**Cultural and Economic Landscape of Downtown Lethbridge**

**Friday, March 8, 9:30-12:00. Meet at the west end of 4th Avenue South.**

**Field trip leader: Dr Ian MacLachlan**

The field trip starts at the extreme west end of 4th Avenue South, just south-west of the Lethbridge Lodge and where lots of free parking is available along the edge of the river valley. If you get there early, walk over to the boulder and read the plaque about “The Point,” one of Canada’s most notorious red light districts.

Dress for the weather and please wear comfortable footgear. Washrooms are available in the Lethbridge Lodge. You will be observing different landmarks in all directions and chatting with colleagues so that you may be unaware of traffic. **Be careful crossing streets and always wait for the light!**

The purpose of this assignment is to sensitize you to the richness of the economic and cultural landscape that we take for granted simply because it is so familiar. Along the way you should *observe* and *question* many things that you have never seen before. In Yogi Berra's words, "You can see a lot by looking."

**The Human Imprint on the Coulees**

1. Walk west on the shale trail about 50 meters and observe the panorama to the south, west and north, from the coulee slopes in the near distance, the river bottom and Fort Whoop-Up in the middle distance, and West Lethbridge in the far distance. *Discussion at this point will centre on the importance of perspective on landscape interpretation, the early history of Lethbridge, the human impact on the coulee landscape and the multiple nuclei theory of urban residential structure.*

2. Walk back up the trail, scramble up the little rise to the parking lot behind the Lethbridge Lodge and go north around the west end of the Lethbridge Lodge over the low concrete wall and across to the north-west corner of the Days Inn parking lot. Pause at the bench to view the cottonwoods in the valley and the tree beds above the brewery garden. Which trees are a natural part of the landscape and which are the result of human activity? Observe Indian Battle Park at the former site of the Coalbanks mining camp. Note the high level railway bridge and the tipple that marks Galt #8, Lethbridge’s last operating coal mine. When was the bridge completed? When was the mine closed?

*Discussion on the early history of Lethbridge and its expansion from the river bottom to prairie level in 1885.*

3. Continue north across 3rd Avenue, along the wall of the River Ridge condominium which runs behind Wendy’s and the Shell gas bar, pausing again at the gate of the condominium. Why is the condominium protected by these walls? *Discussion here will centre on walled and gated “adult lifestyle communities” or “fortified enclaves,” ubiquitous features in Canada and beyond.*

**Functional Change in the Western Zone in Transition**

4. Walk east on 2nd Avenue, cross Scenic Drive and note the new fire hall. Continue to the corner of 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street. Observe the three storey building on the northwest corner. Known as the Castle Hotel, it was considered to be a "first class commercial hotel" when it was built in 1909. It was a rooming house in the 1970s when demolition was considered. Describe its present function. What evidence leads you to these conclusions? Look at 200 and 202 3rd Street South. Is residential land use invading office land use? Or vice versa? What complementary land uses might have influenced the location of number 200? (*Hint: that big low building just beyond Liquidation World is the County Courthouse.*) Why might you describe this as the “zone in transition”?

**The Central Business District**

6. Continue east on 2nd Avenue and cross 3rd Street. Observe the parking for Chancery Court and Lethbridge's one block Chinatown. (Chancery Court is the brick office building at the south-west corner of 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue.) Read the plaque. Observe the current condition of the Chinese National League building. *Discussion here will focus on heritage conservation issues.*

7. The building at 310 2nd Avenue (1924) has a recessed second storey balcony reminiscent of turn of the century architecture in South China. (This feature can also be seen on some of the older buildings in Vancouver's Chinatown.) The upper storey is the meeting house of the *Chi Kung Tong* (Chinese Freemasons). Can you see any masonic symbols on the building? What is the general condition and commercial function of the buildings on this street? *Discussion at this point will centre on the concentric zone theory of urban social structure and the “Restricted Area” (West of 4th Street from 1st to 6th Avenues).*

8. Continue south on 2nd Avenue. When you reach 4th street, look south and note how 4th Street was blocked off when the Lethbridge Centre was built. Observe the fire hall (1909) and read its plaque. Compare the location of Lethbridge’s first fire hall with our newest fire hall. How do their locations compare? What is the present function of the old fire hall? *Discussion at this point will centre on historical preservation and conservation.*

9. Continue east and cross 5th Street into Galt Gardens. Note the block front from 4th Street to 3rd Street. What is the condition and function of these structures? What was the former function of 302 1st Avenue?

10. Walk past the Pergola and over to the water feature: Rotary Centennial Plaza. How might these structures help to revitalize Galt Gardens? Read the plaque and note that this is a joint venture involving public, corporate, not-for-profit, and private sources of funds. *Discussion here will centre on urban renewal initiatives for Lethbridge’s largest downtown park.*

11. Continue walking east across the park and pause at 7th Street, observing the Lethbridge Family Services/Immigrant Services building. What group does this agency serve? Why is it located here?

*Discussion at this point will centre on the Centresite concept, Lethbridge Centre and Park Place as downtown retail “anchors” and on the private/public spaces created in downtown shopping malls.*

12. Cross 1st Avenue and walk between Chapters and the Lethbridge Health Unit (formerly Union Station, 1906). Explore this heritage structure. Imagine the landscape and land uses that once lined the railway yards. What sort of new land uses now occupy the former site of the railway yards? Read the plaque facing the T intersection of 1st Avenue and 8th Street. What sort of municipal inducements encouraged the CPR to build Union Station and the railway yards complex? *Discussion here will include:*

1. *the sector theory of urban residential structure and railway yards relocation and*
2. *the Centresite concept, Lethbridge Centre and Park Place as downtown retail anchors.*

**The Commercial Core**

12. Cross 1st Avenue and walk south on 8th Street. Note the Holiday Inn Express. This is the first hotel that people will see coming into downtown Lethbridge from the west – a good example of an “intervening opportunity.”

13. Continuing south on 8th Street, note the newly christened CASA, a Community Arts Centre that will include The University of Lethbridge Conservatory. This site was formerly the IGA, Lethbridge’s last downtown supermarket which was closed in 2010. Where is the nearest grocery store to the downtown area? Why are downtown areas of many North American cities described as “urban food deserts”?

14. Keep walking south on 8th Street, across 3rd Avenue and stop when you reach the new ATB Financial office. What was the former function of this building? Comment on the quality and effectiveness of renovation. *Discussion here will focus on functional change and the impact of maket dynamics on commercial land use.*

15. Turn right at 4th Avenue and walk west until you reach 7th Street. Observe the *Beaux Arts* post office. When was it built? How has its entrance been modified to make it more accessible? Note how Tyndall stone of the Royal Bank branch complements the post office. What other buildings are built from Tyndall stone? Is the architecture of the Post Office reminiscent of any other buildings that you have seen?

16. Note the banks and former banks at this intersection? *Discussion here will include the Peak Land Value Intersection concept.*

17. Continue west on 4th Avenue and stop at 6th Street where you will see the former S.S. Kresge store building (south-west corner) and the former F.W. Woolworth store building (north-east corner). Are building renovations apparent? The south-east corner, which is now a Bank of Montreal, was previously occupied by Eaton’s. Why were these department stores located so close together? Do any other commercial activities favour such a clustered locational pattern? Until 1985 this intersection was the hub of downtown retailing in Lethbridge. How has its function changed? Where is the downtown retail centre today?

16. Walk west on 4th Avenue until you reach the corner of 5th Street. Observe the Lethbridge Centre, an enclosed downtown shopping centre that been transformed into a business centre. Look down 5th Street to the Park Place Mall. *Discussion here will focus on retail dynamics and the long term outlook for enclosed shopping centres in downtown areas. In addition we will evaluate the success of the double anchor concept in a downtown context.*

17. Walk north on 5th Street, noting the activity on this traditional downtown shopping street. Be sure to observe the University of Lethbridge’s Penny Building. Formerly a furniture store and vacant for some years, this building was donated to the university in 2007. This structure has absorbed $800,000 in renovations and some wags have described it as “the gift that keeps on taking.” Planned uses include the university’s Alumni Relations office, a new University gift shop, art gallery space for the Faculty of Fine Arts, meeting rooms, and the U of L call centre.

18. At the corner of Cash Canada turn left on 3rd Avenue and head west. Turn left at 3rd Street and walk back to 4th Avenue Note the Provincial Courthouse and legal offices. *Imagine the housing that once occupied this area.*

19. Walk west on 4th Avenue observing the new Fire Station completed in 2011. *Is this a good location for such a facility?*

20. Cross Scenic Drive and return to our starting point. You may wish to enjoy the sculptures along the edge of the coulees before returning to the university or the Lethbridge Lodge.

*This is where we’ll say good-bye. Thanks for coming and we hope that you enjoyed the trip.*