

JAMES SHORT PARK AND PARKADE

1.0 FACILITY

1.1 Description

The James Short Park and Parkade (115–4 Av SW) is a multipurpose facility that comprises an underground parking garage, a surface-level park, and Plus-15 connections to Sun Life Plaza (112–4 Av SW), TransCanada Tower (450–1 St SW), and the Suncor Energy Centre East Tower (111–5 Av SW). The parkade was designed by Calgary architect Fred Valentine, and it was officially opened on December 3, 1990. The Calgary Parks Foundation developed James Short Park, and it was dedicated on June 20, 1991.

The following inscription on the dedication plaque explains the park's name:

Dedicated in recognition of James Short, K. C., who came to Calgary from Ontario in 1889, was principal of Central School before becoming a prominent lawyer and long-term member of the Calgary School Board. Located on this site, the city's first high school and first normal school for the instruction of teachers was renamed after him in 1938.

1.2 Development history

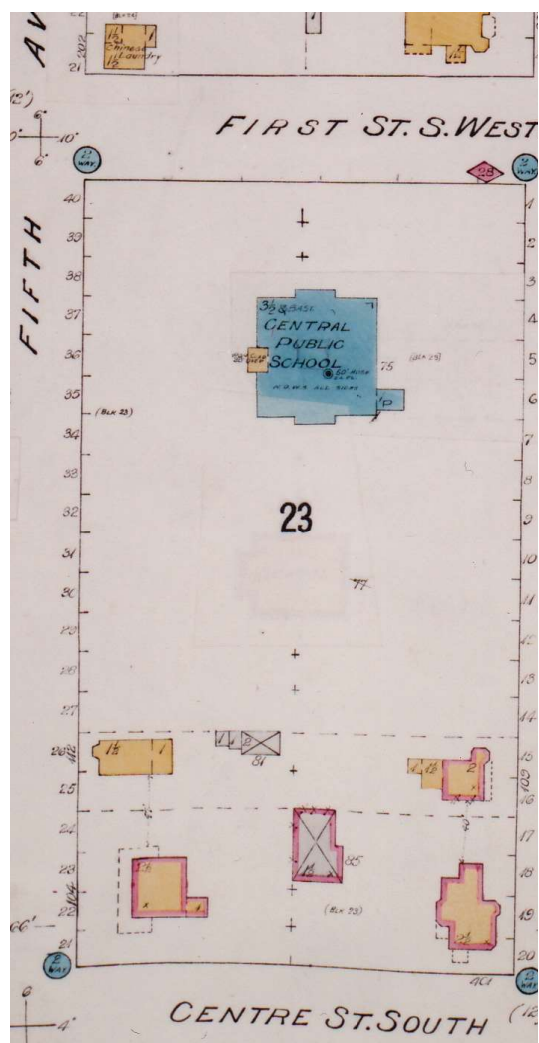
This block, once the site of James Short School, was scheduled for urban renewal in 1966. To address downtown parking needs, the Greyhound terminal that opened in 1972 was built to accommodate a five-storey parking structure above it, although this was never built. City council initially approved park development for this block in 1973, but The City's plans competed with the federal government's aspiration to build a new federal complex on the site. (In the event, the project—the Harry Hays Building—was built in nearby Chinatown.)

The land for James Short Park was assembled in the 1980s, and the James Short School cupola, which had been retained when James Short School was demolished, was moved onto the site and mounted on a pedestal. For all the time the cupola had been fixed atop the school, and in all the years it had been placed in storage or on display on Prince's Island, it had no clock mechanism. As part of the development of James Short Park, the clock mechanism retained from the clock tower of the Burns Block (101–8 Av SW), which had been demolished in 1965, was installed in the cupola.

2.0 SITE

The facility occupies the eastern half of Plan C, Block 23 in the Downtown Commercial Core. Along with the rest of Calgary and most of southern Alberta, the block ceased to be Indigenous land (at least from the Crown's perspective) in 1877 with the signing of Treaty No. 7.

This block was surveyed and subdivided as part of the Canadian Pacific Railway's Townsite of Calgary in 1884. It was bounded to the north by Reinach Avenue (now 4 Av SW), to the south by Northcote Avenue (now 5 Av SW), to the east by McTavish Street (now Centre St SW), and to the west by Scarth Street (now 1 St SW). Street and avenue names were changed to numbers in 1904.



Detail of 1911 fire insurance map showing Block 23. Central Public School, the sandstone building later known as James Short School, is situated on the public school board property (lots 1-14 and 27-40). Old Central was located further east on this parcel. Lots 15-20 and 21-26 were privately-owned, and this map shows four dwellings and two outbuildings on those lots. The block is now evenly divided between the TransCanada Tower site (lots 1-10 and 21-40 on this map, approximately) and the James Short Park and Parkade site (lots 11-30 on this map, approximately).

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2.1 James Short Park and Parkade Site

In 1887, the Calgary Protestant Public School District No. 19 acquired a portion of the block (lots 29–31, approximately) for educational purposes. (The board was later renamed the Calgary School Board and, eventually, the Calgary Board of Education.) Eventually, the board acquired the balance of the future James Short Park and Parkade site apart from lots 15–26, which comprise the eastern third of the block and remained under separate, fractured ownership until the site was assembled in the 1980s to develop James Short Park and Parkade.

The board disposed of its property after James Short School closed in 1967.

2.2 TransCanada Tower site

At an unknown date after 1887, the public school board acquired the future TransCanada Tower site. With that, the board owned the entire western two-thirds of the block. The board disposed of its property after James Short School closed in 1967.

3.0 JAMES SHORT

3.1 Early life and family

James Short (1862–1942) was born in Elora, Ontario, where his parents farmed. He attended high school in Elora and was further educated at the University of Toronto.

Short moved to Calgary in 1889 and remained here for the rest of his life. In 1896, he married Janet Lafferty (1847–1934), a teacher at Central School who was 15 years his senior. They had no children. Janet's brother Dr. James Delamere Lafferty (1853–1920) served a term as mayor of Calgary in 1890–91. Her nephew Eric Lafferty Harvie (1892–1975) became a well-known lawyer and philanthropist in the city; he founded the Glenbow Museum, donated River Park to the city, and was involved in establishing Heritage Park and Devonian Gardens.

Two of Short's brothers moved to Alberta and became prominent citizens in their respective communities. William Short (1866–1926) served twice as mayor of Edmonton, where William Short Road was named for him in 1974. Samuel Short (1882–1945) was appointed Medicine Hat's city solicitor in 1939.

3.2 Social life

Short became actively involved in community life in Calgary. Soon after his arrival, he was elected to the executive of the newly-formed Calgary Institute. He played football and lacrosse.

3.3 Religion

Short quickly joined Knox Presbyterian Church, in which he eventually took a leadership position. It was there that he met Rev. James Chalmers Herdman (1855–1910), who established a Chinese mission in the city around 1900. In 1899, both Short and Herdman attended a Calgary conference of western Canadian Presbyterians. In a session titled “Christianity in Its Relation to Social Questions,” Short spoke in agreement with Rev. E.D. Maclaren that Christians have an obligation to address broad social questions.¹

3.4 Education career

3.4.1 Career before moving to Calgary

Short began teaching English at Chatham Collegiate Institute in Chatham, Ontario when it opened in 1885. He then took further teacher training in Hamilton, Ontario, and subsequently taught in a high school and in another collegiate institute before moving to Calgary.

¹ In another session, Rev. A.B. Winchester of Victoria, missionary to Chinese-Canadians on the west coast, “made a magnificent appeal for the rights” of Chinese-Canadians. The *Herald* summarized his remarks: “Let any man, he said, come amongst us that is a man. Let qualifications and character [stand] as our test and not the mere accident of birth. Neighborliness means not love to a certain section or race or color, but must be determined according to the needs of the man next to you, for G-d hath made of one blood all the nations of the world.” It is unknown whether Short attended the session.

3.4.2 Central School principal and head teacher

For nearly four years between 1889 and 1892, Short served as Central School's second principal. In his first year, the Protestant student population under his charge increased from 160 students to 240. He established a high school program in 1891, one of the first two in the North-West Territories (NWT); the other was in Regina. Besides his role as principal, Short was the sole teacher for the high school program.

In his capacity as principal and teacher, Short's relationship with the school board soured and ended in 1892. At the beginning of the year, trustee R.A. Janes (1837–1907), who was also the board's secretary-treasurer at the time, challenged the competence of the teaching staff despite a positive report from the school inspector. Before long, Short asked for a raise as well as a testimonial in the event that he sought a teaching position elsewhere. The board denied his first request and deferred action on his second.

In June, the board met to consider accusations made by a few parents that Short had administered, or had threatened to administer, undue corporal punishment against their children. The trustees dismissed three of the four charges as unfounded or lacking evidence. In the fourth charge, Short admitted that he had struck one boy with his hand and not the strap. The trustees judged that Short had "acted injudiciously in striking the boy with his hand, as he admitted he did, and would recommend that no teacher

hereafter in said school should lay his or her hands on any pupil in administering punishment.”²

Matters came to a head in July, when Short informed the board that he could no longer teach all three high school grades without an assistant, as he had requested in the past. Short added that he was overworked daily and had given up three weeks of his allotted holiday. When asked, he declined to consider a reduction of his pay to hire an assistant, citing his low salary. To avoid an added tax burden, the board resolved to give Short and another teacher, W.A. Milne, two months’ notice of termination and replace them with new personnel at a lower salary, with the savings to be used to hire another teacher.

3.4.3 Public school board secretary-treasurer

In January 1893, just four months after his departure as principal, Short became the school board’s appointed secretary-treasurer, a part-time paid position that he held until 1904. Early in his tenure as principal, Short had acted as secretary at school board meetings.

3.4.4 Western Canada College

² Board of Trustees report, 20 June 1892, Calgary Protestant Public School District No. 19 minutes.

In 1903, Short played a role in establishing Western Canada College, the first private boys' school in Calgary and the first independent boys' school in the NWT. As an elder of the Calgary Presbytery (a governing body in the Presbyterian church), Short was a member of a sub-committee that recommended the establishment of the college. The school operated as a non-denominational institution. When the Western Canada College Old Boys' Association was reorganized in 1919 after a period of inactivity during the First World War, Short was elected to its board. The college finally closed in 1926, and its campus became home to the Calgary School Board's new Western Canada High School in 1928.



James Short is seated at the right in this portrait of school board members taken in City Hall. "Calgary School Board, Calgary, Alberta", 1912. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, LIB-13-11, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

3.4.5 Public school board trustee and chair

Short served as an elected public school board trustee between 1904 and 1914. He often acted as the board's chairman pro tem, and he served as board chair for two years in 1908–10 and again in 1914. In his decade on the board, it expanded staff and facilities to accommodate a tenfold growth in Calgary's population. One of the first new school buildings constructed during this period was the one eventually renamed James Short School.

Short served on the board's Buildings, Finance, Grounds, Insurance, School Management, and Supply committees.

3.4.6 Calgary College board of governors

Short was associated with the first serious attempt to establish a university in Calgary. When Edmonton was selected as the provincial capital in 1905, Calgarians expected that the provincial university would be established in their city. Instead, when the University of Alberta was created in 1908, it was located in Strathcona, a city that amalgamated with Edmonton soon afterward. A group of Calgarians then pushed for the creation of a private University of Calgary. The institution was chartered in 1910 as Calgary College. While it held classes (at what is now the Memorial Park Library) for three years, the institution lacked degree-conferring powers, and it folded in 1915. Short was a member of the college's board of governors; his nephew by marriage, Eric Harvie, was a student in its Faculty of Law. In 1915, Short was part of a delegation to Edmonton that called for the establishment of an institute of technology and art. The following year, the government created the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, which later evolved into the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and the Alberta University of the Arts.

3.5 **Legal career**

3.5.1 Legal training, background, and professional development

From 1893 to 1896, Short studied law with the firm of Costigan, McCaul and Bangs. He was admitted to the Bar of the North-West Territories in 1895 and to the Bar of Alberta in 1907. Short was appointed King's Counsel in 1907. He served as president of the Calgary Bar Association and subsequently as its honorary president.

3.5.2 Private practice

Short initially practiced law in partnership with C.C. McCaul, K.C. from 1897 to 1900. He then joined Arthur L. Sifton (1858–1921) and Charles Stuart (1864–1926) in the partnership of Sifton, Short and Stuart. Sifton, who later became Alberta's first chief justice and second premier, lived on the future site of James Short Park (see 4.1.3). Stuart became a provincial supreme court justice and the founding chancellor of the University of Alberta. Short was later a partner in Short, Ross and Selwood and, finally, the senior partner in Short, Ross, Shaw and Mayhood. He practiced law until two weeks before his death. At the time, Short had practiced longer than any other lawyer in Alberta.

3.5.3 Crown prosecutor

In 1908, Short was appointed crown prosecutor for the judicial district of Calgary. He prosecuted some of Calgary's best-known legal cases, including:

- John Cashel, who was charged with assisting his brother, convicted murderer Ernest Cashel (ca. 1882–1904), to escape from NWMP custody. John Cashel was convicted. (1904)
- Arthur Pelkey (1884–1921), who was charged with manslaughter after fellow boxer Luther McCarty died in the ring during a prize fight between the two men. Pelkey was acquitted. (1913)
- Charles Harry Minchin (ca. 1886–1952), a former alderman accused of stealing \$5000 from the city treasurer’s office. Minchin was convicted. (1914)

3.6 Associations with Chinese-Canadians

The first Chinese settlers reached Calgary three or four years before Short’s arrival. Since the Chinese community comprised only adult men at the time, there were no Chinese students at Central School during Short’s tenure as principal.



"Residence of James Short, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1900. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, LIB-11-8, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

In 1891, Short built a new residence for himself at the northwest corner of Scarth St (now 1 St SW) and Abbott Av (now 2 Av SW). The house eventually acquired the address 202-2 Av SW, and the site now lies within Chinatown. It remained his home for the next half-century until his death in 1942. In 1910, the *Calgary Daily Herald* indicated that Short had once employed a Chinese-Canadian as a cook "and found him to be a good citizen, and he had always found them to be such".³ Neither Short nor the *Herald* provided any further detail, but it is reasonable to speculate that he employed the cook in a

³ "Told the Chinamen How They Must Sleep," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 14 October 1910, 11.

domestic capacity in this house. Short lived as a bachelor in this house for about five years before he was married.

In the summer of 1892, Calgary suffered a smallpox outbreak that was blamed on the town's small Chinese-Canadian community. Local police stood by while white Calgarians rioted against their Chinese neighbours; the NWMP intervened. Soon afterward, over 600 people attended a lecture at the Calgary Opera House (on the present site of the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby) by Locksley Lucas (ca. 1866–1895) of the newly-formed Anti-Chinese League. Mayor Alexander Lucas (ca. 1852–1942) spoke at the same event. That night, prominent Calgarians decided to form a local branch of the league. They included Mayor Lucas and Councilor Wesley Fletcher Orr (1831–1898), a future mayor (and the originator of Calgary's motto, "Onward").

There is no evidence that James Short participated in the riot, attended the meeting, or joined the Anti-Chinese League. However, in two later episodes in 1910 and 1919, Short expressed racist sentiments directed at Chinese-Canadians. One of those occasions, he took direct action to oppose the interests of the Chinese-Canadian community.

Calgary's first Chinatown originated in the early 1890s at the intersection of Atlantic Av (now 9 Av) and McTavish St (now Centre St). In 1900, Calgary's Methodist and Presbyterian churches began offering Sunday School classes for Chinese-Canadians. The men who attended eventually learned English at

these classes. The following year, Rev. Herdman—Short’s friend—concluded that separate quarters were required for outreach to the Chinese-Canadian community. Thomas Underwood (1863–1948), a building contractor and future mayor, provided quarters at 215–10 Av SW. A new Chinatown developed in that district.

The entry of the Canadian Northern Railway (now part of Canadian National Railways) and its right-of-way along 1 St SW threatened the continued existence of Calgary’s second Chinatown. Louis Kheong led a group of eight Chinese-Canadian businessmen who sought a building permit to construct their own mixed-use building at Centre St and 2 Av SE, just blocks from Short’s home.

Short and a group of citizens signed a letter to The City opposing the relocation of Chinatown to Centre St and advocating instead for a proposed market site near the Langevin Bridge (which was renamed Reconciliation Bridge in 2017). One of the other signatories was Rev. George W. Kerby (1860–1944), the minister of Central Methodist Church (which remains extant as Central United Church) and the founding principal of Mount Royal College (now Mount Royal University). The *Herald* summarized the letter as follows:

The letter said there was no reason why Chinamen should not make good citizens. They are wide-awake business men, and in many ways good citizens, and the

market site could be leased to them. This appeared to the signers the most feasible and practical suggestion regarding the matter.⁴



James Short almost certainly appears in this photograph of men who attended the conference of October 13, 1910 to discuss the matter of Chinatown's location. It appeared in the *Morning Albertan* the following day. "City commissioners and local Chinese delegation, Calgary, Alberta", 1910. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NA-2798-6, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

City council met on October 10 to consider the letter and other petitions it had received opposing issuance of the permit. Short appeared as solicitor for a group of citizens who opposed the issuance of the permit. Stanley L. Jones (1878–1916)—who, like Short, became the namesake for a public school in the city—appeared as solicitor on behalf of the applicants.

⁴ "Council Trying to Straddle the Fence," *Calgary Daily Herald* 11 October 1910, 1.

Council accepted a suggestion put forward in a petition from Short, H.E. Lambert, and Rev. Richard H. Standerwick (who later became superintendent of the Chinese Mission and Chinese YMCA). After consulting with members of the Chinese-Canadian community and receiving their agreement, these men suggested the idea of a conference between the city commissioners and twelve representatives—six on each of the opposing sides—to resolve the matter. Short became one of the delegates who met with the city commissioners on October 13 to discuss the matter.

The *Herald* characterized Short's comments at the conference:

James Shortt [sic], K.C., said he employed a Chinaman as cook once, and found him to be a good citizen, and he had always found them to be such. But there is not a man in the room, he said, who could get up and say there are not features in connection with Chinese homes that make them objectionable. They are a distinct race from whites, and nothing can eliminate the strong antagonistic feeling between the two races. When a Chinaman comes to reside in a neighborhood the whites will no longer live there. He suggested a partial measured bylaw limiting the number of Chinese to sleep in a room.⁵

⁵ "Told the Chinamen How They Must Sleep," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 14 October 1910, 11.

Short's comments contrast sharply with those expressed by Stanley Jones at the October 10 council meeting: "The Chinese are citizens of Canada, and no bylaws can be passed that will discriminate against them because they are of a different creed and race."⁶

In the event, the permit was issued, and Calgary's third (and present) Chinatown began.

Available sources indicate that Short acted as solicitor at the October 10 council meeting, but they make no such characterization of his role as a delegate to the October 13 conference. If Short made his hurtful comments in his role as solicitor, they could be ascribed to his clients' views but not necessarily to his own. However, the circumstances suggest that Short was motivated by the proximity of his own home and property to the proposed Canton Block development. In its account of the conference, the *Herald* indicated that Sheriff I.S.G. Van Wart (1858–1919), one of Short's fellow delegates, "said that he could sympathise with Mr. Shortt [sic] and his neighbors".⁷ Short's further comments in 1919, which he made in a personal capacity and not as a solicitor, express similar racist sentiments.

By 1919, Chinatown extended from 1 St SW to 1 St SE between the Bow River to the north and 4 Av to the south. Early in 1919, The City issued a building

⁶ "Council Trying to Straddle the Fence," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 11 October 1910, 1.

⁷ "Told the Chinamen How They Must Sleep," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 14 October 1910, 11.

permit for new construction at the intersection of Centre St and 4 Av. Further research can determine which property this was. Opponents interpreted this development as an expansion of Chinatown. By the spring of 1919, opposition to Chinatown's growth, and even to its location, resurfaced.

In April 1919, City Solicitor Clinton J. Ford (1882–1964) asserted that The City should not have issued the building permit (implying that Chinatown should not be allowed to grow), but that it was too late to act on the matter. That same month, a group of 150 North Hill citizens petitioned city council to prevent the growth of Chinatown, which lay opposite the Bow River across the recently-constructed Centre Street Bridge.

On April 30, the *Herald* published an editorial that expressed anti-Chinese stereotypes and called for a limit to Chinatown's growth. The *Herald* also summarized remarks on the subject solicited from several prominent individuals, including Short:

James Short, who resides on the corner of Second avenue and First street west, in conversation this morning, said that Chinatown should be shifted, for as time goes on the gateway to Centre street bridge will grow in importance. He said that he had learned from the leading Chinamen in business here, that the Celestials would be willing to move, providing they would not be put to any great expense in making the change.

"It is too central for Chinatown, anyway," went on Mr. Short. "Those people do not beautify any property and in fact they tend to make a district obnoxious. They have no idea of sanitation at all."

Mr. Short said that he heard several complaints about people being frightened to pass through Chinatown at night, and did not consider that this was right, especially when the district is so thickly populated and a large number.⁸

Short's remarks echoed those expressed by the North Hill petitioners and many others in the city.

Short continued to live at 202-2 Av SW while Chinatown grew around him. After his death, the house was broken up into apartment; by 1962, its tenants included David Mah and Kuo Hing Wong. The house was removed or demolished at an unknown date, and, in 1991, the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre opened on its site.

In his legal career, Short prosecuted Chinese-Canadian defendants and he prosecuted others who had harmed Chinese-Canadian victims of crime. He

⁸ "Protests, re Chinatown Being Located in Heart of Calgary, are Vigorous," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 30 April 1919, 11.

also had Chinese-Canadian clients. In 1987, Calgary's Oi Kwan Foundation published a commemorative book that details a redemption story in Short's attitude toward Chinese-Canadians. In a section on Short's friend Rev. Herdman, the book states:

So profound had been his commitment to the Chinese that he'd won over one of their bitterest enemies in the city. James Short, K.C., a member of Herdman's [sic] session at Knox Presbyterian Church, the man who once tried to ban the Chinese to a ghetto outside the town at Mewata, memorialized Dr. Herdman after his death for changing his views on the Chinese.⁹

This account, however, presents a chronological problem. Short's active opposition to Chinatown's establishment in 1910, and the offensive comments that he made in 1910 and 1919, came after Rev. Herdman's death.

3.7 Honours

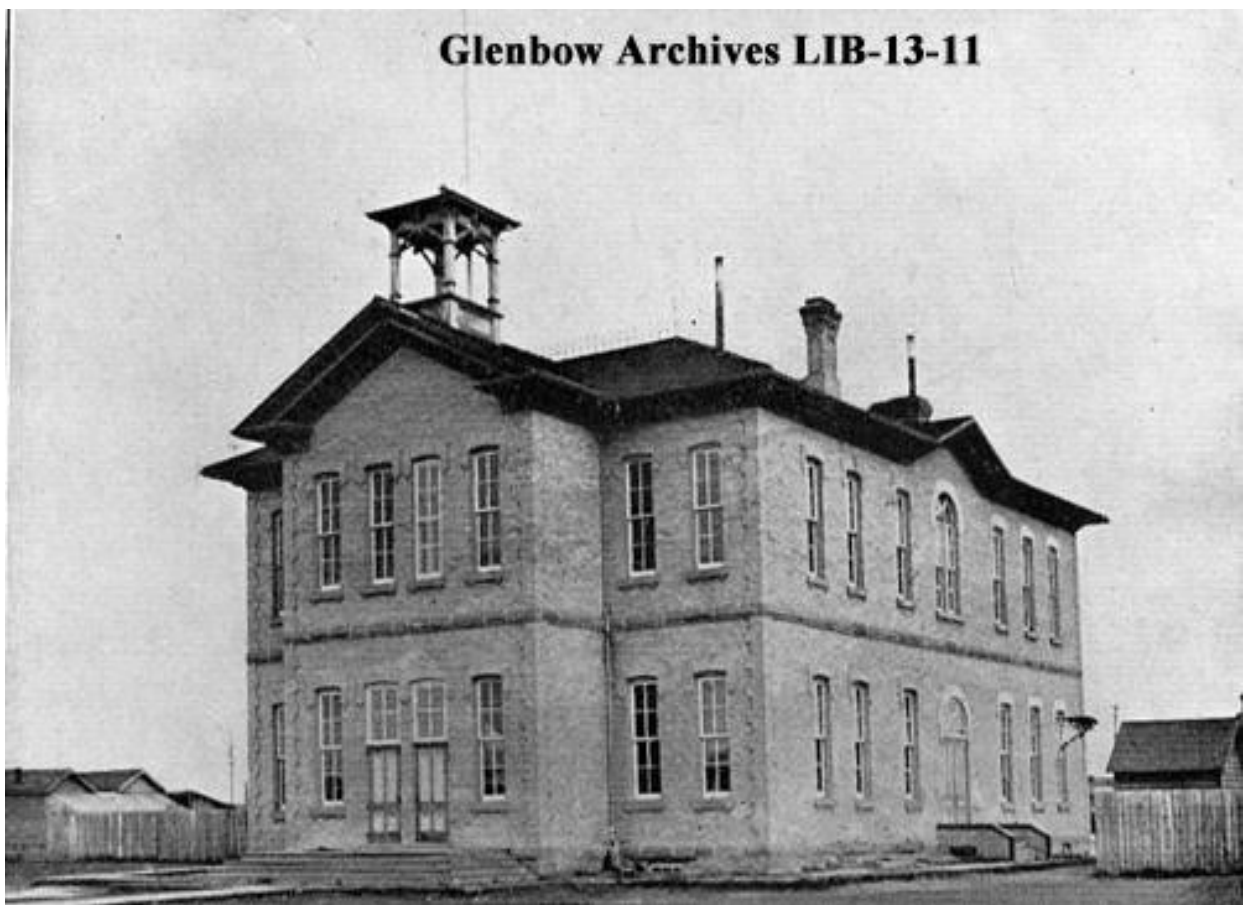
When the public school board first proposed naming renaming the sandstone Central Public School for its former principal in 1918, Short declined the offer. He accepted it in 1938 when the board renamed the new Central Junior High School in the same building after him. James Short School closed in 1969, and James Short Memorial School, which maintains is

⁹ *Oi Kwan Endowment Trust Fund Commemorative Book*, p. 22. Oi Kwan Foundation fonds, Glenbow Archives.

honours and traditions, opened in 1973. At the present school's opening ceremony, the Short family was represented by Short's niece by marriage, Marcella Love (née Lafferty, 1894–1981) and her son Alan Tannahill Love (1922–1995). James Short Park and Parkade were named for him in 1990–91.

4.0 BUILDINGS

4.1 Buildings on the James Short Park and Parkade site



"Central School, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1903. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, LIB-13-11, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.1 Old Central School, 1887–1914

In November 1887, the public school board opened its first purpose-built school along Northcote Avenue (now 5 Av SW, on what is now the southwestern portion of James Short Park). The two-storey brick school was evidently first known as the Calgary Public School; in time, it became Central Public School or simply Central School. The building was expanded to the north in 1891. A furnace failure in 1896 resulted in a catastrophic expense for the school board. After the adjacent sandstone building was completed in 1905, the original facility became known as Old Central. The schoolhouse was condemned in late 1913, and it was demolished in the summer of 1914.

**Glenbow Archives
LIB-11-57**

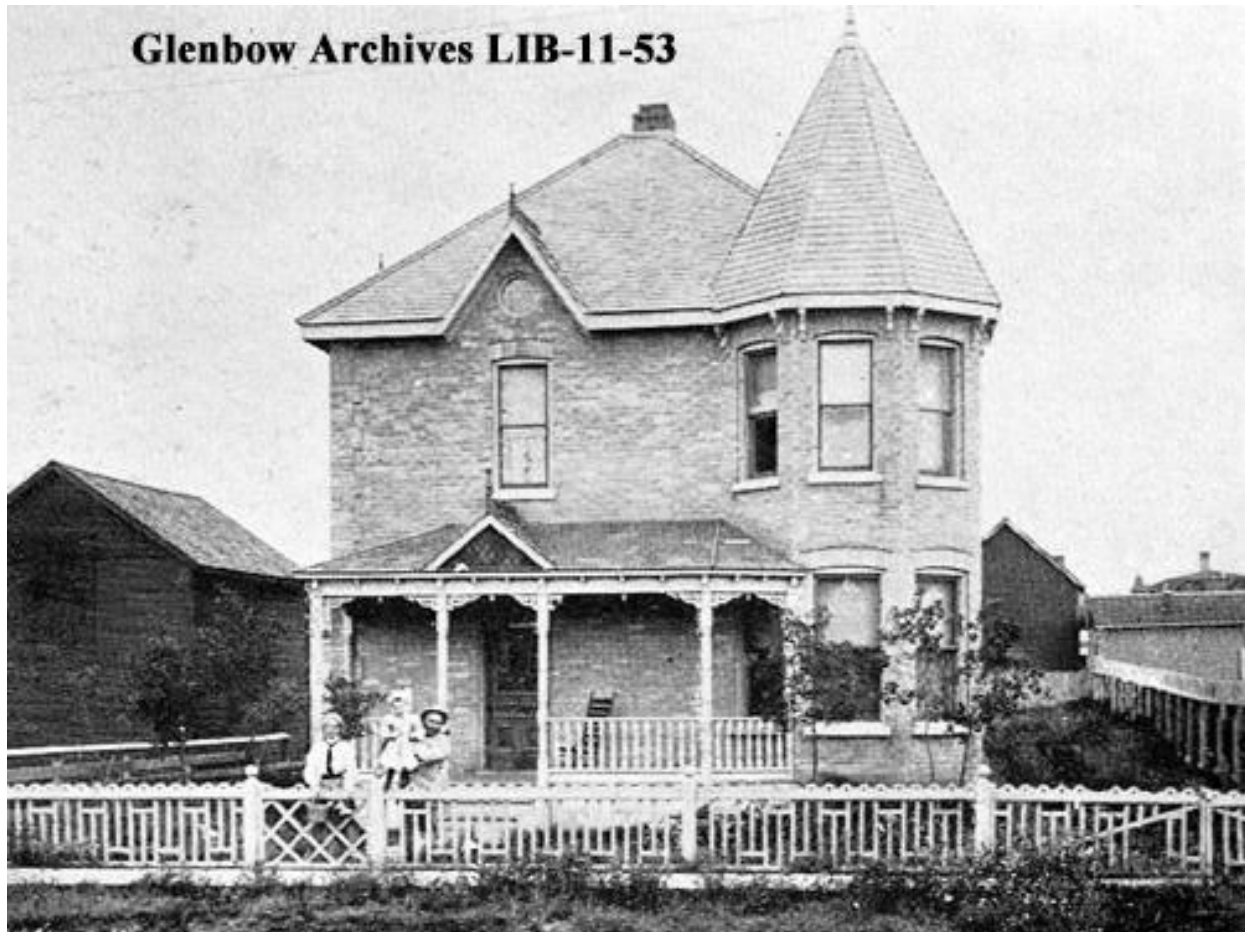


Looking west to the Neilson residence; original Central School, background left. "Residence of alderman Hugh Neilson, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1900. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, LIB-11-57, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.2 Hugh Neilson residence (401 Centre St SW), ca. 1900–52

This two-and-a-half storey brick veneer residence stood at the southwest corner of Centre St and 4 Av SW from about 1900 until it was demolished in 1952. It was evidently built for Hugh Neilson (1849–1918) and his wife, Lydia Catherine Neilson (née Dorland, 1847–1922), who came from Chatham, Ontario in 1894. It remained their home for the rest of their lives. Hugh Neilson established the Neilson Furniture Company and later built the extant sandstone Neilson Block (118–8 Av SE) as its shop and the extant Biscuit Block (438–11 Av SE) as its warehouse. Among

other associations, Hugh Neilson served as an alderman in 1900–01 and as first vice-president of the YMCA. The house eventually became a rooming house.



Looking south toward the north-facing elevation of 109–4 Av SW. Note the octagonal tower. The chimney and roofline of Central School are visible in the background to the right. "Residence of Arthur Lewis Sifton, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1900. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, LIB-11-53, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.3 Arthur L. Sifton residence (109–4 Av SW), ca. 1900–52

This brick veneer residence was built by 1900, when it was owned by Charlotte Boswell. The house was demolished in 1952. Its occupants included:

- Arthur Lewis Sifton, a lawyer who served as Calgary's town solicitor and later as premier of Alberta, a federal cabinet minister, and a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Sifton was a partner in the same law firm as James Short (see 3.5.2).
- D.R. O'Neil, traveller, Thomas Ryan & Co., 1910
- Dr. John Nisbet Gunn (1879–1937), an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, and his wife, Anna Elizabeth Gunn (1885–1966), 1911–14
- William A. Montgomery, music teacher and organist at the Anglican Pro-Cathedral (which remains extant as Cathedral Church of the Redeemer), 1915–17

From about 1921 to 1931, this was the home of RCMP Inspector James Wilson Spalding (1878–1961) and Maude Marie Spalding (née Spurr, 1873–1961) and their son, Frank Spurr Spalding (1910–1993). Inspector Spalding commanded the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment in the city, and he lived around the corner from the detachment's headquarters at 104–5 Av SW (which was also located on the future site of James Short Park and Parkade). Inspector Spalding later became deputy commissioner of the RCMP.

Glenbow Archives NA-2796-23



"Royal Canadian Mounted Police headquarters, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1922. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NA-2796-23, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.4 Knox Presbyterian Church manse (104-5 Av SW, 419 Centre St SW), 1903-47

This large house was constructed in 1903 as the Knox Presbyterian Church manse. It was the home of the congregation's minister, Rev. John A. Clarke (ca. 1866-1938), and his family. The manse was also a venue for congregants' weddings. Clarke resigned and moved to Halifax in 1915, and the church sold the manse. In 1919 it was converted into the headquarters for the local Royal Northwest Mounted Police detachment. It remained headquarters of the renamed RCMP detachment until 1932.

The building later housed the Calgary Faith Mission church around 1933, and that year the Standard Church of America, a Black congregation, held meetings and services in the building. By 1935, the building housed the Alberta Conservatoire, a cultural facility. It was the home of a Danish immigrant family in the 1940s. In 1947, the building was moved to 1331 (or 1351)–12 Av SW.



Dwelling at 112-5 Av SW, left. "Inspector J.W. Spalding in carriage outside Royal Canadian Mounted Police headquarters, Calgary, Alberta", 1922. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NA-2796-21, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.5 Clennan residence (112-5 Av SW)

This frame house was built by 1910 when it was the home of William J. Clennan, a teamster and building caretaker. Between 1914 and 1928, this was the home of Thomas W. Haddow as well as the address of his business, the Denver Transfer Co. As part of their respective businesses, Clennan and Haddow likely kept horses in the outbuilding that appears on this property in the 1911 fire insurance map.

John Elphick (ca. 1895–1973), a sleeping car porter for nearly 40 years, lived here between 1929 and 1933. Elphic was a First World War veteran. Joe Clitheroe (ca. 1901–1984), a co-founder of the Canadian Youth Hostels Association, lived in the house with his wife, Mary, circa 1934–49.¹⁰ The building became a rooming house before it was eventually moved or demolished.

¹⁰ Sisters Mary Barclay (1901–2000) and Catherine Barclay (1902–1985), who also co-founded the Canadian Youth Hostel Association, attended Central School.



Central Bungalow School is visible to the left of James Short School in this south-facing oblique aerial photograph. "Aerial view of Downtown, Calgary, Alberta", 1964, by Andrew Etey. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NA-2864-466h-1, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.6 Central Bungalow School (119-4 Av SW), 1919-1960s

Built in 1919, this two-storey facility was one of several four-classroom bungalow schools built for the public school board in the dozen or so years following the First World War. They were intended for temporary use and ultimate conversion to residential purposes. All were used considerably longer than first intended.

The building was renamed James Short Bungalow School, presumably in 1938 when the main building was renamed James Short Junior High School. The bungalow school was demolished at an unknown date between 1964 and 1969.

Glenbow Archives ND-10-31



"Smith Batteries, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1929, by R.A. Bird. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, ND-10-31, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.1.7 Commercial buildings

Commercial buildings on the site included:

- An auto body shop built ca. 1907
- Smith Batteries, built 1929 (405–407 Centre St SW)
- A gasoline service station (401 Centre St SW)
- A temporary taxi stand built in 1946 and removed in 1950 (409 Centre St SW)
- Freeman Wilson used car office, built in 1953 at the northwest corner of Centre St and 5 Av SW

4.2 Buildings on the TransCanada Tower site



"Central School, Calgary, Alberta", ca. 1913. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, PA-816-2, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

4.2.1 Central Public School / James Short School

The second Central Public School, a three-storey sandstone building, was designed by architect William Marshall Dodd (1872–1949) and built by contractors Addison and Davey. Dodd's most notable commission in Calgary, City Hall, remains extant.

Central was one of nearly 20 sandstone public schools constructed in the city between 1884 and 1914. The school was built in 1904–05 and was officially opened on May 24, 1905. It housed Central Public School from 1905 until 1933, Commercial High School from 1933 until 1938, and James Short School from 1938 until 1967. It then remained vacant until its demolition in 1969.

The cupola was retained, and it was later installed in James Short Park.



"Feature on Greyhound depot and plans for its location change, Calgary, Alberta", 1972. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NA-2864-20497, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary. Modifications to this image may include cropping.

4.2.2 Greyhound terminal

Greyhound Lines of Canada built its new terminal in 1971, and it was officially opened in January 1972. It evidently straddled the James Short Park site and the TransCanada Tower site along 4 Av and 1 St SW on the former public school board property. The building included a restaurant, and it was designed to accommodate construction of a never-built five-storey parking structure above it. The terminal remained at this location until it moved to a newly-built facility in Sunalta in 1986. It was demolished at an unknown date in the late 1980s.

4.2.3 TransCanada Tower (450–1 St SW)

TransCanada Pipelines Ltd. acquired the site in 1997 and announced the construction of the first office tower project in Calgary since 1991. The 38-storey TransCanada Tower, also known as the TC Energy Tower, was completed in 2001.

4.3 Educational institutions

4.3.1 Central Public School

Central Public School was a public educational institution that operated from 1885 until 1933. The public school board's first purpose-built schoolhouse was constructed on this block in 1887 to house this institution. The school provided education for grades 1–8, and it was the only public school in Calgary until 1894. Under Principal James Short's administration, Central began offering high school placement examinations in 1889, but the nearest high school was in Winnipeg. In 1891, Short added a complete high school program and personally taught all high school courses. The high school program was relocated to a new stand-alone institution in 1903.¹¹ While new

¹¹ After a second move to an extant, purpose-built sandstone building at 930–13 Av SW in 1908, the high school program became Central High School. Besides the similarity in their names, Central Public School (and its successor in its building, James Short School) had two notable associations. Commercial classes begun at Central High School in 1908 were later transferred to the newly-created Commercial High School around 1919; from 1933 to 1938, the former Central Public School (and future James Short School) building was the home of Commercial High School. Central High School closed in 1965, and its honours and traditions accrued to Central Memorial High School, which opened in Lakeview in 1968. When James Short School closed at the end of 1967, its students were temporarily relocated to the vacant Central High School.

schools (known as “ward schools”) were built throughout the city in the 1890s and after the turn of the century, Central remained the only public institution that included Grade 8 in its curriculum.

Central classes were relocated to the new sandstone building immediately to the west in 1905. Further research can determine whether the classes that remained in what became Old Central were part of a separate institution or if they were simply an adjunct to Central School. Similarly, further research can determine whether Central Bungalow School, which opened in 1919, was a separate institution or simply an adjunct to Central School.

Central School closed in June 1933, and its remaining students were redistributed to other public schools, including McDougall and Riverside (later renamed Langevin). The sandstone building was then renovated and repurposed as the new home of Commercial High School.

Principals included:

- Joseph Boag, 1887–89
- James Short, 1889–92
- Duncan P. McColl (ca. 1865–1949), 1892–ca. 1898¹²
- John Franklin Boyce (1867–1944), 1898–??

¹² McColl later moved to Regina and served as principal of the Regina Normal School (1902–05), Deputy Minister of Education, and Superintendent of Education for Saskatchewan. He was a founding and longtime member of the University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors.

- J.K. Johnston
- H.R. Parker
- A.W. Van Volkinburg, 1910 (Old Central)
- L. Harry Luck, 1910 (New Central)
- A.J. Watson
- E.S. MacGregor, 1912–13 (Old Central)
- Robert Massey, 1912–13 (New Central)
- Silas C. Stoodley (1870–1944), 1914–28
- C.R. (Bob) Sinclair, 1929–33

4.3.1.1 Chinese-Canadian associations

In the 1901 census year, Calgary's population was well over 80 per cent Anglo-Saxon, and the student body's ethnic composition reflected this demographic. The city experienced rapid population growth in the years leading up to the First World War, and in 1911 the Anglo-Saxon population dipped to 71.3 per cent. That year, free evening English-language lessons for immigrants began at Central. This was a prelude to the school's future polyglot character.

Central was the nearest school to Calgary's third (and present) Chinatown, which was established in 1910 when The City issued a building permit for the Canton Block (202–212 Centre St SE) a short distance from the school. The city's Chinese-Canadian community dated back to 1885 or 1886, but it initially comprised adult men only. These were single men or men who had

left their wives or families in China to earn money in North America. These men had come from China or the United States to work on Canadian Pacific Railway construction in British Columbia in the early 1880s.

The same year the sandstone Central Public School was built, businessman Louie Kheong (ca. 1868–1939) brought his wife, Tuey Tai, from China. Kheong had arrived in Calgary in 1899, and he became one of the businessmen who built the Canton Block. Ho Lem (1870–1960), another businessman from China who moved to Calgary in 1901, brought his wife, Hong Quo, and their son, Frank Ho Lem, in 1907. The Kheong and Ho Lem children were among the first Chinese-Canadian pupils at Central.

Examination of attendance registers at the Glenbow Archives can confirm when Chinese-Canadian students began attending Central. This occurred by 1916, when one of the school's Chinese-Canadian students created the school's First World War Roll of Honour. James Short attended the unveiling ceremony for the roll, which took place in the school. In its account of the ceremony, the *Calgary Daily Herald* described the roll:

A hundred and forty-three names stand out in prominence on one of the most elaborate and artistically designed honor rolls ever unveiled in this city. The work, which would do justice to a professional hand, was done by one of the Chinese students. The names of the pupils and some ex-members of the teaching

*staff are arranged in four columns down the roll headed by Sergt. Floyd Canon, Capt. Walter Jewitt, Sergt. Ernest McGregor and Sergt. Joseph Shaw.*¹³

By 1922, 44 of the city's roughly 50–60 Chinese-Canadian students in public schools attended Central. To relieve congestion, that year Superintendent Dr. A. Melville Scott (1869–1941) suggested fitting up classrooms at the school board's stores facility in the former Woodcrafts Ltd. warehouse (312–4 Av SE) and transferring the Chinese-Canadian students there. The idea was not realized.

That same year, the Chinese Public School opened (or re-opened) in a repurposed dwelling at 126–2 Av SW. This institution provided additional after-school classes for Chinese-Canadian students, and it remained at that address for decades.

Carl Safran (1917–2005), who later served as the public school board's Chief Superintendent, was one of many Jewish children who attended Central in the 1920s. He later recalled:

We had a real conglomeration of ethnic groups—Chinese, Jewish, German, Russian. There was very little prejudice because most of us came from minority

¹³ "Central School Pupils are Hosts at an A-Home," *Calgary Daily Herald* 16 Dec. 1916: 29.

*groups. The Chinese and Jewish youngsters always did very well and usually headed the class....*¹⁴

Newspaper accounts of school sporting events confirm Safran's recollection of the student body's ethnic composition. Based on their names, Chinese-Canadian students in the 1920s included:

- Mary Chow
- Silas Dofoo
- Fong Bing
- Jack Ho Lem
- Annie Kee, Charlie Kee, and Jessie Kee
- Jack Kheong, Joe Kheong, Shuhong Kheong, and Vivian Kheong
- Sing Hoo
- Harry Wong, Margaret Wong, and Nellie Wong
- Daisy Woon
- Charlie Ying

In 1930, David Ho Lem (1916–2000), team captain of Central's cadet shooting team, accepted a national award on the team's behalf. Brigadier-General Daniel Mowat Ormond (1885–1974) presented Ho Lem with the Duke of Devonshire's challenge cup, which was awarded "to the team or school making the best all-round showing from Canadian units."¹⁵

¹⁴ Robert M. Stamp, *School Days: A Century of Memories* (Calgary: Calgary Board of Education/McClelland and Stewart West, 1975) .

¹⁵ "City Cadets Win Dominion Trophy," *Calgary Daily Herald* 7 Feb. 1930: 13.

When Central closed as a public school in 1933, the *Herald* characterized the change that had taken place in the student body's ethnic composition over time:

During the growth of the city the character of the pupils attending here has gradually changed. Originally composed of the best residential section of the city, it has now changed so that a large part is included in the business district. Many of the pupils now live in blocks and apartments. The Chinese section is included within its boundaries. A few years ago a census was taken of all nationalities in the school and it was found that twenty-seven different countries were represented. It has been of recent years the most cosmopolitan school in Calgary. Here, Negro and Caucasian, Chinese and Japanese, Greek and Arabian are on an equal footing—they are all Canadians.¹⁶

The *Herald* indicated the emphasis on “Empire Day” celebrations at Central:

Stress has been laid during the last few years on Empire Day ceremony. This is one occasion when all the pupils may take part and the advantages of being a Canadian and an integral part of the British Empire are emphasized.¹⁷

¹⁶ “Calgarians’ Old School Home Closes,” *Calgary Daily Herald* 11 Jul. 1933: 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

When the school closed in 1933, the final staff meeting took the form of a dinner at the Mandarin Gardens, a newly-opened restaurant at 811 Centre St SW owned by Ming Yee (or Kee).

4.3.2 Alberta Normal School / Calgary Normal School

Between 1906 and 1908, the top floor of the new sandstone Central Public School housed the Alberta Normal School (which was quickly renamed the Calgary Normal School). This institution was the province's first teacher training college. The institution moved to its purpose-built facility (which remains extant as the McDougall Centre) in 1908 and to the present SAIT campus, another purpose-built facility, in 1923. The Normal School operated until 1945 when it became the Calgary branch of the University of Alberta Faculty of Education. This institution eventually developed into the University of Calgary.

4.3.3 Central Bungalow School

Central Bungalow School was established in 1919 to relieve congestion at Central Public School. It evidently operated as a separate institution from Central Public School, at least initially. Wilhelmina Henderson (1867–1951) was its first principal. She retired in 1937 after teaching school in Calgary for 26 years. Further research can determine whether the school remained a separate institution or became part of James Short School.

In 1929, the bungalow school became the venue of a “sight-saving” class for visually impaired students taught by a specially-trained teacher, Elsie M. Leak. The school housed an early nursery program in the early 1940s. It was later renamed James Short Bungalow School.

4.3.4 Commercial High School

From 1933 to 1938, the sandstone Central Public School building housed Commercial High School, a now-defunct public school board institution. The board had initiated commercial classes at Central High School in 1908 to teach office skills such as accounting, bookkeeping, shorthand, and typing. The classes moved to the new Commercial High School in 1919, and by 1932 one or more of its classes were held at Central Bungalow. After Central Public School closed in 1933, it was renovated and repurposed as the new home of Commercial High School. In 1934, more than half of the school’s approximately 700 students were more than 18 years old. Besides its daytime curriculum, the school offered night classes in commercial subjects. By the time the school closed in 1938, it had the largest student body of any public high school in the city. Commercial classes were transferred to Western Canada High School as part of a move toward developing composite high schools. The sandstone building was then repurposed as a new junior high school.

4.3.4.1 Chinese-Canadian associations

Examination of attendance records at the Glenbow Archives can determine if Chinese-Canadian students attended Commercial High School and, if so, who they were. A list of students in the school's final graduating class, published in the *Calgary Daily Herald*, contains no Chinese names.¹⁸

4.3.5 James Short Junior High School / James Short School

The final educational institution on this block was James Short School, which operated from 1938 until 1967. It was created as Central Junior High School in 1938, four years after the public school board had adopted the junior high school model and established Calgary's first two junior high schools in 1934. One month after the school opened in September 1938, with James Short's permission, the board changed the school's name to James Short Junior High School. "In naming the junior high school after Mr. Short," the *Calgary Daily Herald* reported, "the School Board has continued to follow the long-established practice of honoring eminent citizens, for in the names of other older schools one sees recognition of the worth of men who have gone before."¹⁹ In time, the school added elementary grades, and the school's name changed to reflect this.

In 1966, urban renewal plans called for the school to be demolished for redevelopment. James Short School closed in December 1967, midway

¹⁸ "Trustee Expresses Hope Girls to Take More Part In Country's Government," *Calgary Daily Herald* 9 June 1938, 3.

¹⁹ "City Honors James Short By Naming New High School After Prominent Barrister," *Calgary Daily Herald* 29 October 1938, 2.

through the school year, and its students were transferred to the vacant former Central High School (which remains extant at 930-13 Av SW) as an interim measure. James Short Memorial School, which opened in the Penbrooke Meadows neighbourhood in 1973, continues the honours and traditions of James Short School.

Principals of James Short School included:

- Harold E. Panabaker, ca. 1940-43
- G.L. Lunn, 1945-49
- William Potter, 1951-52
- G.L. Fowler, 1961
- E.M. Willie, 1967

4.3.5.1 Chinese-Canadian associations

As the junior high school closest to Chinatown, James Short was the designated school for families who lived in that area.

In 1947, following the Second World War and the Holocaust, the Chinese Immigration Act, 1923 (commonly known now as the Chinese Exclusion Act) was repealed. Immigration from China (and of ethnic Chinese from elsewhere) resumed for the first time in decades. Consequently, Chinese-Canadian pupils grew in number at James Short. The school initiated a special English class for Chinese-Canadian students in 1949, and it added a

second class in 1951 and a third in 1951. Victor Mah, a future chairman of the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre, was in the first class. His classmates held a reunion at the Chinese Cultural Centre in 2002.

By the time the school closed in 1967, its student population was mostly Chinese-Canadian.

5.0 EVENTS

- Central School was closed at least once during the 1918–19 influenza pandemic.
- In 1935, Central School was breached through forced entrance. The principal's office was ransacked, and \$5.10 was stolen from the book room.
- King George VI and Queen Elizabeth's motorcade passed James Short Junior High School as students watched during the Royal Visit of May 26, 1939.
- In 1942, during the Second World War, James Short Junior High School was designated as an emergency station, dressing station, and casualty clearing station in the event of an enemy air attack that destroyed homes in Calgary. James Short was one of 24 schools designated as potential emergency quarters for displaced citizens and as one of four dressing stations/casualty clearing stations in the city. These arrangements were made by The City's Air Raid Precautions Committee.