

Conservation: Strategies for Selected Older Neighbourhoods

by Sybil Frenette
1979

The Institute of Urban Studies





THE UNIVERSITY OF
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SYBIL FRENETTE

INSTITUTE OF URBAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
AUGUST, 1979

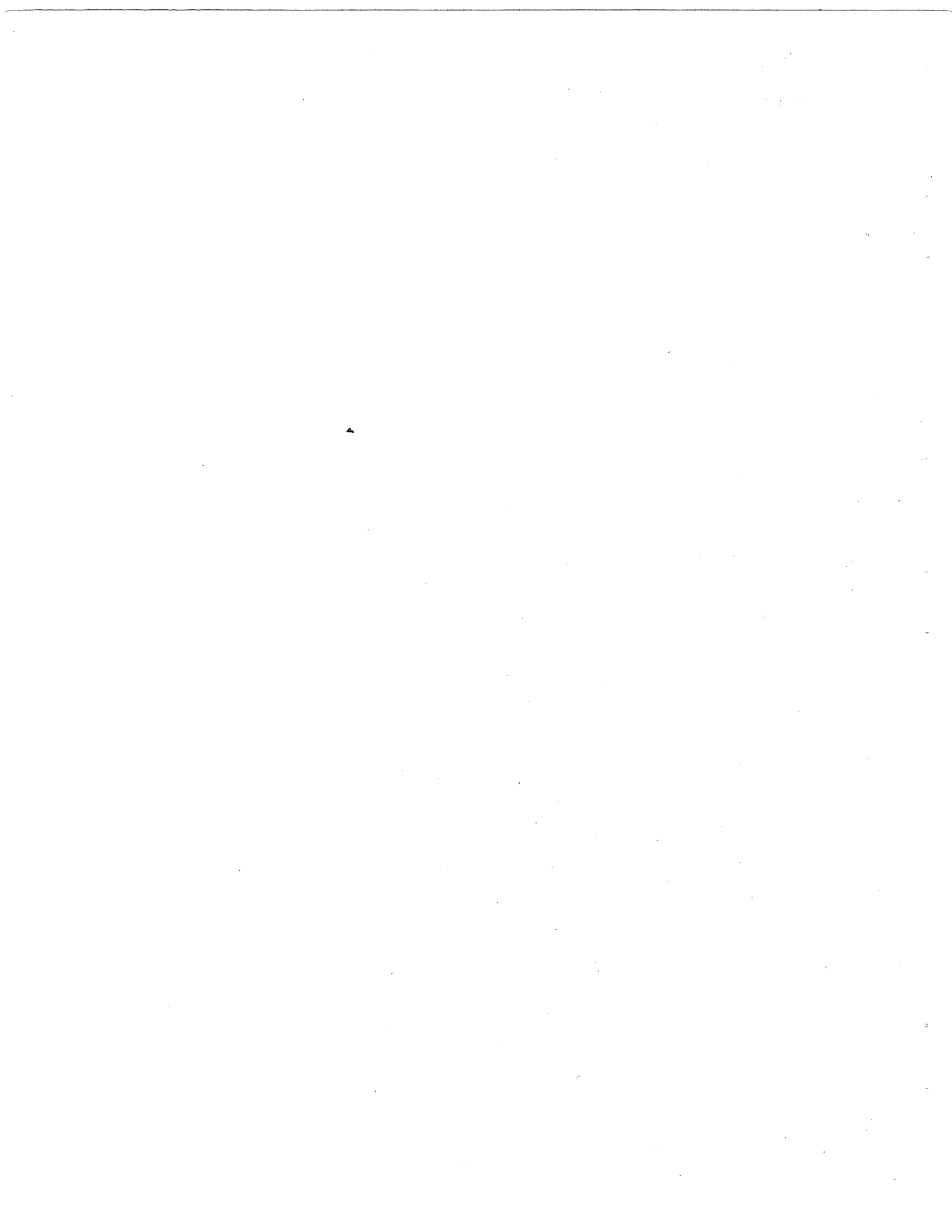


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Introduction

At a recent Ontario Heritage Foundation Conference, speaker Robert McNulty addressed the preliminary session with "we are not here to embalm but to embark." Such action oriented enthusiasm is evident in the new emphasis within the conservation movement. Once synonymous with "preservation", "conservation" meant "to save, to keep intact and prevent from further deterioration". Over time, conservation has derived a more dynamic connotation. It has come to imply, in terms of urban form, the selected retention of structures through the activities of renovation, restoration, alteration or modernization. The new conservation adherents are concerned with the usability as well as the physical form of an object and an attempt is being made to bridge the gap between pragmatist and purist which has to date segregated economically sound conservation efforts from architectural preservation. ✓

The purpose of this paper is to provide a descriptive and comparative package of information concerning the field of conservation. The first objective is to define the term 'conservation' and present the many facets and interpretations of conservation as it has been employed in the preservation of urban features.

Secondly, the paper endeavours to trace the evolution of the conservation movement in North America using the most pertinent legislation and available literature. As a third objective the experience of the City of Winnipeg is drawn upon to illustrate the status of municipal participation in developing and implementing conservation strategies.

Finally, this paper aims to build a case for a new comprehensive, policy oriented approach to conservation using the urban neighbourhood as the focus for action.

Chapter Organization

This study is organized in a loose chronological framework. The first chapter sets the ground rules from which the other chapters follow. In Chapter I, the working definition of 'conservation' is presented. Conservation typologies, using 'form and function' as common denominators are developed to illustrate the combinations of objectives found in conservation schemes.

The historical development of conservation in terms of legislation, programs and strategies, using Canadian and American examples, is described in Chapter II. This chapter is intended to bring the reader up to date on federal programs and policies. A discussion of recent changes in government funding procedures concludes the chapter.

Chapter III explores the many conservation tactics which have been practised to save our built environment. Using the categories derived from the definition of conservation, the strategies have been grouped into site specific, area specific and issue specific. References are drawn to case examples where such strategies have been employed.

Chapter IV presents a case study of the City of Winnipeg: what conservation projects the City has tried and where and how those activities have fallen short of their goals. The purpose of the chapter is to illustrate, through example, the limitations found in a municipality's approach to conservation and the resulting ad hoc, issue oriented programs which emerge.

Chapter V examines the concept of neighbourhood conservation. The prerequisites for a successful program are laid out followed by a matrix exercise, which develops a "best fit" method for tying appropriate strategies to different neighbourhood types.

The final chapter contains a package of program options which have been divided into two areas of responsibility: the federal and provincial governments, and the municipal government. The argument emphasizes the need for comprehensiveness and policy direction in order to effectively conserve the physical and social attributes of a neighbourhood. A new role for municipal government is suggested in the concluding discussion.

CHAPTER I

DEFINING CONSERVATION AS A STRATEGY

What then is meant by 'a conservation strategy'? It is an approach that is concerned with identification and positive utilization of our natural and built resources in a manner which will protect and enhance their longevity. Rather than complete clearance and rebuilding, conservation can be an alternative form of revitalizing urban spaces. Conservation in a neighbourhood context is an organic, gradual and humane process in which attempts are made to save and renovate structurally sound buildings. Worn out components are replaced and empty lots are filled in with new structures which reflect current but sympathetic styling. The major objective is to create a functionally, socially and aesthetically mixed urban form. (Morley, 1974, p. 3.)

The rise of the conservation movement may be attributed to several factors. The 1960's and 70's played host to two significant birthday parties: the Canadian Centennial in 1967 and the United States Bicentennial in 1976. National birthdays have proven the perfect catalyst for expressions of patriotism, unity and national identity. Thus, centennial years have marked the creation of heritage projects throughout the country and a new interest in our roots, history and the features of the landscape which are uniquely Canadian and American. Coincident with our national celebrations was a revived indulgence in nostalgia which manifested itself in fashion, architecture, literature and various art reproductions.

Penina Coopersmith offers additional insight into the rise of the conservation movement in her paper "Heritage by Design". In her estimation, a turning point in the development of conservationism in Canada came with the energy crisis of 1973.

The oil crisis wasn't the only factor involved in the growing clamour over environmental wastefulness and deterioration: it was simply the catalyst that combined numerous voices in the night . . . After the fall of 1973, the ranks of re-cycling, rehabilitation and renovation advocates swelled; they chorused in the city halls, ratepayers' organizations, and planning boards across the country. Their demand was for the inclusion of a modicum of common sense in future development schemes: for slower growth; for greater attention to existing structures and neighbourhoods; and for the introduction of alternatives to the methods and motives employed over the previous years in developing the built environment. (Coopersmith, 1976, p. 9.)

The fields of urban psychology and environmental perception have further contributed to and supported the conservation movement. Theoretically, awareness of the past contributes greatly to healthy survival and the ability of people to adapt to the rapidly changing society. Indeed, the ability to adapt depends heavily on a sense of continuity. Continuity cannot be established merely by saving a few leftovers from the past; there must be enough of the past left in the environment to become part of the person's images and feelings. Appreciation of local landmarks and specific buildings is evident in the pride with which they are pointed out to tourists and newcomers to the city. In this and other ways, the continuity that is characteristic of conservation becomes an important factor in people's identity.

Finally, beyond the many conservation ideologies and rationales lie the most fundamental reason for the growth of the conservation movement. It has been an indigenous development springing from those neighbourhoods which have reacted against the devastating consequences of major urban redevelopment. As such it has been an anti-movement. The Canadian examples are numerous: Strathcona in Vancouver, Spadina and Trefann Court in Toronto, the East- West Autoroute in Montreal, to name a few.

Too much social damage accompanied the physical destruction of old neighbourhoods. Too many families faced even more crowded conditions, higher rents, and the loss of familiar faces and associations. Here in Canada, the revelations of the Hellyer Report cast doubt upon our own urban renewal policies and public housing programs. If there was agreement on anything, it was that there had to be a better way. (Baker, 1973, p. 196.)

The anti-development conservation action has frequently been a response to one or more of the following:

1. The threatened or actual loss of an important building which people have organized to rescue;
2. Proposed new development such as a highway, shopping center, highrise building, drastic urban renewal, or structures with discordant uses and styles that are considered disruptions to the existing community;
3. Social and economic changes perceived as adverse, such as conversions of houses to multi-family and rooming house residences, abandonment, crime and development pressures.

Unfortunately, due to the very nature of reactive or crisis-response conservation, visible results in the field of conservation have been largely ad hoc. Heritage groups have fought to save individual buildings, architectural foundations have concerned themselves only with the physical attributes of a structure, and neighbourhood groups have fought to save the social integrity of their community. Each organization has interpreted conservation for its own particular purpose. As a result of the many combinations and connotations of the conservation philosophy, it has become a very confusing and sometimes contradictory process to implement. The often inadequate conservation legislation is called upon to enact programs which the legislation has no power to enforce. ✓

Conservation Typologies

A close appraisal of the many definitions of the term 'conservation' shows that two basic features appear in common: that of conserving the physical form and that of conserving the function of that form. Combinations of these two components produce three conservation typologies:

In the first case, conservation entails the preservation of the resource at the risk of changing the function of the resource. With old housing stock, for example, it would mean upgrading the housing units through processes of rehabilitation while sacrificing the residential function in order to save the exterior facade. In other words, the conversion of residential structures to office space or to accommodation for groups with income higher or lower than previous occupants would qualify as examples of this conservation typology. The phenomenon of "whitepainting" where low income housing units are purchased and rehabilitated by successively higher income households would fall within this category of conservation. The physical form is improved but not changed. However, the socio-economic function of the housing changes. Other examples would include historic conservation (e.g. a mill is turned into a museum) and architectural conservation (e.g. a warehouse is converted into apartment lofts).

The second conservation typology, conserving the function but not the form, would include efforts such as urban renewal. In the case of urban renewal the physical form, the old housing stock, is demolished to be replaced by new housing. The function of the redeveloped area having been low income housing remains low income housing. This however, is not an ideal example because with the construction of public housing the function changes somewhat from ownership accommodation to rental accommodation. A more subtle illustration of function conservation would be the execution of an infill strategy whereby the individual dilapidated housing units are replaced by sensitively constructed housing units which do not disrupt the function of the neighbourhood.

The final type of conservation where both the physical form and the function are preserved is more of an ideal than an actuality. The objective is to thwart change. It tends to disregard the natural process of neighbourhood change and constrains social evolution. Such a strategy is possible only on a very limited scale. For example, the restoration of a church building for its continual use for assembly and worship would qualify under this definition. Often the rehabilitation of an old structure forces a new function on the structure simply through obsolescence, economics, or fashion.

Adding another dimension to the conservation typologies described above are the matters of scale, magnitude and spatial context. These factors will be further elaborated in Chapter III. At this time it is useful to clarify the three types of strategies through which conservation techniques have been focused:

1. Area specific conservation,
2. Site specific conservation,
3. Issue specific conservation.

Area specific conservation techniques apply to a geographically defined space such as a neighbourhood improvement area, or a historic conservation district. A site specific conservation strategy concerns itself with conserving the form and/or function of an individual structure or site. Site specific strategies include anti-demolition by-laws, transfer of development rights, development control and the designation of historic buildings. Issue specific strategies attempt to counteract a problem which threatens the preservation of a particular function and/or form. For example, issue conservation might address deteriorating building conditions or the destruction of a neighbourhood due to the development of a transportation corridor.

Reducing conservation to various common denominators of form, function and scale is helpful in analyzing and isolating the means/ends strategies which have been employed throughout the conservation movement to date. Often the strategies have been combined and the purpose of the conservation effort has not been easily distinguishable. Where there has been disillusionment in conservation activities, it has often resulted because an inappropriate strategy has been applied to a particular problem i.e. a historic preservation strategy used to preserve low income housing. In this case, the problem is the loss of needed low income housing regardless of the fact that the structure may have historic merit. Conservation strategies, as a result, have been somewhat protectionistic and exclusionary and lacking a comprehensive policy direction.

The Concept of Neighbourhood Conservation

Neighbourhood conservation provides a structure for comprehensive, flexible and co-ordinated conservation. The objective of a conservation district is to create a climate which encourages a process of slow and incremental improvements to the existing housing stock and the social and physical infrastructure of a neighbourhood. It is accomplished by drawing upon the strengths of a particular area and manipulating a variety of forces to

influence the decisions of individuals and public agencies living or operating in the area. There is greater reliance on existing planning controls and the orchestration of existing legal instruments into a co-ordinated planning scheme. Furthermore, neighbourhood conservation requires finely tuned planning strategies which are sensitive to particular area needs.

✓ Neighbourhood conservation is a relatively new concept. It is interesting to examine the progressive stages that conservation has passed through before advocates broadened their interests beyond simple structural reconditioning and began to examine the social and economic aspects of neighbourhood change. The next chapter traces the development of heritage conservation legislation in North America. From the following work it is possible to observe the shifts in focus in the movement from structural heritage to area conservation, from local vigilante groups trying to arrest architectural blight to a growing governmental responsibility.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION LEGISLATION

Several parallels exist between the Canadian and the American experience with regard to their development of conservation bodies and jurisdictions. In the past Canada lagged somewhat behind the United States in its conservation program development although the time differential between policy approval in the States and the adoption of similar legislation in Canada has been reduced significantly in recent years. However, the United States remains strides ahead of Canada with regard to the degree of originality within their programs. Having experimented with the concept of conservation for the last thirty years, the United States has a lengthy list of successes and failures, which Canadians might heed.

At the national level in both countries, the conservation movement has been supported through two major interests:

- 1) historic or heritage conservation and
- 2) housing rehabilitation - directed at the individual structure or neighbourhood.

Historic preservation has been handled as part of a federal ministry or department where the total emphasis of the agency has not been on heritage conservation. For example Heritage Canada fell initially within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States is supported by the Department of the Interior. On the other hand, housing rehabilitation has been administered through the two national housing departments of Central Mortgage and Housing in Canada and the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the States.

This chapter will illustrate the development of conservation legislation in Canada and the United States by highlighting the significant shifts in direction of the two governments' conservation policies. Such an exercise is useful in understanding the manner in which heritage conservation, housing rehabilitation and neighbourhood planning have coalesced into the more comprehensive strategies found in neighbourhood conservation. This chapter has been divided into three sections. The first will discuss the American experiences in developing conservation administration. The second section will focus on the comparable Canadian legislation and the final section will explore the direction of future conservation efforts based on the existing legislation and funding arrangements.

The United States Experience

The earliest efforts in the field of conservation in the United States centered around housing maintenance and home improvement through the use of building code enforcement. In 1909 a Bill was passed which stated that American cities were encouraged to adopt and enforce housing codes such that improvements to the housing stock would be made and paid for by the owners of that stock. It was learned very quickly that the housing problem in the slum areas was too enormous for private landlords. Private organizations and philanthropy could not be expected to provide a solution. "If public funds were to be used to clear slums and build housing, the traditional American ethic of exclusive private control and ownership of property would have to be reinterpreted, legally and socially, to permit the exercise of eminent domains by public bodies for public purpose." (Sachs, 1972, p.11). However, it was not until 1937 that the United States created the legislation for its first Housing Act.

Until the urban renewal programs of the 1950's, the neighbourhood deterioration problem was handled purely through the development of new public housing, slum clearance and the enforcement of local codes and ordinances. The Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 spelled out the objectives of the urban renewal scheme. For the first time, the existing housing stock was to be evaluated and a general neighbourhood plan developed. The program permitted a far greater variety of programs for use in the treatment of slum areas than merely land clearance and redevelopment. The intent

of the program, contrary to the common understanding of urban renewal, provided for the retention of the positive values of deteriorating neighbourhoods as well as the eradication of the negative influences. Structures were rehabilitated if they were considered sound and if they were in conformity with the neighbourhood plan.

In concept, urban renewal was an advance over earlier, indiscriminate redevelopment. But urban renewal remained solely a physical answer to far more complex problems. The renewal plan was basically a land use plan establishing structural, aesthetic and density standards. Even with rehabilitation being introduced as a possible component of the plan, the urban renewal period was remarkable for the bulldozed and rebuilt concrete jungles which emerged in place of rundown but once sociable neighbourhoods. There remains little evidence of a conservation theme. As a housing strategy, urban renewal was largely a failure; considerably more units were destroyed than were built, and replacement housing was often far too expensive for the residents whose housing had been demolished.

In the 1960's there was a growing understanding that deteriorated housing was a symptom of affordability and social problems. In 1961 the Housing and Home Finances Agency was formed to mesh social services with urban renewal. In 1962 the Ford Foundation proposed financing for 'grey areas' to pay for needed social services in deteriorating neighbourhoods. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) was created in 1965 through the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act. The Act also provided for new grant programs to assist cities in carrying out concentrated code enforcement in deteriorated areas. Federal rehabilitation grants were available to individuals or families who owned or occupied a structure in an urban renewal or a code enforcement area.

Under the Johnson administration, neighbourhood renewal or conservation was introduced as an ambitious experiment in comprehensive neighbourhood planning. The appointed task force recognized a need to co-ordinate and concentrate scattered federal efforts in urban affairs with a new emphasis on focusing help in the poverty areas of central cities. The task force created the Model Cities Program which was instituted through the 1966 Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act. The program attempted to streamline grant processing for participating cities by establishing a local model cities agency as the single point of entry for all federal resources affecting the model neighbourhood and the supply of technical assistance from all relevant federal agencies.

The Model Cities Program was meant to be a co-ordinated attack on the physical and social problems of designated neighbourhoods in selected model cities. Resources were to be concentrated geographically for maximum effectiveness. The goal of comprehensiveness was to change the environment of the poor in terms of their employment, health care, housing, education and transportation. The residents were to play a major role in defining neighbourhood needs and planning and administering local programs. Monies were also made available to municipalities to strengthen their city halls and better equip city government to deal with the problems of poverty areas. In all, 150 model city neighbourhoods were selected.

The Model Cities Program had been operating for a short time only when major changes were recommended for its implementation. With the election of the Nixon administration in 1969 the emphasis on citizen input altered. Citizen advice was now seen as a force at the city government level rather than in local neighbourhoods only. The program had imposed a new bureaucratic structure that HUD first had to organize, and then the municipality had to tie into. This required a complex co-ordinative function which had never before existed as most federal aids to cities had been programmatic. There appeared to be a shortage of technical assistance at the municipal level. The bureaucratic structure necessary to maintain the program was large, the monies expended great. The Nixon administration which inherited the program from the previous government quickly became disenchanted with the modest returns on such large government investment. In the words of George Sternlieb (1976):

" The rehabilitation track record was largely mixed. Touted as a high volume, low-cost, socially sensitive strategy, rehabilitation did provide many housing units, but neither as cheaply nor as easily as had been expected. Even more cause for alarm were the numerous rehabilitation projects that experienced initial success but soon succumbed to inner city social and neighbourhood pathologies. This denouement led the federal government to put a moratorium on all rehabilitation and new construction subsidies."

It also meant the end of formal financial support to the Model Cities Program by the federal government.

Fortunately the concept of comprehensive neighbourhood conservation using a careful and realistic matching of neighbourhood conditions and supportive strategies remained intact. Numerous states and localities shifted some of their housing focus away from new construction or isolated rehabilitation programs to the more comprehensive and flexible preservation route. In the words of George Sternlieb "neighbourhood preservation emerged as the postmoratorium housing strategy."

For the first half of the 1970's the federal government distributed its finite resources into various program objectives by grant provision. Included among the objectives were code enforcement, public services, historic preservation, structural rehabilitation and growth management. It was left entirely up to the municipalities to co-ordinate these funding programs into a neighbourhood package.

1974 proved to be the next major turning point in the growth of preservation legislation in the United States. A new Housing Act was introduced with an emphasis on viable communities and neighbourhood conservation. Furthermore, the government was moving towards minimizing federal control. Modifications were made to limit large programs and specific large budgetary allocations, to explore cost sharing techniques, and to develop incentives to encourage more private sector involvement in rehabilitating the existing housing stock.

The Urban Reinvestment Task Force was established the same year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board to promote neighbourhood preservation efforts involving partnerships of local residents, local governments and private financial institutions. The Task Force's main program encouraged private financial institutions to invest in Neighbourhood Housing Services (NHS) programs for revitalization of urban neighbourhoods where credit was inadequate. Neighbourhood Housing Services now operate in several selected neighbourhoods. The NHS's are non-profit corporations with a board of directors composed largely of neighbourhood residents. Financial institutions agree to make bankable loans in the neighbourhood to support the operating budget and to help raise the high risk loan fund. The City commitment includes upgrading of the neighbourhood and operating a code enforcement program.

The Task Force also funds innovative models of inner city revitalization called Neighbourhood Preservation Programs (NPP). Funding for these Task Force projects will end in 1979.

Conservation programs currently in service in the United States address two levels: first, the physical decay and the psychological problems regarding lack of faith in the neighbourhood, and, second, the ability of a city to reverse the trend of decline. Neighbourhood conservation programs have come to entail widely dispersed forms of comprehensive rehabilitation. The programs available are enormous in number and have a variety of administrative and funding structures. Some are conducted exclusively by the private sector (130 cities presently record privately financed neighbourhood rehabilitation projects), some are directed by non profit entities which are not part of municipal cost sharing programs and require government financing and staffing. All indicate that comprehensive neighbourhood planning for conservation has come of age in the United States.

The American Experience in Historic Conservation

The architectural conservation movement in the States has a long history, but only recently has heritage preservation been recognized as a component of neighbourhood conservation. The earliest efforts were no more than the recording of valuable landmarks through photographs and measured drawings. Major attention was focused on cities bearing a close resemblance to European ones.

In the 1960's greater government assistance for historic preservation projects was made available as landmark preservation proved to be an obvious attribute of renewal programs sponsored by the federal government. Under the urban renewal scheme, for example, money was granted for community wide surveys of historic assets, feasibility surveys, restoration and relocation. With the demise of urban renewal and the creation of the Model Cities Program, similar funding arrangements were made available on a neighbourhood basis. The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 provided grants for historic preservation, urban beautification and for planning a program of historic preservation.

Outside government programs, historic preservation has been promoted and funded by philanthropic organizations. In 1965 at least 150 U.S. cities had enacted some form of preservation statute to assist such organizations. As early as 1964, New York City set up a commission to designate entire conservation districts in which demolition control and development control were practiced to ensure preservation of the overall character of the district while new construction proceeded.

The most visible, non-governmental institution in the United States involved in the preservation field is The National Trust for Historic Preservation. It was created in 1966 under the provision of the National Historic Preservation Act. It is supported by dues from members, donors and matching grants from the National Park Service. Its role has been described as the encouragement of public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings and objects significant in American history and culture. The Trust has promoted far more ambitious projects than individual model restorations. Entire historic neighbourhoods have been encouraged and restored due to the activities of this national organization. However, historic preservation programs have been mainly oriented towards the restoration of houses by and for middle and upper-income households. The cost of restoring old houses is generally beyond the scope of government subsidy programs or the means of low income families. As a result low income families are often displaced; hence, true neighbourhood conservation does not take place. Historic preservation district ordinances created by municipalities are however a key element of historic preservation programs. Such programs can be particularly important in attracting higher income residents back to older neighbourhoods and increasing the proportion of more affluent households in the inner city as well as preserving the historical buildings.

A clear incentive to the conservation of historic buildings in the United States has been favourable tax legislation that was introduced in 1976. The most important feature of this has been the provision permitting the costs of rehabilitating historic buildings to be deducted from an investor's income over a five year period. In addition, tax provisions discourage destruction of historic buildings by reducing tax incentives for both the demolition of historic buildings and for new construction on the site of demolished historic buildings. Thus historic buildings have been made into temporary tax shelters with many investors taking advantage of the fact. The result has been a significant increase in the number of historic buildings being rehabilitated and maintained by the private sector in the United States (City of Winnipeg, Resolution re proposed Income Tax Amendments for Historic Buildings, Feb. 21, 1979).

The Canadian Experience

Canada's past efforts in conservation follow much the same route as those of the U.S., particularly with regard to the earlier experiences with code enforcement, rehabilitation loans and the eventual rise and fall of urban renewal.

In 1944 Canada's National Housing Act advocated slum clearance and the replacement of old housing stock with new "social housing". A decade later municipalities were permitted to clear blighted areas provided there was housing on the site either prior to or after clearance. In 1964 the use of demolition and redevelopment was extended so that urban renewal need apply not only to potential housing sites but could include any blighted area provided the site was developed with the best use for the location. This practice of artificial regeneration came to a halt with the publication of the Hellyer Task Force which urged the federal government to rethink its policies in light of the social and moral devastation caused by the massive redevelopment and displacement process. In comparison with the United States, Canadian urban renewal ignored many of the positive features of the program and adopted most of the worst faults. Fortunately it was slower in getting started, underfunded, and had only 48 renewal projects approved when the program was stopped. Unlike the United States the program had contained no provision for rehabilitation or the socio-cultural-conservation of the neighbourhood. In several instances the program forced residents to live in a prolonged state of anxiety not knowing when clearance and relocation would take place. Neighbourhood confidence in working class communities was undermined. The social service, citizen participation and employment mechanisms incorporated in the Model Cities program were never given a test run in Canada. Given the disastrous nature of early attempts at neighbourhood renewal, the creation of the neighbourhood conservation packages of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program showed considerable foresight.

The 1973 amendments to the NHA were the first major achievements in conservation legislation at the national level in Canada. Loans were to be made available to non-profit and co-operative housing corporations for the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing dwellings. The Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) and Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), both of which will be discussed in greater length in Chapter IV, were created at this time. For once, financial assistance for structural improvements to housing in a defined geographical space were to be matched with municipal infrastructural improvements, planning and the provision of social services.

The 1970's saw a snowballing effect in the conservation movement. ✓ Several provinces developed their own rehabilitation programs either to piggyback the federal loan assistance of RRAP or to extend rehabilitation schemes beyond the confines of NIP areas; Ontario created the Ontario Housing Rehabilitation Program (OHRP), Manitoba the CHIRP program, New Brunswick the Home Improvement Loan Program and Quebec the Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program. Algonquin College in Ottawa developed a program in 'Restoration and Rehabilitation Technology' in 1972 to meet the growing employment opportunities in the restoration field. In 1976 Ontario launched its Main Street Revitalization Program to help small towns upgrade and improve their downtown areas in companionship with the successful Downtown Revitalization Program. Most recently 'Main Street - Alberta' has been designed as a community improvement program to assist Albertans in carrying out 'face lifts' for the downtown or main street areas of their towns and villages.

The Canadian Experience in Historic Conservation

Again we find the parallels between Canada and the United States in the strategies used in heritage conservation. The first active heritage conservation societies in Canada began about 40 years ago. Throughout the ensuing decades a few more local and regional groups emerged although there were still only a handful by 1967. Not one province had instituted heritage legislation.

In 1973 Heritage Canada was registered as a national charitable ✓ foundation financed by memberships and gifts of Canadians and by an endowment fund of 12 million dollars from the federal government. Administrative costs were to be financed in perpetuity from the interest on the federal grant.

Heritage Canada acts as an information exchange for the national community of concerned conservationists, works to create stronger protective legislation by representations to government and published research and acquires heritage property within the limits of its resources. In 1974, Heritage Canada moved to support area ✓ conservation. Area conservation was seen to have a more profound effect upon the visual quality of the community than simply the preservation of individual buildings. In addition, area conservation was valued due to its great potential economic dividends in connection with the tourist industry. ✓ Secondly, Heritage Canada moved to support adaptive reuse of older structures as a

cost effective use of their dollar. Lastly, Heritage Canada shares in the investment of a defined and planned conservation area, working closely with local historic foundations, municipalities and provincial governments.

Heritage Canada's 'area conservation' encompasses local planning, citizen participation, home ownership and the preservation of the housing stock. It goes a step further than NIP and RRAP by emphasizing the preservation of architectural fabric of buildings individually and as a community. It stresses sympathetic renovation to preserve craftsmanship which cannot be duplicated.

So, it is evident that in Canada, as in the United States, some public policy has been developed for conservation purposes. However, an accurate critique of the present situation may be summarized as follows:

"A look at the history of different renewal initiatives shows that they do not contend with the underlying economic and social trends. They have been face-lift programs - some remarkably good. But they do not address the issue of how to restore economic vitality to the central city, or how to establish effectively competing economic institutions in the central city; or how to develop an economic strategy for central city core renewal.

✓ Most often, in the case of NIP for example, economic-commercial renewal was excluded. Provincial renewal programs are limited to physical work-heritage programs, usually do not concern themselves with economic facts - and at times work against the interests of local merchants."

(Axworthy - Conserving Ontario's
Main Streets Conference.
Peterborough, 1978)

Present Events in Funding

Both Canada and the United States are moving away from a system of project by project or program by program funding. This has been realized in three major thrusts:

- 1) a dramatic shift in financing from direct government funding to private sector funding;
- 2) a disentanglement of the federal government from the responsibility of various programs with a greater onus placed on provincial and local levels of government for their implementation; and
- 3) the creation of a block grant system so that local governments may make their own decisions on how monies should be utilized to the optimum benefit of a community.

The decision to decentralize spending judgements through the use of block grants was first tried in the United States under the Community Development Block Grant Program of HUD. HUD staff are satisfied with the achievements of the block grant arrangements as funds with loose and broad guidelines (to arrest or eliminate blight, and to address urgent community development needs) have been used to rehabilitate existing stock, both residential and commercial, in ways that are healthy for the community. (Carla Hills: Preservation News Interview).

In the most recent amendments to the NHA, CMHC has also shown a commitment to a block grant format with the Community Services Grant Program. Unfortunately, given the number and nature of the former programs which the new program is designed to replace, the funding is limited and it seems unlikely that the block grant will have a substantial impact on improving housing and neighbourhoods in inner city areas.

With regard to private sector funding of conservation-styled projects, the United States has been abundantly successful. "The Urban Land Institute determined that of the 260 U.S. cities with population over 50,000, almost half have some degree of private-market, nonsubsidized housing rehabilitation in progress in their older central areas. Based on the survey results, ULI concluded that the phenomenon seems to be increasing." (Conservation Foundation Newsletter January 1976). The potential for private sector involvement is tremendous. Efforts to promote an area and to fund a strategic economic analysis have been financed from corporations and businesses or by agencies normally engaged in such activities, such as tourism bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, or graduate business schools (through the use of student interns). For major improvements, developments and business expansion, downtown businesses which are unable to secure long-term financing have turned to pools of financial lending institutions which share the risks in making loans and mortgages at reduced rates.

Municipalities have encouraged private sector involvement in many ways. Three California communities deposited Community Development Block Grant funds in noninterest bearing accounts in one bank to back up low interest rehabilitation loans in designated areas. San Francisco issued municipal bonds that local banks agreed to purchase and used the tax-free income to subsidize low interest loans in designated areas. Business leaders have initiated this development by forming non-profit economic development corporations to receive funds and make low interest loans directly, guaranteeing loans made by local lenders or undertaking rehabilitation efforts (with any profits revolving back into the fund). (Main Street - A Preservation News Supplement 1978).

✓ In Canada some success has been achieved involving the private sector in various housing programs i.e. Multiple Unit Residential Buildings Program (MURB) and Assisted Rental Program (ARP) developments, however, experience to date has not been very encouraging in terms of neighbourhood conservation. Most development has been on a site by site basis and has not included rehabilitation as a component part. Toronto is the exception where once dilapidated housing has been renovated by the private sector for middle class housing. Although aesthetically pleasing and economically a positive boost for a neighbourhood, "whitepainting" ✓ as the phenomenon has been entitled, has very evident negative side effects. These include tenant displacement, underutilization of dwelling space, soaring real estate prices, high turnover rates, and the creation of socially unbalanced communities with a very low proportion of children and a high proportion of single, young adults.

The last major thrust in government policy changes, that of decentralization of program development and implementation to the municipal level, has been received more satisfactorily in Canada. Those cities with established neighbourhood planning divisions (i.e. Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Regina) will be able to ascertain municipal spending priorities based on an indepth understanding of community needs. In such cases where neighbourhood planning has a firm foundation, there is little fear that funding from block grant arrangements will be utilized unjustly in road maintenance or new suburban infrastructure projects. Where the danger lies is in those cities with a proven disdain for inner city neighbourhood programs -- those cities without a neighbourhood planning interest. There is no guarantee that monies from the Community Services Grant Program will be used for reighbourhood conservation purposes in such cases.

So where does this leave the future of neighbourhood conservation? First there are possibilities for improvement using the block grant arrangement to the advantage of the conservation movement. Secondly there is considerable room for reform.

Contributions from the Community Services Grant Program can be used to encourage the creation of community development banks modelled after the American experience. Community development banks with loan assistance from the Community Services Grant Program could offer hard to soft loans and incorporate many existing financial programs to initiate new economic enterprise in the central city.

Governments have many other means of creating conservation incentives for private investment because of their ability to legislate tax incentives. These can include abatements, agreements not to reassess appropriate improvements, enabling legislation for economic development corporations and special assessment areas, and special mechanisms such as tax increment financing (funds for revitalization raised through sale of bonds based on the potential increase in property tax revenues caused by the increased assessments resulting from the revitalization effort). Governments or any other organizations may establish revolving funds used to undertake rehabilitation efforts directly or to make loans to those who will. (H.U.D. Main Street supplement, 1978).

Heritage Canada has been active in the area of tax reform. Presently Canadian tax law encourages demolition. Government provides a tax deduction for demolished buildings as they are considered a 'terminal loss'. Donation of a heritage property to a charitable organization allows for a 100% tax deduction only if the property is movable. Otherwise the deduction equals a mere 25% of the value of the structure. Lastly, lobbying deductions are unjust. Lobbying expenses for a development company wishing to demolish heritage structures are tax deductible. Lobbying for the preservation of a structure by a conservation organization is not tax deductible.

Clearly, these lobbying and tax features load the dice heavily in favor of those who want to destroy heritage structures. ✓
But there is an even greater disincentive for preservation, relating to the fact that the majority of heritage organizations hold charitable organization charters. Existing law specifies that lobbying by a charitable heritage organization may result in the loss of the organization's charter. Thus, there is a great need for legal reform of present systems that work strongly against architectural conservation.

This chapter has outlined the evolution of conservation-type legislation in North America in an attempt to illustrate the growing interest for, and the diversity of programs tried in the field of neighbourhood conservation. The next chapter will take a closer look at the techniques and conservation strategies currently permitted and employed through enabling legislation, with an emphasis on the Canadian experience.

CHAPTER III

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Chapter II has exposed the fact that the concept and application of conservation in a Canadian urban context is still in its infancy stage. The past decade has seen a rise in our conscience concerning the need and desirability to cement conservation policies more firmly within our urban fabric. Heritage groups have become formally incorporated. Legislation has been created enabling various government programs to offer rehabilitation assistance, and to provide fiscal incentives to cities so that they may participate in local improvement campaigns.

The private sector has shown its willingness to finance restoration in selected inner city neighbourhoods and its ability to conserve and regenerate convenient, livable areas. However where private conservation has transcended the landmark building level of conservation to a larger scale project, the result has most often been the creation of a trendy, commercial district with ancillary residential blocks composed of small, highly priced specialty shops, boutiques, restaurants, entertainment facilities and office space for small professional firms. Yorkville, Cabbagetown, Gastown, Old Montreal and Ottawa's Sandyhill are well known examples of the private sector's contribution. It is an unfortunate drawback of private rehabilitation that is often achieved at the expense of replacing low income people with higher income resident users. Only when government assistance has been made available has there been any attempt to reinforce the existing social structure of a neighbourhood through conservation. ✓

It is worth reiterating also that a major reason for this new focus on conservation may be directly related to the economics of the development industry. The high cost of money, land, construction and servicing has driven the cost of a new home beyond the financial resources of the middle-income household. Escalating servicing and land costs have reduced accessibility to new single detached housing. The rising suburban housing prices have, in effect, made the renovation of inner city properties an attractive alternative. In addition, inner city housing provides the conveniences associated with proximity to employment, shopping and services.

Even with the growing emphasis on conservation, there is to date no Canadian municipality which has developed a city wide conservation policy. Our initial attempts at conservation are still piecemeal, and, as stated earlier, can be grouped into three categories -- site specific, issue specific and area specific. This chapter will clarify these strategies and give examples of how and where they have been initiated.

Site Specific Strategies

Historical preservation groups (private, public and third sector) generally select specific buildings or sites that fit their terms of reference. These are purchased and conserved or renovated and protected from future demolition by being designated as historical sites. A number of legislative instruments have been used in this regard.

Anti-demolition By-laws

Anti-demolition by-laws have been enacted in cities to be used in aid of historic designation. The intent is to declare a period of time, usually 90 days, during which demolition cannot proceed and appropriate assessment can be made by the preservation group to determine whether the building or site should be assigned historical site status. This delaying tactic is followed by negotiation amongst the site owner, the preservation group, and government officials as to the final decision.

A broader use of anti-demolition by-laws may include requiring the person requesting a demolition permit to submit approved plans and time frame for reconstruction. This extension of the anti-demolition by-law prevents an increase in the amount of vacant urban land and subsequent loss to the property tax base. In the event that demolition is approved, it promotes sensitive infill through the regulation of the building plans.

The City of Toronto exercised the demolition by-law in negotiating with the Metropolitan Toronto government to delay demolition of houses on Algonquin and Wards Islands. The City refused to grant demolition permits to Metro for removal of the houses enabling the island residents to build a court case that lasted several years. Although the Supreme Court ruled against the residents' case, the years of delay preserved the housing until Ontario government politicians stepped in to assist with a solution to the conflict.

Transfer of Development Rights

Another site specific strategy which has been used more extensively in the United States is the transfer of development rights. The strategy operates similar to a bonus system where an owner of a conservation property agrees to save the building provided that he is permitted to transfer the development potential of the land (usually expressed by height and density zoning) to another location where he owns land. In other words, if an historic church sits on property which is zoned for multi-storey development, the church remains on the site and the option to build a multi-storey structure is honoured at another location in the city. As an effective conservation tool, transfer of development rights has been somewhat limited because it is dependent on several additional factors, i.e. the property owner has another site on which he wishes to build.

Downzoning

In certain cases, downzoning can serve as a very good site specific conservation strategy. Downzoning is necessary where the zoning designation on a piece of property allows redevelopment at a much larger scale than the existing landuse. In the 1960's large blocks of older housing stock were overzoned in this way to encourage demolition, clearance and redevelopment of the lands with apartment structures. The zoning was used as an incentive for development. With the new emphasis on rehabilitation and conservation, high density zoning can be injurious to the stability of a low density community and the intention to conserve the existing housing stock. The city may institute downzoning, however it is often politically unacceptable without some means of compensation to the property owner, who, in a sense, has had his development right removed.

In areas where the character and stability of the residential area is threatened by buildings of higher density and conflicting use, a stringent re-writing of the zoning by-law using downzoning as

the major tool can be most effective. Coupled with this is a firm "holding the line" attitude when individual rezoning applications are presented to city departments involved in the approval process and city council. In other words, allowing too many exceptions to be approved could potentially subvert the by-law.

Toronto in its use of the 45' height by-law bought itself time to re-examine and rewrite the city zoning by-law to cover its development objectives more satisfactorily.

Regina has also found downzoning its most effective tool to date in aiding inner city conservation. Here the planners and politicians drew precise lines designating what was downtown core development and what was inner-city housing. Highrise apartments are now limited to very defined areas and rezonings are granted only in cases where the proposal can clearly show a beneficial effect and non-conflict situation to the existing neighbourhood.

Issue Specific Strategies

Issue specific strategies relate to problems which upset the conservation of specific buildings or neighbourhoods. The issues may include such items as fire safety, condominium conversions, the poor maintenance of buildings or the disruptive extension of a road through an existing neighbourhood.

Code Enforcement

Upgrading and policing of fire code by-laws are very important in retaining the safety factor in old housing stock as are minimum standards by-laws which protect and upgrade the physical aspects of buildings. They offer some important problems, however as the Winnipeg experience documents. The enforcement of the by-laws without added support systems can force loss of residential units and tenant displacement. The costs of making the necessary improvements coupled with the restrictions of rent control make it financially difficult for an owner to meet the upgrading requirements. The result can be closure and demolition of the structure.

The enforcement of housing codes has been a major tool used by communities to maintain and improve existing housing. Housing codes and their enforcement have not been well understood or applied in the past. Their application has too often been the result of public outcry against disastrous fires, decay and ugliness; and their impact, limitations and potential need to be fully considered for several reasons.

1. Housing codes apply to structures frequently built long before the development of uniform codes and standards for new construction. Particular building techniques and architectural styles have varied considerably from community to community making it difficult to implement uniform housing codes. Past experience suggests that standards and codes must reflect local conditions. Little experience however exists in this field and the literature is sparse.
2. Housing codes apply to high-income and low-income housing alike. To set uniformly high standards might exclude some people from housing opportunities. On the other hand, a low standard may condemn many people to a less-than-adequate standard of living. In most cases proper research has not been conducted to determine a true and acceptable minimum health and safety requirement.
3. Housing code enforcement does not respond well to the economics of housing management, which includes factors such as the cost and supply of money, availability and cost of materials and workmen and the "market characteristics" of each type and location of housing unit.

The vigorous enforcement of high standards will not necessarily eliminate problems. Indeed, it may create problems, such as abandonment of housing, tremendous increases in rental rates to those least able to afford higher costs, and a lack of interest and disinvestment in the property. ✓

The presumption that "hitting a slum landlord" will result in more money being spent to comply with housing codes or rehabilitation standards is an illusion that has plagued efforts to maintain and improve housing. Encouraging, assisting and supplying money for investment in existing housing are possible solutions to maintaining and improving the present stock. This includes subsidizing costs for those who cannot afford decent housing and forcing, where possible, house marketing to include provisions for code compliance.*

* Arnold J. Rosemeyer, Housing Development Officer, Cincinnati, Ohio - from a paper given at the Housing Rehabilitation Conference, Montreal, 1973.

Receivership Programs

If an intensive code enforcement program fails to produce owner repairs, a municipality in the United States can petition the courts to appoint a receiver. This receiver makes those repairs necessary to bring the property up to code standards, defraying his costs with the rents he collects from the property. Two examples of receivership programs follow.

1. In 1962 the New York State Legislature authorized New York City's code enforcement agency to appoint a receiver whenever a property owner refused to correct conditions that were health, safety or fire hazards. New York City's Department of Real-Estate, appointed as the receiver, would correct the code violations, using the rent it collected to reimburse its repair expenditures. In 1965, New York's receivership was strengthened by making the cost of the receiver's repairs a lien on the property's fee or title.
2. A 1965 amendment to Illinois' municipal code provided that a municipality could petition the courts to establish a receivership in cases where property owners refused to make the required code repairs. Illinois' receivership procedure differed from New York's in that the receiver could be a private body. If the property's rental income was inadequate to cover code repairs, the receiver could issue promissory notes, called receivership certificates, which would serve as a first lien on the future income and title of the property. (Listokin, 1973. p. 56.)

Health departments in Ontario often contract out the repair work needed to water and waste disposal systems endangering public health, and charge the expense to the owner's municipal tax bill.

Inspection Certification

Cincinnati requires that all sales of residential properties include a certificate of inspection. This means that all parties - seller, buyer and lender - are made aware of code violations and the need to have them corrected at the time when money is being considered. If there are violations, the seller might have to accept less, or the buyer might have to pay more. But in any case, the correction of violations is made an integral part of the sale transaction, and the costs of compliance are just as much a

sales consideration as the asking price and cost of money. This is not dissimilar to road and safety permit regulations attached to the sale of used cars in Ontario.

Service Approach to Code Enforcement

Boston has experimented with several different approaches to code enforcement. Building inspectors are oriented towards a service approach. They estimate the cost of repairs to bring code violations up to standard, make suggestions on how a householder can improve violations that do not call for expert repair, and recommend certain contractors known for good work and fair prices. Boston Housing Authority has also experimented with a tool co-op where tools and advice can be obtained to help bring violations up to standards.

The Regina City Planning Department has recently held its first workshop with citizens in an inner city neighbourhood to talk about home repair approaches.

Fire safety, health and maintenance codes can help to maintain standards, but financing by the owner is often a serious problem. Low cost, long term loans for bringing homes up to code standards are available in several American cities. The RRAP programs in Canada are helpful in their grant and loan forms.

The Issue of Conversion

Two issues which relate to the conservation of the function of a building rather than its physical form are the problems associated with condominium conversion and bachelorette conversion. Both processes involve the substitution of one form of accommodation for another at the expense of the displaced tenant.

With condominium conversion, although no actual change may occur in the number of people occupying the property, many planners and social scientists are concerned about the loss of tenant accommodation caused by the new requirement of ownership. Vancouver has found a partial solution to this dilemma by requiring that a majority of the tenants must agree to the conversion before it takes place and secondly, by requiring that owners assist the displaced tenants to find alternative accommodation.

Bachelorette conversion is a major issue in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood. Large, older homes are divided into several smaller units, usually consisting of one large room with a cooking area and a small bathroom. One house may be subdivided into as many as 20 suites, each carrying a rent of \$50 - \$60 per week. The sudden increase in density can prove very disruptive to the community. The problem of finding space for the additional automobiles is often a major complaint for surrounding single family home owners. Also of concern is the possibility that their property values will be lowered. Furthermore, there exists a real threat of fire hazard when the units are not properly wired (this often happens as the owners refrain from getting the necessary building permits) and when tenants use hot plates for their cooking facilities. Toronto is in the process of cracking down on the bachelorette issue by a thorough inspection of converted properties, the creation of minimum standards for one room accommodation, and by fining owners of illegally subdivided suites. A further preventive tactic would require that the operator have a permit to operate such residences. Several cities have passed licensing legislation to control the quality of boarding house accommodation.

Area Specific Strategies

Area specific strategies are applied to geographically defined neighbourhoods where many issues may be jeopardizing the survival of the community. Therefore, the strategies employed form a comprehensive package of programs requiring the co-ordination of several municipal departments, private lenders, businessmen and social agencies.

Neighbourhood Improvement

The predecessors of Canada's federal NIP program (which will be described in the Winnipeg context in the following chapter) were programs initiated in large American cities in the late 1960's. The following examples taken from this period of neighbourhood redevelopment illustrates the degree of co-ordination and co-operation necessary in orchestrating a neighbourhood improvement effort.

Peekskill, New York declared the Park Street area of the city a community improvement area in 1969. The neighbourhood was a racially integrated working class community with housing between 75 - 125 years old and largely owner-occupied. At the time the district contained over half of the city's dilapidated housing.

The City attracted over \$25,000,000 in federal and state aid. Code enforcement formed the basis of the program. Directed by the city's Director of Rehabilitation, inspectors checked all homes for building code violations. Homeowners were given detailed lists of the improvements required and told of low interest loans or federal grants up to \$3,500 (depending on their eligibility). The City also offered technical assistance on home repairs.

At first, new residents wishing to move into the area were unable to secure mortgage capital. City officials talked with bankers, helping to break the widespread refusal of financial institutions to lend money in these high risk areas. Since the program has gained momentum, all banks now grant funding for home improvement and mortgages. About half of the residents have used their own funds for housing improvements.

The City has substantial design control over all commercial, industrial and apartment dwellings. The City zoning ordinance requires review of all site plans by the city planner and architect. Special consideration is given to plans that will strengthen the inner-city neighbourhood.

From a total of 1,088 substandard units, the city has demolished some and aided or carried out rehabilitation on the remainder. The City and private investment have joined to build project and infill housing for all income groups, new commercial facilities, a civic centre, office space and parks. The City spent considerable funds to upgrade open space and recreational facilities as well as infrastructure improvements. A good community relations program exists to keep residents abreast of benefits and progress.

By pooling many resources the city has aided a badly declining neighbourhood to recover dramatically. House values have risen for the first time since 1964.

Non-Profit Housing and Micro Environments

The work undertaken by the City of Toronto's Non-Profit Housing Corporation may be classified as area conservation. Established in 1974, the City's non-profit housing corporation (Cityhome) and the Housing Department operate as large scale land assemblers, diversified developers and managers of rental accommodation in the City of Toronto. The major objective of the Department has

been to maintain housing options for market demands which have not been satisfied by other forces in the construction and property management field. "Those demands are for rental accommodation that is suitable and affordable for moderate income households, families with children, low income households and the traditional inner city 'roomer'" (Cityhome Report, 1979).

The non profit housing corporation meets the criterion of a conservation strategy, as every effort has been made to save low cost housing in the inner city where the vacancy rate has stood at record lows for the past five years. The earlier projects of Cityhome involved rehabilitation of entire blocks of housing, construction of new housing on infill lots as well as individual rehabilitation efforts. Cityhome solutions have consistently up-graded neighbourhoods by removing objectionable uses, taking over derelict developer assemblies, and making more productive use of existing parking and transportation lands.

The most recent examples of the corporation's work has been the creation of micro environments at the neighbourhood scale. The St. Lawrence development is a 44 acre neighbourhood built on underutilized land at the edge of the City's core. When completed it will be a new copy of the City's other central neighbourhoods, appealing to a variety of income groups and encompassing a range of services both commercial and social. St. Lawrence will provide shops, offices, schools, parking garages, theatres, cinemas as well as potential places of employment for its anticipated 10,000 inhabitants. The Frankel/Lambert development, Toronto's other current project, consists of a 20 acre assembly and will be an extension of an existing neighbourhood. Low-rise apartments, row houses, private homes, a school and parks will be designed to appeal to the middle class neighbourhood of which it forms part.

It is evident from the work found in inner city Toronto that area conservation strategies are vital in both healthy and weak housing markets.

Historic Area Conservation

A final form of area conservation to be discussed in this chapter is 'historic area conservation'. Historic area conservation differs from other area conservation strategies as it includes specific design goals in addition to the reversal of economic and social decline.]

Historic preservation areas have had a better track record than conservation for several reasons. People in all parts of the city can easily identify with historic sectors of the city, outstanding old buildings and landmarks. Many historic preservation groups have among their board members people of wealth and patrons of the arts; people with influence and power who can more easily articulate their goals to media and politicians and then put their financial support behind the effort. The business community and Chambers of Commerce are also enthusiastic about historic conservation as history is a very saleable commodity to the tourist trade. This level of responsiveness is illustrated in the following examples.

1. Montreal's Waterfront District forms 177 hectares of waterfront land near the heart of the City. Almost all the land is government owned, most of it having been reclaimed from the St. Lawrence Seaway for shipping purposes.

The area offers three natural resources which have been either neglected or underutilized in their present setting. The waterfront has been hidden from the public eye by abandoned grain elevators and dilapidated rail-house sheds. The shipping facilities have been largely replaced by newer facilities in the east end of the city. Lastly, the cultural heritage and birthplace of Old Montreal has been only partially restored as the historic, 300 year old port.

The federal government has initiated the project as a combined historic conservation/redevelopment area. A steering committee composed of CMHC, Parks Canada, the National Harbours Board, the Department of Public Works, the Province of Quebec and the City of Montreal has been formed. Their objectives are to:

1. conserve and promote Canadian cultural heritage;
2. improve living conditions and facilitate public access to the waterfront;
3. contribute to efforts for an economic recovery; and
4. maintain certain harbour functions that are congruous with the urban and historic environment.

A process of public consultation has been set up through the Vieux Port Association.

The plan, as it has been developed thus far is highly innovative and comprehensive. The first stage involves the removal of obstacles blocking the waterfront view. Some industrial paraphernalia will be recycled to provide a link with the past (e.g. rail lines will be preserved for future site seeing trains). These same rail lines may assist commuter traffic in the future. The atmosphere of the restored warehousing will be similar to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf.

The plan calls for linkages with the old World Exhibition Grounds at Expo, the development of theatre facilities and the incorporation of Habitat, one of the first experiments in vertical modular housing. Recreation facilities will include a linear parkway along Lachine Canal for bikes and cross-country skiing. It is hoped that the residential aspects of Old Montreal which lie within the historic area's plan will be revived through the conversion of old warehousing facilities into apartment units. All in all, the ambitious project will attempt to integrate history, housing, commercial development, recreation, tourism and industrial port facilities into one co-ordinated scheme.

2. America's first industrial centre was established in Paterson, New Jersey in 1791 by a group called The Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufacturers (SUM). They chose the site for the industrial area around the Great Falls.

Today the Great Falls/SUM Historic District is within walking distance of Paterson's Centre. The 89 acres include a 77 foot high waterfall, 60 historic industrial buildings, and a canal or raceway system and dams to provide power and water to adjoining industries.

In 1971 Great Falls/SUM was listed as a National Historic district. The same year the Great Falls Development Corporation (GRCD) a private non-profit membership organization formed to plan, fund and execute the restoration of the historic district.

To draw attention to the area, the organization has a guided tour service, publishes a quarterly newspaper and co-sponsors a yearly Great Falls Festival with the Chamber of Commerce.

The city applied for a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to study the inclusion in the historic district of the 25 block residential workers' housing area next to the Great Falls area. The Spanish Community Agency, comprised of the local residents is sponsoring this project that involves preservation and rehabilitation of the housing.

The GFDC is integrating the buildings and surrounding spaces into the daily life of the city. Projects include:

- recreation and open space - cleaning up the Passaic River and integrating the city park system and sports facilities with the open space along the canal and spaces in the Great Falls/SUM area.
- hydraulic system - reusing the hydraulic system including the dams and raceways and the hydroelectric plant as functional and educational resources to portray the history of energy development.
- labour and industry-- upgrading working conditions in the buildings still in use and adapting the empty buildings into housing, exhibition areas and commercial spaces as well as restoring facades.
- housing - providing desperately needed housing both sale and rental by innovative adaptation of the old industrial buildings.
- education - started the State Museum of Labour and Industry in the district - the area has buildings where the first revolver, locomotive, submarine and airplane engines were developed along with old cotton, silk and paper mills.

- started the Industrial Arts and Building Trades School which is a job training centre for skills needed and used in the restoration and rehabilitation of the historic industrial park and housing area.

Since the initial efforts of the Great Falls Development Corporation much initiative and capital has come from private individual sources to rehabilitate housing, open shops and services. What was ten years ago a decayed and underused part of the city is becoming its most exciting area, a composite area of housing, museums, recreational shops and craft workshops. The Great Falls/SUM historical conservation area is well worth studying by any city with an old declining manufacturing area.

Area conservation strategies being capital intensive and highly sophisticated in terms of their organizational requirements and program implementation, require a heavy commitment of political support, public will and intra-governmental co-operation. It is easy to understand why site and issue specific strategies, being the most tangible tactics, have been the more popular with citizen lobby groups and municipal councils. Municipal governments are better equipped to deal with the issues which can be corrected through the use of zoning, enabling legislation and various local improvement ordinances. This should not however, exclude them from the role of innovator.

The preceding work has illustrated that conservation strategies are often unique to the urban setting in which they are employed. As each city works to improve the local condition, conservation strategies are adapted to the local context. Chapter IV will serve to demonstrate the application of conservation strategies and the nature of their reception in one particular municipality, the City of Winnipeg being the case example.

CHAPTER IV

THE STATE OF CONSERVATION IN WINNIPEG

Like many other Canadian cities Winnipeg's past growth has been directed towards extensive suburban expansion and major redevelopment schemes for the downtown area. Thoughts have not been on conserving the existing architectural fabric but rather on developing an appearance of newness and largeness which have been equated with financial health and prosperity.

For more than two decades, Winnipeg's older inner city environments have suffered neglect because of this growth ethic. However, a three-pronged movement began in the 1970's and is serving to promote preservation. Key elements in this movement include:

1. heritage conservation in Winnipeg's Historic Warehouse District;
2. government subsidized improvement through the introduction of the NIP and RRAP program; and
3. the beginnings of neighbourhood planning through the creation of a district planning branch of the Department of Environmental Planning.

These changes are significant, although only very recently has a broadly based area conservation policy been developed for Winnipeg. Very little visible improvement has occurred in older inner city neighbourhoods, other than individual efforts of the Neighbourhood Improvement Branch. The city has only recently begun to express a commitment to conservation. However, the process of implementation has been disappointingly ad hoc with little real success so far.

This chapter discusses six experimental strategies which have been tried in Winnipeg, beginning with the Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area. These strategies have had very different objectives, some never having been considered as conservation techniques by the city. It is evident from these examples that there has been both a policy void and general lack of political will for the development of a strong conservation orientation in Winnipeg. However, beginning with the 1978 Winnipeg Area Characterization Study and continuing to the recently approved Housing and Neighbourhood Strategies, a trend towards a conservation policy can be seen.

1. The Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area

In the heart of the city, just north of Portage and Main, lies Winnipeg's Historic Warehouse District. Once the financial, commercial and wholesaling hub of the city, the area remains the only designated heritage conservation area in Winnipeg. It represents the combined efforts of the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, the Old Market Square Association*, the Manitoba Historical Society and Heritage Canada. Their work has included the preparation of appropriate legislation for the area's preservation, the acquisition and restoration of buildings and their conversion to shops, restaurants and cultural facilities, imaginative streetscaping, the development of an outdoor market and the promotion of the historic character through such ventures as walking tours, posters and advertising.

One of the first attempts to stimulate interest in the Warehouse Area was the 1974 publication of the Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area Study by the Department of Environmental Planning of the City of Winnipeg. The planners examined the possibilities of recycling the unusual urban spaces found around and between the warehouse structures and made various proposals for facelifting the facades and improving the sidewalk environment for pedestrians. For the most part, the report received little interest or support from either the public or property owners.

* The Old Market Square Association is a non-profit corporation composed of independent merchants and businessmen in the Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area whose objectives are to promote and encourage the rejuvenation of the district known as Old Market Square.

The next signs of interest occurred concurrently. In 1975 Heritage Canada, which had been seeking to support a Winnipeg project, commissioned the Manitoba Historical Society to undertake a feasibility study of the warehouse district. The investigation resulted in a contribution of \$500,000 from Heritage Canada which went towards the purchase of one of the warehouses. The intention was to provide a stimulating example that might inspire other restorations. The warehouse would be restored and sold, and resale money would go into a revolving fund for acquiring and renovating other properties. At the same time, the City's report sparked the interest of a few entrepreneurs who imagined a Winnipeg version of Yorkville, Gastown or Old Montreal. A handful of new property owners, committed to this vision, moved into the district and began to transform the buildings. This involvement of private investment was instrumental in establishing neighbourhood confidence in a previously derelict quarter of the downtown. The catalyst for a viable, new and trendy commercial area had been formed.

Public investment in the area has also been substantial. Heritage Canada's involvement had been contingent upon matching grants from the province, the establishment of heritage protection legislation, and a similar financial contribution from the city. To meet this offer, the province committed \$100,000 for five years towards a general fund for the restoration area and the City of Winnipeg provided \$800,000 in streetscaping and hiring staff to implement the conservation area plan and develop the necessary legislation. In addition to the above, the Old Market Square Association contributed \$80,000 for the development of the outdoor market park and facilities.

In response to the requirement of producing protective legislation, the City instituted two municipal by-laws. The Design Control By-law #2048/78 controls the materials and colours used on the exterior of new and renovated buildings within the boundaries of the restoration area to ensure compatibility of design. The by-law furthermore prohibits certain land uses and regulates building heights. Before a building permit is issued for any development within the historic district, the owner must have a Certificate of Appropriateness certified by the architectural advisory board. The City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings By-law #1474 - 1977, enables the Historic Buildings Advisory Committee, established through the by-law, to draw up a list of buildings or structures of significant architectural or historic interest. The listing procedure contains a categorization system whereby buildings are

ranked from I to IV depending on the degree of their significance to the City. Grade I buildings are to be preserved in perpetuity whereas grade IV have demolition regulations with provision for the photographic recording of special features. Buildings are listed on the recommendation of the Historic Buildings Advisory Committee and approved by City Council.

Despite progressive legislation, there have been some implementation problems in the form of delays and hesitancy in listing buildings within the restoration area. Uncooperative owners see this as the time to demolish their properties before possible restrictions are created on their freedom to decide the future of their property. There is no insurance that buildings within the district will be saved. Only two structures have been designated and the planners therefore are relying heavily on the owners' commitment to the plan. There is an attitude on the part of the planners that the public sector has done all it can afford to do. The rest will be left to the initiative of the owners, the business community and the public.

The Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area is an interesting case of conservation in Winnipeg. The objectives of the program have been to preserve the architectural integrity of the district and improve and upgrade the area. There has been no opposition to the present wholesale and warehousing landuses but rather an attitude of flexible adaptability. To encourage reinvestment it was necessary to create an attractive and profitable atmosphere. This has been partly achieved by ensuring that vacant offices and retail spaces become occupied and that cosmetic improvements to the buildings are made.

The advantages of the historic warehousing district to the City are numerous; it represents a commercial rejuvenation; it will serve as a new attraction for the convention businessmen and the tourist industry. To real estate investors it means potential gains in rental space on a square footage basis after renovation. To the City Council it results in increased land assessment for the area and positive evidence of capital reinvestment in a previously declining part of the downtown.

The Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area is a healthy combination of public and private investment. Long range goals having been established, there exists a landuse plan with a logical development objective of linking the downtown to the city's cultural facilities and the civic offices via the parallel historic corridors.

Municipal departments have co-ordinated their expertise and co-operated with the business interest groups in the area. Most importantly, City Council has displayed political willingness to support this endeavor. In effect, the historic restoration of the warehouse district has witnessed a concerted municipal effort to bring about a conservation experience in Winnipeg.

In terms of a neighbourhood conservation strategy, the historic area has not been markedly progressive. Spatially, the area is too narrowly defined to be considered a neighbourhood. The issue of restoration has similarly considered only commercial and cultural land uses in its adaptable reuse scheme. Hence the promotion of the area has been purely on aesthetic, business and tourism grounds. The area could also be promoted as a neighbourhood and, as such, a component of the entire network of inner city neighbourhoods. For example, while retaining the specialized Historic Warehouse District and the attendant by-laws, the City could link the district to a neighbourhood strategy having a residential component. Such a strategy would encourage 24 hour pedestrian traffic; not only client traffic but resident traffic. Warehouses could be converted to apartment suites and lofts. The objective would be to retain the vitality of the area on a year round basis rather than relying on the seasonal and temporal fluctuations of the tourist trade and lunch hour shoppers.

A second problem entails the lack of policy, at the city-wide scale. The City has been short sighted in its development of a commercial growth option. At present, commercial development appears wherever the desire and pressure to build exists. Hence, the city's commercial strength is fragmented by the inundation of suburban shopping malls, the expansion of the downtown Eatons store, and long range plans to extend the commercial center of the city to the south around the Convention Center and the boutique strip of Osborne Village. Such competition in a slow growth economy is not going to provide the Warehousing District with the stimulus it will need to retain its self-sufficiency solely as a specialized shopping district.

In terms of public spending the warehousing area has had a very generous share of the public purse and private initiative is well able to carry the project through to completion. The municipality's effectiveness can continue to be exercised through its powers over policy planning and land use controls. Such powers are best executed on a neighbourhood scale.

2. Anti-Demolition Legislation

Demolition control as a means of saving structurally sound buildings in Winnipeg has been a popular action demanded by conservation lobbyists. In response to pressure by heritage conservationists, an anti-demolition by-law now exists (By-law #2032/78) to protect those buildings listed on the Buildings' Conservation List. Using the grading system described earlier, a building may be classified as:

- grade 1 - may not be demolished;
- grade 2 - the exterior of the building and interior elements specified in the listing may not be demolished;
- grade 3 - unnecessary demolition and alteration will be prevented; however, demolition may be authorized
- grade 4 - the demolition will be regulated, although it may take place if authorized by a certificate of suitability.

Although the listing of buildings is city-wide, Council's guideline limits consideration of listed structures to the Albert Street Restoration Area.

The major area of dissatisfaction with the legislation is that the demolition controls do not apply to structures other than historic buildings. The test case for this interpretation was the Alexandria Block.

The Alexandria Block was an old apartment building graded as 3 in terms of its architectural significance. It was located at a prime downtown site between two major retail anchors, the Bay and Eaton's. For many years the building had been rented for both office space and apartment suites. When the owners announced their intention to redevelop the property, the Historical Building Committee requested that they consider restoration of the existing structure. A feasibility study showed that conservation was not the most economical alternative. At the same time tenants of the building were organizing to fight their eviction notices. The issue, when it reached Council for approval of the listing designation became an embroilment over architectural preservation versus the preservation of inner city housing. Both were critical issues for the City. However, it was not the intention of the legislation to preserve residential structures simply for the sake of housing. As the Alexandria Block was only a recommended grade 3 listing the decision of Council was to not list the Alexandria Block in order to save the credibility of the legislation for more crucial fights.

Council has recently (1979) passed a motion to amend the City of Winnipeg Act to allow demolition control over multiple unit residential buildings. The control procedure would be the withholding of demolition permits. Council is now waiting for provincial approval.

The opposition to anti-demolition legislation is encouraged by federal taxation laws which promote demolition over renovation. Through demolition owners often avoid getting caught in depreciating a building's value beyond the actual depreciation in order to claim higher tax deductions. If an owner demolishes he may claim the entire market value of the building at tax time and spread this amount over a number of years to render other income free of taxation. To prevent unnecessary demolition from occurring, federal legislation must first remove the incentive to tear down a building. ✓

In the meantime, the City should better prepare for the eventuality of receiving permission to withhold demolition permits. First, the city should increase the severity of the penalty for contravention of the present anti-demolition by-law. The penalties for demolishing a listed building without the necessary certification amount to a \$1,000.00 fine and/or 6 months in jail for an individual property owner and a \$5,000.00 fine for a corporation. The fines are insignificant in light of the tax concession motives of some owners. Secondly, the City should enunciate the strategy for the implementation of the multiple residential demolition control by-law. Site specific demolition alone cannot serve as an effective conservation technique. However, when combined with a district plan or an existing program such as neighbourhood improvement, its impact on raising the sense of security in a neighbourhood will be far more evident. ✓

3. Municipal Code Enforcement

The City of Winnipeg is second only to Montreal in terms of the age and poor condition of its housing stock. As older residential structures have aged further, their condition has deteriorated and tenant health and safety has been threatened; the casualty rate of residences has increased. The City has opted to act in response to this concern largely by enforcing stringent minimum standards and fire safety by-laws. One unintended result of this program has been to accelerate the rate of residential closings and demolitions. ✓ Since 1972, demolitions and closings of multiple units precipitated primarily by City Health Department orders, the Apartment Upgrading by-law orders and fires have totalled over 1,700 units.

The Residential Upgrading By-law, the major precipitating agent leading to closure and demolition was created in response to a series of fatal apartment block fires. Significant public pressure was placed on the Fire Department and City Council to act quickly to improve fire safety in older buildings. Subsequently 18 guidelines for fire safety improvements were approved by Council. In the interim, two other disastrous fires occurred. Tremendous public pressure was then placed on Council to expedite the inspection program, to close down those buildings posing the greatest fire threat and accelerate the upgrading of all rental premises.

The guidelines of the by-law included such measures as automatic fire alarm systems, two independent exits from each suite, interior surfaces of fire resistant ratings, emergency lighting and the installation of fire doors. Owners were expected to comply by having all improvements in place within one year of the date of the order issued. Buildings were inspected in chronological order, oldest buildings first.

Since the measures were drawn from the Manitoba and National Building Codes, and present day code requirements are considerably more stringent than those in effect when the old apartments were built, the cost of upgrading frequently was high in relation to the value of the buildings.

In many cases, landlords claimed with justification that they could not carry the cost of such repairs and continue to make a return on their investment. The existence of rent controls had worsened the landlord's position. In many cases the buildings were over-financed, with the result that, should the owners default on their mortgages because of losing money annually, mortgage lenders were left with assets worth less than the value of the mortgage investment. This caused a vicious circle with lending institutions reluctant to make loans for mortgages or improvements to the owners of older apartment buildings because of the age of the buildings, the inability of the improvements to generate future income and the uncertain future of the declining older neighbourhoods. The spectre of wholesale abandonments, particularly in poorer areas, became a reality.

Older apartment buildings, built prior to 1940, constitute a significant component of Winnipeg's housing stock. In total they comprise approximately 54% of the city's total rental accommodation constructed prior to 1940 (C.M.H.C. survey of Housing Units, 1974). Later research has shown that older inner city rental units have a much lower vacancy rate than the city average and do not appear to be facing the high vacancy crisis of new developments. As these

Older units can be considered synonymous with low-income units, closure and demolition of these buildings removes the irreplaceable, unsubsidized housing stock of low income households and forces those unable to afford alternative accommodation to seek public assistance.

The closing and placarding of older apartment buildings in the inner city has served to further undermine the already weakened neighbourhood stability. Unkempt properties detract from the appearance of surrounding real estate rendering them unmeritable or unmortgageable. The abandoned units are prone to vandalism and invite arson and as such are a threat to the abutting properties.

The problem of apartment loss has been addressed in this paper because a conservation technique was sought as the solution to health and fire safety. The code enforcement strategy was a conservation strategy in that it was intended to extend the life of the structures. An issue specific strategy was applied to one aspect of the problem. However, more than one issue was at stake. By narrowing the scope to fire safety, the city ignored the impact of enforcement on the economics of the housing market, rent controls, vacancy rates and federal and provincial housing policies.

The requirements of the code enforcement program meant the extensive reconstruction of rental properties. Because of the attendant costs, the program should have been enforced in conjunction with rehabilitation grants and neighbourhood conservation. "Where successful apartment rehabilitation has taken place in Canada, notably in Toronto and Montreal, the major causative factors have been:

1. significant assistance being made available by the City and Province; and
2. aggressive municipally-run programs focusing on co-ordinated neighbourhood action." (Courage, p. 152)

As a conservation strategy, code enforcement, unless applied in concert with additional strategies and a sound policy direction, may result in unanticipated consequences. ✓

4. The Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation

In 1973 the federal government amended the National Housing Act to create a program for the development of private and municipal non-profit and co-operative housing corporations to house low to moderate income households. The objective of the program was to offer a wide range of financial assistance to encourage public and community participation in the development and provision of low-income rental housing. In 1978 the program was further revised to shift more responsibility for the administration of the program to provincial and municipal hands. Due to new funding arrangements units could now be produced with lower break-even rents than previously possible.

Municipal action in non-profit housing was encouraged because it ensured increased municipal control over the type, location and social composition of assisted rental housing developments. The municipality could link its housing program with physical planning and attempt to meet the neighbourhood concerns of local residents. The program minimized the municipal operating and capital expenses because the municipality did not have to make a permanent capital contribution which would affect its borrowing status, and as the projects were break-even, minimal local revenue was required for on-going expenses. Buildings acquired by a non-profit organization were eligible for RRAP funding whether or not they were located within a NIP neighbourhood. By combining municipal planning authority with a city owned non-profit corporation, neighbourhoods could be upgraded by removing objectionable uses, taking over derelict developer assemblies, and making more productive use of existing underutilized lands.

Within this enlightened atmosphere of federal/provincial/municipal co-operation, the City of Winnipeg proposed a five year program for the institution of a municipal non-profit rehabilitation housing corporation. The acquired properties, which were to amount to 400 units, were to be for rent or resale. Section 15.1 of the National Housing Act was to be used to lower costs for the rental properties and a revolving fund was to be set up for the resale properties. Full recovery was expected after five years. The corporation was intended to fill the gap left by other levels of government which had not addressed the option of recycling existing housing units. Council accepted the establishment of the municipal non-profit housing corporation in October 1977.

One year later, with a new council in place, the City voted to abandon the new municipal corporation. Stated reasons for this move included: the cost of the resale houses would be too high for low income earners; the number of houses to be renovated per year would be insignificant; the City should stay out of the housing business due to its limited property tax base; taxes should be used to provide essential services. With regard to the anticipated change in the federal government, there was also concern that federal and provincial funding might be withdrawn thus leaving the City with all the expenses.

The City's decision to dissolve the non-profit housing corporation was a serious blow to the future of residential conservation. The private sector has been hesitant to enter the field of residential rehabilitation. * Municipal activity in this regard may have demonstrated the viability of such undertakings. The corporation would have provided the opportunity to combine the knowledge of the district planners, the neighbourhood improvement staff and the property department. Most important, the municipal non-profit housing corporation would have been evidence of the City's concern for its inner city environment. The activity of rehabilitation by the City may have altered the attitude of private lenders who are presently unwilling to experiment in the financing of home improvements in some declining areas of the inner city.

5. District Planning

The District Planning Branch is the body within the City's planning administration best equipped to undertake neighbourhood planning and advocate neighbourhood conservation strategies. It was initially established in 1973 as the division responsible for the preparation of 'district plans' and 'action area plans'.

There are three levels of area plans as defined by the City of Winnipeg Act:

1. the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan;
2. the District Plan; and
3. the Action Area Plan.

*Institute of Urban Studies, Inner City Housing Study, 1979. Interviews with developers revealed a hesitancy to become involved in an unproven market.

The Development Plan acts as the long range policy plan for the entire city and the additional lands. The District Plans are plans for an area within the city and the additional zone which formulate proposals for the development and use of the land and descriptions of the measures which should be undertaken for the improvement of the physical, social, economic environment, and transportation within the district. An Action Area Plan is a subset of the District Plan. It is a statement of the City's policies, proposals and programs for the comprehensive treatment of a specified area over a period of time. The treatment might consist of development, redevelopment or improvement. It is at this level of planning activity that the District Planners are most capable of developing a neighbourhood conservation scheme. However, since the creation of the District Planning Branch, six action area plans have been drafted and only two have been adopted by Council.

The River Osborne Action Area Plan might be defined as a neighbourhood conservation plan. The area is one of several older residential neighbourhoods surrounding the downtown and is subject to pressure for redevelopment because of its age and location. The mix of residential unit types ranging from single family houses and spacious apartments to boarding houses and nursing homes provides a rich diversity in the population. Redevelopment in the area has caused considerable concern as the area has experienced increased traffic and parking congestion, diminished open space, commercial encroachment and redevelopment with high rise, high density apartment blocks. The area residents, responding to several major redevelopment proposals for their community arrived at a common perception of the neighbourhood's growing problems and subsequently requested and received civic approval to initiate an action area plan. The neighbourhood objective was to conserve the diverse low to medium density living environment characteristic of the neighbourhood and to prevent further disruption of the neighbourhood ambience.

Strategies employed by the district planners to protect the neighbourhood consisted of the development of policies to encourage the rehabilitation of existing dwellings within the area and to ensure that necessary new development would conform to the existing ranges of scale and density. New development and rehabilitation were to be controlled through height and density regulations. In addition, special programs within the municipality's jurisdiction were recommended. These included:

1. the down zoning of lands to reflect existing land uses;
2. use of the zoning by-law to regulate incompatibility;
3. the classification of incompatible uses as non-conforming uses;
4. the provision of buffers between incompatible uses;
5. the adoption and enforcement of a minimum maintenance by-law; and
6. property acquisition by the City where necessary.

Each of these programs had little cost to the City other than administrative expenditures.

The River Osborne Plan, begun in 1973, was not adopted by Council until six years later. Pressures for development in the neighbourhood, political filibustering, and conflicting neighbourhood interest amongst property owners contributed to the delay. In addition, the approval process was tediously time consuming.

The River Osborne Action Area Plan as approved by Council has been considerably altered from the original concept. None of the proposed programs was accepted other than the height and density regulations. The remaining recommendations were merely affixed as an appendix. The land development height and density regulations were adopted as policy but have no legislated power through zoning. The entire area will have to be rezoned to give the plan any strength. It is too early to tell if the programmatic strategies, when and if they are implemented, will in fact protect the neighbourhood.

Since its inception, the District Planning Branch has assumed new responsibilities and gradually divorced itself from the role of district and action area plan facilitator. The staff complement operate more like a current operations division executing rezoning applications, variance approvals and drafting by-law amendments. ✓ The district planners are assigned to the politically defined community committee areas.

Recently the staff district planners have developed an "area characterization package" which provides social, demographic, physical and economic information on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis, the objective being to have a data bank for internal policy decisions and recommendations. The neighbourhoods are classified as conservation, rehabilitation, stable, major improvement, redevelopment and industrial. On the basis of this study, a set of Housing and Neighbourhood Strategies have recently been developed and adopted to maintain and enhance the quality of individual neighbourhoods and their housing stock throughout Winnipeg. The neighbourhood characterization will also serve to co-ordinate municipal services at the neighbourhood level, particularly in older neighbourhoods. Thus street lighting,

sidewalk improvements and road reconstruction may in future be accomplished within a spatial context. Additionally it will serve to provide the necessary documents to solicit senior government funding for major improvements and rehabilitation.

The district planners will no longer be involved in the production of action area plans unless one is requested by Council, a very unlikely situation for the following reasons. It is believed that Council would only request such a project to prevent something rather than to protect something. The general attitude of Council is that action area plans are costly to produce and that implementation requires a package of programs which cannot be delivered by the municipality because of financial constraints. Lastly, action area plans are felt to be too rigid. Once legislated, they are difficult to amend should the dynamics of the neighbourhood demand a change.

While the 'area characterization' approach may have less apparent legal force than the action area plan, this approach is not without its merits. The rigid and lengthy, yet ultimately largely ineffectual action area planning process as seen in the River-Osborne case may be avoided. Moreover, developing characterizations on a city wide basis may lead to a more consistent approach to the problems of the inner city, while retaining the flexibility needed to identify the issues facing individual neighbourhoods. Although the characterizations themselves offer no prescriptions, they can be used as the basis for the development of a coherent strategy that confronts the problems identified by the area characterizations. With the adoption of the Housing and Neighbourhood Strategies, developed as a result of the area characterization study, Winnipeg has moved towards a more coherent conservation strategy which may not have been possible if the previous action area planning approach had been maintained. In the end what matters more in obtaining effective conservation results is the municipal attitude towards, and the support given to individual neighbourhoods in need of conservation action. This may well be better achieved through responsive 'informal' plans and strategies (as seen in the area characterization approach) than through the formal, but less responsive, action area and district planning process.

6. The Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and the Use of RRAP Funding

It may be argued that the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) are not conservation strategies because their raison d'etre is to improve declining neighbourhoods rather than conserve stable neighbourhoods.

To adhere to such a rigid definition would mean that a community would have to be almost uniformly healthy to be worthy of a conservation plan. However, through the utilization of NIP and RRAP funding, it is possible to prepare a neighbourhood so that it is ready for the implementation of conservation strategies. The Neighbourhood Improvement Program has therefore been included in this chapter due to its objective to save or improve upon the socio-economic status of the neighbourhood, to limit out-migration of residents and to instill an interest in future maintenance of the community.

RRAP and NIP were jointly formulated to provide a dual thrust toward preservation and rejuvenation in inner city areas and their relationship was structured with the intention that each would reinforce the other. NIP was designed to provide funds for citizen participation, to develop a more responsive planning process and to upgrade local services and social facilities. RRAP was designed to assist individual property owners to rehabilitate their properties by means of grants and loans and thus increase the useful life of their dwellings.

The City of Winnipeg has so far nine designated areas for neighbourhood improvement treatment using the funding provided by NIP and its successor, the Community Services Grant Program. Of these nine areas, improvement programs have been essentially completed in two neighbourhoods, North Point Douglas and Centennial, while programs are in various stages of implementation in another six. Under NIP itself some \$22.6 million has been, or will soon be, invested in the first six designated NIP areas with an additional \$2.7 million going towards 814 housing units slated for rehabilitation under the RRAP program. Area improvement funding now comes from CSGP as part of annual block grant to the City of Winnipeg and so far \$1 million per area has been committed to the three most recently designated areas for 1980. Thus planned expenditure on neighbourhood improvement in Winnipeg has now reached a total of nearly \$26 million.

North Point Douglas, the first NIP area in the city has been described by CMHC as 'an ideal NIP neighbourhood'. The site office staff complement includes physical and economic planners, an architect, a social worker, a community development officer, draftsmen and clerical staff. Administration of the overall program is conducted from the central City Planning offices.

To advertise their existence and introduce the area residents to the program, the NIP staff blitzed the North Point Douglas area with information about the RRAP grants and loans. Secondly the Maintenance and Occupancy By-law was enforced to pressure the homeowners to utilize the RRAP funds. A neighbourhood committee was elected to identify the concerns of the people which would be incorporated into the neighbourhood plan. The NIP staff served as

resource persons to liase between the City and the citizens. This role was later assisted by the formation of a civic advisory committee of representatives of nine civic departments. The NIP staff met regularly with the advisory committee and thus aided in the co-ordinated delivery of municipal services. The monies allocated to the area were used for street lighting, street reconstruction, sidewalks, tot lots, the acquisition of deficient factory lands and the publication of a community newspaper.

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program for the North Point Douglas area is at present winding down as its five year program term approaches completion. The area has shown significant improvement both physically and in terms of the development of neighbourhood confidence and local autonomy. There are some indications that people are improving their homes independently as a result of the visible improvements to the area. Up to 21% of the homeowners and 27% of the landlords are contributing capital (on top of their RRAP loans) towards rehabilitation (CMHC, 1977, p. 143). House prices are rising but not in excess of city wide market rates. Hence, the area is not evolving to a higher income strata, thus shifting the low income housing problem somewhere else.

The federal government has committed money for the NIP program until 1982 when the most recently designated neighbourhoods will have been in operation for five years. At present the NIP staff are going through a transitional period, putting their energies into the newer NIP neighbourhoods and evaluating future financial assistance to further the program beyond 1982. The City, through its neighbourhood characterization work has designated future neighbourhoods for major improvement in anticipation of federal funds. Future improvement programs will have to be funded under the new federal block grant, the Community Services Grant Program, in which neighbourhood improvement forms only one of ten categories under the granting system. The city will have to prepare a budget outlining its needs for municipal servicing and the 10 categories. Despite fears that this may lead to a downgrading of the importance of neighbourhood improvement, this has not been proven to be the case so far in Winnipeg. The funding allocations from the block grant that have been given to neighbourhood improvement in 1980 show that the city's commitment to intensive area improvement continues at a level similar to that which existed when NIP was in operation. As the neighbourhood improvement category of CSGP does not call for citizen participation, there is, however, cause for concern that the educational and community site office functions of the the program may not be retained.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the NIP programming, it is hoped that the neighbourhood committees, having been left to stand on their own, will continue to serve as the voice of the neighbourhood in their quest for municipal support.

In retrospect the NIP and RRAP programs have been successful in saving deteriorating neighbourhoods from incipient decline and through the community development process educating residents to help themselves. However, the problem of declining inner city neighbourhoods in Winnipeg extends beyond the needs of nine areas. There are highly tenanted districts which have not qualified for NIP assistance due to the low proportion of owner occupants. There are no reinforcement mechanisms to take over in a completed NIP area to ensure that the elevated quality of life remains as such. It would appear that the federal retreat from the program leaves the City with the job half done and little assured long-term financial help to continue such programs.

A CMHC Neighbourhood Improvement Evaluation Study summarized the Winnipeg experience with the following:

"the study team concluded that despite the municipality's intent on providing support to the inner city, the municipality would not have become involved in neighbourhood improvement if Federal funds had not been available." (CMHC, case study no. 411, p.4.)

The NIP program has been heavily indulgent of the public purse. As a municipal program, it would not have been supported. With the removal of NIP there is a real fear that the City will see rehabilitation and conservation as excessively costly. In the negotiation for Community Services Grant Program funding there is a possibility that neighbourhood improvement will be sacrificed for the sake of other activities (i.e. roads and sewers), although this has not been the case so far. Furthermore, it will be difficult to justify concentrated spending on any one area of a city when each of 26 council members will be looking to show visual evidence of their activities within their own constituencies. The City must have alternative sources of funding over and above their municipal tax base to ensure that declining neighbourhoods may be brought up to standards where they are suitable for conservation policies and programs.

By looking at the conservation successes and failures of a particular city, the political realities of conservation become clear. Conservation has not been valued in the same light as redevelopment and construction. From the preceding six cases of conservation strategies it is possible to separate the projects which have met with greater municipal co-operation, public acceptance and the support of private industry.

Area specific strategies exemplified in the Historic Winnipeg Restoration Area, the Neighbourhood Improvement Program and Action Area Planning have been more successful than the issue specific strategies of anti-demolition, non-profit housing and code enforcement. With a defined spatial area, a co-ordinated delivery of municipal services is possible. A community of interests is reached including the business community, local residents, ward aldermen and the private investor. Perhaps the visual benefits to the neighbourhood are more easily appreciated when they can be concentrated.

Programs where federal money has been involved have received much greater support from municipal council. This is a natural function of our centralized taxation system and the municipal spending constraints dictated by the limited property tax base.

Finally, conservation is given a healthy boost when the project fulfills the aspirations of public, political and private sector will. This unanimous support is clearly evident in the Old Market Square Development.

The free enterprise side of Winnipeg will never be committed to conservation unless it changes its interpretation of health and vitality to include continuity as well as growth. Conservation is unpopular because it does not represent new employment opportunities, a growing construction industry, spatial expansion and new development. There is no enthusiasm for conservation except where it can be made marketable. Alternatively, enthusiasm has to be generated from the City administration. However, even in this respect, energies appear to be waning as government support for conservation dwindles. These and other problems will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The previous chapter has illustrated how the best plans and good intentions for the development of conservation projects in a city can be ineffective without the prerequisites of private market interest, public will, political will and neighbourhood confidence. It has illustrated that where there is resistance to conservation associated with property market mechanisms, large infusions of federal capital have been called upon to remedy the situation. Furthermore, when conservation has been politically unacceptable because of parochial tensions, the issue has been removed to the federal arena. This very reliance on external funding may have allowed the City of Winnipeg to relax its involvement in developing conservation models and to avoid using planning tools already available.

A city actually has considerable leverage in the protection of conservable neighbourhoods. One comprehensive planning framework that has been used elsewhere to integrate a variety of programs in older neighbourhoods is the notion of a "conservation district". The objective of a neighbourhood conservation district is to create an overall climate which encourages a process of slow, incremental improvement of the existing housing stock and social-physical infrastructure of a neighbourhood. In theory this is accomplished by drawing upon the specific strengths of a particular area and by manipulating a variety of forces to influence decisions of individuals and public and private agencies, living or operating in the area. The plan involves the provision of incentives and disincentives to encourage individuals and organizations to make decisions that will allow achievement of overall planning objectives.

Before discussing programs for conservation districts, it is wise to first explore the process of neighbourhood change and look at policies that may constrain the negative forces of decline and promote the positive forces of revitalization. Secondly, the programs must fit the most suitable neighbourhood type and be sensitive to the stages of neighbourhood transition, e.g. conservation is not a strategy one would apply to a neighbourhood that had passed beyond the stage of serious decline.

Neighbourhood Change

Some common findings have emerged from the plethora of research on neighbourhood change and they are relevant to the study of conservation and its application to the neighbourhood scale.*

Neighbourhoods are continually in a state of flux due to the decisions of the individual property owners in their weighing of the costs and benefits of retaining a vested interest in the area. Planning interventions such as a road widening that reduces the size of a yard and causes major noise and pollution problems, or a decision by a developer to locate a high-rise in the immediate vicinity causing shadow and light problems will cause an acceleration in the rate of natural change. Change, however, must be regarded as a process. All neighbourhoods fall somewhere along such a continuum in terms of improving or declining.

In a stable neighbourhood, property is maintained and residents protect their territory by organizing against undesirable changes. People move in and move out, buildings age, the income mix may slightly increase or decrease but the overall character of the neighbourhood remains intact. The neighbourhood is free from invasion of new residential land uses, and high density housing. Housing is marketable for its reproduction cost.

Change in the direction of improvement may be attributable to location to downtown or proximity to various aesthetic resources. Property values exceed the value of an existing structure resulting in pressure to redevelop land to recoup the maximum investment potential. There may also occur a filtering up process often associated with 'whitepainting' where, through the rehabilitation of properties, property values escalate artificially.

*Grigsby, Sternlieb, Levin, Quigly and Ahlbrant, to name a few have made the study of neighbourhood change their life's work. Hence a multiplicity of theories exist which explain the many processes involved in neighbourhood change. For purposes of brevity no attempt has been made to reiterate the findings of these scholars.

Change in the direction of improvement may be attributable to proximity to downtown or to various aesthetic resources. Property values may exceed the value of an existing structure resulting in pressure to redevelop land to recoup the maximum investment potential. There may also occur a filtering up process often associated with 'whitepainting' where, through the rehabilitation of properties, property values escalate artificially.

At the other end of the spectrum is neighbourhood deterioration. Ahlbrant (1975) has identified six forces that contribute to neighbourhood decline:

1. economic terms - an absolute decrease in the number of people wanting to live in the area and a reduction in the income of the new population;
2. deferral of maintenance and repair expenditures;
3. difficulty in obtaining mortgage financing as confidence in the future vitality of the neighbourhood lessens;
4. neighbourhood aging - older stock necessitates higher per unit expenditures as a result of technological and functional obsolescence;
5. decline of municipal and neighbourhood services;
6. activities of the public sector erode the community, i.e. transportation corridors, condemnation of dwellings.

Neighbourhood Characteristics Associated With Housing Condition and Market

It is important that planners and decision makers have a sound knowledge of housing conditions and market trends to develop conservation and revitalization strategies appropriate to a city's various housing market situations. Goetze (1976) provides an excellent framework whereby public programs and municipal actions can be tailored to specific dynamic neighbourhood markets. For his analysis, neighbourhood change has been translated via the operation of the property and housing market. His concepts have been used as a basis for developing the ideas that follow.

✓ A more thorough knowledge of housing conditions is the starting point for effective housing preservation. As an alternative to the conventional building conditions windshield survey, Goetze cites the method of appraisal used by the City of Boston. To develop some standards for judging housing conditions, the research staff of the Boston Rehabilitation Authority joined with rehabilitation specialists of the city's Housing Inspection Department to develop indices of housing quality as measured by the varying amounts of resources required to bring units up to the city minimum code standards. Houses were rated in terms of the dollar costs to bring them up to standard. A building in good condition would be graded at \$10,000.00. The entire housing stock for the City of Boston has been evaluated in this way. When this information is coded and mapped, distinctive neighbourhoods of differing housing quality emerge.

The second major indicator of the health of the housing stock is related to the strength of the housing market, "the balance between the number of households trying to move into, stay, or leave an area". (Goetze, 1976, p. 30). Market indicators, although not as easily quantifiable as rehabilitation costs, may come from objective data such as housing sales values and totals per neighbourhood, rent levels and vacancy rates. Attitudinal information solicited from lenders, realtors, city agencies, owners and residents must be probed to gauge the market. From these sources it is possible to determine differing market areas; strong market areas have more households wishing to live in the area than there are available units; stable neighbourhoods exist where supply and demand balance out; and weak market areas are those with many dwellings available and few households seeking to remain.

A matrix results from combining the housing condition dimension with the market perception dimension (See figure 1). The cells identify some of the symptoms associated with different types of neighbourhoods. From the matrix three major neighbourhood types emerge; rising market neighbourhoods, stable neighbourhoods, and declining neighbourhoods.

Figure 1

Neighbourhood Characteristics Associated With Market/Condition Classifications

		Market Perception			
		Rising	Stable	Declining	Rapidly Declining
Housing Condition	Good Minor Repairs	G/R - rising values - rising rents	G/S - ideal neighbourhood		
	Fair Moderate Repairs	F/R - reverse filtration - absentees taking over - existing tenants being displaced - speculation	F/S - housing deterioration - aging of housing stock - low turnover	F/D - blockbusting - unrealistic expectations - arterial or industrial blight - racial fears - redlining	
	Poor Major Repairs		P/S - market 'bottomed out' - some abandonment - realistic expectations	P/D - abandonment - foreclosure - multi-problems - redlining	P/RD - firebombing - wholesale disaster

SOURCE: Goetze, Rolf, Building Neighbourhood Confidence, Figure 3-6, p. 35.

Conservation Strategies Tailored to Neighbourhood Dynamics

The cost of maintaining and upgrading is a function of condition; but the incentive to do so depends in many cases on the strength of housing demand and the change in the market value resulting from upgrading. A market perceived by key actors as rising differs sharply from one seen as declining, and their future, even for superficially similar neighbourhoods with essentially the same housing condition, will differ widely. (Goetze, 1976. p. 31.)

Conservation strategies must recognize the conditions of the housing and/or property markets. As stated earlier, conservation is not an appropriate strategy for all older neighbourhoods. It is likely to be most effective in a stable community in good to fair condition. Rising market areas will need protective programs as well as conservation strategies. Improvement programs will be necessary where housing conditions are fair to poor, and, should the neighbourhood stabilize after such efforts, conservation programs might be employed. Declining neighbourhoods will require direct housing assistance, some having declined beyond hope for rejuvenation. (See figure 2).

1. Rising Market Neighbourhoods

Where there is an excess of demand compared to supply, property owners often refinance their mortgages to capitalize or convert their increased equity into cash for other investments. In this process, tenants desiring to remain are required to pay more and more rent. If there is strong enough demand, owners will convert or create additional units within existing structures to gain increased rental income. There is furthermore a pressure to demolish older or lower density dwellings in order to build to higher densities at a higher investment return to the owner. Both existing tenants and their dwellings are threatened under such circumstances.

Improving housing in rising market areas poses a dilemma. Countervailing social forces may be present. Existing tenants, often on fixed incomes may seek improvements but be unable to meet the rent increase necessary to pay for the upgrading. Landlords may be willing to make the improvements but will want to raise rents accordingly, especially when they know they can attract more affluent tenants at a higher price. The process must be monitored to insure that landlords do not try to capitalize on the rising market by asking for rent increases which are not

Figure 2
Conservation and Assistance Strategies for Neighbourhood Types

		Market Perception			
		Rising	Stable	Declining	Rapidly Declining
Housing Condition	Good	G/R <u>PROTECTION & CONSERVATION STRATEGIES</u> - downzoning & anti-demolition - legal landuse controls - prevent commercial encroachment	G/S <u>CONSERVATION STRATEGIES</u> - prevention of rezoning - m & o by-law enforcement - co-ordinated service delivery - demolition control		
	Fair	F/R <u>CONSERVATION & IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES</u> - downzoning & anti-demolition - landuse & development control - action area planning	F/S <u>CONSERVATION & IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES</u> - rehabilitation assistance - m & o by-law enforcement - co-ordinated service delivery	F/D <u>IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES</u> - community development - community banks - rehabilitation assistance - non-profit housing - property tax abatement	
	Poor		P/S <u>IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES</u> - code enforcement - program like NIP & RRAP - neighbourhood clean-up & community development	P/D <u>DIRECT HOUSING ASSISTANCE</u> - replacement and/or redevelopment - retain & rehabilitate structurally sound buildings	P/RD <u>DIRECT HOUSING ASSISTANCE</u> - removal of abandoned dwellings - redevelopment

SOURCE: Goetze, Rolf, Building Neighbourhood Confidence, Figure 3-9, p. 45, with additional notes by author

justified by improvements. Such areas are prime locations for rent control legislation.

But public regulation does not solve the problem of tenants without the means to pay for housing alterations. In the long run, the rights of such residents to remain as tenants in rising markets are difficult to safeguard without increasing the tenants' ability to remain through direct subsidy to those households. Only by opening tenure options, such as co-operative or non-profit housing, can they be protected from being displaced by more affluent households.

The most effective physical conservation programs are strong zoning controls to prevent encroachment of excessive and incompatible commercial development, monitoring illegal conversions, code enforcement, height and density land use controls, development control and downzoning where an area has been overzoned.

The redevelopment of a highly marketable community is somewhat inevitable as long as the pressure remains constant. Strategies for conservation can however aim to reduce the rapidity of the conversion process and attempt to retain the positive features of the neighbourhood -- quiet streets, trees, substantial old buildings and the residential compatibility of the streetscape.

2. Declining Market Neighbourhoods

Strategies for declining areas must aim at the restoration of the neighbourhood confidence and the removal of the stigma which has caused disinvestment. Work must first be in the direction of improvement of the housing stock before any conservation approaches are even considered. Behind the symptoms of neighbourhood pathology - poorly maintained structures, scattered housing abandonment, and trash accumulation - is the lack of effective housing demand and the ability to afford the cost of decent housing.

Strategies to improve the physical aspects of the declining neighbourhood include filling vacant buildings or cleared lands with infill housing, removal of abandoned and dilapidated dwellings and code enforcement with subsidized rehabilitation loans.

Availability of adequate residential credit at affordable terms may be made possible through the creation of a municipally and privately funded risk pool for mortgages to encourage greater lender participation.

Decline is transmitted spatially through the operation of the property market. There are a number of theories which purport to explain the process, however, the problem is complex and cannot be properly covered in a paper concerning issues of conservation. What is clear is that you cannot stop decline by concentrating solely on the housing unit. It is necessary to examine the entire poverty syndrome.

3. Stable Neighbourhoods

Given limited city resources without large scale federal subsidies, a high priority must be placed on preserving neighbourhood confidence. Stabilization and preservation efforts require only a fraction of the resources needed for new construction or for futile efforts to prematurely restore confidence in areas of serious deterioration. Preventive care today would obviate the formidable efforts otherwise required in the future to reverse decline and demolish and replace existing housing (Goetze, 1976, p. 43).

Technical assistance, service oriented code enforcement and property tax incentives linked to repairs can help maintain and improve conditions in stable neighbourhoods needing moderate rehabilitation. Stable areas having housing stock in poor condition will require the addition of a special loan fund to supplement technical assistance and code enforcement as part of a comprehensive neighbourhood improvement strategy.

In addition to remedial strategies, preventive planning is needed in stable neighbourhoods. Through the creation of a neighbourhood plan, future land use objectives for the area can be articulated. The expected usage of roadways, parking demands, commercial and industrial land use designations, permissible height and density requirements could all be prescribed in a neighbourhood plan. With political commitment and public support, such a plan could provide sufficient leverage to prohibit developments which might have negative impacts on the area.

Neighbourhood dynamics dictate that over time the physical condition of housing will deteriorate and the socio-economic structure of the neighbourhood will change causing them to shift into different cells in the neighbourhood classification network. However, policy makers have considerable control over the neighbourhood change process. Amenities such as recreational space, the location of educational, church and medical facilities can bolster housing demand and help recycle a neighbourhood. An understanding of these dynamics for the identification of appropriate interventions to improve housing conditions and to shift as much housing stock as possible into a stable market state should be the objective of a sensitive neighbourhood planning scheme.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVENESS

Summary

It is clear that conservation reform is a complex issue involving a wide range of actors and necessitating reinforcement at the neighbourhood, municipal, provincial and federal levels.

The preceding work has illustrated the development of the urban conservation movement from its earliest stages of simple, indiscriminate code enforcement to its more recent, sophisticated neighbourhood conservation strategies.

Conservation of urban form is a relatively new concept in Canada. Much of the Canadian literature in the field originates in the eastern provinces perhaps for the reason that our younger Canadian cities are more anxious to forget about their less glamorous pioneer pasts and praise the frontiers of progressive growth and development. Nevertheless, the movement had a much earlier development in the United States as Chapter II has documented. Much may be learned from the elaborate experiments in neighbourhood scale rehabilitation and conservation practiced by the United States.

There have been two components to the working definition of conservation used in this report; that of conserving form and that of conserving function. The conservation strategies described in Chapter III have illustrated that innovation and adaptability has been possible when the objective of the strategy has been to preserve either the form or the function of an individual building or neighbourhood. It has also made clear, however, that the ideal of conserving both form and function is somewhat unrealistic

in its attempt to thwart change. It may be possible to preserve both the form and function of an individual structure, i.e. restoring a church. However, with regard to a geographic area, the goal to conserve form with function is to deny the dynamics of neighbourhood change. As stated at the outset of this study, conservation strategies are no longer intended to embalm the urban landscape, but merely to allow the gradual and orderly evolution of the city such that some continuity with the past is maintained.

In Chapters III and IV conservation strategies were categorized by their scope of delivery; site specific, issue specific and area specific. Through the use of case study examples, it was possible to evaluate the pros and cons of each strategy type. Site specific strategies like historic designations, anti-demolition and downzoning appear to be favoured, particularly by lobby groups and municipal councilmen. Their results are quick and tangible. However, site specific strategies are often employed in reaction to a crisis (i.e. the threat of demolition to a historic building) and do not necessarily reflect long range objectives. Issue specific conservation, conservation strategies which are used as a solution to a problem (code enforcement to resolve the problem of poor building maintenance) are ineffective in isolation. Issue specific strategies, in their urgency to meet their objective, often focus too narrowly on the problem and do not consider the ancillary consequences of the action. Such strategies are most effective when they are accomplished within a broader policy framework which recognizes the impact of each action on the whole.

Area specific strategies, although the most capital intensive and requiring the heaviest commitment from staff resources, have proven to be the most rewarding, visible strategies in restoring health and pride to a community. Area strategies provide the opportunity to develop a long range conceptual plan and involve members of the community in the planning and implementation processes. In terms of historic preservation, area conservation can assist the business community through the rejuvenation of old commercial districts, introduce new commerce and trade, add to the tourism industry and salvage the landmarks which make the community unique.

A blanket approach to area conservation, even with the financial capability and public commitment, is not desirable, equitable or wise. Chapter V has discussed the various stages of neighbourhood change on the continuum between declining and rising market areas. Within their natural state of flux, neighbourhoods shift in

position along this continuum due to the aging and condition of the housing stock, the marketability of the real estate within the neighbourhood, the demographic processes, and various planning interventions. In declining areas, there are processes undermining neighbourhood confidence, rendering such areas immune to conservation type strategies. Declining areas must first be improved and stabilized before a conservation effort will have any lasting, positive impact. On the other end of the spectrum, in emerging neighbourhoods, districts of a city where there is a high demand for property and pressure for redevelopment, there is a need to produce strategies which will protect the social and physical advantages of the community. In conclusion, conservation strategies must be tailored to the neighbourhood dynamics, otherwise the exercise is futile.

Reform in Government Conservation Programs and Policies

The information provided in the earlier chapters of this report indicated that there is considerable room for reform and the elevation of conservation awareness. Each level of government has a role to play in making conservation a viable alternative to rebuilding our aging inner city areas.

The Federal and Provincial Contribution

The federal government has previously played the leading role in terms of financing heritage conservation and neighbourhood improvement schemes. Provincial governments have contributed by providing additional sources of funding which, when combined with federal funds, have made projects more economically feasible. With the federal government moving away from direct program funding, there is reason for concern.

The federal block grant which will be distributed via the provinces (Community Services Grant Program) has a category for neighbourhood improvement. The category makes no mention of contribution for community participation. It is intended only for physical improvements. The City of Winnipeg NIP program has proven that local improvements must be supplemented with programs to elevate community awareness through the use of site offices, community newspapers and neighbourhood representation through a formalized committee system. The removal of funds for citizen participation and community education from the neighbourhood improvement equation represents an unfortunate oversight in the new program format.

The key element of the federal government's new funding policies will be a growing dependence on private sector sources of financing. Whereas private sector funding may ensure loans for individuals with a proven banking record, it is questionable that loan privileges will be extended to persons who own property in a neighbourhood which has been classified as uninsurable due to various risk factors (high degree of abandonment or a weak resale market). All households will not be able to meet the more stringent qualifications of the private sector. Therefore, the federal and provincial governments should continue to provide a pool for high risk loans in order that low income communities and highly tenanted neighbourhoods will have equal opportunity for improvement and conservation.

Another area for senior government reform involves federal jurisdiction over income tax. Research by Heritage Canada has revealed that owners of older properties demolish the structures and then deduct the market value of the building from their personal or corporate income tax. Tax shelters should be calculated to encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of structurally sound buildings rather than their demolition. Donations of heritage properties for charitable purposes should be 100% tax deductible. Legal expenses for court cases where a developer wishes to demolish a heritage structure should not be tax deductible. By creating such a tax advantage, it would appear that the federal government condones the actions of the developer. Lastly, charitable heritage organizations should not be threatened with the loss of their charter should they lobby against the demolition of a structure.

As a final contribution to a more effective approach to conservation planning, the federal and provincial governments could encourage municipal administrations to develop greater sensitivity to neighbourhood and market dynamics through the provisions of a new program. Funding could be supplied for the delineation of neighbourhoods by the socio-economic, building condition and market perception. Municipal applications for improvement or conservation funding could then be contingent upon the findings of a proper neighbourhood characterization.

The Municipal Contribution

The case study work on the City of Winnipeg has verified the problems of municipal reliance on government grants for their conservation programs. It is evident that municipal governments need a nudge before they become involved in conservation. With the responsibility for formulating conservation programs and policies shifting from the national to the local level, customary roles and approaches need to be re-examined.

Cities must first take a serious look at their growth objectives and develop a realistic economic forecast for the community. Then, within the framework of a long range development plan, place should be made for the city's conservation policies such that conservation programs will work in tandem with municipal objectives.

The provision of municipal services, the powers to regulate housing standards and to adjudicate the enforcement of those standards will remain important. The trade-offs between the level of code standards, upgrading costs and the resulting rent levels are critical to the maintenance of both the housing stock as well as effective market demand. When administered without vision they can aggravate an already serious situation. It has been a recommendation of this report that a city work to co-ordinate its regulatory powers so that the code enforcement strategies of one municipal department do not compromise the intentions of other regulatory bodies. The city should work to remove problem structures and crack down on delinquent property owners before their impact has the chance to erode neighbourhood confidence. Code enforcement should be treated as a municipal service. Inspectors should be trained to provide technical advice and cost estimates so as not to intimidate or alienate co-operative property owners.

Local discretion over property tax assessments can be used to generate indirect subsidies to owners of restored or rehabilitated properties by authorizing less than full value assessment on the rehabilitated properties or housing run by non-profit housing corporations. Or a moratorium can be imposed on reassessments to buildings that have been improved or rehabilitated.

In addition to its role as conduit for subsidies from higher levels of government, the city should work to develop a partnership between public and private interests in conservation. Neighbourhood conceptual plans proposing successive stages for improvement will inform the private sector of local objectives so that they might better contribute to the city's goals for

the area. Through this partnership, private investors might feel more confident in an area's future and make available loans to facilitate rehabilitation and re-establish a stable neighbourhood real estate market.

Foremost in the area of reform, the city must move beyond its present understanding of land use planning. Physical and structural programs must be complimented by a knowledge of economic and market conditions. An updated information base of market indicators serving as a barometer of a community's ebb and flow should be maintained. An understanding of the economic health of a community can be aided by the establishment of neighbourhood planning and site offices which can keep an ear to the community. In this way specific programs might be better adapted to neighbourhood circumstances.

A fundamental examination of neighbourhood dynamics and the factors shaping neighbourhood confidence is essential for effective conservation planning, for within these interactions lies the key to future trends in a city's development patterns and building conditions.

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2. Canadian Literature Resources
3. City of Winnipeg Resource Material

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