

Bridgeland Walks Self Guided #9 – East Village

Thank you to Kate Reeves, resident of East Village and a Bridgeland walker who has documented this self-guided 4.5 kilometre long tour. East Village is an area that was one of Calgary's earliest communities. It declined over the years but in 2007, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) started redeveloping East Village as a high density, modern inner city neighbourhood began. New construction continues. When it is fully built, the population is expected to be 10,000 people. The tour will highlight history, art, music, historic Calgarians, eating places, and the range of squares and multi-family housing found in this new village.

Land Acknowledgment - This walking tour takes place on the traditional territory of the Treaty 7 Nations in Southern Alberta, and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Start at the NE corner of Reconciliation Bridge (corner of Memorial Dr & 4 St NE) and walk across the Bow on the recently widened sidewalk. Watch for bikes & scooters....

The bridge, known as Langevin Bridge for over 100 years, received its present name in a ceremony in 2018. See Bridgeland tour #6 for the reason why the bridge was renamed. The first bridge crossing the Bow River at this location (built in 1888) was a wooden one and it was called the Dewdney Bridge as it connected to Dewdney Street, now familiar as 4 Street NE in Riverside. Edgar Dewdney was Lieutenant Governor of the NorthWest Territories from 1879 to 1888. Alberta was created as a province from these territories in 1905.

As part of the Jack & Jean Leslie RiverWalk Project, CMLC installed 5600 LED lights on the bridge that can be programmed in different colours and combinations. You can request a colour on CMLC's website for a certain date and occasion. Jack Lesley was mayor of Calgary from 1965 to 1969. He & wife Jean were committed environmentalists who campaigned to stop the extension of the CP rail tracks along the Bow River through East Village and Eau Claire neighbourhoods!!

Every year the banners on the bridge are replaced and a different artist completes a new set. The 2020 banners on the bridge were created by Ramsay artist **Angie Rees** who points out that an "Albertan" detail on the banners is the changing weather. She thinks the geese have it right: fly somewhere warm for winter! Also look for the interesting story plaque about the Anderson twins on one of the bridge columns as you approach the North bank of the Bow.

Crossing the bridge you have a lovely view to the West of the Centre Street Bridge. To the South, in front of you, is the Calgary Rehab and Drop In Centre. The Drop In Centre was just getting ready to open in September, 2001 and when airports closed due to 9/11, stranded visitors were the first guests. After you cross the bridge, turn left along Riverfront Ave. Just beyond 4 St SE, cross at the new bike crosswalk and walk South.

Stop #1. See the mural by artist **Ron Moppett** on the East side of the CTrain bridge. Titled *The Same Way Better/Reader*, this mural is a "Dream Story" of Calgary history

and contains nearly 1 million mosaic tiles including glass tiles from Mexico and granite and marble from Venice. Homage is paid to William Reader, Calgary's first Parks superintendent, who also planned tree lined streets in Bridgeland, notably 8 & 8A. At the South end of the mural look East and you see the Bee Hives display next to the parking lot of the former East Village Experience Centre (now home to Harvest, a tech company that is a "hive" for startup businesses). There are five very active hives this year and if you go on the East side of the structure you will see that each hive has a name. Lots of good info about beehives. You can follow @MOBHoney to know about online bee workshops.

Head South on Riverfront Lane.....

You are passing the three buildings that make up Evolution condo complex. The buildings, named through a contest are FUSE, the East tower, PULSE, the West tower and Midrise for the one in the middle. Looking West you can see Promenade - a public art "marker" for East Village. South of the Drop In Centre and standing tall above the 5th Avenue Flyover it is like a lighthouse. "The animated figures sweep the surrounding landscape endlessly passing each other," commented the creator, **Julian Opie**. "The movement does not really exist but is created by fooling the eye and the brain." The names of the walking people figures are: Jeremy, Jennifer, Rod, Tina, Verity and Chris.

Proceed across the new bike light crosswalk to C-Square (originally called Celebration Square).....

Stop # 2. The square is a plaza and has been used for Food Trucks, Garage Sales, and even a Tea. The metal "flags" light up when the train goes by and can be used by musicians to accompany their music. Across the street to the West is the new Superstore, a full service grocery store. To the East is the Hosteling International, Calgary Hostel. Hosteling in North America was begun at the home of two Calgary sisters, **Catherine and Mary Barclay**, who lived in Crescent Heights and used their home as the initial hostel. Their next site for a hostel was Bragg Creek. It took until 1976 to get this Calgary one built - said to be the first purpose-built municipal hostel in Canada. During the flood in 2013, hostel guests had to be rescued by fire department rafts. The first of two neighbourhood Little Free Libraries is located at the front door of the Hostel.

The entire block is being developed by COPAZ as East Village CourtYard and the proposal shows public art by **Jeff de Boer** of "a large brown trout posed in the moment of surfacing ..." One could climb inside the trout's mouth for photos.
<https://pub-calgary.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=133460>

Continue South past the Hilton Garden Hotel and just before Tim Horton's turn right to the alley and walk around the building.....

Stop #3 Across from Brewer's Apprentice you will find Balloon Art on the wall of the historic St. Louis Hotel. The Brewer's Apprentice is located in N3 - the only new East Village condo without underground parking for cars. Their parking is for bikes! The St. Louis Hotel (built in 1914) closed in 2006 but due to its heritage signage still gets visitors looking for accommodation. Note the glass bubbles in the sidewalk in

front of the hotel. Sidewalk prisms, also known as vault lights, are glass prisms set into sidewalks in order to transmit daylight into the basement of the building. The lower floor was once the site of the famous St Louis Friday Lunchtime Horse Races. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/st-louis-hotel-horse-races-return-1.5218758>). It is hoped that it will someday be a restaurant again. The main floor was a bar scene in the third Superman movie with Christopher Reeve. The upper floors are offices for CMLC. “Ghost” signage can be seen on the West side of the building.

Guarding the end of the cup-de-sac outside the New Central Library, is one of ‘TRIO’ bobbing bird sculptures by **Christian Mueller**. Kate’s grandson informed her there was an alien inside.

The historic Hillier building (built in 1910) across from the St. Louis is home to an entrepreneurial company called *Platform*. This company will be moving to the parking structure being built at 9th Avenue and 3rd Street SE. Besides vehicles the Parkade will be home for this company that mentors new tech companies.

Proceed to the corner of 8 Ave SE and 4 St SE and walk South.....

Stop #4. Bounce Park buzzes with active people whenever weather permits. It includes a full-sized basketball court, Ping-Pong tables, Snakes & Ladders games and an art mural by *Buds Collective* whose name is derived from the former Buds Office Furniture at 4 St & Memorial Dr in Bridgeland.

Look for the “ghost sign” on the King Eddy hotel building. Although each brick was said to be marked with its location when the building was taken down, it took some time before the words were “reconstructed”. The radio station CKUA has a broadcast studio here. As part of the Studio Bell National Music Centre the “bridge” over 4 St SE is known as the East Village Sky Walk. Sound boards from priceless keyboards damaged in the 2013 flood were used to create a new kind of solar powered instrument that is in the ceiling of the walkway.

Want an ice cream break? Then cross 9 Av SE, walk along the West side 4 St SE underpass below the CP Rail mainline.....

In the underpass view **Michelle Hoogveld’s** “Corridor of Connection” mural. Take the switchback steps up to Village Ice Cream shop at 431-10 Av SE. Owner Billy Friley named his shop because he thought it is in East Village, but it actually is Victoria Park.

After your yummy ice cream, return to 9 Av SE, cross the street and on the SE corner is

Stop #5. Studio Bell: National Music Centre which houses the Kimball Theatre Organ. Be sure to arrange your visit so that you can attend a recital of the organ. It is free to go in the lobby of the Centre to see the exhibits there and look up at the interesting interior architecture. The Centre has many interesting exhibits and live music concerts showcasing Canadian artists. Check out Cafe Rosso in the lobby area for a nice coffee, or bakery treat.

Walk North to the corner of 8A SE and 4 St SE.....

Stop #6. This is a good spot to “stand and understand what was here before”. The CPR owned this land and sold lots which became houses, churches, hotels,

commercial buildings and light industry. The blocks South of 8 Ave SE had a Chinese laundry, the first school, the brothel of the famous Madame, Pearl Miller and the Chicken Fry Restaurant operated by a black family. North of you is a parking lot which was the former site of a Canada Safeway store which opened in November 1955 and became a local landmark. It was re-purposed as a food bank in the 1980s. An archeological dig required for future planned development unearthed a teepee ring. The rocks have been saved and hopefully will be part of an interpretative display on the re-developed site. The Parking lot on the South side, right in front of you, is said to be the burial site of **Api-kai-ees**, the Blackfoot running messenger who we know as Deerfoot. He died in the NWMP infirmary of tuberculosis in 1897 and was buried here in a “pauper’s plot”. So much Calgary history is on this corner!

Walk along 8 Ave SE towards Fort Calgary.....

Half way along the block was the former site of the last house in East Village. It was called the Sander House, a small stucco house with a gable roof hidden by a Western false front and no basement. It was built by 1904, making it 115 years old when it was recently demolished. (<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/East-villages-last-residential-house-could-be-demolished>). A book by East Village historian, **Pat Cooper**, called “*Discover East Village: Through Our Cultural and Heritage History*” describes many buildings once in East Village as well as some interesting characters and fun facts. This book can be obtained from the East Village Neighbourhood Association www.EV-NA.com

Look South to the alley and you see the “Broken Objects” mural by **Jill Stanton**. Her mural refers to “light that shines through broken cracks”. According to the artist, there is also a reference to the Last House in East Village in the mural.

Next door is Loft 112. This literary space created “Noir on Eight” a serial mystery novel that takes place in East Village, each chapter written by a Calgary author. The story features some of our city’s quirkiest historical characters and events. You can read it at <http://yycpenny dreadful.ca/start-from-the-beginning/>

In front of Loft 112 is Western Canada’s first “Bookmark” a project building Canada’s literary trail from coast to coast to coast. The poem is placed here because the author, **Rosemary Griebel**, composed it as she walked from her Inglewood home to work at the Library.

Continue East further along 8 Ave & crossing 5 St SE....

Stop #7 On the SW corner is Orange Lofts (home of Loft 112) a 6 story building opened in 2003 based on a live & work in one place concept; very appropriate in our COVID 19 world. On the SE corner is Murdoch Manor, seniors housing built as part of an urban renewal scheme for the inner city that changed the original name of this area from East Calgary, to Churchill Park and re-christened once again as “East Village” in 1978. Murdoch was Calgary’s first mayor (our Bridgeland park is also named for him). Stop to admire the lovely bejeweled Little Free Library (LFL) . Do you remember where the other LFL is located?

King Tower to the East of Murdoch Manor was named after George Clift King. King was a member of F Troop that arrived at the Bow and Elbow in 1875. In 1879, he married Louise Munroe, the daughter of a fur trader, becoming the first couple married in Calgary. He was also our second mayor and for many years, the postmaster (He also had a home in Riverside and the bridge linking East Village with Bridgeland bears his name.

Cross to the North side of 8 Av SE and walk West towards 5 St SE past River Twin condo built in 2003, and its neighbour INK built in 2018.

Stop #8 The building on the corner of 8 Av & 5 St is East Village Place apartment building part of Calgary Housing Corporation. The first two floors once home of the Golden Age Club and will be re-imagined as Village Commons, a Community Centre for the neighbourhood. <https://www.calgarymlc.ca/East-village-place>

The Corner Drug Store has been run by **Abdul Kanji** since 1987. His picture and very interesting story can be found in the Village Commons window (June 2020) along with other East Village residents who took part in a Loft 112 Exhibition.

Return to 5 Street and walk North to 5th Street SE Square.....

Stop #9 You may remember the "Upside Down Church" more properly titled "The Device to Root Out Evil" that was located in Ramsay from 2008 to 2014. It not certain where it disappeared after that, but we are glad to see it here now. The sculpture by artist, **Dennis Oppenheim** (1938-2011) gives the square a focus.

To the East is Hat, a 28 floor apartment building opened in 2019. The large H for Hat was painted to mimic graffiti. Can you see graffiti that might have been added later? Across 7 Ave is Verve, a 25 floor condo building with Good Earth café at street level. This is also the NE corner of "The Riff" diagonal pedestrian pathway connecting to the Bow River.

Walk along The Riff pathway taking care because it is not fully completed....

Stop #10 On the wooden fence at the East end the RIFF you can enjoy a gallery of Instagram photos

Continue straight ahead to 6th Avenue, carefully cross the busy street and continue through the alley.....

FIRST condo building, opened in 2014, is on the West side of the alley. Photos on the East wall of the alley were done by local street photographer **i.m. ruzz**. His photos also grace the lobby entrance of ALT Hotel. When the hotel is open, step inside (the entrance is around the corner on Confluence Way SE) and look up. They are on the ceiling of the vestibule!

Turn right and walk along the ALT Hotel and then cross Confluence Way. Proceed along the narrow concrete walkway alongside the new M2 building and arrive at the Jack & Jean Leslie Riverwalk, Turn right and walk to the "Crossroads Plaza", at the foot of the George C. King bridge.....

Stop #11 Here in the circular sculpted stone walkway are the names and info of 30 women who have contributed to Calgary's development. Two of them are **Louise Munroe King** (1862-1951), wife of George C King, and **Mary Belle Barclay** (1862-1951) of the Hostelling movement. **Ethel McKillop** (1871-1955) helped start a Mission for homeless men at the corner of 3rd Street and 9th Avenue SE. Ethel was active in charities which evolved into CARYA - the social services agency developing the Village Commons (Stop #7). **Annie Gale** (1876-1970) was the first female alderman in the British Empire who fought to have reasonably priced, good quality, local produce available to Calgarians by promoting a Public Market that was located where Booker's BBQ Grill & Crab Shack is now located. Also included are: **Annie Davidson** (1839-1910), the founder of the Calgary Public Library, and **Doris Anderson** (1921-2007) journalist and editor of Chatelaine magazine, and Canadian feminist movement leader. What names do you recognize? What other women should be commemorated by future stones on this plaza?

Walk Westward, along the Jack & Jean Leslie RiverWalk...

Stop #12 Along here you can see several buildings and steps that lead down to the Bow River to commemorate previous floods. One step is a marker for the 100-year flood at 1042.30 m. Below it, closer to the river is a 5-year flood maker at 1039.80m.

The Bow River did not breach its banks here during the historic June 2013 flood. CMLC had raised the level of this area when re-development started. But the water came over land from the Elbow River just East of Fort Calgary. It flowed as far as the new 4th Street Underpass. The pump there is ready for any future flooding!

Fun Fact: East Village could have been the "Venice of Calgary".... a development plan seriously considered by the City in 2002 included a network of canals.

Stop #13 The Simmons Building (built in 1912) was a former mattress factory that has been renovated and now home to several businesses. Take a break at Citizen Sidewalk Bakery Cafe. Built into the floor in front of the cashier is a "contraption" invented by **Cappy Smart**, Calgary's popular fire chief from 1898 to 1933. These are fire hose ports used to deliver water to put out a fire in the basement. Fire hose ports are also in the floor of Charbar restaurant and in some buildings in Inglewood.

East of Simmons is M2, EV's latest building. It's sleek river facing front is white and the rear facing backs black. E-Bikes can be rented from Bow Cycle on the ground floor. Check out organized segway tours available from the nearby container box store.

Our walk through East Village is now complete. You can return to Bridgeland via Reconciliation Bridge and pass **Katie Green's** marvellous art work on the buildings and bridge abutments (<https://www.bridgeinyyc.com>). or by the George C. King Bridge.

We hope you enjoyed your walk through East Village and have learned something old that was new to you!