

# Historic Buildings Walking Tour

For many years, Brooks' historic downtown was the center of the entire community - it was the center of commerce, entertainment, services, and residences. Today, many of the buildings that were constructed in Brooks' earliest days are still standing in their original locations. Be sure to take a walk around our beautiful community and learn about what life was like in the early 1900s!



# Historic Buildings

## Sites along Evergreen Park Close:

1-5) #8, 28, 32, 36, and 40 These homes, plus 3 others, had foundations done by the CPR by 1919 and were contracted out to be built by Messrs Lancaster and Poulson, all being completed in 1919. All of the homes were used by Engineering Staff and Department Managers for the CPR.

6) #50 Known as the "Engineer's House", this home was built around 1912 to be used by the Chief Engineer for the CPR. One of the first known residents was A.S. Dawson.

*In the early days, this row of houses was known as "Rotten Row" by the working class residents of Brooks because of the high quality, nice homes that were built for the upper class employees. In 1935, all of the above homes, Headquarters building and Evergreen Park were turned over to the newly formed Eastern Irrigation District from the CPR. In 1991/92, all of the homes were sold by the EID to private owners.*

## Sites along Third Street West:

7) #216 was built in 1912 by Leonard Nesbitt, the new editor of the Brooks Bulletin, at a cost of \$1,200.

8) #224 was built between 1912 and 1913 by Jim Wilson, known as the "Irish Jew", a tailor with a clothing store on 1st Street West. In the 1930's an addition was added to the rear of the building and a screened veranda was added to the front. Today, the home has been owned since 1964 by the descendant of the early pioneer Bert Coultis.

9) #307 was built in Bassano in 1912 and moved to 2nd Street in Brooks and then to its current location in the 1950's. The building's original hardwood floors and thick plaster exterior are still in place.

10) #304 was built in 1930 by W. G. Manson, the owner of a slaughterhouse and a grocer.

11) #327 1st Street West is a two-story home which was moved in 1931 from Alderson. There were three homes moved from Alderson that year.

12) #440 1st Street West was built in 1926 and was the first brick school in Brooks. There were two grades per room and later, more rooms were added onto the east end of the building. In 1933, it was extended to include grade 12 and is now part of the Holy Family Academy. In 1927, there were 34 evergreens planted in recognition of the 34 Fathers of Confederation and today, some can still be found growing in front of the school.



13) St. Alban's Anglican Church was first established in 1910 and their services were held in a single room above a store in the downtown core. In 1912, a new church was built at this location. Several renovations have been done, but the original building still stands.

14) #224 1st Street West was the original site of the Brooks Banner building built in 1911. The Editor at the time was Calvin Goss who sold the company to Leonard Nesbitt in 1912. Soon after, the paper became known as the Brooks Bulletin.

15) The corner of 2nd Avenue and 1st Street West was the British Empire Service League building, now known as the Royal Canadian Legion. The building held the Town of Brooks offices for many years and is most recently a gift shop.

16) #224 2nd Street West became the Masonic Order building when it was purchased in 1918. Meetings were held on the upper floor.

17) #129 2nd Street West is the site of today's Oasis Theatre, previously the Gayety Theatre. For many years, it was run by the Ubertino family.

18) #125 2nd Street West was a men's clothing store built by Wilson Cain, who was the first MLA from Brooks. Later, the building became Harry Fowler's Men's Wear and the McMahon Western Shop.

19) #111 2nd Street West was originally the Brooks Hardware Store and was built in the 1920's. It was destroyed by fires with other downtown buildings and is now Ultra Floors.

20) #107 2nd Street West is and has always been the Newell Hotel. It was built in the "boom years" of 1911 and was originally a frame structure with the red brick added on years later. A bar was added at the back of the building and it is still currently owned and operated.

21) #103 2nd Street West is the site of the old Union Bank and was built in 1909/10. It was the first bank in Brooks and used the same floor plan as many other Union Banks, some of which are an exact mirror image. Currently it is locally owned and houses the ReMax Realty offices.

22) #102 2nd Street West was the Merchant's Bank, built in 1912. The bank merged with the Bank of Montreal in 1922 and the building was then used by the Irrigation Investigation Branch of the CPR. The building was purchased by the Bank of Nova Scotia who added to the back and installed a stairwell to the second floor.

23) #212 1st Avenue was the site of Triangle Motors in the early 1930s where they sold Fords and John Deeres. Modern Auto took over from 1936-59 where Chevrolets and Oldsmobiles were sold. Then, the building became a Jenkins Groceteria and Tom-Boy and was purchased in 1994 by Jaaco Services to be used by Dinosaur Gas Co-op. The parking lot to the east was the site of the first drug store owned by P. W. McNab.

24) #107 1st Street West is a combination of 3 buildings - the central portion is the first garage which was opened in 1912 and operated by Ed Revenning. The north portion was a hardware store owned and operated for many decades by J. S. Ingram and his descendants.

25) #111 1st Street West is the Brooks Hotel which was built in 1908. Originally it was run by Eli Sanford and then sold to James Ingram in 1909. The building was steam heated and held gala events such as church meetings, social sporting organization events, and UFA events. Monthly room and board was \$30 in 1914.

26) #136 Centre Street is a home that was built by local carpenter Fred Hanson, with three other in the early 1930's. Due to a fire in 1915, Town records were destroyed and earlier information is somewhat controversial and contradicting.

27) #126 Centre Street was the original location of Sarah King's home. It was a maternity hospital where 160 babies were born before a regular hospital was built. The house has since been moved and is now located at the Brooks and District Museum.

28) #124 1st Avenue was built in 1909 by rancher James Pierce and was one of the first homes in Brooks. Later, the home was occupied by the A. L. Young family, who was a pioneer dairyman and delivered milk to homes in Brooks.