

## **Central Memorial Park, City of Calgary Parks, Calgary, Alberta**

The oldest surviving park in Calgary, Central Memorial Park had its early beginnings as a nursery and a site to nurture trees used to plant in the city. A hub for community activities, it was selected as the site for city's first library, the Carnegie Library. When the park opened in 1912, the formal landscape design that accompanied the library illustrated Calgary's evolution as a sophisticated city.



Over the next 60 years the space grew in the hearts of Calgarians and proved a fitting location to erect the memorials honouring those who sacrificed their lives in the Boer War, WWI and WWII. And in the 1970s, the park was protected by a Provincial Historic Resource listing.

Like many larger cities across Canada, Calgary was challenged by decades of rapid growth, and Central Memorial Park began to suffer from lack of use and neglect. Recognizing the historic and community values inherent in the park, representatives from the Beltline Community Association, the Calgary Public Library, veterans, city and provincial heritage experts and Calgary Parks formed a steering committee to develop a concept plan for the site. Under the exceptional leadership of project manager Michelle Reid, the restoration was completed in 2010. Important historic elements such as the original Edwardian inspired “carpet bed design” of intricate, geometric patterns of grass, pathways and the well-loved memorials and monuments, were sensitively recreated using the official *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Adapting the park for compatible new uses saw the addition of a comprehensive lighting plan to address safety and highlight architectural elements, water features to animate areas, the Boxwood Café to provide refreshment, and wireless internet to meet contemporary needs.

The rejuvenation of Central Memorial Park by City of Calgary Parks has made a major contribution to improving the social and cultural health of downtown city life.

The award was presented to Calgary Parks' Anne Charlton jointly by HCF's former chair Trudy Cowan and Cynthia Klaassen on behalf of the Calgary Heritage Initiative, who made the nomination, at the city's Lion Awards for Heritage on August 1, 2012.