

# 2020 Bridgeland Walks Self Guided – Theme - Overview



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### First Walk of the Year

The walk is 4 km long mostly along city sidewalks with some “ups and downs” along the way. It will give you a taste of the many themes of the walks that are planned for this summer.

Start from the Community Centre at 917 Centre Avenue.

- 1) This award winning building was opened in 2005, one of the early one to be constructed as part of the Bridges Project. Development of this three phased multi residential project was managed by the city and is only now seeing the last of the spaces under construction. The Bridges project replaced the 88 year old Calgary General Hospital, built here in 1910 and imploded in 1998.

Proceed West along Centre Avenue.

- 2) **A Park** – Murdoch park was named for the first Mayor of Calgary and Centre Avenue was previously known as Murdoch Road. This is one of many unique parks around the community, some with names and others unnamed and hard to find. Murdoch Park is known for its soccer field, busy with kids learning how to play in the spring and other skillful teams on summer evenings. The hill on the west end is a great place to toboggan in the winter and the east end closer to the Community Centre has a top notch playground (unfortunately closed during Covid19)

Proceed West along the delightful tree lined promenade of Centre Ave, taking in the panorama views of downtown, to 7A St and turn right

- 3) **Italian Heritage** – at the NE and SW corner of 7A St at 1st Avenue. Bridgeland Riverside was home to many immigrants, especially those from Italy who arrived after the second world war. But a previous wave of Italian immigrant had settled earlier. The C.annibale Block – SW corner, named for Annibale Coradetti , an immigrant from Italy has been many things since being built in 1912 – a meat market, hairdressing salon, flower shop, wine shop, dog grooming business and most recently a popular eating, drinking and barber establishment – themed as a speakeasy. On the NE corner of this intersection stood the Italian Grocery Store building, which is currently being renovated for Shiki Menya Ramen restaurant. Also check out the Baya Rica cafe and coffee roaster next door. In the past many residents of Italian heritage who lived in Bridgeland regularly shopped here for authentic Italian foods and wares. After demolition of the hospital, fewer people frequented the area so the family moved the store to the Mission District – 4 St SW - its popular establishment is called Mercato. But fortunately you can still find freshly made authentic Italian food at Peppino’s on 2 Ave at 6a St.

Proceed North on West side of 7A St

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- 4) **Heritage Homes.** There was a population explosion and building boom in Calgary and especially Bridgeland between 1910-1913. Many homes were built in our community during this time. Two examples of this are #215 and next door, the duplex of #219/221 (a rare find).

**#215** – known as the Mauch residence was built in 1911 – in the Queen Anne Revival style. The home was built by an immigrant a German from Russia. Then Fred Weimar, a CPR employee and his wife Katie (who worked at the Ontario and Model Laundries and at CGH as an ironer) lived in the home between 1918-1941.

**#219/ 221** – known as the McDowell Duplex, was built in 1912 by Grace McDowell who also operated the Mount View Ranch with her husband Hugh. It is also built in the restrained Queen Anne Revival style and provided rental accommodation to a variety of tenants including bricklayer, carpenters, store clerks, labourers, etc. The only owner to live here (1919-1939) was Meier Malkin who owned Bridgeland Cash and Carry. The building was used briefly as a nursing home in the 1950's and has been a multi-unit rental until recently when it has undergone an amazing renovation.

Proceed up the street to 2nd Ave and turn right (East) and walk one block

- 5) **Churches** – Bridgeland - Riverside is home to one of the largest concentrations and greatest variety of 'places of worship' in Calgary. The church on the corner of 8 St and 2nd Ave is currently St Michaels Eritrean Orthodox Church. This church building has served many congregations over the years – initially the Bridgeland Baptist Church, then Chinese Alliance Church till 1975, Immaculate Heart of Mary traditional Catholic Church until 2012 and now the current well attended church.

Proceed South along 8 Street

- 6) **Trees** - Bridgeland Riverside is home to many hundreds of trees of all kinds and sizes. The trees along 8 St were planted under direction of William Reader, Superintendent of Parks from 1913 to 1943 and the street is featured is part of the heritage trees of Calgary. The trees along 8 and 8A St are all American elm trees and as you can see they are some of the tallest trees that you will see in Calgary, forming a lovely canopy over the street. Check them out in the fall when they become a golden bower.

Proceed South to 1st Ave and turn left – and proceed to 10 Street – Bridgeland Market.

- 7) **Ice Cream possibility.** It is always nice to stop for ice cream or a drink at a local merchant along our walks. Built in 1912 Bridgeland Market is known in heritage circles as the Shuler Grocery, and is owned and operated by a member of the Traya family who initially owned the NorthWest Grocery from the early 1980's. And they serve delicious ice cream in addition to other tasty baked good and treats.

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Continue East on 1st Ave to 12A Street, cross over and head left, and as it winds up the hill it becomes Abbott Ave. Halfway up Abbott, turn right onto Thomson and ascend to the top of the hill.

- 8) **Tom Campbell Hill.** This broad area of prairie grassland, now a Natural Area park and dog off-leash area provides a panoramic view of the city and mountains to the west. The plateau of TCH was formed by the action of retreating glaciers and resulting waters flowing along the Nose Creek and Bow River drainage systems. Early Bridgelanders grazed their cows here and from the 1960 - 80's the Calgary Zoo used the area to pasture its ungulates such as camels, zebra and mountain goats. Bridgeland children playing in the area recount interactions with the camels who spat at them. The city was in negotiations for TCH to be developed in the late 1980's but the deal fell through and the Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association capitalized on the opportunity to lobby for the area to be turned into a natural park for all Calgarians to enjoy. They were successful and now thousands of people visit the park on a regular basis. Check out the recognition plaque on the arches as you enter the park to see who contributed.

Proceed South along the promenade lined with poplar trees till you reach the end of the park where you'll see a display area. Take some time to look at the information on the panels about the natural features of the area and the changes over the years.

- 9) **Fireworks viewpoints.** Our community is blessed with many excellent viewpoints of the city where different fireworks displays can be seen. This is the best place to see the fireworks for Globalfest, held at Elliston Park in the South East every August. It's also a good place to see the light show from the grounds of the Calgary Stampede every July.

Head back North again till you reach the paved pathway – turn left and head down the hill. Stop at the rocks midway along the path and look to the west and down.

- 10) **Schools.** Bridgeland Riverside is home to 4 schools. Below the hill you can see the original Christine Meikle School, built in 1958 to serve the needs of developmentally challenged children. Many young people attended school here over the years until a larger building was needed. This school closed in 2017 and students moved to their new site in Varsity. The building was turned over to the city, was vacant for a couple of years until occupied by an Islamic School.

Proceed down the path and when you get to the bottom cross the road at the lights and proceed over to the bridge

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- 11) **Bridges.** Our community's formal boundaries extend as far South as the Bow River and include St Patrick's Island. There are many bridge spans in this area and on our 'Bridges' Walk we cross them all. This bridge is known as the Zoo Bridge and it crosses over Memorial Drive. It was constructed in the 1970's as part of the East Memorial Drive project that brought vehicles out of East Calgary and into the downtown core. A decorative feature of the bridge is the metalwork outlining different zoo animals.

Don't cross the bridge but instead turn north again and follow the sidewalk toward the new building project. As the sidewalk descends turn left and cross the mostly empty parking lot. Enter a small park at the north side of the CNIB building.

- 12) **Gardens.** Bridgeland Riverside is home to numerous attractive gardens including historic vacant lots garden, community garden, residential gardens and this Fragrant Garden owned by the CNIB. Take a few moments to enjoy the many different flowers, shrubs, trees marked by signs in braille and the benches placed along the winding pathways. Maintained by volunteers this colourful garden will be different each time you visit as the varied shrubs and perennials bloom at intervals.

Exit the garden along 11A St and proceed right- north till you reach McDougall Rd and turn left – west. Stop inside the arches at the corner of McDougall Rd and 11 Street.

- 13) **Little Free Library at Riverside Park.** Various groups and residents have established Little Free Libraries – which are part of the worldwide Little Free Library system. Take a book, return a book is the motto and this LFL is typically filled with a wide range of titles. The LFL was constructed at a workshop that was held in conjunction with the opening of the Bridgeland Tool Library in 2014 and was painted by a local resident. It is currently stewarded by a senior who lives nearby (unfortunately closed during Covid19).

Continue west along McDougall Rd till you reach the fencing around the baseball diamond.

- 14) **Riverside Art Walk** There are numerous artistic features in the community and the 'Connecting Back to the Bow' mural is one of the most recent to be completed. It was conceived as a means to bring attention to the less known Riverside Park as well as to remind us of the original connection of our community to the Bow River as it emerged from the mountains, traversed foothills, our city and flowed eastward to the prairies. Conceived and designed by local artist Janel Nail and organized by the BRCA Beautification Committee, the painting was completed by many community volunteers over the summer of 2018. Stop and spend some time sitting under the trees in one of the park benches or picnic tables.

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Continue along McDougall Rd till you reach 9 St. and cross to the NW corner of the street.

15) **Murdoch Rain Garden.** This is the second example of a city constructed rain garden intended to funnel and clean storm water before it enters ground water and into the Bow River. The plaque describes how the rain garden was constructed and how it works. Planted with many lovely plants, including lovely red rose bushes, the garden also features a pergola and comfy bench. The blooming crabapple trees in the area are a joy to behold here in the spring.

Proceed North to Centre Avenue and you have reached the end. We hope that you've enjoyed all that you've seen and learned about on this walk and that you'll participate in future self-guided walks through our beautiful, interesting and varied community.