

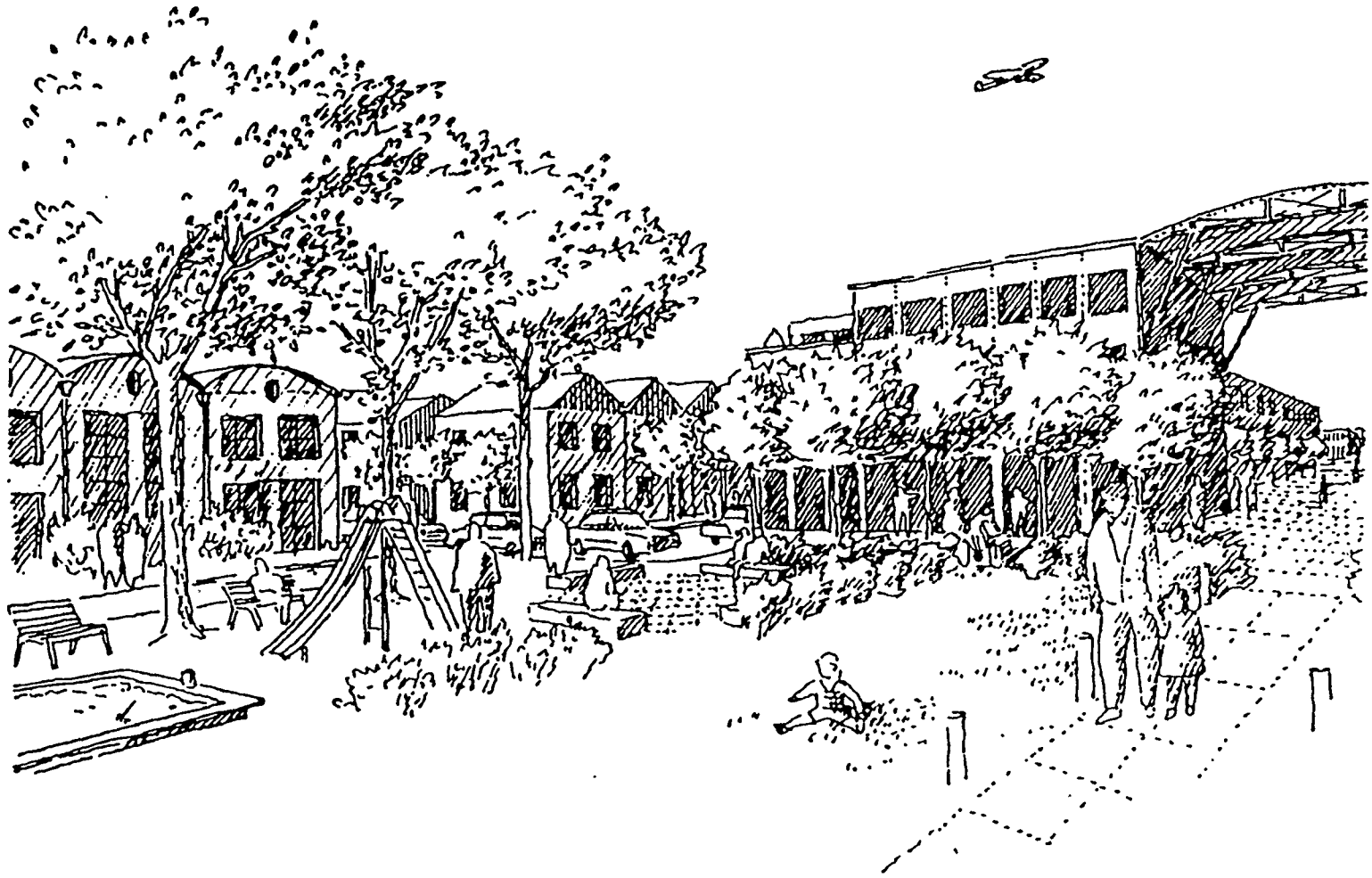
THE FOREST LAWN HOLDINGS:AN ASSESSMENT OF A LOW-INCOME HOUSING PROJECT

by
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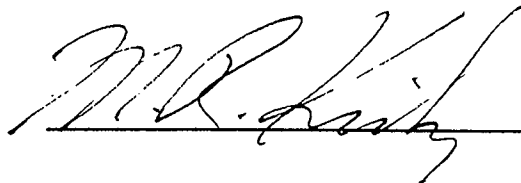


THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
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The undersigned certify that they have read,
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Supervisor



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ABSTRACT

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
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This project is an evaluation of a low income housing complex, the Forest Lawn Holdings, which is situated within the Greater Forest Lawn (GFL) neighbourhood southeast Calgary. Dating back to 1959, this project is typical of many older public housing projects in terms of siting of buildings, large grassy open spaces between buildings and a relatively low density. The project evaluation and assessment was geared towards an investigation of planning options and methods to improve the living environment of this project.

Overall assessment of living and social conditions showed more negative than positive aspects. The most positive aspect, that formed the basis for recommendations, was the availability of a vast land resource that could be employed to accommodate a large section of low to very low income residents. Housing agencies and other organisations that are providing a variety of social services in the GFL area were seen as an important resource for any future improvements of the project.

Given the existing and potential resources in the study area, this study proposes the following has been proposed as an ideal conceptual development for the FLH housing project:

- a) a community based theme for management and maintenance of FLH;
- b) a community planning concept based on a mix of housing types including a mix of tenure systems; and
- c) a design concept whereby space would be allocated according to the social needs of the tenants.

Key Words: Forest Lawn Holdings; Greater Forest Lawn; Calgary; Canada; third world; low-income; co-operative housing; social housing; self-reliance; self-help; community development; living environment; maintenance; management.

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INTRODUCTION

This project developed from the researcher's interest in housing issues that affect low-income groups and the desire to use the physical design and social features of a low income housing development to enhance identity, character and image of a neighbourhood.

Accommodating housing needs and desires of Canadians has presented policy makers with a variety of challenges since well before the passage of the Dominion Housing Act in 1935. A recent challenge facing policymakers has not only been to facilitate home-ownership, but to make housing available to underprivileged groups. The main concern has been the fact that suitable and reasonably priced housing is not available for low-income groups in sufficient volume. This has led to a proliferation of academic investigation into ways of eliminating the shortage of affordable housing. New insights and approaches have resulted in policies and programs targeted towards provision of low income housing to suit the current conditions.

Encouraging tenants, whose social status has been improved, to move up to more appropriate accommodation has proved to be a non-viable strategy in the gradual elimination of housing shortages. This filtering down process has been too slow and little affordable housing has become available through it. Most of the recent literature acknowledges that

much as affordability is necessary, shelter must also be appropriate and suitable for residents, thereby providing a healthy living environment. Some housing analysts suggest more radical or comprehensive changes in the urban form to achieve appropriate and affordable housing for all (Cooper, 1986; Engstrom et al, 1980; Mackay, 1977; Whyte, 1968).

Academics and housing experts emphasize four major aspects which affect housing for low-income groups: affordability (ratio of housing costs to income), adequacy (including quality and overcrowding), neighbourhood conditions and availability. Many housing analysts including Hulchanski (1983, 1990); Kolodny (1986); Goldberg (1989); Bratt (1990); Mackay (1990) and MacKee (1990) agree that the affordability problem has increased while overall housing quality has improved (including incidences of overcrowding).

Even though there is a widespread commitment amongst both policy makers and academics to the principle of access to adequate and affordable housing as a fundamental right, the problem of housing affordability affects an increasing number of people. While government agencies state that Canada's system has provided "an adequate supply of suitable accommodation at prices most people can afford" (CMHC, 1985a. 10), some housing experts like Hulchanski contend that many Canadians still have a problem finding

affordable and adequate housing (Hulchanski, 1983, 1988, 1990).

Besides focusing on affordability, suitability and adequacy, this study aims at examining the relevance of a community-based approach to low-income housing projects involving transfer of ownership and management to residents and other forms of management that can help facilitate management and maintenance of social housing. A considerable number of researchers and analysts (including Cooper, 1985; Fallis and Murray, 1990; Burns, 1988; Bratt, 1989; Bove, Hollands etc.) advocate "community-based" housing, explicitly supporting a collective approach rather than advancing private ownership and accumulation. They further recognize that since the private sector is made up of developers, owners and financiers in the housing field, there is a tendency to operate from the profit motive which can undermine the public non-profit motive underlying low-income housing. However, it should be noted that private owners may embrace low-income tenants as a necessary part of dealing with a government financing agency (Langley, 1990).

Community based housing offers, amongst other things:

- control over one's immediate environment;
- sense of security and empowerment;
- inclusion of tenants in management decisions e.g.

budgeting issues, maintenance etc.; and

- pride in home ownership (Rivas, 1982; Bratt, 1989).

Other studies and experiences do, however, raise some concern over the success of tenant control over management; e.g. lack of time to participate fully in management and maintenance and lack of communication between the tenants and relevant parties

Notwithstanding the inspirational appeal of community based or direct control by tenants, one cannot overlook the fact that it can be hard to act on specific community values. Direct control can bring conflict amongst its members. Due to lack of experience, it can also be quite time consuming.

Many studies have been conducted concerning existing rental subsidized housing in which tenant groups have undertaken management of their projects. For example, in St. Louis, (US) Tenant Management Corporations (TMC's) oversee the operation of more than 3000 apartments. Such housing analysts as Hydman (1980); Kolodny (1986); Hurwitz (1988); Sumka and Blackburn (1990) and numerous others, as well as housing journals of many organizations have recently focused on ways and means of improving tenant participation in management and operation of social housing.

These, and other alternatives to community control of housing

projects are examined in Chapter 1 including contracting management services which are responsible to a tenant association. Advisory roles which tenants can assume in the maintenance and operation of a low-income housing project are also explored.

In exploring the phenomena of social housing this study relied heavily on practices and theories of related areas such as community based economic development, community development and community entrepreneurship. This would help enrich suggestions geared towards a search for a local implementation model for community based housing projects.

PURPOSE

This study investigates and documents management and ownership issues that affect the Forest Lawn Holdings (FLH), a low-income housing project located in the Greater Forest Lawn (GFL). Greater Forest Lawn is a low-income suburban area situated in the South East of the City of Calgary (see Appendix 2). The FLH project is located on 10th Avenue to the north, 14th Avenue to the south, between 40th Street and 41st Street to the east and the west respectively. This project is within a walking distance from the 17th Avenue, a commercial strip and a major transportation corridor.

This project focuses on management and ownership concerns

that have a direct bearing on the living conditions of the tenants. The main intention was to conduct an evaluation and assessment of the FLH based on the conceptual understanding of housing issues that affect low to very low income groups.

The overall objectives of this research project were:

- to investigate issues pertaining to the living environment in the FLH, a low-income housing project;
- to examine alternative forms of ownership, private and or community management that could help promote a positive living environment within a very low-income housing project, despite the residents' socio-economic status; and
- to analyse, through a literature review, those aspects of physical design that could be applicable for improvement of a living environment within a very low income project.

RESEARCH

A literature review and interviews with a sample of residents, management and ownership representatives were conducted with the aim of recommending planning options and methods to render low-cost housing affordable and suitable to the people that it purports to serve. Alternative means recommended and designed in this research project were a result of an assessment of a range of community-based housing developments in the US, Canada and some developing countries. Comparisons were drawn between social housing

principles and approaches in some developed countries and developing countries. Notwithstanding the differences in socio-economic and environmental conditions among these countries, comparisons were made especially in terms of management policies and practices for housing low-income groups. A primary focus for the literature review not only determined the relevance and degree of community participation in varying implementation strategies for social housing, but also included relevant design aspects that could help change the physical appearance of the housing project.

Meetings with several housing agency representatives were arranged during the summer months between July and September, 1991. Mostly, these meetings were accomplished by informal interviews and telephone conversations. The directors were very co-operative and introduced the researcher to practical issues surrounding delivery of social housing. The directors were questioned about: the kind of housing their agencies offered; the profile of tenants; vacancy rates; rental rates; financial status; management and maintenance procedures; and issues pertaining to affordability, adequacy and appropriateness of subsidized housing. Through interviews with some social workers the socio-economic conditions of the residents became clear and the constant struggle to alleviate these problems was highlighted.

Some agency directors were willing to escort the researcher

to the sites, including non-profit cooperative housing complexes. This enabled close examination of various types of social housing that exists in the City of Calgary. During the summer months the researcher spent 15 to 20 hours a week at Forest Lawn. Initially, time was spent observing the physical environment in the area and in the complex itself. The social worker at the GFL community office arranged the first site visit in March, 1991 and introduced the researcher to the resident manager. The resident manager, an employee of Berdean Management (an Edmonton based management company), acquainted the researcher with the problems of management and maintenance in the housing complex.

Initial contact with the tenants was facilitated by the resident manager who introduced the researcher to some longer term residents (those who had lived in the complex for 2 years or more). A list of approximately ten of those residents was used as the sample to pre-test the interview questionnaire. Discussion with long term residents met with willingness and approval both from the resident manager and the tenants themselves.

Community workers who assisted and worked with the researcher in the Forest Lawn area were staff and volunteers of the Greater Forest Lawn Initiative Council. This community organization stated that the most appropriate means of

gathering data on the Forest Lawn Holdings would be to conduct a survey of the tenants in the social housing complex. It was felt that face to face or interview questionnaires would be most appropriate for considering the need to examine resident satisfaction and also to assess the adequacy and appropriateness of the dwellings. Most importantly such a survey would reveal the tenants' attitudes towards the project and their socio-economic circumstances.

Financial constraints limited the survey to only a sample of the resident population at FLH. The main aim of this sample was to enable inferences to be drawn from the data and to accurately represent certain household characteristics in the project. In the study the sampling design allowed all households to have an equal chance to be selected. Two in every group of ten apartments was selected. If no person was available in the selected residence, the next available townhouse resident was interviewed. A total of 40 households were interviewed out of 210 apartment units.

A questionnaire was designed to provide information on the following aspects:

- a profile of respondents aimed at revealing some socio-economic characteristics of the tenants;
- affordability in terms of whether rental rates were within affordable limits for the tenants;

- occupancy, i.e. whether there was a high tenancy turnover;
- maintenance - if the managers and owners were sensitive to tenant needs in terms of daily upkeep of the dwellings;
- adequacy and suitability of dwelling structures and the immediate environment;
- level of satisfaction of tenants concerning their living conditions;
- potential for resident cooperation within the complex; and
- the tenant perspective on the social environment.

Resident interest in participating in the maintenance of the project was assessed by the question “would you be interested in joining a group of residents in improving the living environment in the Forest Lawn Holdings?” (see appendix 1 for the questions). There was an attempt to keep the questions interesting and to enhance a comfortable atmosphere. Opinion questions were generally open ended to allow flexibility and to encourage a more in-depth response. The problem, generally, was that such answers were difficult to code because they were extremely varied.

This study is organized into five chapters:

Chapter 1 reviews the literature searched including:

- i) an analysis of the relevant policy issues;
- ii) a note on some relevant housing programs;
- iii) elaboration of the criteria or measures used to assess and evaluate the Forest Lawn Holdings (affordability,

adequacy, suitability);

- iv) an outline of policy measures for redevelopment and conversion;
- v) Forms of ownership and management of social housing; and
- vi) justification for a change in the physical appearance

Chapter 2 describes the neighbourhood and the project.

Chapter 3 discusses the project characteristics and evaluates the Forest Lawn Holdings with the aim of determining its strengths and weaknesses and quality as a residential environment.

Chapter 4 details the development of a conceptual plan - a general idea or perceived image of what potential changes can occur to the site to improve the physical and social environment of a social housing complex. This chapter further explores possible management options for revitalizing a housing project.

Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarizing recommendations on management and operation of a very low income housing project including the physical and social changes necessary to improve the quality of life within the complex.

CHAPTER 1: SPECIFIC HOUSING POLICY ISSUES

This chapter provides an overview of some social housing developments, relevant concepts and a selection of specific policy issues. Each of the issues indicated is an important policy concern and also reflects some of the problems in choosing amongst alternative policy strategies.

First, some social housing programs are highlighted either as illustrative examples of programs available to very low income groups or in terms of the lessons that can be drawn from such programs and utilized for the benefit of very low income housing provision. Secondly, types of management usually applied in subsidized housing is described to reveal the options available for a project like FLH. Thirdly, the need for project physical design that is responsive to the social needs of tenants is noted. Finally, concepts such as conversion, redevelopment and redesign on one hand, affordability, suitability and adequacy on the other, are analyzed in this chapter with the aim of reflecting on the policy objectives and the need to enhance such objectives in the provision of subsidized housing.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING PROJECTS

Public housing, with substantial operating subsidies, was for some time the only program serving the lowest income groups. A number of lessons could be drawn from the disadvantages of large scale public housing, these include:

- public perceptions of public housing projects that are largely negative and difficult to counter;
- cost factors that have always been the major limiting factor affecting location and design of this kind of housing (have been mostly located in the fringes of cities because of lower land costs); and
- problems such as attitudes towards social housing and rigid administration that have curbed development of management systems and posed obstacles for administrators who are sensitive to the social needs of very low income tenants (despite federal initiatives for improving public housing management there has been very limited progress in this area).

In a non-profit housing venture, no income may be used for personal benefit of any member or proprietor. Non-profit organizations or corporations are either formed by charitable organizations or by provincial or municipal governments. Non-profit housing was initially based on the expectation that the provincial government would provide the necessary

funding whilst the municipal government would provide the land more cheaply, including tax abatements.

Initially, this program was oriented towards providing rental housing for senior citizens. In the last several years non-profit groups, housing agencies and authorities have been broadening their scope to house single people and single headed families to respond to both the changing population trends and new appraisals of the most needy groups.

The other form of housing subsidy includes subsidized rental housing. This was a limited dividend program which allowed projects to be built by the private sector and rented at below current market levels. Developers entered into agreements with the federal or provincial governments. These agreements specify the rate of return on investment, rent levels and tenant income levels. The Assisted Rental Program (A.R.P.) introduced in 1975, was meant to encourage the development of modest rental housing. At this time building costs had increased tremendously. Annual subsidy per unit was initially at \$600 and later at \$900. Later, the subsidy was replaced by interest free loans for up to 10 years.

Subsidized rental housing can invoke negative responses due to frustration with some public housing including the stigma attached to publicly owned and managed rental housing. In most cases publicly owned and managed rental housing is

usually either a target for crime or is in such bad physical shape that neighbourhoods in which they are located mostly reject or display negative attitudes towards these projects.

In some areas, notably in the United States, tenants have overtaken management of these by forming tenant management corporations. The idea of tenant contribution into the management and maintenance of these projects appeals to this research as a step towards self realization amongst low to moderate income groups. Kolodny, (1980); Struyk, (1980) and other housing analysts state that tenant management schemes work and encourage pride and a sense of ownership amongst the tenants. Some tenant associations have been set up in some low income housing projects in the City of Calgary.

A more ownership oriented form of subsidized housing involves co-operatives. Co-operatives can either be building co-operatives or continuing housing co-operatives (i.e. co-operatives can be responsible for new construction or reorganizing existing residential units) . In either form, people who wish to work collectively in developing or managing housing must incorporate as a co-operative housing corporation.

Cossey defines organizations which "... attempt to develop

structures that combine social purpose with economic realities..” as co-operative (Cossey, 1989). The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as “... an organization usually incorporated, with economic and social aims formed by and for the persons or business entities having some common needs (National Task Force on Cooperative Development, 1984) “Not-for Profit continuing housing co-operatives are incorporated associations that exist to provide private housing to members and to build communities” (Burke, 1990).

Canadian housing co-operatives which can be traced back to the 1930’s have developed into a national movement which culminated in 1968 with the founding of the coalition, Co-operative Union of Canada (now the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, CHF/C). The coalition was a response to the need for decent, affordable housing for low and moderate income people, the deterioration and loss of housing and neighbourhoods in urban core areas, and the stigma attached to the poor and disadvantage, in what had become known as the public housing ghettos.

Co-operatives as self-help organizations have tended to be more successful than other types of low-income projects in that they offer the residents a more secure tenure system and assure a sense of collective and individual responsibility.

Cooperative housing can and has in many cases taken the form of enhanced participation of residents on the board of directors and committee work which is a very important aspect of self-help. In some cases residents contribute hands-on labour without direct payment; help build their homes, create and maintain a community garden, or participate in demolition or finishing work. In Britain, for example, some co-operatives have found a very effective system to enhance a sense of ownership and belonging among tenants. The interior painting of each housing unit is left entirely to the owner’s choice (Mackay, 1977). In most Third world countries (Latin America and Africa) the permanent staff is comprised of local people and future residents perform most of the project work. Emphasis may also be placed on hiring local youth to increase skills and income levels.

Kawano summarizes (1987) the philosophy behind housing co-operatives as involving the following principles:

- democratic control including equal voting of all members irrespective of the amount of his or her investment ;
- self-help and mutual aid through co-operation ;
- operation without a return on investment as the main objective (they can have a limited return on capital); and
- equal opportunity for involvement, regardless of

income level.

The strength of co-operative housing lies on its ability to enhance integration of people from differing backgrounds into a community.

MANAGEMENT OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

The history of social housing has shown that project operation and management has always been a major problem. The main concern through the seventies and early eighties has been the deteriorating physical conditions of most projects due to a lack of proper maintenance and management of public housing. One of the main questions raised has been 'who should manage public housing?'. The main concerns have centred around the housing agency's management responsibilities to the tenants and to what extent the tenants should participate in the management process. Views have ranged from an advisory level of tenant participation to complete control by the tenants.

McKee (1980) writes that the power to make decisions in social housing should lie not with one group or individual but should be shared by two or more of the following groups: the funding agency, the board of the housing authority, management, and the tenants. Generally boards are appointed according to the type of housing provided. In co-operative

housing, for instance, tenants elect their own board of directors. The boards of public housing authorities are commonly appointed by the municipal government .

From different case scenarios and experiences one can identify a number of approaches to managing subsidized housing projects. In some projects tenants may have direct control in management and maintenance of the housing project by participating as members of the board of directors or forming a tenant management association. Given that failure of projects often arises from practical maintenance concerns, tenants can start by organizing around issues, especially social issues, that affect them directly. Issues can also involve concerns about management policies and practices.

The cases reviewed represent a wide diversity of communities and cultural types, the common denominator being that in each there were communities with people in need of low cost housing. Most notable and applicable among the efforts investigated were interactive participatory research methods used in setting up co-operative projects typical in some developing countries especially Latin America; housing assistance by non-profit development associations; rural worker co-operatives; use of co-operative approach to community planning and construction; nationally organized, comprehensive national systems of housing delivery and management based on a network of resource groups; and

primary co-operatives e.g. the Canadian Housing Federation of Co-operatives (Burke, 1990; Cossey, 1989; Bergman, 1986; Caja Laboral Popular, 1985; Yin 1984; Chervallier and Cardin, 1983; Schon 1983; Co-operative Future Directions Project, Various Papers, 1980-1982; Ahlbrandt, 1975; Arizmendiarieta, 1969 and others).

In Nova Scotia where active participatory research and action research studies were undertaken (1978-1988), data files created from interviews, site visits and so on, were reviewed. Of interest to this study were community development and community based efforts pertaining to management of subsidized housing. Of the collective resident control experiences analyzed the following lessons are relevant :

- a solid base of local community support is required;
- skilled leadership must be available;
- the ability to work co-operatively with, but independently from the government agencies;
- ability to generate funds from a variety of sources;
- ability to relate business, social and cultural concerns;
- ability to structure and plan ahead; and
- technical and professional skills used for community service rather than for self interest (Ross and Usher, 1986; Perry, 1984; Mayers, 1984; Brookings, 1982; Newman, 1980).

Of the African experiences examined the Low-cost Housing Unit (LCHU) created in Tanzania, East Africa offered a comprehensive package of services ranging from serviced land, preferential credit to management training and building construction advice. In this group of co-operatives sweat equity has been a major part of the housing process. Most technical assistance or expertise solicited from outside, especially from the United States, helped to complement local knowledge. Assistance was offered in the areas of management, training, law, leasing, cost recovery and appropriate technology.

Failure of direct control in managing low-income housing projects can result from overlooking some important problems. Residents have to know from the onset the pitfalls of co-operative or collective housing management :

- lack of expertise and experience can lead to inefficiency and conflict;
- the process can be time consuming. Some members may not have much time to invest into self-management; and
- communication between the members and the housing agencies and or the government can be hindered by such factors as language and cultural differences including legal language, power differences, differences in decision making, structure and authority.

Management can also be done by a private company. There are other scenarios where actual management can be done by a trust company or by a private non-profit organisation. Depending on specific situations the managers are either on-site resident managers or an off-site management company. A study done by Barton and Silverman (1987) revealed that views about management companies were mixed. Some people felt that management companies were expensive. In some cases there seems to be very limited communication between private management and the tenants mainly because some management companies can be very insensitive to tenant needs. There could be a breakdown of communication and lack of flexibility on the part private companies. This system of management can of course be workable where the managing company is responsible to a tenant association or where the management company is committed to becoming knowledgeable about specific properties and their tenants.

Resident management can be seen as a shift away from the conventional management forms of public housing. In some places (in the United States for instance) direct resident control has been given statutory standing and financial support since 1987. This has allowed for conversion of some housing units to low-income housing through resident management ownership. As Kolodny (1989) acknowledges, resident management has to include a heavy element of education and

training, self-determination and self-respect together with community, and economic development. This research project does recognize the fact that there is still a need for the other more conventional forms of subsidized management housing in cases where resident control may not work due to the above mentioned problems.

PHYSICAL OUTLOOK AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING PROJECTS

It is important to note that changes in the physical environment can help create a sense of community. A well designed physical environment can help support the formation of a community. However, this does not mean that physical changes alone can bring about a sense of place or community. According to Kawano, 1987,

“..physical design cannot create or animate community development. This can only be done by the people who develop, construct, manage and reside in the new housing... The best a physical design can hope to accomplish is the maximum facilitation of opportunities for community and personal development” (Harper, 1986).

The physical appearance and functioning of a project can

facilitate its maintenance and management. Well delineated spaces, from semi-private to public spaces, for instance, can lead to a well co-ordinated social interaction within the complex.

However, it is common with many low-cost housing projects that the managing agencies or authorities are responsible for buildings they had little or no role in designing. Some of the design features may have not been provided for the tenants or in other cases it may have been decided at the time of construction that certain economies had to be observed in order for the project to remain within the set budget. The increased cost of equipment and labour over the last five years has in many cases led to the elimination of some features that are thought to be essential for the comfort of residents. When money is in short supply, 'luxuries' may be cut from the budget, e.g. landscaping may be reduced. In other instances, housing may have been built by people inexperienced in the design of social housing. Overall, physical design can play an important role in creating either a negative or positive image of social housing.

NEED FOR MODIFICATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECTS:

Conversions, Redesign, Redevelopment

There are a number of cases in Canada where tenants' action has led to redevelopment and redesign of social housing projects in order to meet certain requirements and better achieve suitable, adequate and affordable housing. Various rehabilitation schemes have involved buying buildings back from developers and running them as non-profit housing. Some results are relevant for this study. Most of these operations have been financed by the CMHC under the Public Housing Program.

The CMHC, 1990 Program Evaluation defines major redesign and redevelopment of projects in terms of regeneration which encompasses:

"a process whereby the issues associated with the impact of the aging process on housing are most prudently addressed, a decision making process that will ensure that the kinds of improvements that are made to older housing projects will result in maximum benefits to both the tenants and the Partnership at the most reasonable costs."

This definition is relevant to this study in that it provides broad tenets for rehabilitation of physically and functionally

obsolete housing projects. It further entails regeneration which is more than just improvement, but is a comprehensive process of redevelopment and redesign of individual units.

Conversion, on the other hand, is described as:

“...an upgrading activity which results in a net increase in the number of units in a building to produce more smaller units or a net decrease in the number of units in a building so that fewer larger units can be accommodated. Conversion can also occur where a change in unit layout is considered desirable. Conversion is generally required where a mismatch exists between the size of units available, and the household size and composition of potential clients” (CMHC, 1990).

With the changing social structure towards an increase in single parent families and single persons, there is a growing demand for conversion to accommodate the needs of these groups. Conversion allows for changes to provide a variety of options according to special needs. “Conversions can also be generated to include purchase of existing buildings which are not designated to receive RRAP assistance” (CMHC, 1983).

Redesign pertains to the physical design of the buildings and the site and is a response to community, project management

or even tenant concerns over the need for a form of subsidized housing. Among other things, redesign for the project would demand a closer look at the layout of the project site and the effect of its physical form on both the residents’ social and the surrounding community’s physical environment.

The costs of redesign can be high and can often necessitate self help and self reliance approaches. The CMHC suggests:

“...tenants should be full participants in the planning process. In addition, the opportunity to maximize human and financial resources which can be applied to the project should be pursued by ensuring the full cooperation and involvement of all government bodies involved with the project (e.g. social services).”

An increase in activism surrounding displacement issues is notable in some housing project studies. Most tenants in private rental housing have been organized only after the landlord has severely neglected the building and has abandoned most if not all management functions. In St. James Town, Toronto (1965), for example, the houses were in serious violation of the safety codes to the extent that houses were in danger of burning or falling down. The mayor later came in and pronounced that “redevelopment is the only possible way to improve the situation in the St. James Town

area.” The City offered to relocate the tenants in one of the new public housing projects that were being constructed in Toronto (Whitzman, 1990).

In other words, delayed rehabilitation can result in some problems. Also, if tenants are not involved with the details of the rehabilitation process it is quite easy for friction to develop between the tenants and the owners. It is also important to note that even with adequate funding and subsidies, any attempts at conversion, redevelopment and redesign are complex and demand careful planning.

AFFORDABLE, ADEQUATE AND SUITABLE HOUSING

This section outlines the criteria used to assess housing affordability, adequacy and suitability. Most housing studies indicate that affordability has become the major problem restricting accessibility to housing. However, there has been little agreement as to what affordable limits to housing means. According to the Metropolitan Studies (Toronto, 1983), housing is affordable when the cost of shelter does not hinder the purchase of other basic necessities. Adequate housing refers to a dwelling's physical adequacy in meeting health standards and facilities requirements (e.g. bathroom and a kitchen). Suitable housing refers to the spatial adequacy

of a dwelling in meeting certain space standards thereby avoiding overcrowding.

Problems arise when households find their housing insufficient, resulting in crowded living conditions, traditionally defined as more than one person per room. Housing is physically inadequate if it lacks basic facilities e.g. electricity, water, a stove or refrigerator. It is also not affordable when households are required to pay an excessive amount of their income for housing, usually defined as more than 30 percent.

Since the early 1970's, several studies have been conducted which examined the housing conditions of low income groups and social welfare recipients in Canada. These studies are summarized and then some recent data is presented which suggests that housing affordability, in contrast to suitability and adequacy, is perhaps the most pressing problem in Canada. The four major studies include a study done by the City of Calgary Social Service Department (1973); in Toronto by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto (1974); in Saskatchewan by the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services (1974); and one covering several Metropolitan areas in Canada, including Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Halifax-Dartmouth, done by the Canadian Council on Social

Development (1976). Two of these studies revealed that suitability of housing and overcrowding was a problem for a limited proportion of social allowance recipients. Even though these studies date back to the mid-seventies, most recent studies confirm that affordability is still a major problem (Clayton Research Associates, 1978; Alberta Housing and Public Works, 1982, 1984; Bobrow, Fieldman and Associates, 1981; Hulchanski, 1990).

Suitability is used interchangeably with appropriate in that suitable and appropriate housing should have sufficient physical space and design features to satisfy the occupants. These measures are not based on any specific guidelines beyond those stated by the CMHC. One criterion used to evaluate the appropriateness of housing is overcrowding. The CMHC criteria for overcrowding adopted in this research project includes the following guidelines:

“a) The number of rooms should be greater than or equal to the number of individuals in the household. All rooms excluding bathrooms and hallways are included.

b) The number of persons per bedroom should not exceed two.”

Basic standards of a dwelling have been defined and measured in some studies as to whether the tenant does have some

measure of control over the interior environment i.e. basic services and access to clean water, power, heat, transportation networks, access to communication networks.

Some housing experts go further to do a cross sectional analysis in terms of the neighbourhood, for example, safety within the neighbourhood; support services (nursery, hospitals, fire, police etc.); environmental adequacy (waste management) (Schuman, 1986; Sherwood, 1983; and others). A range of factors highlighted as criteria for suitability (CMHC, 1983) include:

- “
- a) occupant satisfaction with the project;
 - b) occupant intentions to move;
 - c) occupant satisfaction with location;
 - d) the presence or absence of facilities in the project or neighbourhood as well as their accessibility and quality;
 - e) ratings of neighbourhoods;
 - f) the presence or absence of special design features for those with special needs; and
 - g) leasing arrangements for units.”

Most literature reviewed centred on affordability (Djao, 1983; Hulchanski, 1983/1989/1990, Fallis, 1990; Frier, 1990; Dean, 1990; Ahrentzen, 1989; Grier, 1989; Whitzman, 1989; and others). Housing affordability is the most persistent problem especially for renters and cooperative owners.

Traditional affordability measures have two major problems; first, it includes householders who choose to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing (although they could obtain suitable, adequate housing for less); second, the 30 percent measure fails to include households who occupy inadequate or crowded units in order to keep their housing costs down.

A literature search done on affordability measures suggests that the current measure for affordability is not adequate. For example, the criteria used to determine whether the ratio of rent to income is set at 25 percent or 30 percent of gross income or a “week’s wages” is unfair. It is important to consider whether housing has become more or less affordable to people over time. The residual income method proposed in some literature seems most reasonable in that it takes into account the housing expenditure as what is left after all necessary living expenses are taken care of (food, transportation, medical, education, etc.).

Michael Stone, 1983, argues that,
“...any attempt to reduce affordability of housing to a single percentage of income - no matter how high or low - simply does not correspond to the reality of fundamental and obvious differences amongst households.”

A small household with a given income can afford to spend more on housing than a large household for instance. According to Stone, therefore, “an appropriate measure of affordability for housing is the sliding scale (Stone, 1983). However, for the purposes of this study the measure of affordability adopted is the 30 percent of income for housing. Both the 25 percent and the 30 percent ratios are used in the federal rental scale in the social housing programs (CMHC, 1983). Rental social housing managed at the municipal level in the City of Calgary uses the sliding scale as a criterion for rent (see Chapter 2).

SUMMARY

This chapter has been basically a review of some important policy issues that have influenced the delivery of social housing. Of the subsidized housing programs, co-operative housing is the only one that offers the residents a measure of freedom and independence. Since the residents have a feeling of ownership about the housing, there is a high probability that co-operative housing can enhance pride and a sense of identity for the residents. From past social housing programs there has been a growing need to improve the very low-income housing physical outlook so as to eradicate negative attitudes towards public housing. Such improvements do not only deal with negative attitudes, but could also lead

to an improved quality of life for the residents.

It is further noted that recognition of the need for participatory methods in the planning, design and maintenance of social housing continue to influence policy decisions. There is not doubt that such principles could lead to socially and economically improved housing projects. Section 1.4. points out the importance that has been placed on policy in terms of conversions, redesign and redevelopment of social housing projects. Various rehabilitation schemes have been a way to upgrade housing complexes so as to create a livable environment for the tenants. This is of particular relevance to this research project in that the FLH project is the best example of a very low-income project that is in need of conversion, redevelopment and redesign if it is to continue serving these groups. The last section provides a definition of three crucial concepts, i.e. affordability, adequacy and suitability. The importance of these concepts lies in the fact that it is mainly through their assessment that one can determine accessibility to this kind of housing and the quality of life within the projects.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

This chapter reviews the socio-economic characteristics including housing issues in Greater Forest Lawn (GFL), the neighbourhood in which the ForestLawn Holdings is located. Section one outlines the housing agencies or housing authorities that are involved in the delivery of social housing in the City of Calgary and have or could have an influence on social housing issues in GFL. Section two analyses demographic and socio-economic aspects characterising the Greater Forest Lawn area and the impact on the image of the neighbourhood. Also included in this chapter is a documentation of some community services and organizations responsible for delivering those services. The level of need of particular social groups is evaluated for affordable housing and emphasis is put on the need to sustain very low-income housing projects like FLH. Furthermore, this chapter presupposes the necessity to take advantage of future changes in the FLH's living environment for the good of the image of the neighbourhood.

SOCIAL HOUSING AGENCIES IN THE CITY OF CALGARY

The City of Calgary had been involved in public housing since 1972 when the provincial government assumed full jurisdiction in the area of subsidized housing. Calgary,

unlike Edmonton, did not enter the land banking program. The City opted to try to purchase land for social housing, but discovered that the private sector was reluctant to sell for these purposes. Some land was acquired after the city began applying development agreements and other tools. In general, neither the city nor the Alberta Housing Corporation were able to acquire sufficient properties to meet social housing needs (Lyons, 1987).

A non-profit housing corporation, the Calgary Housing authority (CHA), was established under the federal 56.1 social housing program. This corporation has constructed and purchased new units, completed renovations, and provided land and technical assistance to private non-profit organizations and co-operatives. At the peak of the boom 90 percent of its tenants were paying below market rents. The proportion had fallen to between 40 to 50 percent by 1987 (Lyon and Carter, 1987).

CHA has worked towards ensuring that subsidies are sufficient to enable reasonable rent to income ratios for lower income groups even though there is still an on-going debate as to whether these ratios are fair. Some argue that these ratios can only be reasonable when other basic needs are taken into consideration i.e. that fair ratios be determined after considering necessary expenditures on other basic needs,

(e.g. education, food etc). The CHA role has since been enhanced and has become varied to include special needs housing i.e. physically disabled individuals and families and shared accommodation for the hard to house low income single persons. The three programs administered under the CHA include the Modest Apartment, Rent Supplement and the Market Rental Programs.

The Calgary Housing Authority, in an attempt to ensure accessibility, divides its case load according to “greatest need” and “low need”. Socio-economic factors which are assessed include income, number of children in each household vis-a-vis their income, building structure (especially if disabled), living environment in current accommodation, evictions and homelessness for each household. Some people are referred to CHA by emergency shelters. CHA has a “predetermined point rating system” according to each core need. Highest number of points means “greatest need” (informal interview, CHA director, Sept, 1991).

Other social housing programs in the city are delivered through the following:

- Calhome Properties which is managed at the municipal level by the City of Calgary. Calhome operates similar to the CHA in that rent is based on a sliding scale at

25 percent of gross monthly income. If the monthly income is \$2,200 and up, one becomes a market tenant paying \$585 and up for rental of a three bedroom apartment ;

- Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation (AMHC), a provincial agency whose social housing function entails providing affordable housing based on income for the disabled, special needs groups like the seniors and other low-income families; and

- Under CHIP the developer receives a preferred mortgage rate from the provincial government. In return they rent half the apartments in their developments at controlled, subsidized rents. Subsidized units (2313 in Calgary) are for those whose income falls below a certain maximum figure. In some instances preference is given to seniors (conversation with program directors, August, 1991).

Carter and Badiuk (1987) and Carter and McAfee, (1990), discuss various ways in which municipal governments direct subsidies to social housing in Canadian cities. It is interesting to note that the City of Calgary is one of those Canadian cities where subsidies include mainly what they refer to as “..cash in kind assistance” whereby city experts, e.g. architects, site planners and legal staff, contribute time to, among other things, develop policy; identify housing needs; help develop site plans for projects and lobby senior levels of government for greater support.

Other project types include emergency or crisis shelters; transitional housing; long term housing with various levels of support and long term community housing. Since the formation of housing agencies such as Connection Housing (1991), the rising need for social housing has been witnessed. Connection Housing attempts to meet need for subsidized housing by connecting the most needy with relevant housing agencies. One cannot ignore the role of the third sector, i.e. religious and charitable agencies; church groups like the Interfaith, the Salvation Army, the YWCA and many others which have played a remarkable historical role in housing and still continue to provide housing even for the hard to house.

A 1989 study (Social Services Department of the city of Calgary) documents not only the low income housing programs but also reveals the percentage of units held by social allowance recipients. From informal interviews and telephone conversations with program directors it is reasonable to assume that the number of welfare recipients has been steadily increasing and that affordability continues to be the primary housing problem, especially for the poor (very low income groups and social welfare recipients).

Some housing agency representatives, when interviewed, identified a growing need for subsidized housing. This has

necessitated an increased supply of subsidized housing. Between 1983 and 1990 no new units were added to the existing subsidized housing stock managed provincially and municipally. Only in 1990, 10 units were added. These new units were designated for the physically disabled or families with a disabled member. Vacancy rates for housing agencies have been gradually decreasing and the number of applicants, waiting list lengths and the waiting period for placement (delay between application and receipt of housing) have gone up. Means of dealing with this demand would be a very long term venture. Meeting the "core needs" has been a priority for the agencies to help deal with the most needy people. For the current year, 60 additional units are planned (conversation with J. Anderson, Calhome Properties; T.E. Bradley, Director, Calgary Housing Authority ; October, 1991).

Some agency directors do recognize that mixing of income groups (e.g. low to very low income families or individuals in each complex) in subsidized housing complexes has not been practised by most agencies. Calhome Properties' officials, however, acknowledge the need for planning towards a mix of income in their new complexes. CHA on the other hand is a "low income only program". Eligibility for CHA housing units is based on income levels of applicants. CHA policy asserts that no mixing of income should be encouraged. However, construction should be of such quality and design

that one cannot easily identify a complex as a “low-income housing project” within a neighbourhood (Informal interviews with Agency Representatives, 1991).

Cooperative housing, mostly managed by private non-profit organizations and financed by CMHC experiences the highest demand of this type of housing. The number of applications has steadily increased - in 1990 alone a 20 percent increase is notable. It is speculated that this is because it is the only kind of housing that offers both an element of ownership and some security of tenure. The vacancy rate for cooperative housing was 2.7 percent in April 1988 and only 0.9 percent in October 1989 (CMHC, 1989). A CMHC 1989 rental market survey reveals that there were essentially no vacancies in the row housing units and in the 2 and 3 bedroom units. In summary the social housing situation in the City of Calgary does reflect some important aspects for this research project, e.g. a move towards an increased demand for this type of housing; the need for more flexibility in the provision of such housing to cater for future and current socio-economic and demographic changes.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE

The Greater Forest Lawn area (GFL), consists of seven communities and is located in the southeast and lower northeast

quadrants of the City of Calgary. The GFL communities are: Albert Park/Radisson Heights, Dover, Erin Woods, Forest Heights, Forest Lawn, Penbrooke Meadows and Southview (see Figure 2.1). Of the seven communities, Forest Lawn is the community where Forest Lawn Holdings (FLH), a very low income housing project is situated. This housing project is the focus of this study.

GFL lies east of the Calgary central business district and is separated from it by the Bow River and the Deerfoot Trail (see Figure 2.2). The fact that the GFL is known in the city as a low income neighbourhood, therefore a socially and economically depressed area, has contributed to its negative image. Forest Lawn agreed to be annexed to the City of Calgary in 1962. One of the driving forces to this agreement was the need for accessibility to services and social programs. However, it is clear that the physical and social infrastructure of GFL are not comparable in quality with other communities in the city. A Statistics Canada (1986) study of socio-economic data compares GFL to the rest of Calgary. It reveals that numerous other communities, especially in the east end of Calgary, have similar disadvantages.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

Based on the City of Calgary 1989 census, the total population in the GFL is 48,935, representing 7.3 percent of the city population. The Forest Lawn community, where Forest Lawn Holdings (FLH) is located, has the third largest population in the area with 7,682 people 15.6 percent that of the GFL. Dover has the largest population, at 23.1 percent of the GFL population.

It is important to note that there are some variations to the distribution according to age when it comes to each community at GFL. The Forest Lawn community has 30.4 percent of the age group 0-9, lower than Forest Heights at 32.5 percent. Southview has a much lower representation at 25.2 percent. At the other extreme GFL has a much lower percentage of residents 65 years and over (5.1 percent). Other categories, which comprise of adults at work and in retirement at GFL, are under-represented.

The high proportion of immigrant population in GFL does not make GFL an exception. Calgary's Chinatown and its adjacent areas contain the highest proportion of immigrants and the northern communities of GFL and the northeast part of the city are secondary focus areas. The Faculty of Social Work Report (1990) is more revealing of the extent of

immigration population in the study area.

"...the proportion of residents in Calgary born outside of Canada in 1986 was 21.2 percent compared to 24.5 percent in GFL. Two communities, Albert Park/Radisson Heights and Penbrooke Meadows had a substantially higher proportion of residents born outside of Canada, 27.7 percent and 27.0 percent respectively. The proportion of residents with citizenship other than Canadian was also higher for GFL at 7.9 percent than for the city at 6.1 percent, with Erin Woods (9.5 percent) and Forest Lawn (8.9 percent) having the highest proportion" (Faculty of Social Work, U of C 1990).

GFL does have a wide variety of support services. However, the major problem has been accessibility to certain services and community support systems for the ethno-cultural minorities. The GFL Community Development Project Report referring to studies done in 1983 (Naidoo) and 1986 (Phan) including a study done by the Calgary Mennonite Centre (1989) indicates immigrants' lack of accessibility to certain major services. For instance, lack of affordable educational training programs has contributed to serious unemployment.

Persons living under low income cut off lines or poverty lines, set by Statistics Canada, are those people who are

unable to afford the basic living needs. Of the four “concentrated centres of persons living in low income households” the Indices of Needs document identified five GFL communities, i.e. Albert Park, Forest Lawn, Forest Heights, Penbrooke and Dover.

The 1985 average total income, shows typically low incomes in GFL. Income levels lower than the Canadian Municipal Average are reflected. Forest Lawn had the lowest median family income (\$25,050) and the lowest household income (\$22, 808).

Quite a large proportion of city residents who do not hold educational degrees are from the GFL. GFL has less than grade nine education ranging from 10.2 percent in Erin Woods to 18.8 percent in Forest Lawn which is much higher than that of the city average at 7.1 percent. As a result of the prevalence of these education problems, the unemployment rate is calculated as higher than that in the rest of city.

Occupation, on the other hand, reflects the different levels of education obtained by residents of GFL. While in the city the most frequent cited occupation was reported as managerial, administrative and related fields, the “...top 6 occupations in GFL included service occupations, construction trades; service occupations..”. The difference in occupation is a reflection

of the low level of education prevalent at GFL.

The rate of crime, as reported by the Faculty of Social Work Report, is “...over represented...” in the Greater Forest Lawn “...in relation to other areas. In particular, the crime rate for vehicle thefts (13.5percent), drugs (12.6percent), and carprowing - vandalism (9.9percent).is notably higher than that for the city generally “ (City of Calgary Crime Trend Report 1988 - 90).

However, it is important to note that GFL does not suffer from a chronic lack of community services. GFL consists of seven community associations that are active in providing recreational and social activities for their members. The main concern has been to coordinate these services in a manner that that makes them responsive to social and recreational needs for the area. The Community Development Report summarizes their role as:

“Representing community residents to various levels of government about issues such as transportation, parks, housing.

Initiating and providing programs desired by residents. Depending on the community, this may include athletic, recreational, and to a lesser degree, social programs (e.g. daycare, lunch programs, after school programs).”

However, there is a concern over a general lack of community involvement in activities and at the "...volunteer level" mainly because of a general feeling that ethno-cultural groups are not well represented or integrated in these organizations. Besides the major concern over accessibility to services, concern also pertains to the fact that these Associations are more sports/recreational and therefore have social entertainment as their priority rather than the more pressing community issues e.g. affordable childcare provision (GFL Community Development Report, 1990).

The major problem is not only in socio-economic status, but also a lack of co-ordination and integration of services delivered ; lack of cross-cultural interaction and awareness including poor utilization of local resources. The objective of this reflection is to lay ground for addressing solutions that could encourage community based principles and solutions from within the community.

SOCIAL GROUPS IN NEED OF SOCIAL HOUSING

This section briefly highlights various groups of residents and citizen types that are served by very low-cost housing projects in GFL. These are not the only groups occupying the low - income projects. The ones mentioned are the most relevant to this research project. Some other groups e.g. the disabled, can be said to be most notable in these projects but

are not served by the project under study.

From the analysis of data from housing agencies' clients, senior citizens are an important group in these programs. The elderly persons addressed in the study only included senior citizens who are fully independent. Of the options available for the elderly, self-contained senior citizens apartments were the prevalent form in GFL. Generally, seniors housing can be identified as market housing which includes initiatives by the private sector. This market segment caters for those with the means and preferences for purchasing non-subsidized shelter and assisted housing care. Subsidized seniors housing has entailed grants provided by the AMHC (1973 to 1983) for one third of the capital costs of rental housing for low to middle income seniors built by non-profit housing organizations. The organizations were responsible for obtaining the remainder of the required funding from CMHC. There was also a senior Citizens Lodge program which is the oldest program. AMHC cost shared operating deficits with foundations which provided certain services to the elderly.

The researcher looked into choices that varied from bachelor to one bedroom units in projects ranging from four plexes to high rise blocks, meant for low and moderated income persons who are physically and mentally self-sufficient, i.e. capable of independent living. The Alberta Mortgage and

Housing corporation does provide full capital financing for these projects. CMHC on the other hand, under the global agreement with Alberta, is providing 70 percent of net operating costs (including capital cost amortization up to the approved maximum unit price, Lyons and Carter, 1987).

The other social group that can be said to be a notable part of this study includes recipients of social welfare. Most housing representatives agree that there is an increasing number of social welfare recipients in Calgary's public and private low-income housing projects. A study done by the Social Welfare Department revealed that of the 3,498 Calgary Housing Authority managed public housing units, 30 percent are occupied by social allowance recipients, while 10-60 percent of cooperative units and other private non-profit housing are occupied by this group.

Another target group is comprised of single parent families especially single mothers. The increase in female headed families is notable, although lower than most countries including developing nations. In 1981, almost 10 percent of all Canadian families were headed by a lone female parent, an increase of 59 percent from 1971. An LIS study of "International Child Poverty Rates by Family Types", (1989) revealed that Canada had 51.2 percent lone parent families as compared to the US, at 60 percent. Concern for child poverty

has recently attracted attention from the media (Calgary Herald, Nov. 25 1991). Most of these children are from lone parent families (The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty, 1989).

According to the Indices of Need compiled by Social Services (1986-1988, by 1986) 21,000 families in Calgary were headed by single parents (Federal Census). Twelve percent of these families seemed to be in low income community districts with evidence of a high concentration in the central eastern districts of Calgary. One of these areas is the Greater Forest Lawn Area, the study area (Indices of Need, 1989).

Compared to the city as a whole, the West End, East Village and a few scattered communities including GFL communities north of the 17th Avenue have the highest percentage of single parent mothers in Calgary (Stats Canada, 1986). Again the proportion of lone parent families living in GFL (18.5 percent) is reported to be higher than that of the city (12.8 percent) substantially. The Forest Lawn community has the highest at 22.5 percent (Indices, 1990).

Providing accommodation to single persons living alone, especially those in the lower income brackets, has also been a great concern for many housing agencies. The problem of providing homes for such individuals is aggravated by the fact that the number of single or unattached individuals has

been on the rise. Almost two thirds of poor people in Canada are single individuals (The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty, 1989). Contrary to the demographic trends, CHA and other housing agencies have not more than five percent of their housing units reserved for single persons (J. Anderson, October, 1991). Apparently some of these single persons are among the "better-educated individuals" who happen to be under employed because of either disability, ill health or other social problems (The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty, 1989). Informal interviews with housing agencies demonstrated that most of this accommodation is provided for by the third sector, e.g. the YWCA, churches and so on. Housing agencies like the Calhome Properties and CHA need to re-evaluate their policy to provide for low income single persons.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

More than 40 percent of the total area of GFL is residential in use and according to the design brief (1977) more than 60 percent of the dwelling units fell into the single detached family category in the early seventies. Only 5 percent were in the form of apartments or townhouses. Although there is no current documented information statistically, one can observe that the housing types are quite diversified, including single detached and attached dwellings, townhouses, walk-up apartments, converted dwellings and mobile homes. One

can observe that mostly low-rise walk up apartment buildings dominate the multi-family housing landscape. According to the 1986 Census Data there are no apartments 5 or more storeys in GFL.

Some characteristics that indicate housing adequacy, suitability and affordability include average number of persons per dwelling; owner occupied units versus renter occupied units; types of dwellings; vacancy rates; rental prices and, at a general level, social housing availability. These characteristics have been analyzed on the basis of data from Calgary census data, 1989, conversations with program directors and studies that have been done in the area.

According to statistics showing the average number of persons per occupied dwelling (1989, Calgary Census) the GFL area compared to the whole city seems not to have aggravated instances of overcrowding. The average number of persons per dwelling in Calgary is 3.8 persons (1989 Census Calgary) while in GFL it is 3.2 persons. Forest Lawn community has the lowest of the seven communities at 2.8, second to Albert Park, 2.7 and Southview at 2.7. The Forest Lawn/Forest Heights Area Redevelopment Plan survey (1990) results on household size reports that 34 percent of the respondents (of the 3600 questionnaires, 434 households responded) are two person households.

Of the 434 respondents surveyed by the ARP study (1990) in the Forest Lawn/Forest Heights area 73.3 percent owned their dwellings. In addition, 59.7 percent of the respondents (ARP survey, 1990) intended to stay in the Forest Lawn/Forest Heights area. The highest ranking reason for moving was indicated as 'wanting to upgrade or to own' (14.8 percent). The number of respondents that felt that housing was affordable in Forest Lawn/Forest Heights was 50.7 percent. Maintenance of property seemed to be one main problem facing the community.

City of Calgary	56.4
Albert Park and Radisson Heights	38.2
Dover	61.9
Erinwoods	61.3
Forest Heights	63.5
Forest Lawn	41.7
Penbrooke	65.6
Southview	64.7

Figure 2.1. Percentage Owner Occupied Units

GFL has an overwhelming domination of the housing landscape both in the city and in GFL by single family dwellings. The city has 52.5 percent of its housing stock represented by single family houses and GFL is not far different at 48.5 percent.

According to the 1989 Civic Census records, in the Forest Lawn community 37.9 percent of the units are single family dwellings while 29.9 percent were semi-detached, duplex or concerted forms of dwellings.

Of the social housing authorities and housing agencies involved in delivering housing in GFL, Calhome Properties, CHA and CMHC are the most notable. There are, however, other non-profit housing agencies like the Churches, Interfaith and Catholic Immigration Society who are also involved in providing subsidized housing in the area.

The GFL population was 7.3 percent of the city in 1989. Yet 14 percent of the CHA units were located in the area, and 21 percent of Calhome units are found at GFL. Only 8 percent of the rent supplement program is located at GFL. Considering that GFL is generally a low income neighbourhood, it seems that there is a demand for more subsidized housing in the area.

Figure 2.5. Subsidized Housing Supply
(Source : 1989 - 90 Program List Informal interviews with

PROJECT TYPE	# OF UNITS IN THE CITY	# OF UNITS IN GFL	% TYPE IN GFL
Calhome Properties	1500	312	21
CHA	3978	561	14
CMHC AMHC :			
Rent Supplement	728	57	8
Special Non-profit	30		
Special Purpose	30		
Public Non-Profit	5		

*Figure 2.2. Subsidized Housing Supply
(Source: Program List)*

Informal interviews with program directors (CHA and Calhome Properties, July - Oct. 1991) leave no doubt that they believe there is an insufficient supply of subsidized housing in the City of Calgary. Some types of subsidized housing e.g. cooperative housing is not available in GFL or in fact east of the Deerfoot Trail (Informal Interview, J. Anderson, July, 1991).

SUMMARY

This chapter, primarily, was an attempt to outline the important role played by housing agencies and authorities in providing social housing in GFL. There is an emphasis on the need to move away from conventional management of social housing developments. For example, as the Calhome director pointed out in an informal interview, there is a growing need for income mix in some subsidized housing complexes coupled with the need for tenant democracy to help improve housing management and maintenance. However, there is need for additional research in order to determine more fully the effectiveness of other alternative methods to social housing management. At the same time the goals and the mandate of social housing management has to be flexible to changing socio-economic and demographic changes. The mandate based on giving priority to seniors housing has to give way for instance, to the rise in single, unattached adults.

Secondly, there is a reflection on the socio-economic status and the demographic aspects characterising the GFL area. Socio-economically, residents in GFL are ranked as the most disadvantaged compared to other areas in the city. The rate of unemployment is higher than elsewhere in the city; the proportion of single-parent families who are not in the labour force is quite substantial;

a very small proportion of residents have university education and a very large proportion have less than grade nine education; more men and women are in lower paying jobs compared to any other neighbourhood in the city. Particularly distinct are three communities; Forest Lawn; Albert Park/Radisson Heights and Forest Heights, with Forest Lawn having the highest proportion of residents whose circumstances are most disadvantaged. The relevance of the outlined socio-economic status lies in the fact that it has more often than not, led to perpetuating a negative image of the area and also to an emphasis on solutions that could lead to dependancy on government agencies and on social assistance programs. For example in many studies there is a call for additional services and public funding. The contention of this research project is that within these socio-economic deficiencies also lies some elements of potentiality that could be siphoned towards community development. For example, Chapter four draws from aspects like cultural diversity and the large proportion of single parent families to suggest community based development, awareness and cross cultural interaction to better utilize the local resources in conjunction with existing services. Small scale developments like FLH could be used as a starting point to tap these resources and to create a positive image for the area (see chapter four).

Thirdly, the housing situation for GFL is outlined. The

general housing profile for the area is important for this study because it shows the importance of having low-cost areas in the city. Many people who could not afford to own a single family house elsewhere in the city could have the same chance at GFL. A diversity of owner occupied housing from single family houses, duplexes to rowhouses, coupled by diverse social housing complexes, characterize the housing landscape of GFL. The problem of social housing in GFL centres around the fact that social housing complexes are easily identifiable because of the physical condition that does not merge with the surrounding housing types. This is aggravated by the fact that occupants are also easily identifiable. There appears to be a lack of pride among social housing occupants. This is contrary to housing agencies' aim to promote a design quality that "cannot be easily identifiable". Chapter four proposes more research into ways of encouraging tenant participation.

CHAPTER 3. PROJECT EVALUATION

This chapter presents an overall assessment of the Forest Lawn Project, i.e. how the project does or does not satisfy the needs of the residents and how the residents feel about their living environment. Also, an analysis of the most outstanding features of the project both from objective (i.e. observation) and subjective (residents' views and the researcher's) angles is done. Furthermore, an attempt is made at presenting an evaluation of the low-income project and how it falls short of satisfying the social and spatial needs of the tenants. Evaluation is further aimed at emphasizing the need to exploit its potential features and outlining some ingredients that could improve its performance as a low-income housing project.

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

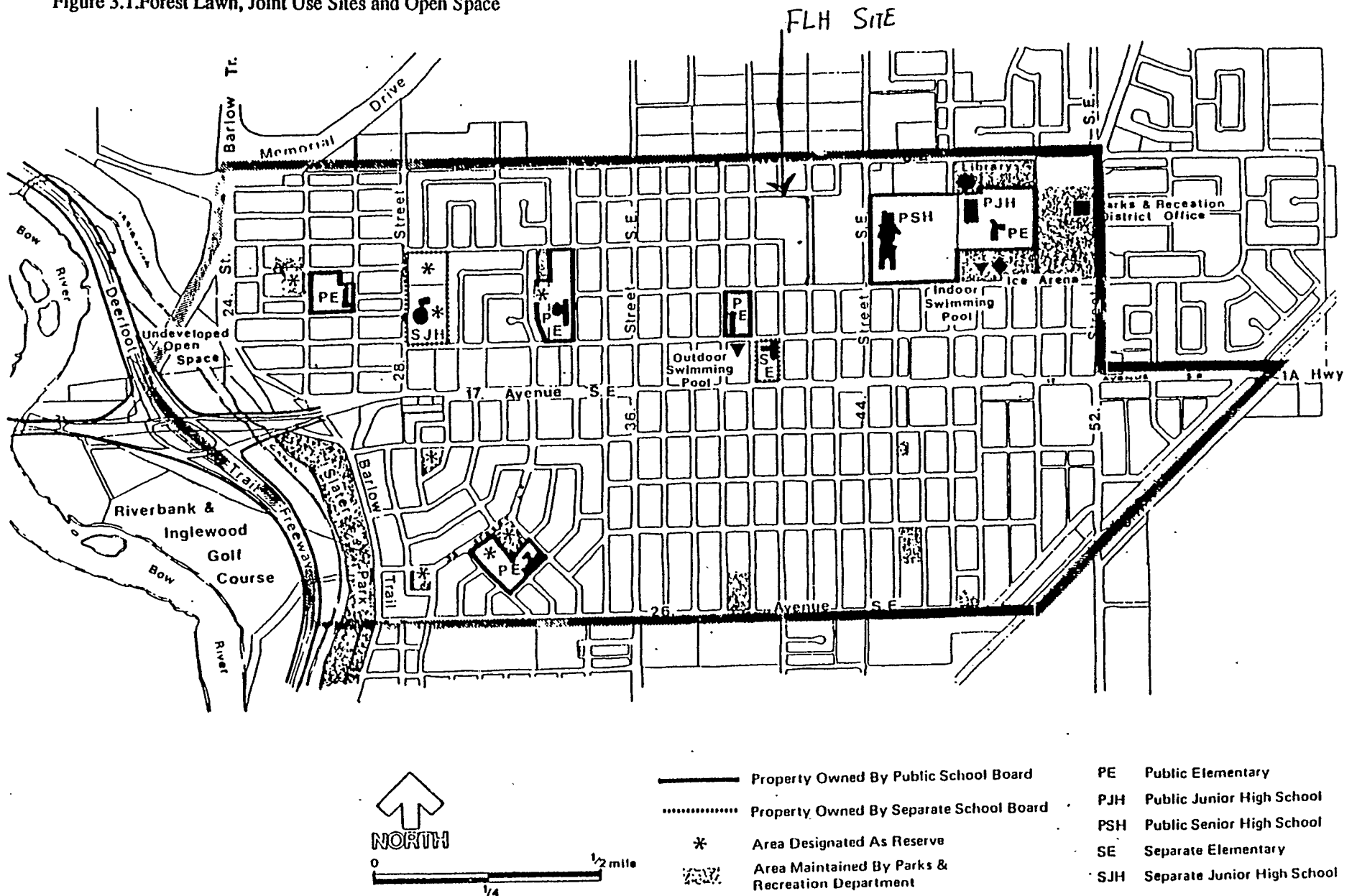
The FLH project layout (figure 3.2) is not very different from the typical courtyard design of many public housing projects. It has a rectilinear siting of buildings with building structures, open green spaces, has no enclosed space between building structures and leaves a rather too wide space between these structures. Also, the relatively low density is typical of the old public housing design. The FLH site covers 6.6 hectares and accommodates 210 dwelling units. More than half of the

site is open space (see fig 3.6 and 3.7). No private outdoor yard space is delineated and the remainder of the open space is grassed and has no recreational facilities or equipment nor any areas designated for activities of any kind.

Immediately to the west of the site is a commercial strip that offers residents of Greater Forest Lawn a diverse ethno-cultural shopping opportunity. Public transportation is easily accessible from this site. Surrounding the site is a wide variety of housing types of medium density comprised of; duplexes, walk-up apartments, converted dwellings, mobile homes, single detached and multi-family houses.

This site is designated as RM-4 land use classification which allows for residential density of up to 148 units per hectare. There are further requirements for side and rear yards which act as semi private spaces. Discretionary use accommodates the fact that "each dwelling shall be provided with a private outdoor amenity space in conformity with section 20 of the land use regulations. Landscaping requirements do not only permit private outdoor amenity space but also "...all plant materials.. of species capable of healthy growth in Calgary". Further discretionary uses allowed in the RM district land use regulations range from apartment buildings to townhouses, public and quasi public buildings, child care facilities, duplex dwellings, hostels for transient residents and senior citizens

Figure 3.1. Forest Lawn, Joint Use Sites and Open Space



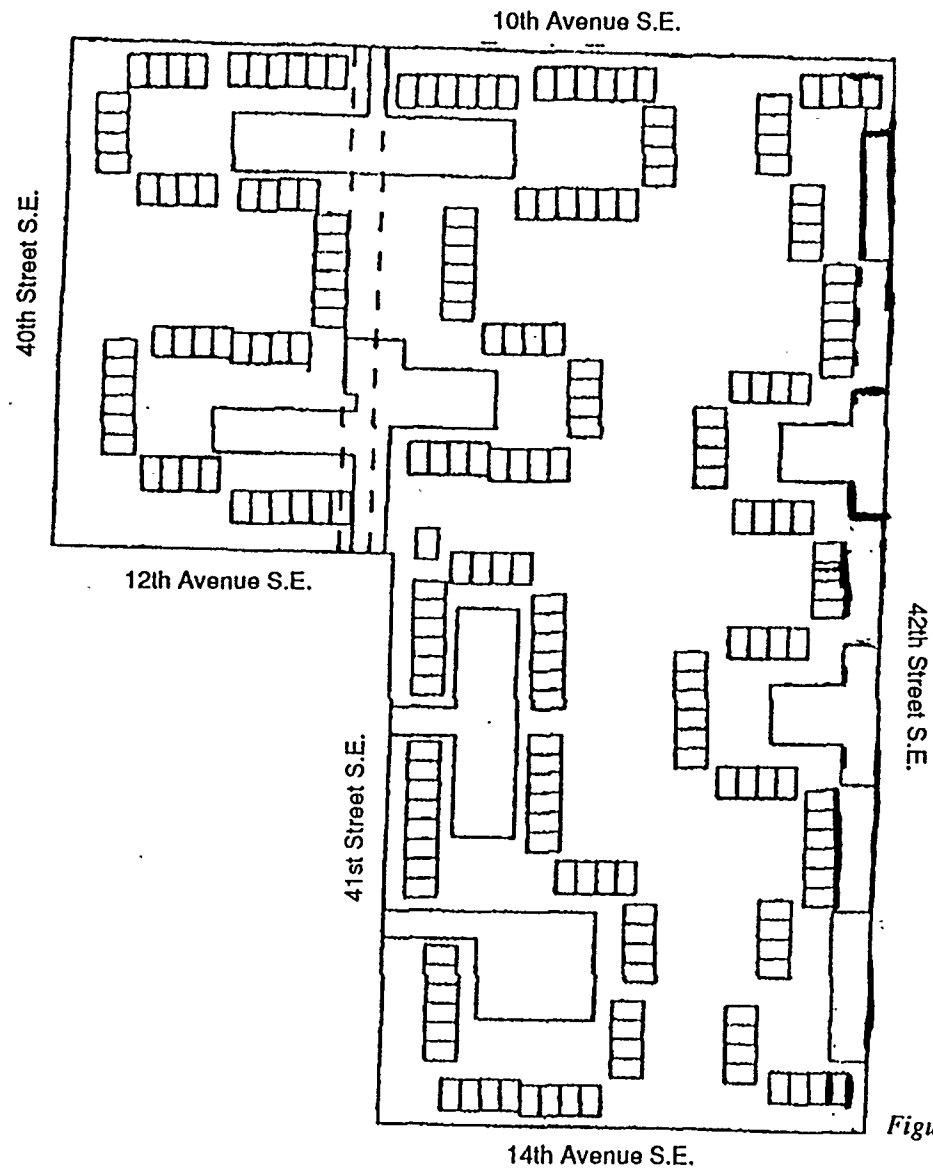


Figure 3.2. Forest Lawn Holdings : Site-Layout.

housing. These land use requirements presuppose the need to redevelop the site in order to put into full use its potentiality.

At the moment more than half the site lies bare and minimally landscaped considering potentials offered by the site itself and the land use regulations. The poor utilization of land (see figures 3.7, and 3.8), contributes to an inadequate and unsuitable living environment. The site plan has no apparent concern for different uses e.g. recreation, leisurely walking, pathway from one block of units to another and even from unit to unit.

The siting and orientation of buildings does not conform to the project's edge conditions. The residential streets overall enclose the site, and yet there is no landscaping along the streets to buffer the housing from the street. Some housing fronts are directly on the streets while others are back on to the street.

The lane on the east edge provides for no street address, faces on to the back of other housing (parking and garbage) and is generally a hostile environment behind the buildings and contributes to the entirely introverted site plan. Even though there is no compelling reason for orientation towards the streets, a lane like this at the edge does not allow direct accessibility to the 42nd street. It does not allow a continuous

sense of street edge. As it is, it is just an open space that serves very little utility.

Accommodation is provided in townhouse units. The project features 61 two bedroom and 149 three bedroom units. Each has a kitchen and a combined toilet with a bath tub (Figure 3.3). As Figure 3.3 shows, each kitchen area is supposed to offer each occupant all the necessary fixtures, a stove, refrigerator and kitchen cabinets. The main floor (Figure 3.3) for each unit appeared to have adequate space for both the cooking area and the living room space. The problem has been that some units do not have any of these facilities. Some occupants who have a very low-income status and cannot afford to buy this equipment. The second floor (figure 3.4 and 3.5) in both two and three bedroom units accommodates bedrooms and a bathroom. The total space area seems sufficient, considering the size of families. Most units have experienced leakage problems in these facilities.

All have large basements. This has posed problems for the tenants because these basements are not well maintained. Basement leakage was ranked as number one maintenance problem in the units. All of the units in the block near 42nd street (see Figure 3.2) have a large window well below ground level to allow light into the basement area leading to serious leakage.

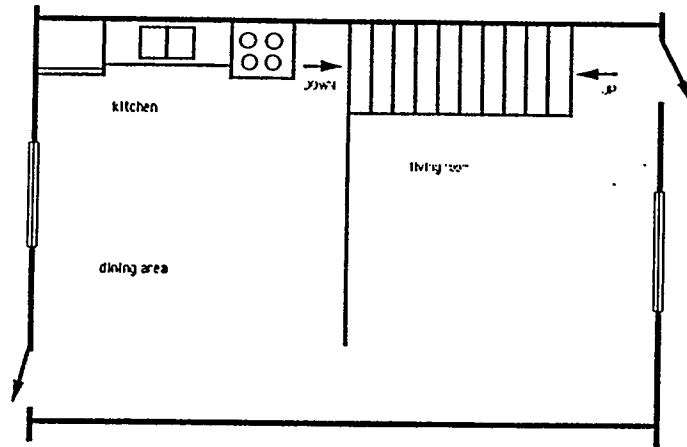


Figure 3.3. Example of ground level; two and three bedroom townhouse

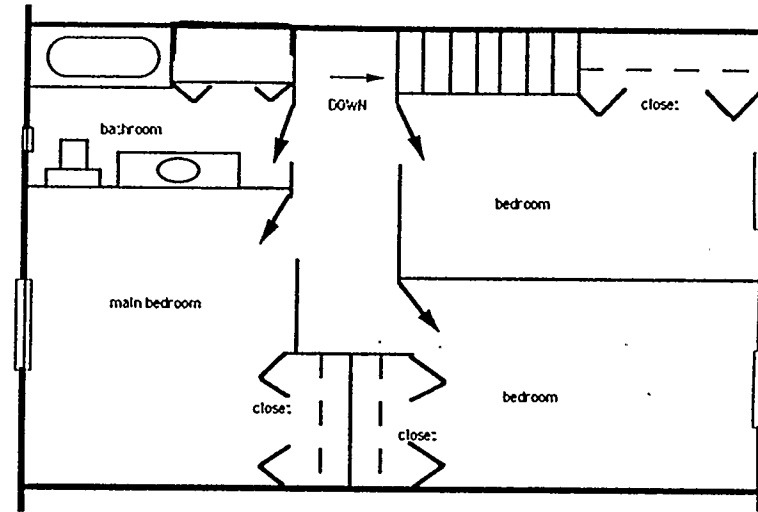


Figure 3.5. Example of a three bedroom townhouse

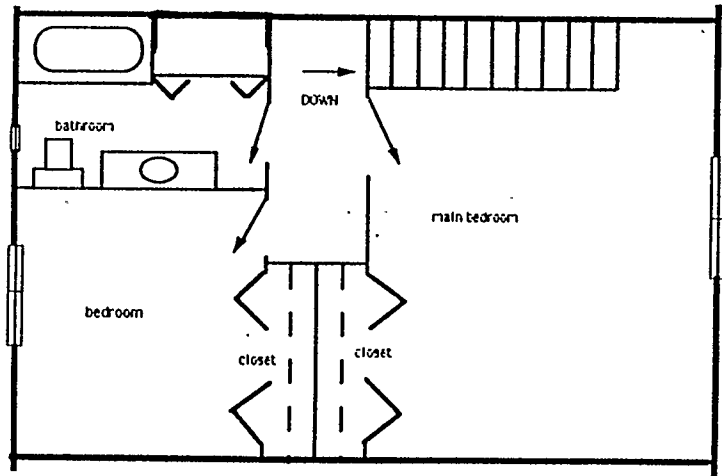


Figure 3.4. Example of a two bedroom townhouse

The FLH site plan has poor definition of space in terms of transition from a private to a semi private space (Gehl, 1987; Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986). This leads to a high degree of insecurity both for the tenants and their property. Over 50 % of the tenants surveyed were children yet the site has no designated play areas. The whole open space within the complex has no boundaries to limit or restrict movement of children and it has consequently become a huge play area. This could mean intrusion into private space of households without children for instance. There is no attempt to integrate the diversity of social groups e.g. children, seniors and so on. The view of the typical open space and front of buildings (Figure 3.6 and 3.7) condition is so large that there is no

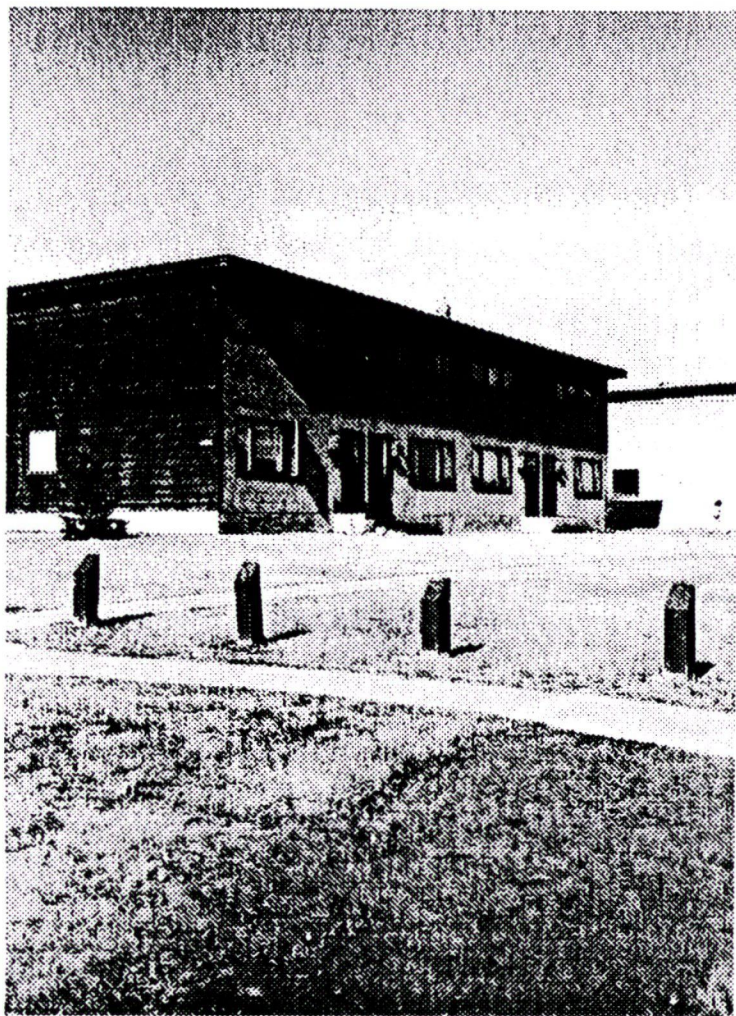


Figure 3.6. Typical view of building condition; front of building.

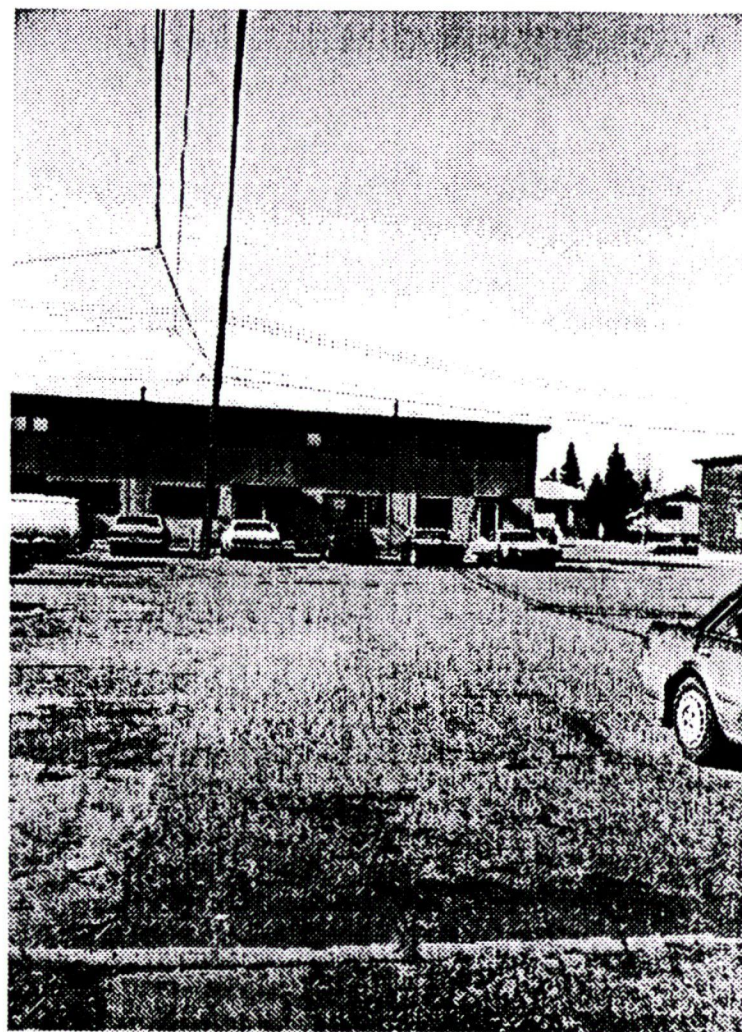


Figure 3.7. Typical view of building condition; back of building.

respect for the private space of each occupant. The view of the parking lot and back of building condition (Figure 3.7) promotes visual blight.

There are two entrances for each unit, one in the front and one in the rear. The similarity of front and rear building facades and entrances makes it difficult to tell back from front. The closeness of each unit door to the next poses serious problems in terms of privacy and lack of transitional space. Furthermore, there is a serious problem of lack of protection from weather. Some windows as well as doors are not double sealed for cold conditions. Some occupants resort to spending their own resources to provide protection and to provide some measure of comfort for their families. One can hardly say therefore that the living conditions offered by the dwelling unit is suitable and adequate. In most cases families are not adequately accommodated especially because some families cannot afford to improve conditions on their own.

No machine washer or dryer facilities are provided. Some tenants arrange for these facilities on their own. In some units refrigerators are provided by tenants. There is no security system at the main entrance to the building structures and no delineated space or pathways to individual units entrance points. The facade of building structures is made up of concrete block walls.

To assess if the space required for each family's needs was adequate, the interview questionnaire was used (see appendix 1 for interview questionnaire). Most respondents answered positively. Also, from observation, the space provided within the dwelling unit seemed fairly adequate. The survey revealed average occupation of a dwelling per person at 4.3 persons per unit in three bedrooms and 3.3 persons per unit for two bedrooms. The resident management had, in an informal interview complained about tenant subleasing and overcrowding. No cases of overcrowding were identified, either during the process of the survey or from observation. The problem of inadequacy did not lie in space requirements but in the poor design of the building structure and the immediate environment.

PROFILE OF TENANTS SURVEYED

This section looks into some observations pertaining to the social environment within the housing project. The interview questionnaire was also used to analyse the social context in the complex. This is to recognize the fact that goals of a housing project cannot be limited to the physical outlook of shelter only. The social environment also needs to be addressed. For example, the immediate environment can be designed to encourage social interaction among tenants of all ages through the use of court yards. The socio-economic aspects of the living environment examined in this section

include the resident profile, management and maintenance, rental rates and terms of tenancy.

The interview questionnaire was further used to reflect on the type of residents who live at FLH. However, it is important to note that the total number of people living in the households surveyed was 161. Of these, 121 tenants (75.5 percent) lived in three bedroom apartments and 24.8 percent were occupying two bedroom apartments. Of the units surveyed 28 were three bedrooms and only 12 were two bedrooms. Of the 161 occupants whose households were surveyed, 81 (50.3 percent of the sample) were children.

Results of the interview questionnaire were very informative in that the data collected refuted some assumptions by the resident manager and the community workers, concerning the social and economic status of tenants living in the project. Quite a substantial number of the residents (26 percent) had lived within the Forest Lawn community before moving into FLH and were therefore familiar with the area. In fact, most of them expressed liking for the neighbourhood. The remainder were new residents in both the area (Forest Lawn) and immigrants mostly from Third World countries specifically Central/South American countries, East Asian countries and very few from Poland.

The survey revealed that of the 40 households interviewed 27

(67 percent) were actually low-income and working residents. Only 22.5 percent were welfare recipients and 4 percent were either IUC recipients or retirees.

With the interview questionnaire and through observation the following types of households could be said to be noticeable at FLH:

- older families;
- young families;
- single families - with low income;
- old and new immigrant families; either from east Asia or Latin America (of the interviewed households only one, came from East Europe);
- young working couples; and
- elderly persons with a family living at home (some retirees)

This is a heterogeneous group of tenants. This has some important implications for both the management process and the physical design in that the specific needs of all these groups have to be taken into consideration to allow for varying needs.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Findings are summarized in Figure 3.9. Eighty eight percent of the households surveyed expressed total dissatisfaction

with the level of maintenance of their units and common space. At least 70 percent of the surveyed families had more than three significant maintenance problems within the apartment. Only 12 percent felt maintenance was 'okay'. The latter still felt the maintenance process was not really satisfactory but felt nonetheless better than the rest of the respondents. These respondents lived in some apartments that had just been renovated.

At least 67.5 percent of the units were experiencing unsuitable conditions like leakages in the basements and toilets; windows and doors were broken in some cases; walls not painted; lack of privacy and lack of uniformity in maintenance of the living environment. The rest of the units were still experiencing bad conditions, but were comparably better.

The rental system seems to aggravate the problems of management in that rents in the FLH currently range between \$350 and \$500 per month. Nine of the two bedroom units had rents of \$351- \$400 per month and the rents of the other seven were between \$451- \$500 per month (almost the same amount as units elsewhere in the city). Fifteen of the three bedroom were \$401 - \$450 per month and eight units had rents of \$500 per month. The more expensive ones were recently renovated. In other words renovation lead to increasing rents over a period of time and older residents

whose apartments had not been renovated were paying less rents than new residents.

Therefore, because of different levels of renovation there seems to be no uniformity in terms of the rental system. Longer term residents (two years and more) are paying less than \$400 per month for their apartments whereas newer residents are paying more than \$500. The justification for this is that there has been renovation in those more expensive apartments due mostly to irresponsible tenants who almost trashed the apartments in some cases. Most residents feel they cannot afford the increasing rent especially given the living conditions. The situation pertaining to tenancy turnover in the complex can be summarized in the following table:

YEARS	#OF PEOPLE	PERCENTAGE
0 - 1	9	22.5
2 - 3	14	35
4 - 5	10	25
5 and over	7	17.5
TOTAL	40	100

Figure 3.8. : Occupancy

Figure 3.8 shows that quite a significant number of tenants, 42.5 percent, have lived in the project for at least three years. One tenant commented to the researcher that when they first moved into the project, rent was only \$75 per month. Most tenants (80%) had seen no change at all in the living conditions within the complex. The results of the survey show that despite some residents' negative perceptions and some design and management problems, there is a fair degree of stability in terms of turnover.

Most of the information analysed in this study can be summarised in the following form:

OCCUPATION	working 67.5%	welfare 22.5%	other 10%		100
RENT	\$351 - 400 27.5%	\$401 - 450 47.5%	\$451 - 500 25%		100
TENANCY	over 3 years 42.5%	two year 35%	one year 22.5%		100
MAINTENANCE	very poor 70%	poor 18%	okay 12%		100
DWELLING UNIT	small 0	adequate 85%	too big 0	no response 15%	100
COLLECTIVE SPACE	day care 12%	garden area 16%	play area 32%	no response 40%	100
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	members 0	non-member 85%	no response 15%		100
INTEREST IN PROJECT	rent 47.5%	17 Av 12.5%	Forest Lawn area 26%	no response 14%	100
THINGS LIKE LEAST	maintenance. 60%	lack of privacy 30%	not good for kids 17.5 %		107

Most of the questions posed by the interviewer were geared towards investigating the FLH tenants' level of satisfaction with the residences. A very subjective approach was used. Questions relating to changes the tenants would like to see, space requirements, community integration, both the complex and the Forest Lawn area generally, and the positive and negative aspects of the housing complex were designed to reveal satisfaction with the living and social environment from the tenant perspective. Most negatives indicated high levels of discontent. Because a weighting system was not included in this study, emphasis was placed on the descriptive nature of responses.

Figure 3.9. Summary of Descriptive Data

According to these findings, the number one problem affecting FLH is lack of maintenance resulting from improper management. The poor physical condition of the development is quite obvious. Both the owner and management have been unable to provide a positive living environment. The position adopted in this study emphasizes the fact that local management and ownership could be key to a successful and innovative low-cost project.

The overall impression was that the dwelling unit provided temporary accommodation to most tenants. Given alternative conditions, social and economic, most tenants would move. This was indicative of the fact that the tenants had limited choice of accommodation. The following chapters (4-5) examine alternative ways and means of changing the living environment despite the financial limitations confronting the tenants and the owners.

PROJECT EVALUATION

This evaluation has two main objectives:

- to examine strengths and weaknesses of the FLH social housing project, including physical design, management and maintenance; and
- to determine if there are any opportunities involving the tenants in the operation of the project

Evaluation criteria employed in the review of the FLH

project centred on maintenance, occupancy cycle, security, privacy and overall assessment of the physical and social environment.

First, maintenance of the environment could be encouraged by improving the physical appearance and efficient utilization of space around the townhouses. This criterion has been used to determine if utilization of ground space does take into consideration the forms of social interaction within the complex. For example, if the space areas have been functionally delineated for play, parking, privacy for each unit to facilitate maintenance and operation of the project. In other words, assessment of the immediate environment is linked to the sensitivity in the design of the physical layout to social needs of households including:

- segregation of space to foster a sense of security by developing pathways and therefore allowing residents to be able to identify strangers from within their houses;
- sensitivity to social needs, for example, play area, communes or garden areas; and
- cultural considerations as an important factor in the management of social housing. Although low-income residents share similar characteristics e.g. income and housing environment, the manager has to recognise that residents are individuals with different

values, beliefs, cultures and attitudes.

Secondly, the dwelling units both inside and outside must be well maintained and designed to cater for individual needs of each household. This is to help examine the space needs of the residents within the dwelling unit and how they are met.

In summary this entailed assessing:

- adequate space within the dwelling unit determined by the number of people in each room; and
- the level of privacy (i.e. two persons per bedroom) between members of the family especially different sexes and ages.

The occupancy cycle does determine the design and operation of the administrative system within a housing project. There are three stages in the occupancy cycle, i.e. application for a unit, tenancy and termination of tenancy. This criteria has been used to assess FLH because its success as a low income project does rely on whether at each of the stages of occupancy there are routine procedures that are followed and whether these are consistent for all occupants. For example, at the application stage there has to be eligibility requirements related to income, suitability requirements related to employment or welfare status and family stability as well as tenant history (housekeeping, vandalism, late payment of rent and so on). At tenancy stage a condition report helps both the tenant and the management to assess the condition

of the unit and the system of management e.g. collection of rent, use of appliances, information on fire safety and so on. Moving out should also be by arrangement between the manager and the tenant. this involves further inspection of the unit.

Security is the most basic need within the project. It can also be an emotional issue. Fear of crime, for instance, can create a sense of insecurity for both the property and personal safety of the resident. This is very important for the success of a housing project especially because the potential for security problems increases with poor design. Well lighted and clearly defined areas for private and public use help people recognise a potentially harmful situation. Privacy, on the other hand allows each unit occupant to feel safe within the unit and the complex. For example, having a small partition between two units allows the occupant to see who is within their premises and at the same time to feel free to organize the private space according to their particular needs. These criteria have been applied as a basic need to all housing projects and to assess if FLH can meet these and other needs within the premises.

The above criteria can be expanded to include affordability, suitability and design of each unit. All these criteria are

essential to a successful operation of a very low-income housing project. Some issues, e.g. security and privacy, are the very basic needs that a living environment can offer to the tenant. As indicated earlier, failure to meet such needs can lead to emotional conflicts.

EVALUATION OF THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Density within the units was used as a measure of suitability. The resident managers stated that overcrowding and subleasing was one of the major problems within the complex. Observation and the survey results revealed that mostly families with an average of two to three children occupied the three bedroom units. Two bedroom units averaged 3.3 persons per unit and consisted of families with two children. There was no reflection of overcrowded circumstances. Most of the households living in the project had children. Of the 161 people whose households were surveyed, 81 were children.

Most tenant dissatisfaction was directed towards the management system. There seems to be a general lack of communication between the resident manager and the tenants. The situation is such that there is a dire need for this line of communication but the managers are in a rather awkward position. They can do very little to bring about improvements

either in the dwelling structure or the immediate environment. The project is being managed by crisis. No one seems to know what the future has in store for this project.

In a number of instances concerns were raised about the fact that the conditions were below safety standards set by the City of Calgary. In two occasions the fire inspectors were called in to assess and one inspector commented that the tenants should get together and take the owner to task because conditions were below safety required standards.

As mentioned above, occupancy is an important ingredient in the successful operation of a housing project. As shown in Figure 3.8 there is some degree of tenant stability in the FLH project. Some 42.2 percent of the tenants have lived here for more than three years. The project has provided a home to 42.2 percent of the residents in the complex for more than three years.

However there seems to be a lot of disorganisation in terms of the occupancy cycle. Occupants do not fill out a form of conditions of tenancy. This means that there is no verification of information by the managers on each occupant. There is no suitability criteria for applicants. The manager seems content to get the units filled. Regulations as outlined by the resident manager (conversation with resident managers,

March, 1991) are quite insufficient to ensure that there is a selection criteria to be met. The moving stage is the most disrupting. Most tenants have in the past deserted the units, leaving behind trails of destruction of property within the units.

There is no set code of conduct within the premises and therefore no set system of management and maintenance. As long as the tenant has the rent for the month they are welcome to stay. This has led to misunderstanding between the management and tenants. For example, most tenants would bring in pets which would be a nuisance to neighbours and to management itself. The result is that some tenants would leave four weeks later, leaving the unit in a miserable condition. The management has incurred varying expenses in renovations after each unit is vacated.

Overall lack of privacy within the complex is evident of the fact that this project cannot adequately meet the needs of the tenants. The major problem affecting privacy lies with both the design of the built environment and the layout. The space from one unit to the next does not give each occupant some form of private space or 'transitional' space. There is no partition between units. This limits the level of privacy not only between families but also between tenants of different ages. The large open space in the front of each unit (see

figures 3.6 and 3.7) neither offers delineations to allow a comfortable social environment, nor does it give each family a yard immediately in front of their unit or some form of semi private space. This renders both the living and social environment unsafe at the least since there are no boundaries.

There are no security measures taken by property owners or management at the entrance of the complex or at individual unit entrance points. This housing complex could continue to deteriorate well into the future if no measures are taken to provide security even in the short run. The resident management, in an informal interview, did raise the concern over the rate of crime within the complex. There is no security for both tenants and their property. The tenants do not feel secure allowing their children out of sight e.g. to play in the nearby park. Of the surveyed tenants, 17.5 percent felt that FLH did not provide good living conditions for children (see summary of findings, Fig. 3.9). The lack of security can be linked to both the poor physical conditions of the complex and the lack of protective measures to enhance security within the complex.

The townhouses are becoming unaffordable even though there has been little change in the physical and social conditions. Rent has been increasing even with minimal maintenance and renovation of some units. There are such

notable disparities in rental rates that only those units that have not been renovated in a long time are still within affordable rates (\$350 for a three bedroom unit). The renovated ones are up at \$550/month. However, when tenants were asked what they liked most about living in the FLH, 47.5 percent felt that they stayed because of cheaper rent. Tenants did express concern over increasing rental rates. To some tenants accommodation at FLH therefore, is currently not affordable. Rent is rising steadily and more tenants will not be able to afford it in the near future.

From observation and tenant interviews, overall impression of the social and physical conditions at FLH can be summarized in the following categories:

CRITERION	CONDITION	POINT OF EMPHASIS	ASSESSMENT
Rent Affordability	Social	Is the rent affordable	+ -
Shelter	Social	Is the shelter adequate	+
Privacy	Social	Does the dwelling unit allow a reasonable level of privacy	-
Security	Social	Does the complex provide a sense of security for its occupants	-
Townhouse Design - interior space - exterior space - transitional space	Physical	Are the designs sensitive to the user needs	+ - -
Climate control	Physical	Does the design suit the weather	-
Security	Physical	Does the Design offer people and goods safety	-

Fig.3.10. Overall Assessment of Living and Social Conditions.(Positive + & Negative -)

The above assessment was based on the interview questionnaire, observations made during the site visits together with interviews with the resident managers.

EVALUATION OF OWNERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Operation of this project could be more successful if based entirely on serving the low income population of GFL. The fact that the owner has wanted to sell the property for many years, creates uncertainties not only for the tenants but also for the future of the project itself. One can conclude that there is seemingly no pride in the ownership, management and operation of the project. This, it seems, is enough reason to render the project a failure.

The copy of the legal land title updated to 07/06/90 shows the date of inception as 06/08/59 and the owner being Forest Lawn Holdings Ltd. of Edmonton. According to this document CMHC provided the initial mortgage amount. Since then a number of organizations e.g. CCB Mortgage Investment Corporation seem to have provided financial backing to the project (\$3,800,000 in 1984). The Provincial Treasurer of Alberta provided more funding (an original amount of \$188,125 in 1985). It seems also that a number of offers to buy the property did not materialize. The first offer for sale in 1988, generated an offer for purchase in 1989. An

interview with a second source revealed that the owner has been engaged in a bitter battle over sale of the property against the CMHC. It is likely that the property had restrictive covenants in the initial arrangement or terms of sale. CMHC seems set against sale of the property, and the matter is at the moment in the Supreme Court of Alberta.

CONCLUSION

The questionnaire interview revealed that there is a feeling of community identity among some tenants. It further revealed that though tenants came from different parts of the city and had different backgrounds (quite a few immigrants) most had been residents of the Forest Lawn area prior to moving into the complex. Of the sample survey 26 percent expressed familiarity with the area, grew up in the area and had friends in the community. The tenants have common concerns e.g. lack of proper maintenance, which they can effectively address as a group. The advantage is that it could give the tenants a unanimous voice within the community and could lead to a positive response especially since the area has housing agencies, community associations etc.

The tenants were generally dissatisfied with the project and especially with its management and maintenance. The latter remains the main source of discontent. The description of living conditions ranged from 'slummy' to 'appalling'. There

is need for change in the living conditions, with private space and security being some of the pressing issues.

With such low standards of living it is rather obvious that there is need for change or a re-establishment of the concept of low-income housing in the project. The following chapter ventures into suggested changes given the conditions at FLH. Some of the literature reviewed has been used to reflect on how improvements in design, a living environment can lead to improved social conditions within a housing project (Cooper and Sarkissian, 1986; Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986; McKee, 1979; Gehl, 1987).

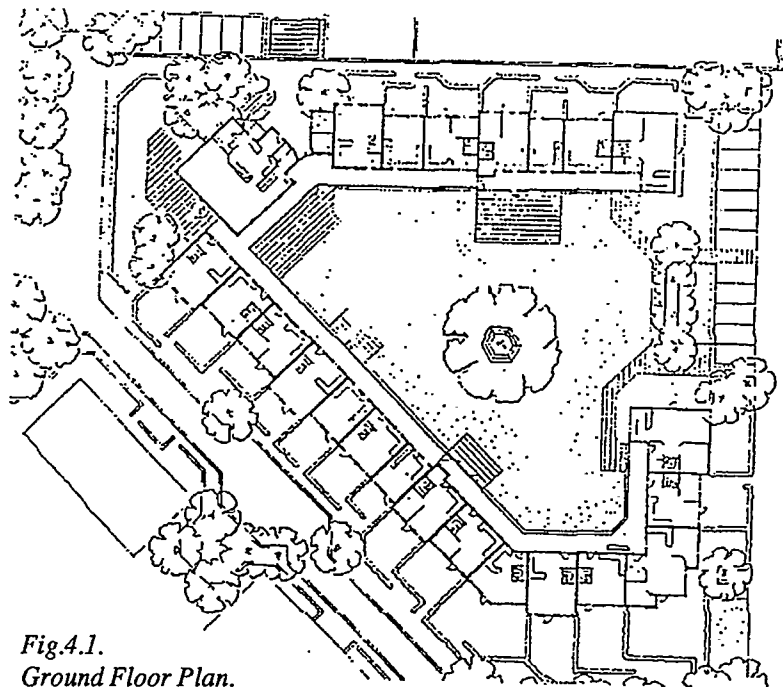


Fig.4.1.
Ground Floor Plan.
Scale 1: 600
Each Unit has a semi-private outdoor garden area

CHAPTER 4: PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FLH

This chapter proposes fundamental changes to the FLH project by developing a concept for future conversion, redevelopment and redesign of the complex. These suggestions follow not only from the literature and case scenarios reviewed, but also from observation of the site and the way the tenants live. The concept developed sets broad tenets for rehabilitation assuming that in the long term FLH will be physically and functionally almost obsolete (chapter 3). The broad range of actions that are suggested do not undermine the need for greatly expanded support from the institutional framework at the local level and from the community, hence the underlying contention is an approach based on Community Development (CD) principles. Moreover this study highlights and proposes that additional research is needed to determine more fully the effectiveness and feasibility of such a concept. Also, a construction feasibility study is required to determine the feasibility of the various proposed building types together with landscaping for the site. Considering that the concept plan proposed and outlined in this research project is quite far reaching, the later part of this chapter outlines a transitional plan as a vehicle for mediating current management and maintenance problems

The main objective of these changes, is to create a sense of place and to fully exploit the potential of a low-income project to complement and blend with the surrounding housing

types as a place of spatial order and identity. A design that conforms to the social norms of “home”, most literature shows, encourages the residents of subsidized housing to feel a sense of place and identify with their housing environment.

The proposed changes to the current layout are based on the need to change the layout of the site to suit the social and economic needs of the tenants. The existing site layout and physical appearance is easily identifiable as a very low income housing complex. First, a change in physical appearance could afford the tenants some pride and interest in participating in the general upkeep of the dwelling units and the immediate environment. Secondly, to encourage co-operation and co-ordination of different low-income to very low income housing authorities, programs and or agencies.

This could be geared towards enhancing contact between the tenants, housing agencies and managers. That could mean a shift from a “client / manager” relationship to that of a partnership between housing authorities, third sector and non-profit agencies on one hand and the tenants on the other.

THE PROPOSED CONCEPT

The proposed concept, being new and experimental, might have many problems. Among other things, such uncertainties as costs of construction, lack of co-ordination between the different parties (agencies, managers and tenants) responsible for management and maintenance, social costs like displacement of tenants and so on can lead to a failure in the project. However such an endeavor could be viable given determination and commitment from below.

FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

The most fundamental theme of this concept is to mix building types in the form of clustered, mixed and high density housing. This is meant to promote communal support together with different tenant systems. These improvements, renovations and redevelopment are aimed at not just the physical quality but the quality of life within the complex. Alternative management forms and ownership structures have to be ascertained before implementation of these changes. These mini-projects reflect the assumption that the development process would be in stages or phases. Furthermore, these changes are assumed to be long term developments depending on the economic and social support offered by the housing agencies, planning structures, government and community. It is felt that these changes

could improve co-ordination between different housing agencies, tenants and management within the area of very-low income housing.

For each proposed mini-project within the complex there is a close interrelationship between design and social aspects. A possible design for co-operative housing would include townhouse style units, with private entrances. This would enhance not only privacy and identity, but also a sense of surveillance and security together with self reliance in the upkeep of the surrounding environment. The transitional or special purpose housing, on the other hand, could have connecting doors, common playrooms and living rooms, a community center and day care center to allow the occupants to share facilities and to socialize freely. The layout and design in the development of the site could be such that it creates a hierarchy of open spaces from private to semi-private spaces. This could help promote a community of residents by enhancing an atmosphere of social gathering both at the formal and informal level.

A system of pathways from one housing type to another could lead to a clear direction of movement from one point to another and also an informal leisurely movement could be created. Design can allow formal and informal socialization within the complex thereby helping create a sense of

community.

The following sketch depicts the proposed conceptual image which the FLH site would assume within the outlined proposed improvements;

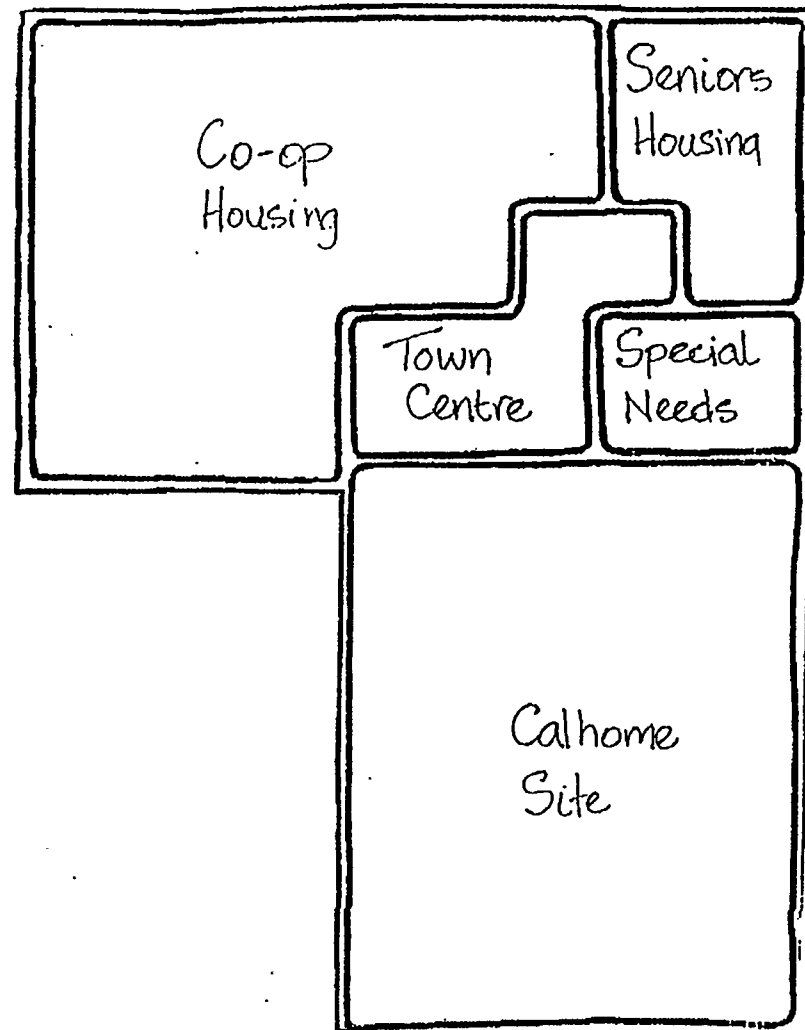


Figure 4.2. : A Conceptual Image of FLH Site with Improvements

The underlying assumption is the notion of not only mixing housing types, but also different systems of tenure involving housing authorities and agencies working together to ensure proper delivery of low-income services in the area. This, it is assumed, would attempt to establish separate “mini-neighbourhoods” with a certain measure of landscaping to determine open space, courts or parking areas as spatial dividers. Further suggestions revolve around subdividing this site into small identifiable clusters of higher but acceptable density.

The nature of the proposed design would determine the livability and further development of the site. The projects outlined in Fig.4.1 are proposed for the site.

HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

As indicated in Chapter 3, most housing agencies e.g. CHA, have, in the past emphasized delivery of housing for senior citizens. It was also pointed out that there is a need to shift the policy to accommodate other social groups, e.g. single adults. However, this study suggests that FLH could accommodate senior housing because housing the elderly can be seen as a means for providing long term financial security for the project. The elderly are frequently subsidized and therefore can further provide a very stable tenancy. Furthermore, vacancy rates in the Interfaith Housing, one of

the major housing facilities for seniors in GFL, is extremely low (Gordon Faith, personal communication, March, 1991).

The multi-storey design for the elderly seems to be the standard form of housing for senior citizens in Canada. A study conducted by Ken McDowell on “Senior Citizen Satisfaction With Their High-Rise Buildings” in Saskatchewan revealed quite high levels of satisfaction (70%) with the design of their environment including the social aspects of their environment. Reasons investigated in the study included appearance of the buildings, laundry facilities, feeling of being part of the neighborhood, other residents and so on. A sensitive design can assure the tenants a greater measure of identity. Overall space requirements and special design attention has to be thoroughly investigated before implementation of such a project. A design such as the elderly complex demands, can potentially provide the much needed sense of place in the Forest Lawn area if accommodated in FLH.

To create a livable, affordable home environment for the seniors, a mid-rise, five storey structure in the North East side of the site is proposed. This location is meant to ensure orientation towards the sun and less impact on other housing developments in terms of shadow. Also, this location and the site itself is nearer to transportation and seventeenth avenue

which has all the shopping facilities. The GAO report in Cleveland looked into the issue of older people living in public housing. This study concludes that the elderly living in public housing were much more likely to receive multiple services from formal agencies than older people who rent or own their homes. Because there are quite a number of housing agencies in the GFL area, support for elderly housing in Forest Lawn could be sought from the already existing administrative and housing agencies.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

As indicated in Chapter 3, GFL has never had the privilege of established housing cooperatives. This proposed cooperative would be the first of its kind in GFL. How successful such a venture could be, also remains to be seen. Co-operative housing offers an alternative to home ownership or rental tenancy. It features collective ownership under a legal corporation. A co-operative is eligible for financial assistance through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. As a non-profit entity it assures its members a secure tenancy. Co-operatives can be a form of multiple housing e.g. rowhouses, townhouses or apartments. The housing is collectively owned and managed by members. Because this form of tenure has an element of ownership for the members, it provides more security for them.

Another proposed design for medium density housing is comprised of ground level units with enclosed yards. In the form of townhouses, this plan may become a cost-effective and energy efficient alternative. The design could incorporate a court yard which would serve as a focal point for daily activities. This park like area would be visible from each unit. The private entry to each unit would permit light and fresh air to circulate. This building form could house families with small children and is suitable as a low-cost ownership option for single parent and lower income families. The proposed design can be varied to meet site and market requirements. Whatever the variations, this design has the potential for private spaces, front yards and a 'sense of place'. The outdoor square, plantings and structures in illustrative examples in Figure 4.2. further enhances the homey atmosphere that a design can establish within a social housing setting.

The implementation process together with the tenant participation element required in a co-operative housing has been elaborated in the latter part of this chapter.

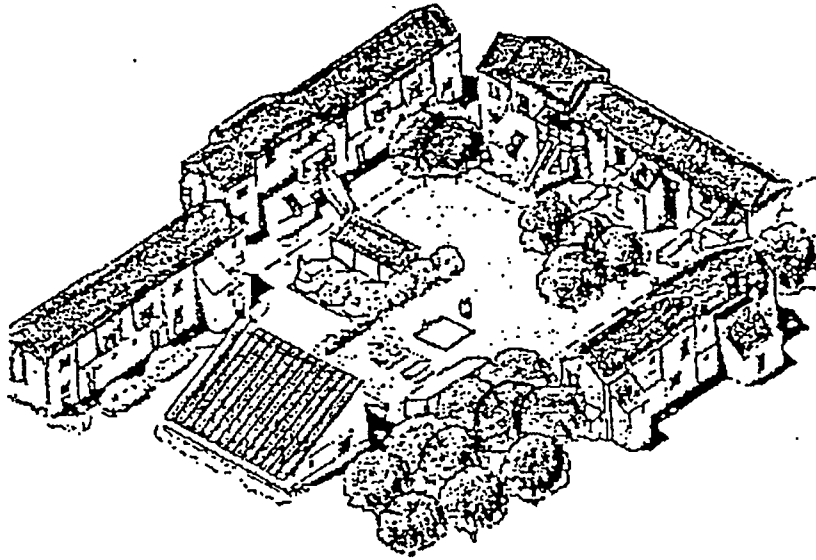
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Ahrentzen, 1989, defines transitional housing developments as "...those where single parent families stay for a temporary but set period of time,...". This proposed housing project is

meant to provide shelter for young mothers or for single parent families who would rather share facilities and live temporarily until they can find other more suitable accommodation. Of the families living at FLH currently, few intended for the project to be their permanent home. Even though this accommodation has become home for most families for over two years, there still are families that stay only for shorter periods of time. Also, for some housing Authorities, e.g. the Calhome Properties, housing battered women or women who are single mothers has become a priority. Having this kind of housing in a new development can be of benefit to the community.

The overall design theme for this complex is 'shared facilities' embraced in the concept, 'cohousing'. Common facilities together with a more collective and supportive life-style could be accommodated through the design of the community center, kitchen, dining room, laundry facilities and adult interaction area, including design features such as connecting doors and common playrooms. Through cooperation and pooling resources residents enjoy facilities they could not otherwise afford. The fact that GFL has one of the highest number of single headed families in the city should encourage housing agencies to invest time and resources to develop gender sensitive housing that could respond to these new family needs.

The facilities would further enhance shared child care. This project could be extended to provide for an on-site day care center which could be of value to the Forest Lawn area. Access to day care, does not mean just a center located on the site, but also has administrative and financial implications. Before implementation, more research could be performed relating to lobbying local agencies to provide financial assistance for other on site day care facilities. This facility could accommodate a community center for management and resident association offices.



*Figure 4.3: Housing organized around communal spaces
(outdoor square and community house)*

Source: Arkitekt :Jegnestun Vand Kunsten..SBI Report.

RENTAL HOUSING

One half of the site is proposed as a mixed type of rental housing established, owned and managed according to Calhome principles. The proposed plan could involve a mix of rental housing ranging from five storey walk up apartments and fourplexes to stacked housing within a large high density development. The scale could be such that it does not overpower the surrounding housing types together with the existing housing in the neighborhood. Each subunit within the scheme would have some element of uniqueness to create a sense of place and identity.

This is supposed to be an economically workable concept. Because of the demand of rental housing in this neighborhood, a Calhome type of housing development should be viable. The phasing of this project should not result in the unnecessary displacement of tenants. The turnover in the blocks could facilitate the building process and help avoid inconveniences for the residents.

The existing RM-4 height designation minimizes overshadowing of any building structure within the site or on adjacent residential areas. It restricts all three storey developments from exceeding nine meters at any eaveline. It is suggested that any future development in the site could be

benefited by these regulations. A three storey rental complex on site, blended with a one storey row of town houses at a certain strategic distance can assure a rich combination of tenant forms and housing types.

The existing medium density residential classification (RM-4) can be modified to allow for increased density measures at a maximum of 148 units per hectare. This project site at the moment houses 210 units only, on a 6.6 hectare area. There is a potential for a substantial increase in the number of units.

SITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

RM-4 regulations provide for both side and rear yards for semi-private spaces. On the other hand, landscaping requirements do not allow for individual private outdoor amenity space but permit the planning of “..all plant materials.. of species capable of healthy growth in Calgary”. Growth of these could serve both the most needed aesthetic value and further give functional definition to space.

The design considerations could include the planning of open spaces, e.g. determination of which area will be held in common ownership or used as public space. This could be coupled with delineation of recreational amenities, a communal garden area, fences, special features and landscaping. A proper balance between amenities, common

spaces and the number of units could be struck. For instance, the existing plan of the site is overwhelmed by a large open and undefined space in the front of each block of dwelling units.

Of the interviewed townhouse residents, more than half were children (see chapter 3). For a community with such a high proportion of children it should be mandatory to designate areas for recreation. An open field and play area can serve this community of residents both physically and socially. It can physically link together the pathway system and the private and semi-private spaces. It can further provide a powerful framework within which to structure preserved natural vegetation, sitting area and other amenity and non residential features. The town center, in Figure 4.1. was conceptualized as a sort of square for social gathering. Strategically located in the middle it could go a long way in further enhancing non-residential uses such as;

- a day care center managed by, for instance, a private owner or the community itself. While promoting social contact, a day care center could help not only the FLH residents but could contribute to a sense of community for the Greater Forest Lawn community and could be a strong focus for community involvement;
- an ad hoc car maintenance facility could further encourage opportunity to meet informally or casually over an oil change

for instance; and

- a green oasis of plantings in the form of trees, plants or flowers arranged in a small park could further extend the concept of social gathering for children and families in the town center.

Ideas, such as the following diagram outlines, is illustrative of how the sitting areas, plantings and structures for wind and shade within the center could be developed. This space would allow residents from the four proposed projects to gather together and socialize. Such ideas could be imported into FLH as a simple measure to allow a socially interactive community of tenants within the complex.

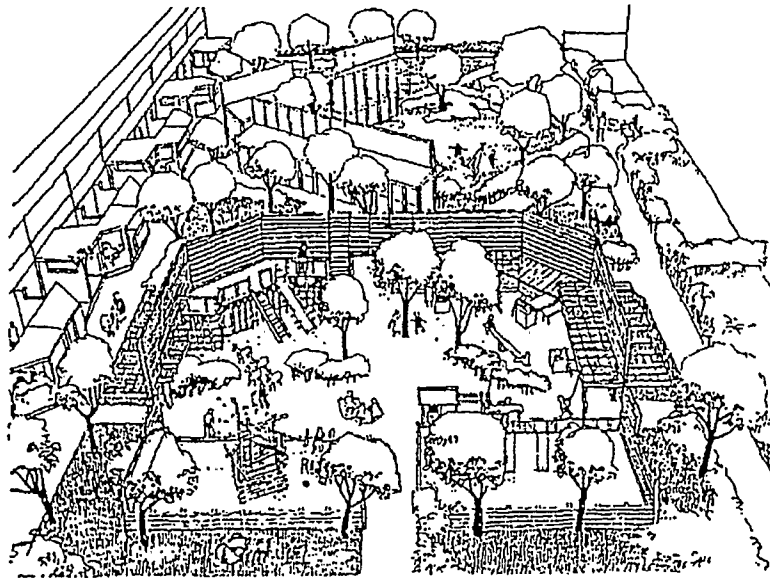


Figure 4.4. : sitting areas, plantings and structures for wind and shade. Source: Fojab Arkitekt kontor AB. Kroksback, Malmo, Sweden.

As shown in Chapter 3, lack of a private entry to each townhouse is one of the causes of reduced privacy and security in the complex. The attempt by most residents to build, at their own expense, a fence around their units (Chapter 4) shows the dire need for delineation of space and creation of boundaries between private and public space. The concept of “green-space entry” (McKee, 1979) is relevant for the type of housing suggested in the complex. A private entry space could be created to buffer each unit from the pathway traffic. As well, a greenbelt entry or fencing and gates can be used to separate the units. A combination of different designs can assure each owner a considerable degree of privacy. Gates between yards and communal areas can further assure private space (Engstrom, 1980; Cooper, 1985; Cooper, Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986; Gehl, 1987). This variety in designs envisaged, such as yards together with court yards, should accommodate a variety of opportunities and needs e.g. the elderly tenants may not wish to socialize.

There are presently no walkways within the FLH with no organized connection between one group of townhouses and the other. The path system in a housing cluster could serve both the efficient direct movement from point A to point B and informal, leisurely movement (Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986). A design of pathways that is sensitive to access for rubbish disposal, car parking, children’s areas and any other

shared spaces is much needed in FLH. Proper definition of pathways can further help to enhance a sense of surveillance and assist as a crime deterrent.

REGENERATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR FLH

It is important to note that other alternatives for change at FLH were looked into. Also, since the proposed concept demands that the existing structures be demolished, an alternative of gradual regeneration of the existing units and incorporation of other housing units to the existing structures, is suggested. This could help reduce the social costs of replacement for those tenants who cannot afford, not only to participate in new construction but also, those who are financially unable to stay in a new, redesigned and redeveloped FLH. Short or long term rehabilitation of the existing structures while developing infill housing could prove to be financially and socially viable. Since the majority of the building structures are structurally sound and are still being renovated, detailed rehabilitation plans could incorporate new housing in the underutilized space.

In the case of Regent Court an old public housing project in Regina, Saskatchewan, (CMHC, 1987), even though some units were demolished, new family housing units similar in form to the existing units were incorporated to the project. The same type of rehabilitation could be applicable to FLH.

This does not mean to undermine the fact that the FLH site does have functional layout problems. These units could be demolished and could be replaced with new ones. A detailed and carefully designed rehabilitation plan for infill housing could leave a large part of these units for improvement.

It is suggested therefore that a plan such as the Regeneration of Regent Court be adopted for the proposed alternative for FLH. Such a regeneration process could further incorporate a strong tenant participation process not only to the construction process but also to the development of appropriate regeneration proposals. The proposed community development concept could be still applicable and could help develop a powerful sense of involvement and purpose with an impact during the regeneration process and well after the improvements are implemented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A report done by the Alberta Department of Housing (McKellar Architects, 1985) suggests that conversions may vary significantly from community to community within Alberta and that "Actual costs will be a function of the level of construction activity within a given community at the time the conversion is initiated". Costs can also vary according to the type of materials used.

It is quite evident that significant changes as proposed in this study cannot come without some substantial financial and social costs. History of such projects as Regent Court F.P. (Regina) which were built under section 40 of the National Housing Act provides for a justification for a project like FLH. The assumption of shared capital and operating costs by different levels of governments e.g. 75 per cent and 25 per cent could be extended for the good of FLH. Already the project exists as a public private partnership scheme between the private owner and CMHC. At the same time this project has been sustained partly from provincial funding. The CMHC may enter into partnership with the private owner, or with the City of Calgary as was the case in other projects like Regent Court and the debt was amortized over 50 years. Costs for conversion, redevelopment and redesign could be provided by a partnership on an agreed cost sharing formula including management and operation costs. The suggested local housing agencies like the Calhome Properties could oversee or manage on behalf of the Federal, Provincial and or Municipal partnership.

The economic viability of any of the four project scenarios, together with the actual costs, is linked to the support given by housing organizations involved with social housing in GFL. For example, rent levels that can be achieved, and participation by the tenants and the community. It is further

proposed that a thorough financial study and economic analysis be conducted before implementation.

AFFORDABILITY

It is important to note that this study does not undermine the fact that the whole process of conversion, redesign and redevelopment for FLH might suffer due to the lack of funding. In the same manner, it is an important fact, that due to major changes in the physical structures and the layout of the site including landscaping, affordability of the units will be affected especially for very low income families. Some tenants may not be able to afford these new units due to the reality of their financial position. Therefore, an implementation policy must ensure from the onset that;

- planning policies are developed to enable that at least a certain percentage (25 percent) of the new units remains affordable, for instance, by subsidies and ensuring that residents can be considered according to, for example, 'core need' or assessment of need according to e.g. family size, income and so on;
- a predetermined procedure is set up to monitor affordability from initial stages; and
- identifying opportunities for sweat equity and setting up special reserve funds in the likes of the "Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund " in Richmond (CMHC, 1990).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS

The proposed project changes could be viable as a community based venture backed by community and social planners together with housing agencies that serve social or public housing needs in the area. The underlying theme in the operation, management and maintenance of such a project would be "self-help" and "self-reliance" as a possible way of lowering costs for both the tenants and the owners. But because a project of such magnitude has never been tried and also because one cannot ascertain that tenants could be interested in committing their time or labour into such a project, there also has to be room left for other strategies. Also more research is warranted into the viability of such a venture. Such questions as whether housing authorities and agencies could enforce a coordinated effort to ensure the success of such a venture, have to be further developed.

Most of the tenants at FLH were home makers who indicated willingness in participating in future collective action for improvement of the complex. The concept of self-reliance permits the tenants and co-operative owners a voice in the management and maintenance of the housing scheme. Most importantly, self reliance would encourage the residents to identify with and feel ownership of their living environment.

Participation by future tenants and owners could begin early

in the planning stage. The phasing and formulation of this project should be based on initiatives by the existing community organizations in the Greater Forest Lawn area. Existing tenants could be encouraged to participate in the planning and design of the new neighborhood.

It is assumed that improvement of the dwellings and collective maintenance of open spaces should be the responsibility of the tenants and co-operative owners thereby reducing overall costs. If modification and personalization is encouraged through lease arrangements, an incremental and significant long term opportunity to upgrade the project could be created.

Management and maintenance associations could be formed, comprised of residents and members from various housing projects together with representatives of housing agencies and community organizations to ensure a progressive administrative process. This hierarchy should be in such a manner that all resident representative committees are responsible to a Board of Directors which, in turn, is drawn from representative owners and agencies.

This suggested community participation process could be based on such community development and planning concepts as education and training on one hand and organization and leadership on the other.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The most important force behind the success of such schemes lies in the involvement of the residents in the community planning process so as to give them an opportunity to express themselves and to develop a stake in their community. This cannot take place without the crucial aspect of education. Education can help develop awareness in the planning and community development process including the implementation of policies affecting communities and residents alike.

Training programs have to be designed in a manner that establishes and strengthens community action. Such programs coupled with particular skills and qualifications that residents already possess can perform a significant role in promoting education for self management. This can be considered as an integral part of the mobilization of local communities for the implementation of self-help project improvements.

Professor Oberlander (1987) defines education for community action as, "...a process of participatory, bottom-up, people-based and needs oriented project planning....." and has "...two principal phases: Training through action, and Action through training..." It has to be community based and has to respond to the needs of the community by presenting a coherent programme for training human settlement workers

or 'barefoot planners' to achieve a substantial urban environment through and with the local community. Recruitment and mobilization of readily available local manpower, thereby initiating the essential process of self development and economic growth, should further be a priority.

With education being built into the planning process, this should ensure constant communication between the organizational and planning structures at the top. At the same time, through learning and education, the residents should be engaged in learning by doing. This structure illustrates the co-ordination of activities between the planning structures at the top with the residents at the education and developmental phase. The emphasis on training and education ought to ensure orientation of planning towards community action in the context of community responsibility and individual participation. The budgetary commitment towards training to support the residents has to be within the local governmental institutions. The GFL community has a ramified network of community organizations. The need lies in rearranging priorities within and between organizations both governmental and non-profit.

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

GFL is one community in the city with a larger network of

organizations and agencies than many other communities. Mobilization of the community could be a challenge for all these agencies and local organizations to work with the community on matters directly affecting the residents. Encouraging, developing and training local leadership within the community should be a major community development task. Some studies conducted in the GFL area show very low levels of participation in community organizations including community associations.

There seems to be an isolated effort on the part of individual organizations to organize the community. The suggested organizational levels could be reorganized to pool resources and further to work at an integrated action level.

At the local level, community associations and community councils, planning organizations, special service government agencies, and educational/aid agencies may have different missions but they have the same goals, i.e. to deliver certain services within the GFL area for the good of the community.

It seems evident that there is need for coordination of associations with similar interests. Housing organizations could work together with educational agencies to enhance education and development goals within the community. Some of the methods could vary from pooling resources by

grouping same interests and programs together; personal contact to enhance collective confidence. Problems that can be associated with this kind of organizational operation can be, amongst other things, insufficient funding, lack of cooperation between organizations and antagonisms between agencies.

All these organizations can provide proper channels for community leadership. It is a question of advocacy to organize the residents and make them aware of the existence of these and try to curb the obstacles of dealing with bureaucracy. Furthermore, the difficulty lies in gaining public attention at some levels especially at the federal level. Again, awareness becomes tied up with 'barefoot training' of community workers who can best help mobilize the community. Ultimate decisions should lie with the community and residents' participation at all stages is essential.

It is suggested that service providers and agencies be the ones who adopt a policy by which residents could begin to contribute to the creation of an improved living environment in FLH. The main strength of a project like this lies in the fact that agencies like the CMHC do have a stake in the project. It is therefore assumed that CMHC could win the foreclosure on the sale of the property and be the new sole owner.

SHORT TERM PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

This research project does acknowledge the fact that most of the proposals are long term and too broad to be implemented in the immediate future. Also these changes are so major as to demand decisions that could lead to demolition of some units and replacing them with new structures. This section briefly looks into intermediary measures that could be utilized for the benefit of the present tenancy. Of major importance is the need to upgrade and improve the units and their immediate environment in response to the fast deteriorating living environment. These intermediary changes would be aimed at achieving maintenance economies, yet still provide a shelter environment which would promote a sense of pride for tenants.

Project evaluation (Chapter 3) showed that some tenants have demonstrated capability in providing fencing to the front of their units to bring about some measure of privacy. Such issues could be exploited to encourage the tenants to participate in improving their units.

The people who live in subsidized housing have many other problems than just living on very low incomes. They may see themselves as social failures without any hope for access to social and political opportunity. It is important that the management of this type of housing develops an understanding

of the residents e.g. who they are and the difficulties they are faced with. The manager's relationship with residents could hinge on how well they understand each other, e.g. do they understand the manager's limited scope of operation, limitation of resources and subsequent level of resources? Furthermore, the management has to understand the different needs of the varying social groups within the complex e.g. the elderly couples, the youth, single mothers and single persons.

As indicated in the previous chapters, a good management policy is crucial for the success of a subsidized housing project. In rental housing for example, resulting crime and vandalism can be attributed to management policies rather than to composition of the tenant population or even the location of the development. Ways and means could be sought to open communication between the resident management and the tenants. For example, it is of utmost importance that the tenants be kept aware of the future of the project as well as the financial problems related to maintenance and management. In the mean time, it is the contention of this research study that there is a potential for participatory management and maintenance at FLH. It is mainly the lack of communication between the tenant on one side and the managers and owners on the other, that impede the co-operative work and potential for tenants' participation in realizing structural changes at FLH. This would further

enhance identity for the tenants in that the tenants could feel part of the solution rather than just posing a problem for the owners and the managers.

The most important areas to be addressed in the FLH project include the fact that:

- it is important for the residents to know the maintenance and repair policies in the project. Most of the problems could be avoided in FLH, for instance, if maintenance and replacements could be integrated into the overall management process. A system of including in the occupancy cycle a planned maintenance policy could keep the tenants aware of what is expected of them thereby opening opportunities for 'preventive' maintenance;

- residents should be constantly kept aware of the project objectives and the importance of their role in its operation, management and maintenance. As a starting point, the following information should be readily available to both current and potential tenants;

- location of project
- size of project and the number of units within
- the design of townhouses
- terms of tenure
- financing of the project and its operating mortgage terms;
- cost of repairs and maintenance;

- need for clear rules and regulations governing the operation of the project could be extended to include the idea of a resident manual which could be distributed to all residents. Simple language could be used together with illustrations to exhibit use of public outdoor spaces, suggestions on interior maintenance, possible furniture arrangements and overall what the management expects of the residents and in turn what the residents could expect of the management;

- as outlined in Chapter 3 occupancy cycle is determinant of the design and operation of the project. Irrespective of the size of the project, its location and the type of tenant occupancy cycle determines the process mostly followed, the standardized forms used to obtain information on individual tenants including the routine tasks to be completed. This process has to be utilized fully to strike a good relationship between the management and the tenant;

- personalization is suggested as one way of enhancing pride and belonging for residents. Tenants might be given at least something in the dwelling unit to make them feel a touch of uniqueness. Renters could be allowed to improve their dwelling units. Something that Ruddick refers to as "... a reflection of me/my family...". This could stimulate personal expression and further promote pride in tenant participation since it could encourage neighbor co-operation (swapping ideas, tools and some do-it-yourself home improvements); and

- because rents have been increasing due to the pressing need for renovation, tenants who have the capability to improve their living environment could be encouraged to do so with little cost to the owner and the managing company. At the same time the rental rates could remain at affordable levels

This type of self reliance and do-it your-self measures should be seen as resourcefulness instead of a threat by the owner and the present managers. Hand tools and skills could be grouped to maximize self management of individual units. Compensation for any improvements done could be given at the termination of the tenancy.

The majority of types of unit improvements that could be done through self-help management could include measures such as:

- interior of units could be improved by repainting; replacement of plumbing fixtures as required; patching, repairing or even replacement of doors, frames and so on. Management could provide individual tenants with some fixtures instead of hiring a maintenance man or company; and

- exterior of units could be improved to allow the tenants some measure of privacy.

For example, fencing rear and front yards was recently prohibited. The resident manager allowed some tenants to pitch up fencing at their own expense. The response was quite positive. Set backs of 2' were agreed on. Hardly a week later the tenants were approached with an order from the owner that the fences should be pulled down. This was a clear demonstration of the tenants' response to the need for private space and their resourcefulness. Issues like these could be exploited to create a base for self help and to further strengthen mechanisms essential to mobilize the tenants to improve their living environment.

At the moment, the tenants do not feel they are part of the community of Forest Lawn. One of the questions asked was meant to ascertain if the tenants belonged or even knew of the community association. Not one of the interviewed residents belonged to the community association. A voluntary community or tenant organization could be promoted so as to promote both awareness and communication between the managers and the tenants. This could further encourage contact with other community organizations in the neighborhood. Most tenants did indicate that they would participate in any future organization geared towards improvement of the complex.

CONCLUSION

The project suggested is seen as having two crucial elements to help effect a sense of place on the living environment in FLH and to empower the residents. First the design is seen as a means to bring about order and a balance between the living environment and the social activities that take place within the very low income housing project. It helps to achieve a measure of privacy, security and most importantly identity and pride for the residents. Design by itself is not seen in a deterministic way hence it is coupled with community development to mobilize the community to give support and life to the physical environment. Through management and maintenance based on self reliance principles, it is hoped that the heavy financial and decision making burden will be borne from below. This is a community based project and therefore the community takes full responsibility for its planning and implementation. Support from community associations, government and private organizations, housing agencies and any other interested parties are expected to give full support in administrative, legal and economic terms.

CHAPTER 5: PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

To conclude the study, an implementation plan for the changes suggested in chapter four is proposed. This includes an administrative framework within which such changes could occur. Six principal organisational phases that are comprised of initial planning, pre-project planning, project design, planning for implementation, implementation and evaluation, including the monitoring stage are proposed. Each stage of implementation is related to the main actors, roles and interrelationships between the actors. In this way, an integrated administrative framework is suggested as a basis for community development. The assumption here is that it is quite obvious that no one organization or program can assume total financial, social or political responsibility for such a venture.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The organizations suggested in terms of initiating the implementation and development process at each stage are already involved in either delivery of housing or other social services in the area.

PLANNING

This stage would involve preliminary arrangements by an umbrella organization through which community action could be co-ordinated. It is assumed that a networking of organizations would facilitate this process. The Greater Forest Lawn Initiative Council (GFLIC), has taken a stance in doing community development by involving some members of the community in CD training sessions. This organization also has looked into the situation of housing problems in the area, including FLH. These progressive steps could be reinforced to initiate a process whereby communication lines could be opened up between such organizations as the CMHC, Calhome Properties and the current and prospective tenants. CMHC, for example, could work together with GFLIC in encouraging establishment of a tenant association to open lines of communication between the tenants and the new housing owner. "Vision workshops" could be organized to increase the awareness of current and future tenants about the future of the project.

This process could be fully exploited and used as the basis for building communication and encouraging new partnerships between communities and government agencies. This should also offer opportunities for other housing agencies to adjust or expand their approach from that of provider to that of adviser and facilitator. Once a basis for thrust has been struck

between organizations and the community some of the more ambitious ideas of community development could be offered for discussion and brain-storming at community meetings.

The main objectives of this stage of planning include:

- identification of issues, including tenant and community concerns, to enable a clear set of priorities;
- identification of key people, housing agencies and any other organizations who are not only interested in building a co-operative housing structure, but are also affected by specific problems and may be willing to be involved in action to address the housing issues in FLH;
- informing the decision making process regarding what issues should be addressed and identify interested groups; and
- identification and evaluation of existing and potential strengths within the community at Forest Lawn and FLH in order to assess the area's capacity for development.

This should engage the following resources:

HUMAN- organizational capacity, agencies. planning and

municipal structures; FLH tenants, community associations, ethnic associations, church groups, existing services;

PHYSICAL- the site could be further analyzed to take full inventory of existing capacity in terms of land resources and the built structures; and

FINANCIAL - CMHC together with other housing agencies could be involved at different levels or phases of planning.

Technical expertise could be involved in assessing resource management especially physical and financial resources. The municipal level could be involved at this stage to provide expertise. The community should be well able to handle the project alone once it has been launched. Ultimate decision making should rest solely with the community. Resident participation at all stages is the cornerstone of the project suggested.

PRE-PROJECT PLANNING

Once the information has been compiled and community leaders and tenant interests have been identified, short term cost effective measures could be attempted. A tenant association could be formed at this stage and this could lead to the formation of sub-committees. This could serve as a basis from which the community of tenants, including future

tenants, could proceed to do their own organization. Also, individual members engaged in one way or another in this structure by a process of education and community development could be consulted. Training workshops for community leaders and 'promoters' could be organized.

Most Third World literature refers to this process as “..systematic applied methodology for popular education and it links community work with training in the use of tools of popular communication. This could also be a useful tool to inform the community of the technical, educational and organizational elements of co-operative community participation. This could be considered as a sort of pilot project on community development education in order to:

- encourage familiarity between the residents and housing agencies, as well as public officials and residents;
- set up and pretest organizational structures and group dynamics on small scale actions e.g. setting up workshops; and to
- obtain quick positive results; e.g. commitment from all parties, and heighten the interest of residents.

Educational sessions could take the form of:

- specific training programs;

- economic and community development seminars open to the community at large; and
- free administration consultation - offering assistance to resident association and sub-committees on setting up a co-operative scheme.

PROJECT DESIGN

At this time the ground should be set for an assessment of how ready the situation is to launch an initiative for physical improvements. Awareness should be at such a height that collective input into initial phasing of the project and the possible design of buildings should be possible. This stage should be more of a response to community pressure. Planning, housing and community agencies should be responsible for co-ordinating the administrative, legal, financial and institutional structure of each project. Project design can be aimed at, amongst other things:

- organizing the private sector to contribute expertise in designing the project (contribution of technical expertise);
- organizing participatory workshops and inviting resident ideas on the phasing of the project;
- identifying models that could work for this community;
- identifying design ideas from other situations in

other parts of Canada and elsewhere;

- assessing cost effective means of setting up the project and alternative sources of funding;
- examining resident potential for contribution of 'sweat equity' and fundraising; and
- assessing other means of fundraising like community festivals.

This stage of development in setting up the project would be determined to a large extent by the success in the other two stages. The backbone of such a strategy lies squarely on the level of participation and pressure put to bear on interested parties by the residents themselves. Networking between organizations could help reduce the legal, administrative and financial obstacles.

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This stage would involve scheduling and co-ordination of work activities. By this time it should be quite evident which mini project could take precedence over the others.

Objectives of this phase could include:

- maximization of existing resources within and from outside the community;
- appeal to outside agencies for more funding;
- sketching out the design of the project and its phases;

- provision of hands on training for the current and future residents in management and maintenance skills;
- further encouragement of the development of a sense of community;
- development of a process of moving residents to one side of the complex, e.g. the east side so that no residents are displaced and to lessen disruption; and
- inviting support of private industry.

IMPLEMENTATION

The focus of this stage would be the implementation of whichever project was chosen as a priority by the community.

HOUSING TYPE	MANAGEMENT OR OWNERSHIP	PHASE
Elderly	CMHC	1
Co-operative Housing	Members + CMHC	11
Rental Housing	Calhome Properties	111
Transitional housing	CHA	1V

Figure 5.1. Proposed Project Implementation Phases

The implementation process must include amongst other things:

- setting up a time plan with target dates for each phase, including development of a step by step plan with long and short term goals;
- keeping up momentum and ensuring that the plan is adapted to changing circumstances whilst the goal is always kept in sight;
- optimizing the action plan and ensuring that flexibility is crucial to accommodate new ideas from residents and other interested parties together with support from influential people and organizations (public and private);
- exploring opportunities for positive publicity; and
- delegation of responsibilities.

An umbrella committee could be established, comprised of members from the resident association, committees of different housing types, housing agencies, community and service organizations. This committee would look into the overall co-ordination and networking between these organizations. There should be less rigidity in the process and a firm communication network, to liaise between all parties concerned, established.

USE AND MAINTENANCE

With the structures being intact, it is at this stage that resident self reliance is at play. Residents are fully engaged in the management and maintenance of the different clusters of housing. This is also the stage for evaluation and monitoring so as to:

- enable the team to be accountable to those supplying the resources and also to be accountable to the residents; and
- encourage constant assessment of progress and learn from mistakes.

The evaluation process should coincide with initial project planning. Whatever information is collected from the preliminary planning stage to the implementation stage should be used to evaluate the project. Even though overall socio-economic impacts of the project might take a long time to be felt, short term positive and negative impacts should be constantly evaluated and monitored.

Evaluation will involve at all stages of development:

- why certain goals were chosen and their effectiveness;
- what problems were encountered;
- positive and negative socio-economic impacts;
- whether the resources were wisely employed; and
- what the future has for the project.

CONCLUSION

This research project started off with a brief discussion of specific social housing policy issues. Specific low-income housing policies were documented so as to stress the potential socio-economic benefits of social housing. This was followed by a brief documentation of the main actors involved in delivering and financing social housing in the City of Calgary and in the GFL area. In order to establish a context for further investigation, this research project advanced an assessment of a very low-income housing project, the Forest Lawn Holdings. With the knowledge derived from an analysis of the living environment within the case study, and the more general information on the social housing situation in the City of Calgary, it is hoped that some areas could be singled out where there is need for change.

The main problem of housing at GFL has been the inability to catch up with not only the rising demand for social housing, but also the changing demographics in the city. For example, there has been a rise in the number of single "hard to house" adults and single headed families. A fair share of social housing complexes still housed specifically, seniors and married couples in 1990. These problems are aggravated by the inadequacy of government subsidies and cutbacks.

On the other hand, the study explored some measures that could be carried out at both the community development and physical design levels so as to affect some practical changes.

In other words, this project has also been a study of the creation of a livable environment within a social housing scheme by examining the relationship between a sense of community and improvement of the physical environment. It is suggested that any meaningful changes, roles and interrelationships must be geared towards the achievement of something closer to the ideal proposed in Chapter 4. There is acknowledgement of the fact that improvement of the physical environment can contribute to the creation of a sense of place and a sense of community by:

- providing increasing levels of privacy thereby encouraging tolerance among neighbors within the establishment;
- provision of public and semi-public spaces thereby offering opportunities for repeated informal meetings amongst neighbours. Organization of open spaces can encourage social contact at different levels within the complex;
- provision of places for formal meetings to encourage resident involvement in self-reliance schemes within the project; and
- provision of open spaces at different levels helps strengthen physical identity and uniqueness within the complex (Kawano, 1987).

In many economically depressed communities self-help and self-reliance have helped to house hundreds of homeless

people especially in developing countries. This does not mean that self-help is meant for people who lack resources and live in developing countries only. Self reliance can be of great value as an element of community development in any community, be it middle class or low-income; individual families or groups of households working together. Its success draws heavily from the level of commitment in its implementation and general commitment to community development. Through the recommended approach of integration of community development ideals into a more social oriented design of the physical environment, it is hoped that a more livable environment can be achieved for a very low income group. The community could undertake development with the initial help and injection of capital from government, thus establishing a network of communication between government and the community. It is hoped that as time goes on the project can become self reliant and be less dependant on government funding. Involvement of the community in the development of a new plan and design, it is hoped, will result in cost savings with time.

Figure 5.2.: Summary of Proposed Action

Figure 5.2.: Summary of Proposed Action

Stage of Development	OBJECTIVES	Resources
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of issues and concerns - evaluation of potential strengths and weaknesses - identification of interest groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizational - community associations, ethnic associations, church groups, existing services - housing agencies

2. Pre-project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting up organizational structures - encourage familiarity between residents, housing agencies and interested organizations - set up specific training programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local planning agencies and community organizations - commitment of community groups
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3. Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organize support of private industry - organize participatory workshops to invite design ideas from community - solicit technical support from consulting companies and municipal government - explore sweat equity for future operation of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the FLH site as a pilot project - tenants at FLH
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4. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sketch out design of project and phases - hands on training for community and tenants - involve existing organizations in implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funding from government sources - fundraising by community
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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The following questions are a basis for a study, conducted by a student at the University of Calgary, in the ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN FACULTY (Planning Program). The objective of the study is to look into issues regarding the living environment in a low-income housing project. Your responses are confidential, you do not have to give your name. Participation in this survey will not result in displacement in any way. The interview will take only twenty minutes of your time. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How many bedrooms are there here? 2..... 3.....

2. How much is the rent

3. What is the maximum amount of rent you could afford to pay ?

4. How many years have you lived in the Forest Lawn Holdings Complex?

0 - 1.....

3 - 5.....

1 - 3.....

5 and over.....

5. Do you intend to stay here longer ? How long?

Years or months.....

0 - 4.....

3 - 5.....

1 - 3.....

uncertain.....

6. What do you like most about living here?

7. What do you like the least ?

8. Is everything in a good working condition?

(very poor poor not bad good very good)

basement

floors

water taps

bathroom

walls

plumbing

9. Have there been any changes in any of these conditions since you moved in ?

10. What changes would you have liked to see ?

11. Is the space adequate for your family needs ?

12. What would you do to change it ?

13. Do you have any parking problems ?

14. Please comment further if you like

15. How many people live in this apartment ?

16. How many are working ?

17. How many children live here ?

Where do they play ?

Where do they go to school ?

18. Do you know your neighbours well ? Yes... No...

19. Do residents in the complex help each other ?

20. If you were offered space for collective use within the complex, Which of the following would you choose -

(please number them 1, 2,3, and 4 - in order of priority)

play area.....

day care...

Laundry facility...

garden area...

21. Do you like living in the Forest Lawn area? Yes ... No..

22. Are there any particular reasons you like the area.?

23. Are you a member of the Community Association? Yes.. No..

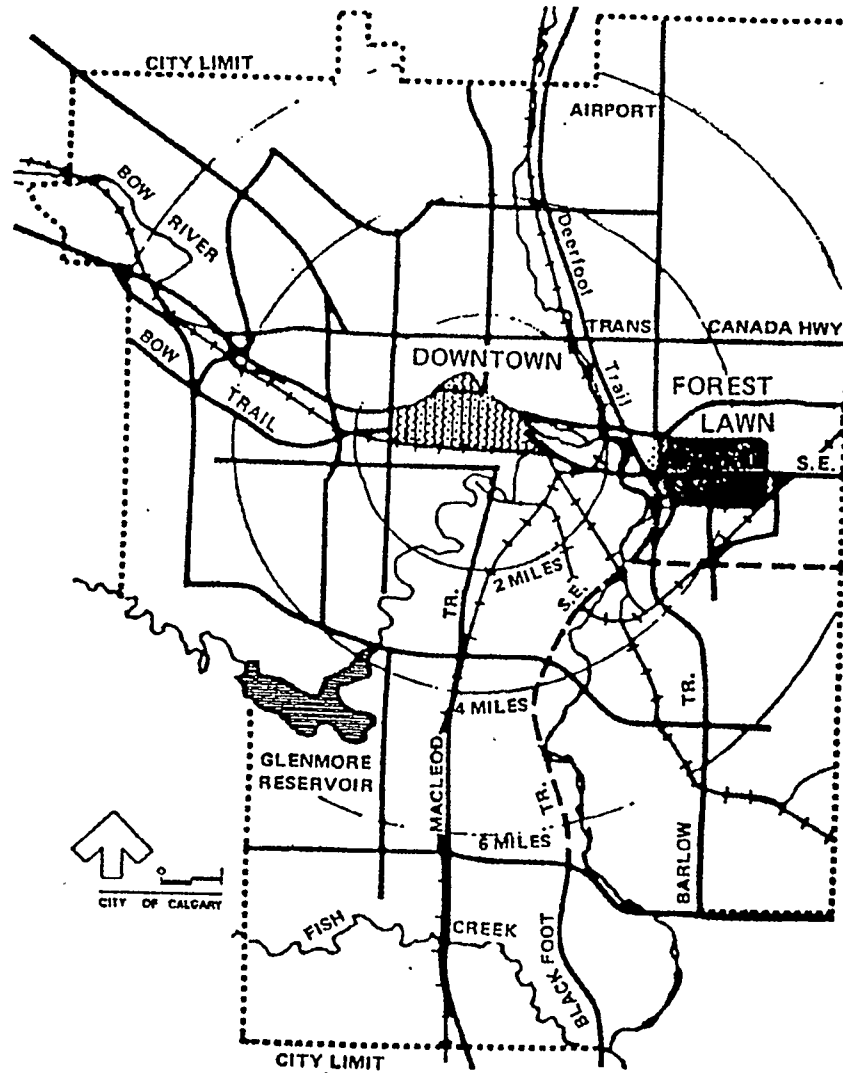
24. WHY ?

25. Have you ever participated in a survey like this before ?

26. Would you be interested in joining a group of residents interested in improving the living environment in the Forest Lawn Holdings ? Yes?No?.....

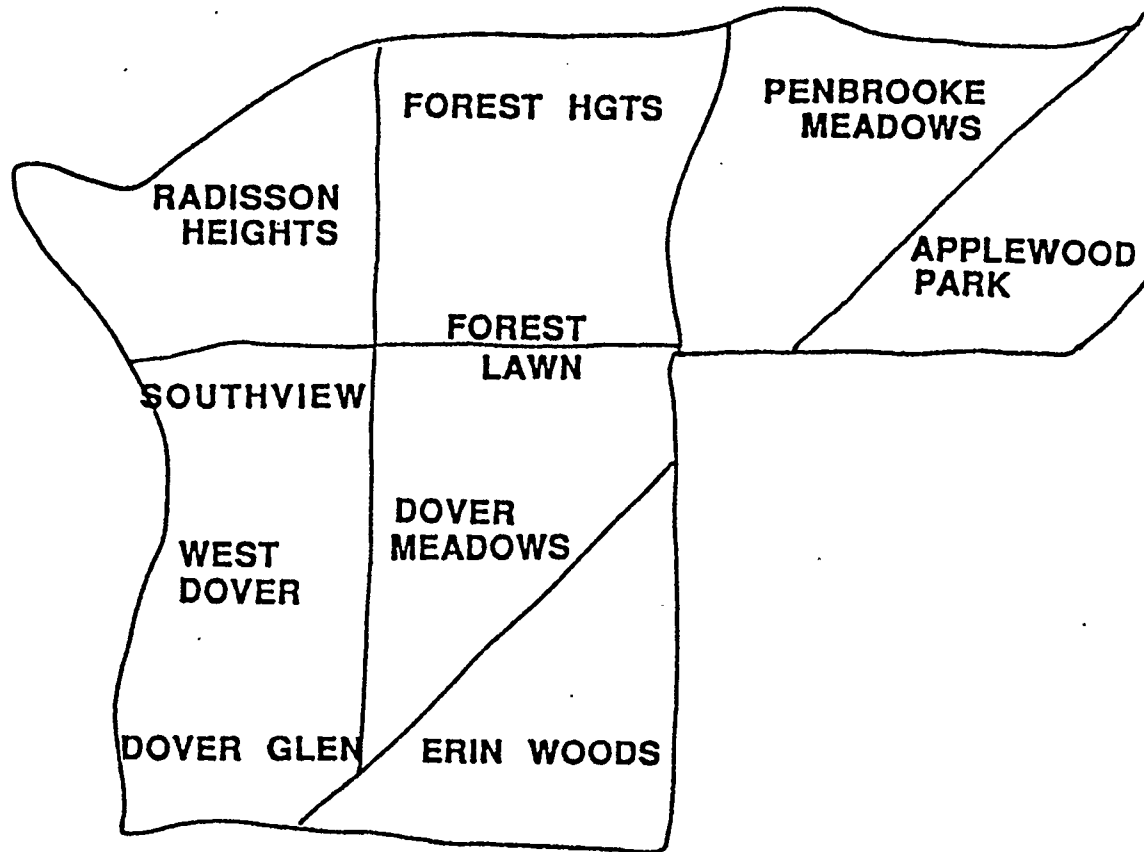
27. WHY?.....

APPENDIX 2



Locational Map for GFL

APPENDIX 3



GFL COMMUNITIES.

APPENDIX 4

TOTAL POPULATION

COMMUNITY DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION
Albert Park/Rad. Hgts	6,230
Dover	11,100
Erin Woods	3,240
Forest Heights	7,215
Forest Lawn	7,600
Penbrooke Meadows	9,135
Southview	2,295

GREATER FOREST LAWN FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

COMMUNITY DISTRICT	TOTAL FAMILIES	HUSBAND/WIFE FAMILIES (with children)	LONE PARENT FAMILIES
Albert Pk/Rad.Hgts	1,630	785	335
Dover	2,825	1,755	465
Erin Woods	895	570	145
Forest Heights	1,860	1,080	330
Forest Lawn	2,010	975	440
Penbrooke Meadows	2,390	1,490	450
Southview	645	310	105

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