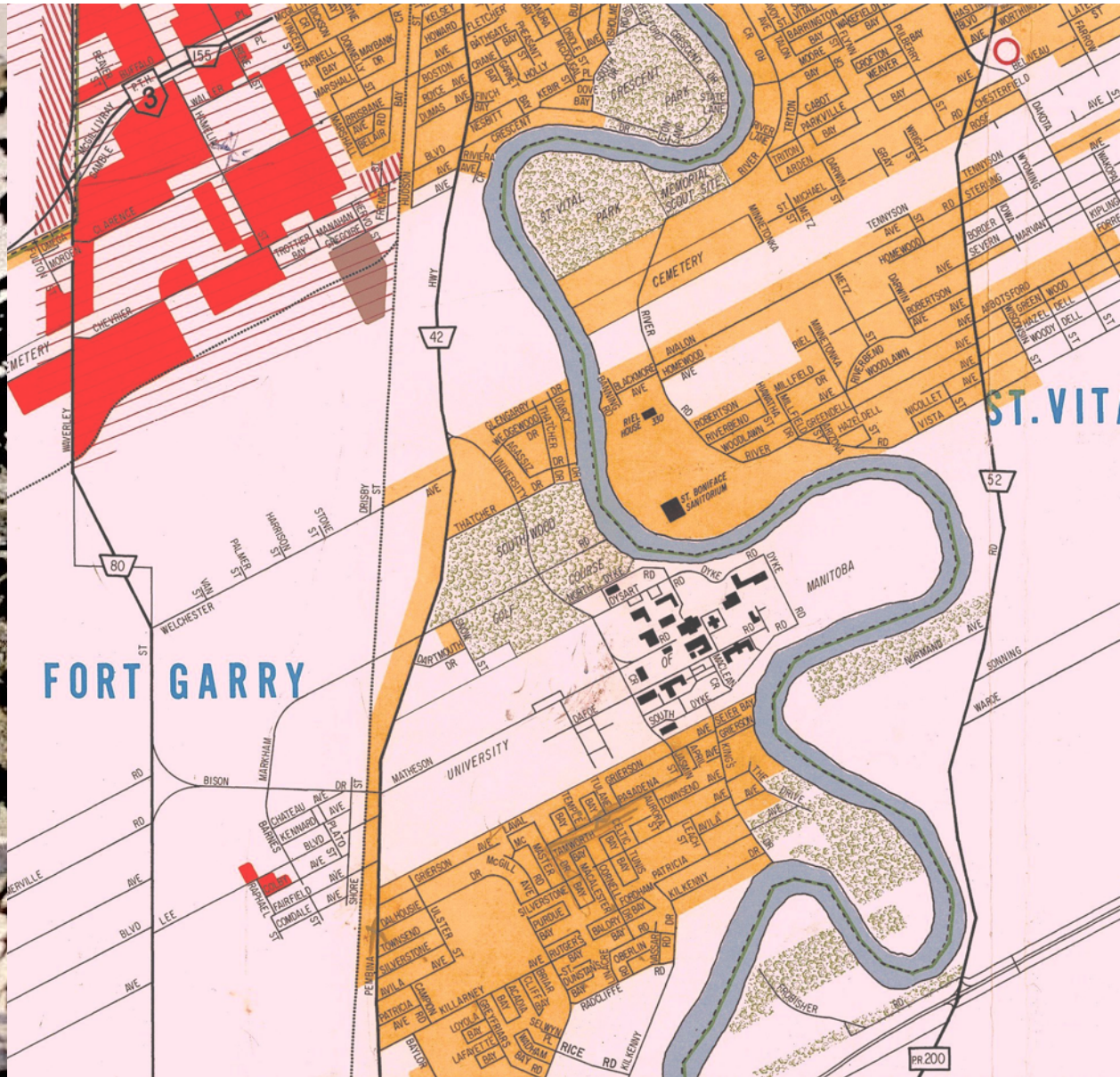


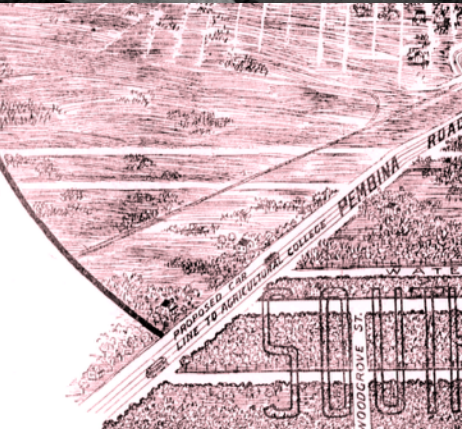
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS





The neighbourhood of University Heights is bound by Bishop Grandin Boulevard to the north, Pembina Highway to the west, the Red River to the east, and the former Southwood Golf and Country Club to the south. The area is largely residential, comprised of dwellings erected in the post-war years, most designed in a modern architectural idiom. Residential lots housing single family homes dominate the district, each with front drive access. Alongside these individual homes are a number of interesting apartment and multi-unit housing projects which stand among the most unique in Winnipeg.

University Heights was originally part of the Rural Municipality of Fort Garry. In 1972 it was amalgamated into Winnipeg as part the “Unicity” consolidation of outlying municipalities. The neighbourhood grew up alongside Pembina Highway, whose path from Pembina, North Dakota, to the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers was in regular use as early as 1803. By the twentieth century the road was home to many commercial establishments, including (in University Heights) the distinctive Art Moderne-style Jack’s Place restaurant and night club, built after World War Two. During the 19th century, alongside this path as it ran through Fort Garry were located many mink ranches, turkey farms, and market gardens. In 1894 the former Southwood Golf and Country Club began life as the Norwood Golf Club; these lands also became host to the Winnipeg Riding Club (as of the 1900s known as the Winnipeg Hunt Club), which ceased operation during the First World War. At this point the course grew to become the first 18-hole golf course in Manitoba.



ABOVE

1950s aerial photograph of the area.

LEFT

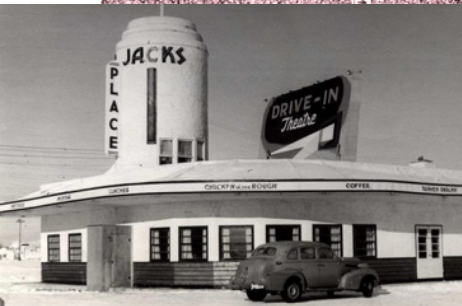
Detail of 1912 advertisement for homes in Fort Garry.

BELOW LEFT

1933 Thatcher Drive, part of the Leslie Park development

BELOW RIGHT

Interior photo of Summerland’s glazed central space.



BOTTOM LEFT

Jack’s Place





The name University Heights was first utilized to describe this area in the early years of the 1910s under the auspices of the University Heights Realty Company, whose efforts at leading a building boom in the area were largely unsuccessful. Construction in the area only took off in full after the Second World War.

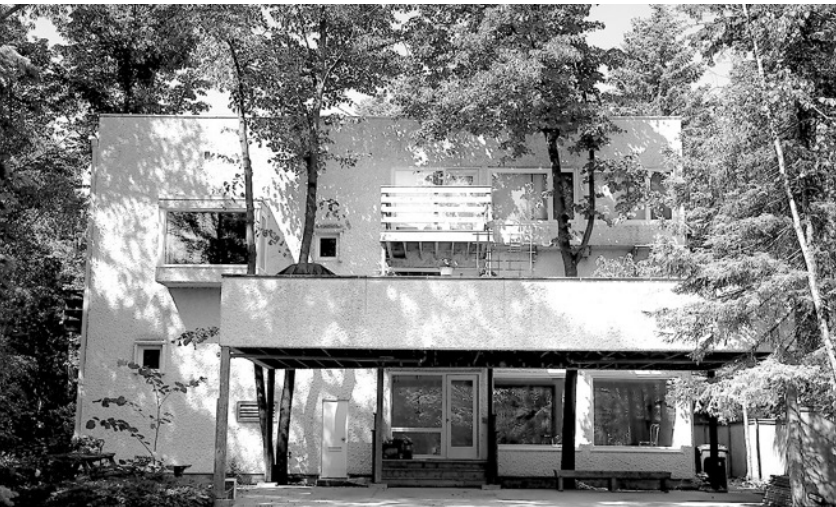
Much of University Heights is composed of the Agassiz Park district, which lies to the east of University Crescent. The neighbourhood is made up of five gently curving streets oriented around a centrally located elementary school, and can be accessed via only two entrances off the Crescent. This area includes approximately 200 homes – predominantly bungalows – constructed in the early 1960s. Many of the homes were built by Elias Construction Ltd., a Winnipeg-based company also responsible for the nearby Clarence Avenue subdivision in Fort Garry.

Agassiz Park's display homes had five separate floor plans; a Winnipeg Free Press advertisement, with an illustration of the neighbourhood model home located at 24 Glengarry Drive, stated: "pick the home you've wanted from a wide variety of proven floor plates. A house designed for convenience and gracious living is an investment in the future." (Winnipeg Free Press, 9 September 1961.) Many of the area's houses are modernist designs defined by such features such as flat or low-sloping roofs, vertical pattern wood siding, and facades with clean geometric lines.



TOP
Advertisements of
the University
Heights Realty
Company , ca. 1913.

LEFT
Homes in
Agassiz Park



ABOVE

Michener
Residence, 75
D'arcy Drive.

TOP LEFT

Collin
Residence,
1972.

TOP RIGHT

78 Thatcher Drive,
designed by
James Donahue.



Alongside the homes built by Elias Construction, Agassiz Park features a number of homes custom-designed by significant Winnipeg architects. These include the Collin Residence (77 D'arcy Drive), a modernist home with a distinctive and simple stucco facade designed by the French-born and trained architect Jacques Collin in 1972.

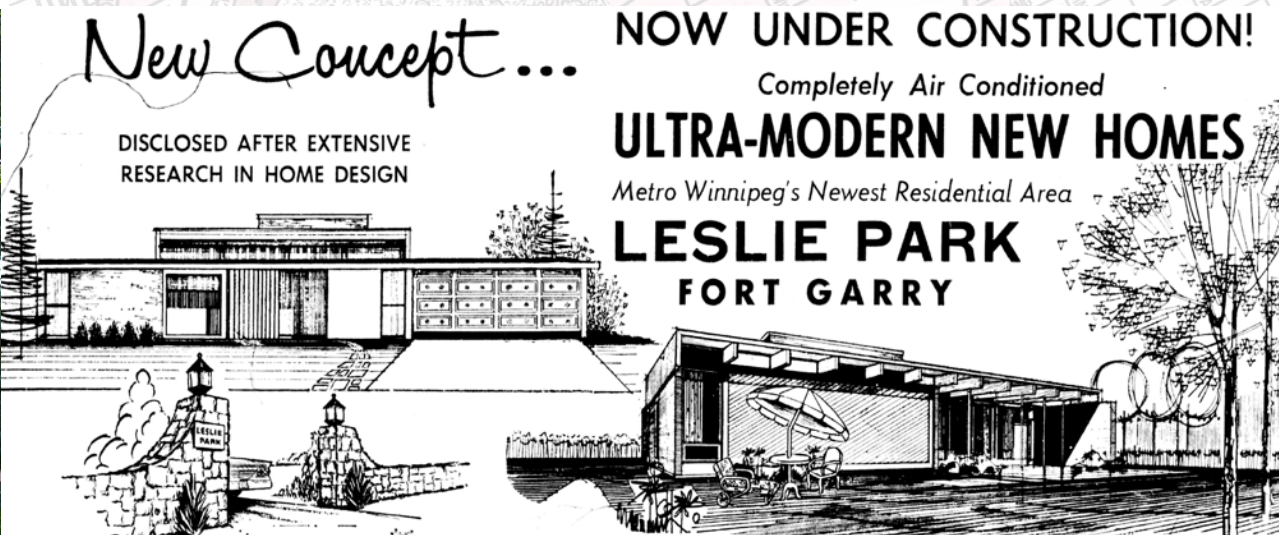
The neighbouring home, 75 D'Arcy Drive, was designed by noted Winnipeg modernist architect Mel Michener for himself and his family. Of the home Michener wrote: "The house was designed to achieve several objectives: 1. to provide comfortable family accommodation for parents and four children, by designing the house to function well as a family home and then work for parents when the children leave. 2. to take advantage of the view to the east overlooking the Red River. Integrate into the design a stand of Siberian Elms (which were part of a former nursery located in the neighbourhood. Develop a design which exploits the unique opportunities of each of the seasons with outdoor decks and courtyards, with microclimates suitable for different weather and temperatures." The house's elegant design is dominated by a single barrel vault which overhangs the front facade to shelter a projecting terrace.

Not far away, at 78 Thatcher Drive, is a home designed by architect James Donahue, the first Canadian to complete a degree at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, a school at the forefront of the growth of modern architecture in North America. The house features vertical wood cladding and a flat roof, echoing the work of many of Donahue's European-trained professors, including Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius.

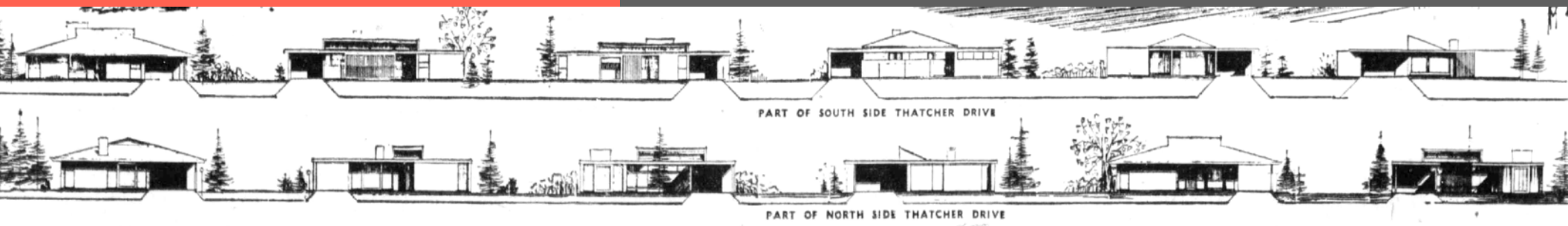


ABOVE & BELOW

Homes in Leslie Park and period advertisements for the neighbourhood.



On the west side of University Crescent stands a one of Winnipeg's most notable collections of residential modern architecture: Leslie Park, a row of over 20 homes designed in distinctive modernist fashion in the mid-1960s. Developed by B. Leslie Real Estate & Development, the area was marketed in 1965 as such: "From the drawing boards of one of Canada's foremost architects Pratt Lindgren & Associates plus the skill and knowhow of one of Winnipeg's most progressive development companies comes this lovely residential area known as LESLIE PARK. Located in suburban Fort Carry on Thatcher Drive, feature a truly fine concept in modern living." Other advertisements noted the homes' contemporary design elements: large glass areas, skylights, and large foyers. The area is marked by a nearly hidden concrete sign. It exists as a small-scale Canadian analogue to California's famed Eichler neighbourhoods, post-war residential subdivisions with all their homes designed in a modernist style by the same architect.





Nestled between the former Southwood Golf Course and Pembina Highway stands one of Winnipeg's more interesting multi-home developments: Southwood Village. Built in 1967 the complex was designed by architect Leslie J. Stechesen for the firm Libling Michener and Associates and was the winner of the Canadian Housing Design Council National Design Award in 1969.

A 98 unit townhouse development, the site features central green space, public sculpture and fountains atop underground parking. These meandering interior walkways through staggered rows of townhouses.



ABOVE &
RIGHT
Photos of
Southward
Village.

"A fine example of a row-housing development. The architects have sought to control the environment by creating an introverted scheme. The siting of the building is quite pleasing and results in some attractive vistas. The relationships of the spaces within the scheme develops considerable interest with the use of a very simple building form. Spaces flow from one to the other, expand, contract, rise and fall. Grading and plant forms are well used."

— Canadian Housing Design Council National Design Awards



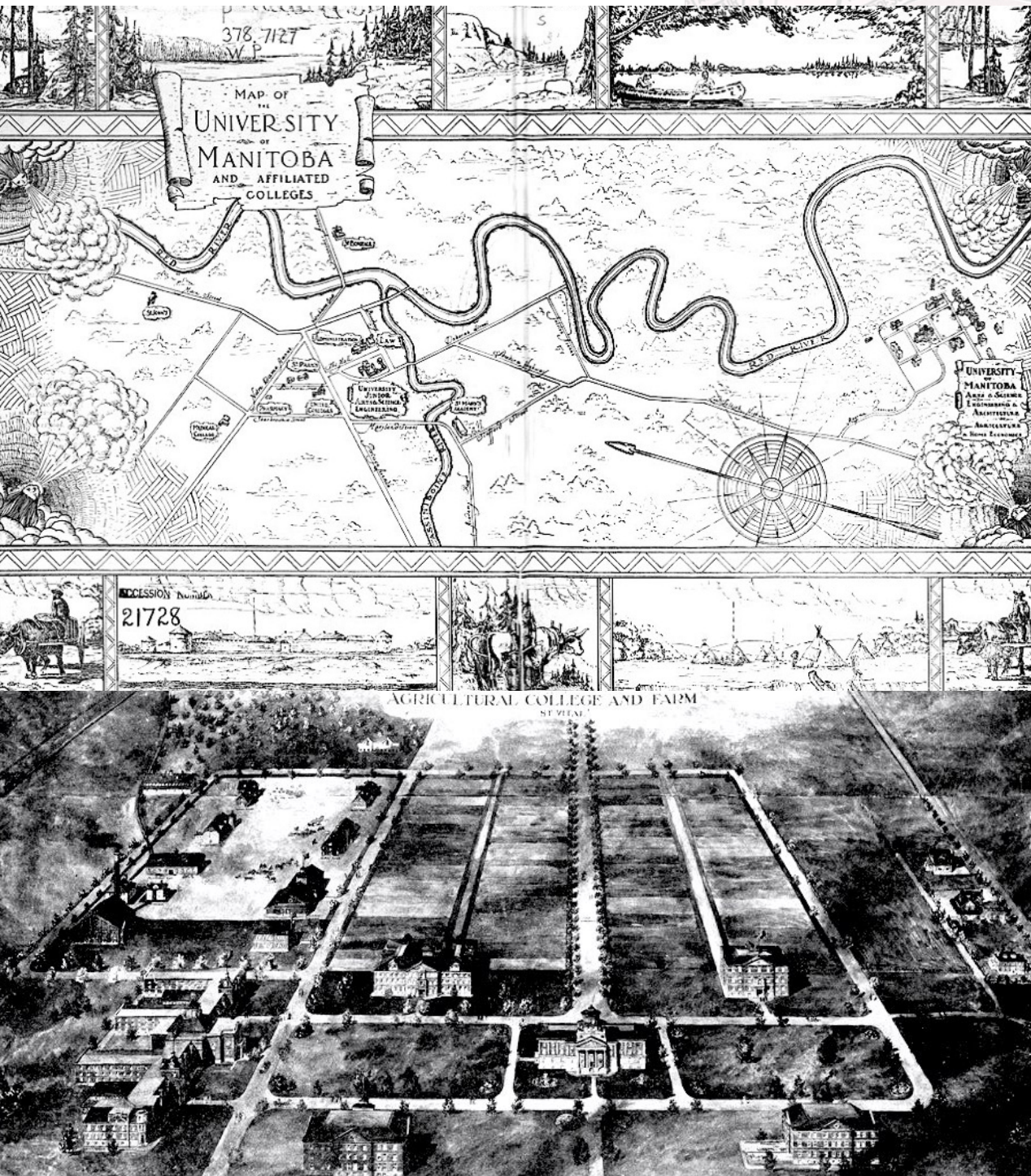


ABOVE & LEFT

Photos of and advertisements for 77 University Crescent.

With its twin fifteen-storey concrete towers enclosing a soaring residential enclosed atrium, 77 University Crescent, also known as “Summerland,” is a distinctive landmark in University Heights. Plans for the complex were unveiled Monday, 10 January 1972. Designed by Waisman Architectural Group, the building was constructed to house 103 two-bedroom suites and 89 one-bedroom suites and was intended primarily for married University students. Financing for the project was provided by R. C. Baxter Ltd., the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Co-operative Credit Society of Manitoba Limited. It was developed at the behest of College Housing Holdings Incorporated, a non-profit corporation established to develop housing for students and their families with a concern over a housing shortage near the University of Manitoba. The building was initially operated as a student co-operative. Period advertising for the complex boasted residents could “Enjoy shirt-sleeves weather year round ... Spend sunny winter days relaxing under a palm tree. Tan or swim before supper. Now South Seas life comes to Winnipeg-for residents of 77 University Crescent in Fort Garry.” They elaborated: “Between the two newest apartment towers in Winnipeg is a special place where summer stays 12 months of the year. Summerland. A graceful transparent roof sweeps across from one apartment tower to the other. Double thickness glass doors slide into place at either end to exclude winter. Rain and snow never get in. Sun and warmth are always welcome. In Summerland, the temperature stays around 70. That’s perfect for swimming or putting a golf ball on Summerland’s 9-hole green any day of the year. ... Outside in a second large recreation area are 2 tennis courts, volleyball court, jogging track, shuffleboard, barbecues, and a children’s play ground.”

The design of the two towers echoes a Brutalist approach, making extensive use of exposed concrete, with vertical linear patterning at the north and south ends of the building. Interest is lent to the balcony-laden east and west facades through modulation in depth. Adding further interest is the use of yellow paint to highlight metal work, a technique in keeping with the development of modern architecture toward an embrace of pop, Supergraphic, and high-tech aesthetics during this period. Undoubtedly, however, it is Summerland’s namesake solarium or conservatory style enclosed atrium which is the building’s most notable feature. The integration of passive solar with modern building techniques and the development of a new “solar architecture” was an important trend in architecture the 1970s, as was the popularization of large, multi-storey atria, as embodied in the work of American architect John Portman. Here these dual tendencies were merged in a mode that had a unique valence in Winnipeg’s northern climate – used to foster an interior ambiance of the tropics in an environment at times otherwise forbiddingly frosty. The use of large sheets of glass and thin metal-work to create space – typified by London’s 1851 Crystal Palace – was an important precedent to the development of modern architecture, one that led to the popularization of conservatories and arcades such as Milan’s Passage Vittorio Emanuele. At Summerland this glassy and light enclosure of space is merged, as in Milan, with the counterpoint of heavy surrounding form. In combination, the aesthetic is almost one of a vertical concrete and metal sandwich: a framing that lends further allure to the verdant space hidden within. Interestingly, a similar embrace of glazing to create space was later recapitulated by Waisman in the design of Vancouver 1986 Expo British Columbia Pavilion and Plaza of the Nations complex.



As indicated by its name, University Heights' history is closely linked to that of the University of Manitoba (located immediately to the south). First operating as the Manitoba Agricultural College, the campus commenced its life in 1911 with the construction of the Boys' and Girls' Dormitories (now Taché Hall), Administration, and Home Economics buildings. These buildings rose on land described at the time as "thickly treed with small poplars, a few willows, and some scrub oak."

The following year the University began erecting some of its own buildings at the campus, including the first engineering department building. To mitigate against isolation from Winnipeg, University Crescent was soon constructed, reducing the distance to the city's core by nearly one mile. A streetcar rail link was also developed.

Debate over where the University should be located continued for decades until the 1950s when a full transition from the previous Broadway campus and college sites occurred. It was at this point in time when the development of University Heights was initiated.

LEFT

Early University of Manitoba famous maps. (From University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections.)

RIGHT

University of Manitoba streetcar passengers. (From University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections.)



