

Garden Cities in Canada

In Canada, the Garden City movement inspired a number of different settlements. Most were based around industrialists rather than a need to manage population or address issues of social reform.

Walkerville

The first example was **Walkerville** in Ontario. It was developed in the late 19th Century by Hiram Walker, an entrepreneurial whiskey producer, who planned a model town for its workers, similar to the precursors to Letchworth Garden City at Bournville and Port Sunlight.

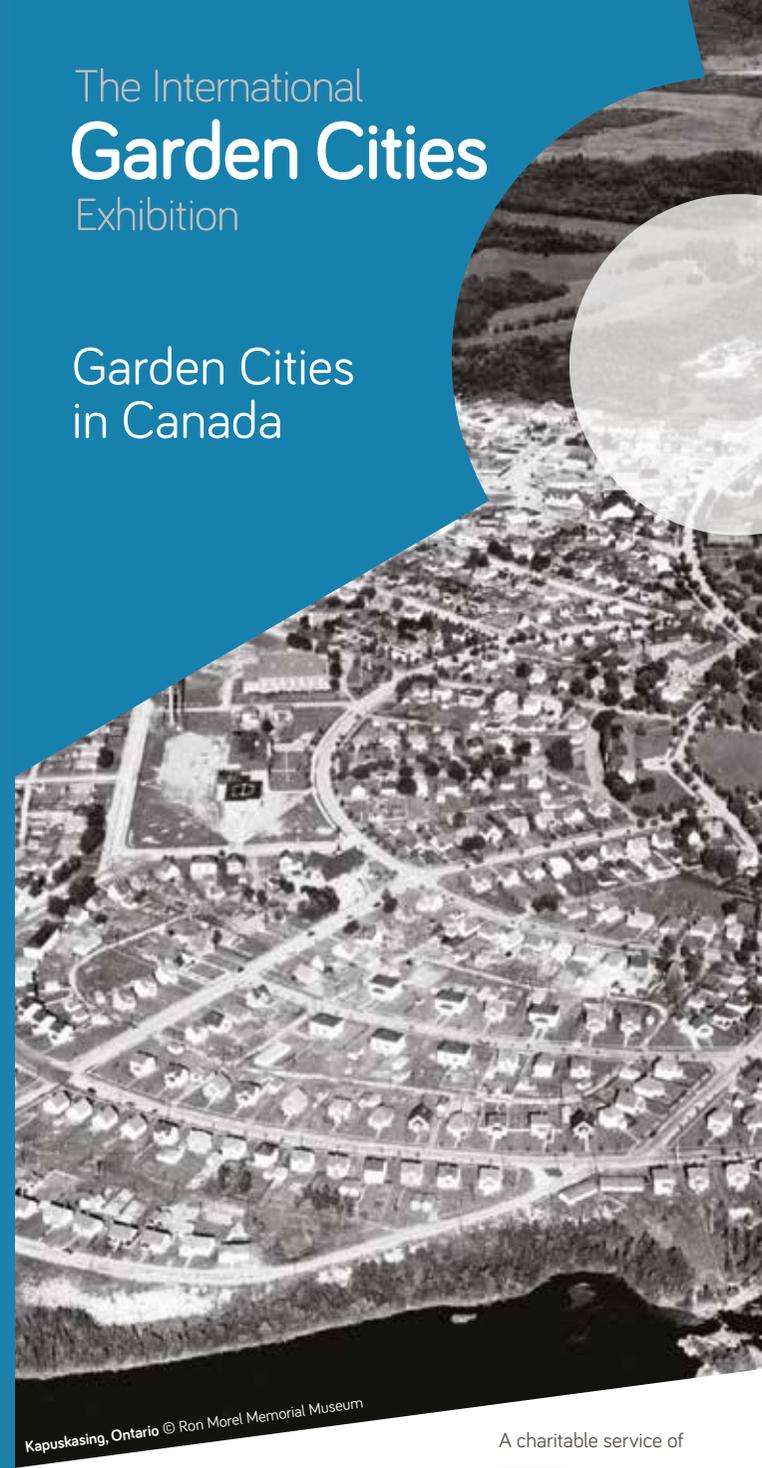
Walker's business interests diversified and included welcoming other industries to the town, an influx that was assisted by a new rail terminus. Most notable was the Ford Motor Company, who set up a branch in the town in 1904. Chrysler, General Motors and Seagrave followed and the population of the town grew significantly with this industrial growth.

Walkerville is separated into 3 sub-districts (business, commercial and residential) and the town enjoys a distinctive high quality appearance with many large homes, as part of a garden community. Much of the original town remains, with a population of 17,000, and is now classed as a heritage precinct of the city of Windsor.



The International Garden Cities Exhibition

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Kapuskasing, Ontario © Ron Morel Memorial Museum

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Kapuskasing

Kapuskasing in Ontario was much more directly influenced by the Garden City Movement in the UK as well as the American 'City Beautiful' movement. However it was still associated with a single industry, the Spruce Falls Company, a paper & pulp mill which since 1926 and to this day produces the paper used to print the New York Times.

The original plan for Kapuskasing by Alfred Hall was completed in 1921, with the intention that it would become a prototype for other communities and a model for other company towns.

The layout was carefully planned, with formal street patterns, and a strong focus on open space with a prominent river and public parks.

Industrial areas were kept on the fringe of the town with commercial areas located in the centre.

Numerous public buildings were incorporated, and much of the housing was in a similar form to that found in Letchworth.

The town was a municipality seeking to incorporate a community ownership model, and not company controlled, which differed from other such industrial towns.

Subsequent development was frustrated by a bridge linking the rail station with the primary business areas, leading to Hall's plan not being implemented in its entirety, although enhanced landscaping programmes took place in 1927.

Later development of the town did not reflect original principles. Some land removed from the municipality between 1928 and 1932 was returned by 1964, but the development that had taken place during that time hadn't reflected Hall's original ideals.

Today Kapuskasing houses approximately 8,500 people, with many original components of the town protected.



Don Mills

Another settlement inspired by Garden Cities is **Don Mills**, a district of Toronto, developed between 1951 and 1965 by entrepreneur and industrialist, E P Taylor.

The planning of the new town was led by a Harvard student, Macklin Hancock. His master plan was influenced by his academic work on new towns and modernism, along with UK Garden City principles and the work of Stein & Wright in the US.

The plan was governed by 5 concepts: neighbourhood, a discontinuous road system, green space, new house forms with large plots and a separation of uses and activities.

Hancock's layout dispensed with a standard grid approach and used short curving roads to fit the topography, whilst dedicated pedestrian routes avoided conflict with cars. The road layout itself divided the neighbourhood component of the plan into 4 sections – each with a school, store, and community facilities – surrounded by a ring road.

Although most plots were larger than normal size, there was a mix of houses and apartments. Both Hancock and Taylor aspired to have a mix of incomes and occupiers, but this was sadly not achieved and the town remained a private venture with no community ownership.

The combination of Hancock's innovative master planning and Taylor's business skills in managing the development, which included taking responsibility for all infrastructure costs, made the town a success.



Thomas Adams

A direct export from Letchworth Garden City to Canada was First Garden City Ltd's founding Company Secretary, **Thomas Adams**. After helping to draft the 1909 Town Planning Act in the UK, he was the inaugural President of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1914. That same year he was appointed as Canada's advisor on Town Planning. Always a tireless advocate of Garden Cities, he helped develop several schemes, including the Richmond district of Halifax, the 'Garden City' suburb at Mount Royal, Quebec, and new communities at Temiskaming in western Quebec and at Corner Brook in Newfoundland.

Churchill Park Garden Suburb

Churchill Park Garden Suburb, St Johns, Newfoundland was developed in the 1940s and 1950s.

A co-operative-funded scheme by the governments of St Johns and Newfoundland, the suburb was planned during the Second World War. In 1949 a housing corporation acquired 800 acres of land on the edge of the city with the aim of providing better homes into which inhabitants of a large slum area in the centre of the city could be relocated.

The design of the master plan reflected many principles from other Garden Cities and Suburbs. It consisted of small villages, with wide tree-lined streets and integrated open space, all connected by trams to downtown St Johns. Almost all of the homes were detached or semi-detached, with individual driveways and front lawns, but were more expensive than originally planned.

After 1949, the province began to provide funding for low cost public housing, built by Co-operative housing societies in order to keep costs down and assist with the slum clearances.

Today Churchill Park remains a popular attractive suburb which has ultimately attracted predominantly higher income residents.



Don Mills