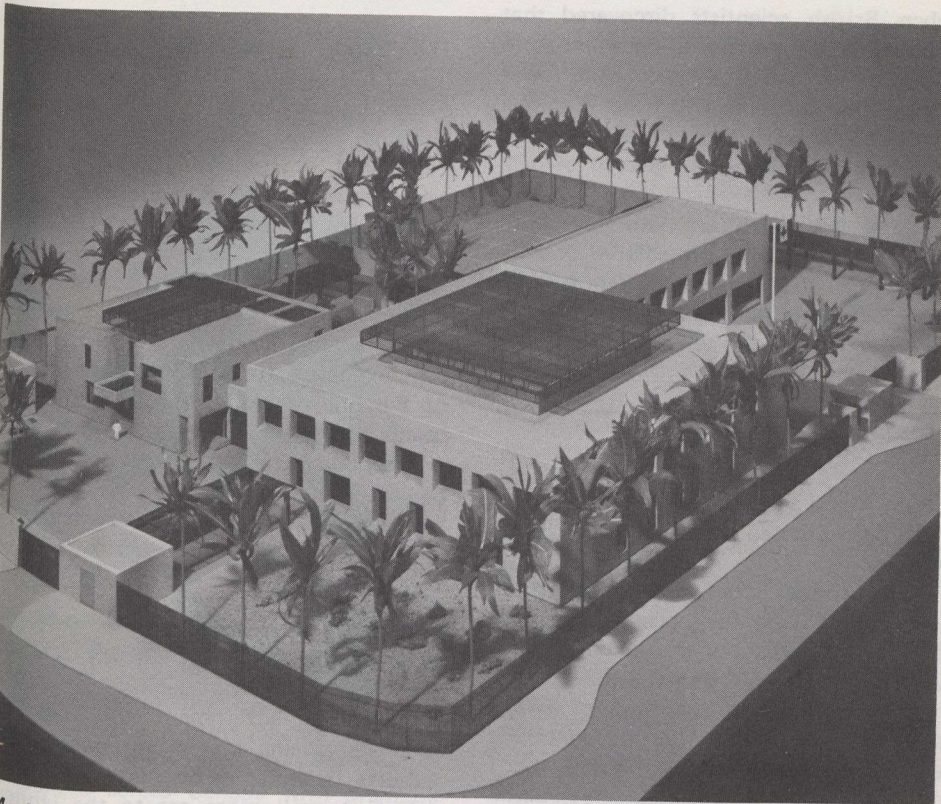


New Saudi embassy respects Arab traditions



Model of Canada's new embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia shows the chancery buildings (left) and the official residence (right).

A new Canadian embassy, now under construction in Saudi Arabia, is the first of about 85 embassies being built in Riyadh. The \$20-million project is expected to be finished one year from now, according to project manager Mary Pynenburg, an architect with the Department of External Affairs.

Embassies are being built in a new diplomatic quarter. Last July, the Canadians were the first to break ground. Since then, Britain, Japan, Norway, Taiwan and South Korea have begun construction.

Canada is building a chancery, an official residence and housing for staff members. The Canadian housing was designed three times before it met the Saudis' "very strict requirements about privacy", said Mrs. Pynenburg.

"The Arabs object far more strongly than we Canadians do to visual intrusion — they will not accept designs in which residents can stare into rooms or gardens of neighbours," said architect Lloyd Sankey, whose firm designed the embassy complex.

To comply with these requirements, the architects used several devices, including trellises, screens, recessed openings and offset views from windows —

design elements that also help deflect the heat of the sun.

"Essentially, what we did was study Arab culture to discover their solutions to desert living and adapt them to western living styles," Mr. Sankey said.

The Canadian housing includes 15 detached and semi-detached houses in five clusters. They will be used to house Canadians at the embassy, with the exception of the ambassador, who will have an official residence.

During the daytime, housing in the Middle East must be a haven from the searing heat, but after sundown the cool evening breezes can best be appreciated on rooftops or in courtyards.

From the street, the houses will have a traditional Arab appearance: walls of stuccoed concrete block with small, shuttered windows. But from the patio or interior courtyard, they are much more contemporary, with extensive use of glass, skylights and wood.

Canadian materials will be used extensively on all the embassy buildings. These include Quebec granite for all exterior surfaces and parts of the interior of the main site, as well as Canadian carpeting, furnishing and hardware.

Bombardier trains for New York

Bombardier Inc. of Montreal has been awarded a \$20-million contract to build 19 self-powered commuter rail cars for the Metro North Commuter Railroad Co., a division of the New York City transit authority.

The 19 surface cars are the same design as 117 Bombardier units delivered last year to the New Jersey Transit Corp. The New York authority purchased six similar cars in an earlier order.

The Metro North lines serve suburbs north and northeast of New York City. They use Grand Central Station as their Manhattan terminus. The Metro North cars will be delivered in 1985.

Carrots fight cancer

A team of Canadian scientists has come up with new evidence to support the theory that carrots can prevent cancer, according to Margaret Munro of *Southern News*.

The University of British Columbia scientists have found that vitamin A and beta-carotene, found in carrots, cut by 75 per cent the number of genetically-damaged cells in a group of people at high risk of developing the disease.

The researchers, led by Dr. Hans Stich, recruited a group of cancer-prone Filipinos and gave them large doses of the two compounds twice a week.

After three months, the number of damaged cells — widely believed to be precancerous — in the volunteers dropped to almost normal.

"The results are very encouraging because there is every indication that if you decrease genetic damage to cells you decrease the risk of cancer developing several years later," says Dr. Richard San, spokesman for the team working at the school's Cancer Research Centre.

It is now believed that if the body is fed enough anti-cancer agents — vitamins A, C and E and a number of "anti-oxidant" compounds top the list — it can fend off the multitude of carcinogens encountered daily.

"In other words you don't have to give up all your bad habits," says Dr. San. The key is to ensure that carcinogens and anti-cancer compounds are kept in a healthy balance.

Carotene compounds, the yellow colouring found mainly in raw carrots and to a lesser degree in sweet potatoes,