

Creating Oshawa's First Public Park

Oshawa's population grew rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As more people settled in the community, residents recognized the need for a dedicated public space where people could gather, play sports, attend events and enjoy the outdoors.

Getting the Ball Rolling

In 1902, community leaders came together to form the Oshawa Athletic Association Limited with the goal of purchasing land that could be used for organized sports and recreation.

Shares were sold for \$10 each, equivalent to roughly \$300 in 2026. This investment from community members made it possible to purchase six acres of land at the northwest corner of Simcoe and Alexandra Streets (today's Hospital Court), forming what is now the southwest corner of Alexandra Park.

Community Advocacy Creates a Public Park

In 1906 more than 200 Oshawa residents signed a petition asking Council to adopt The Public Parks Act and establish a municipal park system.

Council responded by passing By-law No. 636 on July 3, 1906, paving the way for the creation of Oshawa's first public park.

Whereas, over 200 electors have petitioned the council of the said Town of Oshawa; praying for the adoption of "The Public Parks Act" in the Municipality; Be it therefore enacted by the Municipal Council of the Town of Oshawa, that the said "Public Parks Act" be adopted in this Town.
— BY-LAW NO. 636. Passed July 3, 1906



In 1915, community members gather in Alexandra Park to enjoy the open green space amid global upheaval during the First World War. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.

From Farmland to Park Land

On July 7, 1906, Oshawa's Town Council appointed a Board of Park Commissioners to find and secure a site that could become a fairground and town park for sports and recreation. The South Ontario Agricultural Society was considering moving its annual fall fair from Whitby to Oshawa, so time was of the essence!

On August 13, 1906, the commissioners selected a 19-acre property immediately north of the land owned by the Oshawa Athletic Association. That same day they secured a 99-year lease for the Association's adjoining six acres. Together, these two properties formed Oshawa's first public park.

Did you know that the Board of Park Commissioners was one of the first boards in the Town of Oshawa to be empowered to conduct its own affairs and receive regular grants to conduct its work?



Who was Alexandra?
Some think the name "Alexandra Park" is in honour of the local and influential abstract artist Alexandra Luke. However, Alexandra Luke was only 5 years old when the Park was created and she wasn't even an Oshawa resident yet. The Park was actually named in honour of Queen Alexandra, the wife of the then reigning sovereign, King Edward VII.

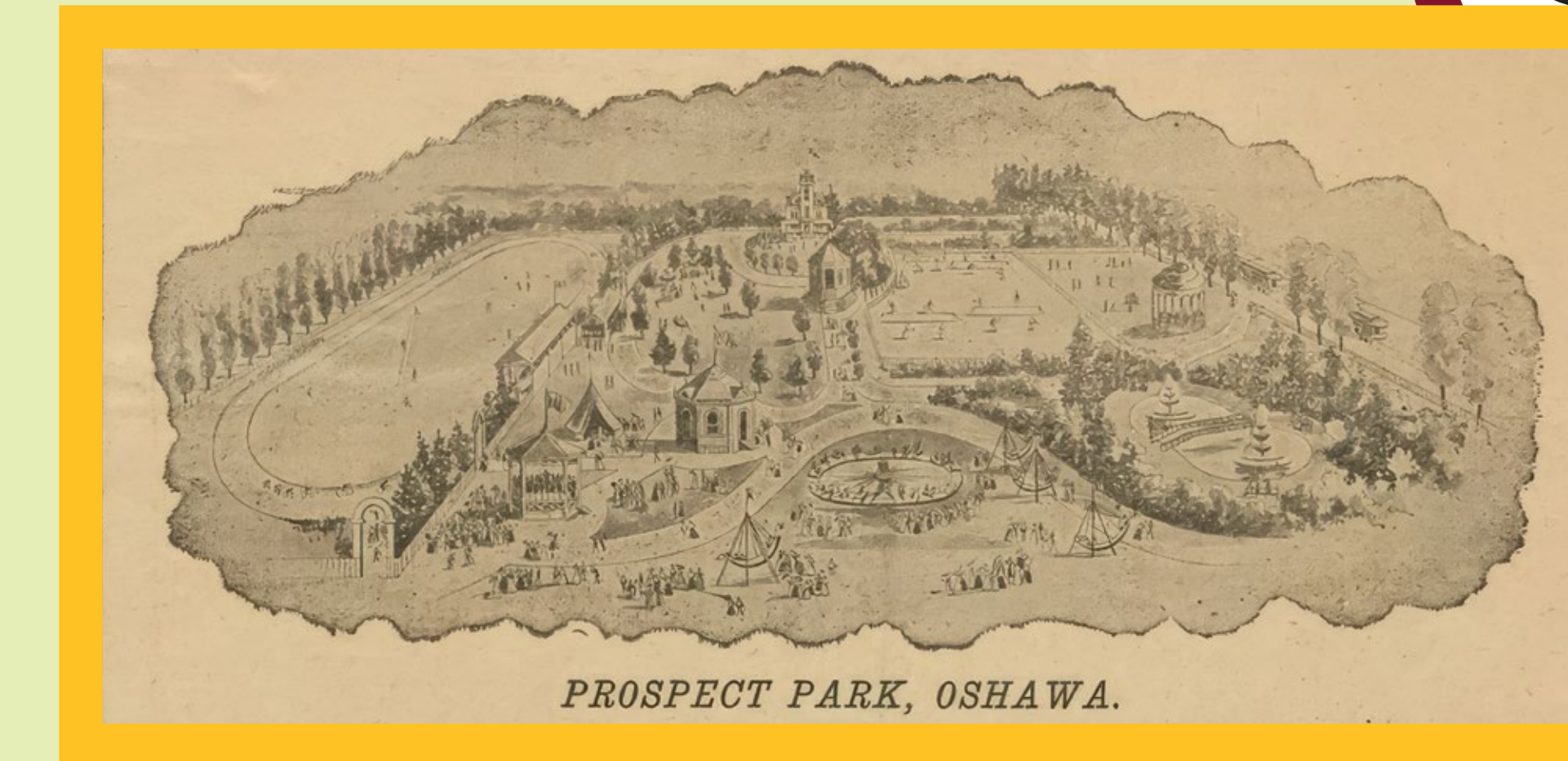


Alexandra Park gates on what was Alexandra Street, now Hospital Court. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.

How a Park Shaped a Neighbourhood
Alexandra Park was considered one of Oshawa's treasures and played an important role in attracting residents to nearby housing developments. When the Buckingham and Simcoe Manor apartments were built in 1928, they both included rooftop gardens where residents could overlook the Park's beautiful landscaped grounds.



Residents looking for a new home in 1928 would have seen this ad for the Simcoe Manor and Buckingham Manor apartment buildings in the Oshawa Daily Times. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.



This map from 1905, published in the Ontario Reformer, offers a peak into the design of Prospect Park, a private park created by Eli Edmondson on his property. This 11-acre park was open to Oshawa residents for a reasonable fee. The private park closed when the home and land was purchased by R.S. McLaughlin in 1915 and became Parkwood Estate. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.

Can you spot the grandstand that was later moved to Alexandra Park?



Built for Big Crowds

Alexandra Park was always intended to host large community gatherings. To accommodate spectators, a grandstand from the nearby privately owned Prospect Park was relocated here to provide seating for visitors attending celebrations, fairs and sporting events.

Historical information and images provided by the Oshawa Museum



For more information and an accessible PDF, please visit oshawa.ca/Exhibitions.