

A WALKING TOUR OF BRANDON UNIVERSITY



**BRANDON
UNIVERSITY**

About Brandon University

Brandon University (BU) is proudly and prominently situated along central 18th Street in Brandon, Manitoba. BU is a co-educational, non-denominational, government-supported institution and the third-largest university in the Province of Manitoba. It is a member of Universities Canada.

Although Brandon College was founded in 1899, the history of higher education in the Brandon area can be traced back years earlier. In 1871, the signing of Treaty 2 permitted the settling of lands that were traditionally home to the Dakota, Anishanabek, Oji-Cree, Cree, and Métis peoples. Baptist missionaries, among the early settlers, made education a priority and in 1880, established Prairie College at Rapid City, about 40 km north of Brandon — the first post-secondary educational institution on the Canadian Prairies west of the original 1870 Manitoba border.

In 1884, the McKee Academy succeeded Prairie College, and it moved to Brandon in 1890. Brandon College absorbed McKee Academy in 1899 and began instruction that year. The original Brandon College building was built on Brandon's 18th Street in 1900–01, followed

by the adjoined Clark Hall in 1906, and a nearby Science Building in 1922. Brandon College weathered economic downturns and two world wars to thrive and prosper.

Although Brandon University received its charter on June 5, 1967, on the occasion of the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra and the Honourable Angus Ogilvie, the charter was dated July 1, 1967, to mark Canada's Centennial. Brandon University shares this anniversary with a number of other Canadian universities.

From 1899 until today, the number and variety of campus building facilities increased in response to new academic programs, expanding enrolments, and a widening range of campus activities and services. Many new buildings were added to the campus landscape, and a number of the institution's physical structures underwent renovation, reconstruction, expansion, and repurposing. Remarkably, in its over-120 years, only one structure — the temporary WWII-era H-Huts — no longer appears on campus.

The current BU campus comprises building complexes or centres and individual, single-purpose buildings.

1 – Original Building & Clark Hall Complex

The original Brandon College building, designed by Winnipeg architect Hugh McCowan, was officially opened on October 1, 1901. The façade of the building is built from locally produced brick and Manitoba limestone and features elegant arches and a Romanesque appeal. A chapel was a central interior feature. This building initially housed the College's theology, commercial, and high school departments.

Clark Hall, designed by William Alexander Elliot and officially opened on October 27, 1906, is connected to and shares a similar design with the original Brandon College building. It was named after Dr. Charles W. Clark who funded \$30,000 of the total \$40,000 cost of construction. Clark Hall, originally used as a women's residence, included a gymnasium, a music studio, reception offices, and a dining hall.

In the late 1990s, the Original Building and Clark Hall complex was completely renovated and reconstructed. Although the interior was gutted and rebuilt, the heritage brick exterior was preserved. An expanded fourth floor was added, additional space was created in the basement, and a new expansion was added to the west, designed to complement and enhance the existing historical design of Original Building and Clark Hall. The expansion includes a skywalk connecting to the George T. Richardson Centre.

Today, the fully restored original Brandon College and Clark Hall buildings are used as the main home for the Faculty of Arts. They include classrooms; study spaces; and offices for faculty, senior administrators, and finance and registration personnel.

Coat of Arms

The BU Coat of Arms dates to 1948 and represents the three-fold nature of humanity: spiritual, mental, and physical – crowned with the blessing of everlasting life. The wheat sheaf represents humanity's material blessings; the



open books represent learning and the arts; and the phoenix represents immortality. The motto, taken from Ephesians IV:15, is Aletheuontes de en Agape, which translates as "Speaking the truth in love."

2 — Knowles-Douglas Student Union Centre

This Centre is named after Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles, who were both Brandon University Alumni. Douglas served as Premier of Saskatchewan and was voted “Greatest Canadian” in 2004 for his role as the “Father of Medicare”. Knowles, a federal political colleague of Douglas’s, is credited with the introduction of the Canada Pension Plan. He was Chancellor of Brandon University from 1970–90.

The Knowles-Douglas Centre incorporates the initial beige brick Science Building, constructed in 1922. Thanks to the foresight of its architect, the initial Science Building

plans included the potential for additions that were never completed.

Upon completion of the new John R. Brodie (Science) Building in the 1972, the Science Department vacated the Knowles-Douglas Building and was replaced by the Drama Department and various student functions. In 1985, the Knowles-Douglas Building was expanded to connect with McMaster Hall. The Centre is currently home to the Brandon University Students’ Union; the BU bookstore; student groups like *The Quill*; and the central Mingling Area, with coffee shop and services.

3 — McMaster Hall

McMaster Hall, one of the tallest buildings in Brandon, opened in 1971 as an all-gender residence.

Originally known as the “Towers”, it was quickly renamed “McMaster” to honour Brandon College’s association with McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. The McMaster Hall residence allows for up to 270 occupants and boasts game rooms, television lounges, multi-purpose rooms,

study rooms, and laundry facilities. Atop McMaster Hall is the BU Observatory, featuring a 16-inch telescope, one of the largest in the Prairies.

In 1972, McMaster Hall was connected to the newly constructed John R. Brodie Science Centre, creating a sprawling complex that includes two other residences and the cafeteria, Harvest Hall.

4 — J.R. Brodie Science Building

The new John R. Brodie Science Centre officially opened May 8, 1972. It was custom designed to be a science centre, replacing the aging science facilities in the old 1922 Science Building and its adjacent, hand-me-down, WWII-era military H-Huts. It was designed by Green, Blankstein and Russell Associates in Winnipeg and constructed by CANA Construction.

John R. Brodie was the founder of the Great West Coal Company and donated \$250,000 to BU, \$200,000 of which was spent on the Science Centre. In his will, Brodie designated a \$500,000 endowment to the

university; it currently generates about \$37,000 a year.

The Brodie Science Centre is currently home to traditional and modern-day sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics, geography, psychology, and mathematics. Although each floor of the Centre is devoted to a different discipline, the floor plans are similar, with offices facing south and classrooms and labs facing north and west. Most floors also feature scientific displays in the main west hallway. The BU Greenhouse is situated atop the building.

5 — Flora Cowan Hall

Flora Cowan Hall was built in 1963 as a women's residence, to replace the former residence in Clark Hall. In addition to dorm rooms, the three-floor residence has two fireplace lounges, a kitchenette, and a laundry room.

The residence is named after Flora Cowan, who became Dean of Women at Brandon College in 1953 and served in that position for 14 years. She served for 16 years on

Brandon City Council as the second woman elected. Cowan was also a member of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire and an active member in the Brandon church community.

Flora Cowan Hall is connected directly to the other two residences and the cafeteria. Its external structure is notable for the soaring and dramatically floodlit concrete entryway along Louise Avenue.

6 – Darrach Hall

Darrach Hall was constructed in the early 1960s as a men's residence, shortly before the construction of the nearby women's residence, Flora Cowan Hall. It was named after Sarah Darrach, Dean of Women from 1936 until 1953, and her husband, Robert Darrach.

Sarah Darrach was a Brandon College graduate in 1911 and a

decorated nurse in World War I. In 1967 she became the first winner of the Brandon College Alumni award and received a centennial medal. Brandon University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1971. Robert Darrach was a member of the first Brandon College Board of Directors and served for more than 30 years, including in the role of Board Chair.

7 – Harvest Hall

The current cafeteria building officially opened in 1962. It housed Food Services, which had been moved from the basement of Clark Hall. It was purpose-built to house the new dining hall, which can seat up to 400 people. In 2016, the cafeteria was renamed Harvest Hall, the winning entry in a naming contest.

Harvest Hall is closely connected to all three residences, the Brodie Science Centre, and the Student

Union Centre. In addition to its main-floor cafeteria, it has a secondary food service space in the basement – The Down Under – and classroom and study space.

The low-slung design of the cafeteria building, with exposed concrete pillars and overhangs, features rare elements of colour on the exterior and large plate-glass panels – an excellent example of Modernist architecture that is rare in Brandon.

8 — Healthy Living Centre

The Healthy Living Centre is located on the site of the former outdoor Kinsmen Memorial Stadium, which first opened after World War II.

In 1965, a freestanding BU gymnasium building was constructed next to the Kinsmen Stadium. In 2007, plans were made to upgrade and greatly expand the university's gym and related services capacity, and the resultant expanded facility opened in the fall of 2012 as the Healthy Living Centre. This Centre incorporates the original 1965 gym, two new, full-sized gymnasiums,

an indoor walking/jogging track, a public fitness facility, and many more amenities.

Upon completion of the Healthy Living Centre, the old gym was renamed the Henry Champ Gymnasium, after the noted alumnus of Brandon College and former Chancellor of Brandon University.

The Healthy Living Centre is home to the BU Bobcats athletics teams, and is a much-used venue for large BU ceremonies, including Orientation and Convocation.

9 — Jeff Umphrey Centre

The only BU building located on Victoria Avenue, the Jeff Umphrey Centre, was named after Edwin Jefferson Umphrey, who was known for working with people with disabilities.

The Centre was built in 1971 as a joint project of Brandon University and the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (currently the Canadian Association for Community Living). This collaboration was designed to study the problems and needs of individuals and their families living with mental or physical disabilities.

The building also housed a bank branch.

In 2006, the building underwent a significant renovation to become a fine arts building. It is currently home to the BU's Art Centre and includes studios, an art gallery, and faculty offices. The art gallery is named after Glen P. Sutherland, a Brandon College alumnus who enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1942. Sutherland's name was added to the art gallery's name pursuant to a donation from his son, Grant Sutherland, also a BU alumnus.

10 — Physical Plant and Steam Plant

The first dedicated Steam Plant to heat campus opened in early 1962. This coal-fired plant was located north of campus, near the railway tracks. BU alumnus John Kasiurak, Chief Engineer of Brandon College for 43 years, led its official opening. This plant provided space and water heating to campus until 1990, then was decommissioned and used for storage and as a lab for processing archaeological bone specimens. It was sold in 1998.

In 1990, a new natural-gas-fired Steam Plant was built on campus near Louise Ave and 20th Street.

The institution's Physical Plant services comprise maintenance, janitorial, trades, grounds keeping, and security services. In 2010, these services were relocated from World War II- era H-Huts near the centre of campus to a new Physical Plant building, located adjacent the new Steam Plant. The H-huts were then demolished.

Nighttime lights on the physical plant can be turned off from the BU Observatory atop McMaster Hall to prevent artificial lighting from interfering with celestial observations that require dimness.

11 — Queen Elizabeth II Music Building

BU's first dedicated music building was built in 1963. By 1985, the Music Department had become too large for this initial facility, and music programming moved to a new home on the first floor of the new Queen Elizabeth II Music Building.

The main floor of the new Queen Elizabeth II Music Building opened in 1985. The building was named after Queen Elizabeth II, who participated in the naming ceremony in October 1984. In order to be named after the monarch, the building had to house programming that had a nationally significant reputation, and Brandon University's highly acclaimed Music

Department qualified, as one of the top music programs in the country.

The QEII Music Building was subsequently expanded to three floors and included office, classroom, and studio space; a music library; and finely tuned performance spaces, most notably the Lorne Watson Recital Hall.

Lorne Watson, who first became Director of Music at Brandon College in 1948, also served as Director of the School of Music at BU, Supervisor of the BU Conservatory, and Artistic Director of the Eckhardt-Gramatté Festival.

12 — A.E. McKenzie Building

The AE McKenzie Building was completed in 1961, as was the adjoining JRC Evans Theatre. The McKenzie Building's first use was as a library. Today, the main floor of the McKenzie Building houses student services and related offices, and the second floor is home to the SJ McKee Archives and to a portion of the library, with study spaces.

The McKenzie Building is named after Albert Edward McKenzie, who founded the McKenzie Seed Company in Brandon. McKenzie donated \$500,000 to Brandon

College at the tail end of the Great Depression — the equivalent of about \$9 million in 2019 dollars. His gift saved the college from financial ruin. Later, he deeded millions more in company shares to the provincial government, under the condition that profits would go to his endowment fund at the college.

An overhead walkway now connects the McKenzie Building and the entire George T. Richardson Centre to the university's Original Building and Clark Hall complex.

13 — John E. Robbins Library & Richardson Centre

The newest part of the John E. Robbins Library opened in 1993, with an eye-catching semicircle of mirrored glass that maintains a feeling of spaciousness both inside and out. The round arc of the new building intentionally evokes that of the adjacent JRC Evans Theatre.

The library is named after the last president of Brandon College, Dr. John E. Robbins, who was the driving force behind the institution becoming a university in 1967.

Along with the Evans Theatre and the Indigenous People's Centre, the

library is located in the George T. Richardson Centre. The Richardson Centre was named in 1995 in recognition of the contributions of George T. Richardson during his 28 years as President and CEO of James Richardson & Sons Limited, and in appreciation for the generous donations made to BU to renew and expand its library and to complete funding of an enhanced Business Administration program.

Anthropology labs and arts studios, including ceramics kilns, are located in the basement of the Richardson Centre.

14 — Kavanagh Courtyard

The Kavanagh Courtyard is located between the Original Building and Clark Hall complex and the George T. Richardson Centre.

In 2006, this courtyard was named in honour of Kevin and Els Kavanagh, as a celebration of their vision for Brandon University and their commitment to advancing post-secondary education.

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh, former President of The Great West Life Assurance Company, was the Chancellor of Brandon University from 1996 to 2002,

and a longstanding member of the Brandon University Foundation.

The Kavanagh Courtyard is one of the central outdoor spaces at Brandon University. It was identified as the “heart of the campus” during community consultations for BU’s 2017 Campus Master Plan.

A number of sculptures are housed in the Kavanaugh Courtyard, including ‘Explorer’, which was displayed at Expo ’67 in Montreal before being donated to Brandon University by Sam Bronfman.

15 — Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium

The Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium (WMCA) opened in late 1969, just in time for the 1970 Manitoba Centennial celebrations.

The history of this project featured more than 15 years of planning and debate; it became a civic election issue in 1967. The initial goal was to complete the Auditorium for Canada’s 1967 Centennial. Concerns about rising costs delayed construction, and the project was nearly cancelled just before its

scheduled start-up in 1968.

The Auditorium’s stark limestone structure features a projecting centre tower that allows curtains to retract vertically off the stage. Since its opening, the interior of WMCA has been almost completely preserved, and it stands today as an outstanding example of the style and design of the period.

For many years, BU Convocation was held at the WMCA.

16 — Brown Health Studies Complex

The Dr. James and Mrs. Lucille Brown Health Studies Complex is named in honour of the couple's significant gift to BU. Dr. James Brown is a BU alumnus, medical doctor, and honorary degree recipient.

Like many of the university's building complexes, the evolution of this Health Studies Complex featured the use of existing and repurposed campus buildings and significant new construction. The first home for the School (now Faculty) of Health Studies was the original Music Building, which had been built in 1963, and had housed

music programming until 1985, before it was renovated to serve as home for Student Services.

In response to growing programming and enrolments in Health Studies, a new section was added to the building in 2003. The expansion — a round projection that recalls the J. E. Robbins Library — features long windows designed to look similar to those of the Brodie Science Centre. This expansion provided more classroom space, laboratories, and offices, along with the He Oyate Tawapi Ceremony Room, which was designed for teaching and Indigenous ceremonial uses.

17 — Education Building

Teacher training had been ongoing for many years at Brandon College before the BU Education Building officially opened in September 1967 — just in time for the first year of classes at the newly chartered Brandon University.

The Education Building was fully funded by the Manitoba Government and was originally designed to accommodate 300 students. It features the 160-seat Rowe Theatre and another small

theatre with a stage that can be used for drama classes. It also houses three science laboratories and a model kindergarten.

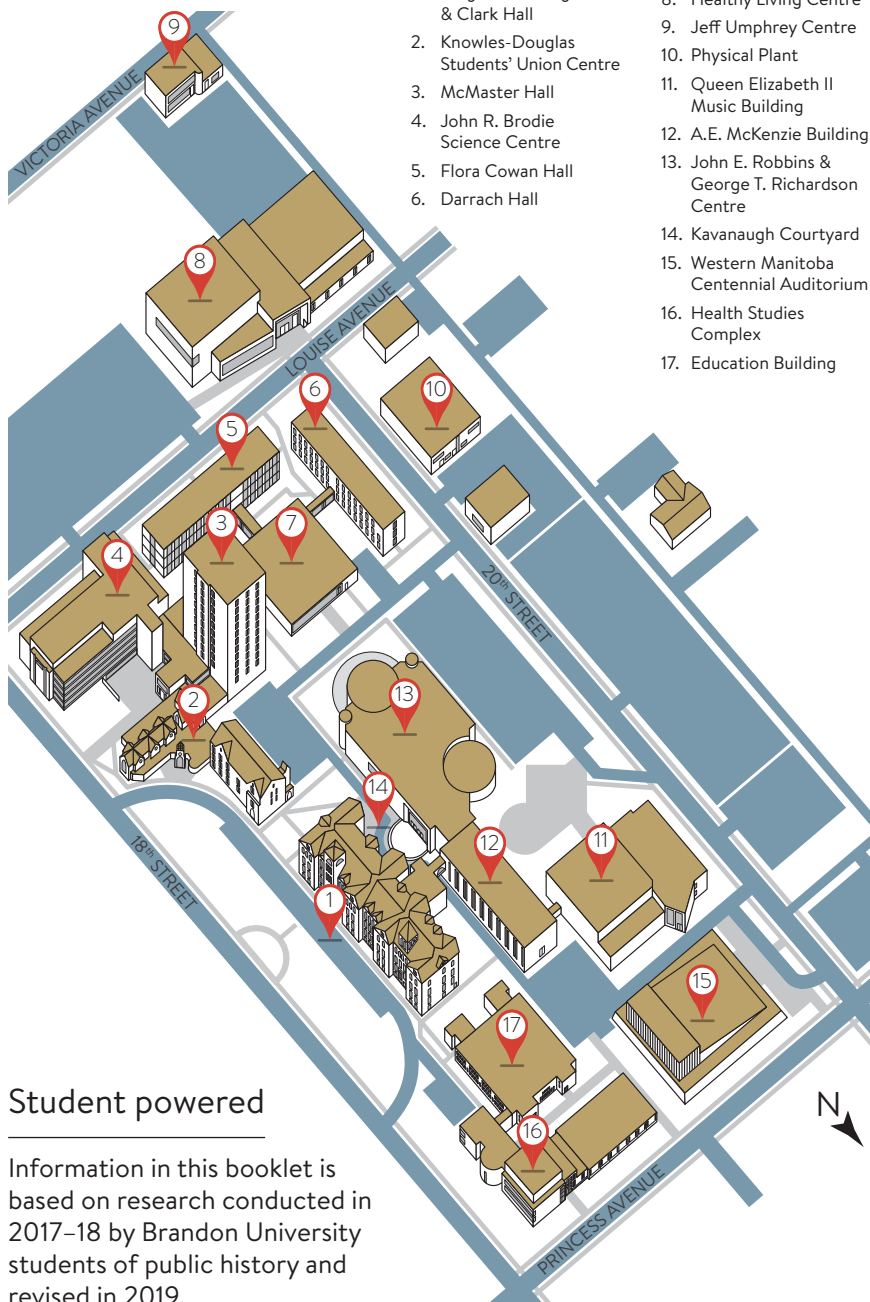
The design of the building across a hill means that people who enter the Education Building from the north will enter on a lower floor than those who enter from the south.

A skywalk now connects the Health Studies Complex to the Education Building.



**BRANDON
UNIVERSITY**

Walking Tour



Student powered

Information in this booklet is based on research conducted in 2017-18 by Brandon University students of public history and revised in 2019.