

TIPPERARY PARK

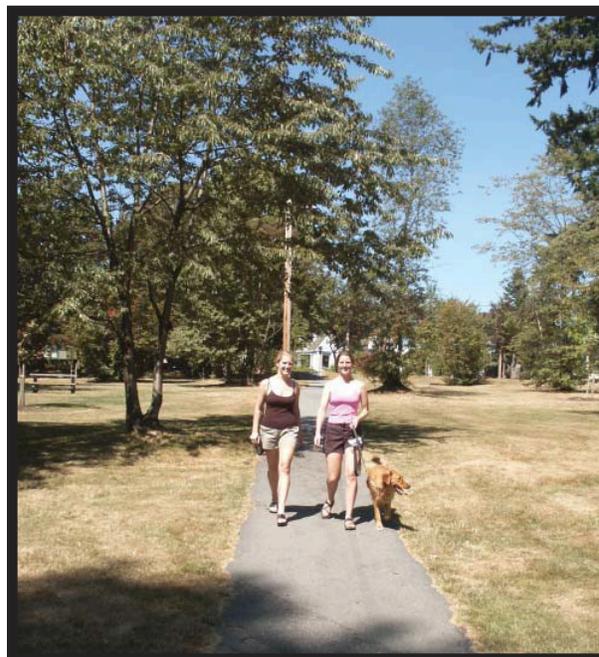


IHP0902-26

Established **1908**
Size **6.38 acres**
location **Royal Avenue & Third Street**

Ammenities

- **Trees & grass**
- **Benches**
- **Picnic tables**
- **Flowers**
- **Birds & wildlife**



Ammenities

- **Memorial plaza monuments**
- **Trails & Greenways**
- **Tennis Club**
- **Pond & waterfall**

Tipperary Park was originally one of three government reserves upon which Colonel Moody and the Royal Engineers planned to build the government buildings for the capital city of the Colony of British Columbia. These sites were laid out in the extension to the original city above Royal Avenue in 1862. The central square (now city hall and Friendship Gardens) was flanked by two minor squares; the western square located across Sixth Street became home to the city's first public school, and the eastern square - now Tipperary Park - was always used as a park square.

The New Westminster Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club (founded circa 1897) (see Columbian Dec. 11 1896 Tennis Club Social) received permission in a letter from the provincial Minister of Land and Works to establish a facility in the Government Reserve on November 25, 1902. In 1903 it was reported that "Tennis is one channel into which the sportsmen and sports women of New Westminster have always turned a great deal of enthusiasm. During the season of 1903 ...great strides were taken in the forward march of this popular game. The first was the building of three new courts on the Government Reserve, Royal Avenue. The construction of these three splendid courts was a matter of no little cost and worry, but the undertaking was carried to a successful conclusion, and the result is one cinder and two earth courts that afford every facility for the playing of the game."

Tipperary Park was formally conveyed to the city's ownership from the province in 1908, and vested forever in trust "for the recreation and enjoyment of the public." In 1911, Landscape architect G.L.K. MacLean advised Council that: "Tipperary Park situated as it is in the heart of the city, New Westminster has a most valuable breathing space and this value will increase rapidly as the city grows. It may be laid down as a principle in its treatment, that it should be cut up as little as possible, the space being mainly devoted to broad sweeping lawns on which the children can play. The bandstand which will be a central feature, should of course, be of such a design as will harmonize with its surroundings.

Proper paths would, of course, have to be made for crossing the park and for reaching the bandstand. These should seem to proceed directly to their objective, and if they should curve, as undoubtedly they would, there should be some definite reason either natural or seemingly natural for their curves, that is to say they should lead one to view some special object, or seemingly to take the easiest grade and distance to cross the park. ... Ornamental shrubbery might very well adorn Tipperary Park, but, as noted before, the central idea of broad and restful lawns should govern the design. Such shrubbery could for instance be massed in such a way as to effectually mask the rather unnatural, abrupt but necessary grading of the tennis courts; so as to give the appearance of a gradual rise to higher ground, on the south side of the tennis courts."

Tipperary Park was developed following MacLean's vision, albeit without the addition of a bandstand. Little has changed in this park since that time; it remains one of the best preserved historic landscapes of the city, as well as the location of the venerable New Westminster Tennis Club.

The club's original courts and club house remained intact until 1982, when the historic clay courts were replaced with 4 hard-surfaced ones. Four years later, in 1986, the club house was renovated, and in 1988, lights were added to the courts. A new club house was built in 1996 to replace the original erected nearly 100 years before.

Behind the Name...Tipperary Park:



IHP7365

Tipperary Park's name dates back to when the city works yard and firehall were located on the central square, where city hall is situated today.

In 1889, the city began hiring many men to work on street construction, and soon the works yard located here became a squatter's camp for these labourers and some families. The Daily Columbian reported: "Westminster's Tipperary, the Government Reserve above Royal Avenue, is nearly evacuated, a couple of families only remaining on the ground. It is pretty generally known that a number of people, mostly single men, employed on the street improvements camped out on the reserve last summer, but the wet weather has driven most of them to seek more comfortable quarters. A few, however, remain, and will weather the winter under canvas. The residents in the vicinity of the reserve named the camp 'New Tipperary' from the fact that a few immigrants from the 'ould dart' were among its inhabitants. Like its contemporary in Ireland, our New Tipperary promises a short lived existence." The squatters evacuated the site in 1892 after an order by the province, but they left the colloquial name Tipperary behind as their legacy.

County Tipperary in Ireland takes its ancient name from the old Irish language "Tiobraid Árann" which means "House of the well of Ara." The county was created and named after the town in 1328, making it one of the earliest of the Irish counties.