One giant step for Edmontonkind

Space and stars are now

The outdated Queen Elizabeth Planetarium is dwarfed by the new Edmonton Space Sciences Centre. The old planetarium, opened in 1961, is the smallest in North America.

The mini-planetarium's star theatre is only seven meters in diameter and can seat sixty-five people. The new star theatre will seat 236 people and is twenty three meters in diameter, the largest in Canada.

The entire Queen Elizabeth Planetarium could easily fit inside this theatre.

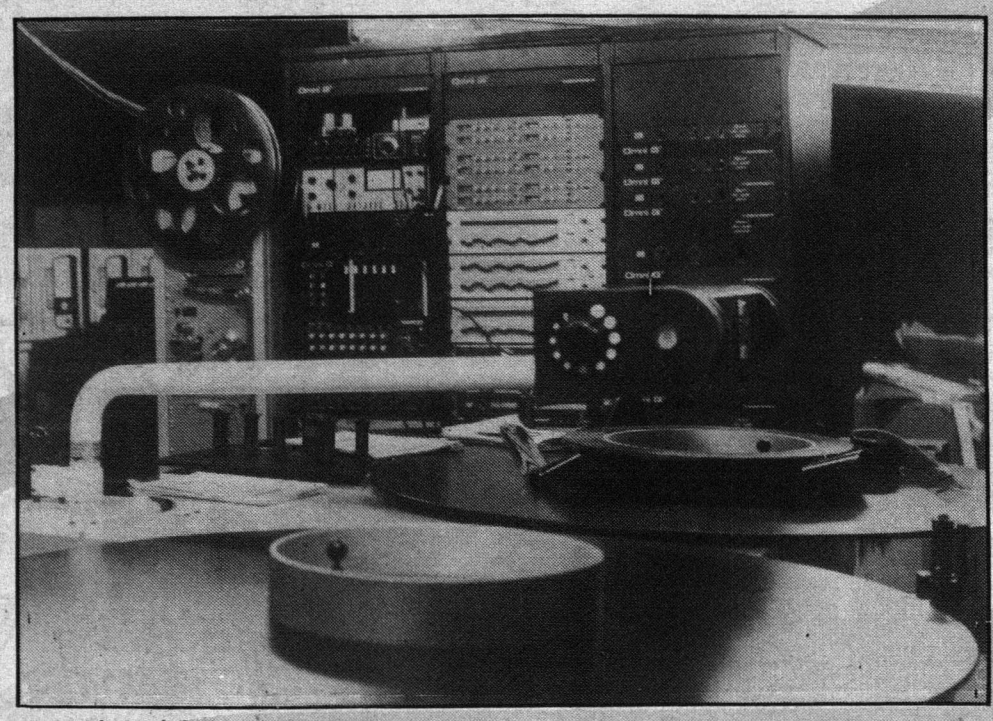
The centre was conceived by the Edmonton Space Science Foundation which was formed in 1978 for the specific purpose of building the new planetarium.

In addition to being a planetarium, the centre will house all kinds of scientific exhibits.

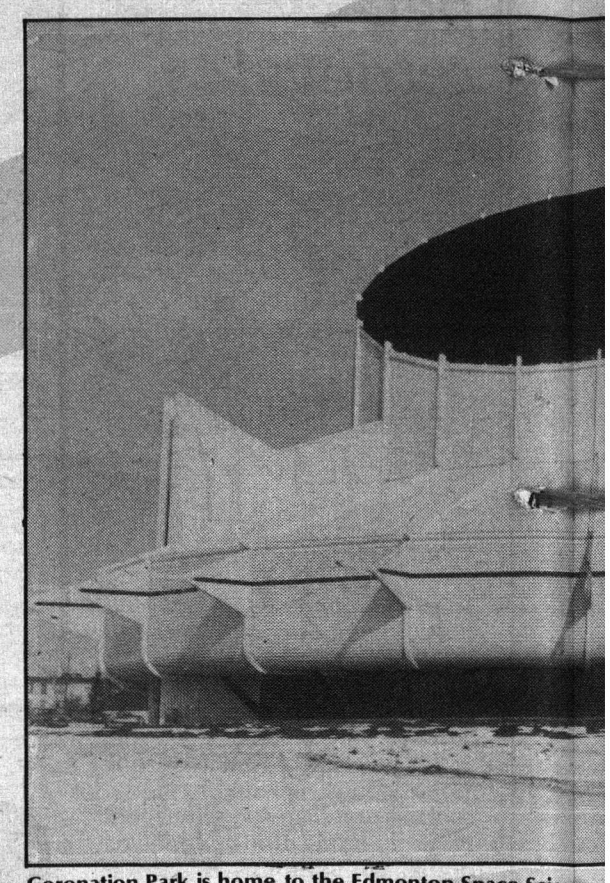
Visitors will actually be able to play with many of the exhibits. These interactive exhibits will consist of computer consoles and random access laser disc systems. Optical Technician Stew Krysko says that such displays "will challenge the visitors as well as allowing the visitors to challenge them."

Krysko compares these exhibits with those at the famous Ontario Science Centre.

The 900 square meters of exhibit space will contain other displays such as accurate models of the space crafts used in the space programs of various nations, a meteor display, and a display of antique optical and



IMAX Theatre's impressive projection room.



Coronation Park is home to the Edmonton Space Sciences

sound system, will allow for spectacular audio-visual shows.

The star theatre will also be used for laser light and music concerts, in which dazzling laser images are projected on the dome-shaped screen to the sound of music.

"There was a need for a general science centre in Edmonton," said the Executive Director of the centre, John Hault.

The Space Sciences Centre will open on Canada Day, July 1.

Hault says that all of the equipment in the new centre will be "state of the art" and will make this planetarium "the best equipped in Canada."

The building was designed by Edmonton architect Douglas Cardinal, who also designed the Grande Prairie College and the St. Albert Centre.

The project was approved in February 1980 and construction began in March 1982.

Approximately 30 per cent of the $15.8 million required to build the centre came from the provincial government as part of the Alberta 75th anniversary celebrations.

Another 30 per cent was given by the City of Edmonton. The remaining 40 per cent is being raised by the foudation itself.

One of the foundation's fund raising methods is the Donate a Star program.

The donor receives a certificate of donation and that donor's name is placed on a large star map which will be displayed in the centre.

The stars range in price from fifty to five thousand dollars depending on the brightness of the star.

Those interested in buying a star of their very own will be extremely disappointed to hear that all of the five thousand dollar stars have been sold. But some of the cheaper stars are still available.

Also, according to the donation forms, the sun, moon, and planets are not for sale at this time.

Construction on the star theatre's domed screen.

astronomical equipment which was donated by the East German government.

There will also be a restaurant and a lounge. "It will be a nice restaurant, and not just a snack bar," assured Krysko. Both will be open after the regular hours of the Centre.

For the amateur astronomer and scientist there will be a science shop. The shop will sell science books, kits, and souvenirs. The shop will also carry a selection of telescopes and accessories.

However, the main attraction of the Space Sciences Centre will be the star theatre.

At the heart of this theatre will be the 1.3 million dollar Zeiss Jena star projector, which is being custom built for the centre in East Germany and which features the latest in computer automation.

Older star projectors are remotely controlled by an operator from a control room. With the new projector, the operator has only to turn on the computer. It does the rest.

The star projector will be used to recreate the night sky within the theatre. It is capable of simulating the stars, planets, and constellations as well as the motion of the Earth and moon.

A unique feature of this star theatre is that the star projector is mounted on a hydraulic lift so that it can be lowered out of the theatre and into a public viewing area, when not in use.

In addition to the projector, there are hundreds of slides and special effects projectors mounted around the perimeter of the hemispherical screen and in the centre stage area.

These, combined with the Zeiss projector, the centre's computer control system, and an excellent

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