhouse was damaged by fire) as 13A Street SW and 34 Avenue SW is consistent with a 34 Avenue location at 14 Street SW (“Club Building Fire Damaged,” *Calgary Albertan*, 16 February 1933, 3). The childhood home of brothers Johnny Richardson and Kemp Richardson (3628–14 Street SW) was located “facing the South Calgary cricket grounds” (Bert Greer, “From Tee to Green,” *Calgary Herald*, 8 August 1942, 16). This is consistent with a location on the southeast corner of 14 Street and 34 Avenue SW, placing the west-facing Richardson house to the south of the grounds. A more fulsome quotation from Greer’s article suggests that the front of the house faced the athletic grounds, which would place the grounds on the southwest corner of the intersection: “Not so many years ago a couple of youngsters swung on the gate in front of a large house facing the South Calgary cricket grounds, or playfully wrestling in the grass.” However, if the location of the cricket grounds is assumed to be unchanged during its existence, the most likely location is the southeast corner of the intersection.
- 5 ““Teen Agers Open Centre,” *Calgary Herald*, 20 November 1946, 19.
- 6 Agnes M. Spensley, “River Park,” *Calgary Herald*, 6 February 1956, 4.
- 7 Spensley was likely mistaken in locating a two-acre park at 17 Street SW between 47 Avenue SW and 48 Avenue SW. She was likely referring to the future Craig Reid Park, which is located one block to the north of the location she identified.

Harry Pon in his Loop Coffee Shop, n.d. Pon owned the business from the early 1950s until at least the mid-1960s.



THE *Loop* COFFEE BAR

2441 - 33rd Avenue S.W.

Telephone 95303



Loop Coffee Bar menu, circa early 1950. The fare included steaks, sandwiches (either liver or bacon, lettuce, and tomato), burgers, fresh cut fries, and Harry Pon's homemade pies. Cigarettes, chocolate bars, chips, and candy were available for purchase at the front.

TEN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



In 1975, John W. Grant wrote a memoir of growing up in South Calgary in the 1930s. He defined the neighbourhood by its boundaries—south from 26 Avenue SW to the Elbow River, west from 14 Street SW to 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail). But Grant qualified his definition, emphasizing the primacy of local commerce in early neighbourhood identification:

I suppose a resident of old South Calgary could also be defined as a person who did his or her shopping at any one of the following stores: Purdy's Altadore Grocery on the corner of 19th Street and 34th Avenue SW, Irwin's Grocery at 15th Street and 34th Avenue SW, the Hillside Grocery at 17th Street and 27th Avenue SW, and last but not least, Summer's Grocery and Confectionery on 14th Street SW.¹

Commercial districts emerged along transportation routes. This began in 1912 with the entry of the Calgary Municipal Railway, as the streetcar system was officially named, into the neighbourhood. As the streetcar route expanded into a loop around the neighbourhood, commercial enterprises appeared along the route's 14 Street SW and 34 Avenue SW segments. When the transit route was relocated to 33 Avenue SW in the

late 1940s, the present commercial strip along that avenue began. Construction of the Glenmore water treatment plant and the establishment of a residential neighbourhood for military families each influenced local commercial development patterns.

Looking southeast along 33 Avenue SW from 20 Street SW, December 15, 1984. R-L: Patterson Block; medical clinic (2031-33 Avenue SW); Nevan Building (2025-33 Avenue SW); Clinton Apartments (2019-33 Avenue SW). Westwinds Texaco (2040-33 Avenue SW), left, opened by 1970. John Colville, photographer.

MARDA LOOP'S BUSINESS DISTRICTS

A series of business districts, as well as individual, isolated businesses, developed over time in Marda Loop's constituent neighbourhoods of South Calgary, Altadore, and Richmond. Business districts are described in this chapter in the sequence in which they were developed:

- 14 Street SW (north of South Calgary Park), 1912
- 34 Avenue SW, 1913 (including a 1950s-1960s projection south onto 18 Street SW and 19 Street SW)
- 33 Avenue SW, 1949
- 14 Street SW (south of South Calgary Park), 1951
- 16 Street SW, 1951
- 26 Avenue SW, 1951
- 42 Avenue SW, 1953

Within each business district, buildings—both extant and demolished—are described in the sequential order of their construction.

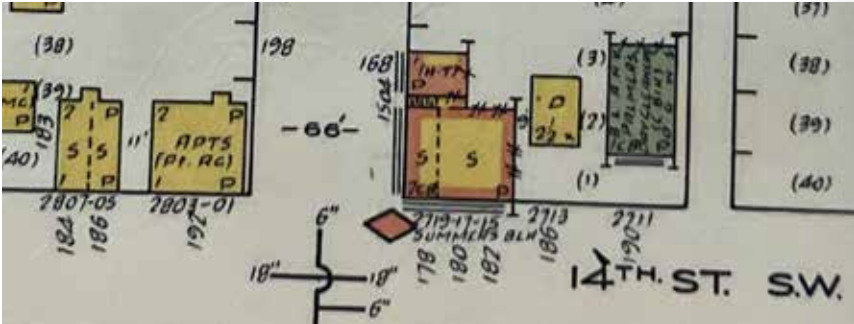
14 Street SW
(north of South Calgary Park)

In 1912–13, Frederick Gascoigne (1874–1961)—a tailor from Durham, England—built the first two commercial buildings in the Marda Loop communities. This was contemporaneous with the extension of a streetcar line south along 14 Street SW from 17 Avenue SW to the top of the hill. The extension remained a stub line until 1913. Both buildings were constructed on a single property, which Gascoigne owned from about 1912 until the mid-1920s.

The first was the two-storey frame building at 2805, 2807–14 Street SW. It had two storefronts and one or more apartments upstairs. Gascoigne lived in the building with his wife, Lilley, and their children. The earliest-known commercial tenants were William Noble, confectioner (2805–14 Street SW), and Arthur G. Duncan (circa 1876–1950), shoemaker (2807–14 Street SW). Duncan’s business remained in the building until at least 1930, and he evidently lived at the same address until his death. On at least one occasion, in 1927, the *Herald* referred to Duncan’s address as Cobblers’ Hall.

Around 1913, Gascoigne built a second commercial structure immediately north of the first. This single-storey building included two storefronts and one or more apartments. The first known commercial tenants were Jones Bros. meat market (2801–14 Street SW) and the Summers Store, a grocery owned by William Summers and J.E. Batten (2803–14 Street SW).

Gascoigne sold the buildings in the mid-1920s and moved to Vancouver. H. Lough, who also lived in Vancouver, was the next owner, and the building at 2801, 2803–14 Street SW became known as the Lough



Apartments or the Lough Block. By 1940, the property belonged to George W.T. Bush (1889–1965), also of Vancouver, and the Lough building became the Bush Apartments. Bush’s estate continued to own the property into the 1970s. Both buildings were demolished sometime after the 1970s. Southside Lofts (1505–27 Avenue SW), a residential complex built in 2001, now occupies the site of both structures.



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the extent of the neighbourhood’s original commercial district along 14 Street SW.

Southside Lofts (1505–27 Avenue SW), September 11, 2024. This condominium complex was built in 2001 on the site of Frederick Gascoigne’s two residential-commercial buildings.

Looking southwest along 14 Street SW toward South Calgary’s original business district, 1979. Bush Apartments (the former Lough Block, 2801–14 Street SW), right; “Cobblers’ Hall” (2805–14 Street SW), centre. To the left is South Mount Royal Shopping Centre (2833–14 Street SW), which was built in 1962. A.H. Ellison, photographer.

In 1913, businessman Charles John Summers (1873–1959) extended this commercial area by building the extant Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW), a mixed-use building with three storefronts and apartments upstairs. Summers operated a grocery store in the building until 1945, and he lived with his



family in a house next door (2713–14 Street SW) circa 1912–29. Besides Summer’s own longtime grocery store, the Summers Block’s notable occupants included European Delicatessen & Imports (ca. 1974–91), Hobby West (circa 1976–86), and Banbury Lane, an upscale hardware store (1986–2013).

From 1972 until 1990, the Summers Block storefront at 2719–14 Street SW housed Professional Skate Service, a business established in 1972 by the Racz family and known as a retailer for figure-skaters. After it moved in 1990 to 3519–18 Street SW in Altadore, the business expanded its scope to include hockey (including supplying the National Hockey League). (See also page 86.)

Around 1951, Summers sold the Summers Block and the house to Everett W. Costello (1909–1985), a lawyer who later became president of Loram Ltd., a significant group of companies in the city. The house was later converted into a residential-commercial property around 1998.

Gascoigne’s two buildings and the Summers Block comprised this entire commercial strip until after the Second World War. Between 1949 and 1959, the commercial area expanded south to 29 Avenue SW and north to 26 Avenue SW.

The first addition was Smithway Motor Service (2905–14 Street SW), an automobile garage that Erle Smith opened around 1949.² The British American Oil Company Ltd. (B-A, a forerunner of Gulf Canada) acquired it from Smith in 1956. By 1957, the station had become Premier Way Service, a B-A



dealer. The station was demolished around 1975 for commercial development.

Next, Ronald J. Palmer (1912–1989) built the extant commercial building at 2711–14 Street SW in 1953 to house his dry-cleaning business. Palmer’s Ltd. remained at this address until around 1972. Campbell and Hillier Ltd., a longtime city plumbing firm, occupied the building from 1976 to at least 1991.

In 1954, restaurateur Wilfred F. Costello (1913–1955), a brother of Everett W. Costello,

The Summers Block and Summers residence, June 30, 2024. The residence became a commercial property by 2000.

The former Palmer’s Ltd. (2711–14 Street SW), June 20, 2024. It was built in 1953 to house Ronald J. Palmer’s dry-cleaning business.

Commercial building at 2911, 2913, 2915–14 Street SW, June 30, 2024. Wilfred F. Costello had this building constructed in 1954.



built the extant low-rise building at 2911, 2913, and 2915–14 Street SW. The earliest-known occupants were Malone’s Grill (1957–60) and the Premier Way Grocery (1957–66), which was owned by Peter Chow. Later occupants included O-Ann’s Restaurant (1964–66), the South City Cafe (1966–69), the Fijian Inn restaurant (1971–76), Hair beauty parlour (circa 1970–2024), and Al Frache’s Flowers Ltd. (1995–2024).

Construction of two more service stations extended the business strip to its furthest limits in the 20th century.

The strip reached its northern limit in 1955 when Great West Distributors, an Alberta-based oil marketing company, built the extant service station at 2709–14 Street SW (now 2703–14 Street SW; an alternative address, 1504–26 Avenue SW, is no longer used.). The building was constructed by Larwill Construction. Great West Distributors sold Red Head Gasoline products, and this station was initially operated by licensee Leonard Kornfeld (1932–2024) as Len’s Red Head Service. The station has been called Southwest Auto Service since about 2012.

As early as 1956, a Shell Oil service station was proposed for the southwest corner of 14 Street and 29 Avenue SW. Top Service Station No. 1 opened on that corner around 1959. It later operated as Mount Royal Shell and, finally, as The Mechanic’s. The building was demolished around 2018, and the Spider Block (3007–14 Street SW), a commercial complex, was built in its place. The new building was named to honour “The Bug,” a folk art piece that stood outside The Mechanic’s for years (see page 96).



Southwest Auto Service (2703–14 Street SW), June 30, 2024. The original business opened on July 7, 1956 as a Red Head Service Station.

HILLSIDE GROCERY



Watercolour of the Hillside Grocery by artist Ron Ellis.

2718–17 Street SW

Apart from a brief period of vacancy around 1918–19, this building has housed a grocery store continuously since 1912. That longevity make it unique among commercial properties in the district. For most of the years between 1912 and 1928, it was usually operated by women; they lived in the building with their husbands who had separate careers. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the store had Jewish owner-operators. From the mid-1970s to at least 1991, it had Chinese-Canadian owner-operators.

The original owners, contractor Richard Condon (1853–1930) and his wife, Jessie (née Kelly, 1854–1925), and their children came to Canada from the Isle of Man in 1904.³ They built this house in 1912 as their family home and as Condon’s Grocery, which Jessie operated for a few years before the family moved to Vancouver.⁴ For most of the 1920s, the store was known as the Service Grocery, and it was operated early in the decade by Julia Pearl Bowlby (née Cairney, 1891–1981) and later by Ethel M. Price (1891–1956).⁵ Grace Brown operated it around 1933–34 as the Hillside Grocery.

Jewish owners of the Hillside Grocery, from the early 1930s to the late 1950s, included Morris Sigal, Samuel Aisenstat (1897–1974), Cecil Sheinin (1903–1976), and Mendle (Max) Switzer (1900–1982). Before the Switzers moved to 1727–27 Avenue SW in the early 1950s, owner/operators also lived in the building.

Paul Reti (1919–2015), owner in the 1960s, was a senior civil servant in Hungary before fleeing to Canada in 1956. Later owners included John Murray in the early 1970s, William Chow (circa 1906–1993) from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, and then J. Wong. The store became Hugh’s Grocery by 1994 and Little Green Mart in 2017.



The extant South Mount Royal Shopping Centre (2819 through 2835–14 Street SW) was built in 1962. This two-storey commercial/office block includes nine storefronts and several offices or suites upstairs. Notable longtime occupants have included the Calgary Southwest Chiropractic Clinic (circa 1962–17), Chow Bros. Coin-Operated Dry Cleaning & Laundry (circa 1963–71), Gondola Pizza (circa 1985–94), Ming’s Kitchen (circa 1962–85), and the Pink Lady Beauty Salon (circa 1962–91).

Around 1975, the service station at 2905–14 Street SW was demolished and replaced by the present strip mall at that address. Early tenants included Mac’s Convenience (which remains in 2026 as Circle K) and Pic-a-Pop, which remained in the mall until 1978 or 1979.

34 Avenue SW

The second commercial strip began in 1913 when Archer & Robertson, a real estate and

financial agency, built a single-storey residential/commercial complex at 1919 through 1929–34 Avenue SW. This was the first commercial development in the future Marda Loop Business Improvement Area.

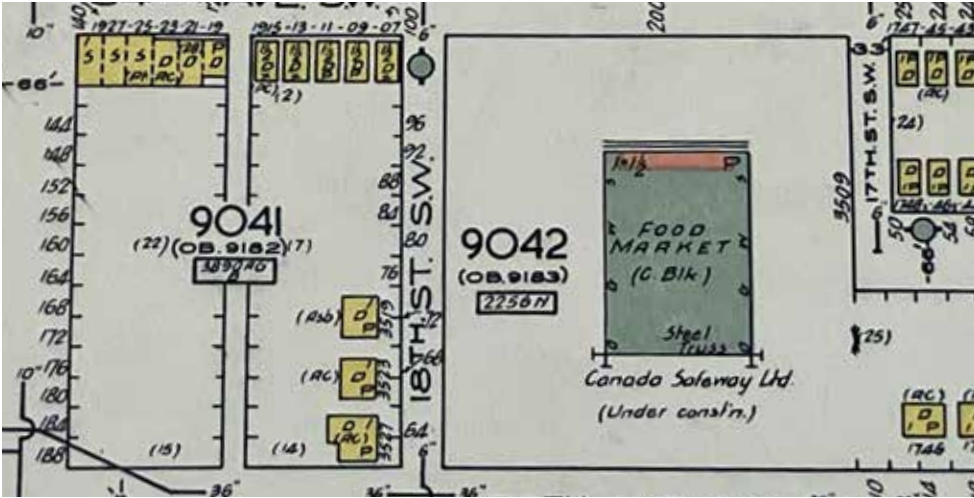
There were other early businesses along 34 Avenue SW, but they were non-contiguous and did not comprise a unified business district. These included: the original Altadore Grocery (1601–34 Avenue SW), a short-lived business in 1913; Calgary Broom Works (1701–34 Avenue SW), a wholesale business that operated around 1915–16; and the South Calgary Coal & Wood Yard (1802–34 Avenue SW) about 1914–15. James A. Irwin (ca. 1874–1931) opened Irwin’s Grocery (1621–34 Avenue SW) around 1923.

Business development on 34 Avenue SW was contemporaneous with the extension of the Calgary Municipal Railway’s 14 Street SW stub line into a loop that served a wide area. The new extension traversed west along 26

South Mount Royal Shopping Centre (2819 through 2835–14 Street SW), June 30, 2024. This mall was built in 1962.



The Mechanic’s (3001–14 Street SW) was built in 1959 as Top Service Station No. 1, and it was demolished around 2018. “The Bug,” a folk-art piece, stood outside beginning in the 1980s.



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the origin point of the present-day Marda Loop business district (1919 through 1927–34 Avenue SW).



The Glenmore Grocery (1621–34 Avenue SW), shown here circa 1968, originally opened as the Irwin Grocery around 1923. It was demolished at an unknown date, and a two-storey condominium complex was built in its place in the early 1990s.

Avenue to 20 Street SW, south on 20 Street to 34 Avenue SW, east on 34 Avenue to 14 Street SW, and north from 34 Avenue along 14 Street SW for the return journey.

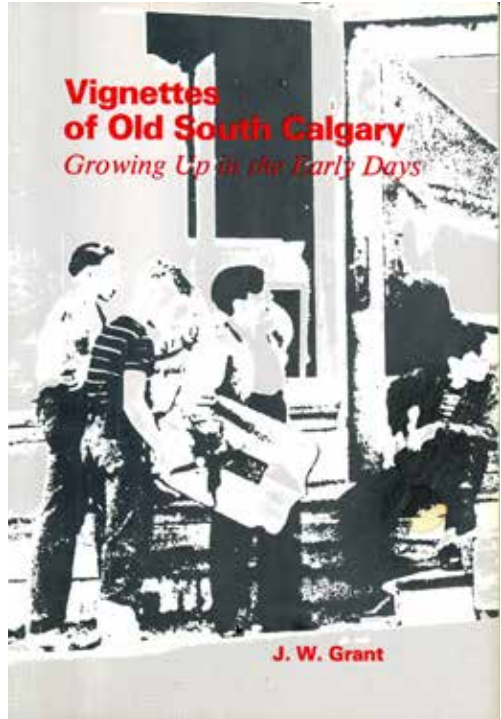
The Archer & Robertson Building's earliest-known commercial occupants were Dixon Hardware and Archer & Robertson, a partnership comprising Frederick B. Archer (1872–1956) and J.A. Robertson.

Melville D. Smith (1888–1960) owned the building from about 1928 until as late as 1952, and it housed his eponymous plumbing business for decades. By 1938, the storefront at 1925–34 Avenue SW had become a lunch counter. It operated until the early 1950s, briefly as the Silver Castle Inn and then as the Currie Inn.

The building was also the longtime home of the Altadore Grocery and Sub-Post Office No. 23. Gordon S. Purdy (1890–1953), a First World War veteran and local recruiter for the Canadian militia (see pages 39–40), opened the store around 1919 and operated it for nearly 30 years. Purdy's son-in-law George Mork (1915–1993), a Second World War veteran from Cremona, Alberta, took over the business in 1945. Around 1950, Mork moved the store to the new Pauline Block (2047–34 Avenue SW), an extant two-storey residential/commercial structure that he built and named for his Oslo-born mother, Pauline Serene Mork (née Christenson, circa 1878–1950).

The Archer & Robertson Building's final owner was Leong Chee Lok (circa 1902–1970), a businessman from Guangdong, China who immigrated to Canada in 1918 and operated a restaurant at Retlaw, Alberta for years. Leong's Grocery replaced the Altadore Grocery in the building. Frequent robberies earned Leong's business a reputation as Calgary's most-robbed store.

In 1964, the property and adjacent lots to the



The only known photograph of the Altadore Grocery appears on the cover of John W. Grant's 1975 book *Vignettes of Old South Calgary*, where it is rendered as a block print. The unaltered version of the image is not known to exist.

south were redeveloped as the Plaza 34 (3504–19 Street SW), a strip mall and low-rise office building.⁶ Early tenants included Party Delite (a grocery store owned by Tony Quan circa 1966–90), Westfield Real Estate, and, as early as 1969, an Alberta Liquor Control Board outlet. Plaza 34 was demolished in 2025 to make way for a six-storey mixed-use development.

The Pauline Block was one of four commercial buildings constructed west of the Archer & Robertson Building in the late 1940s, and it is the only one still extant. One of its notable tenants was the Sentry Box, a gaming store that operated in the building from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. The store was a meeting place for the British Television and Film Society and the USS Astra, a *Star Trek* fan club.

Original Joe's, a popular bar and restaurant, has occupied the main floor since 1998. Early on, it became a live music venue. Local acts that performed there included Brian & The Promises, Ralph Boyde Johnson, Steve Pineo, and Tom Phillips. The business later expanded from this first location into a franchise with over 50 outlets across western Canada.

The other three commercial buildings, identified by their original occupants, were Currie Shoe Repair (2035–34 Avenue SW), Damar's Bakery (2039–34 Avenue SW), and the Currie Service Station (2101–34 Avenue SW).⁷

The Currie Service Station, both the building and the business, was a partnership of brothers George Pipella (1913–1976), Charles Pipella (1915–1984), and Charles' brother-in-law, William J. Farris (1909–1980). The three



Plaza 34 (3504–19 Street SW), July 2, 2024. This mall was built in the mid-1960s on the site of Altadore's first-known commercial building.

THE KOO FAMILY



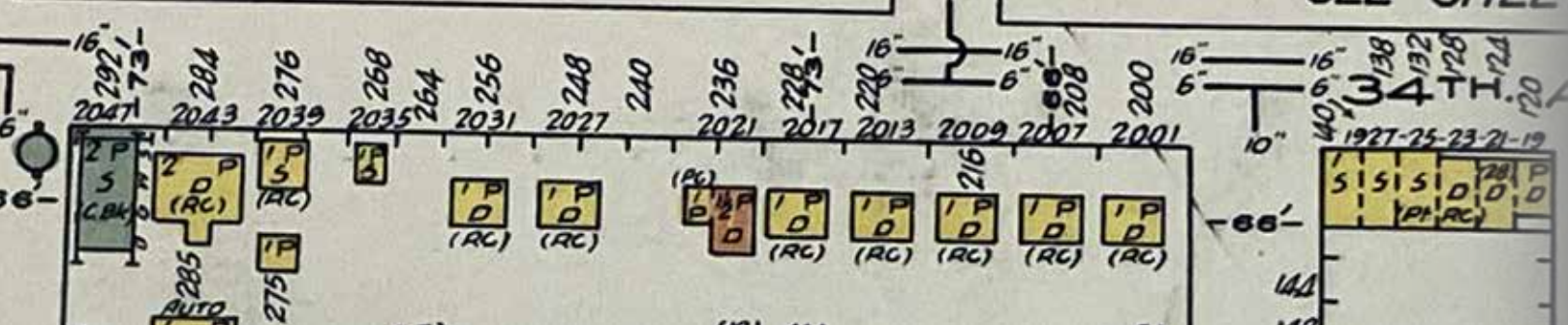
Wai Lan Louie with daughters (from left to right) Maxine, Elizabeth, and Deborah in front of the Glenmore Grocery (1621–34 Avenue SW), n.d.

From 1929 until 1953, Koo Man Hin (1880–1966) and his wife Wong Shee Koo (1890–1955) were among the Chinese-Canadian market gardeners who farmed adjacent to the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary. Theirs was a family operation in which their children were involved. The Koo family delivered vegetables by truck to grocery stores and restaurants in various parts of the city, and South Calgary was part of their market. Three of the Koo family's daughters—Wai Lan, Margaret, and Beverley—later had strong connections to the future Marda Loop communities.

From 1953 until 1968, Wai Lan ("Abe") Louie (née Koo Wai Lan, 1914–1997) owned and operated the Glenmore Grocery (1621–34 Avenue SW) and lived at the same address. Born in New Westminster, B.C., Wai Lan came to Calgary in 1929 and lived and worked on the family market garden. In 1932, Wai Lan married Gar Shek Louie (1905–1980), and the couple moved to Vancouver, returning to Calgary in 1953. Six of the Louie family's eleven children became physicians.

Margaret Pon (née Koo, 1923–2002) married Harry Kee Hon Pon (1908–1990) in 1945. Born in Taishan, Guangdong, China, Pon moved to Canada in 1921 to join his father. Around 1953, Harry bought the Loop Coffee Shop (2439–33 Avenue SW). A large portion of its clientele were soldiers from Currie Barracks. The Pons initially lived upstairs from the coffee shop before moving to Knob Hill. Employees Peter Mah (a nephew) and Jerry Mah also lived upstairs, at least briefly. Harry owned and operated the coffee shop until sometime in the mid-1960s; he also owned and operated the Rodeo and Park Inn restaurants.

Beverley Leong (née Koo, 1927–2023) married Henry Quoy Yuen Leong (1922–2004) in 1950. Beginning around 1952, he owned the Knob Hill Food Store (2103–26 Avenue SW) in the space later occupied by Volos Pizza.



men and their families lived just east of the station, the Pipellas in a duplex at 2407–34 Avenue SW and Farris at 2411–34 Avenue SW. For the first few years, the three partners also operated two other businesses in the service station building, the Currie Coffee Shop and Currie Taxi.

Currie Service eventually became Currie Gulf, and it was damaged by fire in 1969 and was repaired. The service station business closed early in the 21st century. Around 2016, the building became Voltage Creative Garage, an art gallery. It was demolished in 2018 and replaced by the six-storey Marda



Looking southeast toward the storefront windows on the Pauline Block (2047–34 Avenue SW), early 1960s. The apartment building at 2043–34 Avenue SW is visible to the left.



Apartments (2107–34 Avenue SW), which was completed by 2020.

In 1951, Farris and the Pipellas moved Currie Taxi and the Currie Coffee Shop to a new building they constructed a few blocks west, where the coffee shop was renamed the Loop Coffee Shop (see below under 33 Avenue SW.)

Later in the 1950s, the Pipella brothers and Farris separated their businesses. Farris retained Currie Service, the Pipella brothers retained Currie Taxi, and the Loop Coffee Shop was sold. The Pipellas constructed a new building at 2442–34 Avenue SW to house Currie Taxi. It was built at the south end of the through lots (extending from 33 Avenue south to 34 Avenue SW) that the partners owned and where they had built the Loop Coffee Shop. Currie Taxi remained in business at that address until the mid-1970s. Since that time, its former building has housed Mike’s Auto Service.



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the westward expansion of the 34 Avenue SW business district from 19 Street SW to 20 Street SW.

Pauline Block as seen from the corner of 33 Avenue SW and 20 Street SW, December 15, 1984. John Colville, photographer.

Looking southeast toward the Pauline Block (2047–34 Avenue SW), July 2, 2024.



Looking west toward the east elevation of Currie Service Station & Taxi (2104–34 Avenue SW), early 1950s. The station was located at the southwest corner of 20 Street SW and 34 Avenue SW from the late 1940s until sometime prior to 2020 when it was demolished. Apart from Mary Farris (left), the wife of co-owner William Farris, the people in the photograph are unidentified.

The business district expanded eastward in 1955 when Canada Safeway built a new supermarket at 1811–34 Avenue SW. Before that time, the site was an undeveloped 5.5-acre site owned by Glenbow Ranches Ltd.

Safeway had entered the local market in 1939 when it opened a store at 2609–14 Street SW, an extant commercial building in nearby Bankview. The Altadore Safeway, constructed by Poole Construction, operated until 2000 when the extant Garrison Woods Safeway (2425–34 Avenue SW) opened. The former supermarket building at 1811–34 Avenue SW was later demolished, and its site was redeveloped as condominiums.

In the late 1950s, a small business district emerged adjacent to Safeway along the west side of 18 Street SW. A pair of side-by-side, two-storey residential-commercial buildings established this business strip, which projects south from 34 Avenue SW toward 36 Avenue SW. Both buildings remain extant. This business strip had previously been a lightly-developed residential street.

Both buildings were constructed for Lomow’s Ltd., a company associated with Russian-born businessman Peter A. Lomow (circa 1898–1985). Lomow grew up on a Saskatchewan farm, fought in the First World War, and moved to Calgary in 1952. In a six-year period between 1954 and 1960, Lomow and his firm built five extant low-rise residential-commercial buildings in three of Marda Loop’s business districts (two on 16

Street SW, two on 18 Street SW, and one on 33 Avenue SW; see pages 101, 102, 110 and 117).

Lomow built the structure at 3503–18 Street SW around 1957. Early commercial occupants included the Bo-Peep Shop, a children’s clothing store, as well as two concerns headed by area resident Jerald R. McVeigh (ca. 1915–1962), the Abundavita Corporation of Canada Ltd. (which marketed a nutritional supplement) and Whitehorn Publishing Canada Ltd. In the 1980s, the building housed Kodiak Books, a second-hand bookshop owned by Don Mosimann. Al Frache’s Flowers Ltd., a longtime area business, moved into the building in 2024.



Looking southwest toward Currie Service Station & Taxi (2104–34 Avenue SW) and its coffee shop addition to the south. The addition was later destroyed by fire. George Pipella, left.



Looking northwest toward the east facade of Currie Taxi (2442–34 Avenue SW), circa 1968. The building remains extant as Mike’s Auto Service.

Lomow built the structure at 3517–18 Street SW around 1959. Notable occupants included The Computer Shop from 1977 to 1990 and Professional Skate Service from 1990 to 2024.

The Marda Loop Brewing Company (3523–33 Avenue SW), which opened at the south end of the block in 2018, draws on neighbourhood history for its branding. The brewery’s logo includes the image of a streetcar, and its beverage labels include Casablanca Blonde Ale (evoking Casablanca Video, a longtime local business), Red Trolley Amber Ale (evoking the neighbourhood’s street railway history), Jenkins Grapefruit Ale

(evoking the family name of the Marda Theatre’s original owners), and Passchendaele Pale Ale (evoking the neighbourhood’s military history).

Later additions to the business district included the Treasury Branch (2140–34 Avenue SW), which constructed a building in 1975 to house its local bank branch and replaced it with the present structure around 1996. The development in 1990 of the Marda Loop Village strip mall included the low-rise commercial structure at 3411–20 Street SW. (See below under 33 Avenue SW for Marda Loop Village.) With the development of

Altadore Safeway (1811–34 Avenue SW), 1957. The store was built in 1955 and demolished around 2000.



Garrison Woods at the end of the 1990s, further commercial development took place along the new Garrison Gate SW, including Gateway Garrison Woods (3546 Garrison Gate SW), a three-storey mixed-use complex designed by Abugov Kaspar Architecture.

In time, some of the houses along 34 Avenue SW east of 20 Street SW were converted to commercial purposes. This began by 1984 when the extant house at 1913–34 Avenue SW, which had been built by 1914, became the address of Central Roofing (Calgary) Ltd. By 1985, Nunzio’s Hair Design opened at 2040–34 Avenue SW in a house built in the early 1950s. Star Interiors, a cabinet shop and showroom, opened around 1990 in the extant 1914 house at 1911–34 Avenue SW. In 1998, Javan Belcourt opened Shangri-La Hair Design in the extant 1914 house at 1907–34 Avenue SW. Around 2011, the extant house at 1915–34 Avenue SW was converted for office use.⁸

After 2000, several houses on the north side of the 2000 west block, all of them built by 1914, were converted to commercial purposes. In 2025, these include: Calgary MediSpa & Family Medical Clinic (2022–34 Avenue SW); Allure Hair Studio & Boutique Spa (2026–34 Avenue SW); Studio Jewellers (2028–34 Avenue SW); and Skintelligence (2032–34 Avenue SW).

33 Avenue SW

A new commercial district began on the south side of 33 Avenue SW in the late 1940s. With the removal of the South Calgary streetcar line and its replacement by an electric trolley coach line, the renamed Calgary Transit System shifted its route along 34 Avenue SW one block to the north. Consequently—assuming a link between transit routes and commercial districts—33 Avenue SW quickly emerged as the neighbourhood’s primary commercial street.

Instead of a loop around the neighbourhood, as the old streetcar route had been, the new trolley coach route followed an L-shaped pattern. After its southbound stretch along 14 Street SW, the trolley coach made its westward turn at 33 Avenue SW. Just west of 22 Street SW, the electrically-powered trolley coaches turned at a loop in the road (which also included a corresponding overhead loop



in the trolley wire that powered the vehicles), and then the transit vehicle returned west to 14 Street along 33 Avenue.

The Patterson Block (from 2033 to 2039–33 Avenue SW) established the business district when it opened in 1949. It was built for Ernest James (E.J.) Patterson (1892–1963), a Scottish-born businessman who moved to Canada in 1925. The single story building had four storefronts along 33 Avenue SW. The original occupants comprised Fairley’s Meat Market, Lockhart’s Food Terminal (a grocery store), the Stork Shop (a children’s clothing store), and, at the corner of 20 Street SW, Pritchard’s Drug Store. The corner storefront remained a pharmacy for the entire history of the building. A dramatic incident there in 1986 made national news. After several armed robberies at his South Calgary IDA drugstore, owner Stephen Kesler acquired a firearm for protection. On November 8, 1986, Kesler

Looking north toward Mike’s Auto Service (2442–34 Avenue SW), n.d. Mike Meyer, a German-trained automobile mechanic originally from Kenya, bought the former Currie Taxi building in 1975 to house his repair shop. Meyer later raised the roof in this part of the building to admit taller vehicles into the service bays.



Lomow’s Ltd., a local concern, built the commercial-residential building at 3503–18 Street SW around 1957. Photographed on September 13, 2024.



Around 1959, Lomow’s Ltd. built a the commercial-residential building at 3517–18 Street SW. Photographed on September 13, 2024.



shot and killed a man who was fleeing the drugstore after robbing it. Kesler received support from the local business community, including a letter sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Kesler was acquitted of second-degree murder the following year.

The 33 Avenue SW business strip soon expanded eastward to 19 Street SW and westward to 24 Street SW.

In 1950, Morley Paul built a single-storey building (2031–33 Avenue SW) east of the Patterson Block to house his business, Currie Hardware and Appliances. Two years later, E.J. Patterson enlarged Paul’s building or constructed an adjacent one as a medical clinic (2033–33 Avenue SW). Then, in 1956, Patterson built the Nevan Building (2025–33 Avenue SW), a two-storey residential/commercial building, immediately west of the medical clinic. Bevan, the maiden name of Patterson’s wife Beatrice, might have been a source for the new building’s name.

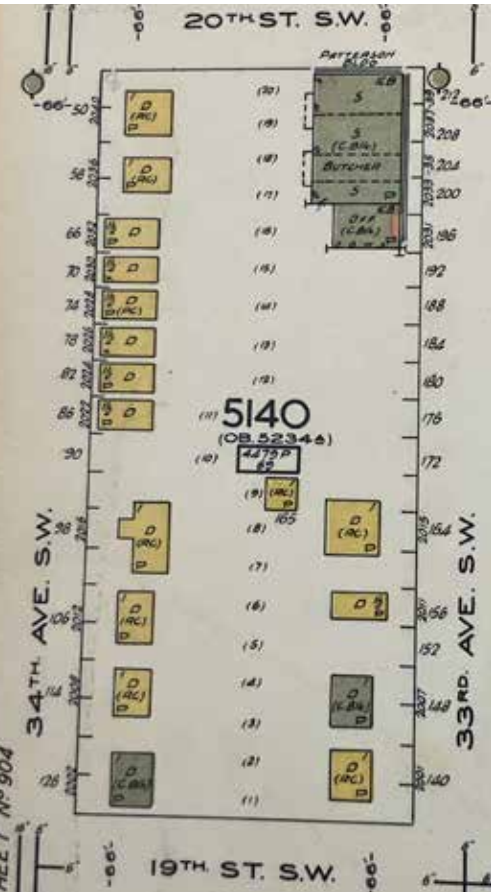
Original tenants of the Nevan Building included Active Electronics, Boys’ Town (a boys’ clothing store), Cawthorn’s Jewellery, Fabric Lane, Lucille Beauty Salon, Nevan Barber Shop, and chiropractor Dr. K.R. Nevison. Lithuanian-born Olga Kilotaitis bought Fabric Lane in 1976, and it remained in the building for years as Olga’s Fabric Lane.

Active Electronics originally opened in Altadore in 1953. Owner Frank Richter later built the extant Richter Plaza (2123–33 Avenue SW) across the street, where a “ghost sign” for Active Electronics remains on the east façade. Richter moved his store there in 1982.

The Patterson and Nevan buildings, and the small building between them, were demolished in 2007. Ronmor Developers Inc., a Calgary-based concern (in partnership with the Intergulf Cidex Group of Companies) built the extant six-storey residential/

commercial complex (2123–33 Avenue SW) on the site. The Shoppes of Marda Loop (the lower two floors of the complex) and Treo at Marda Loop (the four-level residential component) were completed in 2009.

The commercial strip extended eastward in 1960 when Dr. John R. Dumka converted the building at 2015–33 Avenue SW, which had been built as a residence in 1949, into his optometry clinic. Dumka later moved his practice to the Nevan Building, and his stand-alone clinic became a typewriter shop. The building later housed restaurants, including Nellie’s In the Loop Diner. The structure was the oldest building on the block when it was demolished in 2024.



Looking southeast along 20 Street SW toward the Patterson Block (2033 to 2039–33 Avenue SW), centre, and the adjacent office building to the east (2031–33 Avenue SW), 1955. These buildings were demolished in 2007 to make way for a six-storey commercial, office, and residential complex

Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the Patterson Building (2033 to 2039–33 Avenue SW) and the adjacent office building (2031–33 Avenue SW), the beginnings of commercialization on this block. The dwellings at 2015–33 Avenue SW and 2022 through 2032–34 Avenue SW were later converted to commercial purposes.

Finally, around 1973, the commercial strip reached its eastern limit of the 20th century when the local Bank of Nova Scotia branch moved into its newly-built facility at 2001–33 Avenue SW. The branch had opened 20 years earlier at 2131–33 Avenue SW (see page 109).

Commercialization of this block was completed in the mid-1970s when the extant strip mall at 2123–33 Avenue SW was built adjacent to the bank. One of the original tenants, Dragon’s Gate restaurant, remained at that address until 2007 when it moved across the avenue to Richter Plaza (2123–33 Avenue SW). Globefish, a sushi restaurant, took over the former Dragon’s Gate location.

West of 20 Street SW, the first commercial development on the south side of 33 Avenue took place four blocks to the west, at the corner of 24 Street SW, in 1950. Construction of the Currie PMQs drove this commercial expansion.

The first two businesses opened in autumn 1950. Morris A. (Moe) Shortt (1909–1990), the owner of Shortt’s Jewellery, acquired a former Royal Canadian Legion hall at 310–7 Avenue SW and had the building moved to 24 Street SW just south of the 33 Avenue corner. In its new location at “Currie Corner,” as



Shortt advertised, the building housed a branch store of Shortt’s Jewellery (3412–24 Street SW) and a food store, Shortt’s Grocery (3414–24 Street SW).

Around the same time, the Northern Trust Co. received a building permit for a single-storey, five-storefront commercial building

Phil Streifel, the barber in the foreground, operated a barber shop in the Nevan Building for many years.



Looking southeast toward the main (north) façade of the Nevan Building. This photograph was published in the *Calgary Herald*, May 25, 1956 as part of an advertising feature on the new building.

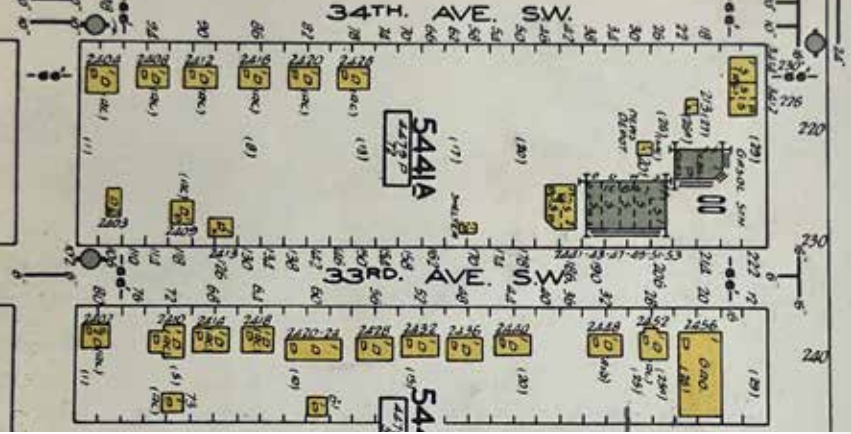
(2443 through 2451–33 Avenue SW).⁹ The earliest-known occupants included Benny’s Grocery (owned by Yuen Jung), Currie Ladies & Children’s Wear, and Currie Hardware & Appliances.

Two more building permits issued in 1951 rounded out the commercial presence on this block: an Imperial Oil service station (2459–33 Avenue SW) and the two-storey Loop Coffee Shop building (2439, 2441–33 Avenue SW; see sidebar on page 107).

Bill Farris and the Pipella brothers built the Loop Coffee Shop building to house their coffee shop and Currie Taxi business, which moved from their previous location (see above under 34 Avenue SW).¹⁰ Within a couple of years, they sold the renamed Loop Coffee Shop to businessman Harry Pon, but they evidently retained ownership of the building. Development of an overpass at Crowchild Trail in the early 1980s virtually eliminated this portion of the business district.

The next commercial development took place on the south side of 33 Avenue SW between 20 Street and 21 Street SW.¹¹ Late in 1950, a building permit was issued for the Marda Theatre (2101–33 Avenue SW), which opened in 1952 (see sidebar on page 108). The building included six storefronts, two along 20 Street SW and four on 33 Avenue SW. The original commercial occupants included Fields Men’s & Boys’ Wear, Happy Food Store, Marda Beauty Salon, and Raemor Hardware.

The family-owned theatre was sold in 1964; it was closed for renovations and re-opened the



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the western extension of commercial development along 33 Avenue SW between 22 Street SW (to the left) and 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail, to the right).

The building in the top right corner (depicted in yellow) is Shortt’s Jewellery (3412–24 Street SW) and Shortt’s Grocery (3414–24 Street SW), which fronted 24 Street SW (the future Crowchild Trail) at 34 Avenue SW. The next building below (in green), and slightly to the left, is South Calgary Esso Service (2459–33 Avenue SW). Next to the service station is the five-storefront commercial building (in green, 2443 through 2451–33 Avenue SW). The next building to the left (in yellow), with a corner storefront, is the Loop Coffee Shop (2441–33 Avenue SW). The structure to the left of the coffee shop, marked “shelter,” is assumed to be part of the transit loop. Shop-Easy Food Fair (2456–33 Avenue SW) is represented on the other side of 33 Avenue SW, across from the gas station.

Development of an overpass at Crowchild Trail and 33 Avenue SW in the early 1980s completely remade the western portion of this block (on both sides of 33 Avenue SW), and none of these commercial buildings remain extant. The house at 2409–33 Avenue SW depicted in this fire insurance map later housed the Smilin’ Buddha Tattoo Parlour, and it remains extant.



The five-storefront building at 2443 to 2451–33 Avenue SW is partly visible to the right in this 1955 photograph.



South Calgary Esso Service station and Shortt’s jewellery and grocery stores at “Currie Corner” (the southeast corner of 24 Street and 33 Avenue SW), 1955. Moe Shortt moved his building from 310–7 Avenue SW, the future site of a garden adjacent to BMO’s downtown office tower, First Canadian Centre. Rosettis Studio, photographer.

CURRIE, MARDA, LOOP

Currie Barracks was named in 1937 after the late General Sir Arthur Currie (1875–1933), a key Canadian military figure during the First World War. Businesses and institutions in the area adopted the name, particularly after the establishment of the Currie Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs), a new residential neighbourhood for soldiers and their families, in the late 1940s.

The first business to use the name was the Currie Inn, a restaurant that operated under that name around 1943–51. Currie Coffee Bar, Currie Service station, and Currie Shoe Repair started by 1948, and Currie Taxi followed by 1949. When the first businesses opened at the intersection of 33 Avenue SW and the future Crowchild Trail in 1950, the location was advertised as “Currie Corner.” In the 1950s and 1960s, local businesses included Currie 66 (a service station), Currie Broasted Chicken, Currie Cleaners, Currie Hardware & Appliances, Currie Jewellery & Gift Shop, and the Currie Shop (a clothing store listed variously as Currie Ladies & Children’s Wear and Currie Men’s Wear). Currie Plaza (2403–33 Avenue SW), a three-storey residential-commercial complex, was built in 1961.

Use of the name diminished over time. In 1951, the Currie Coffee Bar moved next to the transit loop and became the Loop Coffee Shop. In the 1970s, Currie Taxi ceased operation, and Currie 66 became Rebel Gas. Currie Service operated until 1990. Finally, early in the 21st century, Currie Plaza was renamed Mainstreet Plaza.

Before the business community adopted the name Marda Loop in 1985, local enterprises included the Loop Barber Shop in the 1950s and the Loop Coffee Shop in the 1950s and 1960s. Besides the Marda Theatre, there was Marda Men’s Shop, Marda Shoes, and Marda Variety. The last to use the name was Marda Beauty Salon, which opened in the Marda Theatre Block in 1952 and remained in business until the 1990s.



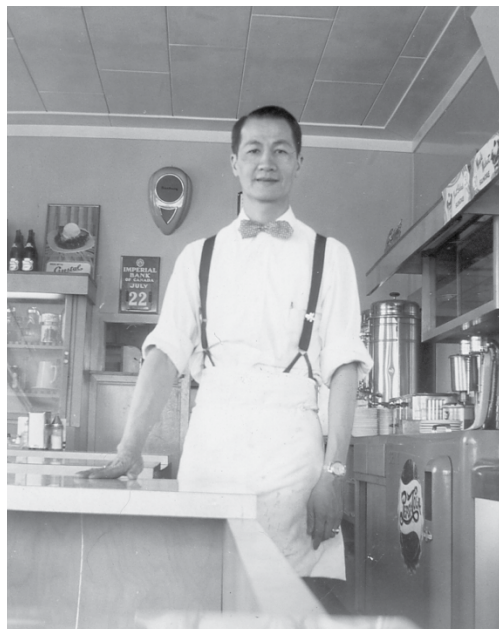
From about 1916 until his death, William Woods (1887–1962) lived at 1926–28 Avenue SW with his family. He worked at the CPR Ogden Shops for years before joining Bennett and White Construction Ltd. in 1929, but the Great Depression left him unemployed. In 1933, Woods established Woods Cement Works adjacent to his home, manufacturing chimney blocks, gas flues, and fireplaces, and he operated it until he retired 20 years later. His sons Frank and Sim continued running the firm as Woods Western Ltd., and it remained in business into the 21st century as Woods Fireplaces.



Oblique aerial view showing the 33 Avenue SW business district and its proximity to the Currie PMQs, looking northeast, 1964. This photograph shows 33 Avenue SW and 34 Avenue SW as streets that end at 24 Street SW (lower left, now Crowchild Trail).



Loop Coffee Bar menu, circa early 1950. The fare included steaks, sandwiches (either liver or bacon, lettuce, and tomato), burgers, fresh cut fries, and Harry Pon's homemade pies. Cigarettes, chocolate bars, chips, and candy were available for purchase at the front.



Harry Pon in his Loop Coffee Shop, n.d. Pon owned the business from the early 1950s until at least the mid-1960s.

LOOP COFFEE SHOP



Loop Coffee Shop (2441-33 Avenue SW), 1955. The five-storefront commercial building at 2443 to 2451-33 Avenue SW is visible to the right.

2441-33 Avenue SW

The Loop Coffee Shop was the first local business to include the word “Loop” in its name. But it was not originally called the Loop, and it was not the first business in the city to be known as the Loop.

The business was originally called the Currie Coffee Shop when Charles Pipella, George Pipella, and William J. Farris opened it a few blocks to the east in the late 1940s. The three men had built an addition to their Currie Service Station (2104-34 Avenue SW) to house the new restaurant. In 1951, the partners constructed a new residential-commercial building (2439, 2441-33 Avenue SW) to house the coffee shop. The new location was within sight of the South Calgary transit loop, and the location informed the new name: Loop Coffee Shop. The name was not unique in the city. In the years that the Calgary Transit System used electrically-powered trolley coaches, there were other transit loops in the city besides the one in South Calgary. Loop Service (5004 Macleod Trail South), an automotive business, was established near the Manchester loop in the early 1950s, before the Currie Coffee Shop became the Loop.

Around 1953, the partners sold the shop to Harry Pon, who operated it for over a decade. The busiest hours were from dinnertime until buses stopped running. Clientele included enlisted men from Currie Barracks who came in after a bus ride; sergeants and officers had cars or took taxis. Young women also came in, and soldiers would buy them meals. Soldiers who had been drinking downtown came in late from the transit loop and have coffee to sober up before returning to barracks. The shop had a counter with round stools around one side (it was later extended to the other side), pinball machines, and a juke box, with music selection possible from the tables. Roughly 3-5% of patrons “took off without paying,” running out to catch the bus. There was a walkway between the loop and the coffee shop and adjacent stores. The coffee shop closed in the mid-1960s, and the space became Ceramics Studio Six, a ceramics studio.



Marcus Edison Jenkins (1901-1983) and Mada Minerva Pratt (1901-1987) were both born in the United States—Marc in Kalispell, Montana, and Mada in Wilford, Idaho—to families that belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In their youth, both moved to Staveland, Alberta, where they married in 1920. In 1938, the Jenkins relocated to Claresholm and took over the Rex Theatre in that town, which they continued to operate until they built the Marda Theatre in 1951-52.



Interior photographs of the lobby, the auditorium, and the concession area of the theatre.

MARDA THEATRE



Marda Theatre, March 14, 1964. Rosettis Studio, photographer.

2101-33 Avenue SW

From 1952 until 1988, the Marda Loop district had its own neighbourhood theatre. Its unique name, Marda, was a portmanteau of the names of its original owners, Marc and Mada Jenkins.

Building permit #8081 was issued to Marc on December 21, 1950 for a theatre and six stores to be built at an estimated cost of \$82,000. The architects were John Stevenson and Maxwell Dewar, and the contractor was Nodwell Brothers. The grand opening took place on January 18, 1952 with the Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis feature *At War With the Army*. Military families and other neighbourhood residents became regular customers, and children enjoyed Saturday afternoon programs that were designed for them. Calgary wrestler Stu Hart and his family often saw movies at the theatre.

For a few years, the Jenkins lived in an apartment above the theatre before moving to 1637-33 Avenue SW. Sons Marcus Roy (“Bruz”) Jenkins (1923-1985) and Jay Pratt Jenkins (1930-2005) also worked at the Marda. “Bruz” and his family lived at 1938-46 Avenue SW; Jay and his family later lived in the apartment above the theatre until they moved to 2012-42 Avenue SW.

In 1964, the theatre was sold to Calgary businessman Jacob Bell Barron (1888-1965) and Odeon Theatres Canada Ltd. Barron and Odeon were partners in the city’s Grand and Uptown theatres and the 17th Avenue Drive-In. The Marda was closed, renovated, and re-opened on March 31, 1965 as the Odeon. The new management sought a city-wide audience with extended showings of distinguished films, beginning with a 72-week run of *The Sound of Music*.

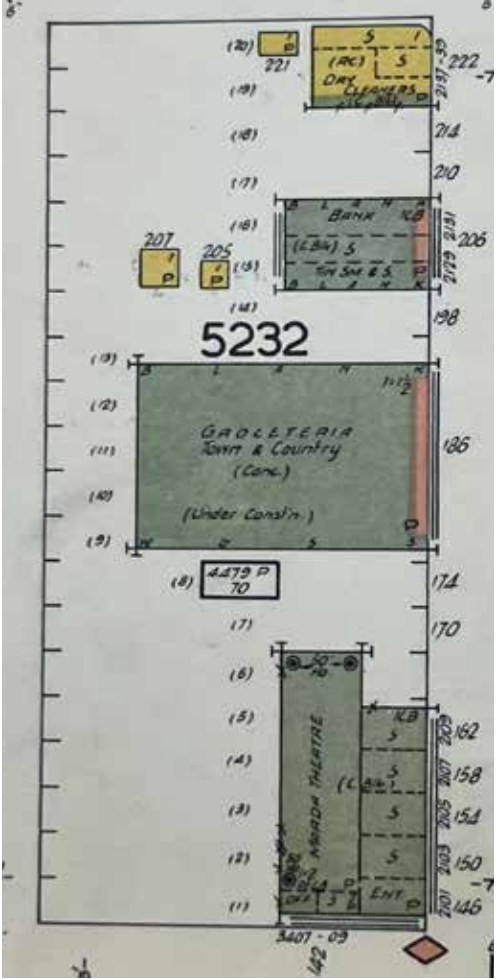
The Odeon firm acquired the Barron family’s interest in its Calgary cinemas in 1969. The Odeon was “twinned” in 1975, and it closed on August 18, 1988 with the features *Mac and Me* and *Big*. Developer John Stoddart invited area residents and the local business community to enter the theatre one last time before its demolition in 1990. It was replaced that year by Marda Loop Village, a shopping complex.

following year as the Odeon Theatre. In 1988, owner Cineplex Odeon Corporation shuttered the building, and the property was sold to Calgary-based Medina Development Corporation. John Stoddart (1942–2020), president of Medina, worked with the local business and community associations for the design of Marda Loop Village, a low-rise, U-shaped shopping complex that was built on the site. The theatre was demolished in early 1990. Marda Loop Village, designed by Zanzibar-born architect Zul Boga, opened later that year. Medina then sold the building but continued to manage it.

One of the original tenants was Casablanca Video & Sound (see sidebar on page 112). Casablanca eventually reduced its footprint, and Global Pet Foods—a business owned by Stoddart and his daughter Megan—opened in most of what had been the Casablanca storefront. The video store moved to Macleod Trail SE in 2014, and Global took over the rest of the space.

In 2020, Calgary Co-op purchased the building and the adjacent Go Performance gym (see below) and partnered with homebuilder Truman in proposing the Marc & Mada Block, a commercial development surmounted by residential towers.

After the theatre, the next commercial development on this block was the extant office/commercial building at 2129–33 Avenue SW and 2131–33 Avenue SW. It was built in 1951 by Harry Lee (1902–1966), a local businessman and prominent member of the city’s Chinese-Canadian community. (In 1953, Lee built the extant commercial structure at 2034 through 2040–42 Avenue



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing the commercial area on the 2100 block of 34 Avenue SW. Buildings marked 206 (2129, 2131–33 Avenue SW) and 186 (Go Performance gym) were extant as of 2025.



Musician Tom Phillips at Karma Local Arts Lounge, circa 1997–98. Don Robinson, photographer.

The former Karma Local Arts Lounge, 2139–33 Avenue SW, was destroyed by fire in 2017. Mazaya Lounge, which opened in 2013, was the final occupant.

In 1954–58, the eastern storefront was the office of Art Sullivan Homes Ltd. Arthur Harold Sullivan (1926–2017) was a notable Calgary homebuilder and developer. He was one of the original shareholders in Kelwood Corporation, a large development firm in the city. Sullivan developed the Glenwood Meadows and Meadowlark Park neighbourhoods and a cul-de-sac in south Altadore.

Brothers Ben Sheftel and Leo Sheftel built the small corner building at 2137, 2139–33 Avenue SW in 1952. Henry Goon-Ming Lee (circa 1903–1990) and Marion Kui-Ho Lee (circa 1910–2009) bought the building and owned Lee’s Grocery, the corner occupant, for decades until they sold it sometime in the 1980s. Charles Ho Lem (1913–1991), scion of a leading Chinese-Canadian family, ran Currie Cleaners in a second storefront, followed by a series of butcher shops, a vacuum repair shop, and, finally, a print shop. The middle space was always a barber shop. After Lee’s Grocery, the corner storefront became Cafe 21, followed by On 33rd Cafe and then Esquire’s Coffee House.

In 1998, Soren Borch, Lynne Thorimbert, and Marty Park opened Karma Local Arts Lounge in the corner storefront. Regular musical acts included local musicians Laurie Matheson, Tom Phillips, Mike Stack, Tim Williams, and Ian Tyson. The partners moved on and founded the Ironwood Stage & Grill in Inglewood. The final occupant of the space was a hookah bar. Fire gutted the building in 2017, and it was demolished soon after.

The extant Go Performance gym (2123–33 Avenue SW) was built in 1955 as the Town & Country Food Centre supermarket. Within months of its opening, Dominion Stores, a large supermarket chain based in eastern



The extant building at 2129, 2131–33 Avenue SW now houses Boogie’s Burgers and Infinity Spa.

Canada, acquired Town & Country. The store later became an Allwest supermarket.

The extant office/commercial building at 2133, 2135–33 Avenue SW, built for Lomow Ltd. in 1960, was a later addition to this block. From 1966 until around 2018, the building housed a Pinky Coin Operated Laundry outlet, one of several in the city. This business was part of a regional chain or franchise (possibly the Western Canadian Coin-Washer Company Limited). The business’ colourful sign outlasted the outlet, and it remained as a neighbourhood landmark until it was destroyed in a windstorm in 2021.

Gaps in the 33 Avenue SW business district were filled in between the 1960s and the 1990s. Currie Plaza (2403–33 Avenue SW), an extant multi-storey office/commercial development, was completed in 1961.

The Currie 66 Service Station (2235–33 Avenue SW), later renamed Rebel Gas,



The Pinky Laundry sign, photographed in August 2019, was a neighbourhood landmark for decades. Bob van Wegen, photographer.

Looking southwest along 33 Avenue SW toward the Odeon Theatre shops and SuperValue (the former Town & Country Food Centre), December 15, 1984. John Colville, photographer.





Currie Plaza (2403-33 Avenue SW), an extant residential-commercial complex, was built in 1961. It exemplifies the identification of the neighbourhood with adjacent Currie Barracks and the Currie PMQs, but the building's name was changed sometime around 2019. Calgary Civic Trust, photographer.



Marda Station is another example of a development or business recalling the theatre and the streetcar, in name and logo. Harry Sanders, photographer.



MAC'S CONVENIENT FOODS



A trolley coach turns eastward on 33 Avenue SW from 20 Street SW, circa 1974. The Mac's store at 2104-33 Avenue SW, situated in the mall that was later named Marda Loop Centre, is visible to the right.

2104-33 Avenue SW, 2905-14 Street SW

With some exceptions, most corner grocery stores in the future Marda Loop neighbourhoods were independent, family-owned businesses. In 1970, Mac's Convenient Foods entered the Calgary market via local franchisees.

Mac's began in 1961 with a single store in Richmond Hill, Ontario. By 1970, it had 425 stores stretching from Ontario to British Columbia. Around that time, Calgary businessman (and Sien Lok Society president) Ray Lee sold his local Kwik Shop stores to Mac's and facilitated further expansion of Mac's in the city through franchising.

Around 1971, one of the early Mac's stores opened in a new South Calgary strip mall at 2104-33 Avenue SW with Tony Ries as manager. Another opened around 1977 at 2905-14 Street SW under Louis Faureau's management. By that time, the chain had been renamed Mac's Convenience Stores Limited. Mac's stores became ubiquitous throughout Calgary.

In 2017, the chain's Quebec-based parent company, Alimentation Couche-Tard, began renaming all Mac's stores as Circle K stores, adopting another brand owned by the same company. Alimentation Couche-Tard had acquired Arizona-based Circle K Stores, Inc. in 2003. The Circle K in Marda Loop Centre (2104-33 Avenue SW) closed in June 2025.

opened by 1964; it was later demolished and replaced on the site by a new Petro-Canada outlet.

Marda Station, a mixed-use commercial/residential development, was built in 1999 on the former site of a social housing complex operated by the Order of the Eastern Star. Architect Ron Poon of Poon McKenzie Architects designed the residential portion (2212-34 Avenue SW) for Qualico Developments and the two-part commercial portion (2205-33 Avenue SW and 2215-33 Avenue SW) for Streetside Development. Poon persuaded Streetside to build the Shoppes of Marda Station along the sidewalk and locate the parking lot at the rear, between the shops and the residential complex. Like Marda Loop Village, this followed a historical pattern that contrasted the ubiquitous neighbourhood strip malls fronted by parking lots. In a further nod to history, the sales office on the site was a replica streetcar, reflecting the neighbourhood's historic association with public transit. Marda Station is another example of a development or business recalling the theatre and the streetcar, in name and logo.

On the north side of the avenue, commercial development began in 1954 when Ensign Stores Ltd. built a grocery store at 2456-33 Avenue SW. The store opened in 1955 as a Shop-Easy Food Fair, part of a food store chain, which it remained through the 1950s.

A new strip mall (2104-33 Avenue SW) opened at the northwest corner of 20 Street and 33 Avenue SW around 1970. The mall was expanded in 1987 and named Marda Loop Centre.

Westwinds Texaco (2040-33 Avenue SW) opened on the northeast corner by 1970. It later operated as an Esso station. The building was demolished around 2001, and Ronmor built the Odeon office/retail complex (3332-20 Street SW) on the site in 2013. The Odeon perpetuates the name of the Odeon Theatre, as the former Marda Theatre was renamed.

To the east, Richter Plaza (2123-33 Avenue SW), a two-storey office/retail complex, was completed in 1982. Frank Richter (1934-2015), owner of Active Electronics in the Nevan Building, built the new complex and moved his shop there. (See page 103.)

CASABLANCA VIDEO



Marda Loop BRZ chair Jon Lord (right) and BRZ marketing manager Pat Mattern, outside of Richter Plaza, August 22, 1985. Larry MacDougall, photographer.

Jon Lord (1956-2014) opened Casablanca Video around 1983 at 2026-33 Avenue SW. He distinguished his business as a source of classic films as well as popular titles, and it gained a city-wide market. In the mid-1980s, Lord was a key figure in the formation of the Marda Loop Business Revitalization Zone (later renamed the Marda Loop Business Improvement Area), and he served as its chair. He later represented the area as alderman for Ward 8 (in 1985-92) and as the Progressive Conservative MLA for Calgary-Currie (in 2001-04). Lord ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 2013.

Casablanca gained a reputation for hard-to-find films. By 1987, the business differentiated between a VHS store at the original location and a Betamax store at 2403-33 Avenue SW. The business later moved to Richter Plaza (2123-33 Avenue SW) and then to the Marda Loop Centre mall (2104-33 Avenue SW). Finally, in 1990, it relocated to the new Marda Loop Village (2101-33 Avenue SW), where it had the same address that once belonged to the Marda Theatre. Lord owned the business up to his death in 2014, by which time it was one of only two independent video stores in the city. The store moved to Macleod Trail SE later that year. A park bench in the courtyard of Marda Loop Village was dedicated to Lord's memory.



Ken Jang (left) and his father, Henry Jang (right), in the original Sun-On store at [1501-34 Avenue SW](#), n.d.

KAFFA COFFEE & SALSA HOUSE



Built in 1912 as a private residence, this structure was converted into a dental office in the 1980s and then housed two successive restaurants.

2138-33 Avenue SW

This frame dwelling began in 1912 as the residence of Edmund A. Garrett, chief installer for Alberta Government Telephones (now Telus). In 1918, it became the home of Thomas and Annie Kelly and their six children, who came from the Isle of Man. The Kellys sailed to Canada aboard RMS *Virginian*, one of the ships that had made wireless contact with the stricken *Titanic*. Occasionally, visitors to Calgary from the Tsuut'ina Nation stayed overnight before returning to the reserve, and daughter Meg would make them a meal. Sons Bill and Tom Jr. delivered milk in the neighbourhood for the Union Dairy. Area children were sometimes allowed on the wagon to take the reins, but the horse knew every stop on the route without being told. When the milkman stopped at home for his breakfast, the horse stood outside eating oats from a feedbag. The family kept a beautiful garden on the east side. Meg remained in the house into the 1980s.

The property was rezoned as commercial, and, in 1983-92, it housed the practice of Dr. Donald A. Grace, a consulting specialist in urology. From 1992 to 2013, it was Kaffa Coffee & Salsa House, and then it briefly operated as Vita Cafe. Finally, in 2014, Margie Hope and Jody BARNED opened a restaurant, the Farmer's House, in the building. It remained in business until 2017 when the house was demolished for redevelopment.



Harold Garfield (Buzz) McKittrick constructed the building at [1515-34 Avenue SW](#) in 1953, and it housed McKittrick Hardware for many years. in name and logo.



The building at [1519-34 Avenue SW](#) was constructed by 1960.



14 Street SW (South of South Calgary Park)

In 1951, another locus of commercial buildings and businesses began with the completion of an extant three-storefront, single-storey building ([1501 through 1507-34 Avenue SW](#)). It was built for its original owner, restaurateur Wilfred F. Costello, who later built the extant low-rise building at [2911, 2913, and 2915-14 Street SW](#) (see above under 14 Street SW [north of South Calgary Park]). Costello added to the building in 1951, creating a new storefront at [1509-34 Avenue SW](#).

Two notable businesses were among the building's earliest occupants: Tucker Drugs and the Sun-On grocery store.

Tucker Drugs occupied the corner storefront ([1501-34 Avenue SW](#)) from 1951 until 1961, when owner Joe Tucker (1924-2008) built the extant Riverpark Medical Centre ([3505-14 Street SW](#)) immediately to the south and moved his store to the new building. Tucker established his eponymous pharmacy on 8 Avenue SW in 1949, and the Altadore location was its first and only branch store. Tucker Drugs remained at the Riverpark Medical Centre until early in the 21st century.

Jim Jang and his son Ken Jang operated the Sun-On grocery store in the 34 Avenue SW building from 1951 until 1969. It first opened at [1503-34 Avenue SW](#), in the storefront east of the drugstore. After Tucker Drugs moved to its own building, the Sun-On store either moved to the corner storefront or expanded to include that space. Sun-On moved to its own, purpose-built building (extant at [3519-14 Street SW](#)) in 1969, and the business expanded to include a restaurant at that location. The building was designed by architect David J. Russell (1931-2023), a friend of the Jang

family and a municipal and provincial politician. Ken Jang sold the business in 1980 and retired.

Around 1970, the building at [1501-34 Avenue SW](#) became Spiros Pizza & Spaghetti House. Founder Jim Spiros (né Spiropoulos) immigrated from Greece in 1948, and he became a Calgary restaurateur by the 1950s. Spiros Pizza moved to the Killarney neighbourhood in 1978, and Tropicana Pizza and Steak House took up its former space. A bar was added to the premises in 1983, and the business eventually became a live music venue called the Trop Bar and Grill.

The building immediately to the west ([1515-34 Avenue SW](#)), a two-storey apartment building with two storefronts, was built in 1953 for its owner, Harold Garfield (Buzz) McKittrick (1916-1998), who lived nearby at 1615-32 Avenue SW. The building housed his business, McKittrick Hardware, at least to the 1960s. Bell's Bookstore Cafe, one of two storefront tenants, opened in 1996.

South of South Calgary Park, commercial development along 14 Street SW comprises three buildings. The original structure (right, [1501-34 Avenue SW](#)), was built in 1951 and originally housed Tucker Drugs and the Sun-On store. River. Riverpark Medical Centre (centre, [3505-14 Street SW](#)) was built in 1961 to house Tucker Drugs and other businesses. The new Sun-On building ([3519-14 Street SW](#)) was built in 1969 to house the Sun-On store and the new Sun-On Restaurant.

Sun-On Food Store ([3519-14 Street SW](#)), n.d.



To the west of McKitrick’s building, another two-storey apartment building (1519–34 Avenue SW) with two or three storefronts, was built by 1960.

In 1959, The City rejected a rezoning application to build a Texaco service station at the northwest corner of 14 Street and 33 Avenue SW; the property remains residential.

Just months after Tucker Drugs and the Sun-On store opened in 1951, the City issued building permits that led to the establishment of new commercial areas along 16 Street SW in Altadore and 26 Avenue SW in Richmond and South Calgary.

16 Street SW

The earliest-known commercial operation on 16 Street SW predates the development of the commercial district. In the early 1930s, construction of the Glenmore dam, reservoir, and waterworks south of the neighbourhood and beyond the city limits contributed to the development of 16 Street SW, south from 34 Avenue, into a highway. Businessman Tommy Pratt recognized the opportunity to build a service station on that street. Tommy’s Service Station (3505–16 Street SW) opened around 1933. By the late 1950s, lessee John Luider operated it as a White Rose gasoline station. The building was vacant when Stevo Prcic (1938–2003), an automobile mechanic originally from Yugoslavia, bought it around 1967. He operated it as a mechanic’s shop called Stevo Auto Clinic, and he did not resume gasoline sales. The underground tanks were removed in the 1970s. Prcic retired in 1984; his son Robert took over the business, and his other son, Norbert, worked there for



Barb Steinberg poses outside of her parents’ store, the Jay Dee Food Store (left, 4002–16 Street SW), n.d. Both the store building and its neighbour to the south (right, 4008–16 Street SW) were built in the early 1950s and remain extant.

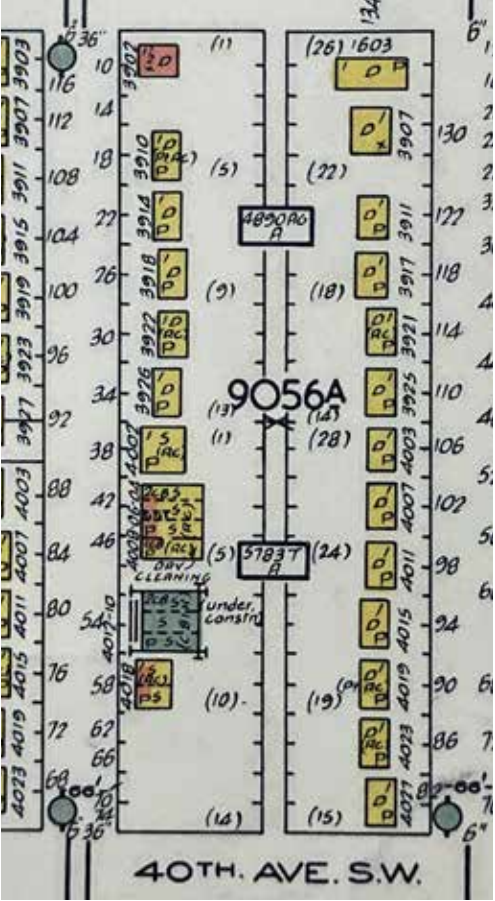
many years. The Prcic family had lived in Rosscarrock and, later, in Westgate, but the two Prcic sons made their homes in Altadore while they operated the business.

As the residential area of Altadore developed in the 1950s, commercial development extended along the east side of 16 Street SW (in the 4000 block).

In 1951, Danish-born businessman Nels P. Hansen (circa 1896–1971) and his wife, Anna, built a store, residence, and garage at 4002–



Looking west toward the Stevo Auto Clinic (3505–16 Street SW), July 10, 2024. This extant building originated around 1933 as Tommy’s Service Station.



Detail from a March 1955 fire insurance plan showing early commercial development along 16 Street SW in Altadore.



Wilfrid F. Costello built the extant commercial building at 4018, 4020–16 Avenue SW in 1951. Photographed on June 18, 2024.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS



In 1976, Olga Kilotaitis bought 20-year-old Wagner’s Fabric Lane, which she owned and operated for years as Olga’s Fabric Lane. The sign is visible behind Marda Loop BRZ officials Jon Lord, left, and Pat Mattern, right, in this August 22, 1985 photograph. Larry MacDougall, photographer.

In many family-owned local businesses, female family members have contributed as owners, managers, and employees just as male family members have done. But there is also a strong local tradition of women in business for themselves. The following are just a few of many possible examples.

Extant commercial buildings provide some associations. At the Hillside Grocery (2718–17 Street SW), Jessie Condon (née Kelly, 1854–1925) operated Condon’s Grocery before and during the First World War, and Julia Pearl Bowlby (née Cairney, 1891–1981) and Ethel M. Price (née Smith, circa 1891–1956), in turn, each ran the Service Grocery at the same location in the 1920s. Grace Brown operated the Hillside Grocery briefly in the early 1930s.

In the Summers Block, Frances King operated a dry goods store (2717–14 Street SW) in 1919, and Kansas-born Idelia Halsey (née Dye, 1884–1952) operated a confectionery in the same storefront through most of the 1920s. In the mid-1920s, Edith Ellen Green (1882–1962) operated a grocery store in the next Summers Block storefront to the south (2819–14 Street SW). Green and her husband came from England in 1912, and they lived nearby in the extant house at 1509–26 Avenue SW.

In 1964–66, sisters Joann Donaldson (née Waselenak, 1918–2011) and Olga Agnes Vaselenak (1922–2008) operated O-Ann’s Restaurant in the extant building at 2911–14 Street SW. Many years later, in 1988, Judith Galbraith ran Galbraith Publishing from the extant house at 1501–32 Avenue SW.

Other examples are associated with demolished sites. Irwin’s Grocery (1621–34 Avenue SW), one of the grocery stores that John W. Grant considered definitive of the neighbourhood, later became the Glenmore Grocery, and Wai Lan “Abe” Louie (née Koo, 1914–1997) owned and operated it from 1953 until 1968.

Marjorie Cuell (née Squance, 1915–2014) owned and operated the Stork Shop, a landmark children’s clothing store in the Patterson Building (2033–33 Avenue SW), from 1949 until at least 1970. Next door in the Nevan Building, Lithuanian-born Olga Kilotaitis bought Fabric Lane in 1976 and operated it for many years, followed later by her daughter Ingrid Hodges, as Olga’s Fabric Lane.

16 Street SW. The Hansens lived in the residence briefly and operated the store as Hansen's Food Store. Joseph Steinberg (1914–1989) and his wife, Dorothy (née Gutman, 1914–2007), bought the property and business in 1952. They lived in the residence for years and operated the store as the Jay-Dee Food Store (for their initials, J and D). In 1971, they sold the business and moved to Chinook Park. The building remains extant, but it has been altered beyond recognition. In 2025, the building houses the Kindervally Montessori Academy.

Wilfred F. Costello (see above under both 14 Street SW sections) built the extant two-storefront commercial building at 4018–16 Street SW and 4020–16 Street SW in 1951. Early occupants included the Altadore Drug



R.A. Lomow built the extant commercial building at 4004 to 4008–16 Street SW in 1955. Photographed on June 18, 2024.

Store and Alberta Freezer Food Plant. Active Electronics, a radio and small appliance business, opened in this building in 1953 and remained until 1956, when it moved to the new Nevan Building on 33 Avenue SW. Bak Wai Lum (circa 1901–1983) operated the Service Grocery in this building from the mid-1950s until at least the early 1960s.



In 1954, R.A. Lomow built the two-storey commercial building at 4004 to 4008–16 Street SW. Early commercial occupants included Alpine Cleaners, Altadore Dairy Bar & Coffee Shop, Deluxe Barber Shop, and the Vandenberg Beauty Salon.

Most recently, in 1955, Lomow's Ltd. built the commercial-residential structure at 4010 to 4016–16 Street SW. Early occupants included Altadore Drugs and the Danish Home Bakery, Rachel Brodsky, who owned the building, lived in one of the upstairs apartments.

R.A. Lomow built the extant commercial building at 4008–16 Street SW in 1955. Joe Steinberg was likely the photographer.

Altadore Shopping Centre (4810–16 Street SW), June 18, 2024. This complex opened in 1963 as Acton Shopping Plaza.

A few blocks to the south, just south of Acton Avenue SW, Acton Holdings Ltd. built the Acton Shopping Centre (4820–16 Street SW) in 1962. The mall was designed by Milroy and Associates. Early occupants included Royal Drugs and a bowling alley. In the mid-1970s, the complex adopted the name Altadore Shopping Centre, a name previously used by another strip mall on 42 Avenue SW (see below under 42 Avenue SW). Later occupants included the Computer Hobby Shop, which opened in the building in 1976.

26 Avenue SW

Two low-rise buildings on the south side of 26 Avenue SW at its corner with 20 Street SW comprise this small commercial district.

In 1951, the Sheftel brothers built the single-storey building at 2101, 2103–26 Avenue SW in Richmond. Before long, Henry Quoy Yuen Leong (1922–2004) and Lee Shew acquired the property, and the eastern storefront (2103–26 Avenue SW) housed the Knob Hill Food Store, which Leong owned and operated for several years.

By 1960, both the building and the grocery store had new owners. Charley Fong (1937–2016), a businessman originally from



Susan Leong stands outside of the building at 2101, 2103–26 Avenue SW, circa 1952. Note the sign for the Knob Hill Food Store, which her father, Henry Leong, owned and operated. The photographer is looking west.

Guangdong, China, bought the store in 1966 and operated it until 1979 as Charley's Food Store. Volos Pizza opened in the space in 1980. In 1991, Sprios Antoniou (1940–2020) bought Volos from its owner, Antoni Lourbas. Antoniou was a police officer in his native Greece before he and his wife, Panagioti, moved to Montreal in 1967 and to Calgary in 1978.



Looking south toward the building at 2101, 2103–26 Avenue SW and its occupants, Volos Pizza and Knob Hill Martinizing, n.d.

Charley Fong stands outside of Charley's Food Store (2103–26 Avenue SW), ca. 1966–67. This photograph shows a detail of the building's north facade.



Occupants of the corner storefront have included Knob Hill Hardware and then Knob Hill Martinizing, a dry cleaning business.

Across the street in South Calgary, the Hilltop Apartments (2039–26 Avenue SW) and its three storefronts was built around 1952 for a company called Group Enterprises Ltd. Early commercial occupants included Allied Drug, Gillespie's Dairy & Snack Bar, the Lucille Beauty Salon, and Royal Grocery No. 2.

42 Avenue SW

Development of the Currie PMQs drove commercial expansion along 42 Avenue SW. The extant shopping strip on the north side of the avenue, east from 20 Street SW, was developed in three components in 1953.

The building furthest to the west (2048–42 Avenue SW), originally known as Altadore Shopping Centre, initially housed Allied Drug, followed by Davey Drugs (circa 1957–81). Owner James M. Davey lived nearby at 2041–42 Avenue SW. Since 1981, this has been the address of My Favorite Ice Cream Shoppe. Businessman Rork Hilford founded the landmark business at this location and owned it until 2002. Hilford was the Liberal candidate in the Calgary-Currie constituency in the 1982 provincial election.



Jenkins Groceteria, a locally-owned supermarket chain, built the next building to the east (2042, 2044–42 Avenue SW). It housed Jenkins' Store No. 2 from around 1954 to 1960 and, later, the Maple Leaf Food Market from about 1966 to 1991.

The third component, east of Jenkins Groceteria, was a single building with seven storefronts (2034 through 2040–42 Avenue SW). It was built for owner Harry Lee, the

Patti Leong pushing a doll carriage east along 26 Avenue SW, circa 1955. Her father's Knob Hill Food Store is visible in the background, just beyond the Hilltop Apartments.

Patti, left, and Wendy Leong stand outside their father's building (2101, 2103–26 Avenue SW) with the Hillside Apartments (2039–26 Avenue SW) in the background, circa 1956. The photographer is looking east.



A South Calgary trolley coach travelling south along 20 Street SW just south of 42 Avenue SW, 1974. The Currie PMQs are visible to the left. Ca Va Bien Har Studio & Day Spa was later built on the site of the Gulf station to the right.



Jenkins' Groceteria No. 2 (2042–42 Avenue SW), circa 1955. Rosettis Studio, photographer.

Interior of Jenkins' Groceteria No. 2 (2042–42 Avenue SW), circa 1955. Rosettis Studio, photographer.



My Favourite Ice Cream Shoppe (2048–42 Avenue SW) and Cap Liquor (2042–42 Avenue SW) occupy extant buildings constructed in 1953. This photograph was taken on July 3, 2024.

businessman who built and owned the extant office/commercial building at 2129–33 Avenue SW and 2131–33 Avenue SW (see above under 33 Avenue SW). The original occupants included Chalmer’s Shoes (circa 1955), Donald’s Dairy Bar (circa 1954–62), Green Dell Fruit (circa 1955), McLaren Hardware (circa 1955–76), the Small Fry Shop (circa 1955), and Susan’s Bakery (circa 1955).

Across the street, the Glenalta B-A Service station (2049–42 Avenue SW) opened by 1962. It later operated as Glenalta Gulf Service station (by 1972) and as Glenalta Petro-Canada (by 1991). The station was demolished in the 1990s and replaced by the extant building at 2049–42 Avenue SW where Ca Va Bien Hair Studio & Day Spa opened in 1998.

In 1983, military authorities opened a vendor within the Currie PMQ area, just west of the



Free-standing sign for shops at the Altadore Shopping Centre, northeast corner of 20 Street and 42 Avenue SW. Photographed on July 3, 2024.

Businessman Harry Lee built the extant commercial building at 2034 through 2040–42 Avenue SW in 1953. Photographed on July 3, 2024.



42 Avenue SW business strip, in competition to local businesses. CANEX (abbreviated from Canadian Forces Exchange System) was a retail outlet available to military personnel and their families on Canadian military bases.

This challenge prompted a group of South Calgary business operators to form the South Calgary Business Association that year. Representatives from the group met with CANEX managers and the Colonel in charge of CFB Calgary. Their efforts resulted in success when the CANEX outlet began enforcing its rule to sell only to military personnel and their families.

Marda Loop BRZ

The group was a forerunner of the South Calgary Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), which was established the following year. Responding to a petition from local businesses to set up a BRZ, city council approved an establishing by-law on December 17, 1984. The BRZ initially included about 73 businesses along 33 Avenue and 34 Avenue SW between Crowchild Trail and 19 Street SW; on 34 Avenue SW, the BRZ extended as far east as 17 Street SW to include the Safeway store. This was the second BRZ in the province of Alberta; the first, the 17th Avenue BRZ, had been established earlier in the year.¹²

The creation and naming of the Marda Loop BRZ in the 1980s led to a new identity for South Calgary and Altadore as “Marda Loop” and its newly-created annual summertime festival as Marda Gras.

The Marda Loop name was the result of a

naming contest conceived by four people: Jon Lord, owner of Casablanca Video; lawyer Brian Hagel; Wayne Thiessen, owner of Captain Cook’s Fish and Chips; and a man named Henry who was associated with the Mac’s store on 33 Avenue SW.

The four conducted a “name the area contest” and offered a \$500 prize for the winning entry. Irene Horn, an Okotoks teacher who had lived in the neighbourhood for many years and had recently returned, submitted the winning entry. She combined “Marda” (from the Marda Theatre, which other businesses adopted and used, including the Marda Beauty Salon and Marda Shoe Repair) and “Loop,” a reference to the turnaround of the trolley line that succeeded the street car (the loop was located on the south side of 33 Avenue west of 22 Street SW). Horn’s prize came in the form of a voucher that could be used at local businesses.

The CANEX store and gas station, seen here in the early 1980s, stood on part of the future site of Flanders Park.

Marda Loop BRZ chair Jon Lord (right) and BRZ marketing manager Pat Mattern, pose with a banner on the future site of Marda Station (2215–33 Avenue SW), August 22, 1985. Larry MacDougal, photographer.



At the BRZ’s next Summer Fest (as Marda Gras was then known), Mayor Ralph Klein cut a ribbon to inaugurate the name officially.

In 1986, the BRZ hired Walter Jamieson, a heritage consultant, to design a beautification scheme for the area, and lobbied The City to realize the project. As a result, in 1988, The City undertook the Marda Loop Enhancement Project, an improvement program. The most visible components were a metal frame traffic signal structure at 20 Street SW and 33 Avenue SW and four “Blue Lollipop” entry signs that outlined the BRZ area. Architect/planner Keith Funk designed the signs, which included the BRZ’s streetcar logo and a blue, white, and yellow colour scheme that evoked route colours of Calgary’s historic streetcar system. The traffic signal structure was later damaged on July 14, 2006, when an automobile struck it, and a salvaged portion was relocated to the 33 Avenue SW entry from Crowchild Trail.¹³

Heritage Value

The Marda Loop communities possess activity value that derives from the function of commerce (i.e., the exchange of goods and services). Since the communities’ origins, local businesses supplied residents with basic needs (such as food, auto repairs, and gasoline) as well as entertainment. Specialty businesses like the Odeon Theatre (with its program of prestige films) and Casablanca Video (which specialized in hard-to-find films) had city-wide significance, while most local businesses had community significance.

The communities have city-wide person value through their association with Jon Lord, whose longtime business, Casablanca Video, established a city-wide market base for hard-to-find video rentals, who was a central figure in the formation and development of the Marda Loop Business Revitalization Zone (later renamed the Marda Loop Business Improvmenet Area), and who represented the neighbourhoods as Ward 8 Alderman and as MLA for Calgary-Currie.

Through the “Marda” portion of its unique name, Marda Loop has city-wide symbolic value associated with a now-demolished neighbourhood cinema. While the Marda Theatre had only community significance, the Marda Loop name is known city-wide,

and its historical associations (the theatre and the transit loop) have become part of the city’s popular historical narrative.

Character-defining elements

Character-defining elements include, but are not limited to:

- commercial districts whose spatial patterns follow historic functions or trends, including transportation routes (streetcar route, trolley coach route, highway to Glenmore water treatment plant) and former landmarks/functions (Altadore Safeway for the 18 Street SW business strip, Currie PMQs for the 42 Avenue SW business strip and the former business strip in the 2400 block of 33 Avenue SW).
- concentration of low-rise, mid-century commercial buildings along 14 Street SW, 16 Street SW, 26 Avenue SW, 33 Avenue SW, and 42 Avenue SW
- two commercial buildings that predate the First World War (Hillside Grocery, Summers Block)
- Garrison Woods gateway signage at 34 Avenue/Garrison Gate

Places of interest

- Tucker Drug Co./Sun-On Grocery (1501, 1503, 1505, 1507, 1509–34 Avenue SW)
- McKitrick Block (1515–34 Avenue SW)
- George H. Shaw Residence (1907–34 Avenue SW)
- Liddell/Stewart Residence (1913–34 Avenue SW)
- Kirkwood Residence (1915–34 Avenue SW)
- Altadore Shopping Centre (2034 to 2040–42 Avenue SW)
- Pauline Block (2047–34 Avenue SW)
- Knob Hill Food Store (2103–26 Avenue SW)
- Currie Taxi/Mike’s Auto Service (2442–34 Avenue SW)
- Summers Block (2715–14 Street SW)
- Hillside Grocery (2718–17 Street SW)



Marda Loop BRZ signs, including a “Blue Lollipop” sign (above), photographed in 2017.



- Hansen’s Food Store (Jay-Dee Food Store, 4002–16 Street SW)
- Altadore Drug Store (4018, 4020–16 Street SW)

Interpretive opportunities

- Early history of itinerant commerce, particularly by Chinese-Canadian market gardeners
- Association of commercial patterns with transportation (streetcar route, trolley coach route, highway to Glenmore water treatment centre)
- Site of the original business area in the future BRZ/Main Street area (Plaza 34, 3504–19 Street SW), which is going to be demolished and redeveloped).
- Little Green Mart (former Hillside Grocery, 2718–17 Street SW) as a rare, extant historic corner store
- Tradition of minority communities in business
- Impact of the Currie PMQs on commercial development
- The story of the Marda Theatre, its role as a namesake for Marda Loop; place of the Odeon Theatre and Casablanca Video in the city’s cultural life (both were places to find distinguished and hard-to-get movies)
- Garrison Woods gateway signage at 34 Avenue/Garrison Gate

Notes

- 1 Grant, 347.
- 2 Erle Smith lived nearby at 1940–29 Avenue SW. In the 1920s, his in-laws, Thomas and Ethel M. Price, lived at 2718–17 Street SW where Ethel operated the Service Grocery. The Prices later lived at 2130–18 Street SW.
- 3 The Condons were unrelated to the well-known Condon brothers in Calgary, Jimmy and Rusty.
- 4 Henderson’s lists Richard at the grocer in 1913, but subsequenet listings have him as a contractor and Jessie as the grocer.
- 5 Henderson’s listings suggest that at least some husbands had a role in operating the business, but evidence suggests that the women operated the store while their husbands pursued outside careers.
- 6 The adjacent lots were acquired at the time from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary, which had evidently intended to build a church on the site.
- 7 As with the later Marda Theatre, the name of Damar’s Bakery was a portmanteau of the first names of its owners, in this case Dave and Martha Henderson.

- 8 TAC Marketing became one of the first occupants, if not the first, after the house was converted to offices. This firm designed the Marda Loop logo that is now embedded in sidewalk stamps, tree gates, and other items of the Main Streets project that took place in 2023–25.
- 9 The commercial building at 2443 through 2451–33 Avenue SW was owned by the estate of Robert Pelham Hassard (1888–1953), a former mayor of Biggar, Saskatchewan who also represented Biggar in the provincial legislature. Hassard moved to Calgary around 1951 and lived at 2029–29 Avenue SW. He might have been the developer behind this commercial property.
- 10 Ed Pipella, George and Charles’ youngest brother, built a six-suite apartment building at 2402–33 Avenue SW in 1961. In 2025, a sign naming the building “Pipella Place” was mounted on the building’s exterior.
- 11 For a brief period around 1950, the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District owned every lot on the south side of 33 Avenue SW between 20 Street SW and 21 Street SW, evidently with the intention of building a school on the property. Instead, the board soon disposed of the property and built St. Raymond Elementary School (4416–16 Street SW), which opened in 1954.
- 12 In 1983, the Province of Alberta amended the Municipal Government Act to enable municipalities to establish BRZs. BRZs were formed at the initiative of area businesses, which paid an annual levy to support marketing initiatives, community events, and physical improvements in their business districts. Each BRZ was run by a board of directors elected by business members. BRZs were later renamed Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).
- 13 As of 2025, the “Blue Lollipop” signs were refurbished and returned to their original locations, with one exception: One of the signs on 34 Avenue SW was placed at corner of 18 Street SW instead of the original location at the corner of 17 Street SW.

Garrison Woods gateway signage at the southwest corner of 34 Avenue SW and Garrison Gate. Photographed July 2, 2025. Harry Sanders, photographer.



Marda Loop BRZ “Blue Lollipop” sign, refurbished in 2025 by the City of Calgary’s Main Streets project, photographed in 2026. Bob van Wegen, photographer.



PHOTO CREDITS

Ancestry.ca: p. 14 (top); p. 54 (top left).

Anholt, Jill: p. 86 (bottom).

Antoniou, Lampros: p. 118 (bottom right).

Barber, Hazel: p. 91; p. 101 (top); p. 107 (top left).

Buchan, Larry: p. 54 (top right; middle right).

Calgary Herald, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.: Front cover (top left); p. 9 (bottom); p. 38 (bottom); p. 50; p. 82 (bottom); p. 83 (bottom); p. 84 (bottom); p. 104 (bottom).

Calgary Public Library: p. 84 (top); p. 87 (bottom).

Canada Lands Company: p. 47 (both); p. 49 (top); p. 86 (top).

Cass, Bernice: p. 54 (bottom left); p. 55 (top left).

Century Calgary: p. 97 (bottom).

City of Calgary: p. 18 (top).

City of Calgary Archives: p. 2 (Parks & Recreation Department fonds, CalA 87-056-004 [detail]); p. 10 (Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-8100 [detail]); p. 22 (Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-8098); p. 24 (bottom, Transportation Department fonds, CalAPP-00662); p. 26 (top, Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-0317 [detail]; bottom, Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-8100); p. 28 (top, discrete item, CalA 2022-024-003); p. 33 (bottom, Engineering and Environmental Services Department fonds, G81-2-1962-44); p. 34 (top, Joseph Lewko fonds, 2006-042sl-98-1; bottom, City of Calgary Electric System fonds, CA1A 910613006); p. 37 (Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-0317 [detail]); p. 41 (Joe Lewko fonds, CalA 2006-042sl-315-1); p. 44 (Alderman Craig Reid fonds, CalA P92-006-b3-001); p. 57 (top left, Calgary Transit fonds, Transit Topics, February 2, 1959); p. 59 (Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-0318 [detail]); p. 63 (top, Bill Onions fonds, CalA 2011-006-0318 [detail]); p. 80 (Parks & Recreation Department fonds, CalA 2001-032-118 [top]); p. 81 (Parks & Recreation Department fonds, RGA23-38-1); p. 110 (top, Joseph Lewko fonds, CalA 2006-042sl-38-1).

Deobald, Tiffany: p. 45 (bottom [both]).

Donald Luxton & Associates: p. 109 (bottom).

Ellis, Ron: p. 95 (top).

Fallwell family: Front cover (middle left); p. 52 (bottom left).

Farris, Richard: p. 100 (both).

Fong, Anita: Front cover (bottom centre); p. 118 (bottom left).

Glenbow: p. 4 (na-2295-3)

Google Earth: p. 114 (top).

Grant, Jeremy: p. 55 (top right).

Heritage Calgary: p. 28 (bottom); p. 30 (bottom); p. 35 (top); p. 55 (bottom left); p. 56 (top centre; bottom left); p. 62 (bottom); p. 66.

Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church: p. 76 (top).

Hope, Margaret: p. 113 (top)

Jang, Ed: p. 113 (top left); p. 114 (bottom).

Jenkins, Gary: p. 108 (top left, bottom [all three]).

Kaplan, Lennie: p. 99 (middle left).

Kiessling, Mabel: p. 15 (top left; top right); p. 53 (bottom left).

Koo family: Front cover (top centre); p. 90; p. 97 (top); p. 98 (top); p. 105 (middle [detail]); p. 107 (top right, bottom); p. 118 (top); p. 119 (both).

MacIver, Ken: p. 103 (top).

Marda Loop Business Improvement Area: p. 9 (top); p. 20 (top); p. 68

(top [detail]); p. 85; p. 96 (bottom left); p. 110 (middle); p. 123 (both); p. 125.

Mawson, Thomas H.: p. 18 (bottom, “City of Calgary Preliminary Town Planning Scheme, General Plan” [detail], from *Calgary: A Preliminary Scheme for Controlling the Economic Growth of the City* (London: Thomas H. Mawson & Sons, City Planning Experts, 1914); p. 80 (bottom, “City of Calgary Preliminary Town Planning Scheme, General Plan” [detail], from *Calgary: A Preliminary Scheme for Controlling the Economic Growth of the City* (London: Thomas H. Mawson & Sons, City Planning Experts, 1914).

McCord Stewart Museum: p. 40 (top right, II305821).

Meyer, Mike: p. 102 (top).

Opta Information Intelligence Corp.: p. 93 (top, sheet 503 [detail]); p. 96 (bottom right, sheet 904 [detail]); p. 99 (top, sheet 904 [detail]); p. 103 (bottom, sheet 514 [detail]); p. 105 (top, sheet 544 [detail]); p. 106 (top, sheet 525 [detail]); p. 109 (top left, sheet 523 [detail]); p. 116 (top left, sheet 905 [detail]).

Poon, Irwin: p. 111 (top right).

Provincial Archives of Alberta: p. 17 (PA84.12 [detail]); p. 43 (bottom, PA84.12 [detail]); p. 74 (top, (PA84.12 [detail]).

Robinson, Don: p. 109 (top right).

Rogers, Kathleen: p. 23 (bottom [detail]).

Rosettis, Tom: p. 57 (top right).

Sanders, Harry: p. 16 (both); p. 29 (top); p. 48; p. 49 (bottom); p. 68 (middle and bottom); p. 73 (middle right); p. 93 (middle); p. 94 (all three); p. 95 (bottom); p. 96 (top); p. 98 (bottom); p. 99 (bottom); p. 102 (bottom [both]); p. 111 (bottom [both]); p. 113 (bottom [both]); p. 115 (bottom); p. 116 (bottom), p. 117 (top left and bottom); p. 121 (all three); p. 124.

Service Alberta: p. 23 (top); p. 43 (top).

Simpson & Curtin Transportation Engineers: p. 31 (bottom, from Simpson & Curtin Transportation Engineers, *Transit for Calgary’s Future* (Philadelphia: Simpson & Curtin, 1967–1970).

St. Mark’s Anglican Church: p. 71 (middle).

St. Simeon Mirotocivi Serbian Orthodox Church: p. 76 (bottom).

Steinberg, Eric: p. 115 (top); p. 117 (top right).

Streifel, Phil: p. 104 (top).

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Alberta Airphotos Collection: p. 14 (bottom, CU110251695).

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(bottom right, CU1140164 [detail]); p. 56 (top right, CU1141625; bottom

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504-36; bottom, CU1103381); p. 61 (CU1103378); p. 62 (top, CU1203585

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bottom right, CU1141636); p. 70 (top left, CU115353132; top right,

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CU112792755); p. 112 (CU112792901); p. 116 (top right, CU112792896);

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van Wegen, Bob: p. 20 (bottom); p. 44 (top left); p. 69 (top); p. 121.

Whittaker, W.C.: Front cover (top right). Reproduced from Colin K. Hatcher, *Stampede City Streetcars: The Story of the Calgary Municipal Railway* (Montreal: Railfare Enterprises, 1975), p. 72.

Yeomans, Sheila: Front cover (bottom left).