

Grad residences

New tenants are having teething problems

By BRIAN MILNER

York's long-awaited graduate residences opened for business this year — and as can be expected the new tenants have had some problems.

Two 17-floor, air-conditioned, overheated towers have been built so far, and a third one is on the way. Each building has 70 bachelor apartments and 84 bedroom apartments for graduate and married students. Another 14 two bedroom apartments are available for single grads who get lonely and want to share their accommodation.

All the apartments, but especially the bachelor suites, are furnished in what could be described as Early Don Jail Modern, with a touch of Scandinavian.

Rugs, drapes, decorating and basic household furnishings are provided, but linen and dishes must be brought by the tenants.

Wiring for private telephones and televisions has been installed and heat, hydro and hard water come with the rent.

Each building has a central coin laundry. Rents range from \$85 a month for a bachelor apartment to \$180 for a two bedroom penthouse.

Tenant complaints involve, not surprisingly, the furniture. All the furniture is not in yet in some of the apartments. Then there were the inevitable complaints about colors. The furniture generally, however, is durable and functional. It was obviously made to last . . . and last . . . and last.

Most of the tenants interviewed seemed satisfied with the rent and apartment facilities. Compared to the depressing basement quarters some left behind these apartments are luxurious.

An interim tenants association has been formed to deal with the more serious problems.

The leases, or licences, are amazingly exacting in their detailed rules and regulations.

For example, there is the standard pet clause: "Dogs, cats, rabbits, reptiles, rodents, chickens, and pets in general are not allowed in any of the units on York Campus. Such pets cause inconvenience and damage to university property. Persons violating this rule will lose their eligibility to occupy units." When was the last time you had a chicken running around your house? Children in limited quantities are allowed.

Moreover, "The rules . . . shall during the term be in all things, observed and performed by the licensee, his family, visitors, guests, clerks and servants and agents." So your aunt can't even bring her chicken for a visit.

The lease, said one tenant "is an unbelievable thing." Payment, by the terms of the lease, is by post-dated cheques at the beginning to cover the entire term of the lease.

Failure to obey university rules, even parking fines, can result in the tenant "losing his eligibility to occupy units."

Then there is the inspection clause: "The university reserves the right to make maintenance inspections during normal working hours whenever such inspections are deemed advisable".

Sloppy people beware. "Inspectors will cover . . . general housekeeping conditions."

Notice how vague this part of the lease is compared with the pet clause. Inspection standards are not mentioned, although there is a section on the proper disposal of garbage.

Many of the problems are typical cases found in most new structures. Hot water doesn't run; refrigerators malfunction; fuses blow.

Then there was the Bell telephone man who refused to believe the residence had a floor numbered 13 (it does). Telephones eventually were installed.

Most tenants said that minor problems such as these are attended to quickly.

"They're pretty good about fixing things", said one, despite the fact she had no hot water at the time.

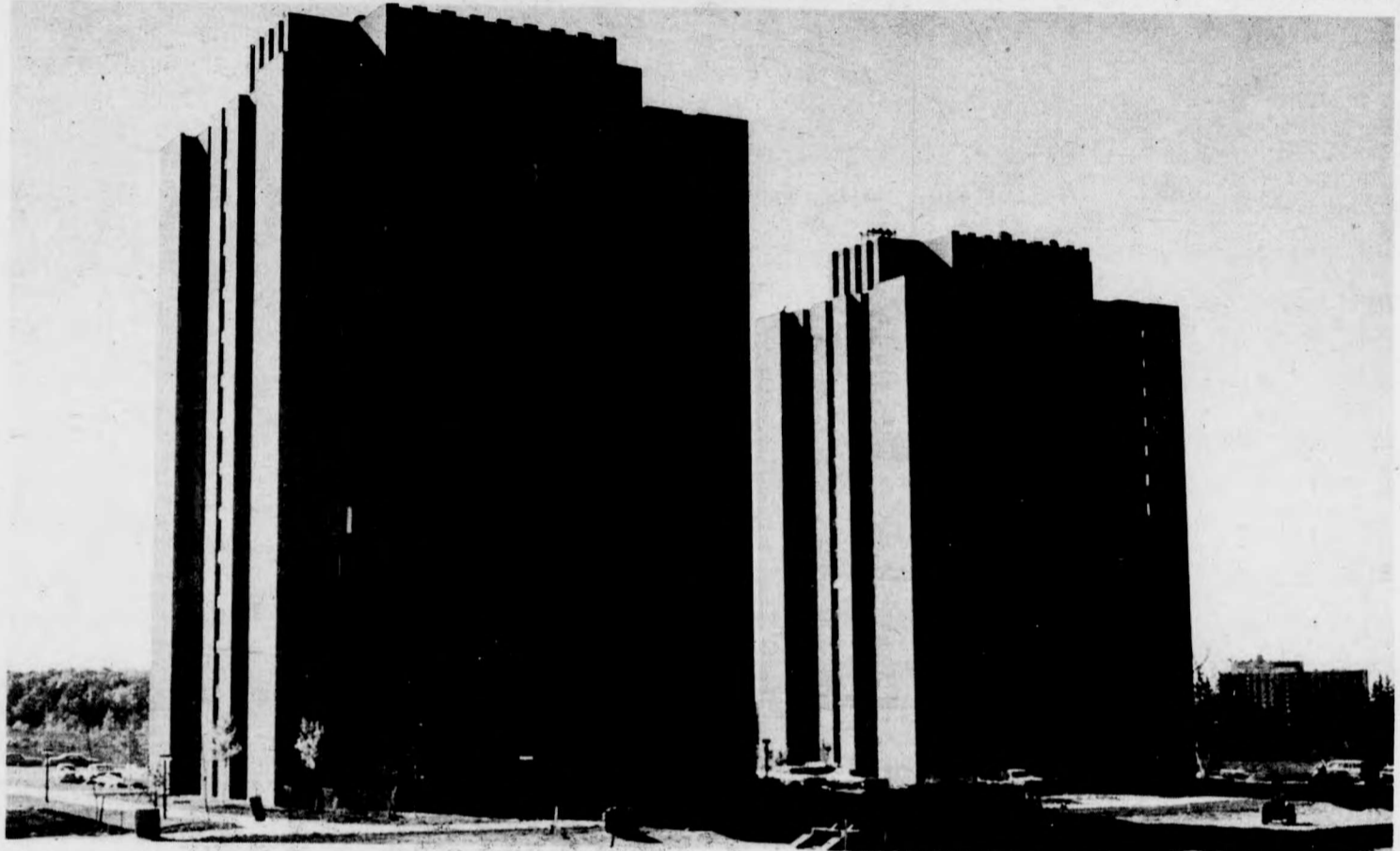
The apartments do have built-in inconveniences as well. There is a large,

almost useless storage space (there are no shelves) that reduces possible living area. One tenant had a bed in his, presumably for overnight guests who are not allowed by terms of the lease.

Due to tenant complaints the third building, when constructed, will likely have storage space separated from living quarters.

What about living off campus? One bedroom apartments around York rent for about \$150 a month. They're generally much larger than the ones in the grad residences. They have a lot of windows (the grad residence rooms don't) and sometimes even a balcony. But they're unfurnished and generally unsuited to student needs.

So in spite of the drawbacks, living at York is generally cheaper, more convenient and more hospitable for graduate students.



Apartments off campus might have windows and a balcony, but they are unfurnished and unfit for student needs.

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