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INSPECTION GUIDE FOR THE URBAN NATIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

Canada

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This document has been prepared by the Edmonton Branch Inspection Department with input and comments provided by Social Housing, Portfolio Management and Inspection Departments from Edmonton and Calgary respectively. In addition, this document was reviewed and comments were received from the Metis Urban Housing Corporation. The comments and recommendations received were considered and have been incorporated.

The intent of this document is to assist and to provide a common understanding to Urban Native sponsor groups in Alberta and CMHC personnel as to what item(s) can or should be considered for repair and/or replacement. The guide is to be used at the time of acquisition of units and also for maintenance on a post administration basis.

For acquisition(s), this document does not preclude the application and utilization of the detailed specification(s) which currently exist and is required for repair(s) and replacement(s).

Revised: May 29, 1992

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INSPECTION GUIDELINES FOR URBAN NATIVE HOUSING

1.0 GENERAL

These guidelines are intended for use with all Urban Native Program acquisition and post administration inspections. Items not specifically mentioned shall comply as much as is practical with the National Building Code of Canada. Any repairs are to comply with the latest edition of the NBC and all other applicable provincial and municipal codes and bylaws. The initial document is the Minimum Property Standards for Existing Residential Buildings and the category and numbering are similar to those found therein.

The underlying premise of all repairs identified is that you only repair what is absolutely necessary and it is only to be replaced if it is less expensive to do so.

Mandatory:

- All mandatory items will be listed under this heading. All repairs in this category would be fire, health, and safety concerns as well as those items which are deemed to be a threat to the structure.

Acquisition:

- Items which pertain to this category only will be listed under similar type headings. These items would only be eligible at the time of acquisition.

Note:

- The underlying purpose at the time of acquisition is to ensure that the unit is structurally sound, is safe, is habitable and should require little maintenance (assuming normal tenant use) **during its first five years in the portfolio.** This will require replacement of some components sooner than would normally be done. It would be expected that large components (eg. shingles, interior painting) would have a minimum remaining life of five years.

1.1 DRAWINGS AND SPECIFICATIONS

- Drawings and/or written description of the work are required to indicate adequately the scope and detail of the work intended.

1.2 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Common services such as water, sewer, gas and electricity are acceptable if separate utility service shut-offs (except sewers) for each unit are provided and meet the approval of local authorities having jurisdiction over these services.

1.3. DEFINITIONS

Acceptable, reasonable, necessary, etc. (or variations therein) mean acceptable, reasonable, necessary in the opinion of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

1.4 PROTECTION AGAINST TERMITES AND OTHER PEST INFESTATION

Where the presence of termites or pests is evident or suspected, measures for extermination, and protective measures against future termite infestation, shall be undertaken.

2.0 ANCILLARY STRUCTURES

Garages and ancillary structures are to be structurally sound and maintained. If structurally unsound, they are to be removed.

Roofing: See 12.1 - Exterior Walls and Roofs
Painting: See 12.4 - Painting

Fences are to be in sound condition and are to be repaired/ refinished if necessary. Additional fencing can be installed in areas where there is a safety concern (i.e. back yards which are adjacent to heavy traffic) or to provide privacy (center of a back yard of a duplex unit). Also where fencing is a norm in the immediate neighborhood, it should be provided.

3.0 SITE PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT

3.1 YARDS

Side yards, lot areas, and right-of-ways shall be adequate to permit maintenance and access.

3.1.1. SEPARATION SPACE

The separation space between buildings shall comply with municipal requirements. This may require the changing of the exterior finish (eg. wood siding to stucco - which may be a fire code requirement with units too near property lines) on some units.

3.2 ACCESS TO PROPERTY

This property shall have pedestrian access to a public street.

3.3 PARKING

Arrangement for car parking shall comply with municipal requirements.

3.4 WALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

Existing walks and driveways shall be in safe and sound condition.

* **Mandatory:**

- Badly sloped, cracked or uneven walks are to be repaired or replaced (as a guide 3/4 inch differential at joints or a 3/4 inch slope per foot should be used as a minimum). Sidewalk blocks are to be used as much as possible.
- Exterior steps which have rotted, deteriorated, are spalling, sloped or steps of rises of large discrepancy are to be repaired/ replaced.

Acquisition:

- See mandatory above for replacement. Wood steps are to be structurally sound and be refinished if required.
- Replacement of concrete driveways will be done in severe cases. Gravel driveways are to be upgraded to concrete only if concrete driveways are the norm in the immediate neighborhood.

3.5 SITE DRAINAGE

Adequate surface water drainage away from the structure shall be provided.

* **Mandatory:**

- Severe negative grading or negative grading with evidence of water entry or other signs of a threat to the structure will necessitate regrading.

Acquisition:

- All negative grading is to be redone to a minimum distance of four feet from the building. Areas which had lawn should have those locations sodded. Walks with a negative slope of 3/4 inch or greater per foot, which are immediately next to the building, are to be replaced.

Fast growing trees, such as willows and poplars, which pose a threat to the structure or services-eg. sewer line, should be removed.

4.0 BUILDING SPACE AND PLANNING

4.1 GENERAL

Areas, dimensions and heights of rooms and other spaces within existing dwelling units should be suitable for their intended use.

4.2 CLOSETS

A reasonable amount of closet space is to be provided.

Acquisition:

As a guideline, one per bedroom should be considered.

4.3 GENERAL STORAGE

A reasonable amount of general storage space within the building should be provided for each family housing unit.

4.4 KITCHEN

Each dwelling unit shall contain reasonable kitchen/dining space for cooking facilities, cupboard storage, counter top work area and a refrigerator.

* **Mandatory:**

- Replace counter tops which have severe burns, blisters or are badly chipped. Minor abrasions are not considered adequate reason for replacement.
- 7.5 lineal feet of base and top cabinets is to be considered the minimum.

Fan: See Section 4.6 - Ventilation - Mandatory.

4.5 BATHROOM

Each family housing unit shall be provided with at least one bathroom and plumbing fixtures as required by Section 13.2.

Fan: See Section 4.6 - Ventilation - Mandatory.

4.6 LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

As much as is practical, lighting and ventilation shall comply with municipal requirements and the National Building Code.

*** Mandatory:**

- Fans are required in kitchens and bathrooms which have no windows and in rooms with windows if there is evidence of high levels of condensation. In the case of bathrooms, fans should be wired in with the light.
- Lights are required at exterior step and door locations.
- Dryer is to be vented to the exterior.

Note:

- Installation of a fluorescent fixture in a bathroom or laundry room is not to be considered a mandatory repair unless no fixture exists or if the existing fixture is unsafe. Special attention should be given to older fixtures to ensure serviceability.

Air Intakes:

See Section 13.1 Combustion, Relief and Fresh Air Intakes.

5.0 FIRE PROTECTION

5.1 GENERAL

A high degree of safety to the lives of the occupants and protection of property shall be achieved by the separation of dwelling units or individual rooms occupied as a dwelling by the use of materials which retard the spread of fire and prevent the passage of flame, smoke and hot gasses through open or concealed spaces within the building, and by providing exits which will permit a safe departure from the building. The provisions of the National Building Code of Canada (NBC) and/or the National Fire Code shall be met except that minor variations to the NBC may be permitted where such variations are acceptable to the municipal and/or provincial authority.

5.2 SMOKE ALARM

*** Mandatory:**

- Smoke alarms on all floor levels which contain sleeping rooms are required.
- An open area (such as a basement) which shows evidence of people sleeping there shall have a smoke detector.
- Except in very unusual circumstances, all smoke detectors installed are to be of the 110v type and be inter-connected as much as possible. Battery type detectors which are functioning properly are not to be replaced.

6.0 STRUCTURAL

6.1 GENERAL

All structural components of the building shall be sound. Structural members in a seriously deteriorated condition shall be replaced. Loose jointing of structural members shall be restored to original rigidity. Sagging roofs, floors or stairs and bulging walls shall be restored, as far as is practical, to their original position.

6.2 FOUNDATIONS

Foundations shall adequately support the loads imposed and shall provide a dry basement or crawl space. Where there is evidence of the entry of water or moisture to the basement or crawl space, foundation walls shall be waterproofed or dampproofed and drainage provided. In cases of foundation settlement, heaving or similar problems, a report and recommendation as to corrective action may be required and in special cases may require the services of a professional engineer.

Mobile homes shall be adequately anchored to the foundations or ground and the towing hitch shall be removed. All work to comply with CSA Z240 M-86.

*** Mandatory:**

- Foundation cracks below grade which are allowing the entry of water are to be repaired from the exterior.
- Crawl spaces which show evidence of water pooling are to have ground cover installed, have a minimum of 12 inch clearance from grade to bottom of floor joists (provide additional protection for wood beams which are below the floor joists), and provide natural ventilation.

Non-mandatory:

- Cracks in foundation walls which are not allowing water entry may be repaired from the interior.

6.3 EXTERIOR WALLS

Exterior walls shall be in sound condition capable of supporting the loads imposed, e.g. dead loads, and shall prevent the entry of moisture into the house.

6.4 INTERIOR WALLS AND COLUMNS

Interior walls, partitions and columns shall be in sound condition. Load-bearing walls, partitions and columns shall be capable of supporting the loads imposed, e.g. floor loads.

6.5 ROOFS

All roof construction components shall be capable of withstanding the loads imposed, e.g. snow loads, and form a suitable base for the roof covering which shall be watertight.

*** Mandatory:**

- Enclosed attic and roof spaces shall be vented to the exterior.
- Access hatches should be provided to roofs, attics and other enclosed spaces where the vertical dimension exceeds 6000mm at the highest point.

6.6 FLOORS

All floor construction shall provide adequate support and form a suitable base for the floor covering. Basement or cellar floors shall be concrete or preserved wood (unless the wood floor is properly suspended). Crawl space floors shall be dampproofed when there is evidence of dampness (See also: 6.2 Foundations - Mandatory).

7.0 INSULATION

7.1 SOUND

New construction should provide a sound transmission class rating of at least 50 between dwelling units in the same building and between a dwelling unit and any common space. As close as is practical, existing construction is to comply to the above rating provided any such variations are acceptable to the local authority having jurisdiction.

7.2 THERMAL AND VAPOUR BARRIER

Dwelling units should have a vapour barrier and, where practical, the heat loss should be reduced by effective insulation.

* **Mandatory:**

  - Insulate ceilings and walls above the foundation if there is no insulation at present.

Acquisition:

- Attics/ceilings are to have minimum R-20 insulation.
- Open areas of exterior basement walls are to have insulation added. See also non-mandatory below.

Non-mandatory:

- Foundation insulation; when insulation is to be added it should be to 24 inches below grade only, be protected from mechanical damage (wiring not eligible), and joist end space is also to have insulation and a vapour barrier installed.

Note:

- If insulation is to be upgraded, it should be increased to present day standards as far as is practical.

7.3 WEATHERSTRIPPING

* **Mandatory:**

  - Provide weatherstripping only in cases where it is needed to prevent the entry of weather.

8.0 CAULKING

Joints around doors and window frames, louvers, fans, etc., and all other unprotected joints in the exterior construction shall be caulked where necessary to prevent the entry of moisture or drafts.

* **Mandatory:**

  - Caulking is required where there is evidence of a water entry problem which is causing deterioration of building components.

9.0 WINDOWS

Windows shall be in good condition and perform satisfactorily. Cracked or loose glass, defective putty, hardware and deteriorated sash and frame members shall be replaced to restore the window(s) to sound working condition.

*** Mandatory:**

- All windows are to have a minimum of two panes, and cracked panes are to be replaced.
- Windows are to be replaced only if it is more economical than repairing the existing units or if existing is not functioning and cannot be repaired or if the existing window units are no longer weathertight and causing damage to building components.
- All requirements of Article 9.7.1.3 and 9.7.1.4 of the NBC will apply for bedroom windows.

Acquisition:

- Screens are to be in place or supplied at time of acquisition. Screen repair should only be considered at time of tenant change.

Non-mandatory:

- All screens are to be considered non-mandatory repair except at those times as listed under acquisition.

10.0 DOORS

Existing doors and hardware should be retained if they are in an acceptable condition and operating satisfactorily.

*** Mandatory:**

- Exterior one and three-eighths inch inside entry doors are to have an adequate storm door or the entire door is to be replaced.
- Doors which are no longer functional are to be replaced.
- Damaged jambs are to be repaired or replaced.

Note:

- All metal insulated doors which are installed in areas where ventilation is also a concern should have an opening window.
- Storm doors are not required on entries with metal insulated doors.

Weatherstripping: See Section 7.3 - Weatherstripping.

11.0 VENTILATION

Enclosed attic, roof and crawl spaces shall be vented to the exterior.

Roofs: See Section 6.5 - Roofs.

Crawl spaces: See Section 6.2 - Foundations.

12.0 FINISHES

12.1 EXTERIOR WALLS AND ROOFS

All exterior walls and roofs shall have an acceptable cladding or covering to prevent the entry of moisture into the structure and be reasonably durable.

*** Mandatory:**

- Severe deterioration of existing shingles such as loss of much of the aggregate, badly curled, etc. would make replacement necessary and this may include garages.

Acquisition:

- All roof coverings are to have a minimum remaining life of five years.
- Insul-brick siding is to be removed and new siding is to be installed.

Note:

- As much as possible, existing finishes are to be retained.
- Only in cases where the cost of the repairs to the existing fascia and soffit is close to or in excess of the cost of upgrading to a prefinished system, should upgrading be considered.
- Removal of asbestos siding in serviceable condition is not eligible.

12.2 INTERIOR WALLS AND CEILINGS

Major cracks and defects in interior wall and ceiling finishes shall be repaired.

Acquisition:

- All units should have the interiors painted unless they have recently been redecorated in an acceptable manner.

*** Mandatory:**

- Water resistant finishes around shower stalls and bathtubs shall be provided.
- As much as possible, repair of existing finishes are to be considered and only in extreme cases is the replacement of the wall sheathing and/or finish to be considered.

12.3 FLOORS AND STAIRS

Resilient or non-absorptive flooring or the equivalent shall be provided in bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms.

*** Mandatory:**

- Floor and stair finishes creating hazardous or unsanitary conditions shall be replaced.
- Handrails shall be provided on at least one side of stairs which have more than three risers.

Acquisition:

- All flooring is to be cleaned, with carpet to be steam cleaned.

Note:

- The installation of carpeting over hardwood is not to be approved unless existing floor condition is to the point where it is not repairable or too expensive to refinish. Carpeting should only be replaced in living rooms and lino should be installed in all other rooms.

12.4 PAINTING

All exterior wood, metal or other material subject to deterioration from exposure to weather shall be painted or otherwise suitably treated to retard deterioration.

*** Mandatory:**

- Repainting will be required, where existing paint is deteriorated to the point that water entry is occurring causing damage to building components.

Acquisition:

- All exterior painted surfaces are to be refinished as required to provide a life expectancy of five years. This may include garages.

12.5 EAVESTROUGHING AND DOWNSPOUTS

*** Mandatory:**

- Install eavestrough, downspouts and splashpads only if none exist and it is contributing to a water entry problem or some other threat to the structure.
- Repair and replace existing eavestrough, downspouts and splashpads, only if not repairing it will contribute to further deterioration of building components.

Acquisition:

- All existing eavestrough, downspouts and downspout extensions, to a minimum distance of four feet from the building, are to be in place and watertight.

13.0 BUILDING SERVICES

13.1 HEATING

Each building shall be equipped with a suitable, safe heating system capable of maintaining, with reasonable economy of operation, an adequate indoor temperature.

Acquisition:

- Virtually all furnaces are to be serviced including power vacuuming of ducts, replacing of the filter, oiling of the motor, etc.
- Unit heaters and gravity furnaces are to be replaced.

*** Mandatory:**

- Provide the required clearances from all burning appliances and all components of the flue/chimney to combustible materials (including insulation).
- Any component of the furnace, the hot water tank or the flue which is suspect is to be inspected by a qualified tradesperson and any recommendations complied with (the inspection and the required repairs should be written up as separate items).
- The furnace is required to be separated from livable floor space and when the furnace is enclosed in a room, is to be supplied with relief/combustion air.
- Existing fireplaces and chimneys assessed as a fire hazard shall be repaired or closed off. Since a fireplace would not be considered modest, these repairs are to be relatively minor or the fireplace is to be removed or otherwise disabled from potential use (closed off).
- With enclosed furnace rooms, relief/combustion air is required.

Non-mandatory:

- Combustion and fresh air for existing furnace installations which are open to the rest of the basement, may be installed.

Note:

- Do not write up the item for attic insulation clearances if insulation is to be upgraded (this requirement is part of the insulation upgrading specifications).

Add-on, solid-fuel-burning equipment connected to oil or gas-fired heating systems shall be CSA certified and listed.

13.2 PLUMBING

Each family housing unit shall have a kitchen sink, water-closet, lavatory and bathtub or shower connected to a water supply.

Each family housing unit shall be provided with a suitable means of heating water for domestic use connected to all kitchen sinks, lavatories, bathtubs, showers and laundry facilities.

*** Mandatory:**

- Laundry facilities should include hot and cold water hose bibs, drain and vent lines and exterior vent for the dryer.

Acquisition:

- All hot water tanks are to be serviced.
- All faucets are to be serviced as required.

13.3 SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A method of disposal of sewage, acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction, shall be provided.

14.0 ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Where electrical services are available, each family housing unit shall be provided with safe electrical facilities.

* **Mandatory:**

- 60A/220v service would be considered the minimum.
- If less than 60 amp exists, an electrical inspection is required and its recommendations complied with.
- An exterior duplex receptacle shall be provided.
- Laundry facilities to include a 220v dryer receptacle and a 110v washer receptacle.

Acquisition:

- See mandatory above for minimums and note below for minimum if system is to be upgraded.
- If unit has aluminum wiring, it is to be checked by a qualified electrician and their recommendations are to be complied with.

Note:

- If it is necessary to upgrade the electrical system, it must include; a minimum 100 amp-24 circuit panel, the required smoke detectors, circuit for furnace, plug for fridge, and a split plug for the kitchen counter, an exterior G.F.I. plug, a G.F.I. plug in the bathroom, the required grounding and bonding and check and make safe all components of the system.

- Kitchen and laundry light fixtures are not to be upgraded to fluorescent unless existing fixtures are unsafe.

- The inspection and the repairs should be shown as separate items on the inspection report.

- A copy of the inspection recommendations should be received by CMHC prior to field inspecting the completed work (this would apply at acquisition only).

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation may require a certificate from the local utility authority reporting on the adequacy and safety of the installation.