

HISTORY OF THE ABORIGINAL ART PARK SITE

Pre Contact / Fur Trade History of Site (before 1800)

Prior to European settlement, the Queen Elizabeth Park area, and surrounds, were extensively used by First Nations peoples including the ancestors of the Cree, Nakoda Sioux, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot and eventually Métis peoples. These groups camped and traded in the area with other First Nations and eventually with traders from Fort Edmonton.

- Oral histories, as well as archaeological evidence, indicate that the ancestors of the Cree, Nakoda Sioux, and Blackfoot, and other Nations, resided on this land long before the arrival of Europeans. The site location is near a pre-fur trade historical boundary between the Cree and Blackfoot territories.
- Archaeological evidence includes a 1,500 year-old campsite located within QE Park that contains the seeds of chokecherry, pincherry, bunchberry, and kinnikinnick. Stone tool debris, as well as bones of bison, rabbit, duck, and fish were uncovered.
- The North side of the river, known as the Rossdale Flats, is the historical location of Fort Edmonton and the current site of the Traditional Burial Grounds/Fort Edmonton Cemetery.
- An adhesion to Treaty No. Six was signed at Fort Edmonton August 21, 1877. Treaty Six Nations in Alberta include the Cree, Nakoda Sioux, Saulteaux, and Dene peoples.
- The North Saskatchewan River was a significant transportation route prior to the establishment of the railway. Indigenous peoples, fur traders, and early settlers relied on it for transportation, shipping, and fishing.
- The Papaschase Reserve was historically located about 4 miles south of the river from this location.
- The site location became part of River Lot 11, the homestead of Métis settler Joseph MacDonald and family. He was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, a freighter, fur trader, and a farmer. His river lot was across the river from the Fort and he is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery about 4 km away.
- Another notable settler living adjacent to River Lot 11 was Lawrence (Laurent) Garneau, a prominent Métis Edmontonian
- The Walter Ferry operated adjacent to the site

Post Contact / After Fur Trade History of Park Site (after 1800)

In the late 1800's there was substantial residential, commercial and industrial development in the area surrounding the present-day park. Two coal mines (I.X.L. mine and North Star Coal Mine) were dug into the river bank in the east area of the park. The Calgary-Edmonton railway was completed in 1891 near the intersection of Queen Elizabeth Park Road and Saskatchewan Drive. With the establishment of the railway network, the role of the North Saskatchewan River for transportation was reduced. Around 1912-13 the High Level and Walterdale Bridges were completed, replacing the ferries.

In 1912, a fenced area was built to house two moose. In the early 1900s a brewery was built on the south side of the park and operated there until the early 1980s. In the late 1960's a large pile of fill material was deposited in the northwest area of the park, forming what is known as Dantzer's Hill. Reportedly, the fill was to support a new bridge across the river which was never built. The spatial organization of Queen Elizabeth Park has been largely unchanged since its design in the 1930s.

About Queen Elizabeth Park / Rossdale / Strathcona District

Queen Elizabeth Park is located in the North Saskatchewan River Valley, south of the Walterdale Bridge and encompasses 31 hectares on the south bank of Edmonton's River Valley, east of the Kinsmen Sports Centre. The area has significant heritage value relating to the settlement and development of the City of Edmonton, with key proximity to the communities of Rossdale and Strathcona. Queen Elizabeth Park is highly visible, centrally located, between the dynamic areas of Downtown and Strathcona and is immediately adjacent to the new Walterdale Bridge and Rossdale, where there is strong potential for new uses to welcome many more visitors. Sight lines from the Park include Edmonton's downtown and important structures and buildings such as the Government of Alberta Legislature Building and the High Level Bridge.

Queen Elizabeth Park has been a well-loved destination park for Edmontonians for almost a century. The park is rooted in Edmonton's recreational history. In 1907, the City of Strathcona purchased 20 acres of land on this site and named it Riverside Park. The original park extended north from Saskatchewan Avenue to the river, between Main and Niblock Streets (now 104 and 105 streets). Further acquisitions of land expanded the park to 75 acres by 1938. The park was considered a showcase of Edmonton's river valley parks system, and it attracted approximately 1,000 visitors a day during the summer months. It featured boardwalks, a bandshell, and picnic areas. A swimming pool, installed in 1922, is considered to be the first outdoor public pool in Western Canada.

On May 29, 1939, Edmonton City Council, in honour of the visit from King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, renamed Riverside Park, Queen Elizabeth Park.

The comprehensive Queen Elizabeth Master Plan was approved by City Council in August 2013. Implementation will allow the revitalized park to play a key role in Edmonton's cultural and recreational life. The Plan includes renewal of the park's infrastructure, a new bike skills area in the lower park and space for public art, including the Aboriginal Art Park in the upper park.

Renewal of the park consists of five phases with construction of Phase 1 to be completed by Fall 2015. Phase 1 consists of a new accessible trail that will link Saskatchewan Drive (and the Strathcona neighbourhood) to the upper park, which is the future site of the art park. Phase 2 includes the Aboriginal Art Park and improvements to the upper park in general, including a new paved parking lot and bus turnaround, a new shade shelter, new picnic areas and trail upgrades.

For more information please visit:

City Of Edmonton Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan:

http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/projects_redevelopment/queen-elizabeth-park-plan.aspx

City Of Edmonton Edmonton Neighbourhoods :

http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/neighbourhoods/know-your-neighbourhood.aspx#

Edmonton Archives

<https://archivesphotos.edmonton.ca/Presto/home/Default.aspx>

http://edmonton.ca/city_government/edmonton_archives/edmontons-hidden-communities.aspx

ART PARK BACKGROUND

Queen Elizabeth Public Art Park

The creation of a Public Art Park was a key recommendation of the Edmonton Public Art Master Plan and was included in the Council approved Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan. The concept of an Art Park aligns with the goals and objectives of other approved City of Edmonton planning documents, including *The Art of Living* and *The Way We Live*. The proposed art park will also compliment nearby City initiatives to increase the integration of artworks within public space. The site for the new Waltherdale Bridge, for example, will include public art works by Canadian artist Ken Lum.

The Queen Elizabeth Park will include three areas for Public Art: Phase 1 – Aboriginal Art Park (upper park), Phase 2 – Transitory Art Area (lower park) and Phase 3 – Permanent Art Park for Local Art (lower park). Funding for the Aboriginal Art Park and for improvements to the surrounding area were approved in December 2014. Concept plan development of the art park and surrounding area will commence in Summer 2015, with construction slated to occur over 2016 and 2017.

Aboriginal Art Park Visioning Workshop, September 2013

The first step towards developing a vision for the development of the art park was to facilitate a workshop with community members, Aboriginal artists, staff from the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Arts Council and the curator, Candice Hopkins. The workshop was held in September 2013, and took place over two days. Themes discussed included naming the art park, Aboriginal naming traditions, developing Art Calls, as well as presentations by the curator, selected artists and City of Edmonton and Edmonton Arts Council staff.

The Aboriginal Art Park Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was formed to provide leadership and strategic direction for the art park, including the consultation and engagement processes, naming of the art park, communications, and direction to the working committees. The steering committee includes members from the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Arts Council, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, Métis Nation of Alberta, Elders and Aboriginal Artists/community members.

About the Curator, Candice Hopkins:

Candice Hopkins is a member of the Carcross Tagish First Nation in the Yukon, Gaanax.ádi clan, and a member of the BC Métis Association. She is the Chief Curator of the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA). In 2014, she received the Joan Lowndes Award from the Canada Council for the Arts.

As a curator and writer, she has held positions at the National Gallery of Canada, the Western Front, and the Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre. Hopkins holds an MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College where she was awarded the Ramapo Curatorial Prize for the exhibition *Every Stone Tells a Story: The Performance Work of David Hammons and Jimmie Durham*.

Candice is published widely and has lectured at the Witte de With, Tate Modern, Dakar Biennale, and University of British Columbia.

For more information about Candice, please click:

<http://www.iaia.edu/museum/museum-news/new-chief-curator-at-the-iaia-museum-of-contemporary-native-arts/>

<http://www.acc-cca.com/wordpress/curator-profile/candice-hopkins/>

<http://canadianart.ca/features/site-santa-fe/>