Century Homes Calgary: Providing a Blueprint for Use by Other Cities

Cynthia Klaassen, President, Calgary Heritage Initiative Society
Lorna Cordeiro, Heritage Advocate, Calgary, AB

Saturday, October 4, 2014
Century Homes Calgary: Old Homes Great Stories

A Celebration which engaged 508 homeowners in 30 Calgary communities in 2012
Calgary City Council recognizes Century Homes Calgary

“The public experienced Century Homes Calgary in many ways. Many people first noticed Century Homes yard flags on their daily commute to work or school. There were media stories featuring proud residents of Century Homes, and others heard about it through friends or on social media. But more than anything else, awareness of Calgary’s heritage, and its importance in building community, was most enhanced by people walking around and visiting Century Homes.” Mayor Naheed Nenshi (Jan 14, 2013)
What Inspired us?

"If this house could talk..."

Cambridgeport, Massachusetts

Sacramento, California
What Inspired us?
Century Homes Calgary
10 Key Steps:

1. FORMED the Celebration Committee
2. Created a BUDGET & secured FUNDING
3. Created the “BRAND” of Century Homes Calgary
4. MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS
5. Solicited Community PARTICIPATION
6. HOSTED Community events
7. Distributed BANNERS & SIGNS
8. CELEBRATION: Historic Calgary Week 2012
9. Created a LEGACY
10. Post-event SURVEYS
Century Homes Calgary: A Community Network

Century Homes Calgary Celebration Committee

- Federation of Calgary Communities
- Calgary Heritage Initiative
- City of Calgary Archives
- City of Calgary Heritage Planning
- Calgary Heritage Authority
- Chinook Country Historical Society
- Community Associations
- Calgary Public Library

Calgary Public Library

Chinook Country Historical Society

Federation of Calgary Communities

Calgary Heritage Authority

City of Calgary Archives

City of Calgary Heritage Planning

Century Homes Calgary Celebration Committee
Century Homes Committee: A Synergy of Diverse Skills
From July 27 to August 6, 2012, Old Homes will Tell Great Stories

Century Homes Calgary is a city-wide celebration of homes constructed during Calgary’s first building boom, which peaked 100 years ago. Our city has many interesting and beautiful Century Homes with proud owners and residents that are ready to share their stories with all Calgarians.

During Historic Calgary Week 2012, July 27 to August 6, hundreds of houses in communities all over the city will be sporting homemade yard signs that tell their part of Calgary’s story.

www.centuryhomes.org

Go to www.centuryhomes.org for a map of participating Century Homes, and more. Create your own tour, read the history of select “twain homes”, and find news of Century Home tours and events. This summer, experience the story of Calgary, as told by Calgarians, by visiting Century Homes.

Only a little time left to sign up your home

The Century Homes project provides do-it-yourself yard signs, access to information on how to research your home, and places participating homes on an online map. If you have a Century Home and would like to participate in the program, the deadline for sign-up and receive a yard sign is July 15. July 31 is the last day to sign up but yard signs might not be available. Send an email to contact@centuryhomes.org, learn more at www.centuryhomes.org or call the Federation of Calgary Communities at 403-244-4111.
Century Homes Calgary Reaches Out
Workshops at Calgary Public Library

“Research the History of Your House”
Sharing the workshop via live-streaming and YouTube
Celebration during Historic Calgary Week
Bringing History to Life: One Home at a Time

A postcard mailed to our house in 1911.

Thomas George Whitcher - home builder
With Beatrix Whitcher
Daughter Beatrix Whitcher
Both the Dog
Circa 1911 - our house!

# This information was kindly provided by Hilda Agar,
granddaughter of Thomas
# Beatrix Whitcher. Hilda
# resides in Calgary with her
# husband, Hilda's son
# followed in the footsteps of his great-
# grand father and is a home
# builder in Calgary.

Hello.

Welcome to our home. It was built in 1908 and was first owned by a printer named Harry Chapman. Harry, originally from Kent, lived in 2622 14A Street SW. No date is known to the home until 1930. Unfortunately, there are no available records regarding the occupants until 1928 when a carpenter by the name of Earl McWalter moved in. We can only surmise that the home might have been rented or sold before the H. McWalter moved in.

In 1929, Harry Chapman sold the home to W.C. Cooper, a prominent real estate and insurance man. He had stores and insurance businesses, W.C. Cooper and Co., was located at the historic Barrie Block on the corner of Prince Edward Street and 8th Ave SW. Cooper was a member of the Calgary Board of Trade, and would later go on to become the mayor of Calgary, AB in the 1930s.

In 1930, Edward McWalter occupied our home. He was manager of the Calgary Lumber Company. In 1932, when W.C. Cooper purchased the home, R. G. Wilkins, a life insurance manager, moved in. The house remained in the McWalter family until 1975 when it was sold to the City of Calgary as a library. In 1983, the building was restored and opened as the Peace Cultural Centre. In 1984, the building was converted into a museum and became the Historical Society of Calgary.

In 1992, the home was restored to its original condition and opened as the Calgary Historical Society Museum. The museum is now owned by the City of Calgary and is operated by the Calgary Historical Society. The museum is open to the public and features exhibits on the history of Calgary and the surrounding area.

Thank you for visiting us at 2622 14A Street SW!
Century Homes Calgary Legacy: “House Party of the Century”

An opportunity to celebrate and say “thank you” at the Sunnyside School Fall Fair
Legacy: Digital Library at the Calgary Public Library
Legacy: Survey - Here is what we heard from our participants:

- 33% heard about the program via word of mouth
- 39% through their Community Association newsletter

- 58% joined to learn about their homes’ history
- 70% of participants signed up to celebrate their home’s centennial

- 78% had no previous involvement in the Heritage community

- 82% wanted to do more research

- 89% wanted to see the project become an annual event.
Legacy: Survey - Here is what we heard:

Quotes:

• **Preservation:** “How can I ensure that my home will not be demolished to make way for development other than designating it as heritage?”
  • “Calgary needs to embrace all its heritage homes and not be so eager to tear them down to be replaced by infills.”

• **Community Building:** “I thought this project was a very good community builder - got neighbours talking and discussing their homes, etc.”
  - “I was amazed at the number of people who actually stopped to read the signs - we often talked to them as well.”
  - “It was nice to meet together with other like- minded home owners.”
  - “Our community had a little wine and cheese event in late spring…that was fun - we have met new people in the community as a result of the project.”
Winner of the 2012 Governor General’s Award for Community Programming

www.canadahistory.ca/Awards/Community-Programming/Articles/2012-Calgary-Heritage-Initiative-Society

2012: Calgary Heritage Initiative Society

for Century Homes Calgary

Century Homes Calgary is a celebration of homes constructed during Calgary’s first big building boom, which peaked 100 years ago in 1912. In its inaugural year (2012), an amazing 500 households signed up to research their homes, display Century Homes Calgary yard flags, and create and display homemade yard signs with historical information, telling their part of Calgary’s story.

Participants visited the new website to plan their route for guided and self-guided tours of the homes. Research and photographs of the participating homes will be collected for an online legacy database to be housed at the Calgary Public Library for posterity and to benefit future researchers. The continuation of this project has great potential to grow the community of Calgarians who actively support history and built heritage.
Priorities Shifted in June 2013: The Flood Testing the Resilience of Century Calgary Homeowners + Their Communities
Century Homes Calgary: Our 7 Key Learnings:

1. Have a clear focus on the goal(s) and purpose(s) for the event:
   - to create community engagement
   - to raise awareness re: built & cultural heritage
   - to celebrate a significant year or event in the community

2. Partner with other local agencies, societies, festivals and events.
   - To leverage resources and to reach a greater audience

3. Cultivate funding sources such as corporate or small business sponsors
Century Homes Calgary: Our 7 Key Learnings:

4. Scale your project according to capacity, skill set and budget.

5. Determine whether this is a one-time event or annual:
   - This impacts infrastructure required: volunteer recruitment, budget, website etc.

6. Remain open-minded as a committee:
   - Look for emerging opportunities + unexpected challenges; widen the circle as time progresses.
7. Things takes more time than you think:

- Enjoy the people you are volunteering with.

Thank you!