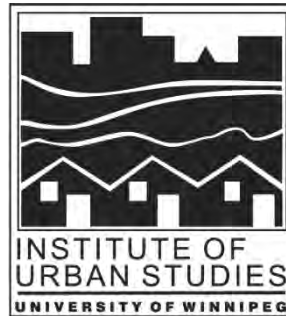


Handbook for Managers of Social Housing

**by Christine McKee, Claudia Engel, Cheryl Sherba
1979**

The Institute of Urban Studies





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HANDBOOK FOR MANAGERS OF SOCIAL HOUSING

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HANDBOOK FOR MANAGERS OF SOCIAL HOUSING

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I.U.S. No. 064
I.S.B.N. No. 920684-70-X

PREFACE

The following handbook was the outcome of two social housing management courses offered by the Institute of Urban Studies under a pilot training program sponsored by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The earliest version of the handbook was used as a class tool for the second course. Since then it has been substantially revised and edited, the principle authors being Christine McKee who co-ordinated both courses, Claudia Engel, who jointly co-ordinated the course and who was particularly responsible for the rural module. Final editing and preparation for publication was undertaken by Cheryl Sherba.

The handbook is intended to be a practical reader for managers of social housing projects and should be particularly useful to new managers, those who manage individual projects and management staff. It attempts to define social housing, and the context in which it separates and discusses management issues and problems such as administration, financial management, housing design and use, physical plant management, communications, and non-shelter needs and social services. It should provide pragmatic help for managers experiencing day to day and longer term planning problems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors and editor wish to acknowledge the contributions made to this Handbook by several Institute staff. Tom McCormack and Gene Milgram contributed two chapters to the original draft, Nell Provinciano edited and reshaped the chapter on physical plant management, and Sherry Burns and Linda Huisman typed the final draft with skill and patience. The work of Stewart Clatworthy who acted as commentator and final reader of the manuscript was also appreciated.

Our special thanks are offered to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation who provided funding for both the social housing management courses and the staff time involved in preparing this handbook.

*Christine McKee
Winnipeg 1979*

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CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL HOUSING

WHAT IS HOUSING?

Social housing is a concept which is very difficult to define satisfactorily.

At one extreme, it could be said that any kind of government action which alters the type or amount of housing produced is an aspect of social policy... At the other end of the spectrum, it could be argued that housing produced and subsidized for low income people can be classified as social housing.¹

Social housing policy in Canada can be traced to the passing of the first National Housing Act in 1938. In 1969, the federal government introduced the first provision permitting public housing under a federal/provincial partnership. However, since the 1964 amendments, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation* (CMHC) has made a substantial commitment to low income housing programs. After the creation of the provincial housing corporations beginning with the Ontario Housing Corporation in 1965, there was a major shift in the proportion of CMHC funds channeled into low income housing. From 1954 to 1964, lending for low income housing amounted to less than 29% of public funds lent directly for housing, but by 1969, lending for low income housing was about 80% of all direct federal lending for housing purposes.² There are very few Canadians whose choice of housing is not affected directly or indirectly by some form of social housing policy. Land development policies determine the cost and

1. Jeffrey Patterson and Patricia Streich, A Review of Canadian Social Housing Policy (Toronto: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1977), p. 4.

2. Dennis and Fish, Programs in Search of a Policy: Low Income Housing in Canada. (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972), p. 130.

* Now Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

availability of lots for home construction; mortgage insurance provisions reduce risk for banks and trust companies; and rehabilitation assistance is given to homes in need of repair. These government programs provide for a better quality of housing than might otherwise be available.

From a more limited perspective, social housing can also be defined as any government activity that provides housing for lower income groups who under current market conditions cannot find acceptable quality accommodation at an affordable price. Government intervention has taken the form of mortgage guarantees, loans, capital and operating grants to the public, private and third sector.

Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation employs the term 'social housing' to distinguish housing which is produced under the aegis of the National Housing Act through direct subsidized dollars. This includes: family and senior citizen low income housing produced under Sections 40 and 43; family and special care facilities, such as those for the elderly, the handicapped or other disadvantaged groups built under Section 15.1; by community or municipal non-profit citizen accommodation "leased" through the Section 44 'Rent Supplement Clause'; continuing co-operative housing built under Section 34.18; the rural and native housing schemes under Section 40 and 34; entrepreneur sponsored 'limited dividend' or rent controlled housing and Assisted Rental Program under Sections 58 and 14.1; and the Assisted Home Ownership Program (AHOP) (financed through Sections 35.15 and 34.16).³ In 1979 many of these programs were replaced in a major shift of federal housing policy which placed the emphasis of social housing production on co-operative and non-profit groups who henceforth would rely on C.M.H.C. - guaranteed private loans with substantial mortgage interest write-downs provided by C.M.H.C. With the exception of the A.H.O.P. and rural and native housing schemes which result in owner occupied housing, there is an on-going management function associated with the other forms of social housing mentioned above. This manual is concerned with those forms of social housing which involve management functions.

Within this definition, there are three main types of social housing: public housing, built and operated by provincial and municipal governments; non-profit housing, owned and operated by non-profit groups with government financing; and co-operative housing, assisted financially by governments, but owned and opera-

3. Canada, The National Housing Act (1974).

ted by community groups whose members are its tenants or co-owners. In addition, there are two other programs which allow or have allowed rental housing to be provided at below market rent levels, the 'limited dividend' housing program, and the Assisted Rental Program.

WHAT IS PUBLIC HOUSING

Public housing is planned to meet the needs of households whose incomes are insufficient to afford adequate housing at current market levels. Rents for public housing are not based on economic cost. Rentals are based on a sliding rent geared to income formula, varying from 16 to 25 percent of income. Revenue from rents is too low to cover either capital costs or operating expenses of housing units. Therefore, the program is heavily subsidized by the federal and provincial governments.

Until recently, the National Housing Act offered two forms of federal aid for the development of public housing. Under section 43 of the Act, C.M.H.C. could make long term, low interest loans to provinces, municipalities or their public housing agencies, for public housing projects. This could involve new construction or the purchase and conversion of existing buildings, and could include hostel or dormitory accommodation as well as family units. Loans could equal up to 90% of the total cost, for as long as 50 years, but not in excess of the projected life of the project. In addition, under section 44 of the Act, operating costs are shared 50/50 between the federal and provincial governments. Section 40 of the Act authorized the federal government to bear up to 75% of the capital and operating costs of a public housing project which is undertaken jointly with the government of a province. The remaining 25% of costs are borne by the province, but the municipality may be requested by the province to assume a portion of the provincial share. Management of completed projects is provided by a housing authority created specifically for this purpose and whose members are selected by the participating governments. Following changes to the N.H.A. in 1979 sections 43 and 44 were eliminated, leaving section 40 as the only available federally assisted public housing program. Cost sharing agreements regarding operating losses would have to be negotiated between the province and federal government.

Subsidized units have also been provided in non-profit, co-operative, or market housing by provincial housing corporations. In such cases, the same rent to income formula is applied as in other forms

of public housing and the gap between what a tenant pays and the economic rent of a unit is subsidized by the provincial corporation.

WHAT IS NON-PROFIT HOUSING?

A non-profit housing organization is one in which no part of the income is payable or otherwise available for the personal benefit of any proprietor, member, or shareholder. Typically, non-profit housing organizations, or corporations are formed by charitable organizations or are provincially/municipally owned. Until May 1978, start-up funds not exceeding \$10,000 were made available to the sponsors of a non-profit housing project. These funds were intended to ensure that the group was able to properly prepare a loan application for C.M.H.C. and to cover expenditures on research and organization, incorporation, site selection, options, professional fees, the purchase of technical expertise, and the like. Non-profit organizations formed exclusively for charitable purposes or those which are municipally owned could obtain loans to cover 100% of lending value at slightly less than market rates.

In May 1978, programs which should provide added impetus to the non-profit housing program, were announced by the federal government. Under these new provisions, the federal government provides contributions to bring the effective interest rate down to as low as one percent on a 90 percent loan, and two percent on a 100 percent loan with a 35-year amortization. In addition, start-up funds, previously available up to a maximum of \$10,000, are available in amounts up to \$75,000 depending on the size and complexity of the project. The new program also applies to co-operative housing. (See the discussion below).

In the past, the majority of the non-profit housing constructed has provided rental accommodation for senior citizens. Recently efforts have been made to construct non-profit housing for families and single individuals below retirement age. The new program should encourage more provision for these latter groups. In each instance, full recovery rents are charged. However, as noted above, agreements with provincial housing corporations may result in the provision of rent-to-income rent supplements for up to one quarter of the family units in a project and all units in senior citizen projects.

WHAT IS CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING?

There are two basic types of co-operatives, the building co-operative and the continuing housing co-operative. In either form, a group of people wishing to work together to provide housing for themselves must incorporate as a co-operative housing corporation. Members of a building co-operative purchase materials, land, and services as a group during the construction of their homes. When the construction phase is completed, the co-operative dissolves and each household becomes responsible for all costs related to their house. Membership in a continuing housing co-operative requires that each member purchase a share in the co-operative. Though members as a group own the housing, individually they lease their unit from the co-operative. Members pay a monthly fee which covers their share of the co-operative's mortgage and maintenance costs. Federal and provincial funding is available to assist groups in forming co-operatives, securing interim financing, and providing loans.

In 1973, amendments to the National Housing Act (NHA) allowed co-operatives to become eligible for NHA loans for both the purchase and rehabilitation of existing housing. (Formerly loans were for for new construction only.) In addition, housing co-operatives may qualify as non-profit corporations and receive the special assistance available to these organizations such as 100% loans and start-up funds. Land, leased at reduced rates by CMHC or the province, is also available to continuing housing co-operatives. As has already been mentioned, the new program introduced in May of 1978 relating to loan funding, increased start-up funding, and rent supplements apply to co-operatives as well as non-profits.

WHAT IS LIMITED DIVIDEND AND ASSISTED RENTAL PROGRAM HOUSING?

Limited dividend housing is built by the private sector and rented below the current market levels. Developers enter into agreements with the federal or provincial government which specify rate of return on investment, rent levels and tenant income levels. The Assisted Rental Program (A.R.P.) introduced in 1975, was intended to encourage the development of modest rental housing at a time when building costs had risen at a faster rate than new rentals could support. Initially, assistance took the form of an annual subsidy of up to \$600 per dwelling unit. Later, it was increased to \$900.

4. Canada, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Co-operative Housing Assistance (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1975), pp. 1-2.

Since December 1975, the subsidy has been removed and a system of annual interest-free loans for up to 10 years has been provided. The maximum loan is designed to supplement rental income where a gap exists between the cost of building and operating the project and the rents that can be charged.⁵

The Assisted Rental Program was modified and a new program was introduced in May, 1978. This new program was intended to stimulate the production of new, moderately-priced rental accommodation, particularly in those areas where such units are in short supply. As with the earlier program the objective of ARP in 1978 is to bridge the gap between rentals that builders could actually expect to receive in certain market areas, and the amount they would have to charge to meet their own expenses and realize a reasonable profit.

In 1978, however, ARP financial support was in the form of a "Payment Reduction Loan" - a second mortgage not exceeding for the first year, an amount equal to \$4.25 per month for each \$1,000.00 of the first mortgage. The Payment Reduction Loan bears interest at the same rate as the first mortgage.

IS SOCIAL HOUSING NECESSARY?

Housing need is associated with adequacy and affordability. In terms of adequacy, the Canadian Council for Social Development has estimated that in 1975, well over one million Canadians were inadequately housed.⁶ Many housing units occupied by these people were either heated with stoves, without flush toilets, piped hot water and bath or shower, or were overcrowded. Housing conditions were often worse among the lower income groups.

Although the federal government has maintained steady progress in initiating programs to replace or renew deteriorated housing and in building new housing, the problem of providing adequate affordable housing for low income groups is far from solved, particularly in larger urban centers.

5. Canada, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Annual Report (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1976), pp. 24-25.

6. Canadian Council on Social Development, A Review of Canadian Social Housing Policy (Ottawa, 1977), p. 19.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

While a precise definition of affordable housing has never been offered by governments in Canada, the federal government, and several provincial governments employ a shelter cost to income ratio of 25 percent. It is generally recognized that no family should have to pay over 25 percent of its gross income for adequate housing.⁷ Very few precise guidelines assessing what families can afford for housing are available, although considerable discussion has taken place on poverty and poverty lines in Canada.⁸

Figures collected by Statistics Canada show that the proportion of income spent by families on shelter increased for all income groups from 1969 to 1972, but that increases were greatest for the lowest income groups.⁹ Data for 1971 show that approximately 1,300,000 Canadian households (or 24%) were paying more than 25 percent of their income for housing. More than 80% of this number were renters.¹⁰ If we are to accept 25% of income as an affordability yardstick, Canada has clearly not solved the affordability question.

WHY CAN'T THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR ALL CANADIANS REGARDLESS OF THEIR INCOME LEVEL?

The cost of building new housing and acquiring and rehabilitating existing housing has increased for both tenants and home owners. The private sector, with some encouragement from the government, has concentrated on housing starts. It was assumed that those households who could afford this new housing, would move and would leave their previous dwellings for those households with lower incomes. This filtering process, as it has been called, would make available these less expensive homes in good condition to those who could not afford the high cost of a new home.

This process has not worked. The high cost of land, material, labor, money and taxation for housing in the rental and ownership category has put new housing out of the reach of all but the highest income levels. Due to the shortage of serviced land, the cost of land has particularly increased as more demand is placed on less land. Construction costs have sky-rocketed as the price of materials and the wages of construction workers have increased.

7. Ibid., p. 19.

8. Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Fact Book on Poverty (Toronto: C.C.S.D., February 1975).

9. Canadian Council on Social Development, A Review of Canadian Social Housing Policy, p. 23.

10. Statistics Canada, Urban Family Expenditures on Shelter and Households Durables (Ottawa: CMHC Tabulations, 1972).

As the interest rate on mortgages has climbed, the cost of new and existing housing has risen. An increase of one percent in the interest rate is equivalent to nearly a 10 percent rise in total capital costs. Concurrently, property taxes and the sales tax on building materials have added to the cost of housing.

The escalating costs of new housing have forced the middle income group to compete for housing which had traditionally been available to the low income households. And so the poor have fewer choices, and these choices are often limited to housing in need of repair, often at costs disproportionate to the total household income.

IS THERE POVERTY IN CANADA?

Poverty prevents many people from living in acceptable housing. While the Canadian standard of living is well above that of many other industrialized and third world countries, there are still many people in this country whose standard of living is well below current Canadian Standards. In 1971, the Senate Committee on Poverty found that one in four Canadians lack sufficient income to maintain a basic standard of living. A recent study by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1975) suggests that this figure has remained virtually unchanged.¹¹

The poor tend to be drawn from particular groups which include the disabled, the aged, and female-headed families. There is also a significant number of working poor, although this group is diminishing in numbers. In 1961, 66 percent of the low-income population was working but in 1973 this had decreased to 48.8 percent. However, the numbers of other groups in poverty have increased: for example in 1961, female headed families constituted 13.2 percent of the total of low income families, but had increased to 28.7 percent in 1973.¹²

Another problem already discussed is the proportion of income which many families have to spend on housing costs. In 1972, the figures indicate that almost one in four households paid more than 25 percent of their incomes for housing. In large cities,

11. Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Fact Book on Poverty, p. 13.

12. Ibid., p. 14.

households whose incomes fall below the poverty line established by Statistics Canada, spent closer to 50 percent of their incomes on rent.¹³

SOME LANDMARKS IN CANADIAN HOUSING POLICY

The federal government has sponsored a number of programs in the housing field beginning with the Dominion Housing Act of 1935. Although numerous studies conducted by public and private agencies have called on the federal government to create an explicit social housing policy, law makers have shied away from a concerted program to alleviate the housing problems of the poor. More frequently, government housing policy has been used to stimulate the economy during periods of recession by encouraging more housing starts. While production of new housing continued, it benefited primarily the middle and upper income groups.

With the development of the provincial housing corporations in the late 1960's the federal and provincial governments took a relatively more aggressive role in meeting the housing needs of low income groups. Assistance to non-profit housing corporations and provision for public housing were established. Following a series of task force reports critical of the government's failure to enunciate social housing policy, the government enacted a legislation to encourage the wider availability of social housing. These amendments to the National Housing Act (1973) were accompanied by a declaration of the government's intention to make housing for low and moderate incomes a priority.

"It is the fundamental right of every Canadian to have access to good housing at a price he can afford. Housing is not simply an economic commodity that can be bought and sold according to the vagaries of the market, but a social right."

13. Canadian Council on Social Development, CMHC Estimates: Presentation to House Committee on Health, Welfare, and Social Affairs (Toronto: CCSD, 1975) p. 14.

14. Canada House of Commons, Debates (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1973. P. 2257.

Outlined below is a review of government activity in social housing from 1935 to 1978.

GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY IN SOCIAL HOUSING
1935-1978

- 1935 Dominion Housing Act: First federal government support for housing. In an effort to create more jobs during the Depression years, this Act enabled the government to loan money jointly with banking institutions for the construction of housing for upper and middle income households.
- 1938 National Housing Act: First government effort in the low income housing field. Low interest loans made available to local housing authorities for the construction of low rental housing for households with limited incomes. No loans made due to delays provinces encountered in passing the necessary legislation to establish housing authorities.
- 1940 - Wartime Housing Limited: Crown company constructs
1949 46,000 housing units for returning veterans.
- 1946 Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): Crown Corporation established to administer the National Housing Act and to manage all units built by Wartime Housing Limited.
- 1949 National Housing Act amended to permit federal-provincial co-operation in the construction of public housing projects. This partnership was carried out under a 75-25 percent federal - provincial cost sharing arrangement.
- 1954 National Housing Act: CMHC alters its method of financing housing construction from that of lender to that of insurer of loans made by lending institutions.
- 1964 National Housing Act amended to permit loans to provinces or municipalities of up to 90% of construction costs and 50% of operating costs for public housing projects. Also provided long-term and low interest loans to non-profit organizations which would provide low-income rental accommodation, particularly for senior citizens.

- 1964 Development of Provincial Housing Corporations beginning with the creation of Ontario Housing Corporation.
- 1973 National Housing Act amended to include mortgage loan assistance to co-operative housing societies and municipal non-profit housing corporations. Programs introduced to give low income people a wider choice of housing types and forms of tenure. These include: Assisted Home Ownership Program (subsidy which enables low and moderate income families to own a house without spending more than 25% of their income); Co-operative Housing Assistance (loans to co-operatives); Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (loans to qualified persons/organizations for the repair and improvement of existing housing units). Under these amendments support for the planning, design and construction of new communities and improving amenities and living conditions in older rundown neighbourhoods (Neighbourhood Improvement Program) was also made available.
- 1974 Rural and Native Housing program introduced. This federal and provincial cost shared program provides mortgage assistance for families whose incomes are likely to rise and fall from year to year because of the seasonal nature of employment in rural and remote areas.
- Introduction of Assisted Rental Program for builders of rental housing and Rent Supplement programs under 441(a) and (b).
- 1978 Funding made available to non-profit and co-operative housing groups at an effective interest rate of one percent on a 90 percent loan and two percent on a 100 percent loan. In addition, start up funding was made available up to \$75,000. Also introduced was an option-to-purchase scheme available to occupants in non-profit and housing developments; increased use of the Rent Supplement program; a graduated payment mortgage scheme and a modified Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program which will be more widely available providing loans and forgiveness grants based on income.

A survey of Canadian Housing Statistics reveals that nearly 500,000 housing units are currently under public or non-profit management. (See Table 1.) Although the production of additional units is slowing down, there is an on going management function associated with existing units. The Handbook is designed to aid the development of sound management practices in social housing. Efficient management is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Efficient management can lead to the control of and reductions in operating costs, thus reducing the amount of subsidies required to maintain the stock of existing social housing dwellings. Recently, operating costs have been rapidly increasing.
2. Recent changes to the non-profit program place greater demand on the management aspect. Projects are now receiving subsidies with a fixed maximum implying that the managers must operate within rigidly defined financial or budget constraints.
3. Extensive research shows that there is a close relationship between tenant satisfaction and well-being and the efficient management of a project.

CHAPTER 2
ADMINISTRATION

Improving the performance of the administrator is the focus of this Section. The Chapter begins with a discussion of the occupancy cycle -- application for a unit, tenancy, termination of tenancy -- which is at the heart of the administrative process. Policy set by the Board of Directors and the office procedures established will reflect this ongoing cycle.

This Chapter will include an examination of the decision making process in a housing project. It is vital for everyone to understand that it is the responsibility of the Housing Authority Board to make policy and the responsibility of the management to implement this policy. The hiring and supervision of staff, and the operation of the housing office are also management responsibilities. As the effectiveness with which the Board, Administration, and staff work together is improved, and as the administration is increasingly successful in overseeing the operation of the office, other related problems will be solved. Effective administration is the most basic tool in the housing management profession.

THE OCCUPANCY CYCLE

The occupancy cycle determines the design and operation of the administrative system of a housing project.

Independent of the size of a housing project, its location, and type of tenant, the occupancy cycle is the process that dictates the procedures most frequently followed, the standardized forms used, and the routine tasks to be completed.

The occupancy cycle has three stages: application for a unit, tenancy, and termination of tenancy. At each stage, routine procedures should be followed, and should be consistent for all tenants.

APPLICATION

Stage I: The tenant fills out an application. The application form should include at least the following information: the name and age of all members of the household; the amount and sources of income, including assets (real estate, bonds, savings) and debts; and special needs of household members, (physically or mentally handicapped, elderly etc.). This information must be verified by management. The Manager determines the eligibility as well as suitability of the household.

Eligibility requirements relate most directly to income; suitability requirements relate to employment and family stability as well as tenant history (house-keeping, vandalism, late payment of rent etc.). A policy which delineates the criteria for selection should be set by the Board of Directors and applied fairly and consistently by the management. An appropriate rent level is also calculated at this stage.

If the applicant meets the selection criteria, the applicant is notified that the application has been accepted and that a unit is either available or their name has been placed on the waiting list. Unsuccessful applicants are notified and the reasons for rejecting the application explained.

If a unit is available for a successful applicant, a lease must be signed. The lease, a legal contract between the tenant and the housing authority, specifies

the mutual rights and obligations of both parties. It should indicate the address of the unit, the amount of the rent to be paid and when it is due, the length of the lease, and the amount of the security deposit if one is required. Most importantly, the lease should indicate what the tenant can expect the management to provide (parking space, payment of utilities etc.) and what the management expects the tenant to do or not to do (painting, keeping pets etc.).

Before the tenant takes possession of the suite, a meeting should be arranged between the management and the tenant. At this time the lease should be signed, the first month's rent collected, and the security deposit paid if required. In order to avoid future misunderstandings, the lease should be explained in detail to the prospective tenant.

A moving date should be established. However, the management should inspect the unit to determine what routine maintenance is required before the tenant moves in.

TENANCY

Stage II: A staff member should be available to issue the keys to the unit on the day the tenant moves in. Elderly or handicapped tenants may require special assistance with moving.

A condition report describing the unit at the time of possession, should be completed within a few days of occupancy. The tenant and management, together should complete the form, so that the same perceptions of the unit are shared. This is an ideal time to demonstrate the use of appliances, provide information on fire safety, and introduce the tenants to services or programs available on the site.

A system for collecting rents is required. It should ensure regular payment and the safety of the money. (The operation of a rent collection system is discussed in detail in the chapter on finance.)

Because of fluctuations in income levels, the rents charged to tenants may have to be adjusted periodically. In most cases tenants will request a review, particularly if it means a decrease in the rent.

However, routine validation of current income levels will be required for all tenants. This may be either two months before a lease is up for renewal (to permit notification to the tenant of a change in the rent) or at the same time for all tenants (perhaps at the beginning of the fiscal year).

MOVING OUT

Stage III: This final stage marks the end of the occupancy cycle for a tenant but the beginning of a new cycle for the management. Unexpected moves can be costly if a unit is unoccupied for one or more months. A vacant unit means lost rent and a greater potential for vandalism. This can be prevented by requiring tenants to give four to six weeks notice although this is not always possible due to death, change in place of employment or carelessness.

Before moving out, the tenant and the management should meet to inspect the unit. The condition report should be referred to as a guide. The tenant should return the keys to the manager who will return the balance of the security deposit to the tenant.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPERATION

In social housing, the power to make decisions does not lie with one group or individual. Policy making is shared by two or more of the following groups: the funding agency, the board of the housing authority, management and tenants.

Boards are appointed depending on the type of housing for which they are responsible. In a co-operative the tenants elect their own board of directors. The boards of public housing authorities are commonly appointed by governments, occasionally in consultation with municipal governments and tenants.

Every board has a set of by-laws. They are formulated by either government or the board itself with the approval of its members. By-laws define the purposes and methods of operating the housing authority, co-operative, or non-profit corporation. Generally they specify the number of board members, the officers of the board, and their responsibilities, the procedure which must be followed in electing new members and officers, the number of meetings which must be held by the board and their frequency, the method of announcing meetings, the quorum (minimum number of board members present) required to hold an official meeting of the board, and the procedures for taking minutes and other related responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the management and the board to be thoroughly familiar with the by-laws. The management must ensure that the by-laws are followed. Any decisions made by a board which are not in keeping with the by-laws can be challenged. Official business cannot be conducted at a board meeting without following the procedures outlined in the by-laws.

In preparing a set of by-laws for a new housing authority, the management should examine the by-laws of similar organizations. These documents will serve as a model when drafting a new set of by-laws. Various changes that have been made since incorporation should be discussed. The experiences and recommendations of similar organizations can be an invaluable source of information.

It is important to adhere to the by-laws; it is equally important to alter the by-laws as the needs of the organization change. The by-laws should be evaluated annually as the character of the housing authority changes, and as new methods of operation are adopted, the by-laws will evolve in response to the new demands.

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Officers of the Board are elected according to the procedures outlined in the by-laws. Generally, a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer are required. Each has official duties that define the area of responsibility for each respective office.

President: Acts as the spokesperson for the housing authority to government and the community; chairs meetings of the Board in a manner that ensures decisions are made in an orderly manner. Sits as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees.

- Vice-President: Assumes the duties of the President when he or she cannot be present. Assists the President in discharging duties of that office.
- Secretary: Ensures that minutes of all meetings are taken. (Whether or not the Board Secretary completes these tasks will depend on the availability of paid staff.) Makes certain that minutes are approved at subsequent meetings and that motions are worded as passed by the Board.
- Treasurer: Is familiar with budgets and financial statements prepared by the bookkeeper, auditor, or manager so that he/she can advise the Board of Directors on any financial decisions.

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The establishment of committees is a useful administrative practise. In large organizations, the use of committees allows a fewer number of persons to consider in detail a particular decision facing a Board, to weigh all the alternative solutions, and to suggest a course of action.

In small organizations where the work of the housing authority is performed entirely by volunteers or by volunteers assisted by a part-time manager, a committee structure is useful in organizing the specific tasks to be completed. A maintenance committee could include: a person responsible for receiving requests from tenants and hiring skilled trades workers; another person who would do all routine repairs, changing light bulbs, cutting grass etc.; and someone who routinely checks the physical plant to ensure that preventive maintenance is completed.

The responsibilities, membership, and length of operation of the committees will vary. Most organizations will have a number of on-going or standing committees. These may include an Executive Committee and committees for finance, maintenance, tenant relations, and staff.

The Executive Committee meets between full board meetings to make decisions and to advise management of decisions that require immediate attention. It is composed of the officers of the Board and may include the chairperson of each standing committee.

Members of the Board sit on the standing and special committees. Their numbers may be supplemented by other men and women who, although not members of the Board of Directors, may have a particular skill needed by a committee. For example, an accountant might be asked to sit on the finance committee.

The Board of Directors may also appoint special or ad-hoc committees. These committees are useful for examining special problems, and should be disbanded upon completion of the specified task. Similar to standing committees, membership can include members of the Board, and other appointments. Examples of a special or ad-hoc committee could include a committee to hire a manager or to oversee the design and construction of new housing units.

The committees appointed by the Board should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to the organization. Staff members and particularly the manager, should attend committee meetings to provide information and to advise members of the committee. Since they are not members of the Board but are in the Board's employ, staff members should not vote when a decision is being made.

FORMULATING POLICY

The Board members of housing authorities, co-operatives and non-profit organizations are responsible for the financial viability and housing conditions of the project(s) they administer. They must make decisions about how money will be spent, the care and quality of individual units and common areas, the number and type of staff, and their expectations regarding the conduct of tenants. The decisions can be made in one of two ways. Either the Board can resolve each case on its individual merits or it can formulate a policy that describes how all similar situations should be handled. Making each decision separately is inefficient and can lead to inequities either real or felt on the part of board members, staff and tenants. The alternative, setting policies to handle all situations, has its own limitations. Policies can be too rigid or not appropriate to the situation. Unless carefully implemented, they can be more harmful than not having any policy at all.

Policy formation is a difficult but necessary process requiring skill on the parts of the Board and the management. Managers are hired because they have the time and the necessary expertise to implement the decisions of the Board. Employing a manager does not absolve Board members from setting policy. They remain responsible for giving direction to the staff. In simple terms, the Manager is the DOER but the Board is the DECIDER.¹

Implementing Board policy is the main responsibility of the manager although he or she should also act as an advisor to the Board on matters of policy. The manager's professional expertise and knowledge of government policy, regulations, administrative practices, and resources in the community should be utilized by the Board. Members should welcome the broader perspective of a professional social housing manager.

The Board should decide on matters of policy. It is wiser to set policy before a problem arises than to react to a crisis. The anticipation of what issues will require a firm policy statement will necessitate advance preparation. Policy development can include many areas, but as a beginning, the management and the Board should review the following:

- method of paying rent
- collecting delinquent rents
- use of common areas
- personnel: hiring practices and working conditions
- financial reports
- routine and preventive maintenance
- pets
- noise
- financial reports from management
- tending contracts
- criteria for accepting tenants.

These policies and others the Board may develop will require periodic review to assure they represent the best known solution to a particular problem.

¹. Antony J. Lloyd, Managing Housing: Background Information for Groups Directing Housing Projects (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1975) p.4.

Practice must be consistent with policy. For example, a Board which establishes a policy of no pets in the development and a manager who allows tenants in the same development to have birds and cats but no other pets, will encounter many problems. As soon as one policy is stated but not enforced, staff and tenants will begin to test the Board and the management by challenging other policies. Complaints to management about unfair treatment and mismanagement will ultimately follow.

Before the Board passes a policy statement, members must make certain that the policy can be implemented. If the Board makes decisions without regard to their practicality, members will jeopardize their credibility with management, staff, and tenants. Board members should ask a number of questions of any proposed policy statement.

1. Are we able to enforce this policy?
2. Is staff time available to carry out the tasks needed to implement this policy?
3. What would be the consequences of not setting this policy?

It is advisable to have a book which outlines the policies established by the Board. Those policies which affect tenants should be explained to them before a lease is signed. Employees should be informed of the Board's decisions when they are hired and as policies are revised and new ones formulated. An uninformed staff person by making his or her own decisions, will ultimately set policies for the operation of the project which are different from those set by the board.

PERSONNEL

The number of staff employed by a housing authority will vary according to the size of the project. When the number of units is small, the housing manager can work alone fulfilling the numerous functions delegated by the Board. As the scale and complexity of the operation increases, additional staff, particularly maintenance staff and caretakers, will be required.

All too often managers overburden themselves by attempting to run the operation single-handedly. As a result, all areas receive superficial attention and management will be unable to thoroughly assess the needs of the development. Work will be done in response to a crisis. In the short-term, the housing development will function reasonably well, suites will be rented, rent collected, and routine maintenance done. But without sufficient staff, long-term planning cannot occur. Preventive maintenance will not be done and when the repair bills and replacement costs increase, the financial viability of the project will be threatened.

An assessment of the amount and type of staff required should be carried out in a systematic manner. The factors which should be examined are the size and location of the project(s), the type of tenants residing in the housing, and budget limitations.

Size of the Project and Its Location:

1. Do the units have separate entrances or are there common hallways which must be cleaned regularly?
2. What is the turnover-rate? Do the units need to be cleaned and painted for each new tenant?
3. What demands does the weather make in terms of the care of the grounds and removal of snow?
4. Is the amount of time required to process rents, pay bills, and prepare budget statements sufficient to justify a bookkeeper?
5. What demands are placed on the manager to compile regular reports and documents for government and the Board? Secretarial support may be an absolute necessity.
6. Does the number of units or the type of building generate enough maintenance requests to justify the employment of a maintenance person(s), or can these demands be met by contracting specific jobs to outside agencies?

Tenants:

1. Are there sufficient requests from tenants for assistance, information, or referrals to other organizations to require a tenant relations worker?
2. Do tenants require a preliminary orientation for living in the development, e.g. care and use of electric stoves, washers, dryers?
3. Do senior citizens require services in the development to meet their needs as they age? Food and housekeeping services, health care, and planned social activities will make program and administrative staff a necessity.
4. Do the needs of handicapped tenants or the elderly require a staff person be on call twenty-four hours a day?

Financial:

1. Will the employment of staff reduce expenditures in other areas, e.g. could a maintenance person doing routine and preventive maintenance reduce costs enough to cover his/her salary?
2. Are funds for staff allocated in the budget? Could an increase in salaries be included in the next annual budget?
3. Could the funds for certain services which are contracted out be pooled to create a salary for a part or full time person?
4. Can some services be contracted out to other agencies rather than being done in house?

HIRING STAFF: JOB DESCRIPTION

Before hiring a new staff person, the manager should understand the nature of the position to be filled. It should be clear how the person will relate to the organization and what specific duties will be performed. The salary range, employee benefits, education and employment experience necessary for the job, and method of terminating employment should be established.

A formal job description is required. It is not difficult to write and will serve as a useful tool in hiring, during the employment period, and if it becomes necessary, in the termination of an incompetent employee's employment. These steps can be followed in developing a job description:

Job Title - Choose one that clearly indicates the nature of the position. A "Maintenance Supervisor" is quite different from a "Maintenance Worker".

Duties - Explain what the person is to do, how these duties relate to the entire operation, and how the duties are to be discharged.

Accountability - Indicate to whom the person is responsible. (A Crafts Co-ordinator who reports to the Head of Nursing will see the job in a different way than the Craft Instructor who reports to the manager). Specify the conditions under which employment may be terminated by either management or the employee.

Qualification - Minimum levels of education and work experience for the job should be clearly stated. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are all important.

Compensation - Indicate what the salary will be. Employee benefits (vacation, hours, sick leave, health insurance, retirement benefits etc.) should be listed.

Preparing a job description will take time and thought. However, the time spent on this task before a person is hired is an investment in a satisfactory relationship between management and the employee.

Managers should have a job description for their own protection and as an aid in clarifying their relationship to the Board. This job description should be prepared by the Board, and not by management, although prospective managers may wish to negotiate some changes.

RECRUITING

Recruiting applicants for a position can be done in many ways depending on the contacts of the housing authority and the community in which it is located. Traditional approaches to staff recruiting include advertisements in newspapers, or listing the position with the placement offices of high schools, vocational and trades schools, the Canada Manpower Office in the area, and private employment agencies. Managers might also examine their present staff to see if someone is interested in the open position. Making the job opening known to the tenants in the housing project is also useful. The advertisement of the position by word of mouth can often help to identify qualified applicants.

Applicants should submit a resumé or fill out an application provided by the housing authority, non-profit, or co-operative. An employment history and references are vital sources of information for the recruitment officer.

Using the job description as a guide, the applications should be reviewed so that only the most qualified applicants need be interviewed. A list of questions to be asked and points to cover during the interview should be prepared in advance. The non-directive interviewing technique described in another section of the Handbook is also helpful. Be careful not to oversell the job. The expectations of new staff may never be met, thus creating frustrations for the employee and the organization.

It is a difficult task to choose the "right" employee. Frequently one is forced to compromise on job qualifications as there are a limited number of persons trained or experienced in social housing management. The weight one gives to education or employment experience will depend on the job and the applicant.

All hiring should be done in accordance with the relevant Provincial Human Rights Legislation. Laws vary from province to province but generally they prohibit the use of age, sex, race, religious or political affiliation, source of income, marital status, and in a few cases sexual preference, as employment criteria. Application forms and questions asked during the interviewing process may not be used to gather this information. For assistance, contact the office of the local Human Rights Commission.

THE MANAGER AS EMPLOYER

As soon as staff are hired to assist in the operation of the housing project, the manager assumes a new role. Not only do managers have responsibilities to the tenants and to the Board, but they must also be concerned about their role as an employer. Staff members must be made to feel that their work is rewarding and necessary to the total operation of the development. Creating this climate requires communication skills, patience and the on-going education of each staff member.

A good manager-staff relationship starts with the first interview, but truly begins for the employee on the first day at work. The manager should introduce new employees to the existing staff. The time should be taken to acquaint the person with the housing development by visiting all offices and work locations. Routine office procedures, general policies under which all staff operate, and employee benefits, should be explained. New staff should be given a few days to explore the organization, reviewing files and learning new procedures before work begins in earnest.

Staff meetings are an ideal time to review standard operating procedures, to identify new problems, and to develop workable solutions. Regularly scheduled staff meetings are an asset to keeping the staff working as a team. The meetings should be scheduled so that all maintenance, management, program and care-taking staff are able to attend. It should be made clear that part of an employee's job responsibility is to attend staff meetings, and only emergencies should constitute sufficient reason for any absence.

Better decisions will result if staff members have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Management rarely has all the information required to make decisions. Problems may be solved by the persons least expected to contribute. Management-staff relations will function more smoothly if staff members realize their opinions are valued and that regular opportunities to contribute are provided.

The on-going training of staff is the responsibility of management. All staff should receive general training to understand the role and function of social housing. The relationship between staff and tenants will undoubtedly improve if the staff has a basic understanding of the needs of the tenants. For example, in a senior citizen's residence, employees should have a sound grasp of the process of aging.

Employees should be encouraged to keep up with new technology in their own field. New trends in energy conservation or congregate housing provide opportunities for the staff to evaluate their performance and adopt new techniques. As employees begin to realize that management will support their attempts to improve their effectiveness, the housing development will benefit from higher staff morale and enthusiasm for work.

Training programs are available through many organizations such as social service agencies, local and provincial governments, colleges, and universities. If appropriate training programs are not available, an attempt should be made to design a new one or to co-ordinate a program with other housing managers.

TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT

Every manager will face the problem of terminating the employment of a staff member. This is an unpleasant and serious matter for both parties. The management should be prepared to document the cause for dismissal. Laws prohibit the dismissal of employees for certain reasons including union activity, race, sex, age, religion, and political affiliation. Check with a lawyer to determine the laws of the province in which the housing authority operates.

A firing should not occur without a forewarning (except in rare situations such as a proven case of theft). It is only fair that the manager explain to the employee why firing is being considered. The employee should be given a chance to defend his or her work. It could be that the manager is unaware of circumstances affecting the employee's work. If the employee's work does not improve within a reasonable length of time, termination procedures should begin.

OFFICE PROCEDURE

The administrative centre of any housing authority, non-profit corporation or co-operative is the housing office. Regardless of its size or location, the office must be managed efficiently. Office procedures that facilitate delivery of services to tenants, board members and staff, should be established. The office staff should not be overwhelmed by needless paperwork and endless procedures.

The location of the housing office is dictated by available space, finances, and the size of the project. Part-time managers may often work at home. A desk, filing cabinet, storage space for supplies, access to a telephone, and if finances permit, an adding machine and typewriter will equip a basic office at home. Most managers prefer to set up their office space in a place away from the noise and activity common in family homes. An empty bedroom or corner of the basement is an ideal choice.

An office located on the site of a project, is recommended if a full-time manager and support staff are employed. Contact between tenants and staff is encouraged by assuring accessibility during working hours. In some of the larger projects, office space is designated by the architect. A unit may be converted into office space. This can be an expensive solution to the problem of finding office space, as rent revenues will be reduced. Unused storage space, and a basement or common area could be redesigned as office space.

Certain office procedures must be followed. Filing, processing mail, ordering supplies, and answering the telephone are routine tasks. The administrative system developed to handle these jobs will vary from place to place. The key is to choose a procedure which meets organizational needs and to follow it faithfully. An overabundance of paperwork is as inefficient as inadequate record keeping; too much bureaucracy is as constraining as no system at all.

MAIL

Mail should be stamped as soon as it is received. Little else is required if the manager responds to all mail. However, as the number of employees increases, a record of all incoming mail should be kept. One person should be assigned the task of opening all incoming mail. This person would stamp the letters with the day's date and then would record the date and names of the author, the person to whom the letter is addressed and, if appropriate, name of the person to whom the letter is referred. If a letter is lost, or a question arises as to the receipt of the letter, the ledger would serve as an invaluable record.

TELEPHONE

Telephone calls should be answered promptly. Messages should include the name and phone number of the caller, the date, and the time of call. Calls should be returned as soon as possible. It is unnecessary to log all telephone calls, unless data is being gathered on the operation of a department or the demand for a service.

FILING

Filing systems should reflect the type of business they serve. In a housing office they may fall into various categories: occupancy, maintenance, finance, personnel and general. Guidelines for each category are suggested in the following sections:

1. Occupancy - All tenants, past and present should have a file. The files of current tenants should be organized by building and unit number. Copies of the tenants' applications, previous and current leases, condition reports, and subsequent correspondence would be filed in their folder.

The records of previous tenants are filed alphabetically in a separate section. After a number of years these dead files should be moved to storage. These files should be disposed of after careful consideration of any legal factors.

Separate files for prospective tenants are not needed. Their applications should be recorded chronologically (by date of application) within a file designated by the type and size of accommodation required. These files will comprise the waiting list and should be reviewed annually.

2. Maintenance - The system used for handling maintenance requests, both routine and preventive, will determine the filing system. Requests of all repairs should be kept to aid accurate planning. It is advisable to keep a record of all maintenance work undertaken in each unit. Records of monthly maintenance reports, safety and equipment inspections should be retained and filed in chronological order by type of report.

Important documents such as building contracts, blueprints, and insurance policies should be stored in a fireproof, locked cabinet or in a safety deposit box. Copies should be retained in the office for quick reference.

Maintenance files should contain an inventory of all equipment and appliances and their serial number and location. Contracts for maintenance services should be filed by type of service.

3. Finance - Records describing the collection of rents should be kept in ledgers and journals rather than files. However, copies of any notices sent to collect delinquent rents should be filed together.

Purchase orders, invoices, and cancelled checks should be filed by number in separate categories. These records should be kept indefinitely as questions about purchases and payments can arise later.

Copies of annual financial statements, and reports to government should be filed by type of report. If tax returns are required, copies should be retained and filed together

If a petty cash fund is used, a copy of all vouchers should be filed. A separate file for information pertaining to bank accounts, Signature cards, and related information, should be kept.

4. Personnel - Personnel files resemble occupancy files in their organization. Current employees should have an individual file containing pay records, information on benefits, job descriptions and original applications.

Applications for employment should be filed together, but not retained for more than one year.

Copies of personnel policies describing pay levels, employee benefits, working conditions should be filed together.

Job descriptions for all positions should be filed in a separate folder.

5. General - Any records which do not fit into the four previous categories belong in the general file.

Copies of all written correspondence should be filed in chronological order. Any correspondence, or minutes of meetings related to the business of the Board can be included in the general category.

A file should also be devoted to management policies and procedures.

Label all file folders so that the contents (including the period of time covered e.g. "Income Tax Forms, 1968-1975") can be easily identified. An annual review of the filing system is required to dispose of unnecessary paper. The efficiency of a filing system is related to the ease with which information can be retrieved. If the time spent in finding a document is more than a few minutes, or if questions constantly arise as to where items should be filed, the filing system should be reviewed and changes made.

CHAPTER 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Many of the regular duties of a social housing manager involve the handling of money. Among other duties, the manager is responsible for collecting rents, paying salaries to employees, purchasing office supplies and depositing receipts. Good financial management requires the keeping of accurate records which reveal the financial position and various transactions of the housing project.

The funds that a housing project has at its disposal come from a variety of sources (e.g. rentals, other levels of government). The accounting system should be detailed enough to supply not only comparative figures, but also to show which funds available to the project are used for building, which are stagnant, and which are declining. For successful financial management, the manager should practice the following:

- realistic planning through budgeting to ensure that policies can be fulfilled, that money will be available to meet imminent obligations, and that reserves will be sufficient to cover emergencies and eventual replacement of major items and equipment as they wear out,
- accurate accounting of monetary transactions of the project, and
- continuous comparison of the actual costs and the budget to see that the two are in reasonable relation to one another.

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER

A professional accounting firm may be hired to administer an accounting system. If this service is unavailable or considered an expensive, additional cost, the task may be delegated to the manager of the housing authority or another staff member with bookkeeping and accounting skills. The manager should supply any information the bookkeeper may require to maintain accurate records. Various accounting procedures are discussed below.

THE BUDGET

The budget is a financial plan, a way of expressing in figures everything affecting the health and viability of the project. There are several kinds of budgets, each prepared with a different purpose in mind. It is not possible to suggest an "ideal" or standard operating budget. Each budget reflects the particular needs and goals of a specific project. A project containing large families, may have to budget a higher percentage of its income for maintenance, while another serving elderly residents, may budget for more social services. The type of housing project also determines the emphasis placed on supplementary expenditures in the way of educational programs, equipment or facilities, and security.

Expenditures may be categorized in two ways: firstly, fixed expenditures or expenses which are uncontrollable by management. These include taxes, debt payments, mortgage, insurance, and so on. and secondly, there are the controllable expenses which can be adjusted or altered by management. Included are payroll, utilities, supplies, maintenance and the like. All expenditures are subtracted from income received from rent, interest on money in the bank, parking fees, maintenance fees, and government subsidies.

A budget provides the following:

- It provides a tool for periodic examination of basic policies
- It establishes performance objectives
- It is a measure of management performance
- It directs capital and effort into the most profitable channels
- It provides a basis for controlling expenses and planning for cash shortages

- It highlights problem areas
- It instills habits of careful review and evaluation before making decisions
- It coordinates organizational effort by requiring input from all areas of management (on-site manager, personnel, maintenance, etc.).

BUDGET PREPARATION

When preparing the budget the manager should begin with the actual figures from the previous year and should ask the following questions to determine if changes in expenditures should be made.

- What was planned but unaccomplished?
- What must be accomplished this year?
- What should be accomplished this year?
- What is the justified need for an increased or decreased expenditure for each item?
- When shall this change be undertaken?
- What are the trends in past expenditures?

Two important considerations during budget preparation are 'actual results' and 'anticipated changes'. 'Actual results' are the actual operating results of prior periods and the trend of these results over time. 'Anticipated changes' are changes or conditions which may have some effect on the level of income or expenditures. Examples of anticipated changes are revisions in policy, operating standards or objectives, announced or anticipated utility and tax-rate changes, revision of government subsidies or policies, and national economic or inflationary trends.

It is important to remember that budget estimates are changeable and not rigid or infallible. The best estimates are usually those which are responsive to community and economic changes and are flexible enough to meet rapid changes. A rigid budget will fail to acknowledge changing realities. At the same time, the budget should not be constantly altered as the stability and reliability of budget data will deteriorate. The most suitable budgetary system provides for periodic review at monthly or quarterly intervals. Revisions should only be made to the fixed expenditure category and not to correct poor performance in the administration of the project.

ACCOUNTING

An accounting system provides a complete record of transactions involving the project. The fundamental test of an accounting system is how well it satisfies the information requirements of those who must rely on the data to assist them in their work. A professional advisor or housing authority personnel should assist the manager in choosing the correct system for the housing project.

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Once an appropriate budget and accounting system has been established for a project, a successful housing manager will use the financial data as a valuable analytical tool in the administration of the project. A few of these tools are listed here.

1. Comparing actual performance with budget estimates. The review should take place at regularly planned intervals, monthly if a yearly budget is employed. As delays increase the difficulty of taking corrective measures, the budget should be promptly reviewed each month.
2. Determining the reasons for any deviations of actual cost and income from budgeted cost and income. The manager should be able to identify budget deviations and determine corrective action, if the appropriate data are available.
3. Corrective action. There are three ways a manager may take corrective action.
 - a. Revise the budget. If a deviation has been caused by a change in an item previously thought to be a fixed expenditure (such as taxes or insurance rates), a possible alternative is to change the budget.
 - b. Cut costs. If costs must be cut, a manager should be able to find expenditures which can be reduced. A manager should also be aware of hidden costs. For example, if expenditures can be reduced by ordering office supplies on a bi-monthly rather than a yearly basis, the bi-monthly pattern should be adopted.

- c. Raise income. If the determination of rent levels and supplementary charges are affected by government regulations or rent controls, this corrective measure has limited use. The manager should exhaust all other available alternatives to increase income and rent.

Financial management and budgeting is an important responsibility for the social housing manager. Through practice and the increased awareness of budgetary and accounting systems, the manager will develop an invaluable source of knowledge which lends to the effective, and efficient operation of the project.

CHAPTER 4
DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

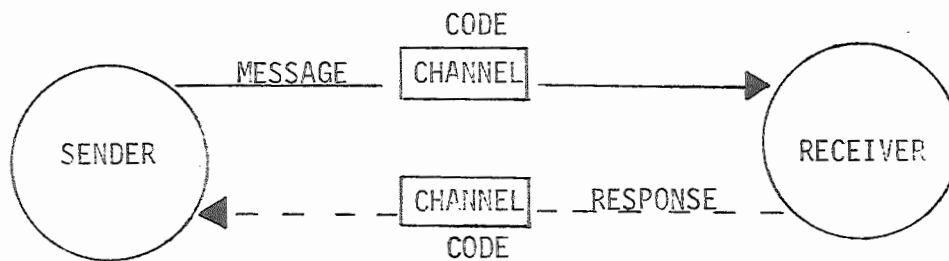
A housing manager spends most of his or her working day communicating with people - potential tenants, present residents, members of the community, the housing authority or owner, and staff members. There are many forms of communication. A housing manager may talk to residents either individually or as a group, use the telephone, write a letter, post signs, print a newsletter or publish a tenants' handbook. The degree to which a manager uses each communication form effectively determines the quality and efficiency of his work. Often, the problems encountered are the result of a breakdown in communication. As a manager becomes skilled at communicating his ideas to others, the job will become easier and more enjoyable.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Although the circumstances and methods of communication change, there are some elements in the communication process that remain constant. It is important to remember that communication is a process. It has no beginning and no end. It is continuous, on-going, yet ever-changing.

A basic model of the communication process involves five elements: the sender or encoder, the message, the channel, the receiver or decoder, and the response. The following model isolates the elements in the communication process and examines the inter-relationships between them. (See figure 1).

Figure 1

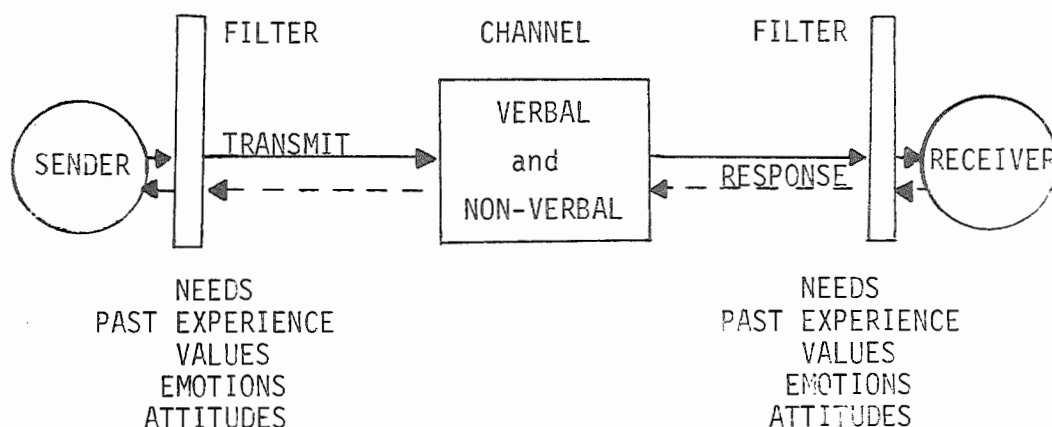


A situation, common to most housing managers, will illustrate how this model works. By the fifth day of the month, one of your tenants has not paid his rent. You wish to communicate to him the necessity of making this payment. You have two choices of a channel: you can speak to him in person or you can write him a letter explaining your desire to receive the rental payment. You then code the message by putting it into spoken or written form.

After you, the sender, have coded the message and chosen the channel, the message is transmitted to the receiver. At this point the reverse process occurs. The tenant either reads or hears your message and then decodes it. He then responds, letting you know that he has understood or misunderstood your message.

Occasionally, and certainly more frequently than one would prefer, communication may break down. Although you sent the letter to the tenant or spoke to him personally, you may still not have received the desired response, i.e. the payment of the rent. An explanation of what might have happened is provided in an expanded version of the model. (See figure 2).

Figure 2



The filters, the receiver, and the verbal and non-verbal channels can help or hinder attempts to communicate. The life experiences, needs, values, and emotions of every person become involved in any attempt to communicate. The method of communication, verbal or non-verbal, affects the transmission of the message.

Referring back to the case of the manager attempting to acquire a tenant's overdue rental payment, the communications failure could be explained by examining the following filters of both the sender and the receiver.

The Manager

The Tenant

Needs

"I need to collect the rent to pay bills."
"We have to follow the standard procedure set up by the Board."

"I need to use this money to pay my grocery bill."

Past Experience

"This tenant is late with his rent nearly every month. If you don't collect rent on time, you likely won't collect it later."

"I've been late before and nothing happened to me."

Values

"Punctuality is important. No one is entitled to housing or any service if they don't pay for it."

"What difference does it make if I pay my rent on the first of the month or on the 10th - they'll still get it, even if the government has to pay for all of my rent this month."

Emotions

"I don't like this tenant's children. My wife has been very ill for the past two months and I'm worried. The children make too much noise."

"I have 4 children and they need room to play. The manager gets mad if they make too much noise."

Attitudes

"I don't like people on welfare" (or any bias towards certain people and their characteristics),

"The manager has a job. What does he know about trying to find enough money to live. He doesn't live here!"

A relatively structured person who dislikes people who are not punctual in their affairs, be it paying the rent, or remembering a friend's birthday, will have a negative reaction to a late rental payment. Similarly, if the manager dislikes a tenant and his family, these attitudes will filter their way into the letter or conversation with the tenant.

The tenant will in turn respond to the manager's message through his own filter. If the tenant is habitually late with the rent, there is no reason he should listen any more carefully to a warning now than he has in the past. If he must use his money to pay a grocery bill which is long overdue, his need to pay rent is not as great. He may also have strong "anti-landlord" feelings which have been fed by many negative experiences with landlords in the past.

The manner in which messages are coded, also has an effect on the communication process. If the manager uses a light, conversational tone while speaking, and fails to look directly at the tenant, the tenant may not take the manager's concern seriously. Words have different meanings to different people. If the word 'eviction' is used in a letter to a delinquent tenant, a highly threatening situation may be created. The tenant may be afraid to deal with the situation. Communication codes and transmission channels have to be carefully selected and the housing manager must be aware of the obstacles in the way of effective communication and feedback.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The first steps towards improving communication skills is to understand the various filters and the way in which a person codes messages. Each individual must determine what is valued in other people, and how to interact with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, racial groups and social classes. Biases are communicated often without a person's knowledge.

As the result of limited interaction with people, individuals form stereotyped images. For example, if a person has known only three elderly people and each was ill and dependent on their families,

he will likely conclude, consciously or unconsciously, that all elderly people are alike. Similarly, if a person has religious beliefs which state marriage is important and lasts forever, he will have some doubts about the morals of divorced couples or men and women living in common-law marriage.

Tenants also have their own filters. Regardless of how friendly or open a manager is, he is still the 'landlord'. If tenants have had unpleasant experiences with previous landlords, they, without realizing it, will expect all landlords to act in the same way. Similarly if a manager works in a housing project, but lives and socializes in another part of town, the tenants may regard him as a stranger or an intruder.

Managers should become sensitive to the non-verbal communication channels people use. Speaking loudly to emphasize a point, looking directly at a person while speaking, standing very close to someone, or sending a letter to a person rather than talking directly with them, all communicate a particular message. It is not enough to just listen to what is being said. The manner in which the words are spoken is also important. If a repair person is vague about when the work will be completed, doesn't look directly at the other person, and continually edges farther away as if to escape the conversation, one can begin to suspect that the repair work will not be done promptly.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Communication skills will also be improved if a person concentrates on being an active listener. The barriers to effective listening with suggestions for combating them are listed below.²

Problem: We are able to think faster than a person can speak. This leaves us spare time to think while the speaker is talking. We are prone to devote this time to matters other than what the speaker is trying to communicate. We may be thinking about problems, interests, feelings, or matters of urgency. When these matters demand more of our attention than what the speaker is saying, we shift our thoughts and attention from the speaker's message. We get "side-tracked" and we lose much of what has been said.

2. Prepared by L. Clayton Hill, Professor of Industrial Relations, The University of Michigan.

Suggestion: The first step towards the improvement of a person's listening skill is becoming aware of wandering attention. Once the listener is aware of the problem, he can make an effort to focus his thoughts on what the speaker is saying.

Problem: As a person is speaking to us, we often permit our thoughts to concentrate on what to say when the person stops. We feel compelled to be ready with a response, and as a result do not listen attentively. If the response is to be critical, defensive, or contradictory, the listener will often interrupt to voice his opinion. People who interrupt are usually poor listeners.

Suggestion: A valuable means of keeping the listener's attention is for him (or her) to attempt to respond by summarizing the message that the speaker is sending. This type of response neither approves nor disapproves what the speaker has just said. For example:

Speaker: "No matter how hard I try, I can't get my subordinates to follow the instructions I give them. They delight in doing things their own way rather than as I want them done. Frequently this causes delays, errors and doing things over. That embarrasses me and reflects on my supervision. I often do their work myself to be sure it is done right."

Listener: "If you could feel confident that they would do as they are told your supervision would not be open to criticism."

While the listener may still be thinking of what to say when the speaker stops, his thought is centered on what is being said so that he will be prepared to accurately summarize the feelings communicated by the speaker.

Problem: We feel so strongly opposed to the speaker's point of view, his attitude, or his objectives that our minds reject what he is saying and we no longer listen attentively. We feel so prejudiced against or fearful of the individual sending the message that we allow these emotional feelings to hinder attentive listening. The "emotional noise" generated by our feelings drowns out the significance of the words we are hearing.

Solution: The listener should resolve to maintain a neutral, non-critical role until reasonably certain that he understands the speaker's message and feelings. To avoid criticizing, contradicting, arguing or preaching while the speaker is trying to get his message across, requires a great deal of emotional control. By doing so, the listener will have better understanding of the speaker's point of view.

The manager who wishes to develop his communication skills will find the following characteristics beneficial to the process:

Openness: A willingness to be frank, yet diplomatic will result in a more open atmosphere for communications among staff members.

Spontaneity: In most circumstances spontaneous interaction will be more effective than cautious and inhibited communication.

Empathy: Empathy refers to the ability to understand another individual and to acknowledge his or her feelings, beliefs and attitudes.

Trust: Trust is an essential ingredient in effective interpersonal communication. It is most likely to develop among people who are genuinely concerned about the welfare of others.

Acceptance: Underlying good communication must be an acceptance by the actors in the communication process of the validity and legitimacy of the messages exchanged and acceptance of the feelings underlying the messages communicated.

Listening: Active listening and avoiding censure are also important. 3

UNDERSTANDING THE RESIDENTS: EXAMPLES OF SOME SPECIAL RESIDENT GROUPS

In many ways, the manager's relationship with residents hinges on how well both groups understand each other. Does the manager understand the various shelter and non-shelter needs of residents? Do they in turn understand the constraints under which the manager operates, the limitations of resources, and the subsequent level of service that can be provided?

In order to develop an understanding of the residents, a manager should look beyond the present conflict when experiencing problems with a tenant. A person's needs and background often determine behaviour in any particular situation. An empathetic manager searches for the cause of a problem and attempts to find short and long term solutions.

RESIDENTS OF SUBSIDIZED LOW-INCOME DEVELOPMENTS

The people living in subsidized units have many problems other than living on very low incomes. Some residents may see themselves, consciously or sub-consciously, as social failures without the prospect of upward mobility or access to social and political opportunity. They may feel trapped and resentful.

The frustration felt by some residents may be expressed in symptoms of withdrawal, depression, delinquency and the search for escape which may involve alcohol abuse. Residents in low-income projects are more likely to have health problems and lack educational and

3. The authors wish to acknowledge the following references in developing this section: Alton Barber and Alvin A. Goldberg, Interpersonal Communications, Teaching Strategies and Resources, (Colorado: University of Denver, ERIC Clearing House on Reading and Communications Skills), and National Centre for Housing Management, The On-Site Housing Manager's Resource Book, Housing for the Elderly, (Washington: N.C.H.M.)

job related skills. There is likely to be a concentration of single parent households, often headed by a woman. Common-law arrangements, stable or casual are common. Because of past experiences, tenants are likely to be suspicious of the motives of management. The simple act of calling on a resident for no greater reason than to become acquainted and to inquire about any problems or needs may arouse suspicions.

The lives of low income tenants are often regulated by some form of external control. It may come in the form of a social worker, the Housing Authority, the police, or the housing manager. Many residents do not have the privilege of making choices. Decisions will often be constrained by economic circumstances.

Although low-income residents share some similar characteristics such as income and housing environment, the social housing manager should be aware that residents are individuals having different values, beliefs, cultures, and attitudes. Managers should avoid the tendency to stereotype and be constantly aware of how personal attitudes affect the perception of the residents.

THE ELDERLY

As with other special groups, there are many common stereotypes given to the elderly. The elderly* often tend to be lumped together as a group. Because a person has passed the age-line associated with retirement (and often a gradual change in lifestyle), policy-makers and the general public do not recognize the individuality, diversity, and heterogeneity of the elderly. While there are some common characteristics, elderly individuals bring to old age unique medical histories, distinct life experiences, and special patterns of interpersonal relationships. The following rhetorical questions are intended to dispel some of the myths and stereotypes about the elderly and the aging process.

* "Elderly" is defined as those people aged 65 or over.

WHAT KIND OF FACTORS ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT AN ELDERLY PERSON'S ABILITY TO COPE INDEPENDENTLY?

Personal impairments:

- Physical illness - the acute and chronic illnesses of old age
- Mobility - arthritic pain, fatigue, paralysis, cardiac problems, loss of energy
- Self-care - difficulties in ability to groom, control of the bladder and bowel, food preparation, dressing, and other behaviour (usually secondary to physical or mental incapacity).
- Speed - a general slowing down of the ability to move one's muscles, to respond to signals from the environment, to make decisions regarding how one should behave
- Mental status - impairments in memory, ability to learn new behaviors, or to think abstractly
- Psychological adjustment - anxiety, depression, excessive dependence, antisocial behavior, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts

Social deprivations:

- Low income
- Inadequate housing
- Poor nutrition
- Neighbourhood crime
- Lack of public transportation
- Enforced retirement
- Lack of continued educational opportunities
- The steady move of recreational resources to suburbs and resort areas
- Centralization of medical resources and consequently their increased distance from the older person
- The concurrent growth of the small family, smaller dwelling units, and decline of three-generation living
- Loss of friends through death, lowered mobility, and migration
- The youth culture and anti-elderly stereotyping ("ageism")

WHAT DISPARITIES ARE THERE AMONGST ELDERLY OF DIFFERENT AGES?

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Young-Old 65-75	Mainly capable of living independently. Work/previous friendship links still in place.
Middle-Old 75-85	Probably face disruption due to death of spouse, decreasing financial resources and increasing health problems.
Old-Old 85 & over	Increasing social isolation as peers die and health deteriorates.

WHAT PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IS ELDERLY?

The elderly comprise a significant proportion of Canadian Society. For example, in 1971 the age group 65 and over comprised 9.5% of Metro Winnipeg's population. Recent projections show that by 1981, this age group will comprise 11.5% of Winnipeg's population.⁴

WHAT KIND OF ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIAL HOUSING?

- Senior citizens housing is occupied predominantly by women. In over half the developments, less than 1/2 of the residents were men.
- As far as age was concerned, in over half the developments, the majority of residents were under 75.
- Those living in self-contained accommodation tended to be younger than those in hostel and mixed hostel/self contained developments.
- It is estimated that in a typical development, 1/5 of the residents lived a lonely life, having few contacts either inside or outside development. For the majority, however, the development was a major source of friendships.⁵

4. Manitoba Department of Health and Social Development; Aging in Manitoba, Needs and Resources, 1971.

5. Audain, Michael, Beyond Shelter, (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development) 1973.

HOW DO THE ELDERLY PERCEIVE AND USE SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS?

- Residents were found to be neither strongly in favour nor opposed to high-rise buildings. Those living in high-rises were less likely than other residents to have negative reactions to them.
- Sharing of toilets, baths, and bedrooms in hostel developments resulted in strong dissatisfaction.
- There was a lack of regular activities in recreation rooms and other indoor facilities were under-used.
- Resident satisfaction in housing for the elderly is closely related to access to community services and facilities such as transportation, shops, churches, etc., general attractiveness of the neighbourhood and familiarity with the area.
- Residents of senior citizen housing generally suffer from a serious lack of personal social services both on site and in the local community.
 - 86% lacked a group leadership service
 - 49% without social work counselling
 - 80% food shopping service unavailable
 - 60% homemaker service unavailable
 - 63% meal delivery service unavailable
 - 66% friendly visiting service unavailable⁶

THE MANAGER'S ROLE IN ELDERLY PERSON'S HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS - SOME QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What responsibility should a project or development manager take in providing social services for residents?
 - a) directly
 - b) initiating linkages and service provision through public and voluntary agencies in the community
- Should recreation programming be the responsibility of the manager, the Board, the tenants or a combination of all three?
- Should senior citizen centres open to the entire community be located in association with senior citizen housing developments? If not, why not?
- How can liason between housing developments for the elderly and other services such as continuing care, personal care homes, etc., be improved?

6. Goodman, Emily Jane, The Tenant Survival Book, (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1972), p. 86.

- To what extent should tenants be involved in management and how?
- To what extent should tenants be responsible for their recreational programming?
- How useful are social programs such as the floor buddy system or the fire warden?

RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

A manager not only has to relate to individual residents but also to groups within the housing environment. Group resident involvement with management usually means resident organizations. Through these organizations, residents can use their skills and strengths to make the development a better place for them to live. Sharing responsibility and decision-making with the residents through their organizations can be the strongest and most productive form of management. A manager in partnership with a successful resident organization can draw on resources that are not available elsewhere. The organization also offers an established means of communication between the manager and the residents. Resident organizations may want the opportunity to plan and participate in the welfare of the community. This can be accomplished by assuming some responsibility for maintenance, appearance and security. Furthermore, the organization provides a vehicle through which residents as a group can build a sound relationship within the surrounding community.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM A RESIDENT ORGANIZATION

A manager should be aware of the many possible contributions of resident organizations. Examples are listed below:

- They can enable the manager to become more effective by utilizing resident leadership.
- They can consolidate similar individual resident requests and grievances before they are referred to the manager for solution
- They can provide a forum for dealing with small problems before they fester and become big ones
- They can be a source of information about project life that may not be available from routine staff reports.
- They can be a safeguard against abuse of authority by management employees.
- They can help communicate the intentions and concerns of the manager to the residents.
- They can promote communication and develop a sense of community among residents.
- They can work with the manager to establish policies and procedures that meet the needs of all concerned.

- They can assist in city and neighbourhood planning by providing information about the need for such additional facilities as schools, traffic lights, and recreation areas.
- They can be a positive force in combating undesirable influences or conditions and helping to stabilize the development and surrounding neighbourhood.
- They can help bring various ethnic, religious and social groups closer together through working toward common goals.
- They can encourage residents to assume greater responsibility for the care and use of development property.
- They can provide the basic impetus and organizing support for a variety of projects, such as resident patrols to strengthen security, or a co-operative day-care center.

TYPES OF RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS (See Appendix)

It is important not to stereotype resident organizations. They will not necessarily be advocate groups for tenant rights, nor will they all be organized around management/resident problems.

Table A describes different types of resident organizations and the kind of response that each demands from a manager.

TABLE A:
DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

TYPE	FUNCTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS	EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
Social	Hobbies, gardening, card-playing, church, etc.	Promote resident interaction.	Provide meeting space, bulletin board, approvals where necessary (e.g. for planting flowers). Help find instructors, etc.
Service	Welcoming new tenants, visiting shut-ins, newsletter, library, escort service, etc.	Promote resident sense of control over environment. Help set hospitable supportive tone. Use resident skills.	Provide meeting space, supplies, orientation material. Seek and encourage leadership. Help investigate community facilities.
Security	Escort service, guards, floor captains.	Promote sense of security. Give residents some responsibility for own security.	Provide technical assistance, support, equipment and materials upon request. Provide rapid response to emergency calls.
Resident Representation: a) Relations with management (Council and/or Committees)	Assert resident rights. Advocate resident interests. Resolve grievances against management.	Share in decision making responsibilities. Important channel for communication between tenants and management. Help identify needs, problems at an early stage. Help establish budget priorities.	Show tact and patience. Meet regularly with whole group, committees or representatives. Respond promptly to reasonable requests. Consult with leadership on mutual problems. Solicit suggestions. Provide meeting space, supplies, office help, distribute notices, etc. Provide new information on new programs, procedures.
b) Relations with community	Political representation (meeting with officials, supplying witnesses). Fund Raising.	Involve residents in the community-at-large. May be channel for out-side funds. Aid in city and neighbourhood planning. Help stabilize community.	Support resident requests (e.g. to different kinds of services). Provide information on up-coming community events, services, and programs, etc.

APPENDIX

Figure #3

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A RESIDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTION ⁷

NAME:

PURPOSE:

MEMBERSHIP: Who is eligible - definition of geographic area - procedure for securing an application and membership card.

OFFICERS: Number, duties, terms of office - nomination, election, installation procedures.

COMMITTEES: Number, duties of permanent committees - procedure for setting up ad hoc committees.

FINANCES: Dues - auditing procedures.

MEETINGS: When are they held? Frequency.

QUORUM: Percentage of membership needed to conduct business.

AMENDMENTS: Procedure for changing or adding to by-laws.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: Simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order.

7. This simple outline of a constitution is adapted from "Resident Involvement Guide", National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, 2600 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. pp. 25 - 36.

CHAPTER 5
PHYSICAL PLANT MANAGEMENT

4

Maintenance. What does the word imply? Does the average person immediately think of one of the most important aspects of property management, or of the high levels of expertise and decision-making that it entails? Not likely. In large measure this is because maintenance has not attained the stature of other professions or vocations that require a comparable level of skills. Maintenance tasks are more or less generalized; all functions are typically seen as relatively simple.

This conventional view of maintenance has far reaching implications for the field of property management. In the first instance, it falsely implies that property can be efficiently and effectively managed by a staff with limited maintenance skills. This offers justification for establishing low qualification criteria for hiring maintenance staff. Over time, this factor can have serious cost ramifications. The problem can be compounded further if the property manager has negligible maintenance skills and looks upon maintenance in the conventional manner. The result will be to sweep maintenance functions 'under the rug'.

What then are the key variables that motivate the individual to undertake maintenance? These can be divided into four categories.

1. If a unit, vital to utility or comfort, has broken down. (i.e. a plumbing appliance or an electrical system)
2. If the failure to maintain the project has potentially harmful consequences. (i.e. the danger and discomfort that might be caused by the failure of a heating system)
3. If the manager is cost conscious. By definition, this implies careful attention to all costs or to the total cost of an operation and the relationship

of the components to each other. Included are initial (or capital) costs and variable (or operating) costs. This, in turn, suggests focusing not only on short-term costs, but on actual and perceived intermediate and long term costs.

4. The requirement to sustain or increase the livability of the housing units. This goal is fundamental to the concept of social housing. In addition, it is a sound business practise for profit maximizer because it increases the potential to rent the units more readily and under normal circumstances results in fewer vacancies.

It is therefore apparent that efficient and effective property management implies sound decision-making and maintenance practises. This, in turn, focuses on the need for a skillful and competent manager.

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER

A housing manager must be able to operate a project in the most efficient manner. The position requires the perceptive and analytical ability to make sound decisions. It further requires a desire and ability to 'stay on top' of the workload. For example, a competent manager will be aware of a deteriorating driveway in one of the projects he manages. He will further be aware that it can probably be ignored for a year or two without any serious problems. However, he will recognize that ultimately it will have to be repaired. The longer the repair-work is postponed, the greater the deterioration and the higher the repair costs. A prudent manager will perceive the increased costs and will therefore undertake remedial action at an earlier date. The reduction in total costs can then be channeled into other avenues.

It is important to note, however, that a competent manager does not make maintenance decisions in isolation of other factors. Specific requirements are viewed in relationship to the total operation. To draw an analogy, maintenance needs can be hypothetically viewed as individual pieces of a large puzzle. Each piece can then be assigned a different weight relative to its degree of importance to the whole. All of these pieces can then be arranged from those most important to those least important.

It is this ability to prioritize effectively in the abstract, particularly when resources are limited, that frequently signifies the difference between a competent, and an unsuccessful manager.

The prioritization process can be vastly different for the private and social housing managers. The latter, to function optimally, must have the capacity to understand and follow social housing policy directions which often deviate from traditional entrepreneurial goals. The social housing manager, in addition to considering economic costs, must also consider social costs. For example, there will be occasions when a social housing manager must opt for higher economic expenditures because the attendant social costs are considerably lower than they would be if he/she chose the avenue of lowest economic cost. (This inverse relationship is not intended to be interpreted as a hard and fast rule). Therefore, unlike the private housing manager who predominately makes cost-benefit decisions within an economic framework, the social housing manager must additionally weigh the advantages and disadvantages of economic decisions in relation to social cost.

It should become apparent that maintenance is not an unimportant area of property management. It entails, or at least should encompass, more than a series of ad hoc decisions whenever mechanical failures occur, or when something has been broken or requires repainting. If it is efficiently and effectively executed, maintenance involves a great deal of forethought. It further requires a high level of maintenance expertise. This implies up-to-date knowledge of building products and techniques. And last but not least, maintenance requires a will to do now that which is necessary rather than postponing it to a later date.

THE ROLE OF THE HOUSING AGENCY

The provision of decent housing has two distinctive components: the initial provision of adequate housing (which implies structures that are characterized by good design, specifications, product utilization and construction) and the maintenance of that housing thereafter. If both of those variables have been met, then long run total costs will be minimized and the accrued savings can be channeled to fulfill other tenant needs. But if one or both of those conditions is not met, the costs of maintenance, in the long run at least, will increase. In that event, economic savings will not accrue or will be diminished. Moreover, during the interim the livability of the housing units will decrease.

Because the amortization period of the mortgages for social housing projects extend up to fifty years (considerably longer than that of conventional mortgages), it is not only conceivable, but probable that the major proportion of the structural components of the housing will require replacement long before the buildings are paid for. It is reasonable to assume that these expenditures will be onerous. If the structure is either poorly constructed or poorly maintained and does not last as long as the mortgage, then a larger portion of society's productivity will have to be channeled into a non-existent commodity. Future generations will pay for the ineptitude of their predecessors.

Economics, important as it is, is not the only justification for a good maintenance program. In addition, good maintenance should be practised, because it is the basis of good property management. More than any other single factor, it contributes to a harmonious relationship between the administration and the tenants. Good maintenance is, in essence, a statement about the respect and dignity accorded the tenants in terms of the physical environment in which they live. In addition it has been illustrated that good maintenance reduces turnover, vacancy rates, and levels of vandalism thereby reducing the overall operating costs of the building. In the non-profit housing situation, these savings can be translated into lower rents. In housing where rents are geared to income, the savings can be translated into additional amenities for the same total budget.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL APPARATUS AND PROCEDURES

The organizational structure necessary to maintain a housing project varies with the type of project. This involves many factors: the total number of housing units, the number of projects, and the physical nature of the structure (apartment blocks, townhouse units, maisonettes etc.). Location is also an important variable. For example, are the housing projects scattered or confined to a small geographic area? This must be considered if only because the former necessitates increased administrative travel time. Whether the housing is senior citizen or family is another critical factor. Housing for senior citizens, under normal circumstances, requires approximately one-third of the maintenance time necessary for family housing.

An organizational structure must be designed to service each different housing project. However, care must be taken to ensure that a rigid organizational design is not created in the process.

A good design will lend itself to minor modifications should the supply of housing stock increase or decrease at a future date.

The responsibility for designing and operating an efficient maintenance system rests with the manager. Unfortunately, the manager is frequently handicapped by budgetary limitations and therefore cannot devise the optimal system. Because resources are scarce, the manager may attempt to further effect economies and refine procedures in order to set the optimal organization in place.

There are many different organizational systems. These can range from the very simplest, associated with small projects, where the manager is directly responsible for all aspects of maintenance, all the way up a large scale hierarchical organization where the manager oversees a number of maintenance supervisors and maintenance men but is only indirectly responsible for maintenance tasks. In the first case the manager may do the maintenance directly or contract some or all of this to specialized service companies. In the hierarchical organizations maintenance men and caretakers undertake the maintenance work acting on instructions from the maintenance supervisor(s). In this last case, the housing manager is only indirectly responsible for day-to-day maintenance work, but would be directly responsible for seeing that overall property maintenance is efficient and effective in meeting the needs of the properties under his control.

In addition to instituting an organizational system for handling maintenance requirements, certain other practises should be included. Firm policy guidelines as well as a systematic set of procedures as to how maintenance requests are to be handled should be established. These procedures should be set in the form of a manual for staff members.

The general manager should learn basic maintenance procedures. A knowledge of the work performed by staff members will be the beginning of improved manager-staff communications. The general manager should acquire basic knowledge of the maintenance procedures, as should the other staff members in positions of authority -- the area and project managers, and the tenant relations workers. The information should be basic, i.e. how to operate equipment in the units, procedures to be followed when certain problems occur such as lock outs, sewer back-ups or electrical failures.

RECORD KEEPING

A comprehensive set of maintenance records should be kept for the following reasons:

1. Governing bodies require a high degree of accountability.
2. It is a form of documentation that might be required in the future by either tenants, the courts or the government.
3. It provides an effective mechanism for monitoring expenditures, staff time, etc.
4. These recordings become evaluative tools in the future. They reveal the weaknesses and strengths of an operation. By so doing, they create the groundwork for more intelligent decision-making in the future.

A well-designed set of records will ultimately provide an overview of the entire operation. The type of records that should be maintained are generally operations specific. The following are a few basic recommendations for a maintenance operation.

1. It is imperative that an appropriately designed system of accounting be devised for the maintenance operation so that cash flows can be easily assessed. It is also important that the system reveals inefficiencies in the operation quickly so that steps can be taken to rectify the deficiency before the effects are compounded.
2. A detailed history of maintenance by type should be kept. Data should be readily available on how much has been spent on individual maintenance requirements and why and within what time period. For example,

how much has been spent on repaving driveways - in years 1, 2 and 3? Were they asphalt or concrete? What were the apparent reasons for break-up - inferior design, specifications, workmanship or type of vehicular traffic? Another similar set of separate records should be kept on doors, windows, electrical repairs, plumbing fixtures, appliances, etc.

3. Two categories of time and motion records should be recorded.
 - (a) The average time required to complete different tasks should be computed so that the work load for maintenance staff can be realistically determined and equitably distributed. In addition this will provide a basis for determining the staff requirements of an operation.
 - (b) The amount of staff time used should be regularly documented. This will aid in planning optimal procedures that will result in time savings or in other words, increased productivity.

TYPES OF MAINTENANCE

Maintenance can be broken down into two broad categories - routine maintenance and responsive maintenance, which can be further broken down into various components.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

This includes all those functions that can be planned in advance. The procedures for these tasks can be carefully analyzed and the time for doing those tasks can be scheduled. It is therefore, relatively easy to set routine maintenance within a systematic framework.

The following functions are included in routine maintenance:

Regular Caretaking Duties

This varies with the type of physical structure. For example, the required maintenance for townhouse developments is considerably different than that required for apartment blocks. Some generalized examples are vacuuming public areas, doing minor repairs, cutting the grass and shovelling the snow. It does not

normally include those janitorial functions, such as washing walls and apartment window washing, which are generally undertaken on an infrequent basis.

Inspection Checks

Basically there are two types of inspection checks. One is essential and frequently required by law. Included in this category are the various safety checks of mechanical equipment and other devices such as elevators, emergency battery powered lighting, fire alarm pull stations, etc. It would also include informal checks on various equipment undertaken by the caretaker - frequently on a daily basis. For example, in the winter, all exterior fire escapes and areas upon which emergency exit doors open, should be inspected daily to ensure that they are clear of ice and snow blockage.

The second type of maintenance inspection is also preventive but the goal is different. The purpose is to detect and rectify minor deficiencies before they become costly problems. Included in this category is almost everything related to the physical structure and surrounding grounds. For example, the source of minor roof leaks should be detected before the interiors are damaged. Exterior doors (or wooden structures) should be repainted on a regular basis. Exposure of the unpainted wood to the elements will cause it to warp extensively.

To ensure that preventive maintenance is done efficiently and effectively, the element of guesswork should be reduced to as great a degree as possible. There are a number of procedural mechanisms that will be an invaluable aid to managers in achieving that goal.

- (a) A complete set of instruction manuals for all equipment should be kept in an easily accessible place such as the central filing system.
- (b) A warranty file should be maintained, so that when deficiencies or breakdown occur, a quick check of the warranty file will reveal in a matter of minutes if the responsibility for the failure or defect resides with the manufacturer.
- (c) A complete set of architectural plans for every building should additionally be kept within easy reach, and should be updated as revisions occur.

- (d) All diagrams of telephone and cable television wiring should additionally be kept in a separate filing system.
- (e) All valves in buildings should be properly tagged so that they can be easily identified.
- (f) Pipelines in open access areas should be color coded so that specific pipes can be more easily detected when required.
- (g) Any of this information which has direct relevance to the tenant's role in the care of the units should be incorporated into the tenant's manual. This would include such basics as operating instructions and care of electrical appliances; how to regulate heating systems so that optimal heat flow will be achieved and information on where the various shut off valves are located.
- (h) A routine schedule should be established for doing the periodic jobs, such as cleaning plumbing traps, checking window and bathroom caulking and repairing holes in asphalt driveways. The scheduling should be staggered so that it will not be a strain on staff time and/or budgets and it should be formalized in written form to be treated as an integral part of the maintenance program.
- (i) The manager should personally undertake periodic checks of the projects. This practice is functional for two reasons. It guards against the possibility of the manager becoming too distantly removed from the base of the operation. Staff members will be aware that someone is checking on their work.

RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE

Responsive maintenance differs from routine or preventive in that the maintenance request generally comes from the tenant, not the administration. Generally these requests are not of a preventive nature. Most frequently they are made because something has broken down and needs repair. However, occasionally a tenant might call to say something is beginning to wear out or requires adjustment.

Responsive maintenance requests can fall into one of two categories:

- (a) those that constitute an emergency
- (b) those that are inconvenient, trivial or otherwise.

Different responses are necessary - emergencies must be dealt with immediately whereas trivialities can be attended to at a later date. Within this context, special arrangements must be made for emergencies in the event that they do not occur during formal working hours.

Maintenance requests are an integral part of property management. They should not be considered as tenant's complaints. Property does break and wear out, and accidents happen to even the most cautious individuals.

The tenant should be told how long it will take for a maintenance request to be fulfilled. There is nothing more infuriating to a tenant than to be continually told by an administrator that a request will be promptly attended and then not have it followed up for months or longer. Some maintenance work cannot be done promptly as parts may have to be ordered.

PURCHASING GOODS AND SERVICES

The purchases of goods and services is an important aspect of maintenance as it comprises a large proportion of the maintenance budget. The lowest-priced goods and services are not necessarily the most economical in the long term. A good example of this would be the cost of paint.

Paint jobs are labor intensive. This means that the greater share of the total cost is allocated for the cost of labor. Paint, in comparison, comprises a small proportion of that cost. Now, if the manager has no choice and must trim costs in the short run, he will invariably settle for the lowest paint bid. That bid, in all likelihood, is lowest because the paint contractor has trimmed his costs so that he will be awarded the bid. A common way of doing this is to settle for the lower cost paint. Now, given that there is a direct correlation between the cost and quality of paint, the lower quality paint will wash off or fade sooner than the higher quality paint would under the same circumstances. Therefore, the premises will require repainting at a much earlier date. Economies, in the long run, will not then be achieved.

The direct correlation between price and quality should not be rigidly accepted. There are numerous examples of services and products that belie this concept. In many instances, price is not a reliable indicator. The cheaper product or services could be better. A competent manager would compare the costs and benefits of each specific product or service.

PURCHASING PRACTISES

There are numerous practises a manager can use to "strike the best deal". One way to gauge the quality of the product is to compare warranties for different products. Another is to approach experts in the field and solicit their opinions. Another good source of information is consumer publications. Canadian Consumer magazine and its American counterpart, Consumer Reports are two good examples. Consumer Associations or governmental Consumer Affairs departments also offer good advice.

How to purchase goods and services intelligently is a vital part of maintenance management. Equally important is what kinds of items are being purchased. Are they essentials or frills? And in what quantities are those goods and services purchased? Many of these decisions are subject to the manager's discretion, which may extend to the formulation of definitive policies and general guidelines to deal with tenants' requests. For example, the decision as to whether clothes washers and dryers should be installed in individual dwellings might have been delegated to the manager. Or whether pets should be allowed in any, all, or none of the developments. Or whether tenants should be permitted to paint, or have their interior premises in pastel shades only, or in any colour. In time any of these decisions could have a decided impact, direct or otherwise, on the purchase of goods and services. No attempt shall be made to recommend specific policies because each specific case merits careful study. It might, however, be useful for the manager to ponder a few generalized recommendations which either directly or indirectly relate to the purchase of goods and services and overall maintenance expenditures.

If tenants have committed some relatively minor infraction, such as wallpapering a wall before learning that it is contrary to administrative policy, they should not be severely reprimanded. They should, however, be informed of administrative policy on the matters and told not to continue the practise.

If a breakage or some type of damage to the premises has been incurred and it has been conclusively established that the tenant has been negligent, it is only reasonable that the tenant should be charged for the damage. On the other hand, if the tenant has wiped a spot off the wall and the paint has come off, it would certainly be unjust to reprimand the tenant for the poor workmanship of a paint contractor.

FIRE PROTECTION

The need for adequate measures of fire safety, comprising measures for the prevention of fires and those for personal and property protection in the event of a fire, would seem to be self evident. Nevertheless, it is useful to reiterate the reasons why fire safety measures are such a vital part of building management:

1. There is a large capital investment in the building, the responsibility for protecting that investment rests with the manager.
2. Some insurance companies will not write a policy for a building unless stipulations in addition to fire department and building code regulations are met. The settlement of claims would become difficult if these specified insurance requirements were absent prior to the occurrence of the fire.
3. Most importantly, the safety of residents is dependent on the precautionary measures undertaken by the property manager. The manager should strive to increase safety aspects beyond those stipulated in building and safety codes.

Managers will recognize that fire safety is greatly enhanced by existing building codes which result in buildings being built with numerous fire-resistant features such as masonry fire walls between units, and fire-resistant stairways; and by safety codes which require adherence to various safety procedures such as the program of fire alarm systems, and the practice of fire drills in apartment buildings. However, these legal requirements should not be viewed as optimal safety standards. Rather they represent maximum standards to be met, not the ideal. For example, although fire extinguishers are desirable they are frequently

not required in many types of residential property; similarly, heat detectors may be a required and acceptable minimum warning system but smoke detectors will normally provide better life safety by providing earlier warning of the outbreak of fire.

Thus there is a clear need for additional safety measures on top of those that are legally required. Such additional measures can be grouped into two distinct categories.

1. Physical property safety measures, largely provided through technical safety devices.
2. Human safety, provided through a combination of physical safety devices and through appropriate education.

It is essential that in planning for both property and human safety, all attention is not focused on one of these factors to the detriment of the other. For example, suppose the focus was placed exclusively on structural safety so that the most effective physical safety devices were installed. These would not, however, ensure a high degree of safety by themselves. The technological advantage would be lost if the tenants had not been trained in fire safety measures. This would include training in behaviour that would reduce the likelihood of fire occurring (e.g. not smoking in bed, particular caution when deep fat frying etc.), and training in how to respond to the outbreak of fire (e.g. how to use fire extinguishers, how to leave the building safely and fire drills). Thus a safety program must be designed that encompasses both educational and technological aspects.

Safety education should be extended to include caretakers and administrative staff who in turn can inform the tenants. It would also be a good idea, especially for senior citizens, to have periodic formal instruction given by the local fire department. Fire safety information should also be included in the tenants' handbook.

SECURITY

A feeling of security is a basic need of all people. In the broadest sense it covers many topics. Security is not something that can be dealt with just on a factual basis; it is also an emotion. Fear of fire, fear of suffering injury without being able to summon aid, and fear of crime against one's person and property all create a sense of insecurity that is very real to the person experiencing it. Security is a special concern of the elderly because of reduced agility, eyesight, hearing, or strength. Feelings of insecurity and fear are also created when

Security guards are an expensive and continual drain on the operating budget, not because of high salaries but because there are so many hours in the week to be covered. Furthermore, they can only be in one place at a time, and anyone can see them coming. The costs and benefits of the services of a security guard should be carefully assessed.

Optical door viewers allow a resident to see who is at the door. When installing, the diameter of the hole in the door should be kept small, one quarter inch is recommended as the maximum. This is to prevent the forceable removal of the device and thereby gaining entry to the unit. The best type of viewer will be one which gives a "fish-eye" wide angle viewing range. Though distorted, the range of view is a more important consideration.

Door chains do permit a person to talk more easily to the person on the other side, but should not be considered a method of keeping the door secure. They can be easily broken, and even the strong chains will permit the insertion of tools to force the door completely open. They do have psychological value, especially to the elderly, and this is not to be ignored.

Window locks may also be employed. For ground floors an extra strong safety glass is another security advantage. Though it can eventually be broken with enough force, the noise involved is great enough to frequently deter the would-be burglar.

Efforts taken to increase security frequently have adverse implications for fire safety. Padlocking a chain to seal a door can hinder escape during a fire emergency. There are more common errors that can be avoided. Locks that require a key from both sides should not be used. A fence can block access to a fire hydrant. A gate with a padlock can be cut open by the fire department, but a fence without a gate creates problems. People trying to get out of exit doors will be doing so under conditions possibly involving panic, reduced vision, lack of electric lights at night, and may be carrying small children. Sliding bolts and "eye" type latches which normally present no problem may present severe problems to people during an emergency.

In summary there are many security issues which must be considered including the design of buildings, the nature of occupants and the characteristics of the surrounding area, and the availability of a quick response by a public police department. Surveillance, protective hardware, the willingness of residents to show concern,

and the use of protective measures, such as Operation Identification* are all components of an overall security system.

* The program, "Operation Identification", is operant in Manitoba. Personal property is coded and marked with an engraving device, making stolen articles easier to trace and harder to sell.

CHAPTER 6
NON-SHELTER NEEDS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

What are non-shelter needs? Basically, non-shelter needs are those needs which are left unfulfilled after clean, safe, comfortable and affordable housing has been provided. They are numerous and of many different types, falling into a number of categories: social, recreation, child care, education employment and health.

Every household will have a need for these social services at one time or another. Some assistance will already be available in the local community such as organized recreation programs for school age children and social and cultural activities organized by churches. Other social services badly needed by tenants may not exist. Many working parents require child care services close to home. Senior citizens unable to cook for themselves on a regular basis may require a meal service such as Meals on Wheels.

In some instances existing services may not be found in locations that are easily accessible. A neighbourhood library located a long distance from an elderly persons housing project may signal the need for a bi-monthly visit from a book-mobile.

All levels of government fund programs to meet the non-shelter needs of citizens. Many volunteer groups and privately funded agencies provide additional services. Commonly called social service agencies, these groups sponsor programs that residents can utilize. And in many instances, staff members are available for consultation and assistance in planning new programs.

THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT

The role of housing management in assuming responsibility for the provision of services beyond shelter is a subject currently under debate. There are those who believe that tenants are not entitled to any more services than a renter in the private market and that the first and only responsibility of managers should be the provision of safe, clean, and affordable housing. At the other extreme some would suggest that it is the function of the social housing manager to be social worker first and building manager second. The reality is that operating funding is seldom available to allow the housing manager to choose a role at the latter end of the continuum. This does not, however, obviate the social housing manager's responsibility to see that the non-shelter needs of his tenants are met. It simply means that the social housing manager must be more innovative, imaginative and knowledgeable in meeting the needs of his tenants.

Social housing managers have this special responsibility because their tenants, unlike their counterparts in privately rented accommodation, do not enjoy the same freedom to move if they do not like their housing environment. Some managers may think a more restrictive role is appropriate, believing that out of respect for the autonomy of families and elderly tenants they should not provide any assistance beyond the provision of shelter. While this may be a reasonable choice for part-time managers of small projects who are kept busy with routine administration and maintenance duties, such a stance creates an inflexible and impersonal environment for residents living in larger projects. Also, research indicates that the efficiency, actions, and attitudes of management greatly affect the satisfaction in a housing environment.¹ Meeting non-shelter needs is an important component of management services provided by a social housing manager. Management involvement in the provision of non-shelter services is not an act of paternalism or altruism. It is a sound management practise.

1. Morton Isler, Roberta Sadecca and Margaret Drury, Keys to Successful Housing Management (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1974), pp. 59 - 67.

The difficulties that managers may encounter are often linked to unmet social needs. Excessive noise and vandalism can be attributed, at least in part, to the absence of adequate recreational programs for children and adolescents. Elderly persons may be better able to live independently if food and housekeeping services are available in times of illness or convalescence. Without adequate planning for the non-shelter needs of residents, the social housing manager will constantly be responding to crisis situations.

How should a manager plan for the non-shelter needs of his tenants? The rest of this chapter attempts to answer this question under the following headings:

- a. Social Services in Family Housing
- b. Social Services in Housing for the Elderly
- c. Identifying and Assessing Tenant Needs
- d. Identifying Existing Community Services

SOCIAL SERVICES IN FAMILY HOUSING

Tenants will often indicate, either individually or through their tenant organizations, that they are encountering certain problems. Most residents will look to the manager to help them find solutions to the problems they encounter. Families rarely want management to resolve their problems for them. They are looking for either information, organizational assistance, the use of space within the housing project or the support of management. The most appropriate role for the manager is that of an enthusiastic supporter who assists tenants in realizing their own goals.

A prevalent need among residents is to exercise control over their own lives. The opportunity to use their own knowledge and experience to decide what programs they and their families need should not be discouraged. Decision-making and leadership in program planning as well as participation in programs ought to come from the tenants.

SOCIAL SERVICES IN HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Social services required by the elderly and the role of management in ensuring their availability will vary according to the mental and physical health of elderly tenants. Among the healthy elderly, the manager functions in a role similar to the manager of family housing. Assisting the elderly plan their own social activities and recreational programs as well as ensuring that emergency medical assistance is available, are common roles for managers however, as the aging process continues, tenants will require more support and assistance from social agencies and housing managers. As physical capacity declines, individuals often become weak, accident prone, forgetful, and suffer from malnutrition. Adults at this stage are not bedridden, but they are often housebound. Counselling, dietary advice, and nursing care may be required for periods of short duration. Help with housekeeping and meal preparation may be required indefinitely. Extensive community services must be made available to the frail elderly in order to postpone institutionalization. Given that most of these services are available, a well informed and sensitive manager who can help to co-ordinate in-house and community services is a valuable resource to the community team. Well planned support systems that are able to cope with the occasional emergency, encourage independence and self sufficiency, and provide a more supportive housing environment can slow the process of the rapid physical and mental deterioration of the frail elderly and postpone costly institutionalization.

IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING TENANTS' NEEDS

RESIDENT PROFILE

One way of identifying the kind of people who live in a housing development(s) and assessing their needs is to undertake a resident profile. This can be compiled from existing records or can be gathered directly from residents. If the latter approach is used, personal interviews rather than surveys by mail are much more effective in gathering accurate data.

The manager will need basic information on the following factors and characteristics, depending on the type of project being analyzed:

- Age
- Sex
- Marital status
- Income and source
- Family composition
- Number of female headed households
- Education
- Employment
- Former employment
- Ethnic group
- Previous address
- Type of previous residence
- Time in development
- Church organization and membership
- Interests
- Immediate family contacts
- Handicaps

GATHERING FURTHER INFORMATION

A resident profile of a development should provide a great deal of information about the needs of tenants. However, the collection of information may be taken one step further by conducting a survey of tenants to discover what they see as their major problems and to get them to specifically identify their non-shelter needs. This could be done in conjunction with collecting information for the resident profile or as a separate exercise.

In order to keep informed of the current needs of tenants, the resident profile and other information should be updated on a regular basis - at least once every six months.

Another valuable source of information of tenant needs lies with the tenants themselves. Comments expressed during individual conversations with residents or during tenant association meetings can indicate unmet needs.

ASSESSING RESIDENTS' NEEDS FOR NON SHELTER SERVICES

The various sources of information suggested above should help the social housing manager to analyze and identify the various needs of different types of tenants. As funding will likely not be available for all of the requested programs the manager should involve the residents in developing a list of priorities. This might be done at a general meeting or again through survey techniques. Encouraging resident involvement will ensure that programming and services truly reflect the needs of the residents and not the preferences of the manager.

The manager is now in a position to plan and program for the non-shelter needs of his residents. To guide and shape his planning, he should next ask the following basic questions:

1. What are the major social, recreational, support, and health needs of residents?
2. To what extent are these needs being met by
 - a) In-house programming and activities?
 - b) Services in the community?
3. What services exist which residents could be utilizing?
4. Are residents aware of available services?
5. What major gaps exist in service provision?
6. Should these be provided
 - a) On site?
 - b) In the community?
7. What steps should be taken to develop new services or expand others?

The final part of this chapter examines some of the tasks the housing manager will need to undertake to answer these questions.

IDENTIFYING EXISTING SOCIAL SERVICES

Managers should have a basic understanding of the social services available in the community and how residents can make use of them. Management can serve as a valuable source of information. Knowing how to apply for unemployment benefits, what services the public school system provides, how to arrange a Meals on Wheels service for a tenant, or where counselling for drug abuse or alcoholism is available will enable a manager to refer tenants to the correct agency when a question arises.

Discovering what services are available is not a difficult task. Many communities have co-ordinating agencies which compile and publish a manual describing the available social services. Generally, the manual will contain a description of the program eligibility requirements, costs, and contact person's name. Various service organizations such as the United Way, the Social Planning Council, the Chamber of Commerce, or even City Hall should know if a social service directory exists.

If a directory has not been compiled or to supplement the existing one, the telephone book, employees of social service agencies, and other housing managers are valuable sources of information. In addition, a survey of tenants may reveal other programs and agencies. The information collected will depend on the nature of the housing project. For example, a list of community resources designed for the elderly will be quite different from a list developed for single women under the age of 60.

The information needed for each agency or program can be obtained in person, over the telephone, or through the mail. A simple form for each agency should include the following information: name of program, address, telephone number, contact person, hours including emergency assistance, description of service, eligibility requirements and cost.

A form should be developed for use in either a looseleaf notebook or card file system to facilitate handy reference. Information should be routinely brought up to date either as changes are discovered or by conducting an annual review of the resource list.

Some housing projects develop and distribute handbooks to their tenants. If such a pamphlet is published, a section of social services available to residents could be added. Otherwise, the manager could compile a specific guide. Such a handbook would contain a description of common problems and needs with a reference to the appropriate service agencies, instructions on how to request assistance, and what to say when calling an agency. If the handbook is to be used by the elderly, phone numbers should be in large, easy to read print. In communities where there is a mix of languages, the handbook should be translated into the main languages.

CREATING NEW PROGRAMS

While government and private agencies provide many programs and services, they simply cannot meet all the non-shelter needs of residents. The number of households needing a particular service may be very small or limited to a certain locale, or the need for certain services may be ignored or not recognized. Two examples of this phenomenon are the growing need for child care services and temporary housing for women who are victims of wife beating.

Once the manager has identified a need for a service or program, the next step is to find an appropriate way to meet that need. The following guidelines will help in meeting that goal:

1. Consult with other professionals.

As housing managers come together to discuss needs, similar problems may be discovered. Proposals can then be submitted jointly, or housing managers can work together on joint projects. Consultation with other professionals such as staff members of social service agencies, will clarify some problem areas.

2. Examine the resources of tenants, the sponsoring agency or housing authority.

Sometimes the resources needed to carry out all or part of the proposed project are available within the organization. A manager may find senior citizens willing to work in a daycare center, teach their fellow residents a course in French, needlepoint, or Canadian literature. A member of the housing authority may have the machinery needed to turn a vacant lot into a garden. The possibilities are numerous.

Even if outside funding is necessary do not neglect this step. Many government agencies and private foundations look more favourably on a grant application which indicates that the group applying for funding is already contributing to the project. An indication that a portion of staff, materials, or equipment costs is being provided by the sponsoring group strengthens any application because it indicates a higher degree of commitment and interest in the project.

At this initial stage it is important to gain the support of the housing authority or sponsoring group. A formal brief outlining the goals, tenants' needs, program operations, method of evaluation, and budget should be presented to the appropriate body.

3. Identify potential funding sources.

Municipal, provincial, and federal agencies, as well as privately funded groups, provide financial assistance for organizations. The key is to find out under which funding program a project qualifies. A proposal to institute a nutrition program for senior citizens will not be funded by

the Provincial Department of Education or the local school board even if they do sponsor a school nutrition program. However, this same project may be funded under the public health program of the Provincial Department of Health and Social Development.

Before submitting a grant proposal, a talk with a staff member at the funding agency will help to determine the criteria used in evaluating a funding proposal. Correct application forms and deadline dates for submitting applications will speed the process.

4. Prepare the proposal.

The application form must be completed in full. Incorrect or missing information delays the application process and thus funding is delayed. If application forms are not provided by the agency, the proposal should include the following information:

- a. The purpose of the project
- b. How the project will operate
- c. Who the project will assist
- d. Who is responsible for the operation of the project
- e. How the project will be evaluated
- f. Budget (salaries, transportation, materials, equipment overhead)
- g. Letters of support from tenants, the housing authority, social workers, etc.

5. Submit proposal to funding agency.

It is advisable to submit the proposal to more than one agency. In addition, it should be submitted on time or better still, in advance of the deadline. If modifications to the proposal are required or if additional information is required, there will be sufficient time to meet the deadline. A call a few days after the proposal is mailed will determine if the proposal was received and if everything was in order.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS

Funding agencies will require an evaluation of programs they fund. Managers will find the evaluation beneficial because it will help them to determine whether their time, energy, and money is being well used. Some programs meet a temporary need and should not be continued. Others are poorly designed and ineffectual. If a program has failed to achieve its objectives, it should not be permitted to continue. It is better to recognize a failure than to continue expending resources that could be more effectively used in other places.

To evaluate a program two kinds of information can be collected - figures and verbal comments from participants. The former should include the number of residents involved, the number who did not participate but have a need for the service, drop-outs, money expended, and so on. The latter can be gathered by talking with staff and participants. An evaluation will determine how effectively the program is operating, if it is actually meeting the non shelter needs of residents, if the results justify the costs, and if the same needs be met in a more efficient manner.

THE MANAGER AS CO-ORDINATOR

Managers of social housing have only a limited amount of time to plan for non-shelter needs. Responsibility for the maintenance of the development(s), financial management, and administrative duties take precedence over the responsibility of providing for non-shelter needs. However, it is the contention of this chapter that planning for non-shelter needs is a part of sound management, and that the manager does not need to be a direct provider of social services to fulfill his responsibilities in this area. The social housing manager can play an important role as a resource person for his residents and staff, as a person who can mobilize and co-ordinate community resources and point out gaps in services, and as an advocate for his tenants. The manager who assumes an aggressive role in planning for the non-shelter needs of his tenants, skillfully utilizing in-house and community resources, can greatly enrich the housing environment of his tenants.

CHAPTER 7

HOUSING DESIGN AND USE

Housing provides its residents with physical and emotional security. The symbol of many of society's most prized values, a house contains an individual's familiar and cherished possessions. It provides a comfortable place to meet with family and friends.

The quality of the physical environment largely determines the degree to which needs for physical and emotional security are met. Most managers are responsible for buildings they had no role in designing; relatively few managers will be involved in the design of new housing units. But by understanding the design process and basic elements of housing design, a manager will begin to see why certain parts of a project function effectively, and why others do not. The choice of the building, the organization of the building's interior space, and the planning of its exterior are all important. So too are the likes and dislikes of residents. After examining these facts a manager should be able to identify weaknesses and to suggest alterations and modifications to his project. By satisfying the housing needs of residents, physical as well as financial, the quality of housing will be improved.

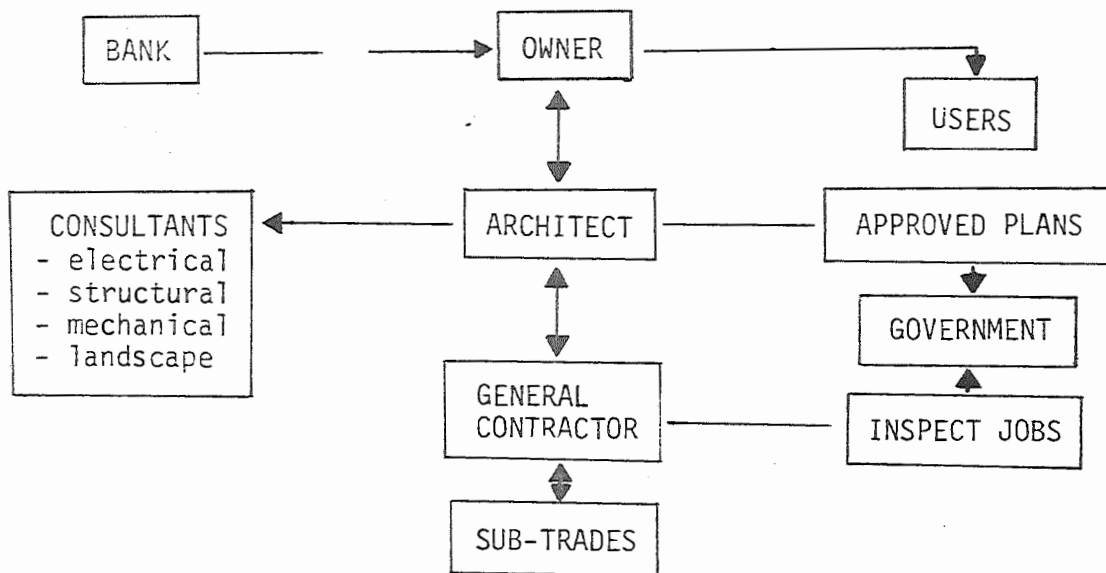
THE BUILDING PROCESS

The design and construction of housing is a lengthy and complex process. It starts with the decision to build and continues until the buildings are fully occupied. Many steps must be completed and the professional skills of a variety of people, including those of the housing manager, are involved.

The basic actors in any construction process, whether undertaken by a private developer, a government, or a third sector agency, are the banker, the owner, the architect, and the general contractor.

The owner makes the decision to build, defines the type of housing to be constructed, and sets a limit on the money to be expended. (The term "owner", for purposes of this discussion, can be defined as either a private developer, a government, a non-profit housing corporation, a co-op housing company or other third sector agency.) The bank provides the financial backing for the project. The architect, in consultation with others, designs the building within the constraints set by the owner. The general contractor, with the assistance of sub-contractors builds the housing as designed by the architect. This process is represented by Diagram 1.

Diagram 1



While these basic components are always present, the design and construction process becomes more complex when public funds are used to build social housing. An additional step must be added to each stage, that of government involvement. In public housing the government becomes the banker and provides the money to finance construction. It also sets priorities for construction, hires the architect, chooses the contractor and then leases the building to a housing authority or board of directors. This high degree of government involvement in social housing will vary only in situations where non-profit corporations, co-ops, and other third sector groups are involved. In these situations, the government acts only as the banker or as a guarantor of privately provided mortgages to an agency that functions in the owner's role. As a condition for funding, the government will make certain demands on the third sector agency but will not become involved in the hiring of a contractor or architect.

The actual design and construction process is outlined on the following pages.¹ At most stages the housing manager can be a valuable source of information to the owner, architect, and contractor. The input of an experienced manager can improve the design, eliminate some maintenance problems, and improve management of the project after construction is completed.

1. Prepared by Architect Eric Barker.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

- Step 1 - The owner has received the necessary approval for the project. Financing has been secured and a schedule agreed upon.
- Step 2 - The architect is hired or appointed from the staff of the sponsoring government agency.
- Step 3 - The design problem is analyzed and a program describing the building is compiled. Specific information regarding building specifications and operation, must be agreed upon by the architect and the owner.

It is at this point that the manager may become involved. He or she can provide information which will help to determine the number, type and form of units, provision of office, commercial or recreation space, type of heating equipment, lighting requirements, etc.

- Step 4 - Potential design options are presented by the architect for review by the owners. Housing managers can assist in the evaluation of the designs.
- Steps 5 and 6 - A preliminary design is prepared. It is refined in consultation with the owners and the housing manager, who can advise about potential maintenance and operating costs.
- Step 7 - The working drawings based on the final design are completed.
- Step 8 - The working drawings are tendered to general contractors who in turn submit their proposals.

Step 9 - The contract is awarded and construction begins.

Step 10 - A construction supervisor oversees the work, consulting with the architect as needed.

During construction, the housing manager should be briefed on the technical operation of the building. Equipment should be demonstrated, copies of warranties and service manuals provided, and the types and suppliers of building materials (floor tiles, plumbing fittings, etc.) indicated in writing.

If the date of completion is altered or postponed, the manager should be informed so that tenants can be interviewed, leases signed and moving arrangements made at the appropriate time.

Step 11 - Construction is completed, the building is inspected by the architect and the owner, and the project is turned over to the owner. Once the building is accepted, the owner becomes responsible for all problems except those due to faulty workmanship or materials. The owner will have negotiated a liability period, generally a year in length, during which time the contractor may be called upon to make alterations if the quality of workmanship or materials is poor. Managers should inspect their building(s) and submit a list of defects to the architect or construction supervisor. If the inspection is not done before the end of the liability period, repair costs will become the responsibility of the owner. These costs will add to the future financial constraints on management.

ASSESSING HOUSING NEED

Planning for the design and construction of new housing must begin with a recognition that households have different needs. For example, it should be determined beforehand what percentage of those tenants residing in this development will be single, married, or have children and what household groupings in the community will have difficulty finding comfortable, affordable housing. Only when this information has been compiled can an assessment of household types most in need of housing be made.

The sources of this data are many. Demographic data, including age of residents and household size, can be gathered from recent census information. The information requested on a housing application can be an invaluable planning guide. The numbers and types of units that have proved difficult to rent provide evidence of an oversupply.

Other factors should be considered. Special needs groups may require special equipment or alterations to the physical environment to compensate for physical handicaps. For the elderly food services, offices for medical personnel, lounges, and meeting rooms may be required. Households with children may make outdoor play areas, daycare facilities, and commercial shops a necessity.

DESIGNING FOR DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLD GROUPINGS

Every community has households at different stages of the life cycle. Housing must accommodate the inevitable process of aging. The living requirements of the single person, the family with children, the couple without children, and the elderly are markedly different. They suggest many apparent and some not so obvious principles which can guide architects in designing better dwellings.

The types of households found in most communities are of five basic types.² Each requires carefully planned interior spaces

2. Scheme suggested in part by James A. Murray and Henry Fliess in Family Housing: A Study of Horizontal Multiple Housing Techniques. (Canadian Design Council, 1970), pp. 4 - 6.

for the activities of daily living, some access to outdoor living space, and different types of auxiliary services.

Single Person: A bachelor apartment is sufficient for the single person, but a one bedroom apartment is usually preferred. If the single person chooses to live with another adult or relative, a two bedroom unit may be required. In either case, cooking and dining space can be small. Direct access to the ground is not necessary. A balcony is adequate.

Couple Without Children: As with the single person, a bachelor apartment is often satisfactory. Space for living, entertaining, cooking and dining is required. Cooking and eating space can be limited. Direct access to the ground is not necessary since most couples have access to parks and recreational facilities.

Couple or Single Parent with Young Children: Space for living, cooking, eating, entertaining, and playing is required. The kitchen and adjacent dining area is important since much of the family's time is spent here. A separate bedroom for the parent(s) is desirable. Two children of the same sex can share a bedroom.

Outdoor space for children's play area is required. With young children, the play area should be enclosed and easily supervised by a parent from inside the house. Older children require larger, open spaces for sports, games, and independent exploration. Some families may desire a small space for planting flowers or a vegetable garden.

Child care facilities are a necessity, if both parents work outside the home. These facilities should include day, noon-hour, and after school care.

Couple or Single Parents with Teenage Children: Space for living, dining, cooking, sleeping, and study is necessary. Teenagers require privacy and a place to entertain friends. A separate bedroom would fill the need for privacy. Outdoor open space for sports and an indoor meeting place would be welcomed by teenagers.

While direct access to the outdoors is not a necessity and for many households a balcony will suffice, many adults would enjoy a small garden for relaxation and gardening.

Senior Citizens: Older couples and individuals require housing that is responsive to their ability to live independently. Many senior citizens wish to maintain their own apartment and prefer either a bachelor or a one-bedroom suite. Some senior citizens require enriched housing in the form of some supervision, meals, occasional nursing care, and the companionship of other seniors. Still other senior citizens require the regular medical attention that is found in a personal care home. In all cases, facilities designed with an appreciation of the physical limitations that the aging process brings, can preserve an elderly person's self-sufficiency.

COMMON FORMS OF HOUSING

There are a number of building forms commonly used for residential purposes.³ Most managers are responsible for only one form; however, some managers will administer projects combining two or more types. Each has advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost, density, and quality of the environment.

Single Family Detached Dwelling: Each unit is in an isolated structure. The single family dwelling can be one or two storeys high and provides direct access to parking and private lawn and garden space. Since the house is not attached to any other structure, it offers the occupants visual and acoustical privacy. The single family detached house is viewed by many as the best and only suitable form of housing for families.

Single family housing must be built at low densities to retain the advantages of privacy and individuality. Consequently large tracts of land are required. The costs of construction are not necessarily prohibitive, although the cost of land can make the single family house uneconomical. Only where land costs are low is this form of housing reasonably priced. Even where land is relatively inexpensive, the continuing construction of single family housing brings the disadvantages of poor transportation, sparse community services, loss of rural land, and costly extension of utilities.

3. Kevin Lynch, Site Planning (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 296 - 301.

Duplex: Two units, attached side by side or one above the other constitute a duplex. The duplex has many of the same advantages as the single family house - privacy, separate yards and a sense of individuality. Because a duplex can be built at a higher density, the cost of land and, therefore, the final cost per unit can sometimes be less than a single-family house.

Row Houses: Three or more units are attached, side by side, or back to back. Row housing is among the least expensive forms of housing to build and maintain, since it makes efficient use of land. Because row housing is built at higher densities, it can support better public transportation and community facilities.

Compared to high-rise apartments, row housing provides a more humane environment, as it is smaller in scale, and often includes private garden space, and direct entry from outside.

Walk-up Apartments: Single storey units are stacked one above the other. They can be two, three, and occasionally four storeys in height. All apartments are accessible by a common set of stairs. The walk-up apartment provides the convenience and freedom of apartment living at relatively lower densities and on an intimate scale. This housing type caters to the needs of small families, single men and women, and the transient tenant but may be unsuitable for persons with physical handicaps and many elderly persons who have difficulty walking and climbing stairs.

Elevator Apartments: Apartment units are stacked in heights above four storeys and serviced by a mechanized lift. These elevated structures are commonly of two varieties - the tower with three to six units clustered around a central elevator shaft or the slab with units disposed along continuous central or external corridors.

Either type of elevator apartment can be built at high densities making it possible to supply special recreational and community facilities on the site. For this reason, elevator apartments are frequently the choice of single adults, childless couples, and senior citizens.

Increasingly, architects are combining housing forms, accommodating various household types and income levels in a single housing project. Single family detached homes, row housing, and elevator apartments, all located on the same site is a common form of integrated housing. A mix of horizontal and vertical housing units relieves some of the visual monotony of rows of housing of the same height and at the same time provides a range of housing for people with different needs. Integrated housing may also include different suite designs for the elderly and families within the same elevator apartment building. Typically, the elderly residents share an entrance and communal areas with other senior citizens, while those occupying family suites share their own separate entrance, laundry, and recreational facilities.

There has been a move away from the construction of large housing projects easily identifiable as public housing, towards housing construction on a smaller scale. Commonly called infill housing, it is usually built at densities and on a scale similar to the surrounding houses. For this reason infill housing can more readily be absorbed into an existing neighbourhood.

HOUSING DENSITIES

The concept of density is an important consideration in the design of housing. A measurement of density will indicate the intensity of activity occurring per unit area.⁴ In housing design this measurement is expressed in terms of the number of dwelling units per acre.

It is important for the housing manager to realize that variations in density affect the quality of the physical and social environment.⁵ The construction of housing at high density levels may result in overcrowding. At very low densities, it is difficult to provide sufficient community facilities and neighbourhood services as there are too few people spread over an expanse of land. Transportation systems become more expensive as residents have to travel farther to gain access to stores, recreational facilities, churches, and schools.

4. Ibid., p. 33.

5. Ibid., pp. 316 - 317.

SITE SELECTION

Choosing a site on which to build social housing is a complex matter. Technical and sociological questions must be raised. Architects and engineers will want data on soil conditions, the water table, topography, climate. This technical data must be gathered to ensure the construction of safe and stable housing. Patterns of human activity within the site and along its borders must also be analyzed. Data indicating the proximity and accessibility of educational, recreation, and commercial facilities must be gathered. It should be determined whether or not these facilities would be able to absorb the growth that new housing would bring.

An analysis of the technical aspects of site development is beyond the scope of this handbook. Engineers and architects are best equipped for that task. However, the housing manager can evaluate the suitability of a site in terms of the needs of residents living in or near the proposed housing. These needs fall into four distinct groups: needs of the general community, needs of the municipal government, needs of adults, and the needs of children in family housing.⁶

General Community: Demographic characteristics of the neighbourhood. To what degree does opposition to social housing exist in this neighbourhood?

Municipal Services: Water, sewer, fire protection, garbage disposal, police services, electricity, telephone, zoning by-laws. Do these services exist on the site? Are they of good quality? Can further growth be absorbed?

Adult Needs: Employment opportunities, grocery stores, banks, athletic facilities, medical care, drug stores, churches, public transportation, barber or hairdresser, parks. Is grocery shopping provided by a supermarket rather than a convenience store where prices are higher? Are the drug store and grocery store within walking distance or are deliveries made? Is regular service provided by the public transportation system? Is the location near

6. W. Mark Fenny and L. Ogrduik, The Selection of Sites for Public Housing (Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, 1975), pp. 7 - 16.

the employment opportunities that are likely to be utilized by tenants? Is it readily accessible to the elderly and handicapped? Are medical facilities near by (particularly important to the rural elderly).

Children's Needs: Schools, recreation facilities and parks. Can the neighbourhood schools accommodate a higher enrollment generated by the construction of more family housing units? Are the schools within a reasonable walking distance and along a route which does not require young children to cross streets with heavy traffic? Are the parks and recreational facilities of good quality, easily accessible, and able to accommodate increased use?

DESIGNING FAMILY HOUSING

Social housing constructed for families is of two basic types, the single family detached home, and the multi-family unit (townhouse, walk-up or highrise apartment). The former is commonly found in rural communities where land is abundant and low in cost. In more densely populated communities, multiple family housing is built because suitable land is expensive and scarce. The design requirements for both types of housing are virtually identical. Both types of homes require carefully planned interior spaces to comfortably accommodate the daily activities of residents, landscaping, and outdoor space for parking, gardening, garbage pick-up, children's play, and adult relaxation.⁷

Family housing units may be analyzed in terms of strengths and weaknesses. The following questions may be asked about the design of interior and exterior features.⁸

7. Murray and Fleis, Family Housing: A Study of Horizontal Multiple Housing Techniques, p. 5

8. Questions formulated on the basis of the analysis provided in Choosing a House Design, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1973.

ENTRANCES

With the exception of apartments and back-to-back row houses, most homes have two entrances. Their placement and design influence circulation patterns and the ease with which family, friends, and strangers enter the house.

Can the space inside the doorway accommodate several visitors at once or children removing their boots and coats? Is some form of storage space for outdoor clothing near the entrances? The severity of winters in many locations requires that children and adults wear heavy coats and boots for four to six months a year. Children's toys and school books can add further clutter to doorways.

Does the door have either an "eye", glass sidelight, or window so that callers can be identified before being admitted?

LIVING ROOM

The living room is the gathering place for family, friends, and relatives. Passive activities occur in the living room (reading, watching television, talking). Small children will use the living room for play.

Does the living room act as a passage between the front door and the rest of the house? If traffic must pass through the living area, careful placement of doorways can keep traffic to a minimum.

Does the front door open directly into the living room? Such placement of the door causes drafts and disrupts activity in the living room. A wall, room divider, or storage closet near the entry can reduce the problem.

Is there sufficient wallspace for the placement of furniture, or are walls cut up by window and door openings? Are window sills at the right height so that furniture can be placed against the wall? Do heating outlets and radiators limit the placement of furniture? A chesterfield requires between five and seven feet of wall space, a chair and an end table four to six feet, a desk or bookcase three to five feet.

Are there sufficient electrical outlets to accommodate the various electrical fixtures commonly used in a living room - vacuum cleaners, lamps, radios, television, record players? A convenient guide is two double socket outlets per wall.

Do the living room windows look out on to a pleasant scene? In communities where noise and traffic present a potential nuisance, placing the major living room windows on the side of the house adjacent to the private outdoor space is desirable. Another alternative is to place windows up high on the walls to allow air and light in but to keep an unpleasant view hidden.

KITCHEN

Of all the rooms in the house, the kitchen is the most used. It is the place where food is stored, prepared, and eaten. The kitchen is also a major focus of family activity. Young children may play in the kitchen while older children find the kitchen table a comfortable place to do their homework, play games, and work on hobbies.

Is there sufficient counter space for food preparation and clean-up? Work spaces on top of counters should be provided next to the refrigerator (watch which way the door opens), on both sides of the sink, and on at least one side of the stove (particularly if the top of the stove doesn't provide a work area adjacent to the burners). Are these work surfaces adequately lighted by windows and room lights?

Are appliances conveniently located and do they have adequate work space nearby? Are electrical outlets for small appliances sufficient in number and conveniently located? Does the placement of kitchen windows allow parents to supervise the outdoor activities of children? Small children can play in the yard without interrupting a parent's housekeeping if this feature is provided.

If meals are eaten in the kitchen, is the room sufficiently large to accommodate a table and chairs? Circulation space around the table and chairs must be ample so that the kitchen workspace can be comfortably utilized. Cupboards should be able to be opened without causing someone at the table to move.

Do the kitchen cupboards meet the storage requirements of the residents? Foods, cooking utensils, cleaning equipment and supplies are stored in the kitchen. Wall and base cabinets each running eight to ten feet in length should meet the needs of most households. Cupboards should have adjustable shelves.

BEDROOMS

Most family homes contain three bedrooms to provide sleeping accommodations for parents and children of both sexes. By the age of six or eight years, most children share bedrooms only with brothers or sisters of the same sex. Bedrooms are used by adults and children for sleeping, reading, and other passive activities. In many homes a bedroom can provide a haven from the noise and commotion of daily family life. Adolescent young people find this particularly important.

Are bedrooms sufficiently large to accommodate at least a minimum of furniture? A child's bedroom requires a bed, dresser, closet, and desk or storage for toys.

Is the ventilation and natural light adequate? Windows need not be large but they should be properly placed. Windows at least five feet above the floor allow for more flexible positioning of the furniture.

Is the bathroom located near the bedrooms? A home with one bathroom on the second floor and an additional bedroom in the basement will inconvenience the children sleeping in the basement as well as adding to the traffic up and down the stairs.

Are closets adequate in size? The minimum space required to meet an adult's needs measures three feet wide and two feet deep.

Are electrical outlets correctly located? Since the placement of bedroom furniture is limited, it is crucial that outlets be properly positioned.

Is there an alternate exit route should a fire block the primary access to the bedrooms? Another stairway or bedroom windows will allow for a relatively quick escape.

BATHROOM

One bathroom with the standard four fixtures, tub, toilet, wash basin and shower is needed for each housing unit. It is commonly located off the hallway near the bedrooms.

Are there enough bathrooms in the house? If the housing unit is multi-storied or houses a larger than average family, it is desirable to install an extra bathroom with wash basin and toilet. The cost of installing an additional bathroom can be reduced by placing plumbing fixtures adjacent to the kitchen, laundry or other bathroom.

Is there sufficient storage for drugs, toiletries, towels, and the like? A medicine cabinet and or vanity is needed by most families.

Can the bathroom accommodate the needs of young children? Sufficient space for the temporary storage of diapers, bathing supplies, "potty", and toilet seat should be provided.

LAUNDRY

If the housing unit contains a basement, sufficient space will be available for individual laundry facilities. However, in walk-up or elevator apartments shared laundry facilities may be provided. The number of households using the laundry equipment will determine the type of equipment purchased.

Is there a place for sorting and folding laundry? A counter or table top is sufficient.

If laundry facilities are shared by a number of households, are chairs available? Residents will often stay while their laundry is being done.

Is the laundry equipped with laundry tubs? Soaking clothing, stain removal, hand washing, and related tasks require either a sink or laundry tub.

Is space and the equipment for drying clothing inside or outside planned? Even where automatic dryers are provided, personal preference and a desire to conserve energy may result in a need for clothes lines.

STORAGE

Every dwelling requires adequate closet and storage facilities. In addition to bedroom clothes closets, the unit should possess the following:

Coat Closet near one of the entrances to store all the outer garments of the family.

Cleaning Closet in a central location, domestic vacuum cleaner, broom, dust mop, pails, cleaning supplies, etc.

Linen Closet adjacent to the main bathroom with size related to number of bedrooms in the unit.

Outside Storage for outdoor furniture, sports equipment, garden tools, toys, etc. If an individual garage is not provided, this storage area may be in a central location outside the unit.

OUTSIDE ACCESS

Each housing unit must be easily accessible to residents, visitors, delivery vehicles, and garbage trucks.

Is parking adequate for both residents and visitors? The amount of parking needed by residents and their guests is a subject frequently debated. Estimates run from one parking space for 75% of the housing units to as high as 100%. Guest parking is added to this figure. To analyze the parking needs of your residents, check the availability of public transportation and available parking space on adjacent streets.

Is the main entrance to each unit adjacent to the parking area? Deliveries are made more easily if the unit's main entrance is close to the street or parking area.

Can garbage be safely stored and easily collected? If each house has a separate entrance, individual garbage storage should be provided. In situations where a common entrance is used by residents, adequate provision for storage and pick-ups is a necessity.

OPEN SPACE

Outdoor living space is important to families regardless of size or density of the housing. In urban communities where multi-family housing is constructed at higher densities, open space will be limited. Private, semi-public, and public areas are necessary for passive and active recreation.⁹ Private

9. Murray and Fleis, Family Housing: A Study of Horizontal Multiple Housing Techniques, p.7.

open space often will be a garden area adjacent to the unit. In multi-storey buildings, a balcony large enough for a lawn chair and a few flower pots may be provided. Semi-public spaces are shared by groups of residents. They usually function as children's play areas or spots for casual conversation among adults. Imaginatively designed corridors and communal hall space can double as play space for young children living in apartment blocks. The location of semi-public spaces should be well chosen, carefully landscaped and properly cared for. Public spaces are usually adjacent to multi-family housing and associated with other community facilities, such as school playing fields, tennis courts and swimming pools. Large open spaces within a housing development serving no specific purpose are rarely used by residents. They can be lifeless, a burden for the grounds staff, and a waste of valuable land.

DESIGNING HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Accommodations for the elderly takes many forms.¹⁰ Housing types may range from a single storey building providing either hostel, bachelor, or one bedroom accommodation to a multi-storey building where lounges, medical facilities, and commercial areas are available in addition to a range of accommodation types. Most residences for senior citizens fall somewhere within this range.

The housing design should maximize the older person's ability to live independently. It should provide an environment in which residents feel secure because assistance is available when it is required. Managers should remember that the design of all facets of housing for the elderly must correspond to the human values and the physical and mental capabilities of senior citizens. The desire for privacy and a sense of home, the need for social interaction, leisure and recreation activities combined with medical services, housekeeping assistance, and food services must all be considered in designing a total living environment.

The elderly require a range of housing arrangements which correspond to the process of aging. Many elderly people are capable of independent living and do not require any additional services. For this group, individual apartments with private

10. This section is adopted from an analysis provided in Housing the Elderly, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1976.

bathrooms and kitchens are sufficient. Communal space in the form of lounges, recreation facilities, meeting rooms, stores, and commercial services are provided for the enjoyment and convenience of residents.

As senior citizens continue to age, many require additional assistance with daily living. Eventually some will need the ongoing assistance that nursing homes and hospitals provide. These facilities are designed to provide complete care for the aging person. The person residing in an institutional setting has very little independence as all medical, food, and recreational facilities are communal.

The transition between the independent and dependent stages of aging can be met by intermediate type of housing design called congregate or enriched housing. This housing form is characterized by the provision of certain services which permit the elderly to maintain a semi-independent living pattern.

Characteristically, enriched housing makes available basic services such as meal service, housekeeping, medical treatment and counselling, recreational facilities, around the clock assistance in the event of an emergency, access to commercial facilities, and transportation. In contrast to institutional care, enriched housing allows the resident to choose one or more services from the total range. Meals, for example may be prepared within the unit, taken regularly with a group, or only on occasion. Housekeeping services can be utilized on an on-going basis or during periods of illness.¹¹

DESIGNING THE DWELLING UNIT

In the sections which follow, the general design characteristics of the dwelling unit and the communal unit are described. The emphasis is on a barrier-free design, one that allows the elderly person total access to his living environment. Additional lighting should be provided to compensate for failing eyesight. The height of switches, electrical outlets, cupboards, and appliances should all take into account the limited abilities of an aging person.

11. Marie McGuire Thompson, Training Guide on Sheltered Housing for the Elderly (Baltimore, Maryland: Office of the Aging, 1976) pp. 2 - 4.

STAIRWAYS, CORRIDORS, AND ENTRANCES

These areas should be planned for men and women whose physical condition, particularly eyesight and mobility, may be impaired. Hallways and stairways should be well lit with natural or artificial light. Ramps are needed for persons unable to use the stairs. A system of battery operated lighting should be available in the event of an emergency. Handrails should be provided for residents on both sides of the hallways and stairways. Doors to each unit should be easily identified so that a resident can locate his or her suite without difficulty. Keyholes should be easy to find, and peepholes and lever type doors provided.

LIVING AREA

Depending on the size of the unit, the living area of a unit may include a separate room for sleeping or the living area may be combined with the sleeping area (bachelor suite). In either case the height of the windows should be such that a person confined to a wheel chair or who is bedridden can see outside. Doors and windows should be carefully placed so that furniture can be arranged comfortably.

KITCHEN

Appliances that can be easily used by an older person should be installed (controls at the front of the stove, self-defrosting refrigerators). Cupboards must be low enough so a person can have access to all shelves, and cupboard doors should have grab-bars to facilitate opening.

BATHROOM

Hardware should include grab-bars at the bathtub and toilet, non-slip floors, and lever-type handles for turning water on and off. An alarm system should be provided in the bathroom so that assistance can be sought. The height of the toilet and sink should be lower than commonly found in a family home.

STORAGE

Linen and bedroom closets should be provided as well as a general storage closet for larger articles. Most elderly persons prefer this larger closet to be located in the unit rather than in an area at some distance from their suite.

DESIGNING COMMUNAL FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY

The size and type of communal facilities in elderly persons' housing will vary with the number of housing units built, the form of housing constructed, the group sponsoring and managing the facility, and the available finances. A facility designed to accommodate a relatively small number of persons capable of an independent life style generally has fewer communal facilities than a larger enriched housing project intended for the semi-independent person. Among those facilities which can be included in the design are those described below.

LOBBY

As a meeting area for residents and their guests, the lobby should include seating and a security system to control access to the building. The mailroom and manager's office could be adjacent to the lobby.

RECREATION ROOM and/or LOUNGE

This area(s) should be designed so that both small and large groups can utilize the space, and to encourage informal visiting as well as organized activities. Public washrooms and storage for chairs should be adjacent to this area.

KITCHEN

Similar in design to the kitchen of a dwelling unit, a communal kitchen assists residents in planning informal parties. If residents find that they require daily food services, the kitchen could be expanded into a cafeteria.

MEDICAL OFFICE

If routine medical care is provided, an area suitable for diagnosis and treatment is needed. Washroom facilities must be included.

LAUNDRY ROOMS

Ideally, laundry facilities should be located so that residents do not have to use stairs or an elevator to gain access to washers and dryers. As this area often serves as an informal meeting place, space for chairs and tables should be included. Sinks and sorting tables are useful additions.

OUTDOOR SPACE

Most elderly residents enjoy walking and sitting outside. A small area for visiting and gardening may be provided. Patios, terraces or balconies sheltered from the sun and rain, can provide additional outdoor space. In large projects, a garbage room is needed.

CARETAKER'S SUITE

A two-bedroom unit, preferably located on the first floor, is needed for the caretaker and his family. The terminal for the unit emergency system and elevator alarm system should be located here.

PARKING

Parking spaces for cars owned by residents and visitors must be included. The number of spaces will vary according to location of the buildings, the availability of public transportation, and the age and lifestyle of tenants.

STORAGE

Storage space for equipment used by maintenance staff should be included within the building. Sufficient space for repair work must be provided.

ANALYZING THE DESIGN OF EXISTING HOUSING

The preceding discussion of the design of family and elderly housing will help the housing manager to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the units. Some of these design features may not have been provided for tenants. Failure to include some items may be the result of an oversight on the part of the architects and engineers who designed the units. Or it might have been decided at the time of construction that certain economies had to be observed in order for the project to remain within its budget. The increasing cost of equipment and labor over the last five years has occasionally forced builders to eliminate features which are essential to the comfort of residents. When the money supply is short, "luxuries" are trimmed

from the budget - laundry facilities are installed on alternate floors, sufficient parking space is not provided, landscaping is reduced, lounge space is converted into rental units. The list could go on and on. In other instances, housing was built by people inexperienced in the design of social housing, resulting in oversights such as an elderly person's housing project without an alarm system in each unit, or a family housing project with unused open spaces.

An analysis of a social housing project can be made using the guidelines suggested in this chapter. A comparison of "what ought to be" and "what is" should uncover those aspects which are missing or functioning poorly. A lounge that is rarely used by residents, or an empty space in the basement could make an ideal games room. Underutilized green space could be turned into a garden area for the residents.

A great deal can be learned about design of housing by observing how the residents use the living space. If the noise of children playing disturbs the conversation of adults visiting, perhaps it is because the play areas for the children are not large enough or are too close to the housing units. Often, informal gathering places evolve around mail boxes, in the lobby or in the laundry room. These meeting places can be encouraged by adding chairs, potted plants and the like.

A systematic observation of various public spaces in the project can provide invaluable information on how the physical environment is used. For example, a lounge is to be observed for 5 minutes every second hour on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. A record of observations could be as follows:

Tuesday

9:05 - 9:10

Mrs. Jones is using telephone. Mr. Smith waiting to use telephone, is standing near the doorway. No one else is in the room.

11:05 - 11:10

Mrs. DiCosimo and Mrs. Leach are sitting in the chairs at the far end of the room, waiting for the milk delivery. Their backs are to the door. No one else is in the room.

1:05 - 1:10 Lounge is empty.

3:05 - 3:10 Birthday celebration for Mr. Gary.
All chairs along the wall are occupied.
People are chatting with persons on
either side.

5:05 - 5:10 Mrs. Abramson's daughter is waiting in
lounge for her mother. She is not seated
but standing in doorway.

After the observations have been recorded over a number of weeks, a review of the data should demonstrate a pattern of resident activity. In the above example, the lounge functions as a waiting and reception area and as a place for large groups to assemble. Could alterations to the room encourage a more varied use of the lounge? If a games table or a television set are installed in the lounge, would more residents use the space?

Although actual observations of the dwelling unit cannot be made, discussions with the tenant can uncover what is liked or disliked about the design of the unit.

If design deficiencies are discovered, they should be corrected even though it may take long term financial planning. A storage unit can be converted into a lounge, peep holes can be installed in all doors, or units can be equipped for the handicapped. Other alterations may require time more than money - moving children's playground equipment from one location to another, turning a reading room into an office for the tenants' association and building a garbage storage bin - are some examples.

The design of the building is simply the translation of human values into a physical form. For the elderly, the design of an environment can stimulate interaction among residents, provide opportunities for leisure activities and also allow for privacy. Families have similar needs depending on size and age. The success of the design of the housing units influences the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

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