

Memorandum

September 6, 2024

Reference No.: 515138061-002

To: City Council

From: Kent Snyder, Branch Manager
Planning and Environment Services

Subject: **Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a
Municipal Historic Resource**

SUMMARY

This memo is further to the attached memo sent on August 6, 2024 which informed City Council that Administration plans to move ahead with the heritage designation of the public park known as Alexander Circle. This is the formal Notice of Intention to initiate the process to designate a historic resource, Alexander Circle, as a Municipal Historic Resource in accordance with the Historical Resources Act. The City of Edmonton is the owner of this resource.

CURRENT ACTIONS

(Immediate)

That a Notice of Intention to Designate a Municipal Historic Resource, as set out in Attachment 1, be served on the owner of the property located at 13301 - 103 Avenue NW in accordance with Section 26 of the Alberta Historical Resources Act, RSA 2000, c H-9.

That the City Manager be appointed to implement matters arising from the issuance of the Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource, as set out in Attachment 1.

FUTURE ACTIONS

*(At least 60 days after the Notice of Intention to Designate is served)*¹

Pursuant to the provisions of the Alberta Historical Resources Act, RSA 2000, c H-9, a Bylaw to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource (the "Bylaw") will be brought forward to Council for their consideration.

¹ On November 26, 2019, City Council passed amendments to the City Administration Bylaw, delegating approval of Notices of Intention to Designate (NOI) under the *Historical Resources Act* (HRA) to the City Manager, where the owner consents to the designation of their property. The NOI initiates the designation process under the *Historical Resources Act*; the final decision on designation remains with City Council by way of a bylaw.

Alexander Circle was renewed as part of Glenora Neighbourhood Renewal in 2014-16 and no upgrades are required in conjunction with its designation as a Municipal Historic Resource. The park is already on Administration's "A" list for open space maintenance and thus receives a higher level of maintenance than open spaces on the "B" list. If Council gives the park heritage designation, Administration will monitor the adequacy of the park's maintenance and will take additional actions as necessary in an attempt to ensure that it receives maintenance befitting an open space with heritage designation.

The boulevard trees on the edge of Alexander Circle are currently part of the road right of way, and any tree on public lands are protected under the Public Tree Bylaw and Corporate Tree Management Policy. The trees are on a 5 year maintenance cycle with the last pruning being in 2022. If Council gives the park heritage designation, Administration will monitor the adequacy of the tree maintenance and will take additional actions as necessary in an attempt to ensure that the trees receive the care befitting an open space with heritage designation.

BACKGROUND

Alexander Circle is on the Inventory of Historic Resources in Edmonton, and merits designation under City Policy C450B - Policy to Encourage the Designation and Rehabilitation of Municipal Historic Resources in Edmonton. Alexander Circle was constructed in phases between 1911-1954. It is an early example in Edmonton of a deliberately planned public park that takes inspiration from the formal, symmetrical urban design that originated in the Baroque gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries. It is valued for its association with the development of the Glenora neighbourhood specifically and with the establishment of neighbourhood parks across Edmonton more generally.

On August 15, 2024, the City completed the application requirements to have Alexander located at 13301 - 103 Avenue NW designated as a Municipal Historic Resource under the provisions of City Policy C450B.

If designated, any future renovation of Alexander Circle will be required to meet the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

The designation of this property will support its continued protection in the future.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL

No funding from the Heritage Resources Reserve is being provided for the costs of the rehabilitation of Alexander Circle, as it is a municipally-owned resource.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement was not undertaken as part of this process, as it is not required under the Historical Resources Act but Administration engaged with members of the Old Glenora Conservation Association and informed the Community League regarding the proposed designation of Alexander Circle as a result of the following March 19, 2024 Urban Planning Committee motion: "That Administration connect with Glenora residents to explore advancing a municipal heritage designation of Alexander Circle and other city-owned historic assets in the Glenora neighbourhood and provide a memo to Council."



KS/bs

c: Executive Leadership Team

Aileen Giesbrecht, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk

Michelle Plouffe, Chief People Officer and City Solicitor, Employee Services and Legal Division

Attachments:

1. Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource - Historical Resources Act
2. 2024-08-06 Memo to Council - UPC Motion re_ Alexander Circle and City-owned historic resources in Glenora (Cllr. Stevenson)
3. Location Map
4. Photographs
5. Statement of Significance

Notice of Intention to Designate Alexander Circle as a Municipal Historic Resource

HISTORICAL RESOURCES ACT
R.S.A. 2000, cH.-9, as amended, Section 26

TO: City of Edmonton
Financial and Corporate Services Department
Real Estate Branch
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square NW
Edmonton AB T5J 2

Notice is hereby given that sixty (60) days from the date of service of this Notice, The Municipal Council of The City of Edmonton intends to pass a Bylaw that the original resource known as Alexander Circle (constructed in phases between 1911 and 1954) and the land on which such structure is located, legally described as:

PLAN 2803AF
BLOCK C

EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS

and municipally described as 13301 - 103 Avenue NW, be designated as a MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE under Section 26 of the *Historical Resources Act*, as amended from time to time.

AND TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT the Municipal Council of the City of Edmonton has appointed the City Manager to implement matters arising from the issuance of the Notice of Intention to Designate a Municipal Historic Resource.

DATED this 24 day of September 2024



Eddie Robar
Interim City Manager

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The above Notice is addressed to the owner of, or person with a legal interest in, the resource named which the Municipal Council of the City of Edmonton (hereinafter referred to as the Council) intends to designate, by Bylaw, as a Municipal Historic Resource under Section 26 of the *Historical Resources Act*.

EFFECT OF NOTICE

This Notice of Intention protects the historic resource named in it for 120 days from the date it was served on you. During these 120 days **NO PERSON MAY DESTROY, DISTURB, ALTER, RESTORE OR REPAIR A MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE OR REMOVE ANY HISTORIC OBJECT FROM IT** unless they have written approval of the Council or person appointed by the Council for the purpose.

The Council or the person appointed by the Council, in its or their absolute discretion, may refuse to grant an approval or may make the approval subject to such conditions, as they consider appropriate.

Although there is no right of appeal as such against designation as a Municipal Historic Resource, you are not precluded at any time from writing to the Council, claiming that the site should not or should cease to be designated. Such claim must demonstrate that the property to be designated is not of architectural or historical significance. The evidence provided to support the claim will be carefully considered.

You may also apply by originating application to any judge of the Court of King's Bench for an Order shortening the 120 days of protection.

After 120 days the Notice ceases to have any effect, unless the Council has revoked it sooner, or the court has shortened the period, or unless the Council has passed a Bylaw designating the resource permanently.

Memorandum

July 18, 2024

Reference No.: 508311887-001

To: City Council

From: Kent Snyder, Branch Manager

Subject: **UPC Motion re: Alexander Circle and City-owned historic resources in Glenora (Clr. Stevenson)**

This memo provides City Council with information regarding the March 19, 2024 Urban Planning Committee motion moved by Councillor Stevenson:

“That Administration connect with Glenora residents to explore advancing a municipal heritage designation of Alexander Circle and other city-owned historic assets in the Glenora neighborhood and provide a memo to Council.”

Administration met with the Old Glenora Conservation Association, shared information with the Glenora Community League, and had one-on-one conversations with other interested residents. On the basis of these connection efforts and technical meetings between relevant City departments, Administration plans to initiate the process of designating Alexander Circle Park as a Municipal Historic Resource, and to make the future sale of two City-owned houses in Glenora conditional on their designation.

Administration hopes that these actions will encourage private owners of historic resources in Glenora to likewise consider heritage designation as a means of achieving The City Plan’s direction to “Encourage the identification and preservation of historic resources and cultural and natural landscapes.”

Alexander Circle

Alexander Circle is a prominent feature of the Garden Suburb layout found in Glenora south of Stony Plain Road. At a time when previous subdivisions in Edmonton had been planned without parks, Glenora’s designer deliberately incorporated green spaces into residential areas for public recreation and enjoyment. Eventually, public parks came to be seen as a necessary element of all neighbourhoods. Alexander Circle is thus a precursor to neighborhood parks across Edmonton.

Alexander Circle’s symmetrical design is also one of Edmonton’s best examples of the formal landscape architecture that originated in the Baroque gardens of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Designers of these landscapes often placed circles at the intersection of key axes. Alexander Circle’s central fountain, walkways connecting to the

intersecting streets in the four cardinal directions, and symmetrical plantings give the park an ordered beauty that has made it a local landmark and attracted visitors for decades.

As a result of its significance and discussion at Urban Planning Committee, Alexander Circle has been added to the Inventory of Historic Resources. The Inventory addition was recommended by the Edmonton Historical Board at its meeting on May 22, 2024 after reviewing an evaluation package prepared by heritage planners in accordance with criteria established by Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women. The evaluation package had earlier been reviewed and recommended by the Historic Resources Review Panel, a subcommittee of the Historical Board, at its meeting on May 14, 2024.

The City's open space planning and design teams are supportive of its heritage designation. Glenora residents who Administration engaged with are either supportive of an Alexander Circle heritage designation or do not object to it. Some members of the Old Glenora Conservation Association requested that the City designate the other green spaces in the neighbourhoods in addition to Alexander Circle.

Alexander Circle was renewed as part of Glenora Neighbourhood Renewal in 2014-16. No capital investment is needed for additional renewal or maintenance at this time.

City-Owned Historic Homes

Two City-owned houses in Glenora are listed on the Inventory of Historic Resources: the De Wynter Residence at 10446 Connaught Drive NW and the Montgomery Residence at 10327 - 134 Street NW. The De Wynter Residence was purchased by the City in 2023 because of the impacts of adjacent LRT construction and is a well-preserved example of the Arts and Crafts style home. The Montgomery Residence, which the City purchased to eliminate vehicular access that would have conflicted with LRT operations, is a rare example of Spanish Revival-style architecture in the neighbourhood. Heritage designation of these two properties aligns with City policy:

- The City Plan directs us to "Encourage the identification and preservation of historic resources and cultural and natural landscapes."
- The draft District Policy more specifically "Encourage[s] properties on the Inventory of Historic Resources in Edmonton to become designated Municipal Historic Resources."

Designating these two homes as Municipal Historic Resources would demonstrate the City's leadership in preserving historic resources. Although there are 132 properties in Glenora on the Inventory, only three properties are designated as protected Municipal Historic Resources. The last Municipal Historic Resource designation in the neighbourhood was in 2007.

Since the City does not have funding to rehabilitate the two homes, rather than designating them as Municipal Historic Resources now, Administration plans to make their designation a condition of their sale after completion of the Valley Line West LRT construction. The future owners would be eligible to access rehabilitation grants from the Heritage Resources Reserve of up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum matching

grant of \$100,000. Following rehabilitation of the homes, their owners would be eligible for maintenance grant funding from both the City and Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

The Real Estate Branch advises, however, that requiring heritage designation of the two homes as a condition of sale might impact their marketability and the revenue that could be derived from their sale. Considering their location in a central community with close proximity to many urban amenities, these sites hold significant redevelopment opportunities.

KS/eb

c: Executive Leadership Team
Aileen Giesbrecht, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk

Attachment(s):

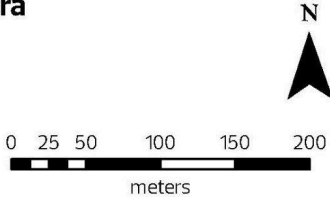
1. Location map of the De Wynter Residence, Montgomery Residence and Alexander Circle
2. Photo of the De Wynter Residence
3. Photo of the Montgomery Residence
4. Photo of Alexander Circle

Attachment 1

Location Map for the De Wynter Residence, Montgomery Residence and Alexander Circle



City-Owned Historic sites in Glenora



Attachment 2

Photo of the De Wynter Residence



Front elevation of the De Wynter Residence, looking to the west from Connaught Drive.

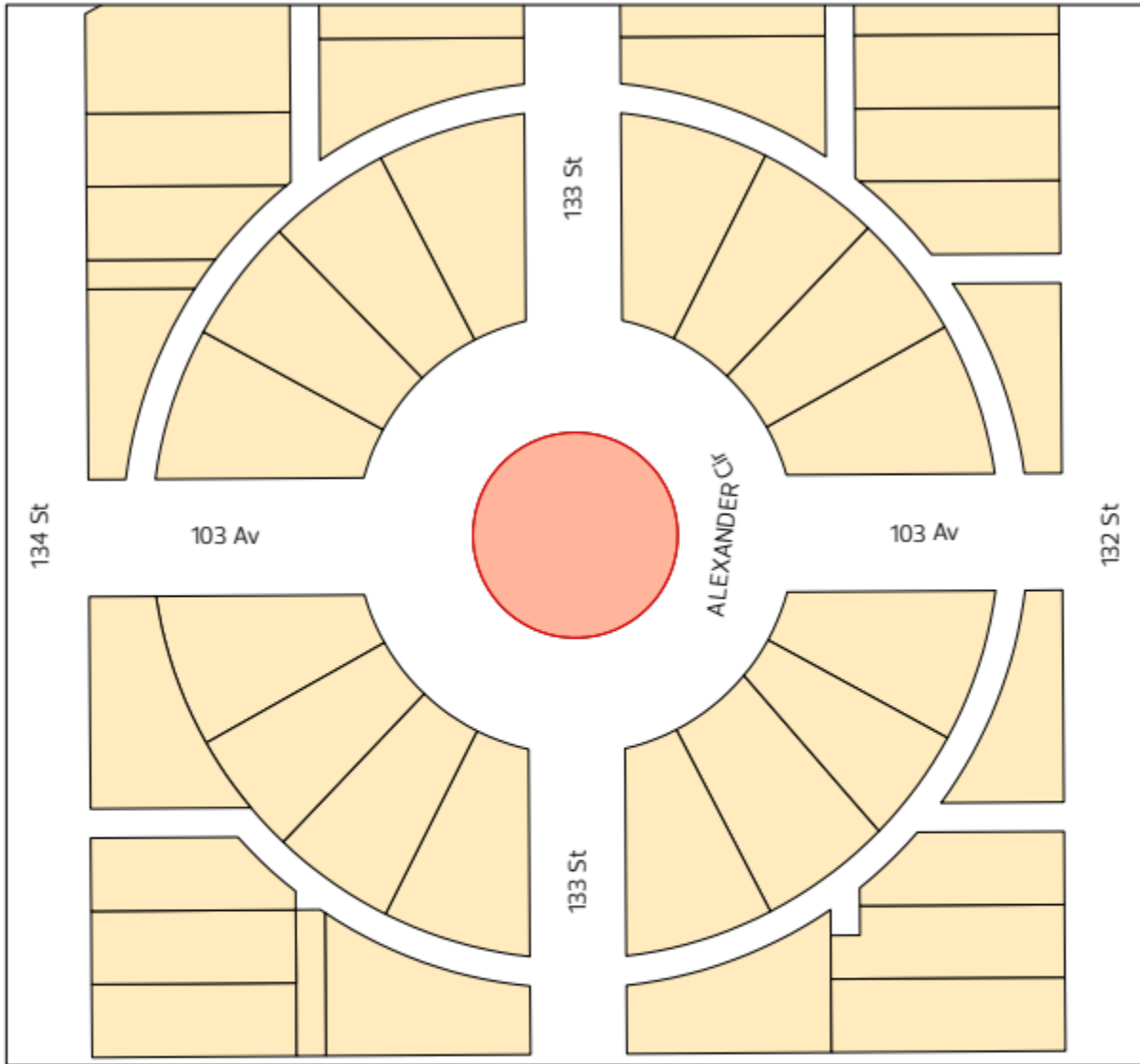
Attachment 3

Photo of the Montgomery Residence

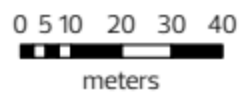


Front elevation of the Montgomery Residence, looking to the east from 134 Street. Note that the detached garage at the left of the photo has since been demolished related to LRT right-of-way requirements.

Location Map for Alexander Circle



**Alexander Circle in Glenora
13301 - 103 Avenue NW**



Attachment 4

Photo of Alexander Circle



West elevation of Alexander Circle, looking east from 103 Avenue NW.

Photographs of Alexander Circle



Elevation photo, looking west onto 103 Avenue



Elevation photo, looking east onto 103 Avenue



Elevation photo, looking north onto 133 Street



Elevation photo, looking south onto 133 Street



Close up view of the central fountain

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

Alexander Circle is a significant landscape located within the Glenora neighbourhood. The park site is a total of 0.263 hectares in size, including titled property and abutting landscaped road right of way, and is divided into four quadrants. It is bound by the Alexander Circle roundabout that connects to 133 Street and 103 Avenue in the four cardinal directions. The park functions today as a passive park site, and features a central fountain, plant beds, and benches.

Heritage Value

Originally constructed between 1911 and 1954, Alexander Circle is valued for its association with the development of the Glenora neighbourhood specifically and with the establishment of neighbourhood parks across Edmonton more generally.

The location of what is now Alexander Circle and the Glenora neighbourhood was initially acquired as River Lot 2 by Malcom Groat, who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company until the 1870s. In 1906, James Carruthers subdivided the portion of River Lot 2 north of Stony Plain Road in conventional gridded fashion and named the community Glenora. In 1911, Carruthers hired surveyor Richard Knight to lay out two very different subdivisions for the area south of Stony Plain Road. These subdivisions were Edmonton's first examples of Garden Suburb design.

Garden suburbs, popularized by Hampstead Garden Suburb in England, were low density residential areas carefully integrated with gardens and/or open spaces. At a time when previous subdivisions in Edmonton had not been deliberately planned with public parks, garden suburbs like Glenora were a revelation that coincided with a societal increase in time for leisure and recreation. Eventually, public parks came to be seen as a necessary element of all neighbourhoods. Glenora's open spaces and especially Alexander Circle, the only legally titled parkland in the Glenora's two Garden Suburb subdivisions, were thus antecedents to neighbourhood parks across Edmonton.

Within the overall framework of a Garden Suburb layout, Alexander Circle is an example of the formal, symmetrical urban design that originated in the Baroque gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries. Designers of these landscapes often placed circles at the intersection of key axes, as can be seen at Versailles and in the garden of Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. Such circles were later incorporated into formally designed urban areas, Place Charles de Gaulle in Paris and Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., being examples. In contrast to those circles on major arterial roadways, Alexander Circle more intimately lies at the intersection of two local roads, 133 (originally 33) Street and 103 (originally Peace) Avenue. It was designed as a perfect circle with a diameter of 140 feet (43 m) surrounded by a circular road right-of-way of 80 feet (24 m). This, being

more generous than the usual 66 foot (20 m) local road width of the day, provided ample space for a treed boulevard around the legally-defined park property. Surrounding the circular road, sixteen residential properties, four in each quadrant around the park, were laid out to give definition to and take amenity from the circular open space.

Alexander Circle's development extended over various economic cycles. The earliest houses in Glenora were built between 1911 and 1918, primarily along Connaught Drive, Alexander Circle, St. George's Crescent and the two blocks immediately west of Groat Ravine along Athabasca Avenue (now 102 Avenue). The eastern half of the circle was built by 1924 and by 1930, the circle was grassed. Children used the space for activities such as rugby, hockey and other active games. The sixteen boulevard trees within the circular road right-of-way – one for each residential property around the circle – were added sometime in the 1930s or 1940s.

The circle did not originally have a name, so its surrounding houses were addressed as being on 133 Street. Some people unofficially called it Glenora Circle. After World War II, the community tried multiple times to get a proper name for the circle. In 1952, residents first proposed the name Alexander Circle. Since other streets in Glenora were named after past Governors General of Canada, Alexander was suggested in honour of Harold Alexander, the 1st Earl Alexander of Tunis, who had just completed a six-year term as Governor General. The renaming did not go ahead at the time.

That same year, however, residents led by J. Percy Page of 10312 - 133 Street (now 16 Alexander Circle) raised money for a fountain to be installed in the middle of the circle. Page was a famed Edmonton Grads basketball coach, MLA and future Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. He had been to Paris and other European cities on basketball tours and no doubt had seen formally designed open spaces. As a result of the community funding, an illuminated fountain designed by the City Parks Department was installed and opened in 1954. Paved pathways aligning with 133 Street and 103 Avenue were also added, along with flower beds and benches.

In 1958-1959, a petition was again submitted by surrounding property owners in favour of the name Alexander Circle. This time the District Names Advisory Committee recommended to the City's commissioners that the name be adopted. The commissioners and the City's planning director, William Brown, agreed with the request. City Council, however, rejected the renaming scheme on the basis that it would erode the long-held policy of using street numbers instead of names in neighbourhoods with a gridded street pattern.

In 1968, another letter was sent to formally request the name change. Administration recommended the change to Council and the Alexander Circle name was adopted for the park but not the surrounding road.

Alexander Circle park is valued for being a local landmark, favourite meeting spot for residents, and as a popular photography site, especially among wedding photographers. The design of the park is unique in Edmonton with the use of quadrants and the number four. There are four walkways, four benches, and four flower beds with one of each in the four quadrants. There are also 16 trees, with four trees in each quadrant in the surrounding boulevard area. The park's symmetrical design features and central fountain are reminiscent of formally designed landscapes elsewhere and lend an attractive beauty to the open space that has drawn Edmontonians and visitors to Alexander Circle for decades.

The character-defining elements of the Alexander Circle include:

- Circular open space within a Garden Suburb subdivision design;
- Formal, symmetrical landscape architecture with hard surface pathways from the four cardinal directions that intersect at the centre;
- Deciduous trees and shrub landscaping in a circular pattern along the edge of the park, with four trees and one shrub per quadrant;
- Manicured circular planting beds in each quadrant;
- Manicured open lawn;
- Radial design of elements from a central fountain; and
- Four seating pads surrounding the fountain.