

HISTORY OF Horner Park and Neighbourhood

Post-European contact the area surrounding Horner Park was cleared by early settlers and used for cattle grazing and hay-making.



View from Mount Tolmie to Mount Douglas, circa 1967. Courtesy of Saanich Archives, 1995-004-010. In the 1960's Broadmead Park was expanded both by municipal acquisition of other private properties and by a multi lot bequest from Mr. Horner's estate. In 1968, in acknowledgement of his generosity of spirit, critical to the development of the park, plus his longstanding municipal service, Saanich Council officially renamed it Horner Park.



View from Mount Tolmie to St. Luke's Church and Irvine farm "Rose Bank" & Cedar Hill Cross Road and farms, circa 1874 to 1892, Courtesy of Saanich Archives 2011-024-141 and 2011-024-143.

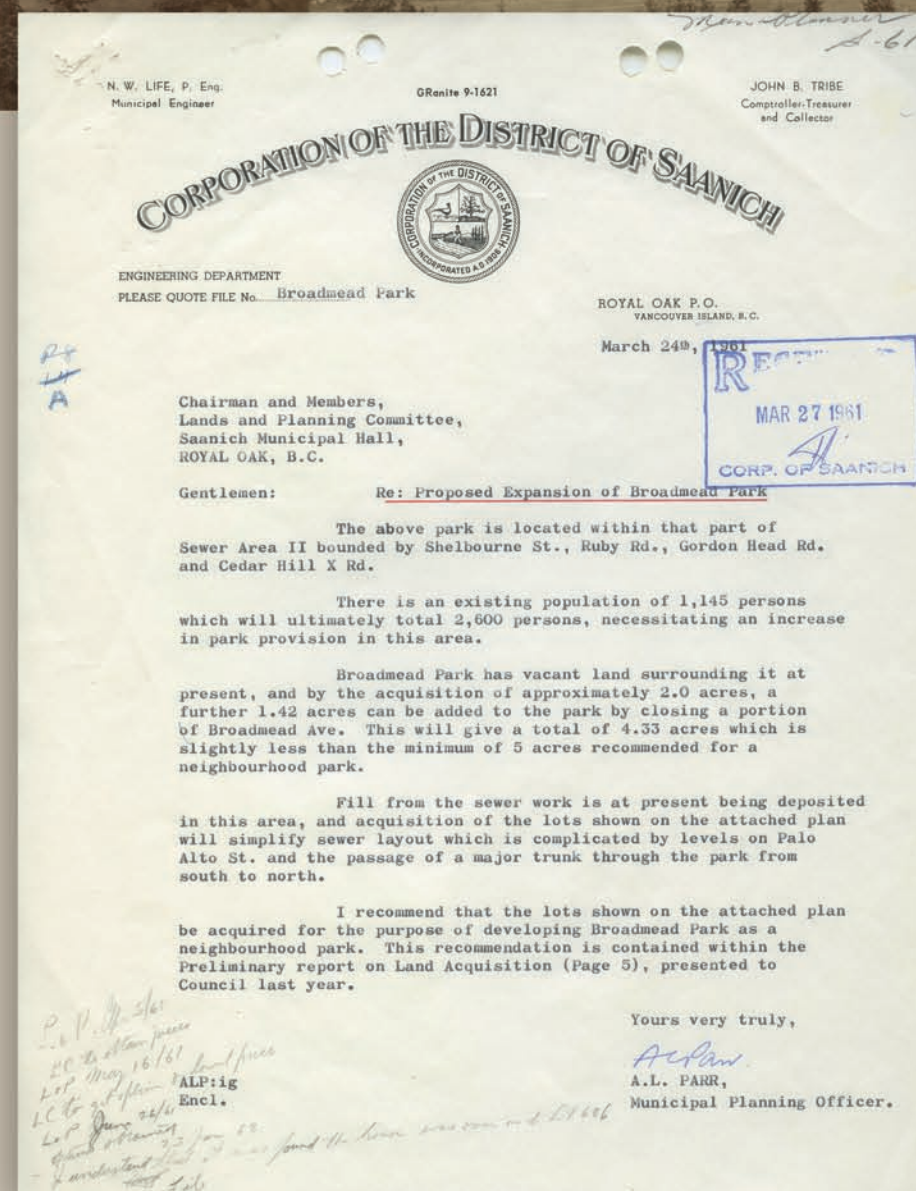
The pace of development in this area was initially slow, but with Shelbourne Street construction proceeding northward up from Victoria, this area was provided with a more direct transportation link to the city. Shelbourne street was eventually completed and officially declared open at the Mount Douglas terminus in November 1916.

This, plus an aggressive advertising campaign, motivated enterprising individuals to buy and build on the area's semi-rural lots and create commercial market gardens, orchards and dairies to supply the rapidly growing city.

After WWII house construction boomed in the area and by the mid 1950's, a local committee received a \$200 grant toward the creation of a much-needed playground. To facilitate this project Mr. Horner swapped some of his lots with nearby Saanich-owned land and this, plus the Broadmead Avenue Road Allowance, formed the basis of the new Broadmead Playground. Initial park installations included a hut for group programs, playground equipment and a baseball diamond.

Over time Saanich has acquired more lots to create Horner Park's current rectangular boundary. In the late 1990's, houses at 1739 and 1741 Kisber were demolished in a Fire Department practice burn and in 2007 a property at 3706 Iona was removed. Heritage fruit and other trees remain as living proof of these former homes.

In addition to regular use by families, dog walkers, picnickers, etc., Horner Park has also hosted regular youth baseball, Saanich Summer Camp Playground Programs, Special Olympics, league volleyball, summer outdoor yoga classes, community picnics and fun days and even a rock concert with the band Chilliwack!



Above: District of Saanich Letter Re: Proposed Expansion to Broadmead Park, March 24, 1961, Courtesy of Saanich Archives Clerks File 148, File 3.



Albert Edward Horner.
Source: 'Saanich Will Rename Park After Land Philanthropist' by Don Gain, The Daily Colonist, April 3, 1968.

Mr. Horner, Horner Park's namesake park name changed from Broadmead Park in April (1968), bought several lots on Kisber Avenue in 1912 and lived at 1729 Kisber Ave. An orchardist, horticulturalist, and surveyor, Mr. Horner was also a philanthropist and community builder, serving for many years on the local ratepayer's association, school board, Saanich Council and the Victoria-Saanich Parks Board.

Older Homes surrounding the Park



1706 Kisber Avenue, photo circa 1987-90. Courtesy of Saanich Archives 2006-015-238a. In 1893 George Smith bought 6 lots in the original subdivision. He built this house in 1894 on one and set up an orchard on the rest. Captain William Hunter, whose daughter Maud ran a corner store at Shelbourne and Cedar Hill Cross Road and was the namesake of the popular nearby pub, later operated the house as a rental property.



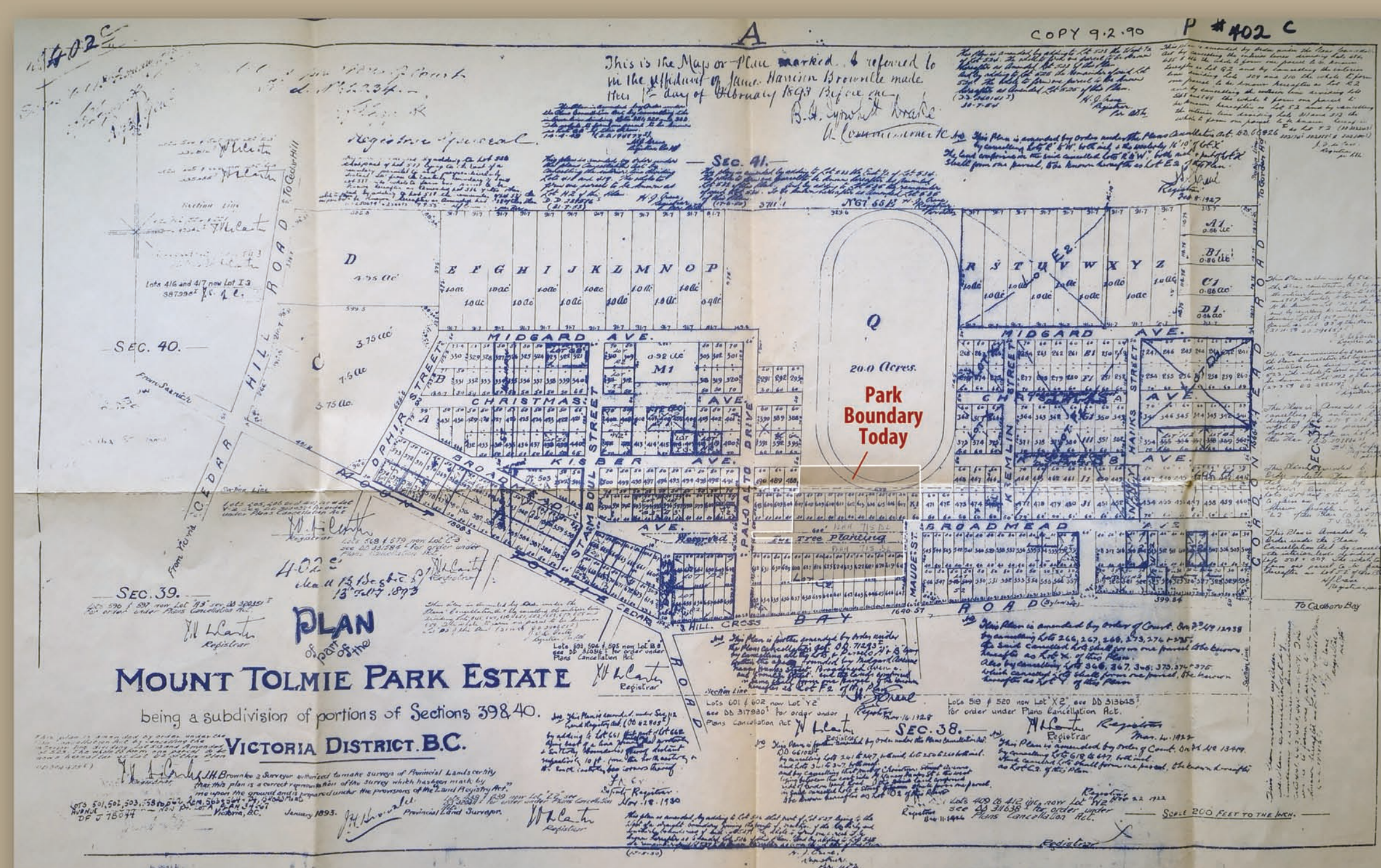
1760 Kisber, photo circa 1987-90. Courtesy of Saanich Archives 2006-015-240a. Built in 1901, and once known as Holly Lodge, this house has many intact original Late Victorian architectural features.



Bradshaw family home at 3701 Palo Alto, photo circa 1909. Courtesy of Saanich Archives 2019-016-013. Custom built in 1907 for Sarah Bradshaw, a widow from Newfoundland who fell in love with the area while visiting family. The house was built for herself and her 8 children by her brother Angus 'Gus' Windsor. In 1955, the Bridges family purchased the property. Over many decades the second generation (Graham family), lovingly restored it and renamed it Graebidge Manor.



1744 Kisber Avenue, photo circa 1987-90. Courtesy of Saanich Archives, 2006-015-239a. This stone house was built during WWI (1914-18) by master stonemason Donald Montgomery who, having bought the stone from the blasting site of the Provincial Normal School, (now Camosun College on Lansdowne), hauled it back load by load in a wheelbarrow!



Proposed subdivision plan for Mount Tolmie Park Estate, 1893. Courtesy of Saanich Archives 2011-003-001. In the 1890's real estate developers acquired the local farmland, and created the Mount Tolmie Home Building Association to subdivide and market lots. Initial plans included a horse racing track in the Kisber area. Although the track was never built, several local streets were named after famous racehorses of the day e.g., Broadmead, Kisber, Palo Alto, Christmas and Nancy Hanks.

