

GROWTH AND PATTERN OF APARTMENT
DEVELOPMENT IN METROPOLITAN WINNIPEG

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John A. Pelletier
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Growth and Pattern of Apartment Development in
Metropolitan Winnipeg.

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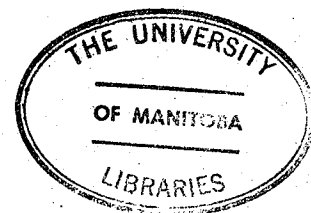
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ABSTRACT

Growth and Pattern of Apartment
Development in Metropolitan Winnipeg

This thesis examines the growth patterns of apartment development for the Winnipeg metropolitan area within the context of the evolving spatial structure from 1900 to 1975. It is concerned with the general distribution pattern of apartments as well as the emerging trends of accelerated apartment development in the suburban areas and the concentration of high-rise activity in the core area of the central city. The thesis identifies the prime determinants of apartment development as the result of the joint efforts of the municipal councils in actively promoting this type of development due to its favourable municipal revenues, and of the initiatives and abilities of certain developers to undertake major apartment projects.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

New urban patterns are developing in the Winnipeg area, and with them new problems of urban planning. The solutions to these problems of urbanization may well be found in contributions from the many related disciplines...including urban geography, sharing a common interest and concern with urban development.

Urban geography, a part of the field of Urbanism, is the application of the geographic viewpoint and methodology to the study of cities and city areas.¹ One of the fundamental concerns of the geographer is the study of the differences and similarities among areas. Geography focusses attention on the location and distribution of phenomena over area: (a) as a means of determining the characteristics of areas; and (b) as a method of identifying the relationships and the significance of given characteristics.

The Winnipeg area, like other urban areas, contains many different kinds of economic activities within the scope of geographic consideration. These activities are related, in one or more ways, within the same physical area. From the complex of such activities contained within the urban area, this study extracts one category of activity for analysis--apartment development, a large but nonetheless single piece of the puzzle.

¹ Harold M. Mayer, "Urban Geography", American Geography: Inventory and Prospect (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1954) pp. 142-166.

Objectives of the Study

The present study focusses on the structure and pattern of apartment development. The investigation is concerned with:

1. The growth pattern of apartments as reflected by the existing stock of apartments for different periods of constructions, and the major factors underlying its historical development.
2. The building, population and other related characteristics of apartment concentrations, and the similarities and differences of these factors between selected areas.
3. The trends in apartment development and their significance in the spatial structure of the metropolitan area.

Information and Data Sources

Information and data for this study were obtained from five kinds of primary and secondary sources:

1. Published material from Federal, Provincial and City of Winnipeg agencies or departments containing statistical and other information.
2. Special tabulation from the assessment records of the City of Winnipeg for data on apartment location, age of building, number of storeys, number of apartment units, age and occupancy factors for the year of the study -- 1966.¹

¹ This tabulation was provided at the request of the author for the preparation of a report, "Analysis of Apartments in Metropolitan Winnipeg", Reid Crowther & Partners, Winnipeg, 1969. It is unique as it contains physical and demographic data for each apartment building.

3. Data for a representative sample of the high-rise and walk-up types of apartments built during the period 1960-1966, was obtained from a field survey conducted in the early part of 1968.¹ The information collected related to size of apartment unit, monthly rental and number of automobiles per unit.
4. Data for apartment units related to location, year of construction, number of storeys, number and type of bedroom unit, site area, floor area, total number of units, and number of parking spaces was obtained from the assessment records of the City of Winnipeg for all units built as of January 1, 1975.²
5. Interviews and discussions with the major apartment developers over a period of years.³

¹ The Planning Division of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg carried out the survey for the walk-up type of apartment at the request of the author, who was at that time a consultant to the corporation. The data for the high-rise apartments was obtained personally through interviews with apartment owners and developers.

² The tabulation contains data available for the first time on all apartment units in the City of Winnipeg. It represents a prime source of material for geographic research, particularly in the application of statistical analysis of the 22,000 lines from the computer print-out.

³ The information gathered during the years the author was a planner with the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Greater Winnipeg (1957-1961), and later (1961-1965), as senior development planner with the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. During the period 1965-1970, the author also acted as planning consultant on apartment projects in the Metropolitan area.

Organization of the Study

In addition to this introductory chapter, the study contains four chapters devoted to analysis and interpretation of data and other information. Chapter II examines the distribution pattern of apartments constructed between 1900 and 1966, and identifies the major apartment concentrations. This provides the framework or setting for the analysis of the growth patterns in apartment development contained in Chapter III. The physical, demographic and other related characteristics of apartment concentrations are discussed in Chapter IV. Chapter V reviews briefly the resurgence of apartment growth for the period 1966 to 1974, and evaluates the impact of recent trends in this development upon the spatial structure of the metropolitan area. Chapter VI summarizes the results of the investigation on the growth and pattern of apartment development in metropolitan Winnipeg.

Limitation in Time

Throughout the study an attempt was made to consider apartment development and its related factors for the base year 1966, that is for those units forming part of the housing stock as of June 1966. The data on occupancy factors and automobile ownership is related to the early part of 1968, the field survey period, for those units constructed between 1960 and 1966.¹

¹ Subsequent development of apartments has been briefly discussed in Chapter V.

In some instances, historical data were used to consider limited aspects of the area of study in the perspective of its historical development. The major part of the study, however, is concerned with the apartment development situation as it existed in 1966.

CHAPTER I I
THE DISTRIBUTION OF APARTMENTS IN 1966

The recent trend to apartment living in Winnipeg is rapidly becoming a way of life for an increasing number of the metropolitan population. This latest surge in high density housing, as seen in Table 1, is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. This is due to such factors as an increase in the number of small families as well as the creation of a greater number of one-person households.

TABLE 1
APARTMENT UNITS BY PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION

	1900- 1909	1910- 1919	1920- 1929	1930- 1939	1940- 1949	1950- 1959	1960- 1966
City of Winnipeg	1209	4515	2089	646	390	4352	4619
Suburban areas	--	--	105	159	95	1785	4557
Metropolitan area Total	1209	4515	2194	805	485	6137	9176

In the decade following World War II, seventy percent of all new apartment units were constructed in the City of Winnipeg while during the same period, the single-family dwelling dominated the housing scene in the suburban areas. However, as indicated in Table 1 these outer municipalities increased their share of construction of new apartment units to fifty percent between 1960 and 1966. It would appear

that the trend to apartment living in Metropolitan Winnipeg is just as strong in suburbia as in the central zone.

In 1960, apartments constituted about twelve percent of the housing stock in Metropolitan Winnipeg. By 1966, the percentage had increased to nearly seventeen percent, and it is estimated that as of December 1968, the apartment unit represented at least twenty percent of all types of housing accommodation. The relative importance of the apartment unit in terms of total housing stock for Winnipeg and the surrounding municipalities, in 1966, is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

APARTMENT UNITS AND HOUSING STOCK

BY MUNICIPALITY: 1966

Municipality	Apartment Units	Estimated ¹ Dwelling Units	Apartment units as % of dwelling units
Winnipeg	17,820	77,710	22.9%
St. James	1,801	10,858	16.5%
St. Boniface	1,412	11,343	12.4%
St. Vital	1,135	8,846	12.8%
East Kildonan	679	8,281	8.1%
West Kildonan	578	6,088	9.4%
North Kildonan	459	2,763	16.6%
Fort Garry	329	5,626	5.8%
Transcona	<u>308</u>	<u>5,009</u>	<u>6.1%</u>
Metro Total	24,521	145,290	16.8%

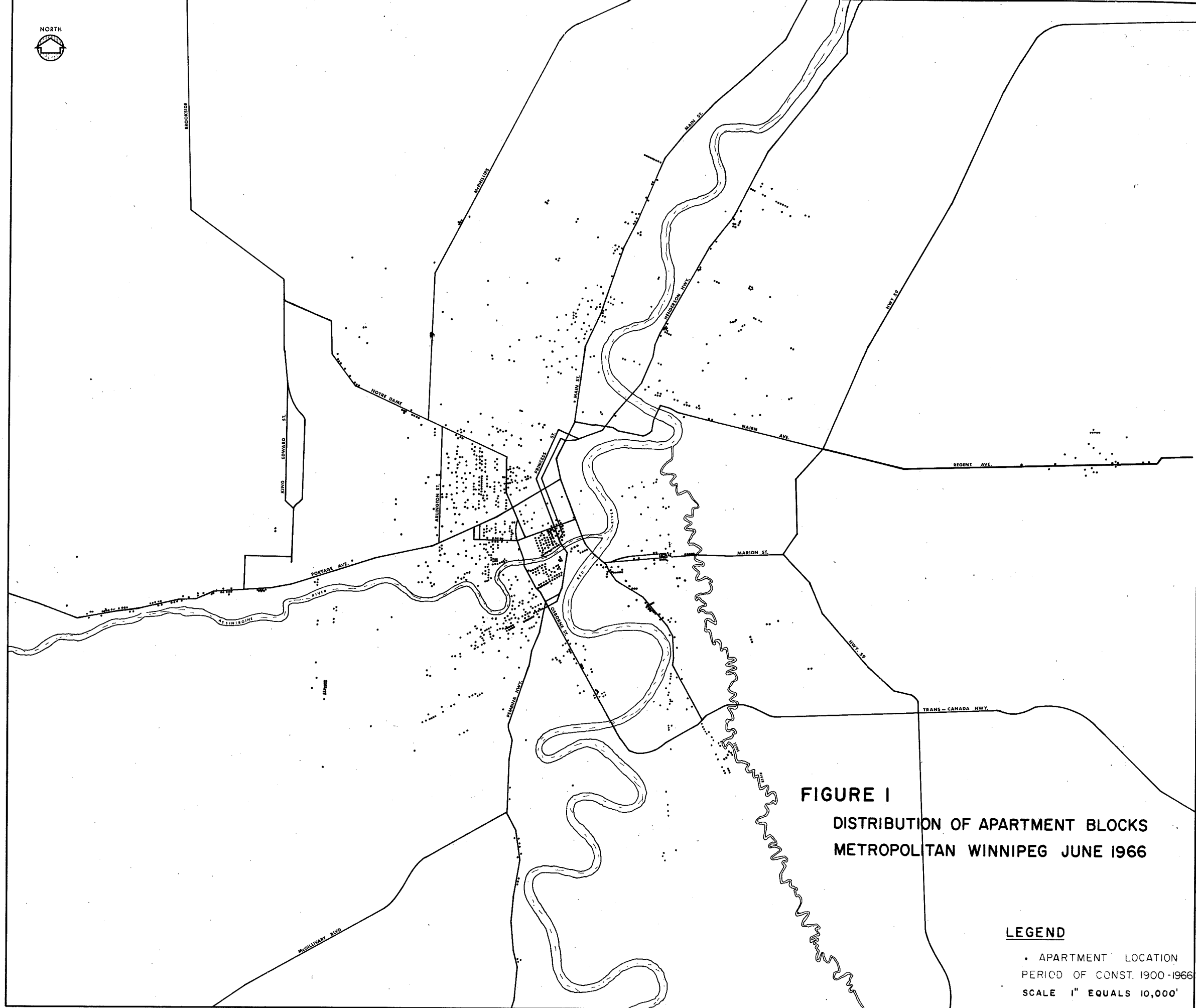


FIGURE I
DISTRIBUTION OF APARTMENT BLOCKS
METROPOLITAN WINNIPEG JUNE 1966

LEGEND
• APARTMENT LOCATION
PERIOD OF CONST. 1900-1966
SCALE 1" EQUALS 10,000'

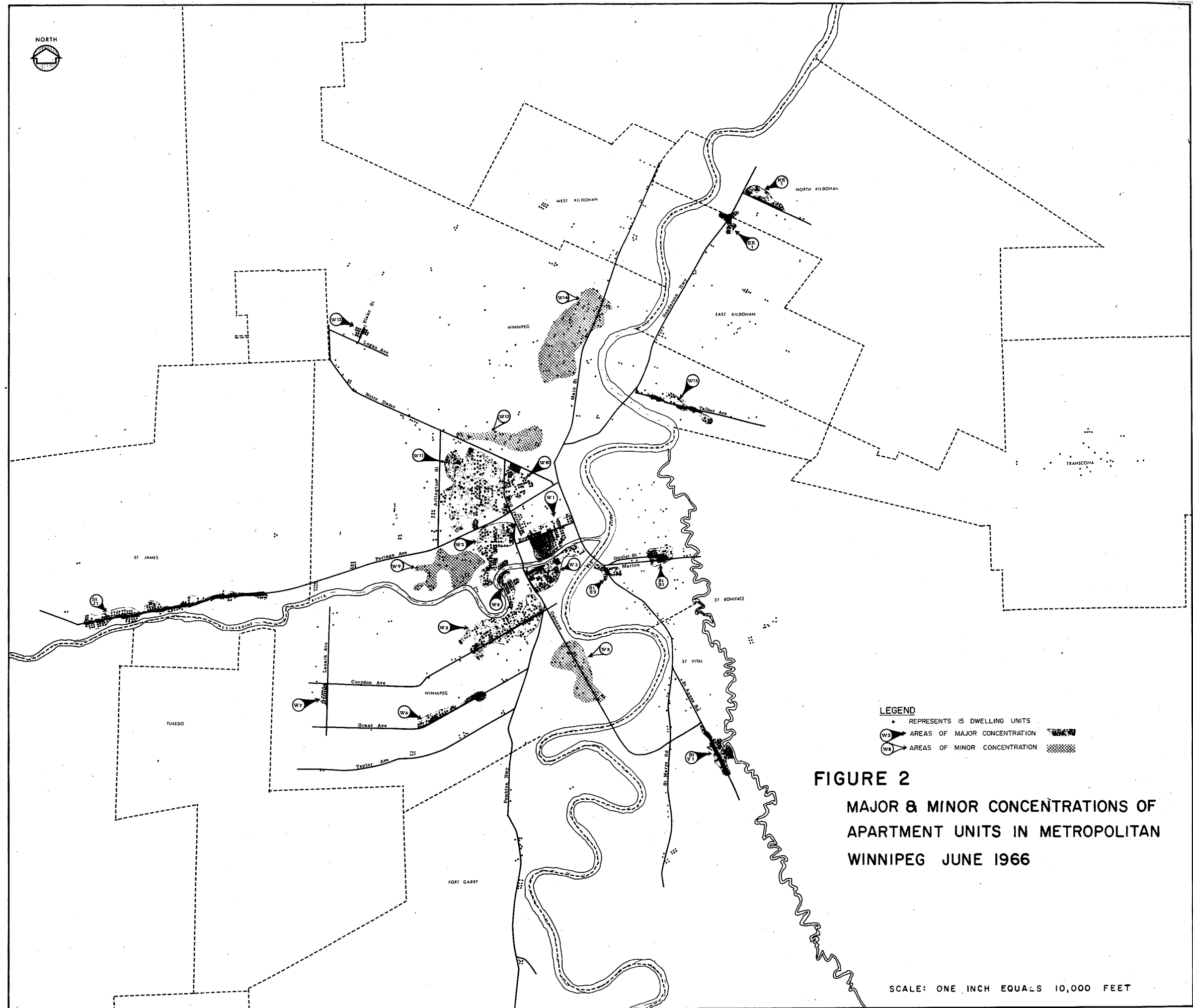


FIGURE 2
MAJOR & MINOR CONCENTRATIONS OF
APARTMENT UNITS IN METROPOLITAN
WINNIPEG JUNE 1966

SCALE: ONE INCH EQUALS 10,000 FEET

Traditionally, apartments have been located in the peripheral areas of the central business district and along the main arterial routes. Figure 1 shows the distribution of apartment structures in Winnipeg in 1966. The salient aspects of this distribution are: (1) a dense concentration immediately south of the central business district; (2) a slightly less intensive cluster south of the Assiniboine River and a similar one west of the central business district; (3) a linear development along the major arterial streets. It would appear from this perusal of Figure 1 that the Winnipeg pattern of apartment location is quite similar to that of other Canadian cities.¹ A different picture is revealed, however, when the density of apartments, that is number of units in a building, is plotted on a map. This new pattern is shown on Figure 2.²

The initial impression given by the distribution pattern on Figure 2 in comparison to Figure 1, is an intensification of the concentrations already identified as well as a coalescence of units in sectors not shown previously to be particularly significant. The concentrations shown on Figure 2 vary to a considerable degree in areal extent and intensity of development. While the boundaries of these areas appear to be rather nebulous, the lines of demarcation are street lines since the smallest unit is the city block. The criterion used

¹ G.A. Nader, Some Aspects of the Recent Growth and Distribution of Apartments in the Prairie Metropolitan Areas: The Canadian Geographer, XV, 4, 1971 (p. 311).

² Data on each building was plotted by street address on a map showing each city block. Figure 2 is an overlay of the base map.

for the delimitation of these areas was one of visual identity as an apartment district. Total number of units within a structure was not sufficient in itself to establish the area as a concentration but rather a definite homogeneity of structural elements within a limited area of land. The Blake Gardens (W12) and Lanark Gardens (W7) areas are typical examples of relatively small clusters of apartments with distinctive characteristics. On the other hand, the Osborne area, between Scotland and Jubilee (W8) and the Portage-Assiniboine River area between Aubrey and Sherbrook (W9) are representative of the minor concentrations, consisting of a mixture of two and three storey apartments and single-family, two-family dwellings, and multiple-family dwellings converted from single-family housing. Table 3 identifies the general location of the major and minor concentrations referred to in Figure 2, and also indicates the total number of units in each cluster, as well as the number of units during the period 1960-1966 for each area.

Apartment buildings are generally conspicuous structures in the urban landscape, particularly in residential areas. While the average urban dweller has no great difficulty in identifying major apartment concentrations, it is unlikely that such a person is aware of significant differences between apparently comparable areas. This part of the thesis is intended to cast a brief look at the distribution of apartments and to note the major differences between areas. A more detailed comparison of characteristics of apartments is presented in Chapter IV, while Chapter III provide some insight into the location factors responsible for the distribution pattern under study.

TABLE 3**LOCATION OF MAJOR AND MINOR APARTMENT CONCENTRATIONS**

Municipality & Map Reference	Location	Total No. of units	No. of units 1960-66
Winnipeg			
W1	Broadway-Assiniboine River Main - Memorial Blvd.	2123	286
W2	Portage-Assiniboine River Sherbrook-Memorial Blvd.	1906	197
W3	Assiniboine River-Gertrude Osborne-Main	1704	442
W4	Assiniboine River-Gertrude West of Osborne	1041	727
W5	Corydon area-Stafford- Osborne, Gertrude-Welling- ton Crescent-Grosvenor	1650	330
W6	Grant between Cambridge and Harrow	727	719
W7	Lanark south of Corydon	291	72
W8m	Osborne area between Scotland and Jubilee	433	98
W9m	Portage-Assiniboine River Aubrey-Sherbrook	579	85
W10	Notre Dame-Portage-Balmoral	1200	422
W11	Notre Dame-Portage Arlington-Balmoral	2420	325
W12	Logan-Blake	298	--
W13	CPR main line-Notre Dame Arlington-King	423	9
W14	Main-Carruthers-Selkirk	814	108
W15	Talbot-Henderson-Grey	455	392

TABLE 3 Cont'd.

<u>Municipality & Map Reference</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Total No. of units</u>	<u>No. of units 1960-66</u>
St. James St. J. 1	Portage	1801	1074
St. Boniface St. B. 1	Goulet-Marion-Traverse- Desmeurons	509	308
St. B. 2	Marion-St. Mary's-Eugenie	188	51
St. Vital St. V. 1	St. Annes Rd. - Fernwood Clayton Drive	668	614
East Kildonan E. K. 1	Henderson-Brazier-Maxwell	266	266
North Kildonan N. K. 1	Edison-Henderson-Arby	459	459

The most distinctive feature of the spatial pattern on Figure 2 is that over fifty percent (50%) of all apartments in the metropolitan area are found within a radius of one and a quarter miles from the intersection of Portage Avenue and Memorial Boulevard. Figure 2 also suggests that the Broadway-Assiniboine River concentration (W1) is of the highest density, making due allowances for variations in areal extent between the major areas. As was noted earlier, apartment concentrations tend to be located on or adjacent to metropolitan arterial streets. Study of Figure 2 together with Table 3 indicates that these transportation corridors were also the prime locations for apartments during the 1960-1966 period.

The era of the high-rise apartment has added a new dimension to the Winnipeg skyline since 1960. Its relative importance in terms of total apartment units and number of buildings is noted in Table 4. Slightly less than half (47.7%) of all apartment units constructed between 1960 and 1966 were high-rise structures with fifty percent of these (2181 units) located at three focal points: the St. James Portage Avenue complex; the Roslyn Crescent-River Avenue sector west of Osborne Street; and the Grant Avenue area between Cambridge and Harrow.

The St. James concentration is generally considered to be the high-rise sector by residents of the metropolitan area, an opinion confirmed by the data in Table 4.¹ In terms of building density, however, the Roslyn Crescent-River Avenue area presents a more compact development due to a greater degree of land coverage by buildings. This factor

¹ The statement was valid for the period under study-1968.

TABLE 4

MAJOR AREAS OF HIGH-RISE APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION: 1960-1966

Municipality and Map Reference	High-Rise Apartments		Walk-Up Apartments		% HR/ Apt. Units
	No. of Buildings	No. of Apt. Units	No. of Buildings	No. of Apt. Units	
St. James St. J. 1	12	973	7	101	90.5
Winnipeg					
W4	7	663	2	64	91.1
W6	7	545	7	174	75.7
W10	1	407	1	15	96.4
W3	3	230	15	212	52.0
W1	4	217	4	69	75.8
St. Boniface St. B. 1	2	210	7	98	68.1
St. Vital St. V. 1	1	156	21	458	25.4
North Kildonan N. K. 1	2	152	18	307	33.1
Winnipeg W11	2	146	15	179	44.9
Total	41	3699	97	1677	68.8
Other Areas	10	680	201	3120	17.8
Metro Total	51	4379	298	4797	47.7

is not so apparent to the public due in part to the dense foliage in the district. In contrast to the St. James area which is bisected by a major thoroughfare, this sector (W4) is off to the side and hence, its visual impact is less forcibly thrust upon the passer-by. The number of apartment buildings and the average number of units per structure for the concentrations identified on Figure 2 are presented in Table 5. It is observed that the predominant structure is the walk-up -- the traditional two and a half storey eighteen unit apartment. The larger average size buildings in the Roslyn Crescent-River Avenue (W4), Grant Avenue (W6) and St. James (St. J. 1) areas reflect the predominance of the high-rise structures averaging about eighty-four units. The Central Park area (W10) average of 35.2 units is statistically correct but quite misleading. By excluding the 407 units of Regency Towers from the calculations, the remaining 29 structures average 27.4 apartment units.

Summary

The pattern of apartment development in Metropolitan Winnipeg in 1966 was one of relative concentration in areas adjacent to or in close proximity to the central business district. These core areas accounted for over fifty percent (50%) of all apartment units. Of particular significance was the proportion of apartment units within the City of Winnipeg, over seventy percent (70%) of all units, with the remaining thirty percent (30%) located in the suburban municipalities, generally along or adjacent to the major arterial routes.