



Olmsted Celebration

Scarboro Historic Walking and Garden Tour

Scarboro, Calgary

July 23, 2022

Acknowledging This Land

In the spirit of respect, truth, reciprocity and the journey to reconciliation, the community of Scarboro acknowledges that this land was the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy – the original caretakers of the land. The Blackfoot Confederacy includes the Treaty 7 nations – the Siksika Nation (Northern Blackfoot), Kanai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), the Tsuut’ina (Sarcee), the Stoney Nakoda Nation, Chiniki and the Wesley First Nation. Scarboro is situated near the Bow River in the City of Calgary which is home to the Metis Nation Region 3. Our community commits to continuing to search for, commemorating and protecting the gifts of this land – its’ history and significance to all people as part of our journey toward true reconciliation.

Sources

The history and photos included were obtained from a variety of sources including interviews with current homeowners, previous Scarboro residents, recollections from descendants; Henderson’s Directories, newspapers, Glenbow photo archives; Scarboro Community Association photos; and from research conducted and published in the [Scarboro Historical Context Paper](#), January 2021 (posted on Scarboro Community’s website scarborocommunity.com).

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the history of Calgary and in particular, for wanting to learn more about the history of the community of Scarboro. We are gathering today to celebrate what would have been the 200th year of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted. Frederick Olmsted was considered to be North America's first landscape architect.

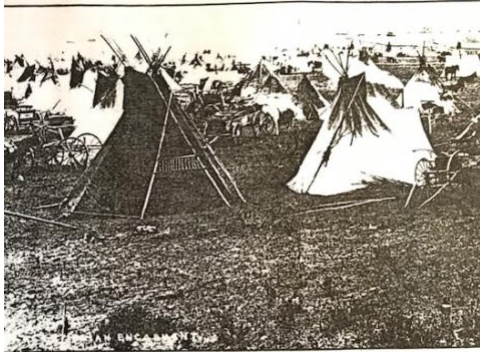
This year (2022), the community of Scarboro along with other communities across North America are celebrating connections to Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted firm. The Olmsted's were renowned for their work and designs for parks, greenspaces and communities including Central Park in New York, the presidential grounds in Washington D.C., and Mount Royal Park in Montreal, Quebec. Frederick Law Olmsted's sons, Frederick Jr and John Charles Olmsted, continued on with the Olmsted firm after his death and followed the principles of their father's designs. This included designing wide boulevards and curvilinear streets and maintaining green spaces for the public's use. The Olmsteds all shared the belief that design affected and actually created community. Indeed this was the case for Scarboro.

In 1910 the Olmsted firm, led by his son, John Charles Olmsted, developed an extraordinary plan that was implemented. The design was fundamental in creating the unique community of Scarboro.

History of the Community of Scarboro and Sunalta

The land on which the present-day communities of Scarboro and Sunalta are found, were granted in 1901 to the Canadian Pacific Railways (CPR) as part of a Dominion Land Grant from King Edward VII. At the time, the CPR was building the railway in western Canada and through this land grant was able to develop these adjacent lands as suburbs to help pay for the construction of the railway.

Prior to this, we understand that the land along the Bow and Elbow Rivers was an important encampment area for nomadic peoples. A photo taken in the 1890s from a ranch house at 1827 14th Street shows a large Sarcee Indian encampment in the Scarboro/Sunalta area.



view shows the Sarcee Indian encampment in our area in the 1890's.

Our walking tour today begins at the top of the escarpment, at the intersection of Scarboro Avenue and Superior Avenue and right in front of Scarboro United Church. As you look down the hill you will see the Calgary Tennis Club and the community of Sunalta. Sunalta was also designed by the Olmsted firm. It was laid out in a classic gridiron plan of 25 foot lots before Scarboro was developed. From 1909 – 1911 lots in Sunalta were sold for \$250 each. Sales were so brisk that the CPR proceeded with the development of what is now called Scarboro.

‘Scarboro’ was initially referred to as ‘the Sunalta Extension’ or ‘Royal Sunalta’. In the 1920s the name was officially changed to ‘Scarboro’. While originally spelt ‘Scarborough’, we understand that this wording was too long to fit around street poles, so the name was shorted to the present day spelling of ‘Scarboro’.

Scarboro was originally a suburb of Calgary at the very western edge of the city. In 1912, residents who moved to the area recall their parents being asked “Why would you move so far west of 8th Street?”.

In 1911, lot prices in Scarboro were averaging \$1,100. On April 23, 1911, the demand was apparently so great that people waited all night to obtain the choice lots. On April 24th, 1911, \$100,000 worth of lots were sold. An average wage at the time was \$30 per month. In 1912 only 47,000 people lived in Calgary.

Scarboro United Church – 134 Scarboro Avenue



Right in front of us, where our Scarboro historic tour begins today, is Scarboro United Church. The church grew out of the union of Bankview Methodist Church and Bankview Presbyterian Church, both founded in 1908. Prior to being built in 1929, the church site was actually a gravel pit. The new church was of Gothic design. Its first pastor was Reverend J.H. Garden. The building was said to have been erected by United Church members of the Scarboro Avenue district. The union that resulted in the new United Church of Canada brought together Presbyterian and Methodist congregations.

The first house on our tour - 114 Scarboro Avenue



Seven Canadian Prime Ministers have visited this house. The house was built in 1922 and was originally on a double lot. The first owners of the house were Charlotte and Reuben Ward. They had four children and lived in this home for 30 years. The house is a classic Georgian style design. When it was first constructed there were 5 bedrooms with staff quarters on the 3rd floor. The lilac bushes at the front of the house are original.

Charlotte Ward, Reben's wife, donated the land across the road to the city to make a park at this entry. In 1926 Reuben Ward became a city councillor and served in this position until 1928.

During the Second World War, Reuben was in charge of war bonds in this region which led Prime Minister Mackenzie King to visit the home in 1939. The Wards supported the progressive conservative party and in particular Prime Minister Arthur Meighan who visited the house while he was in office from 1920-1921. Prime Minister RB Bennett (in office from 1930-1935) also visited the home before and during his time in office.

Somewhere along the way, Reuben Ward started a bakery with his partner Otto Mayhew whose house we will see later on our tour. They eventually controlled what would become Weston's bakery in the 1940s. However, in buying up a number of bakeries in the west, Mr. Reuben was charged under the Combines Act as a monopolist by the federal government of the day. He died during that trial in the den of this house on July 19, 1952.

The house was later sold to the Fussfelt family who only lived in the house for five years. This is shortest time anyone has ever lived in the house.

In 1957, the house was sold to Eldon and Erva Woolliams. They lived in the house for 55 years. Eldon was a prominent lawyer and Erva was deeply involved in the original United Way

campaign in Calgary. Eldon served as a Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) from 1959-1980 after which time he returned to private practice. He supported Prime Minister John Diefenbaker who visited here often. Mr. Woolliams became friends with John Turner who served on the Justice Committee. He also visited the house (Turner became a Liberal Prime Minister briefly in 1984). Joe Clark, who later became Prime Minister, used to have fundraisers in the basement of the house which has sprung maple floors for dancing. We understand that Brian Mulroney visited here in 1980 when he was campaigning. He later became Prime Minister.

In 2010, Nahed Nenshi held a large fundraiser in the house when he was first running for mayor of Calgary. It is fair to say that this house has been a political one. The current owners who bought the house in 2002, are only the 4th owners since it was first built in 1922.

105 Scarboro Avenue



This house was built in 1926. Its first owner was Guy McAdam who was a teacher at Central High School. At the time, Central High School was located on 12th Avenue at 8th Street. Guy McAdam owned the house until 1929 when it was purchased by Charles (“Chas”) and Eva McMicheal. Mr. McMicheal was the collections inspector of lands for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and lived here until 1939. The house is a notable example of an intact semi-bungalow distinguished by a moderately pitched, cross gabled roofline with a front shed dormer. It has a prominent arched inset at the front entrance. There is wood craftsmanship throughout the house and its original layout remains intact.

Walking along the 200 Block of Scarboro Avenue

Even though Scarboro sales were initially strong, only 20 homes were built by 1918 and mostly on Scarboro Avenue. A number of lots that had been sold, went back to the city due to unpaid taxes. As a result, it took about 40 years before the community was entirely built out.

An interesting fact we will share with you, is that about ¼ of the houses mentioned on this tour have residents who have lived in other houses in Scarboro.

The Calgary Tennis Club



The Calgary Tennis Club moved to its current location in 1912 from Mount Royal. This is the third and final location of the Calgary Tennis Club. In 1912, the Sunalta site was purchased for \$10,000. Six shale courts and an elegant clubhouse were immediately constructed. The clubhouse burnt down in 1958 and was replaced with the current building.

Scarboro Community Association & Hall – 1710-14 Ave. SW



Scarboro is thought to have one of the first community associations in Calgary. It was formed in 1920 as a social club and was incorporated in 1934 under the Societies Act as the 'Scarboro Community Club'. Records show that the community was very social and promoted lots of recreation. Big band parties were organized each year, the club ran the skating rink, organized hockey and tennis. The objects of the society refer to other activities including bowling, swimming, dramatic and musical entertainment, dances and bridge parties.

The first 'club house' was built in the coulee north of 17th Ave. This first site was in what is now Crowchild Trail. Originally the area was a sandstone quarry – Oliver Quarry. The quarry manager lived in the brick house at 1605 Summit Street at the top of Scarboro. This part of the quarry was closed sometime before 1915.

In 1933, the Scarboro Community club signed a ten year lease for the site with the City and built a rustic club house. Although lacking running water or toilets, the building had a large stone fireplace and was adequate for immediate needs. The site was sufficient for ice rinks in the winter and red shale tennis courts that were installed in 1934. There was discussion of putting in bowling greens and a swimming pool. The clubhouse would serve the community for over a decade but was never adequate.



By 1943 and for a variety of reasons, the club approached the city to lease lands adjacent to Sunalta School. In the beginning there was opposition to this move from neighbouring residents. By 1947 approvals had been granted and the location was changed. The club was given a wartime Quonset hut that would serve as the club house for the next sixteen years.



In 1966, and as a result of plans for the construction of the Crowchild Trail, another move was required for the Scarboro Club House. The City offered the club the recently vacated Boy Scouts Hall at 1710-14th Avenue SW. In 1978, when dry rot was discovered and the building was condemned, a vote by the community association in 1979 enabled the building to be saved and renovations were made to the building.

Sunalta School - 536 Sonora Ave. SW



Sunalta School was built along the east side of the gully and on the western end of the community. Twelve sandstone schools in Calgary were built between 1909 – 1913. Sunalta School was built between 1912-1913. While several more economical wood frame and brick schools were built during those years to handle capacity, sandstone schools were preferred.

The school board made it clear that sandstone edifices were a definite preference, giving the school system a high profile.

206 Scarboro Avenue



This property was owned by three different people before it was bought in 1915 by John Wellington Templeton. It is one of the first houses to be built in the neighbourhood. It was originally built on a double lot and right to the corner. It is described by Heritage Calgary as a classic example of a one and one-half story craftsman style home. It has a 3rd story attic that was converted into living space, making it look like a three story home. Mr. Templeton and his wife Ida lived in the house with their five children until 1941. Mr. Templeton established the Alberta Steam Laundry Company and is credited as being one of the first men to open a cleaning and dyeing plant in western Canada. The current family who purchased the house in 1985 are its 6th owners.

220 Scarboro Avenue



This Tudor mansion is one of the largest and finest examples of homes being built at the time in Scarboro. It was built in 1913 by Herbert Graham who was the Inspector of Customs at the time. Mr. Graham had been an MLA in Manitoba before moving to Calgary. The house had 5 bedrooms, a sewing room, a ballroom in the basement and even an ensuite bathroom with a marble floor. This was very rare back in 1913! The Graham family lived in the house until 1927. It was rented thereafter for \$50 month. Several of the tenants had difficulty paying the rent and the house stood empty for a while. While it was vacant, the pipes froze which ruined the

ballroom and required the removal of the marble floor. Mr. Graham died in 1934, leaving behind his wife Anne.

Another interesting story about this house is that Mr. Graham had purchased a new Studebaker Landau. The garage was on the top of the ridge at the end of the escarpment. One day, he failed to stop and the car went through the garage and hung over the edge of the ridge.

224 Scarboro Avenue



This house was built by M. Ross Wallace, a developer, who stayed up all night on April 23, 1911 to buy the good lots on the ridge. He bought three lots: 224, 228, and 238 Scarboro. All were double lots at the time. We will come to each of these houses in turn.

In 1912, 224 Scarboro was an impressive 3 story mansion with turrets and extensive porches. In 1937, in order to lower the tax obligations, it was cut from 3 stories to 2 stories by using blocks of ice which were melted to lower the third floor onto the first.

What you see in front of you was originally the back of the building. The current owners have done extensive renovations, including adding a garage in front, while trying to keep all else true to its origins.

228 Scarboro Avenue



This house was also built by M. Ross Wallace in 1912. The house is featured at Fort Calgary and is still inhabited by a descendent of the original McCormick family.

Eneas McCormick was the first owner of the house. He was already trained as a leather worker when he came to Canada from Ireland at a very young age (approx. 14). He founded Riley and McCormick – the western attire store – in 1901. His daughter Mary, married and lived in Scarborough for several decades – most recently at 320 Scarborough – a house we will see on the next block. Eneas McCormick became an Alderman, Deputy Mayor and was also involved in the fire station in the area.

Fun fact: There is a floor wheel (swivel) in the garage so that cars can be turned around inside.

238 Scarborough Avenue



This is the last of the three houses built by M. Ross Wallace. As this house failed to sell after it was built, he used it as a show home. As such, the house was finished but not occupied until 1918 when it was purchased by Frank and Lucy Moodie. Frank Moodie was a character – he was a horse trainer, a self-taught geologist, and a collector who maintained a museum in the basement of the house for many decades. He transported two box cars of family furniture from Ontario in the 1930s, traveling in the train with that collection. Many of the antiques remain in the house today as it is still occupied by his descendants. One of those classic antiques is a musical chair which plays when you sit in it.

Frank died in 1943 but Lucy continued to live in the house until 1964. Over the years, her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren moved into the house to help her. They remain today.

Interesting fact: The first white lilacs brought to Calgary were planted here in the garden.

This house has been municipally and provincially recognized as a heritage home. So far, this is the only home that has received this designation.

227 Scarboro Avenue



This house was built in 1913 by Dr. M.W. McCauley, a physician. He sold the house in 1919 to a dentist, Dr. W.A. Piper. Dr. Piper originally had his office on the main floor of the house. The deck was added years later. The Piper family lived in the house until 1939.

Interesting fact: Dr. Piper's daughter, Norma Pocaterra, became a famous opera singer.

303 Scarboro Avenue



This house was built in 1926. Alex Calder was the first owner. The only thing we know about Alex Calder was that he owned a dental laboratory downtown. Another interesting fact is that one of its owners, Donna Calder, won an exhibition award at the Calgary Stampede for sewing on July 6, 1937.

311 Scarboro Avenue



This house was built in 1929. It still has one of its original gas light lanterns on the front path. In honour of this, the current owners now call the home, 'Gaslight Manor'. The home was originally a bungalow. The Westland family who owned the home for many decades, added the second story in the 1980s. We are advised by the current owners that the gardens are full of perennials which have been carefully tended over many generations.

314 Scarboro Avenue



This lot was purchased by Arthur G. Graves in August 1911. Construction began on the house and the building proceeded during the downturn of the economy in 1913. A 1916 copy of the Calgary Herald was found as insulation in one of the walls. It was occupied in 1919, and the Graves family lived here for 30 years until April 1945. It was then purchased by John D. Mason.

Fun Fact: John Mason's son, Blair, grew up in this house. Blair and his wife and family also lived in Scarboro (in another home). Blair became a judge and until very recently remained in Scarboro.

The original owner, Arthur Graves, was in partnership in the management of the Royal Hotel (which was constructed on the SE corner of 8th Ave. and Centre St. It was eventually demolished in 1972). In 1906, Mr. Graves became an Alderman and served for three terms. In 1908 he became a city Commissioner, a position he held for over thirty years.

We speculate that Commissioner Graves, the Olmsted brothers and William Reader, the City Parks Superintendent - the individual responsible for many of the trees that were planted in Calgary and Scarboro – were all connected.

This home has enjoyed a total of eight owners. The current owners are Glenn and Orma Potter who purchased the home in 1973. Glenn was the chief organist at the Anglican Cathedral in downtown Calgary. They have carried out extensive renovations over the last 50 years to both the yard and the house. As Glenn has said, "I didn't put my hammer down for a very long time".

At the community hall, there is an early photo of the house taken in 1924, where there is no vegetation or trees evident anywhere at the time.

Note: You may have noticed that three Scarboro residents (Ward, McCormick and Graves) all whom lived on Scarboro Avenue were Councillors (or Alderman as they used to be called) at the same time – in 1926. At the time there were only 65,000 people living in Calgary. No wards existed back then within the city for elections.

320 Scarboro Avenue



The future ‘Mayhew property’ remained undeveloped during Scarboro’s first era of home building prior to the First World War. A building permit was issued on February 27, 1913 to J.N. Lyon for a brick veneer residence to be built by day labour at an estimated cost of \$5,000. Nothing came of the project. Ottewell J. (Otto) Mayhew acquired Lots 7 & 8 around 1921, and the house was constructed by 1923. Otto Mayhew was a bakery partner with Reuben Ward, whose house we saw at 114 Scarboro Ave. in 1923. Otto and his wife, Emma Mayhew had five children. Mrs. Mayhew was widowed in 1927 and lived in the house until 1945. She was able to remain in the house because she was the beneficiary of a life insurance policy (when such policies were very new and not yet common). Mrs. Mayhew was a very active community member and served on one of the first community boards in 1930 (remember that the Scarboro Community Association wasn’t incorporated until 1934).

The house was built at the same time as the Empress Hotel in Victoria and many of the same building techniques were used in the wall construction. The house looks like it is either brick or wood covered by stucco. It is neither. Like the Empress, the walls have one-foot ceramic logs stacked one on top of the other so the walls are very thick. Nothing that happens on the street is ever heard in the house.

Between 1945 and 1968, two families lived here. Then in 1968, Mary McCormick and Urban Guichon, who were living in another Scarboro house, purchased the home. Remember that Mary McCormick is the Mary from the McCormick house at 228 Scarboro.

In 1968, it was said that this was the sixth biggest house in the city. Urban Guishon was in the Canadian Intelligence Corp in WWII and became the President of Riley and McCormick.

When the Guichons purchased the house, someone wrote a letter to them asking how they dared as Catholics to own a ‘Protestant built house’. The person who wrote the letter signed it and remained living in the neighbourhood up until her death, not that long ago. This reflects

sentiments of the Protestants and Catholics living in Scarborough at the time who came from Northern Ireland and England and brought these sectarian differences with them.

This prominent two-story residence has strong Colonial influences. It has a symmetrical rectangular form with stucco cladding and a hip roof with one central dormer, centred on the entrance. The windows, in adjacent pairs, have a double hung sash with small panes and awnings. The front door is centred on the façade on a portion of the house that projects slightly out from the front wall plane, tucked under the broadly overhanging eaves. The broad eaves are likely influenced by the Craftsman style. In keeping with Colonial Revival houses, one of the principal areas of elaboration is the entrance. In this example, the pediment is not supported by pilasters or columns and the front door has sidelights and a false fanlight. One-storey wings flank the main form asymmetrically with gable roofs. There are symmetrically placed decorative motifs in the stucco. Brick is used for the foundation as well as the main gate.

Two Prime Ministers have visited this house. Pierre Trudeau in 1972 and Justin Trudeau as a baby.

323 Scarborough Avenue



The land for this home was originally sold in 1912 to a broker for \$1,800, likely on speculation. The land changed hands a number of times until it was purchased by Robert Gordon in 1915 for \$2,000. Gordon built this lovely arts and crafts house. The property was foreclosed on in 1940 and remained empty. It was purchased by a widow in 1945 and she lived here until 1981. It was then purchased by Neil and Sue Murphy who lived here for 32 years. They did an extensive renovation to the back of the home in 1997. In 2013, Peter Strickland purchased the home. He is the 4th owner of the house and lives here with his twin sons.

336 Scarborough Avenue



The house was built in 1922 and has been occupied by only four families in 100 years - Glover (for 8 years); Mack (40 yrs) Fischbuch (24) and the current owners, Fair (28). A few major

changes have been undertaken to the home, but its bones remain intact. In 1979 a solarium was added at the back. This was designed by a Scarborough resident and architect, Harvey Bernbaum. The laneway raised flower bed was added in 2019 to eliminate the steep hill and grass. This was designed by another neighbour, Glynn Wright. The mountain ash trees and lilacs at this home are 100 years old. There is a brass 'F' on the front door which was installed by the Fischbuch's and now represents 52 years of an 'F' family surname occupying the home.

340 Scarborough Avenue



This prominent 2-storey home was likely designed by the same architect/builder as the Mayhew Residence. It was constructed in 1931. The original owner was A.G. Clarke, president of A.G. Clarke and Co., financial agents and insurance. The second owner was H.G. Love founder of CFCN and President of the Calgary Chamber. He was the first non-Ontarian President of the Canadian Chamber and President of the Calgary Stampede. The current owners are the 3rd and 4th generation of Loves to live in the house. H.G. Love purchased this home in the 1940s when the owner ran into tax troubles and had to leave the county immediately. The current owner, his father and the current owner's son all went to Sunalta School.

This prominent 2-storey home was also built on a double lot. It has a hipped roof without a full-width porch. It has an original stucco wall surface. The front entrance is elaborated with an entrance porch and portico supported by two columns. The second storey windows are adjacent groups; however, the large first storey picture windows are atypical this period. The residence has a brick foundation wall and mosaic original stone path. The house had a faux tile red roof made of tin, which was replaced with the current red concrete tile in a second major renovation in 2003. The first renovation to the house occurred in the late 1960s and included the addition at the back of the house.

348 Scarborough Avenue



This is the last house on our walk. This massive brick house was finished by George Venini in 1914 and was built on one of the largest lots in Scarborough. The CPR thought that this was the prime lot in the district. It sold for \$1,800 in 1911. It is a large brick Prairie Style home built on a hilltop site. It has an asymmetrical façade and a roof with a shed dormer and wraparound arcaded verandah. A low decorative concrete fence surrounds the property. George Venini was the manager of Mason and Reich Pianos in Alberta. He lived in the house for over 60 years until 1975. He was an enthusiastic supporter of community events and activities that included dancing and skating parties. This house is still occupied by his descendants.

Other Scarborough Community History

Crowchild Trail and Bow Trail were built in 1964. This severed the communities which had been connected by parks.

In the 1970s, there were traffic issues with cars were cutting through the community of Scarborough from 17th Avenue to Bow Trail. As many as 7,000 cars were taking this route per day. To put this into context, Calgary was only a city of 430,000 people in 1973.

By 1980, the city agreed that this traffic issue threatened by viability of Scarborough and Sunalta. Traffic controls were placed in several places to restrict access to Scarborough from 17th Ave. To this day, Scarborough remains the only community in Calgary that paid for its own traffic calming through tax levies.

Scarborough is now a community of 336 homes (that includes a few lots; some in development) as well as the new condo facility, Scarborough 17, of 52 units. This development will increase the population of the community by an estimated 16%.

The sense of space from the wide boulevards and the setbacks, together with the parks and parklets in Scarborough, are all part of the Olmsted design of the neighbourhood. The Olmsteds believed that design affects community and Scarborough agrees: Scarborough is very much about community with 7 women's book clubs, a senior's club, men's social clubs, a community preschool and a dinner club.