

JACOB PENNER PARK

Hello from Health Sciences Centre! Who would you like to name a park after?

Welcome to Victor Street! Look carefully at all the homes. Identify a detail on each one that you like.

What three things do you like best in Jacob Penner Park? Why?

We're the Works Yard! Which building is the oldest? Which one is your favourite?

I'm a classic three-storey walkup! What's great about apartments?

If you could design your own park, what would you add?



EXPLORE JACOB PENNER PARK!

Jacob Penner Park was developed in 1894, making it over 125 years old! In fact, it’s one of the oldest parks in Winnipeg. When it opened, the park was named Notre Dame Park. In the early 1900s, the area around the park was home to many Icelandic immigrants. Over the years, the park changed as more houses and businesses were built in the area. In 2013, the park was renovated, and it now has amenities like a basketball court, a skateboard park, a community garden, and more! Follow this map to learn all about this historic urban park!

Jacob Penner Plaque

In 2000, the park’s name was changed to Jacob Penner Park to honour the career of Winnipegger Jacob Penner. Penner was a Ukrainian immigrant who arrived in Winnipeg in 1906. He worked as a politician and used his voice to help people of all backgrounds get better pay and proper housing.

Winnipeg Falcons

The Winnipeg Falcons hockey team made history in April 1920 when they won the first ever gold medal in Olympic Hockey, with a 12–1 victory over Sweden! The Falcons were made up almost entirely of Icelandic Canadian players. These players were not allowed in the Winnipeg hockey league simply because they were immigrants. They formed their own team in 1911 and competed in a different league. Many of the players fought in World War One. The Falcons reunited in 1919 and in 1920 competed in the Winter Olympics! Three of the Falcon’s team members all lived nearby in homes on Agnes Street.

Winnipeg Tree Nursery and Works Yard

In 1984, Jacob Penner Park became home to the City of Winnipeg’s first greenhouses and nursery. Greenhouses and nurseries are where plants are grown. City gardeners experimented and grew all different kinds of plants there. They even had an elm tree nursery! Many of the elm trees planted throughout Winnipeg were grown there. By 1930, the greenhouses and nursery had moved to Assiniboine Park.

Verona Apartments, 730 Victor Street

Architect Edgar Prain

The Verona Apartments was designed by architect Edgar Prain and constructed in 1911. Three-storey walk-up apartments like this one were common in the 1910s–1920s. They are called walk-ups because they do not have elevators. The famous cartoonist and film animator Charlie Thorson lived in the Verona. Thorson has been credited for designing beloved animated characters Snow White and the Seven Dwarves and Bugs Bunny!

Houses of Victor Street

The houses along Victor Street are all more than 115 years old. Many of the homes were owned by people who moved to Winnipeg from Iceland.

758 Victor Street

This brick house has many interesting details. There are classical columns on the porch, like the ones you might see on ancient Greek temples! If you look closely, you will see a basket weave pattern in the brick, an elliptical (oval) window, and wavy wood decorations under the roofline.

764 Victor Street

This red-bricked home was built in 1915 and for many years was home to Olafur and Sigrid Bjornson. Olafur came to Winnipeg from Iceland with his family at just 8 years old, and in 1897 became the first Icelandic Canadian to graduate from medical school at the University of Manitoba. Look closely at the details on the house. There is a two-storey “bay window” covered with wooden shingles and brick decoration around the front door.

766 Victor Street

The first owners of 766 Victor Street were bakers. Gudmunder Thordarson and his family lived here while running a Scandinavian bakery on Sherbrook Street. The house is built of brick and has a corner tower with a turret.

776 Victor Street

Constructed in 1905, there have been many changes made to the house but if you look to the top of the roof, you can see an iron railing on a small platform. This is called a “widow’s walk”. They were common on houses near the sea and were used to watch for ships. There are also pressed metal shingles under the triangular roof gable. Look at the chimney to guess the original materials of the house!

794, 796, and 800 Victor Street

Icelandic carpenters were very skilled in building with wood. Look up at the decorative woodwork on these houses. If you look closely, you can see a sunburst, brackets shaped like seahorses, decorated columns, and other wood carvings.

Corner Store

Corner stores used to be very common in Winnipeg, located every few blocks. They sell milk, bread and other groceries, saving a trip to the larger supermarkets. Of special interest to neighbourhood children is the candy selection.

Health Sciences Centre

The Health Sciences Centre is located across the street from Jacob Penner Park. There has been a hospital here since 1884. Over the following century, buildings were demolished and replaced as the hospital expanded. Today, the Health Sciences Centre is one of the largest medical facilities in Canada.

Power Plant

Architects MMP Architects

The Power Plant was built in 1972 to heat and cool the hospital buildings. Because it is not a building that many people will enter or work in, they were able to make it a very unusual shape. What does the shape remind you of?

Playground and Skatepark

Jacob Penner Park has been used in many ways over the last 100 years. There are benches to sit on to read, paths to walk around, and recreational services to explore. Once there was even a wading pool. Today there is climbing equipment, basketball hoops and a skatepark.

Community Gardens

Look at the planters near the center of the park—can you see anything growing in them? This is a community garden, where people can grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers. It is similar to the old city greenhouse that was once in the park, except that people like you care for the plants instead of city workers.

Wellington School, 690 Beverly Street

Architect W.J. Enns

The first school was built here in 1898. As the population grew, so did the school. The present Wellington School, replacing the historic building, was built in 1972. When the school was again expanded a great “supergraphic” drawing on the wall (like a mural) was designed by IKOY architects.

The Winnipeg Architecture Foundation is a non-profit, registered charitable organisation dedicated to advancing the awareness and appreciation of Winnipeg’s built environment through public education.

For more information about Winnipeg buildings, landscapes, and architects, please visit winnipegarchitecture.ca.

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