



Historic Calgary Week 2007 – Bridgeland-Riverside Walking Tour

Presented by the Calgary Heritage Authority and Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association.

Welcome to this walk through historic Bridgeland Riverside. I am going to set the stage for you.

Nowadays most people know this area simply as Bridgeland but in its early days it was two distinct communities – Bridgeland and Riverside

Riverside - where we are standing – occupied this area around 4 Street - close to the river, as the name suggests. It was annexed to the city in 1910. Although it is not reflected on city maps of the day, Riverside was known by the local people to extend partway up Meredith Rd and to the edge of the escarpment to the north – where Crescent Heights began.

Due to the large number of German speaking immigrants who settled in this area, it was also known as Germantown. Some of the streets had German names –such as Dresden, Berlin – until the city’s decision for numbered streets and avenues.

In addition to the Dewaal block where we are standing, there are also some other recognized historic sites such as

- the Riverside Ironworks - a foundry that made machinery that was used back then.... And some of the manhole covers we can still see today.*
- Immanuel Lutheran church where worship services still occur*
- Reliance and Armour Blocks on the other side of 4 St. – vacant now on the main floor but hopefully we will see some interesting businesses emerge in the future*
- And underneath the façade of the Radius block further up 4th street lies the 1910 Sligsby block.*

Plus there are others which are no long here- such as the Riverside Laundry, Riverside Hotel/ Apartments, Farmer Jones Used Car lot to name a few

With the building of a bridge across the Bow River – the initial Langevin Bridge in 1888, and its sturdier steel truss replacement in 1910, the core of a growing Calgary on the south side was connected to this north side of the river.

(As you may know, the Langevin Bridge has recently been renamed Reconciliation Bridge).

And leading north of the bridge, 4th Street or Edmonton Trail as it was called, was the busy thoroughfare. It was the main route north to the capital city of Edmonton...



Horses, carts, carriages and later cars and trucks were driven on this street.

The introduction of Calgary's streetcar system in 1912 also increased the traffic and vibrancy here. One streetcar route went up the escarpment along Edmonton Trail to turn around north of 16 Ave, in the community of Tuxedo. The other route turned east and went along 1 Ave to the Calgary General Hospital.

Lining 4th street and 1 Ave were modest two storey buildings – that consisted of small storefronts – confectionaries, pharmacies, hardware stores, shoe repair shops, sausage and meat shops, with small apartments above. In addition to the Dewaal Block you'll also see the Gerlitz block and Cannibale block – interestingly this style of living is coming back into fashion today

In addition to the German immigrants, the people who settled in this area came from other European countries such as the Ukraine, Italy, Poland, Croatia and so on. An important remnant of these diverse groups is their church buildings – our community likely has the most number of churches per square mile of any area in Calgary because each cultural group built their own places of worship. You will hear about a couple of examples of this today – St Matthew and the Moravian church but we will also pass several others.

What brought these diverse groups together was school and sports. You'll be seeing the 97 year old Riverside Bungalow – one of two bungalows that were built to accommodate the explosion in Calgary's population which occurred in that first decade of the 1900's. You'll see another historic building on this tour that has strong roots in the sports heritage of Bridgeland – Riverside.

Now, the community of Bridgeland was planned and built a distance to the east along 1 Ave. It was annexed to the city in 1907. The growth of the Calgary General Hospital – which was built in 1910 dominated the area over the years.

Bridgeland - Riverside was a predominantly working class community - which meant that the people often worked low income jobs in places like the nearby hospital. It was common for the women to have jobs outside the home as well.

These immigrant families built small homes on narrow lots. It is very rare to find a 50 foot lot in either Bridgeland or Riverside. The families may have had rooms in their basement or upstairs where family or friends, newly arrived from the "old country" would stay until they could get on their feet. The current land zoning of R2 arose from those early days. It was also very common for these families to have a large garden where they could grow their own vegetables in the rich soil of the area. Fruit trees and livestock were common here as well.

On our walk around the community today you'll see some interesting examples of these 100 + year old homes and hear from Josh about some background about who lived in them. I'd also



encourage you to look down at the sidewalks where we walk – you’ll notice sidewalk stamps that go back as far as 1910.

Please enjoy your walk here today.

Poffenroth/De Waal Block (608 Meredith RD NE)

- Built in 1910 by Henry Poffenroth in the Edwardian Commercial Style
- This brick building is a good example of Edwardian Commercial and features: recessed storefronts, display windows, bulkheads, clerestory glazing, double hung windows with sandstone sills and pressed tin cornices. The building was situated on the main road to Edmonton and is part of the main commercial area for the immediate community. Dairyman Henry Poffenroth built this apartment/commercial block shortly after Bridgeland/Riverside became part of Calgary. The de Waal family has owned the building since the 1930s.

Morasch Block (642 1 AV NE)

- Built in 1911 in the Edwardian Commercial Style.
- The Morasch Block, an early commercial-residential building fronting the historic 1 Avenue NE streetcar route since 1911, possesses value for its mixed-use activity for over a century. (Activity Value, Community Significance)
- The commercial block, with its impressive, pressed-metal upper and lower cornices, is a well-designed example of the Edwardian Commercial Style in the community, and one of few remaining buildings of this style. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The mixed-use block is associated with many ethnic Germans - residents, owners, proprietors and its builder - and is symbolic of the ethnic immigrant groups who settled and established businesses in Bridgeland-Riverside at the turn of the 20th century. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)

Riverside Bungalow School (711 2 AV NE)

- Built in 1920 by William A. Branton in the Arts and Crafts Style



- Riverside Bungalow School No. 2 is a well-preserved example of a later phase of bungalow school design by architect William Branton (Design value - City-wide significance)
- The school is the only remaining building from a grouping of three educational buildings on the site, built as the educational and social core of the Bridgeland-Riverside community. (Symbolic value - Community significance)
- The school is a good example of the Arts & Crafts style and is one of three identical bungalow schools in the city, all built in 1920 (Style value - Community significance)

[Gerlitz Block \(402 6A ST NE\)](#)

- **Alternate Names:** Farmer's Grocery; Hergert Block. (aka 728 2 Avenue NE)
- Built in 1912 by D. Englemann in the Edwardian Commercial Style
- With a red brick façade dominated by large storefront windows and pressed metal cornices, the Gerlitz Block is a good representative example in Bridgeland/Riverside of the modest Edwardian Commercial blocks built in Calgary's outlying residential subdivisions during the economic boom of 1906-13. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- It recalls the early character and development of Bridgeland/Riverside as a culturally diverse, working-class residential suburb of Calgary. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)
- It has activity value for its original use as an independent corner grocery store, serving the daily shopping needs of Bridgeland/Riverside residents. (Activity Value, Community Significance)
- It is one of few commercial buildings constructed off Bridgeland/Riverside's main retail streets of Edmonton Trail and 1st Avenue NE. Its substantial massing stands out on a corner lot of a predominantly residential area. (Landmark Value, Community Significance)



[Mauch Residence \(215 7A ST NE\)](#)

- Built in 1911 in the Queen Anne Revival Style
- The Mauch Residence is a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne Revival Style in Bridgeland-Riverside. It employs the gable-front variation of this style, displayed by its prominent, full-width front gable with decorative patterned wooden shingles framed by a wooden frieze. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The 1911 Mauch Residence possesses symbolic value for its association with its ethnic German-from-Russia builder, owners, and residents. Bridgeland-Riverside became defined by the immigrant populations who settled there: Ukrainians, Italians, Jews, and most substantially ethnic Germans, especially those from Russia. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)

[Cannibale Block \(815 1 AV NE\)](#)

- Built in 1912 in the Edwardian Commercial Style
- As an early commercial-residential building situated along 1st Avenue NE, an important streetcar commercial street since 1911, the 1912 Cannibale Block is valued for its mixed-use activity for nearly a century. (Activity Value, Community Significance)
- The Cannibale Block, associated with many ethnic residents, owners and proprietors, is also symbolic of the ethnic immigrant groups who settled and established businesses in Bridgeland-Riverside at the turn of the 20th century. Its builders and first owners, the Corradetti family, were just ahead of the first small wave of Calgary's ethnic Italians who arrived in 1910-14 and settled in Bridgeland-Riverside, mainly along 1, 2 and 3 avenues. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)
- The 1912 Cannibale Block is one of few surviving examples of the Edwardian Commercial Style in the community, and has several typical elements of the style, the most notable being the pressed-metal upper cornice and signband which reads 'C.ANNIBALE BLOCK 1912'. (Style Value, Community Significance)



Hilderman Residence (113 7A ST NE)

- Built in 1912 in the Queen Anne Revival Style
- The Hilderman Residence is a high quality and very well preserved example of the Queen Anne Revival style in Bridgeland-Riverside. It displays the gable-front variation of this style, with prominent, full-width front gable containing decorative wooden dentils, moulded frieze and diamond-shape shingles in the peak. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The ca.1912 Hilderman Residence possesses symbolic value for its association for nearly eight decades with its ethnic German owners, tenants and builder. The settlement in the part of the community just north of the Bow River was known as "Germantown" from the late 1800s for its many ethnic German residents. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)
- The Hilderman Residence is situated in the Bridgeland part of the Bridgeland-Riverside community, on a plateau which runs between 5th and Centre avenues, and 6th and 9th streets, which was subdivided in 1909 as an "Addition to Bridgeland" by the Canadian Pacific Railway Land Dept. The area began to develop rapidly after 1911, the year streetcar service was introduced to 1st Avenue; service ran from 4th Street to a turnaround at 9th Street. In April 1912, Henry Hilderman (born ca1887) gained title to a fifty-foot lot on 7A (formerly Douglass) Street, one lot south of the 1st Avenue streetcar route and just north of the Calgary General Hospital. Having acquired a building permit in February and a \$2,000 mortgage, he constructed a one-and-one-half-storey, brick-veneered, woodframe residence for about \$2200 using day labour.
- Russian-born Hilderman, of German ethnicity, worked as a teamster for the City store department. From 1912-14 he resided in the new home with his wife Marie and children. He sold it to rancher/farmer John Baptist of Sunnyslope, before moving to farm in Richdale, Alberta; through 1922 Baptist rented the home to tenants, including



machinist John Schmick. The Leinweber family were owners and residents for over five decades. Jessie Leinweber (1887-1960) and her husband John (ca1882-1950) were also Germans born in Russia who immigrated to Canada at the turn of the century. John was a machinist, and first worked as a bottler for Calgary Brewing and Malting and later for EP Bossard while living in the home. Son John Leinweber Jr. was a mechanic while living in the home, also working for EP Bossard and later did bicycle repair. Jessie continued to live in the home following her husband's death in 1950, and upon her passing in 1960, the house went to their children, Jessie, John, Emil and Pauline; Pauline lived in the home until Hedwig and Heinrich Lemmer became the owners from 1975-87. The home became a rental property since the couple lived in the Cannibale Block, the adjacent property to the north, which they had acquired in 1960, and where they ran a series of sausage shops. They also obtained the lot south of this house in 1981.

[Escarpment – Vacant Lots Garden \(46 7 ST NE\)](#) (Seen from the escarpment behind St. Matthew’s Church)

- The Bridgeland / Riverside Vacant Lot Garden is an 825 square-metre (8991 square-foot) community garden that occupies three lots in the residential Bridgeland / Riverside area of Calgary. It is situated on a quiet cul-de-sac at the base of hill just below the former General Hospital site. The three long and narrow lots run eastward off of Seventh Street but are currently arranged in four plots that are aligned north and south.
- The Bridgeland / Riverside Vacant Lot Garden is significant as an excellent example of a community garden, and is the oldest of its type in Calgary. It is also valuable as the only known remaining community garden that was once part of the Vacant Lots Garden Club.
- The Garden was established sometime between 1924 and 1930 on vacant land that was purchased by The City of Calgary in 1922 under a City programme known as the Vacant Lots Garden Club. The Vacant Lots Garden Club was an offshoot of a national movement



of the same name that was inaugurated in Calgary in 1911 and formally organized in 1914. The club allowed residents to garden on empty civic property for a small fee with a twofold purpose: beautification and food supply.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (60 7 ST NE)

- Built in 1912 in the Gothic Revival Style
- A large number of German-speaking immigrants settled in this district of Bridgeland in the early years of the 20th century, and one of the names by which the area was known was Germantown. Many of these Calgarians were followers of the Moravian faith. The first Moravian congregation was organized in 1902; the church which is built at the corner of 7 Avenue and 3 Street is now the First Spiritualist Church.
- In 1912 the Moravian congregation, numbering 100 families, built this large brick church. It is a very good example of the Gothic Revival style, with its pointed windows and tall buttressed tower. The building also features a very good interior. In 1945 it was realized that the Moravian congregation had dwindled and the neighbouring Lutheran congregation had grown in size. The two congregations then traded churches. Since that time this building has been known as St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. With its neon-lighted cross atop the church spire, 100 feet above ground level, the church is a North Hill landmark.

George Befus (102 7 ST NE)

- George (ca1882-1935) was also the builder and first owner of the 1912 Befus Building, a small commercial block a short distance from the home at 815/25 1 AV (non-extant). While living in the home with his wife Mary and children, he was first working as a builder and carpenter but by 1914 was a shoemaker in one of his storefronts.



- As part of an assembly of two distinctive red-brick Edwardian Cottage-style homes, the George Befus Residence is a unique and well-crafted example of this style in the community. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The 1911 George Befus Residence possesses symbolic value for its association with its ethnic German builders, owners and residents. By the late 1800s the river flats south of Centre Avenue and area nearby were known as “Germantown”. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)

Alexander Befus (104 7 ST NE)

- The Alexander Befus Residence is situated in the Bridgeland part of the Bridgeland-Riverside community, a 1909 Canadian Pacific Railway subdivision called an “Addition to Bridgeland” located on a plateau between 6 and 9 streets, and 5 and Centre avenues. Development of the neighbourhood took off in 1911, when streetcar service was introduced to 1 Avenue from 4 Street to a turnaround at 9 Street.
- In October of that year brothers Alexander (Alex, born ca1881) and George Befus obtained a permit to build two identical brick-clad, one-and-one-half-storey woodframe residences one block south of the streetcar route. By December their families were living in their new homes. While living in the home with his wife Katie and children, Alex worked as a carpenter, teamster and CPR car repairman.
- As part of an assembly of two distinctive red-brick Edwardian Cottage-style homes, the Alexander Befus Residence is a unique example of this style in the community. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The 1911 Alexander Befus Residence possesses symbolic value for its association with its ethnic German builders, owners and first residents. By the late 1800s the river flats south of Centre Avenue and area nearby were known as “Germantown”. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)



[Rothermal Residence \(105 7 ST NE\)](#)

- Built in 1911 in the Edwardian Cottage Style
- The Rothermal Residence possesses value as a well-preserved example of an Edwardian Cottage-Style home which has undergone an Inter-war ‘modernization’. (Style Value, Community Significance)
- The 1911 Rothermal Residence is valued for its association for over six decades with its ethnic German builder, owners, and residents. By the late 1800s the river flats south of Centre Avenue and area nearby were known as “Germantown”, and Bridgeland street names included Dresden and Munich (6 and 7) streets. (Symbolic Value, Community Significance)
- The Rothermal Residence is located in the Bridgeland part of the Bridgeland-Riverside community, in a 1909 subdivision called an “Addition to Bridgeland”. The land, a plateau between 5 and Centre avenues, and 6 and 9 streets, was developed by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) as a working-class community, and very quickly began to build out following the introduction of streetcar service along 1 Avenue in 1911. In the fall of that year, having obtained a 43-foot lot close to the commercial street as well as a \$700 mortgage, Alexander Rothermal (born ca1877) constructed a modest 6-room, one-and-one-half-storey woodframe residence with bevelled-wood siding. He was working as a labourer at that time, and held various positions with the CPR’s Ogden shops including blacksmith’s helper.

[Moravian Church \(70 6A ST NE\)](#)

- Built in 1912 in the Vernacular style
- A large number of German-speaking immigrants settled in this district of Bridgeland in the early years of the 20th century, and one of the names by which the area was known was Germantown. This small wood-frame church was erected in 1912 by a Lutheran congregation which had been organized earlier, which was originally known as Jehovah

Lutheran Church. In the subsequent decades, the Lutheran congregation grew quickly while the neighbouring Moravian congregation dwindled, and so, in 1945 the two traded churches.

- The present building is a good example of a smaller, rural sort of church, somewhat unusual for an urban building. It is part of a good streetscape, although only a fair historic grouping, and has excellent historical significance for its association with Calgary's German community.

[Fire Hall No. 4 \(104 6A ST NE\)](#)

- Fire Hall No. 4, built 1909, is a two-storey, red-brick building situated in the city's Bridgeland-Riverside neighbourhood, north of the Bow River and downtown Calgary. The building, two-and-one-half-bays in width, is a functional example of the Edwardian Classical style. Two large arched doorways distinguish the primary façade. The property was protected as a Municipal Historic Resource in 1999 and as a Provincial Registered Historic Resource in 2003.
- This building is historically significant for its 39 years of service as Calgary's Fire Hall No. 4. The building fulfilled this role from 1909 to 1922, and again from 1952 to 1978.
- Fire Hall No. 4 recalls Calgary's development boom at the time of its construction in 1909, and the rapid expansion of the city's fire department which resulted. 1909 was a year of great advancement for the Calgary Fire Department, with the force becoming fully paid and inaugurating three sub-stations which included Fire Hall No. 4, as well as those in Bankview (No.5) and Hillhurst (No.6). The building campaign that included Fire Hall No.4 doubled the number of Calgary Fire Department facilities to six. Of these, Fire Hall No. 4 is especially notable as the first facility of the Calgary Fire Department to be established north of the Bow River.
- In 1926 Fire Hall No. 4 was made available to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and became the Calgary YMCA's first official branch. The facility offered a



variety of social and educational programmes to young people as well as numerous physical activities. Physical activities offered by the Riverside location included callisthenics, boxing, hockey, basketball and gymnastics. The Riverside YMCA branch initially focused on activities for boys, but later gained a large membership of girls, offering classes in sewing, tap-dance and art, as well as a physical training programme. When the Riverside branch was established, one of its major purposes was to promote the assimilation of the largely German speaking Russian population of the neighbourhood. The building served as a YMCA until 1948 when it was returned to the City of Calgary.

[John K Kaiser Residence \(34 6 ST NE\)](#)

- The John K Kaiser Residence, built in 1910, recalls the early development of Riverside as a working-class suburb settled mainly by ethnic Germans from Russia. (Symbolic Value—Community Significance)
- The property exemplifies the working-class housing built in this neighbourhood and around Calgary for the burgeoning pre-WWI population. (Symbolic Value—Community Significance)
- Like many such houses, it is in a simplified form of the Queen Anne Revival reflecting the economical manner by which vernacular homes endeavoured to emulate a fashionable high style. (Style Value—Community Significance)
- West Riverside, where this house sits, was subdivided by a private owner in 1907 as “Bow Park.” John K. Kaiser, a carpenter, owned Lots 19 and 20 as of 1908, and had this house built on Lots 20 and half of 19 in 1910. The 1912 city directory lists 15 Kaiser households in Riverside. Kaisers lived in this house until 1920. As of 1918 it housed changing tenants, probably divided into two units from 1943–1953. A former tenant became an owner-occupant in 1949, staying through 1994.



- The property exemplifies the working-class housing built in this neighbourhood and around Calgary for the burgeoning pre-WWI population. Like many modest houses where there was a desire to express high style using available materials and expertise, it is in a very simplified form of the Queen Anne Revival style. Characteristics of the style seen here are its steeply pitched hip roof with lower cross gable and asymmetrical facade with projecting front porch, all meant to evoke picturesque charm. Interior woodwork and leaded-glass windows are also common features. This house has a wood architrave mantelpiece flanked by built-in shelving. Original decorative leaded-glass window panes have been preserved, though are not installed.