



CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

HAWRELAK PARK

9330 GROAT ROAD NW

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The Hawrelak Park Pavilions are a collection of structures built between 1968 and 1973 as amenity features for the then-named Mayfair Park. Built in the Organic Modern/International Style, the buildings include the Main Pavilion, the Boat House, and Picnic Shelters #1, #2 and #3. The park was re-named to Hawrelak Park in 1982, recognizing former Mayor William Hawrelak. Hawrelak Park is located to the west of the Windsor Park community along Groat Road, immediately adjacent to the North Saskatchewan River.

HERITAGE VALUE

Originally built between 1968 and 1973 (the Main Pavilion, Boat House and Picnic Shelters #1 and #2 being built in 1968, with Picnic Shelter #3 being built in 1973), the Hawrelak Park Pavilions are valued for their association with the development of the park during Edmonton's population boom in the post-Second World War period.

Indigenous peoples hunted and camped in the North Saskatchewan River valley and used its diverse resources for thousands of years. European fur traders arrived in the 18th century. As the area's fur trade was winding down in the second half of the 19th century, individuals began staking claims to land in the valley in accordance with the Métis river lot pattern. When the Edmonton Settlement plan was registered in 1883, the river flat where Hawrelak Park is now located was designated as River Lot 1. It was owned at the time by Joseph Hebert, who operated a gold-mining scow on the river.

In 1921 the City leased the north half of the river flat to the Mayfair Golf and Country (now Royal Mayfair Golf) Club. In 1942, City Council approved the concept of the south half of the river flat becoming a park.

A gravel pit opened on the site in 1949 and operated for a few years, but in 1955, under the term of Mayor William Hawrelak, the parks department was directed to finally prepare plans for the park. It was named Mayfair Park in 1956, the same year that the Edmonton Journal reported that the City had saved \$140,000 for park development by putting aside 15 cents for every cubic yard of gravel extracted when the pit was in operation.

Construction of the park was a major, long-term undertaking for the City. Starting in 1966, children could fish in the pond, which was originally stocked with trout. The tender for the construction of the park pavilions was issued in November 1966 and on July 1, 1968, the park was officially opened. Mayor Hawrelak died in office in 1975. The following year, City Council changed the name of Mayfair Park to William Hawrelak Park in his honour.

The Main Pavilion, Boat House and the three Picnic Shelters have been key fixtures of the park since their opening. They provide a range of amenity services to park patrons, and have evolved over time to suit the needs of those visiting the park. The Hawrelak Park Pavilions are also valued as high-quality examples of the Organic Modern/International Style, with influences of West-Coast post and beam construction. The pavilion buildings were designed by Bittorf and Wensley Architects in 1966. The five buildings feature a common, repeated architectural type. This architectural type consists of parallel concrete column and beam systems supporting a series of timber rafter trusses. The roof systems consist of tongue and groove cedar decking topped with cedar shakes; this roofline leads up along a symmetrical curve to a central set of acrylic domed skylights or "ridgelights" as the original architects called them. While the Boat House and the three Picnic Shelters offer single instances of this form, the Main Pavilion consists of three instances with each instance cascaded and offset, thereby marrying the rooflines together into a single facility.





Despite their shared architectural elements, the buildings are not all identical. While the Main Pavilion includes cast-in-place concrete walls, its assembly space is wrapped in glazing. The Boat House, on the other hand, features board and batten cladding along with concrete columns. Shelters #1 and #2 feature cast-in-place concrete walls throughout the washroom areas but Shelter #3 has a concrete masonry unit bathroom. Shelter #3's exterior cladding shares a board and batten treatment with the Boat House. Across these buildings, the same structural system has been used for different kinds of programming. The consistently repeated architectural form across the buildings is a critical component to the heritage value of the park overall.

The Hawrelak Park Pavilions are also valued as landmarks within a regional park, and as focal points for city-wide gatherings and activities. The park pavilions are key landmarks on the site for visitors, and provide amenity services through all seasons. Prior to its closure, Hawrelak Park was one of the most valued park and open space areas in the Edmonton region, and one of the most heavily-used. Beyond the park pavilions themselves, the site features several other amenities, including the Heritage Amphitheatre, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Plaza, public ice skating, a children's playground, paddle boat rentals and walking trails. The park has historically been the location for the Edmonton Heritage Festival, which describes itself as "the world's largest three-day multiculturalism celebration." The Heritage Amphitheatre is western Canada's largest outdoor amphitheater, which completed construction in 1985. The park's lake was the site for the swimming portion of events when Edmonton hosted the 2001 World Triathlon Championship, and since 2014 for the Edmonton stop on the annual World Triathlon Series circuit.

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Hawrelak Park Pavilions include:

Main Pavilion:

- + Form, scale and massing
- + Structural expression of the pavilion (columns, beams and trusses)
- + Deep projecting eaves and rafters
- + Skylights ("ridgelights") in ceiling design
- + Cedar deck tongue and groove ceiling
- + Cedar shake roof
- + Overall fenestration pattern
- + Exterior glazing carefully shaped to fit the curvature of exterior walls and columns without the incorporation of any mullions. This also includes the exterior glazing installed in seams in the concrete at floor level, also without the use of mullions
- + Duct-free space, and the thoughtful orchestration of systems to maximize visual aesthetic of the interior
- + Cast in place concrete walls (exterior and interior) with exposed aggregate
- + Parallel concrete column and beam systems supporting a series of timber rafter trusses
- + Cast-in-place concrete columns (exterior and interior) with exposed aggregate that extend to the ground-level with unique fileted corners at the top and bottom

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Boat House and Picnic Shelter #3:

- + form, scale and massing;
- + structural expression of the pavilion (columns, beams and trusses)
- + deep projecting eaves and rafters
- + skylights (“ridgelights”) in ceiling design
- + cedar deck tongue and groove ceiling
- + cedar shake roof
- + fenestration pattern (south elevation of Boat Pavilion)
- + parallel concrete column and beam systems supporting a series of timber rafter trusses
- + board and batten siding (although a later addition); and
- + cast-in-place concrete columns (exterior and interior) with exposed aggregate that extend to the ground-level with unique filleted corners at the top and bottom.

Picnic Shelters #1 and #2

- + form, scale and massing;
- + structural expression of the pavilion (columns, beams and trusses);
- + deep projecting eaves and rafters;
- + skylights (“ridgelights”) in ceiling design;
- + cedar deck tongue and groove ceiling;
- + cedar shake roof;
- + cast in place concrete walls (exterior and interior) with exposed aggregate; and
- + parallel concrete column and beam systems supporting a series of timber rafter trusses; and

Designated as Municipal Historic Resources through Bylaws 20630, 20631, 20632, 20633, and 20634 in December 2003.

- + cast-in-place concrete columns (exterior and interior) with exposed aggregate that extend to the ground-level with unique filleted corners at the top and bottom.



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