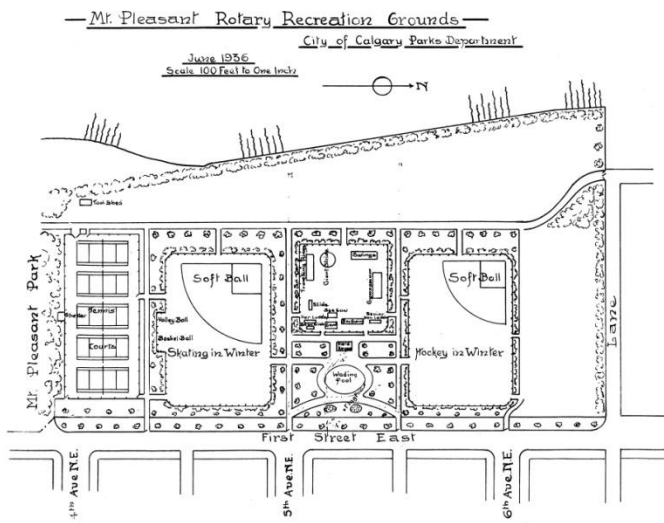


## **A Brief History of Rotary Park**

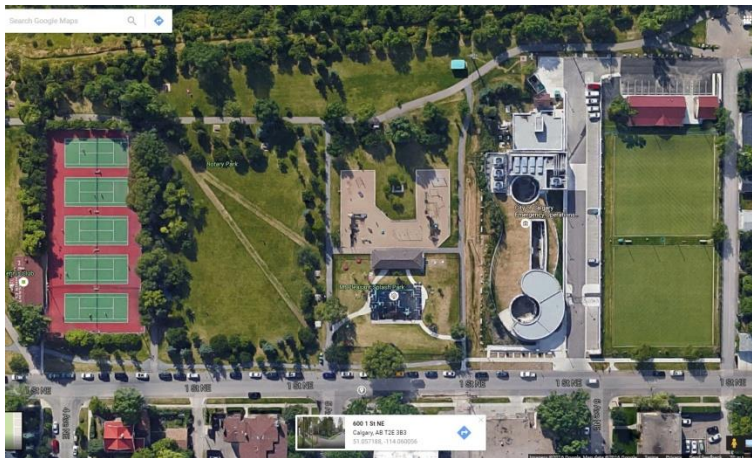
The land forming the backbone of Rotary Park was purchased in 1924 from the McArthur Estate. By 1928, a stairway connecting the park with Centre Street had been connected. That same year, water supply lines had been installed and both trees and shrubs were planted. In 1931 development of the area was accelerated when the Calgary Rotary Club allotted \$8500 to construct a "model" playground for children. The site was chosen at the suggestion of Parks Superintendent William Reader. By 1932, work was complete. The playground itself was fenced and contained three distinct areas: a boys' section, a girls' section and to the east, a wading pool with ornamental fountain. Playground equipment included a sandbox, regular and baby swings, two horizontal ladders, two slides, travelling rings, and a "giant stride" with an enclosed shelter nearby. (To the south, the Mount Pleasant Tennis Club was built.) The Rotary Park project was a real coup for the 'hood as it was the first of a number of similar projects undertaken by Rotarians in Calgary; by 1941 there had come to be seven such Rotary recreation grounds in existence. Many local residents came to use the name "Rotary Park" rather than "Mount Pleasant" to refer to their entire district, which extended south of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to the brow of the hill. The attached drawing was prepared by William Reader well after the facilities were built and shows the heavily-used, fenced playground. On to the north reaches of Rotary Park. A lawn bowling green was first established here by the Royal Canadian Number 1 Legion in 1946. By the late 60's, the bowling greens were used by both the Number 1 Legion Bowling Club and the Army and Navy Club. In 2011, a new clubhouse was erected in the same vicinity as the 50's structure and it is from these palatial quarters that the Rotary Park Lawn Bowls Club now holds forth.

The year 1948 also saw a more sophisticated fire alarm and dispatch centre constructed to the south of the spot where the new lawn bowling clubhouse now stands. Initially a brick-clad one storey building, a second storey was added in more recent years when functions expanded to include EMS and 9-1-1 services. During the 90's, the facility began operations as the City of Calgary Emergency Operations Centre and construction of the new EOC facility- which necessitated the destruction of the 1948 structure- began in May 2009. The EOC was a key operations venue during the 2013 Calgary flood.



This is William Reader's playground plan, prepared 4 years after it had been built. He had finally found some time to catch up on the paperwork!

A more recent view of the area pictured in Reader's diagram above.



The Dispatch Centre in 1948



Lawn bowling in 1953

