

# Vancouver Street Elms

**Address:** Between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, City of Prince George

**Date of Installation:** 1949

**Contractor:** Prince George Rotary Club

**Adopted by the Heritage Commission:** October 26, 2017

**Last Updated:** December 14, 2017



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (2017)

### Description

In 1949, civic-minded members of the Prince George Rotary Club took on a project as a gift to the residents of Prince George. The plan was to beautify the downtown neighbourhood by creating a tree-line along the west side of Vancouver Street. Two types of trees were planted, Mountain Ash and American Elms. The street is now predominantly composed of y Elm trees, just a few Mountain Ash remain.

### Heritage Value

The tree enhancement program has heritage value in honouring the efforts of pioneer Martin Caine, the Rotarian in charge of the project, "I can envision the time 50 years from now, when there will be a nice tree-shaded boulevard with green verges where the tired men and women of Prince George will stroll". The thoughts of Caine truly represent an effort to provide a sense of place.

Heritage value abounds in the list of well-known pioneer residents contributing to the project, all members of the Rotary Club in 1949. A few to recall: Charles East, Ivor Guest, Hubert King, Alex Moffat, Vic Morgan, Jack Nicholson, William Ranby, Tommy Richardson, Wally West, and George Williams. Charles East, as city engineer, oversaw the planting.

There is significant heritage value in appreciating the choice of the American Elm, a species well suited to the Prince George climate. Although some of the Mountain Ash have been lost to the elements over the years, the Elms remain steadfast.

There is no question that the heritage value of the Vancouver Street tree plantation lies in the aesthetic enhancement of the downtown core of the city. All was quite far-sighted planning by the Prince George Rotary Club in 1949, a time when thoughts of preserving the natural environment in the city were in their infancy.

## Character-Defining Elements

- American Elm and Mountain Ash trees were spaced equally along Vancouver Street, between 4th Avenue and 10th Avenue. There appears to be a preponderance of Elm over the Ash.
- The equal spacing is the most complete from 4th Avenue south to the Lane. In this short span of Elms there are at least two Mountain Ash still surviving.
- Pruning on the trunk of the trees has allowed a view through to fronting properties, thus providing an amenity for both residents and outside viewers.
- In the Street perspective, the power lines have detracted from the aesthetic aspects of some individual blocks. An opportunity for view enhancement does now rest with this service.
- The Elms and Ashes both provide an on-going change of seasonal colours, all of which enhances the aesthetic values of Vancouver Street.

## Images



Springtime Ash Blossoms



Autumn Elm Colors



Wintertime Ash and Elm



Autumn Elm Colours

## Sources:

Giles, Valerie M.E. 2014. Remembering ... A Celebration of Prince George's Storied Past.