



## Heritage Highlights

# Roslyn Road was stately Bankers' Row

By 1880, Winnipeg's business leaders began to build new homes on land across the Red River in the southern portion of the city. The district came to be called Fort Rouge, named after a fur trading post built by LaVerendrye at the juncture of the Red and Assiniboine rivers in c.1738. By the early 1900s, the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company had accelerated the growth of outlying suburban districts which provided wider streets and larger lots that only the affluent could afford. Roslyn Road, the first street south of the Osborne Bridge, became the district of stately bankers' homes.

When the Honourable Mr. Justice Robert Maxwell Dennistown built this house for his family in 1903, he was a partner with Machray, Sharpe and Dennistown, Barristers and Solicitors. He had come to Winnipeg in 1907 to serve as western counsel for the Bank of Commerce. His distinguished law career included drawing up Manitoba's first Workman's Compensation Act, lecturing at the University of Manitoba Law School, serving as a

judge of the Manitoba Court of Appeal and later as deputy judge for the advocate-general. He was also a major in the 57th Regiment of the Peterborough Rangers and served overseas, between 1914 to 1919, as a colonel in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, for which he was later decorated.

The family home was designed by architect John D. Atchison. An American by birth, Atchison studied architecture at the Chicago Art Institute and then worked for William Le Baron Jenny and William B. Mundie, a well-known and prestigious team of Chicago architects. In Winnipeg, Atchison designed commercial structures as well as numerous apartment blocks and residences.

Built at a cost of \$15,000, the Tudor style of the house was commonly used by architects for upper-class residences throughout North America from the 1890s to the 1940s. The distinguished features are a steep-pitched roof on the cross gable; decorative half-timbering with an in-



166 Roslyn Road in 1984.

fill of stucco; portions of the walls finished in brick veneer; an elaborate Gothic arched entranceway with quoins of stone; and massive chimneys. The doors and side transoms are glazed with leaded glass in small panes. All these details were an attempt to imitate the manor houses of Medieval England.

By the 1950s, Roslyn Road had changed from an area of private sumptuous homes to high density housing. This residence has been subdivided to contain five suites and remains as one of the few private dwellings in one of Winnipeg's early suburbs. — *City of Winnipeg historical buildings committee.*