

Affordable Housing and Neighbourhood Improvement

- The rehabilitation of heritage buildings improves neighbourhoods
- The adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is a way to create affordable housing and a diversity of housing options etc.

Canadian cities recognize the potential of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in implementing affordable housing

There are many compelling examples of affordable housing strategies implemented through the adaptive reuse of industrial and commercial heritage buildings.

In Montreal, Quebec:

• The Angus Shops, a former Canadian Pacific Railway maintenance complex, has been converted into 2,500 housing units, with 60% rented at market price and 40% dedicated to co-operative, non-profit, and public housing arrangements. (Canada Mortgage and

and public housing arrangements. (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Redeveloping Sites, 2006)

A municipality may meet its goals of heritage conservation and increased affordable housing supply simultaneously. What's more, using existing buildings can lower construction costs by approximately 5% to10%. (CMHC: Converting Non-Residential Buildings, 2006)

In Toronto, Ontario:

 The historic Coxwell Stables, a former horse stable complex used by Toronto Public Works, was redeveloped into 11 affordable housing units managed by the City of Toronto's non-profit housing organization. The redevelopment cost per unit was less than \$100,000, well below the maximum unit price level set by the province for affordable housing. (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Converting Non-Residential Buildings, 2006)

In Kitchener, Ontario:

A surplus one-storey Hydro Commission substation was converted into a two-storey house for a low-income household. The total cost of rehabilitation and construction, including purchasing the land and building, came to just over \$100,000. The converted house was subsequently rented for \$725/month, almost \$200/month less than the market rent for a comparable dwelling in the city. (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Converting Non-Residential Buildings, 2006)

In Vancouver, British Columbia:

Mole Hill, the City's only intact Victorian and Edwardian neighbourhood, has been transformed by a
community revitalization project that saw the restoration of 27 heritage houses to include 170 units of
affordable housing, along with the creation of a childcare centre, community gardens, and a hospice
serving people with HIV/AIDS. (CivicInfo BC, 2004)

Heritage conservation improves neighbourhood livability

A survey conducted after the rehabilitation of the historic Stanley Theatre in Vancouver, B.C., found that a high percentage of area residents believed there was an improvement or significant improvement in several key neighbourhood quality factors:

•	Cleanliness	28%	76% of residents surveyed said that the
•	Cultural diversity	51%	rehabilitation and re-opening of the
•	Business diversity	56%	Stanley Theatre has had a positive
•	Community activities	32%	impact on the community. (Ryerson
•	Pedestrian traffic increase	69%	University, 2003)

Heritage conservation triggers positive socio-demographic changes

The rehabilitation of the Stanley Theatre brought about major socio-demographic changes to the surrounding area:

- Number of households owning dwellings increased from 17% to 25%
- Occupants with a university degree increased by 24.5%, and now represent 48.4% of the population
- The unemployment rate decreased to 5.5%, while Vancouver's average is 8.6%
- Female labour force participation rate increased from 70.8% to 74.2%, whereas the Vancouver average is 61%
- Total crimes decreased by an average of 26%
- Assaults and major thefts decreased by a greater amount than in the rest of Vancouver
- Restaurants, cafes, and bars increased by 21%
- Cultural establishments increased by 9%

(Ryerson University, 2003)

Resources

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). 2006. Redeveloping and Renovating: Converting Non-Residential Buildings. Found at http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/imhoaf/afhoid/rere/conorebu/index.cfm.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). 2006. Redevelopment and Renovation: Redeveloping Sites. Found at http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/imhoaf/afhoid/rere/resi/index.cfm.

CivicInfo BC. 2004. Heritage Houses Provide Affordable Homes. Found at http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/302n.asp?newsid=1201.

Jones, K. et al. 2003. Beyond Anecdotal Evidence: The Spillover Effects of Investments in Cultural Facilities. Ryerson University.