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Helping to house Canadians

FLEX

HOUSING

Design Competition • Information Booklet

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LIFE'S CHANGES**



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FLEX HOUSING

Design Competition • Information Booklet

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement

Canadian Housing Information Centre
Centre canadien de documentation sur
l'habitation

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation supports the Government of Canada policy on access to information for people with disabilities.

If you wish to obtain this publication in alternative formats, call (613) 748-2367.

CMHC offers a wide range of housing-related information. For details, contact your local CMHC office.

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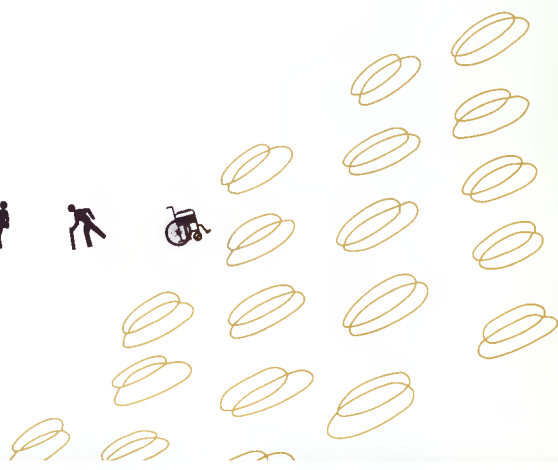




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The FlexHousing Concept

Competition Objectives

CMHC'S FLEXHOUSING DESIGN COMPETITION AIMS TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING THAT CAN BE EASILY ADAPTED TO MEET THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE OCCUPANTS AND TO PROMOTE ITS BENEFITS. THIS ADAPTABILITY WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS OUR POPULATION AGES, AS LIFESTYLES CHANGE, AND AS WE WITNESS AN INCREASE IN HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

THE COMPETITION IS SEEKING DESIGNS FOR SINGLE-DETACHED HOUSING, HORIZONTAL-MULTIPLE HOUSING, AND LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDINGS. THE SUBMISSIONS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE HOW ADAPTABILITY CAN BE ACHIEVED COST-EFFECTIVELY AND BE APPEALING AND MARKETABLE TO THE CONSUMER.



The key to FlexHousing is that it is easily adapted to meet specific needs rather than relying on custom designs. Housing should continue to provide the initial occupant and subsequent occupants with accessibility, safety, security, ease-of-operation, convenience and comfort as their needs change over time.

So that a house will be flexible enough to meet a broad range of individual needs, certain features should be incorporated at the time of construction. Such features as barrier-free access and easy-to-use controls, for example, would be difficult to retrofit. During construction, provisions should be made to simplify the later introduction of additional features that might be required. For example, if bathroom walls are reinforced, they can support grab bars; and if the house is pre-wired, it can accommodate future home automation. This flexibility will help to ensure a broad and ongoing market for FlexHousing.



Market Forces

While FlexHousing will have broad market appeal, it will hold particular interest for seniors, people approaching their retirement years, people with disabilities and their families. The overwhelming majority of people in these groups express a strong preference for living independently in their own homes. FlexHousing can help them achieve this.

Several major factors may drive the demand for FlexHousing by these groups:

Aging Population

Canada's population is aging. Today, almost one in eight Canadians is over the age of 65. By 2031, the 'baby boomers' will have become seniors and this ratio will rise to one in four. As early as 2017, about 50 percent of Canadian households will be headed by a person over the age of 55.


Economic Pressures

Faced with increasing health care costs and the need for fiscal restraint, governments are seeking new ways of delivering health care. It is probable that increasing priority will be given to providing community-based care and support services. This will help seniors and people with disabilities live independently in their own homes. Innovations, such as computer-assisted medical links to the home, will further enhance home-based care.

Lifestyle Changes

New and emerging technologies are opening up many opportunities for home-based activities that are of particular interest to seniors and people with disabilities. Computer links and information networks can offer them the possibility of home-based employment, the convenience of shopping and banking from the home, and access to entertainment.





FlexHousing Design Features

Security Concerns

Canadians are expressing increasing concerns about security and safety in the home. This is likely to result in demands for the types of security systems and safety features that will be provided in FlexHousing.

FlexHousing's Broad Appeal

Homes that offer the features of FlexHousing will attract the interest of a broad range of people. The security, safety, convenience, and comfort will appeal to households in which all adult members pursue full-time employment. Families with small children will appreciate the benefits of ease of access and ease of use. Opportunities for home-based employment will be welcomed by all segments of the population.

Participants in the competition will be provided with CMHC publications that describe the features basic to the concept of FlexHousing. The following examples are some of the design features and components that would best be provided at the time of construction.

- Barrier-free entrances to apartment buildings and individual dwellings
- Space for maneuvering within dwellings
- Wide doorways with very low thresholds
- Door handles, electrical outlets, switches, and other controls reachable from a sitting or standing position
- Non-slip flooring in entrance lobbies, kitchens, and bathrooms
- Water temperature regulators to avoid scalds
- Windows that allow people to enjoy views while sitting



“Healthy Housing” Component

If a house is to be adaptable to the present and future needs of its occupants, certain construction details should be incorporated at the construction stage. For example:

- Reinforcing walls in bathrooms will allow the installation of custom-positioned, well-anchored grab bars.
- Cabinets should be installed so that the height of working surfaces, such as counters and sinks, can be adjusted.
- Dwellings should be pre-wired to accommodate automation applications based on such emerging protocols as CEBus and Echelon.

The response to CMHC’s “Open House” display indicates that these features will be well received by consumers generally.

The CMHC “Healthy Housing” initiative promotes the development of housing that responds to five key objectives:

- occupants’ health
- energy efficiency
- resource efficiency
- environmental responsibility
- affordability

These objectives are described in CMHC’s Healthy Housing booklet, which will be supplied to participants in the competition.

The primary focus of this competition is on designs that best exemplify the concept of FlexHousing. However, in judging entries, up to 10 percent of the marks will be allotted to features that support the ideas of Healthy Housing.





The Competition

The competition will be held in two stages.

Stage 1

This stage is open to developers, builders, and non-profit and cooperative housing agencies and groups. Participants must intend to build the designs that they submit. Designs will be selected from each of Canada's five regions in three housing categories:

- single-detached housing
- horizontal-multiple housing, such as semi-detached, row, and duplex
- low-rise apartment buildings, that is, up to four storeys

Stage 2

Each of the 15 winning participants will be invited to proceed to Stage 2. This stage requires that Stage 1 winners develop their designs further to an advanced stage of completion. CMHC will award each of them \$5,000 to defray some of the costs for design development. A national winner will then be selected in each of the three housing categories.

Promotion of the Winners

All Stage 1 and 2 winners, as well as some who receive honorable mention, will be given local and national media coverage. Furthermore, a CMHC publication will publicize the results of the competition. It is also possible that CMHC will work with some of the winners to feature their designs in demonstration projects.

Entry Guide

CMHC will help FlexHousing Design Competition entrants to develop responsive designs by providing an extensive package of information, including an entry guide. This guide provides complete instructions for developing and submitting an entry. It also outlines the requirements for drawings and sketches, specifications, and written briefs. A checklist will be included to simplify the entry process.

Since projects submitted to the competition may be at different stages in the design process, the guide describes alternative ways of presenting the information.

To help applicants assess the market for FlexHousing and develop their ideas, they will be provided with CMHC publications that include information about:

- features and facilities that seniors and people with disabilities like to see included in adaptable and accessible housing;
- alternative design solutions for features and facilities in adaptable and accessible housing and estimates of incremental costs;
- new home automation technologies; and
- CMHC's "User Friendly Home," a demonstration house built near Vancouver, which incorporates many of the features to be included in FlexHousing.



Selection Criteria

Winning designs will be chosen by a selection committee composed of representatives from the housing industry, design professions, and consumer groups. In making its selections, the committee will be guided by the following criteria:

- The degree to which designs meet the objectives of FlexHousing
- The cost-effectiveness of design solutions
- The extent to which the design will appeal to consumers and enhance the marketability of this type of housing
- The potential effectiveness of the plan to market the proposed housing
- The transferability of the designs
- The potential of the design to increase acceptability of the FlexHousing concept in broad-based markets.

Benefits of Entering the Competition

With this competition, CMHC hopes to help participants develop expertise and business opportunities for FlexHousing.

- Competitors will develop hands-on experience in designing housing for major emerging markets.
- Participants will be provided with a package of information and feedback on submitted designs.
- All winners and those receiving honorable mention will be featured in regional and national media campaigns promoting FlexHousing among the general public.
- Stage 1 winners of the competition will receive financial assistance toward the cost of preparing their entries for Stage 2.
- CMHC might invite some of the winners to participate in national demonstration initiatives.



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COMPETITION ENTRY KIT

REQUEST FORM

Please complete this request to receive the CMHC FlexHousing Competition Entry Kit. You will receive an entry guide that will clearly identify the competition guidelines and the submission instructions. You will also receive the following three important publications that will help you effectively develop your proposal:

- Focus Groups to Examine Barrier-Free and Adaptable Housing Design
- Home Technology to Support Independent Living
- Design Options for Barrier-Free and Adaptable Housing

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Fax, mail, or call

Your FlexHousing Competition Entry Kit will be forwarded to you directly.

To get more information about the competition, please call your local CMHC Branch or CMHC's Canadian Housing Information Centre (telephone 613.748.2367).

~ Closing date for competition entries:

May 31, 1996

Candidate Information

Name.....

Company Name.....

Address

.....

Telephone

Fax.....

Type of Organization

- Builder
- Developer
- Non-profit organization
- Co-operative association
- Other.....

Housing Category

- Single-detached housing
- Horizontal-multiple housing, such as semi-detached, row, and duplex
- Low-rise apartment buildings

Language

- English Entry Kit (4027E)
- French Entry Kit (4027F)

Thank you.

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