

Hilltop offers breathtaking city panorama

By Cinda Chavich
Calgary Herald

They call it the "community with a view" and one of the best is from the crest of Tom Campbell's Hill.

You can see the entire city from up there. Off to the north is the half-moon escarpment, carved out by the mighty Bow during the last ice age, now punctuated by the copper-clad onion domes of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. South, there's the Zoo's prehistoric park with its manmade hoodoos hugging the Bow River like an immense sandstone sculpture, and to the west, the city's skyscrapers overlapping the distant silhouettes of the Rockies.

At the foot of Tom Campbell's Hill the community of Bridgeland/Riverside lies nestled in this fertile river bottomland.

So who was this famous Tom Campbell? An early alderman? A local developer? A famous philanthropist?

No, Tom Campbell was a local hat maker who erected a gigantic billboard on the hill in 1912. The sign, which dominated the hill for nearly 40 years, became a bit of a local landmark, advertising Campbell's hats with a top-hatted and naked kewpie doll, carrying a walking stick in a most strategic position. It was that kewpie doll that kept Campbell in the lime-light, and immortalized to this day.

Back then, the hill was bigger. It sloped down to the banks of the Bow River, with only the rutted Blackfoot Trail skirting its foot. When Memorial Drive came through, the hill was carved back. Later it was home to the zoo's hooved animals (camels and such) until area residents complained about their often amorous evening escapades.

In the last couple of years, Tom Campbell's Hill has been designated city parkland and volunteers have worked hard to reclaim it by planting trees, creating pathways and building a spectacular circular viewpoint at its southern tip.

It's a good spot from which to survey the eclectic community of Bridgeland.

While the city core started south

Walkabout

of the river, the cheaper land north of the river attracted working class immigrants from Russia, Germany and Italy. The Russian-German arrivals settled in the fertile strip along the river (now called Riverside but once called Germantown). Farther up the escarpment, in Bridgeland, the Italian community was established.

That ethnic mix is still predominant in the community: From the great German sausages at Rupp's Meats & Deli on Edmonton Trail; to the Bavarian pretzels and lattice-topped linzer tortes at City Bakery; to church services in German, there is still a German presence.

But the dominant flavor of the community is Italian.

Step inside the Caracciolo family's Italian Centre grocery and you'll be magically transported to a bustling market in southern Italy.

Huge copper pots hang from the ceiling among monstrous green glass carboys for winemaking and dozens of strings of fiery red peppers. Braids of garlic and spiced black olives jockey for space with buckets of bruschetta, rings of homemade Italian sausage, mortadella and big, crusty salami.

Customers chatter loudly in Italian, a piece of cheese or prosciutto will be proffered before you buy, and there's always a bunch of fresh basil in the cooler.

Across the street, Italian Gourmet Foods offers dozens of homemade pastas and sauces ready to take home and cook, a

place to sit down for a frothy cappuccino, and a new cooking school where you can learn the finer points of Italian cuisine.

Down the street is La Dolce Vita, one of the city's most beautiful Italian restaurants with its hand-painted frescos inside and out, and a pretty sundial on the facade. Or for more casual Italian fare, there's the fun-loving atmosphere of La Brezza.

And speaking of views, check out the communal gardens below the pathway that hugs the ridge beside the gothic spires of St. Matthew Lutheran Church (where Chinese market gardeners sewed their seeds a century ago). Hike up 6th Street N.E., up a few steep flights of stairs, to the Ukrainian Catholic Church on top of the escarpment. And don't miss the mini Calgary Tower on the front lawn at 716 Bridge Crescent — the residents there can see the real tower, too.

Talk about a room with a view!

Dave Olecko, Calgary Herald

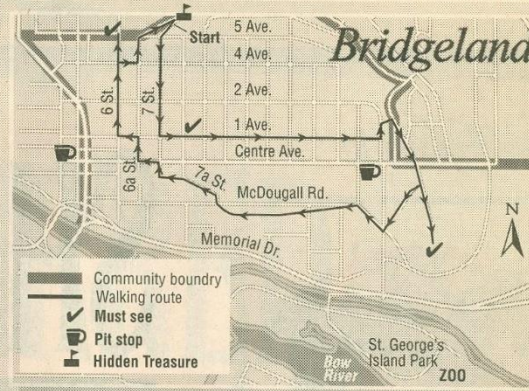
LOOKOUT: Area resident Jim Webster at the hill's circular viewpoint



ROUTE: Begin at The Italian Centre at the corner of 7A Street and 1st Avenue N.E. Head east to 12A Street, then north around the right-hand curve on Abbot Avenue, then a sharp right and continue climbing on Thomson Avenue. At the crest of the hill, you'll find Centre Avenue and the main entry to Tom Campbell's Hill Natural Area Park.

Walk along the central pathway to the circular viewpoint, then double back and head back down into Bridgeland along the bike path to the base of the hill at 12th Street. Head through the park area behind the Calgary General Hospital where you'll find walking paths for the blind, a playground and swimming pool.

Head up 7A Street to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, then along the escarpment pathway to 7th Street. Go north a block then turn west on Centre Avenue and north again on 6A Street past Calgary Fire Hall No. 4 at 104 6A St. Jog west again on 1st Avenue then head up the hill on 6th Street to the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Double back to 4th Avenue N.E., then head east up to Bridge Crescent where you'll see the mini Cal-



gary Tower. Return to your starting point via 7th Street N.E.

HIDDEN TREASURE: At 716 Bridge Crescent, the creative owners have constructed their own rendition of the Calgary Tower along with a miniature, non-leaning Tower of Pisa.

MUST SEES: Tom Campbell's

Hill Natural Area, the Italian Centre grocery, the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

PIT STOP: The Milky Way, 1105 1st Ave. N.E., is an old-fashioned ice cream shop, a good place for a treat before hiking up to the hill. For a fast lunch, try the Polish sausage on a bun with sauerkraut (only \$3) at Rupp's Meats and Delicatessen, 37 4th St. N.E.

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