

A Most Restful Place to Wander Around¹

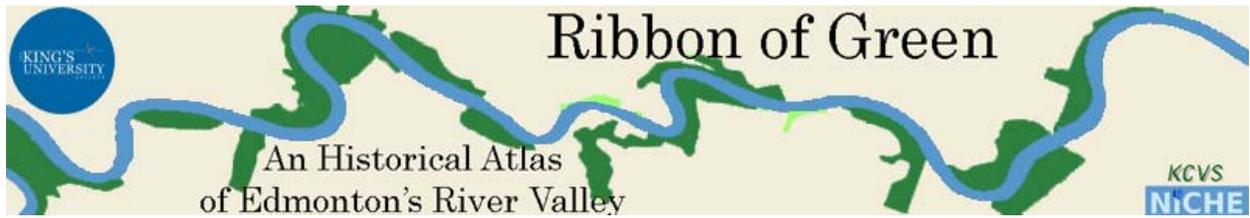
Written by Katie Wallbaum

Frederick G. Todd was the original landscape architect for the city of Edmonton, but as with many of his projects, he simply surveyed the city, made his suggestions and then moved on to the next city. In 1912 Edmonton hired the firm of Morell and Nicholls, based out of Minneapolis, to reassess the City and its landscape needs. This second landscape assessment left the City with a “to-do list,” suggesting that Edmonton purchase river front land before it became too expensive, stabilize the riverbanks to prevent future landslides, develop parks by working with the natural beauty of the land, emphasize the steep and wooded ravines, and connect various parks throughout the city. The report had high praise for the city: “credit should be given to its founders for their foresight in laying out Edmonton along the banks of this river, which with its beautiful wooded banks, its majestic long sweeping curves, offers a panorama unusually beautiful and which is undoubtedly one of the greatest assets of Edmonton.”² At the same time, the architects warned Edmonton’s leaders of the dangers of overdeveloping the banks of the river with industry. They instead suggested creating “river drives,” which would “give an opportunity to view the beautiful panorama along the entire river... [and] also serve as a connecting link between the numerous public parks which will be located along the river banks.”³ A thoughtful assessment of Edmonton, the Morell and Nicholls report guided the City’s purchase and development of parkland for many years. The parks system of Edmonton emphasizes the natural

¹ Morell & Nicholls, “River Improvements,” 1912.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



landscape of the river valley by allowing the ravines and wooded areas to guide park

development; Morell and Nicholls would be proud.