



The stars align for Planetarium designation

March 22, 2017

City Council approved the designation of the Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium as a Municipal Historic Resource yesterday.

The Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium, located in Coronation Park, is distinguished as an early example of Modern Expressionistic Style in Canada. The building exhibits unique stylistic elements, including its circular plan, the lightness of the structure, the transparency of the public gathering areas, and the central dome that displays the primary function of the building as a planetarium. The design was likely influenced by the popular fascination with space age design in the 1950s. It has the appearance of a spacecraft hovering off the ground.

The first Director was Ian McLennan, who has since become an internationally-recognized expert in strategic planning and management of planetaria and science centres throughout the world.



"The designation of the Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium illustrates the City's commitment to the preservation of its historic resources," says David Johnston, Principal Heritage Planner. "In this case, we get the added bonus of a wonderful partnership between the City and the TELUS World of Science Edmonton to bring life back to this fantastic building."

The Planetarium, the first in Canada, was designed to be the main focal point of Coronation Park and was officially opened September 23, 1960, by Mayor Elmer E. Roper. The site for the future Planetarium was dedicated by Queen Elizabeth herself during her Royal visit to Edmonton in July 1959.

Although associated with Robert Falconer Duke, the City Architect at the time, its design was largely the creation of Denis Mulvaney, an architect with the City until 1961. Mulvaney was also responsible for the design of the original Storyland Valley Zoo, as well as numerous power sub-stations around the city. Mulvaney moved to Sydney, Australia in 1961, where he was involved in the design of the Sydney Opera House.

The City's [Historic Resource Management Plan](#) outlines the City's mission to identify, protect and promote the preservation and use of historic resources. The Plan contains 24 policies and 88 action items that direct how Edmonton's heritage should be preserved and celebrated.

For more information:

edmonton.ca/city_government/edmonton_archives/historic-resources.aspx

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