

# *Uno Prii*



**Uno Prii**, born in February of 1924, was an Estonian Immigrant to Canada. He left his childhood home some time after his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1955. Two short years later, he started the architectural practice that became his life.

The man was gifted.

Uno's buildings stand out for their bold forms.

Decorative and expressive use of reinforced concrete in a time when the world seemed just right. Concrete was the material and its plasticity explored. The cost of supplying the material was as expensive then as now maybe more, labour was cheap. The craft of formwork was learnt in those times.

If we look at the details, it's always exposed structure that is being played with, expressed and made into something, even etched onto. That's because it was a given for these buildings, concrete, a natural opportunity to embellish and an incredible material that is unrivalled through time for the forms that are achievable.

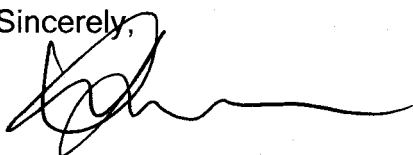
Felix Candela in Mexico, a contemporary in North America was exploring the possibilities of shells in concrete, all continuing in a tradition that goes right back to Pier Luigi Nervi and Robert Maillart in Europe, early pioneers in exploring the versatility of reinforced concrete.

The shear walls at Prince Arthur not only separate units, they brace the apartment in a rhythmic ensemble to resist the overturning wind forces and express this with a gesture to the sky and the earth in a dramatic vertical sweep of line and force.

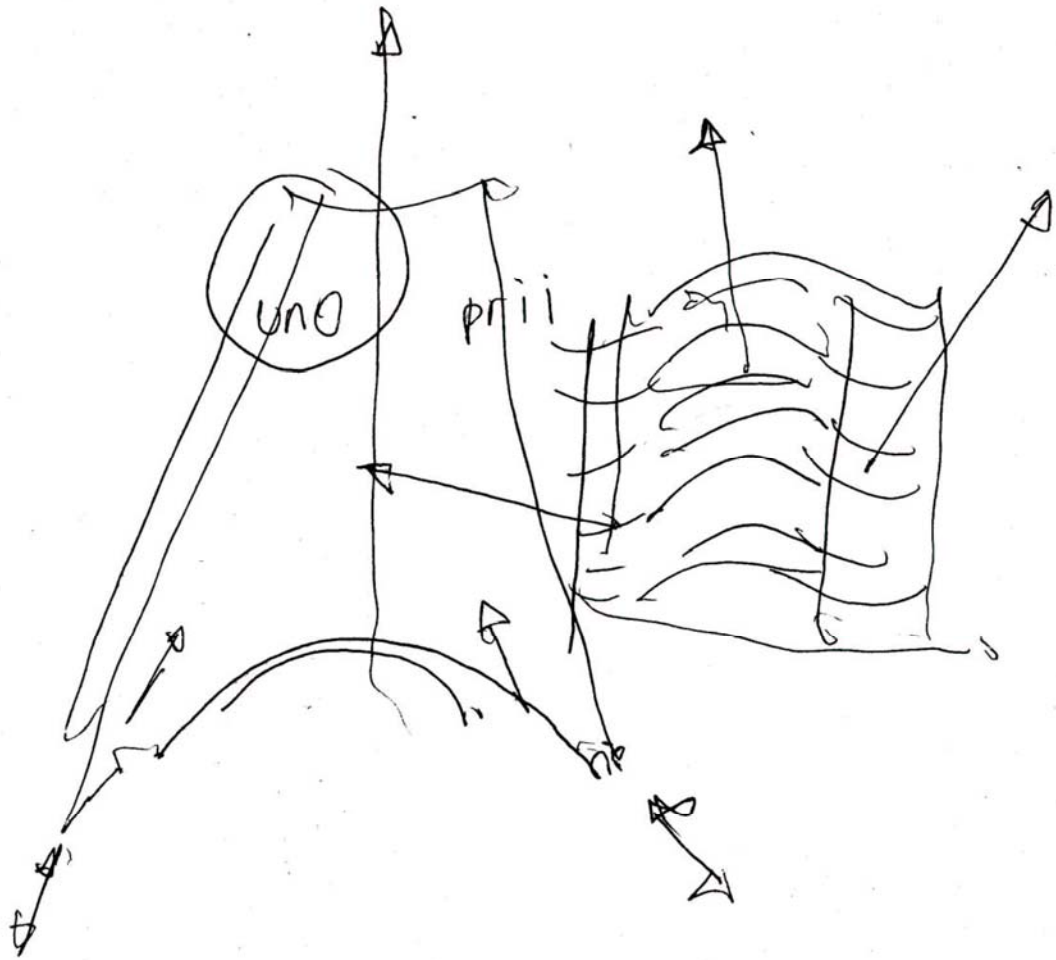
The cantilevered balconies at 44 Wallmer Rd. speak of thrusting plates of concrete reaching out to the vista beyond, every unit a treasure in a community of Torontonians sharing the sky.

This concrete poem is in honour of **Uno Prii**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cucco', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher D. Cucco



Cantilevered concrete balconies

Who does them best, the

Man that knows how to follow the curve

Uno Prij

leap, fly if you can