The Carnegie Library, now the Edmonds Museum, housed the City Hall on the ground floor in the 1950's and 1960's.

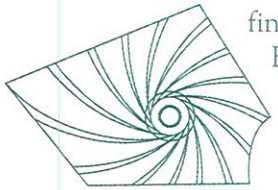
The balustrade and rail, made from pre-cast concrete, enclose the pool in a circular layout. The balustrade reinforces the Old World feel of the Edmonds retail area with this Old World architectural element. The balusters are formed and placed so that spaces between them are shaped like cedar trees. This is the old forest again, the remnant forests of the region, and the urban forest created with street trees and gardens. The water feature includes a central aerated waterspout. This is the representation of town citizens, past, present and future.

Balustrade Bench

The balustrade is repeated in a bench. This allows the pedestrian to experience the materials found in the central piece without the need to walk into the intersection.

Intersection Pavement

Surface treatment alternates, with exposed aggregate in the small sections and central circle, and a lighter colored textured finish in the larger sections. Here is the industrial age. This is sawdust spinning off the logs from Edmonds sawmill's first million shingles.



Pavement pattern.

This is also the propeller wash behind the ferry; the rotating parts in a machine or vehicle used to establish, maintain and expand the town; or the automobile – ubiquitous legacy of the industrial age.

"Edmonds, The Industrial City" – the shingle mills in about 1900.

Sidewalk Inlays

A greatly magnified and stylized representation of the Western Red Cedar needle pattern cut from bronze is inlayed in the sidewalks on four corner areas.

Western Red Cedar.

This represents the forest primeval, the forest of cedars upon which Edmonds was founded. The coastal fog zone is represented by dichroic glass disks. These elements surround the central portions of the artwork, as the old forest surrounds us in time.

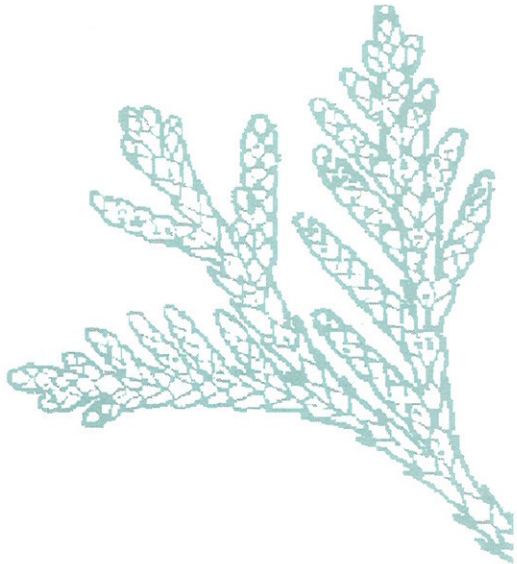
Selected through the City of Edmonds Public Art Process, the artwork was funded by a gift from the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation, Edmonds, WA.

Credits: Photos courtesy of the Edmonds Museum. Drawings by Benson Shaw.
City of Edmonds Arts Commission and Edmonds Museum.

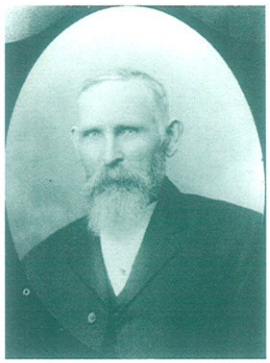
Edmonds 5th & Main Street

Community History and Public Art

"Cedar Dreams" By Benson Shaw



The Western Red Cedar forests, in the coastal fog zone environment, were indigenous to the Edmonds area for thousands of years. George Brackett, early pioneer and founder, came to the area to harvest the cedar.



George Brackett

Building a town was one of Brackett's dreams, a dream based on cedar. The forest around Edmonds gradually receded through logging, in 1889 Brackett opened the first sawmill, and in 1890 the town was incorporated.

In the early years the center of town became the intersection of 5th and Main St. (called George St. after Mr. Brackett until about 1913 – look for the old sidewalk panel

Shingle mills on waterfront, 1890's.

with "George" on it). In 1904 Louis Engel built a general store on the SE corner of 5th and George St.

View west down George St. in about 1912.

The roads were dirt and the crosswalks were made of wood.

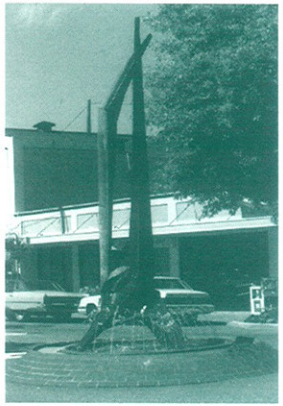
View east on Main St. from about 1920.

The early intersection and road were made of concrete, still visible in the 1950's and 1960's, but later covered with asphalt. In the 1950's a red light hung from the power pole on the SW corner of 5th and Main to signal the Police Chief when the telephone operator got a call for his assistance. The Chief called the operator back to find out where he was needed in this early paging system.

Pole with red light on SW corner, and Beeson building, built in 1911, in background looking west.

In the 1960's east Main was one-way which apparently caused some confusion at the intersection. In 1974, in an effort to improve traffic problems in the intersection, the roundabout fountain was installed (slightly off center to accommodate existing utilities). The centerpiece of the fountain was an abstract copper sculpture by local artists Ed Ballew and Howard Duell.

5th & Main St. looking east in 1960.



Fountain Sculpture looking west.

The sculpture was destroyed by a motorist in 1998. The fountain site temporarily held a white wooden gazebo used as a set prop for a television movie filmed in Edmonds in 1998. A new permanent artwork was subsequently selected in 1999 through the Public Art Process defined by City ordinances.

The new art installation, "Cedar Dreams", by Seattle artist Benson Shaw, was funded by a private donation from the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation.

"Cedar Dreams" reflects the history of Edmonds, from cedars to city. The art installation has four main components as described by the artist:

- Central bronze and stainless steel structure with balustrade and water features
- Balustrade bench
- Intersection pavement treatment
- Sidewalk inlays

Central Structure with Balustrade

The pergola, or gazebo-like structure, is welded bronze tube and plate construction with spun stainless steel spheres. The bronze has a soft green patina. This represents the modern experience, but also references historic architecture. The cupola on Edmonds first church, the historic Hyner home and the arch of the Museum doorway are all reflected in its design.