



NEIGHBOURHOOD DESCRIPTION

In 1878, Malcolm Groat built his homestead on the land that is now the Westmount neighbourhood. Groat was a Hudson Bay Company employee and an early Edmonton settler who remained one of Edmonton's leading citizens through the turn of the century. Groat's square mile of land was located along the North Saskatchewan River, immediately west of the area that became the Hudson Bay Reserve.

The Groat homestead was annexed to the City of Edmonton in two stages, first in 1904 and then in 1910. Groat gradually sold his land to developers as the demand for residential lots increased. In spite of the general oversupply of residential lots in Edmonton, Westmount developed early due to its proximity to downtown Edmonton. Access to downtown was further enhanced by the extension of an electric streetcar line in 1910 and commercial space developed along 124 Street beside the line. Westmount, particularly the area bordering the Groat Ravine, established a reputation as an attractive residential area for wealthy and professional people.

While most low density residential structures were built prior to 1950, apartment development is more recent, and now accounts for approximately half of all the dwelling units. Apartment buildings are generally located near 124 Street or other major traffic routes. Along its residential streets, Westmount has retained many of its older homes, although extensive renovation and infill development has occurred. To help maintain the character of the neighbourhood, public and private initiatives to upgrade the 124 Street shopping district and to develop heritage preservation guidelines were implemented in the 2000s.

Westmount is now a mixed-use neighbourhood with a variety of residential, institutional, recreational, commercial, and light industrial land uses within easy walking distance of each other. The 124th Street shopping area and Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) runs north-south through the neighbourhood, acting as a central spine for the community.

Westmount likely takes its name from an affluent, predominantly Anglophone, city (formerly neighbourhood) on the west island of Montreal.