

## Update from Edmonton Area Archives October 2018

### Here is a history of Edmonton Area Guide Office locations:

- In 1949 Miss Gwen Rhys, Division Commissioner, attempted to open an office for the Edmonton Division Headquarters in the First Presbyterian Church. Official opening was scheduled for April 1950. This did not materialize – I cannot find any information on why the office did not open.
- In 1950, the **Alberta** Guide Headquarters found itself a permanent home. In the early years, when the provincial organization came into being, the current secretary used her own home as an office. However, an abandoned War Service building was given to the Guides, who, not knowing quite how to use it, called in the Scouts, who assumed responsibility for its maintenance, in exchange for providing space for the Guides – rent free.



- The afternoon of November 21, 1950 was a gala occasion and a milestone in the history of Alberta Guiding and Scouting when our Provincial Headquarters in Baden-Powell Park, Bridge Road, Edmonton was officially opened by Premier E.C. Manning. It was a most attractive building in a woodland setting beside the North Saskatchewan River and near the Low Level bridge. The nearest building was a block away. The west windows were large and gave a view of the river valley with its busy roads and open parkland, the Legislature Building in the distance. To the north and above the building – at the top of two hundred and twenty-four steps stood the Macdonald Hotel. Sharing space with the Scouts had its advantages as Scouts had a Gestetner and Addressograph and very gallantly allowed the Guides to use them. The Guides by this time had a good pencil sharpener and in return gladly let the Scouts use it.
- This was an improvement, though the quarters were quite cramped; the joint Headquarters was an unqualified success.
- As the work grew, the space shrank, and a development fund was established with plans to construct an adequate building with separate quarters for Guides and Scouts, though under the same roof.

- On July 15, 1956 the building was moved to make way for the new approaches to the Low Level bridge to 10215 – 97 Avenue.



- In 1957 an addition was made to the Guide section to provide more storage space.
- October 5, 1961 Edmonton Area offices officially opened on the third floor of the YMCA Building – Edmonton Area had separate offices and staff from the provincial offices for the first time; this move was financed through membership in the United Community Fund. The office was open Tuesdays and Fridays between 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Mae Walker was in charge of badge and insignia sales – she retired in 1975.
- In the spring of 1964, Edmonton Regional Boy Scouts opened their new headquarters at 14209 – 109 Avenue and invited the Girl Guides of Edmonton Area to rent the second floor (see picture of open house postcard). The new facility allowed for expansion of the stores to include complete supplies and uniforms for all levels of the Organization. The premises also included a lovely Training Hall with kitchen facilities available to all the groups.
- On May 1, 1965 Edmonton Area Headquarters officially opened. The event was publicized in the *Edmonton Journal*: *“The offices will provide facilities for Guide activities including area council meetings and parts of the first-class training and testing. The Hon. R.A. McKinnon, minister of education, officiated opened the new headquarters at 2:30 p.m. The Rev. Clifford A.S. Elliot of Robertson United Church offered the opening prayer. Mrs. A.H. McLennan, provincial commissioner brought greetings from other Guide groups in the province. A Local Association Tea was held May 3 guests included area council members executives of locals, badges secretaries, secretary-treasurers and the executive of mothers’ groups and district commissioners. An open house was held from 7 to 9 p.m.”* Quite the event!



EDMONTON AREA HEADQUARTERS OFFICIAL OPENING MAY 1, 1965

- In 1986 Alberta Council started discussing a move with Edmonton Area joining them. In 1988 a Provincial Building Committee was formed which included representation from Area. The plan was for Edmonton Area to be a tenant and have their Guide Shop and Administration offices in the Provincial Building. In 1990 a new proposal was forwarded with regard to Edmonton Area being part of the Provincial Building; much discussion followed and in September Area made a decision not to move into the Provincial Building but to remain in the Scout Centre.
- On August 27, 1997 Edmonton Area unanimously accepted a proposal to relocate the Area Guide Office and shop to 11404 – 142 Street effective January 24, 1998.
- Considerations for the need to move were
  - No expansion availability at the present location
  - Fire hazard created by storing boxes in the hallways
  - Limited inventory
  - Limited carriers were willing to carry goods up three flights of stairs
  - Offices were not wheelchair accessible
  - Building temperatures were uncontrollable – controlled by Scouting on the first floor
  - Meeting room allocation conflicting with Scouting office needs
  - Contracted janitorial service unacceptable
- The new offices were wheelchair acceptable; air conditioned; and had three entrances
- 20 parking stalls during the day and 40 in the evening
- Two large meeting rooms
- On January 24, 1998 the Guide Office officially opened at 11404 -- 142 Street – a grand opening was held that day.



- At the December 2009 council meeting the Area Commissioner advised Area needed to move from its present location. A dialogue had been started with Province regarding the space they have available in their building. However, based on the information from Province on their requirements Edmonton Area was not interested in the space at that time. Only parts of the third floor would be

made available and the basement was only offered as a temporary solution. Parking was difficult at Guide House and it was felt that Edmonton Area would lose its presence in the city tucked away in a corner of the Provincial Building. Therefore, Area would be looking at other options.

- At the April 2010 Council meeting the Commissioner reported that, for Edmonton Area to proceed with negotiations with Province for the space in their building, they needed to prove to Province the members of Edmonton Area support the endeavour and truly want to move into the building. Surveys had been sent out to members asking their thoughts about a new home – what we need, etc. – and some of the participants at the recent HLM tea had also sent in comments. **A building does not define who Edmonton Area is; it is what we do that defines us.** If meeting space is required, then the committees or groups who need the space must plan their requirements further ahead of time to book the space at Province. Province has asked what Area is willing to pay for rent.
- A motion was passed at that meeting to begin earnest discussions with province with the thought of moving into the Provincial building.
- In December 2010 Edmonton Area, after a 49 year absence, was once again sharing space with the provincial office.