



By-law Number 305-2025

Schedule "B"

Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of the Chippewa Park Carousel

Chippewa Park Carousel (Chippewa Park)

Builder: C.W. Parker Company

Building description:

The Chippewa Park Carousel was built in the "County Fair" style, with 28 horses paired two abreast and one four-person bench seats in the style of chariots. All are mounted on a circular platform, 42" in diameter. The horses are posed to mimic galloping horses, including windblown manes, creating the illusion of movement. All the hand-carved wooden horses wear real metal horseshoes. The cantles of the horses' saddles feature carved dog's heads, corn cobs and fish. A rim of sectional panels (rounding boards) circles the edge of the canopy. Each panel is adorned with carved dragons and flowers. Rustic carved frames surround mirrors that link the rounding boards. The mechanical equipment is concealed in the centre of the carousel behind an A-frame supported by a centre pole and illustrated decorative panels. The Carousel retains its original Eli motor drive and its refurbished and operational Wurlitzer Band Organ. The Carousel is an excellent example of three-dimensional folk art.

The "County Fair" style of carousels was designed to be a "sleeked down" version of the stationary carousels as seen in the Coney Island or Philadelphia styles; mobile, and able to be taken down, moved to the next location, and set up again. The County Fair style emerged in the late 1880s.

The property is designated for both its historical and architectural merit.

Notable architectural features:

The complete restoration of the Carousel began in 2017 and continued to 2025. Restoration was completed by mirroring as closely as possible the historic architecture of the Carousel and returning it to near factory condition.

The architectural features include:

- 28 hand-carved wooden horses
- real metal horseshoes on carousel horses
- horses posed to mimic galloping horses
- horses have hollow heads and necks, laminated bodies, solid tails, manes and legs
- dog heads, fish and corn cobs carved into saddles of horses
- one four-person hand-carved wooden bench seating unit in the style of a chariot
- decorated wooden panels on central A-frame of carousel
- Rounding boards of sectional panels circling the edge of canopy that feature carved dragons, branches and flowers.
- carved frames surrounding mirrors on sectional panels on edge of canopy
- fabric canopy of panels
- Eli motor drive
- Wurlitzer Band Organ.

Historical value:

Built between 1918 and 1920, the Carousel was built by C.W. Parker, who called himself the "Amusement King". The Carousel was purchased by the Fort William Parks Board from Mrs. King's Travelling Carnival which went into bankruptcy while operating at Chippewa Park in 1934.

During the period in which the Chippewa Park Carousel was built by C.W. Parker, his company employed World War I German prisoners of war as skilled woodworkers to carve his creations. Between 1895 and 1926, the C.W. Parker Carnival and Supply Company of Leavenworth, Kansas, constructed approximately 800 carousels (also known as "Carry-us-Alls"), but only three are known to remain intact; the Chippewa Park Carousel is one of those.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the demand for carousels and other amusement park rides significantly declined. This, coupled with the trend towards mechanization and mass-production, with cheaper materials, devalued the art of carousel construction. Folk art collectors began to purchase individual carousel animals, increasing the rarity of a complete, intact carousel.

The Chippewa Park Carousel as an amusement park ride also has cultural significance. Amusement parks provide a visible record of modern North American culture, reflecting broader trends in social history and acting as extravagant and flamboyant alternatives to the ordinary and routine lives of park patrons. Amusement parks and their rides are symbols of both urbanization and industrialization, two major processes that shaped the modern world and which rose to significance beginning in the mid-19th century.

Contextual value:

The Carousel has been located at Chippewa Park since its purchase in 1934 from a travelling carnival owned by Mrs. Maude E. King that went bankrupt. However, because the Chippewa Park Carousel is a moveable structure, the property on which it resides can be changed.

Should the City decide to move the Carousel to another permanent location, the designation property description may be altered.

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October 3, 2012

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September 24, 2025

Kimberley Costa revisions
September 30, 2025

Final revised version as adopted by the
Heritage Advisory Committee
at its meeting held on September 25, 2025