

## RESEARCHING YOUR FAVOURITE PARK IN THUNDER BAY

### Introduction

This research guide has been developed to help you find records in the Archives related to park development in Port Arthur, Fort William, and Thunder Bay. However, this guide is not an exhaustive list of sources. Each park may have different types, and different quantities, of records available.

Although each park may have developed along a different path, the Archives will generally have records on land acquisition, available facilities at different times, and recreational uses.

This guide presents records that the Archives has collected on these parks' origins, development, and distinctive features.

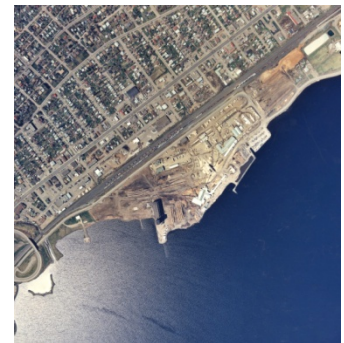
The records covered in this guide are:

- Aerial Photographs
- Maps / Technical Drawings
- Historical Photographs – both created by the City and created by private donors
- Parks and Recreation Department Files

### AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Aerial photographs are high level aerial views that capture a measured portion of the City below. The aerial photographs at the Archives are available as high resolution jpegs. Details of the parks are visible. When researching park development, aerial photographs can show the changing landscapes and waterways, the development of roads and pathways, the construction and demolition of buildings, and the installation of art pieces and playground equipment.

The Archives has sets of aerial photographs encompassing the whole city for the following years; 1949, 1955 (Fort William only), 1959, 1962, 1968, 1969, 1974, 1976, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1991 and 1996. Photographs for the years 1987 to 1996 are in colour. When consulting aerial photographs, you can also consult maps to determine which images you will need to see.



Aerial photograph showing shoreline near Prince Arthur's Landing in 1996, TB 1996 L14-65.

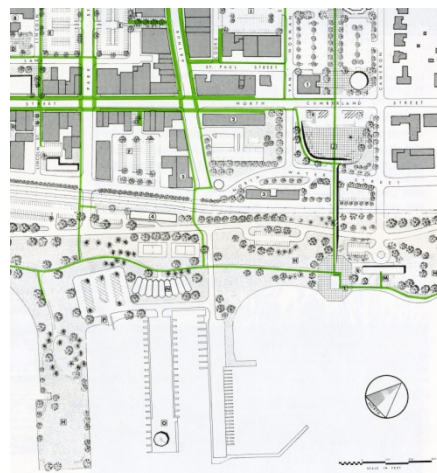
Aerial photographs from 2002 and 2007 are available from The City of Thunder Bay Planning Division.

## MAPS / TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

Maps illustrate land or physical features, such as buildings, roads, or parks. The maps in our holdings reflect different stages of park development: proposals, drafts, progress reports, and final copies. Technical drawings and building plans are available for many of the built features seen in the parks, or for those that were proposed but not constructed. In most cases, maps and technical drawings were created for projects such as construction, expansion, or demolition.

When conducting park research, you can review park proposals and site plans, building proposals and plans, sidewalk, trail, road plans, playground area plans, and fire insurance plans. Even if the proposals did not come to fruition, they indicate the direction that the Parks Board or Parks and Recreation Department wanted to take, and reflect upon views and constraints at the time.

The City Archives has approximately 420 maps relating to parkland or park purposes. These maps date from 1870 to 2000. Maps from 2000 to 2012 are available from The City of Thunder Bay Parks Department or Planning Division.



Map indicating buildings set for demolitions and new constructions within downtown Port Arthur under the Urban Renewal Scheme. Adapted from *Urban Renewal in Your City* (City of Port Arthur, 1968). Series 29. City of Port Arthur fonds.

## HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Unidentified children, accompanied by a nun, ride Chippewa Park's roller coaster in 1969. Location: P014, Accession 1996-02 #34.

Photographs held by the City Archives cover a wide range of subjects and years. They may have been taken by City staff in order to document particular activities or the state of lands or facilities, or they may have been taken by private individuals to preserve happy memories, and then later donated for their historical value.

Most photographs at the City Archives are kept in cold storage for preservation reasons, but high quality jpeg copies are available to view in the reading room. Some images are also available to view online.

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FILES

Three series in particular house a wealth of information on the parks of Port Arthur, Fort William, and Thunder Bay:

- Port Arthur Parks and Recreation Files, Series 28
- Fort William Parks & Recreation Files, Series 121
- Parks and Recreation Department Files, Series 363

Historically, these records cover a wide range of subjects from the formation of the first parks and Parks Boards, through amalgamation, to the recent changes in administrative structure.

As of 2012, the Parks Division manages 124 parks and 32km of paved recreation trails, while the Recreation and Culture Division offers recreational programming and cultural activities. As these two Divisions were linked for many years as one Department, the files are varied and relate to many different topics and issues.

Files can be found on many individual parks, such as Northwood Park or Renfrew Parkette. Many others offer a general perspective on the Fort William or Port Arthur Parks and Recreation Areas, placing information on particular facilities within the wider view of public space developments.

These records preserve: information on recreational activities conducted at multiple park sites, such as snowmobiling, baseball, and hockey; information on facilities, like building upkeep, repairs, and concessions; quality assurance programs, surveys, and Parks Committee Reports; and Reference Material that compiles historic information.

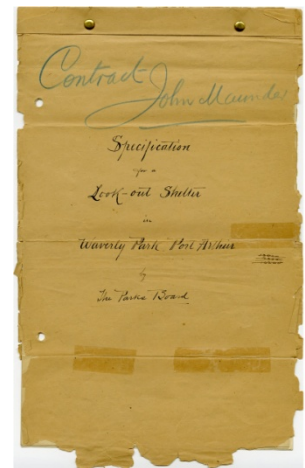
The files contain textual documents such as council minutes, correspondence, surveys, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and researchers' notes, as well as graphical materials such as maps, technical drawings, photographs, and slides.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

*Park Names:* Many parks have had name changes over the years. Others may be known by multiple names at the same time, such as "Prince Arthur's Landing" and "Marina Park." Even alternate spellings ("Waverley Park" and "Waverly Park") may occur. When looking for information on a particular park, watch for any name variants.

*Surrounding Locations:* When looking for maps or other documents, consider also searching by road names or area names in addition to the name of the park. Document titles may use neighbourhood names or addresses but still contain the information you are looking for.

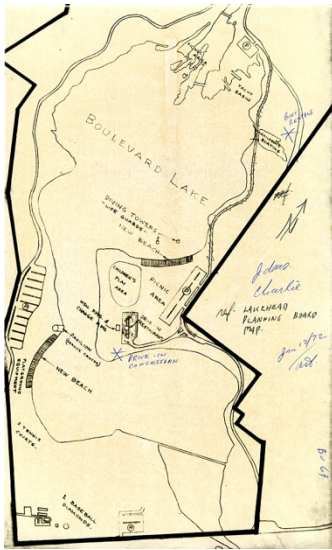
*Key Individuals:* Many individuals (such as citizens, City staff, architects, or donors) have had key roles in developing parks or facilities. Searching records for a person's name may turn up useful information.



Covering page for a contract to build a structure in Waverley Park, 1911. TBA 6117-70.

*Context:* In many cases, park files are aggregated together, and the contents of the box as a whole may provide you with more information than the particular single file that sounds most relevant. When researching at the Archives, you may want to cast as wide a net as possible by viewing whole boxes.

*Additional Information:* Records listings are updated much more frequently than the Research Guides. This guide, and its suggested records series, is not exhaustive. If you are preparing at home, check the online holdings lists and available online photographs. While at the Archives, staff may be able to suggest additional resources.



Drawing of Boulevard Lake showing the location of a proposed drive-in restaurant. TBA 5248-03.

#### RECORDS SERIES:

- Fort William By-Laws, Series 3
- Fort William City Clerk's Files, Series 4
- Fort William Board of Parks Management Minutes, Series 5
- Port Arthur By-Laws, Series 19
- Port Arthur Parks and Recreation Files, Series 28
- Port Arthur Board of Parks Management Minutes, Series 44
- Port Arthur Board of Park Management Records, Series 48
- Fort William Agreements, Series 86
- Thunder Bay City Clerk's Files, Series 117
- Fort William Parks & Recreation Files, Series 121
- Thunder Bay Central Files, Series 156
- Private Donation Collection Photographs – Fulton, Series 250
- Thunder Bay Community Recreation Manager's Files, Series 261
- Thunder Bay Parks Technicians' Files, Series 363