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# HISTORIC Downtown Calgary



INCLUDING CALGARY'S NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 STEPHEN AVENUE

## STEPHEN AVENUE TIMELINE



- 1875** Inspector Brisebois and 50 members of the "F" Troop of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) establish a fort on the banks of the Bow and Elbow rivers.
- 1876** Fort Brisebois is renamed Fort Calgary by Colonel James Macleod of the NWMP after the ancestral estate of his cousins on the Isle of Mull, Scotland.
- 1883** The Canadian Pacific Railway arrives in town. A young lawyer, James Alexander Lougheed, purchases five lots from the CPR at \$300 each, on what became Stephen Avenue.
- 1884** Calgary is incorporated as a town. Calgary has its first newspaper, 30 major buildings and a population of over 1,000. Stephen Avenue is named after George Stephen, President of the CPR.
- 1885** The T.C. Powers and Bro. (Pain) Block is built.
- 1886** The great fire destroys most of the 70 wooden buildings in downtown Calgary. A law is passed by City Council that all public buildings were to be made from fire-proof materials such as brick and locally-found sandstone. Sandstone is found in plentiful supply in the rich seams along the banks of the Bow and Elbow rivers. Wesley Orr opens the first quarry. Buildings along Stephen Avenue are constructed to replace the wooden ones burned in the fire. Skilled stoneworkers, many from Scotland with a long history of stone working arrive in the city to apply their trade. By 1890 over half of the city's skilled trades were stonemasons or masons. fifteen quarries operated around Calgary supplying sandstone to construction projects. Calgary becomes known as "The Sandstone City." Colonel James Walker is sent east by Town Council to convince banks to locate in Calgary.
- 1888** Construction begins on the Alberta Hotel.
- 1891** The Hudson's Bay Co. buys I.G. Baker, eventually selling the building to the Imperial Bank of Canada.
- 1892** The Calgary Tribune moves into the Tribune Block.
- 1893** The Thomson Brothers open their bookstore on Stephen Avenue.
- 1894** The Dominion Government builds a new structure on Stephen Avenue to accommodate a post office.
- 1898** The Glanville Block houses its first tenant, a dry goods store owned by John Glanville.
- 1900** The Lougheed Block, site of the present day Clarence and Norman Blocks, is destroyed by fire on Christmas Day, 1899.
- 1901** The Clarence and Norman Block are built and opened.
- 1902** The Calgary Milling Company opens on Stephen Avenue.
- 1903** The Neilson Block is constructed along Stephen Avenue.
- 1906** Ashdown Hardware opens on Stephen Avenue and lasts until 1971.
- 1907** City Hall approves a budget to construct administrative offices, a courthouse and a jail, replacing the 1895 Town Hall. The Cornerstone to the new City Hall is laid. The Doll Block is built.
- 1910** The Nielson Block is enlarged and two more storeys are added.
- 1911** The Dominion Bank Building is under construction on Stephen Avenue. The jewellery store in the Doll Block is robbed of \$11,000 worth of diamonds.
- 1912** The Molson's Bank opens on Stephen Avenue. The Calgary Milling Company is sold to Robin Hood Milling. The building is sold to John Irwin, who opens a fancy food grocery store.
- 1913** The Burns Building opens as the head offices for Pat Burns' cattle operations. The Main Post office built in 1894 is torn down to make way for a newer and bigger building, but Calgary Public Building, is not constructed until 1930. Hudson's Bay opens store #4, the site of the present "Bay."
- 1914** Rising costs for stone carving, the failure of the quarries to supply desirable stone and competition from other building materials leads to the closure of the quarries. World War I breaks out and the "Sandstone Era" comes to an end. Construction projects along Stephen Avenue are left incomplete.
- 1916** Prohibition closes the Long Bar at the Alberta Hotel.
- 1921** Fire guts the inside of Hudson's Bay Store #3. The Palace (Allen) Theatre opens.
- 1925** "Bible Bill" Aberhart makes the first of his historic radio broadcasts of Back to the Bible Hour from the Palace (Allen) Theatre.
- 1929** The Great Depression results when the world economy nosedives and the stock market crashes. Construction in Calgary slows down and only governments and banks continue to build their buildings on Stephen Avenue (Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia).
- 1935-1946** Most of Calgary's growth takes place away from downtown in the suburbs. Construction plans were put on hold since many of the workers and building materials were required in the World War II effort.
- 1947** Oil is discovered in Leduc and the oil boom begins in Alberta, bringing a new prosperity to building in Calgary.
- 1973** Eight gargoyles from the demolished Herald building are copied and used to decorate the Alberta Hotel.
- 1985** The Calgary Public Building reopens as part of the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts.
- 1996** The TC Power & Bro. Block is restored to its original style.
- 1999** The bronze sculpture of the "Famous Five" women is unveiled.
- 2002** A portion of Stephen Avenue is declared a national historic site by Ottawa. Twenty-nine buildings from the 1880-1930 era, mostly stores, several banks and a church, are recognized.
- 2002** The award-winning Bang and Olufsen building opens at 129 8 Ave SW and is a modern interpretation of the historic buildings of the area.
- 2011** Calgary Public Library was rehabilitated in 2011 and awarded a LEED® Platinum rating, which is the internationally accepted standard for high performance green buildings.
- 2012** Olympic Plaza held Calgary's first Nuit Blanche event, a late-night international contemporary arts festival.



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CALGARY'S NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

There is no set starting point on this tour. Simply orient yourself to a landmark such as City Hall or the Calgary Tower, use the map and explore!



## INTRODUCTION



On July 19, 2002, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada declared a portion of Calgary's original downtown one of only three National Historic Districts in Western Canada.

Over thirty historic buildings have been restored along and around Stephen Avenue and today it serves as one of the central spines of Calgary's downtown core. This tour celebrates Calgary's architectural heritage and is centred on the Stephen Avenue National Historic District (demarcated in red on the map) but extends to include other downtown heritage sites such as City Hall, the Palliser Hotel and the Grain Exchange.

Named after the first Canadian Pacific Railway president, Lord George Mount Stephen, the Avenue was Calgary's main commercial street starting with the coming of the railway in 1883. As the text from the plaque inscribed by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada reads:



*Lord George Mount Stephen*

## INTRODUCTION



“Stephen Avenue is a superb illustration of the central role that retail streets have played and continue to play in the Canadian urban experience. As a well-preserved commercial street, the avenue bears eloquent witness to the emergence of the modern retail sector in Canada from 1880 to 1930. With the coming of the railway, prairie cities grew at an unprecedented rate, and their gridiron urban plan reflected a new functional pattern: financial and commercial sectors located near the train station, surrounded by residential areas while factories were farther away. Elegant illustrations of Calgary’s sandstone era, the buildings of Stephen Avenue are handsome representatives of the architecture of their time, featuring Victorian, Art Deco and Beaux-Arts elements.”

Enjoy your walk through Calgary’s original downtown. The sandstone and brick buildings provide a glimpse into the past and are a proud and essential part of Calgary’s character.



1

## CITY HALL

700 Macleod Trail S.E.

1911

The original Town Hall built in 1885 was on the southeast corner of 7 Ave. and 2 St. East, in front of current City Hall. By 1906, new facilities were planned, intended to house The City's administrative offices, the Court House and the jail. On June 26, 1911, Calgary's new City Hall was officially opened with a gold key by the Honorable Robert Laird Borden, then leader of the Opposition and later Prime Minister of Canada from 1911-1920.

City Hall is one of Calgary's best-known landmarks. It was designed by architect William Dodd and shows a typically Victorian variety of styles.



2

## BURNS BUILDING

237 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1912

Constructed during 1911-1912 by cattle baron Patrick Burns as the head office for his cattle operations, the building was planned and originally constructed as a two-storey structure. In 1912, the plans were altered by the addition of four more storeys. It is a fine example of the Edwardian Commercial Style. The mosaic tile floor, brass fittings and curving marble stairs and column facings made Burns' ground floor meat market and office mezzanine one of Calgary's most elegant commercial interiors. The market and office entrance signs are beneath the striking wrought-iron and glass canopy supported by lions' heads.



## CALGARY PUBLIC BUILDING

201 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1929-1931

The previous building on this site — the Main Post Office, erected in 1894, was demolished in 1914 to make way for a larger structure.

In 1929, the federal Department of Public Works began work on the site. The Calgary Public Building was opened by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett on August 21, 1931.

The classical detailing of the eight-storey Tyndall limestone-clad structure is typical of government architecture of the period. In 1979, the building was bought by The City of Calgary and adapted to incorporate the Jack Singer Concert Hall as part of the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts. The old style brass elevators inside are the last manually operated ones in this province.

3



## DOMINION BANK

200 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1911

The original building on the site was G. C. King's general store. George Clift King was the first man in the NWMP troop to set foot on the land that was to become Calgary, and was known as Calgary's First Citizen.

The Dominion Bank broke with the established pattern of bank design in 1911 Calgary. The terracotta-clad building was Calgary's first example of Beaux-Arts Classicism.

4



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## NEILSON BLOCK (FAÇADE ONLY)

118 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1903, 1910

Furniture dealer Hugh Neilson came to Calgary from Ontario, opened his first Calgary store in 1894, Neilson Furniture Co., and became so successful that he had this larger building erected in 1903. The rough hand-hewn blocks used on the first three storeys are typical of the sandstone construction which followed the fire of 1886.

The upper two storeys added in 1910 used smooth, or “dressed”, blocks of the locally-quarried stone. Both construction dates are visible on the frieze below the cornice.



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## DOLL BLOCK (FAÇADE ONLY)

116 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1907

When L.H. Doll opened his jewellery store in 1907, it was hailed by the Calgary Eye Opener as Doll’s New Diamond Palace. Itself a gem, the first and second storeys sparkled with bevelled glass. The Doll Block stands out primarily for the delightful third storey oriel window with its leaded glass and surrounding sandstone trim.

D.E. Black, moved his jewellery store into the building and, on December 18, 1911, he was the victim of the largest diamond heist in Calgary’s history: a noon-hour Christmas heist of \$11,000 worth of diamonds.

## THOMSON BROTHERS BLOCK (FAÇADE ONLY)

112 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1893

The façade of the Thomson Brothers Block is an excellent example of Calgary's early sandstone period. The art of the stonemason is well-illustrated by the varied sandstone arches that define the Thomson Block's third-storey windows.

Originally built to house the Thomson's bookstore, stationery and printing business, it has housed dry goods, hardware and banking establishments, among others.

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## LINEHAM BLOCK (FAÇADE ONLY)

106 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1886, 1907

Originally built in 1886 as part of the I.G. Baker Co. store, in 1891 it became the property of the Hudson's Bay Company when they bought out Baker's and was then re-sold to the Imperial Bank. In 1907, Lineham added two new floors for business offices.

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*In 1886, buildings along Stephen Avenue are constructed to replace the wooden ones burned in the fire. Skilled stoneworkers, many from Scotland who had a long history of stone working, arrive in the city to apply their trade.*



9



## IMPERIAL BANK OF CANADA

100 – 8 Avenue S.E.

1886, 1909

The original owner of the site, was the I.G. Baker Co. which had arrived in 1875 to provision the North-West Mounted Police. Originally located near the Fort, the company moved to better serve the expanding needs of the community. By 1892, the Imperial Bank of Canada purchased the site and renovated it.

From 1903-1906 the upper floor held the offices of Sifton, Short and Stuart, Barristers, Notaries, etc. Arthur L. Sifton was the elder brother of Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior from 1896-1905, Calgary's City Solicitor, 1892-1897, Premier of Alberta, 1910-1917, and one of Canada's representatives at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919.



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## HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY STORE #3

102 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1890-1891, 1895, 1905

This sandstone building replaced the Hudson's Bay Company's first modest trading post built near the fort (1876), followed by a wood-frame building (1884) located on this site. This building was constructed in 1890–91, then doubled in 1895 and expanded again in 1905.

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The Royal Bank then bought the building, leasing the newest portion to the F.W. Woolworth Co. for a time. The building was badly damaged by fire in 1921, and the interior was completely gutted and rebuilt in 1976 – 1977.

## GLANVILLE / WARD BLOCK

105 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1898

The Glanville/Ward Block was built for James A. Lougheed, grandfather of former Premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed.

The original tenants were Great West Saddlery Co. and the Union Bank. Glanville's Ltd., dry goods dealer, was the main tenant from 1906-1913 giving the block its name. Originally two distinct buildings – the eastern one built of sandstone, the western one built of brick – they were joined later with a sandstone façade to appear as if they were one building.

In 1911, the name was changed to the Ward Block, in honour of its new owner, Dudley Ward.

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## ASHDOWN'S HARDWARE (CALGARY HARDWARE)

110 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1891

This site, once James Lougheed's first home, was purchased by James H. Ashdown in 1889. Then a small hardware store named Rogers & Grant, Ashdown expanded his Winnipeg-based hardware business. Two years later he had this sandstone structure built. Ashdown's adventures included fighting as a Royalist in the Riel rebellion and being imprisoned in Fort Garry, and later serving as the mayor of Winnipeg. He got his start in the hardware business by supplying Fort Garry with stovepipes. He renamed this store Ashdown Hardware in 1905, an enterprise that operated until c.1969, when the company's numerous branches were sold.

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## MACNAUGHTEN BLOCK

109 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1888

F.A. Macnaughten, local rancher, built a one-storey brick building, in 1888. A second storey was added in 1889. Early tenants included Pettit & Ellis, later Ellis & Grogan. By the turn of the century the building was known as the Ellis & Grogan Block. Grogan, a former NWMP constable, retained his office in the building until about 1909. He was an early treasurer of the Liberal Association in Calgary, and around 1900 the Liberal Committee Rooms were housed in the building. The Liberal Party governed Canada from 1896-1911, during which time the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created from the Northwest Territories, thus important discussions were undoubtedly held in the Liberal Committee Rooms.



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## LINEHAM BLOCK

111 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1889

The Lineham Block was built in 1889. A man of all trades, including stockman, butcher and member of the Northwest Territories Assembly, Lineham also founded the town of Okotoks and served as its first mayor. This versatile two-storey brick building was one of many substantial buildings constructed following the great fire of 1886 on Calgary's premier commercial street. The building once housed Riley & McCormick's Saddlery.

## CALGARY HERALD BLOCK

113 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1887

The Calgary Herald Block, a two-storey brick and sandstone structure, was constructed in 1887 to house the Herald Printing and Publishing Company. Founded in 1883, the Calgary Herald was Calgary's first newspaper and remains one of its oldest continuously operating businesses. In 1886, the Herald was purchased by Ontario-born businessman Alexander Lucas and his partner. Calgary became a city near the end of Lucas' term as mayor, making Lucas both the last mayor of the Town of Calgary and the first mayor of The City of Calgary.

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## BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA

115 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1904

The main branch of the bank in Calgary from 1904-1930, this building was originally inset from the street. Renovations in 1912 extended the front of the building and gave it a new façade typical of many of the banks from its era.

The façade of English matte white terra cotta had a granite base. The windows on the ground floor were metal casement, the floors were of marble mosaic, the walls and ceiling were of hard tinted plaster, counters of mahogany, fittings of bronze and the main vestibule was paneled with Canadian marble.

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## MOLSON'S BANK

114 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1911

Banking was one of the many early enterprises of the Molson family of brewers. This building, constructed in 1911 on the site, became the property of the Bank of Montreal after the merger of the two banks, who sold it to the Bank of Toronto in 1925. In 1955, an amalgamation with the Dominion Bank of Canada created the Toronto Dominion Bank.

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The building differs greatly in style from the sandstone buildings constructed a decade previously. The architect made extravagant use of classical features, including an imposing central bay with giant order ionic columns and an ornate cornice featuring lions' heads. The dates on the façade refer to the year Molson's Bank was chartered (1855) and the opening of the Calgary branch (1912).



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## TRIBUNE BLOCK

118 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1892

The Tribune Block gets its name from having briefly served as the home of the Calgary Tribune newspaper (a forerunner of the *Albertan* and the *Calgary Sun*).

From 1907-1919, Charles Traunweiser (described in the *City Directory* as a gentleman) owned the building and ran it as the Hub Cigar Store, Billiards Room and Traunweiser's Bowling Alley. He also rented one of the offices to Harry Pollard, a well-known Alberta photographer.

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## CALGARY CATTLE CO. (PIONEER MEAT MARKET)

119 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1903

Constructed in 1903 for the Calgary Cattle Company to house its meat market and offices, in 1905 it was purchased by Patrick Burns and housed the Pioneer Meat Market from 1908-1916, when it relocated to the Burns Building. The building is also associated with Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) who operated a bowling alley on the site, before he changed it to a tobacco and stationery store.

The building is architecturally significant for its Edwardian-era design and its red-brick façade, a feature that differentiated it from the many sandstone structures. The pressed brick exterior is heavily corbelled to form a distinctive roofline cornice and recalls the popularity of the Romanesque Revival style at the time.

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## CALGARY MILLING COMPANY

119 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1902

The Calgary Milling Company building survives as the only tangible reminder of what was Calgary's oldest flour milling company. It was constructed in 1901-03 as the company's retail store. The company was founded in 1892 as the Alberta Roller Flour Mill and was instrumental in promoting economic development and agricultural settlement in the Calgary area. Apart from specializing in their trademark, Hungarian brand flour, the store was considered to be the most luxurious, largest, and complete purveyor of groceries in the city.

The store was locally famous for its marble trimmed interior and technological innovations, such as sprinklers to keep the vegetables fresh.

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## CRITERION BLOCK (MERCHANTS BANK)

121 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1889, 1903

Listed as the Criterion Block in Calgary's first telephone directory (1903), this elegant little building housed the Criterion Saloon/Dining Hall since 1892, run by Osborne Brown & Critchley Bros. In 1903, the building was sold to the Merchants Bank of Canada who added another storey and the façade you see, of machine-cut sandstone with oculi (small circular openings) and a graceful central window. During WW1, this building became the headquarters of the 82nd Battalion and the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Later, it was the office of the Assistant Receiver General, as well as that of the Department of Labour.



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## JACQUES JEWELLERY STORE

123 – 8 Avenue S.W.

c. 1893

Moving to Calgary in 1881, George Jacques was the first watchmaker west of Winnipeg. In March of 1884, he set up shop near the I.G. Baker and Company store.

In 1893 this two-storey sandstone structure was built to house his business and residence. Their second-floor living quarters featured the city's first oriole window, providing an excellent view of the busy street below.

George Jacques retired in 1906 and died in 1925. His son, George, later founded Jacques Funeral Home in Calgary.

## CLARENCE BLOCK

120 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1901

A fire on Christmas Day 1900 razed the original 1890 rough sandstone Clarence Block, owned by Senator James Lougheed and named for one of his sons.

The block was rebuilt and reopened in February 1901. The architect for the present machine-cut sandstone Clarence Block was William Dodd, designer of Calgary's City Hall.

It at one time housed the law office of Lougheed and his partner, R.B. Bennett, later Prime Minister of Canada; as well as Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) and John E. Brownlee, premier of Alberta from 1925-1935.

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## NORMAN BLOCK

126A – 8 Avenue S.W.

1905

This building, like its neighbour, was named for one of Senator James Lougheed's sons and designed by William Dodd. It replaced an earlier structure, that was built in 1900 and destroyed by fire in 1904. This building has housed offices, retail stores, and the Lyric (later Pantages) Theatre — a venue for live performances, political rallies, and occasionally boxing matches staged during 1911 – 1913 by Tommy Burns, the only Canadian to win the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship (1906 – 1908). The building became a shopping centre arcade in 1922.

Fire struck again in 1911 and 1933. Each time the block was rebuilt, and the building's façade was restored in 1997.

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## BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA

125 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1930

This building served as the Bank of Nova Scotia's main branch from 1930-1976. Toronto architect John M. Lyle's sophisticated Art Deco bank is his only building on the prairies and represents a link between Calgary as the Sandstone City and the modern era. It combines the Classical elements commonly used in banks with the flattened façade typical of the period's Moderne style.

Lyle's whimsy can be seen in the main entrance where prairie wildflowers mingle with mounties, First Nations' people, horses, buffalo, guns and arrows – the capitals feature a Model A Ford, flywheels, governors, gears, and an eagle.



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## T.C. POWER & BRO. (PAIN) BLOCK

131 – 8 Avenue S.W.

c. 1885

This is the only wooden building remaining in downtown Calgary to predate the fire of 1886. It was built as a general store for the American firm T.C. Power & Bro. Like the rival, I.G. Baker & Co., T.C. Power & Bro. was based in Fort Benton, Montana, and established a thriving trade in prairie Canada before the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s. The Wood & Green grocery store occupied it from 1901-1917, at which time it became a Macleod Brothers clothing store. In 1933 Pain Furriers moved in and remained the main occupant for the next forty years.

## ALBERTA HOTEL

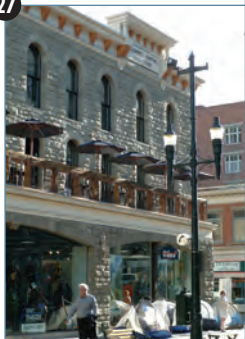
804 – 1 Street S.W.

1888, 1902

The Alberta Hotel was one of the first buildings to use sandstone after the fire of 1886. Its bar was reputed to be the longest between Winnipeg and China. It was patronized by many of Calgary's most memorable characters, notably Bob Edwards of EyeOpener fame, Ma Fulton, lawyer Paddy Nolan, and R.B. Bennett, Prime Minister of Canada from 1930-1935, who was once a resident in rooms there. The names of the builders and the date of construction are inscribed in stone high on the north wall. The hotel was so popular that it was necessary to expand the premises in 1891 and again in 1906.

The building survived as a hotel until Prohibition in 1916 when it was converted to a commercial block. The gargoyles now seen between the ground floor arches were cast from those taken from the 1913 (demolished 1972) Herald Building on 7 Ave. S.W., and so depict newspaper employees at their tasks rather than the usual medieval monsters and spirits.

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*One of Calgary's earliest sandstone buildings, the hotel was popular among ranchers for their forays into town, and was home to a number of colourful characters who frequented its Long Bar, reputed to be the longest between Winnipeg and Hong Kong.*

## BANK OF MONTREAL

136 & 140 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1929 – 1932



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A branch of the Bank of Montreal has stood on a portion of this site since 1886. By 1928-1929 it was readily apparent new premises were necessary and the building next door, the Bank of British North America, was purchased for the expansion.

The present Manitoba Tyndall limestone building, designed by Montreal architect Frederick Rea, replaced an earlier, ornate Victorian one of rough sandstone. Neo-Classical in style, it follows the tradition of using classical forms to symbolize financial stability. A carved relief incorporating pine trees, beavers and First Nations' people to symbolize Canada, surrounds the Bank's coat of arms.

Ornate brass doors open onto the only intact neo-classical interior (restored in 1993) existing in Calgary, which features spectacular coffered ceilings, encrusted with 917 ounces of gold leaf.



## CENTRAL METHODIST (UNITED) CHURCH

131 – 7 Avenue S.W.

1905

The Central Methodist Church is the successor to the Calgary Methodist Church that was established by Reverend John McDougall in 1875. Planning for this building began in 1898, at which time funds were raised to hire the architectural firm of Badgely & Nicklas of Cleveland, Ohio, to produce a design.

The building was officially dedicated in February of 1905 as a conspicuous tribute to Calgary's progressive spirit. The chimes in the tower were donated in 1927 by R.B. Bennett, in memory of his mother.

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## HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY STORE #4

200 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1911-1913

The Hudson's Bay Company is the oldest trading company in Canada and this is its fourth retail location in Calgary. This store was constructed in three stages. The initial construction began on the northern half of the present site along 1 St. West and 7 Ave.

When it opened in 1913, it was one of the largest city stores to use the department method of merchandising.

In 1929, the store was enlarged, adding the 8 Avenue façade and the colonnade.

A third addition to the west was made in 1957. This Chicago Commercial style building with Edwardian Classical features is built of steel, concrete and brick, and is entirely faced with cream-glazed terracotta.

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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE



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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## ALBERTA BLOCK

805 – 1 Street S.W.

1903

A portion of this site was originally owned by a group of eastern investors – R.B. Angus, Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona), E. Osler and Wm. Scarth. Smith was a major personality in western Canadian history, negotiating a settlement to the Red River Uprising (1st Riel Rebellion) with Louis Riel. He was a major stockholder in both the C.P.R. and the Hudson's Bay Company and drove in the last spike in the C.P.R. railway at Craigellachie in 1885.

The Alberta Block is significant for its association with the original builder and owner, Wm. Roper Hull (1856-1925). Hull was a local cattleman, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and land developer and played a prominent role in Western Canada's early economic development. This was the long time home of Condon's Palace of Eats.



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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## HODDER (HULL) BLOCK

205 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1901

Originally owned by Edward (Ed) F.T. Hodder, who wore a Viking moustache, called his residence Bow Peep and was often the brunt of his cronies jokes. The building was eventually sold to William Roper Hull, who altered the structure by adding a basement, then converted it into the Royal Theatre in 1911. By 1914, it had been converted into a pool room with offices above.

## LEESON & LINEHAM BLOCK

209 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1910

George Leeson and John Lineham first joined forces in the ill-fated Rocky Mountain Development Corporation then turned to real estate. Prior to their partnership, Leeson ran a general store, ranched, and owned part of the Royal Mail Line, a stagecoach running between Alberta and Saskatchewan. Lineham was also a rancher who established the Lineham Lumber Company – the prime industry in Okotoks for over 25 years.

When Leeson first came to Alberta he ran a trading store at Morley, Alberta in partnership with John Scott of Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, that used personalized minted coin tokens ranging in value from 1¢ to \$1.

Leeson had large ranching interests near Morley, and property holdings at Calgary and other towns in the area.

This Chicago style commercial structure features grid-like window organization, rock faced sandstone base, banded brick and sandstone walls, large simplified storefronts and a large sand painted entablature.

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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE



*George Leeson & John Lineham first joined forces in the ill-fated Rocky Mountain Development Corporation venture. When their oil wells did not produce as anticipated, they turned to real estate.*

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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## ALLEN (PALACE) THEATRE

219 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1921

Barney Allen and his two sons, Jules and Jay, founded the first big international movie theatre circuit in 1906. By 1909, they were giants in the movie theatre industry and made Calgary their base of operations. In 1921, the Allen Theatre was opened. In 1929, when the theatre was taken over by Famous Players, the “Golden Age of Cinema” still lay ahead but the Allen empire was already a thing of the past.

William Aberhart, Premier of Alberta from 1935-1949 and founder of Alberta’s Social Credit Party, made his first broadcast from its stage in November 1925.

The Palace is the sole intact survivor of Calgary’s early theatres. Designed by C. Howard Crane, it features Corinthian pilasters across the brick facade, five central bays project slightly, and each contains a three-light window with Adamesque lunettes. The pilasters support an entablature, above which is a decorated blind roundheaded arch. Much survives of the fine interior, including some detailed and distinctive plasterwork.



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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## MACKAY & DIPPIE BLOCK

218 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1909

A small business block occupying only one-half of the lot was built in 1909 for MacKay & Dippie Furriers & Taxidermists. In 1910, a workroom was added in the rear of the lot and in 1913 an addition produced the building that stands today.

When Walter MacKay arrived in Calgary in 1886 with his family, his father, James Grant MacKay, rented the log cabin that stood on the northeast corner of Stephen Avenue and 3 St. East until 1976. In 1910, when the noted naturalist Geo. F. Dippie arrived in Calgary, the partnership was established.

## McFARLANE & NORTHCOTT (TURNER-HICKS) BLOCK

220 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1907

Typical of many of the smaller commercial blocks of its time with retail at grade and offices above, this building has undergone numerous changes both in its appearance and tenancy. Originally it housed hardware stores, first McFarlane's then Turner-Hicks, then it was home to the Trust and Guarantee Company (1914-1930) and later, the Famous Cloak Company.

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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## WESTERN (KRAFT) BUILDING

222 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1907

The Western Block is typical of the period, with retail at grade and offices above. A simple three-storey brick building with sandstone trim, it exhibits good style and detail.

In 1930, the building changed its name when Kraft The Furrier Ltd. moved into it.

The storefront has been modernized, a marquee added and the windows covered with closed shutters. The building was incorporated into Scotia Centre in the mid-1970s and the storefront opens at the rear into the Scotia Centre mall. The building, however, has retained its cornice and general integrity.

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CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE

## MACPHERSON FRUIT COMPANY

227 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1905, 1929

Built in 1905 as a warehouse, in 1912 it housed a brokerage office whose fraudulent practices led to the enactment of securities fraud legislation. In 1928 the building became the property of the Trust & Guarantee Company, which proceeded to stamp the building with its own image. The stunning black Art Deco exterior of this building is the result of that renovation. Today it stands as one of the finest Art Deco exteriors in Calgary.

It also housed the offices of numerous barristers, solicitors, and stockbrokers. Since 1968, the building housed Arnold Churgin Shoes, a popular shoe store. Arnold Churgin (1927-1987) introduced European designer shoes to Calgary in the 1960's. This visually striking structure is the westerly bookend of the main collection of historic buildings on Stephen Avenue.



CALGARY'S NATIONAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STEPHEN AVENUE



## LOUGHEED BUILDING & GRAND THEATRE

604 – 1 Street S.W.

1911

The Lougheed Block was built to accommodate retail stores, offices, living quarters and the Sherman Grand Theatre.

The Lougheed Building's Grand Theatre was hailed as one of the most famous theatres in North America. Many renowned actors and theatre companies performed, including Sarah Bernhardt, Lawrence Irving (who appeared in "Typhoon" only weeks before his death on the Titanic), The Dumbells, Sophie Tucker, Ethel Barrymore, the Marx Brothers, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Fred and Adele Astaire, and the list goes on. The Grand had the largest stage in Canada and acoustics that were touted to be second to none in North America.

In 1937, the theatre was bought by businessman J.B. Barron and became a cinema. Renovations were completed in 1947.

Since that time, the building has had several tenants, until a fire in 2003 temporarily closed the building. In 2008, the building re-opened after a complete rehabilitation.

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*The rather plain appearance  
of this commercial block bellies  
the excitement & merriment that  
once flourished under its roof.*



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## AGT BUILDING

119 – 6 Avenue S.W.

1929

The Alberta Government Telephones (AGT) Building was erected during the construction spurt of the late 1920s. Considered very modern, the AGT Building featured such innovations as the first automatic elevators in the province and improved fireproofing. The building is an excellent example of the commercial architectural style of the time in which elements derived from the Gothic Revival (such as the buttress-like piers and the crenellated parapet) are combined with geometric Moderne forms.



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## UTILITIES BUILDING

115 – 6 Avenue S.W.

1939

The Utilities Building was the largest single building project completed at the close of the Great Depression. The building was an employment scheme to provide work for approximately 50 men each day during the eight months of its construction. In the interest of employing more skilled workers (as well as allowing for future expansion), City Council determined that a steel structure, rather than the originally specified reinforced concrete, would be used.

The Utilities Building was the home of the Electric Light Systems and Waterworks Department of The City of Calgary from 1939 -1957. It has the distinction of being the first fully air conditioned building in the city and, in 1954, one of the first in the city to have been fitted with an IBM computer.

ODDFELLOWS' TEMPLE  
(CHAMBER OF COMMERCE)

517 Centre Street S.W.

1912

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Oddfellows organizations began in England in the sixteenth century. The rituals and oaths of secrecy were typical of societies and craft unions of the time, such as the Freemasons. The role of lodges and beneficial societies was most welcome in the West, where their promise to care for ill members, bury the dead and look after widows and orphans, provided a much-needed social safety net in the early years of settlement. The first Independent Order of Oddfellows lodge in Alberta was founded by Calgary's first mayor, George Murdoch, in 1884, who also participated in the founding of the first Masonic lodge (Bow River Lodge #1).

The four-storey brick building is relatively ornate in design, with three tiers of superimposed stone pilaster strips, reaching from the base to the cornice. The arched windows of the top floor illuminated the Grand Hall of the Oddfellows. The building was purchased and adapted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce in 1979.



*The first Independent Order of Oddfellows lodge in Alberta was founded by Calgary's first mayor, George Murdoch, in 1884. Interestingly, Murdoch also participated in the founding of the Citizen's Committee which spearheaded the campaign for Calgary's incorporation as a town.*

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## CALGARY FIREHALL #1

140 – 6 Avenue S.E.

1911

In 1885, the Calgary Fire Brigade was formed. 1897 marked the appointment of James “Cappy” Smart as the chief and first full-time paid employee of the Calgary Fire Department. A legend in his own time, Cappy Smart was credited by many in the Northwest with being one of the two forces – the other being the arrival of the CPR – that transformed Calgary into a modern city. Smart led the call for a more appropriate hall, and this 1911 red-brick building is the result.

Classical in styling, the firehall has a central pediment, a side tower with a bell and copper cupola, and arched fire-truck doors.



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## NORTH-WEST TRAVELERS BUILDING

515 – 1 Street S.E.

1913

This building was originally built to house commercial travellers’ offices, sample rooms and the Commercial Club. Additional tenants included both federal and provincial departments. By 1926, the major tenant was the Calgary School Board’s Commercial High School and the Calgary Public Museum. Then for two years, 1943-1945, the YWCA’s Service Women’s Centre occupied the facilities and in 1945 the building was converted to a residential hotel, the Hotel Bliss. By 1948, it was a Salvation Army Social Service Centre. Recent restorations have allowed for a variety of commercial tenants.

## CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

218 – 7 Avenue S.E.

1905

This Gothic Revival building is the second oldest church still standing in downtown Calgary.

Canada's Governor General, the Earl of Minto, laid the cornerstone in 1904, and the first services were conducted in 1905. The elaborately carved rood screen (a wooden screen separating the nave and choir) was dedicated by the Prince of Wales in 1919.

William Roper Hull, Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, William Pearce and Patrick Burns are commemorated in the stained glass windows.

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## GRUNWALD (ST. REGIS) HOTEL

124 – 7 Avenue S.W.

1913

When the St. Regis Hotel opened on October 22, 1913, it was known as the Grunwald Hotel. Touted as a first-class European-style hotel, it was built to accommodate the better-heeled of the westward-bound masses. The St. Regis is one of a small number of edifices in Calgary to feature terracotta tile. The Grunwald, named for the manager, Carl Grunwald, was changed when owner, A.C. Johnstone, took over the management of the establishment in 1917.

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## CALGARY (ROYAL CANADIAN) LEGION HALL #1

116 – 7 Avenue S.E.

1922

In 1915, returning soldiers world-wide formed the Great War Veterans' Association (GWVA). The Calgary branch gained notoriety in Calgary by declaring the Calgary Resolution, a grant scheme for veterans — later endorsed nation-wide to develop a system of bonus payments; limited only by the country's ability to pay. The GWVA, changed in the mid-1920s to the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, continued to fight for veterans' rights.

Plans were developed for a Memorial Hall and on September 9, 1919, HRH Edward, Prince of Wales (later King of England, and later still Duke of Windsor) turned the first sod for the Calgary Legion Hall. But it was not until 1922, with the support of provincial and municipal governments and a public subscription, that the \$90,000 structure was completed.



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## CALGARY COURTHOUSE #2

7 Avenue & 5 Street S.W.

1914

This was the second courthouse built in Calgary; the first had been built in 1886 by the Federal government. Architect A.M. Jeffers, who also designed the Legislature Building in Edmonton, was replaced by R.P. Blakey, who modified some of the features of Jeffers' design, but left it largely intact. The Courthouse is one of the last buildings in Calgary to use sandstone. Between 1964-1975, the Courthouse was the home of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute and Museum, and after 1986, was the Provincial Court of Appeal.

## KNOX PRESBYTERIAN (UNITED) CHURCH

506 – 4 Street S.W.

1913

In the winter of 1883-1884, Calgary's first church, made from lumber donated by the Northwest Mounted police was moved across the frozen Elbow River to the corner of 7 Ave. and Centre St. Calgary's steady growth soon rendered the wood frame building inadequate. This church, built 1912-1913, is the fourth home of the oldest Protestant congregation in Calgary.

It is one of Calgary's largest historic churches and the city's most impressive example of Gothic Revival style. It features a cruciform plan with a side bell tower and is characterized by the building's straight lines and the vertical emphasis of its massing and detailing. The church seated 1,200 and featured organs, stained glass windows decorated with tracery and finely carved stonework. The church cost \$184,610.

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## YORK HOTEL

636 Centre Street S.E.

1929 – 1930

Until 2007 this site was occupied the Art Deco-style York Hotel, opened April 2, 1930 as an upscale hostelry. The hotel's brown-brick exterior was made distinctive for its roofline frieze - an exuberant design impressed within concrete material. The building's interior featured Egyptian and Spanish-style architectural finishes and housed a cafe, bar, billiard parlour, bowling alley, barber and beauty shops, and later the CFCN radio studios. By the 1960s, the hotel's status had begun to decline and by 1993 it had been remodelled as low-income housing. In 2007, the building's facades were dismantled and stored for reassembly on the site as part of a future development.

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CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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## EATON'S (FAÇADE ONLY)

412 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1929



Construction of Eaton's original store on this site was preceded by more than a year of intensive public relations, culminating in the arrival of a contingent of the company's top executives by private railway car in 1927. Interviewed by the press, they praised the mayor's courtesy and stressed their intention to use Alberta stone and local architects.

Lady Eaton and her young son Timothy opened the store in 1929, which boasted the dual novelties of the first escalator in the province and a display window arcade. While basically utilitarian in concept, the building, with its second-storey groupings of three arched windows, its three-part vertical division and its restrained cornice, does exhibit Renaissance Revival and Italianate influences.

A portion of the store façade was incorporated in the 1980s development on the site.



*In the 1920s, Calgary experienced a brief respite from economic hard times. In 1927, the T. Eaton Company bought two city blocks at the western edge of the downtown core & proceeded to build a major department store. It was a bold gamble on Calgary's growing economy to locate the store so far west of the bustling centre.*



## LANCASTER BUILDING

304 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1913 - 1918

James Teague, a student of the famous Rattenbury (architect of the Empress Hotel in Victoria), designed this Edwardian skyscraper and its prestigious office interiors.

Teague suggested a classical form by the divisions of the facade. The ground and second floors are clad in terra-cotta and brick pilasters, which protrude only slightly, extend to the ninth floor, terminated by a heavy cornice above, which is an attic storey.

The building was named after the House of Lancaster, one of the sides in the British War of the Roses, by its owner J.S. Mackie, who was a keen student of history. Mackie arrived in Calgary in 1866, became a successful businessman and served as an alderman and mayor (1901).

This building was the first 10-storey structure in downtown Calgary and uniquely remained in the same family for three generations.

This building was used as the Grain Exchange, an Eaton's store, the offices of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, the post office and a pioneer radio station.

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## CANADA LIFE ASSURANCE (HOLINSWORTH) BUILDING

301 – 8 Avenue S.W.

1912 – 1913

This early skyscraper was the product of the development boom that peaked in 1912 and collapsed in 1913. This is the only example in Alberta of the work of the Montreal architectural partnership of Brown & Vallance, who also designed buildings in Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon.

In the late 1980s, the Canada Life Assurance Building was integrated into an office and shopping mall complex, and so the structure and the interior have been rebuilt. It illustrates how historic façades can be retained in adaptive re-use and redevelopment projects.

Like many other downtown buildings, this building was erected during the boom preceding World War I.



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## GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING

815 – 1 Street S.W.

1910

The Grain Exchange Building is Calgary's first skyscraper and first modern business block. The Grain Exchange Building was the first reinforced concrete building in Calgary and, at six storeys, was one of the tallest buildings in the province. It is the only building of its height and size to use sandstone cladding.

The Grain Exchange Building is noteworthy for its association with William Roper Hull, one of the legendary pioneers of southern Alberta. Hull (1856-1925) was born in England and came to British Columbia in 1873. He raised livestock near Kamloops, and drove cattle through the Crow's Nest Pass in 1883 to the foothills. A year later he settled in Calgary, where he raised cattle, and became active in numerous important businesses and in real estate.

## PALLISER HOTEL

133 – 9 Avenue S.W.

1911-1914

Built between 1911-1914 by the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Palliser Hotel is a testament to the lucrative development potential of both southern Alberta and the transcontinental railroad. Built at a cost of \$1 million to cater to the tourist and business traveller, the Palliser became the centre of social life in Calgary: political conventions and important meetings, dinner functions, fancy dress balls and thousands of wedding receptions have taken place here. Many distinguished guests have stayed in the hotel: politicians, dignitaries, and royalty from Buckingham Palace to Hollywood and beyond. Curiously, early drawings of the hotel depict a two-storey mansard roof, which is more typical of the Chateau Style hotels for which the CPR is famed. This building, however, marks a break with that tradition. The hotel is based on hotels such as the Plaza in New York City and the St. Francis in San Francisco.

The hotel underwent a complete restoration and renovation in the 1980s.

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*The Palliser Hotel was built between 1911 & 1914 by the Canadian Pacific Railway for approximately \$1 million according to designs by two Montreal architects, E. and W.S. Maxwell.*

## CALGARY TOWER

101 – 9 Avenue S.W.

1968



The freestanding tower, known as the Husky Tower until 1971, was completed in 1968 and comprises a concrete shaft topped by a pod containing four levels and a spire. The tower is integrated within Palliser Square, a 1960s transportation, retail and office development at its base. The 190.8 metre-high tower was the tallest structure in Canada until 1975 and The City of Calgary until 1983. The Calgary Tower stands in the centre of downtown, on the former site of the Canadian Pacific Railway station and the end of Centre Street, a principal city street that incorporates the monumental Centre Street Bridge.

The Tower is significant in Calgary as an early example of the continuous-pour, slip-form of construction. The concrete shaft of the tower was completed in just 25 days, sometimes rising 11.88 m per day.

