

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:
MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 'PLANNING FOR CHANGE'
AN EXAMINATION OF BRITISH AND NORTH AMERICAN RESPONSE(S)

by

BRIAN KARASICK

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THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis constitutes an attempt to collate a vast array of ideas, responses, actions, and reactions within the realm of residential development and development standards, relative to issues of 'planning for change' (social-economic-technological-political). It emanates from a growing suspicion that the value of standards within the regulation of residential development is often questionable without due consideration of changing conditions, reflected in the intents/goals of said standards. An examination of the evolution of residential development standards in both Britain and North America indicated a long-standing discrepancy among affected parties as to the ultimate value of regulation; an increasing level of socio-economic diversity and technological sophistication within the recent past serving to make such a consensus even more difficult, if not appearing at times impossible. In further examining the scope of concerns (and subsequent responses) within the realm of residential development regulation, it was discovered that much of the reform within the existing system (and consequently, much of the resultant development pattern) provide limited response to long term concerns, both social and economic; in theory, this being one of the few ready justifica-

tions for the existence of controls. These reforms appear to be largely reactive in nature, most often initiated in response to pressure from immediate crises or problems and often introduced with no long range goal or insight into long term consequences. In response to these concerns, a number of alternative methods for establishing/evaluating residential development standards (and to a large degree, residential design itself) are prescribed, in response to the need to plan for change in a responsible, realistic manner.

"...Without a theory of the built environment, we cannot write its laws. And if we cannot write its laws, we can only design and build in an ad hoc way - we cannot really plan at all."

- John F.C.Turner, "Principles for Housing",
Architectural Design, No.2, 1976, pp.101 -

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This thesis is intended as an exploration into the present system of residential development, set against recent unparalleled social, economic and technological changes (past, present and future) and the subsequent potential for achieving a more positive response, from a planning perspective. The urgency of the issue is compounded by an increasing difficulty on part of governments to adequately respond to said change, coupled with an increasing dissatisfaction with current regulatory reform on the part of both planners and private developers.

Though primarily concerned with the direction of residential development, the thesis will explore the impacts on financial and design related aspects as a reflection of current social, economic, technological and political change. Residential development standards and the resulting regulations which support them, are given a priority as they provide a documentable reflection of changing needs, values and perceptions as applied to housing. Therefore, the evolution of such standards provides a major focus for the study.

At present, it is changing, or rather, uncertain economic conditions, which are emerging as the dominant driving force behind changes in development patterns and development standards in much of the western world, though the social implications resulting from the imposition of these conditions are equally important to consider. This scenario is in sharp contrast to the late 1960's and early 1970's, when social change took on the greater significance. In fact, one may argue that many of the changes brought about during that era, are serving to place greater pressure on the residential environment of the present, notably in the area of 'increased expectations'. In this sense, the net effects of socio-economic change on the residential environment are numerous and complex.

Within the realm of social change, the value of maintaining standards is often questioned relative to residential development. Whether it is from the standpoint of the inability to define what is/should be considered 'substandard' or the basic difficulty in defining appropriate levels relative to changes in human needs, values and perceptions, concern has been prompted to reconsider what are essentially viewed as minimum requirements. Profound changes in the composition of families, households and whole communities in departing from tradition, have served to force reconsideration of minimum standards for residential environments, to the point of questioning the extent to which one 'standard' can be applied and to what degree.

Within the realm of economic change, increased costs of housing related components and services, coupled with a general condition of economic uncertainty, have served to make the cost of meeting minimum standards, in many cases an increasingly expensive endeavor. Given these circumstances, there is a growing tendency to re-examine the costs vs benefits of the standards currently in existence and subsequently reassess the reasons for their continued existence.

From the point of view of governments or regulatory agencies, increasing administrative (including enforcement) costs and the complex requirements involved in adapting often obsolete standards to present (and future) conditions has proved to be increasingly costly; often to a point where action is or has been sought to simplify their administration.

From the point of view of the private developer/builder, the cost in terms of both flexibility and time delay have served to compound the regulatory problem, adding yet another dimension to the mounting pressure for regulatory reform in both Britain and North America. Additional pressure is generated from the significant decay and decline of existing urban infrastructure (notably in the U.S.) often coupled with insufficient resources within local government, to rebuild. In addition, expansion of urban residential development serves to place greater strain on often overloaded existing systems, such as: water, sewer, police,

roads, public transportation etc, to name a few, as well as adding to future replacement/upgrading costs where maintenance is required.

In attempting to comprehend how this situation came to be, one must not underestimate the role that technological changes have played within the realm of housing and lifestyles. Technological change has evidenced itself most prominently in its ability to make life easier for us. In fact, one may concede that technology has incurred (directly or indirectly) radical change in how we live and to a degree, on the entire socio-economic structure of society. However, the results may not always be positive. Though recent advances have served to increase life expectancies, allow access to rapid travel and eliminate numerous menial chores from our lives, just to name a few, such advances have also served to increase our dependencies and expectation for the future. Professionals, such as planners have been left to deal with the consequences, which include rapid obsolescence and the disposal of waste products, often in the form of buildings, neighborhoods or whole towns. Another negative effect has been the increasing tendency to depend on technology to solve problems of an inherently social nature.

In addition, from a planning perspective, the original basis for the creation of residential development standards has changed significantly, since their inception, moving from a primary concern with health and safety, to more sub-

jective issues such as comfort levels and and property value stability. The concern in this area is twofold: Firstly, that standards may have reached beyond the scope of their original (public health) intents, and secondly, that by responding to change mostly in a reactive, rather than proactive manner, standards are unable to redetermine and subsequently realign their specific foci. This situation tends to not only distort the role of planners, but forces one to ultimately question the role of planning in the regulation of residential development.

It is important to distinguish that, though less so in Britain, in many parts of North America, planners and regulators are not one and the same. Thus the term 'planning for change' ought not to be construed as applying exclusively within the realm of planners, as the inherent problems are often beyond the scope of the planning profession, per se.

The thesis will use as case references, the evolution of three national approaches to residential development and its regulation, commenting on a variety of concerns relative to changing response, in each case. It appears likely that many of the problems experienced and currently being experienced in Canada, The United States and Britain are, to some degree, common to most western developed nations, especially given our increasingly fragile world economy. It should be noted that the intent of the study is not to determine which particular approach is better, but to identify a range of

approaches in responding to the concerns previously expressed, re 'planning for change'.

In outlining the range of socio-economic change, the thesis will place particular emphasis on economic change as it affects the ability to respond to social change. This will be highlighted in specific case references, given common concerns with the allocation of resources and the dilemma of having to create more with less becoming more of a necessity than simply a challenge for most everyone, in the recent past.

In addressing problems endemic to the residential environment; specifically development, one must inevitably ask whether our development standards and as a consequence, our standards of living are simply too high to be continued, relative to current (and future) resources; whether development standards themselves are simply inappropriate relative to changing needs, values, and perceptions; or whether we ought to simply adjust our priorities. There is little validity in the argument that obsolescence due to technological change is the problem, given that at present, some of the most readily adaptable housing forms are of pre twentieth century origin. Simply increasing efficiency of use, an obvious technical solution, often fails to address the original problems which created the economic crisis in the first place. Therefore, the main challenge is to determine how to re-orient development and development standards so as to properly address change-related problems and concerns,

without further compounding the problem itself. This is a difficult task, given our uncertain knowledge of the future, coupled with the rapid pace of change over the recent past.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

Three areas of concern to the thesis require some further definition, for the purpose of clarification of objectives: The first being the scope of 'regulation' as pertaining to the study, the second being the various concepts of 'change', as related to specific design/planning response potential and the last being additional clarification of terms revolving around standards.

1.2.1 Scope Of 'Regulation'

Regarding the scope of 'regulation', the study primarily concerns itself with development standards, though it is not possible to discuss this area without involving building and housing codes, public guide instruments, professional standards and insurance requirements. The scope of 'regulation' as applying to housing (Canada) includes the following :

1. BUILDING CODES/STANDARDS-Use and occupancy, design, materials, building services (plumbing, mechanical, electrical), construction safety, residential standards
2. HOUSING CODES/STANDARDS-Health, safety, occupancy, sanitation, flooding
3. DEVELOPMENT CODES/STANDARDS-Building type and use, building bulk and size, lot size, site requirements, amenities, density, zoning

4. PUBLIC GUIDE INSTRUMENTS-Neighborhood improvement, residential redevelopment, renovation and upgrading, community development
5. PROFESSIONAL CODES/STANDARDS-Licensing, registration
6. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS-Public, private¹

It does not appear possible to totally isolate development from planning, management and regulation, given the myriad of steps commonly involved in the development process, regardless of the approval system in place. However, in choosing to regulate development, any authority must make a number of hard value decisions which affect and in many cases, shape the scope of potential development choices/alternatives. Residential development standards may therefore often have a far greater impact on the final appearance of a specific project than the architect/ designer, since most major planning decisions are made in advance of development, anticipating some ideal set of future conditions. Given the ability of regulations to influence the shape of development, it would follow that they ought to be open to examination or appraisal based on their ability to anticipate or accommodate change, as one measure of 'success'. The approach taken by this thesis, is in part, based on such an assumption.

¹ Compiled from: Irving R. Silver and Associates, "The Economic Evaluation of Residential Building Codes: An Exploratory Study"

1.2.2 Concepts of 'Change'

Various concepts of 'change', which affect residential development, require further clarification, primarily as dealing with specific response(s) to changing 'needs, values and perceptions'. These concepts are, for the most part, universal in application, a quality which subsequently will allow for a degree of inter-cultural comparison without being burdened by typical variation in forms of government structure or specific legal systems in operation.

Though applying primarily at the level of individual house design, the implications of these variables (from a planning perspective) affect not only the internal arrangement of individual dwellings, but the arrangement of the external environment within which each dwelling is situated.

What appears obvious is that there must be some point at which a balance between permanence, comfort, cost efficiency and changeability must be struck, as a general policy. A tent is perhaps the most cost effective and versatile housing form available, however it is not a reasonable response in our western culture, given the available resources and past investment. A recent CMHC (Canada) publication outlines some of the concepts associated with 'change' as they relate to one another and to housing in general:

- EXTENDABLE-Allowing for growth and addition
- ADAPTABLE-Allowing for change in use
- FLEXIBLE-Allowing for physical change

- RESPONSIVE-Changing according to needs such as participation in design, extension, adaptation
- MOBILE-Allowing for change in location
- CONVERTABLE-Allowing for physical and functional change
- UPGRADABLE-Allowing for physical change especially in qualitative properties involving replacements and additions.
- RESILIENT-Same as responsive but with an emphasis on recuperative capacity during critical situations
- MULTI USE/MULTI PURPOSE-Allowing for more than one use
- PORTABLE-Easily carried and moved²

1.2.3 Other Terms Related To 'Standards'

A number of terms, primarily as relating to housing quality, require further clarification. This need arises as soon as one attempts to set standards or define what will or will not meet said standards. There appears to be little consensus as to what constitutes any particular housing 'standard', from both a purely physical or a psychological perspective, as the following definitions indicate:

"The term 'standard' applies to any definite requirement established by authority--but this fact does not necessarily mean that the standard is fair, reasonable, or equitable, or is based on sound scientific knowledge.

- 'Criterion' designates a means by which anything is evaluated in forming a correct judgment respecting it. Unlike a standard it carries no connotation of authority other than that of fairness and equity, nor does it imply

² Reid Levenson, "Flexibility For Canadian Housing: A State of the Art Review", pp. 33

an ideal condition.

- 'Principle' is a synonym for a fundamental truth. It is a fact, based on sound scientific knowledge.
- 'Decent' means conforming to standards of what is fitting and proper. When this term is used as an adjective with "housing" or "home" e.g., "decent home", "decent house", "decent dwelling unit", it should connote that the home, house or dwelling unit conforms to standards of what is fitting and proper.*
- 'Health' is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.**

* Note: This definition is not succinct, as standards of what is a fitting and proper home, house or dwelling unit have not been promulgated. Minimum conditions of decency in housing pertain not only to the prevention of communicable diseases and the elimination of hazards to safety but also to mental health and social well-being requirements of the occupants.

** Note: This is the definition of "health" as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization."³

1.3 METHODS AND PROBLEMS

This thesis is intended as an exploratory study, rather than a confirmatory one. Therefore, a number of significant methodological considerations are in order. The study is essentially based on cross application of the evolution of housing standards and recent response to changing socio-economic conditions. It should be pointed out that the primary concern in identifying the range of said changes is to

³ Eric W. Mood, "The Development, Objective And Adequacy Of Current Housing Code Standards"

gain some sense of the potential areas of impact. As such this facet of the study is not intended to be comprehensive.

The intent of the thesis is then to apply the two sets of data, ie the scope of both socio-economic change and regulatory response, in order to develop a pattern (or series thereof) to specific responses, from a planning perspective. The final result would therefore be to begin to identify areas of deficiency in the particular methods of response, and follow with a series of recommendations aimed at achieving greater responsiveness relative to the concerns of planning for change.

Throughout the thesis, considerations, involvement and methods relating to planning are included, as a means of keeping the issues in perspective. As a planner involved in housing, it is difficult to distance oneself from development standards, regardless of location, as these standards are, to a degree, synonymous with the values of any particular society. It is for this reason, then, that said standards ought to remain responsive to socio-economic change.

In approaching the area of responsive development and regulatory reform, one must remain cognizant of certain realities which have placed (and likely will continue to place) limitations on the effectiveness of planning for change, in the area of housing regulation/standards. These realities stretch to political, legal, economic and ethical boundaries, including certain difficulties inherent in stan-

dards themselves.⁴

1.3.1 Political Realities

One must not underestimate the impact of politics and the subsequent political climate on the overall effectiveness of planning, relative to not only housing, but development activity in general. This situation, shared in differing degrees by local conditions, presents certain realities which cannot be ignored:

- The length of term of office for politicians, being set at some finite length, often serves to frustrate the ability to deal with long term concerns, from a planning perspective, given that short term results bring in votes.
- Physically lowering the standard of housing, (even if it is only the minimum) by legislation, is often viewed as lowering the standard of living, thus making it a politically dangerous endeavor. Thus, it is not often attempted, unless some crisis occurs.

1.3.2 Economic Realities

A number of economic realities exist which serve to impede planning objectives. Over and above fluctuations in market conditions, interest rates, etc, a number of more constant variables remain. These include:

⁴ See Albert Rose, "Canadian Housing Policies (1935-1980)" for an in-depth discussion; particularly Chapter 1, 'Housing Policies in their Political, Economic and Social Contexts', pp. 1-14

- Tendencies to limit risk taking on part of not only banks and lending institutions, but as well business and even more important, on the part of governments, which often are in the position of insuring mortgages on housing (e.g. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in Canada).
- Minimization of capital investment relative to return, which is as much a part of housing as any other form of development. As such, long term recoveries may not fit into many capitalization schemes, given the uncertainty of future conditions and subsequent gains. These concerns are expressed not only by private business, but by governments as well.

1.3.3 Legal Realities

The nature of legal constraints on the effectiveness of planning is dependent on the specific legal system and individual property rights within it. Britain, the United States and Canada all provide different legal scenarios, allowing varying degrees of effectiveness for the planning process itself:

- The United States provides for the weakest planning mechanism with the absolute right 'to use and dispose of property', entrenched in its constitution, in much the same way as the right 'to bear arms'. The onus is placed on public policy makers to make the case for any interference in this area, often at the expense of compromising effectiveness.

- Canada provides for a somewhat stronger planning mechanism, not having such absolute individual property rights as the U.S. entrenched in its constitution. Though the powers exist, government rights to expropriate private property are politically difficult to invoke, often serving to weaken public/private cooperation and legitimacy, in the eyes of the public.
- Britain provides the strongest base for planning, given that the the rights of private property ownership are severely limited. As well, land use in Britain is regulated by professional planners under the banner of development control, rather than the less responsive zoning system, in place over much of North America. A high proportion of direct public involvement in housing also allows for greater input by professional designers.

1.3.4 Planning Realities

A number of ethical questions arise relative to the role of planning and its subsequent importance in the area of regulation in general. The primary question revolves around the uncertain need for planning:

- This is especially of concern regarding the ability to follow through with a plan or set of plans.

"When you have least need of it, because nothing changes, planning works best; it is 100 per cent efficient. Indeed, it is a blue-print of the future. But when it would be needed most, because nothing ever stays the same for very long, planning does not work at all, its effectiveness is zero, it does not even serve us as a guide to a desired future...The reason

for this paradox is the uncertainty of our knowledge, particularly of our knowledge of the future."⁵

- Another concern, brought about as a result of economic pressure, is the need for 'streamlining' the regulation of development. The planning concern in this debate is that in order to succeed, such measures will require not only increased coordination between concerned groups, but a greater degree of planning in order to do so. The recent drive (notably in the U.S.) toward deregulation of industry often works against achieving these ends.

1.3.5 Other Realities Inherent To Standards

Finally, there are certain difficulties which are inherent in standards themselves and their subsequent application to residential development. Such concerns are endemic to standards given that they are, to some degree, arbitrary:

One particular concern deals with the relativity of standards, an example given in the United States:

Applying the minimum housing standards of the 1940s to today's (1977) housing stock in the U.S. reveals that the nation's housing problem has largely been solved. But according to the standards of the 1970s, there are over 13 million households suffering from housing deprivation. The reasons for this anomaly are several. As the housing improves by a given set of standards, these minimum standards of acceptability are made more stringent; also, there is a change in the indicators used to denote items of housing concern to reflect current views on housing matters."⁶

⁵ John Friedmann, "Innovation, Flexible Response And Social Learning: A Problem In the Theory Of Meta-Planning, pp. 2

⁶ William C. Baer, "Housing Indicators And Standards In The USA", pp.71

Another concern is in reference to the cost of increasingly escalating standards and the dilemma of resource availability versus other factors:

"The convention is to believe that indicators and standards should be chosen without regard to society's resources available for policy response. Only after the indicators and standards reveal the nature of the problem, it is believed, can resources be assessed and new ones mobilized if the problem is revealed to be serious enough. This view is unrealistic. It ignores the realities of political mobilization and support for programs, it ignores basic problems in program implementation, and it ignores psychological responses to the level of goal setting. Availability of resources must be kept in mind when choosing indicators and standards, although resource availability cannot be the sole determinant of choice."⁷

While Britain has faced this last concern in the recent past, North Americans are only beginning to realize the potential costs of ignoring the long term availability of (financial) resources when setting standards. Responding on an ad hoc basis, often without long term goals in place has been the norm. In most cases, resources were viewed as an endless commodity along with unlimited economic growth.

However, it should be noted that the availability of such resources, especially in Britain where government wields tremendous influence, is more often than not, a function of political will or whim, often creating a problem of distribution rather than real shortage. This phenomenon is not unique to Britain and is prevalent in any housing market where government involvement is pronounced. Regardless, standards should to some degree reflect the financial

⁷ Ibid pp.72

resources of consumers, especially where market oriented economies exist.

One study on regulatory reform in the United States points out a number of 'facts of life' regarding existing regulatory systems. In this example, each one of these 'facts' is inextricably bound up in other concerns (political, legal, etc.) serving to emphasize the difficulty in attempting to isolate issues of residential development standards from development in general. These 'facts of life' include:

- "Efficiency means different things to different participants in the system.
- The regulatory system cannot be depoliticized. Nor would that be desirable.
- Local governments exercise only partial influence over the entire regulatory system.
- The diversity of participants complicates the process.
- There will always be a tension between flexibility and predictability.
- Any community can speed up its regulatory machinery when it wants to, but housing is rarely given special treatment."⁸

⁸ John Vranicar, Welford Sanders and David Mosena, "Streamlining Land Use Regulation: A Guidebook For Local Governments, pp. 7

1.4 SUMMARY

As has been seen, the inherent complexity of the residential environment and its development make generalization on any related subject difficult. As well, the scope of development regulation coupled with the limitations placed on their effectiveness by a variety of sources, must be considered in any study of the residential development process. In addressing the issue of 'planning for change', it becomes necessary to attempt to better comprehend the system, its evolution and the reasons for its propagation.

The purpose of this thesis is to make an attempt to correlate a vast range of information and explore the responses, concerns, issues, etc., which have emerged in this area. In this sense, the thesis is exploratory in nature, rather than confirmatory.

The following chapter attempts to outline the evolution of residential development standards in Britain, Canada and the United States. The intended purpose of this exploration is to comprehend the primary purpose behind the current systems in existence and how these standards continued to affect the shape of development. As well, this chapter will provide a basis for the later study of change and subsequent response from a number of areas.

Chapter II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: BASIS FOR THE CREATION AND PROLIFERATION OF STANDARDS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Standards for residential development are not by any means a modern phenomenon. They have been with us ever since man began living together in groups, as even the earliest and most primitive dwellings and village organizations demonstrate. (See Figure 1) However, standards have evolved from essentially unwritten codes, based on limited choice and technical knowledge, to written standards based on a wider range of choices and increased technical knowledge.

For the most part, the main purpose of residential (or any other) development standards has and is likely to remain unchanged; that being to 'maintain and direct social (and to some degree, political) stability'. Only the method of approach and degree of sensitivity change. In this sense, social stability and the maintenance of order are strongly linked to whatever set of social, economic and political conditions prevail at the time. In times of social unrest or economic uncertainty, pressure is likely to mount to a point where such standards must adapt/change at all levels, to meet the particular set of circumstances.

History has continually demonstrated that an inability to adapt, ultimately leads to extinction. Though most visible in the realm of nature, this is as true of particular cultures and their artifacts as it is of man himself.

"Society is faced constantly with the need to adapt and to change. More important still, man is a variable. Every individual is different. The newly born must learn and thus itself is a process of adaptation. Cultural advance is the result of adaptation."⁹

Why then has it only been within the last 150 or so years, that problems of adapting to change have become difficult to solve? This phenomenon is not restricted to the residential environment, though its particular problems are more apparent given that housing is a necessity.

The problems which have most recently affected residential (and other) environments are largely the result of an overwhelming onslaught of technology, coupled with increasing knowledge/choice. This is supplanted by an unprecedented degree of social and economic structural change, beginning with rapid industrialization and urbanization.

In this sense, it is important to note that Europe had been settled long before industrialization took hold, thus many countries were able to maintain some semblance of order when faced with these new conditions. On the other hand, North America was largely settled during a period of rapid industrialization and technological change. This may have made it easier to adapt in the short term, however, in

⁹ R.S. Ferguson, "Building Regulations-Problems Of Traditions And Knowledge, pp. 30

absence of continued rapid industrial growth, North America is increasingly finding itself on shaky and unstable ground, from both a social and economic standpoint. Within this continent, standards (be they residential or otherwise) and their application, emanated to a large degree, from the need to accommodate growth, often with no longterm goals/concerns considered, certainly with very limited anticipation of changing conditions.

Regardless of these differences, a strong linkage does exist between European (most specifically British) and North American regulation regarding the development of residential environments; notably on the basis for the creation of standards. It is in their respective methods of application and continued adaptation, that divergence has occurred, (even between the U.S. and Canada) resulting in varying degrees of success and potential for future problems. Other variations include the particular level(s) of government responsible for setting, administering and enforcing said standards, with the variety of local conditions (social, economic, political, etc) further adding to the diversity of responses.

Returning to the earlier notion that the setting of residential standards is primarily based on 'maintaining and directing social/political stability', and is likely to remain so, an examination of historical developments leading to housing standards as we now know them, may shed some

light on how we have arrived at our current situation. In this sense, it may then be possible to speculate on future concerns and the solution of potential problems which may arise as a result of changing conditions.

2.2 ORIGINS OF STANDARDS

The roots of housing standards as we know them in North America, are firmly based in Europe. In Britain, as in many parts of then industrializing Europe, health and safety issues relating to housing were becoming issues of increasing importance by the nineteenth century.

"The first moves towards setting housing standards originated from acts of private philanthropy, mostly by employers in industry and agriculture who were concerned with the effect of poor housing on health. Concern with the general safety of all types of building had originated in the London Building Acts arising from the Great Fire of London."¹⁰

One may speculate as to the variety of potential reasons for such concern being generated. These may range from benevolence, to issues of mutual interest or self interest, on the part of private business or government:

- Successful industry was based on efficiency and the workers were (at least at this time) a significant factor re profit/loss potential. In attempting to achieve nominal levels of efficiency, an unhealthy, unhappy, poorly housed working population, would not serve to accomplish such an end.

¹⁰ David Levitt, "Housing Standards: Space Standards Are Not Enough, pp. 71

- Costs to individual cities of hazardous building practices and poor sanitation became a serious issue as nineteenth century urban migration gave rise to unprecedentedly large cities; a direct result of industrialization. Numerous outbreaks of sanitation related disease, proved costly to all urban dwellers, rich and poor, given that in most cases, all groups shared the same water supply.
- Advances in technology allowed for improvements to the quality of housing, from the quality and range of building material to the quality of sanitation facilities. Increasing knowledge of the causes of disease coupled with new technology, allowed responses to difficult problems which previously were not possible.

Essentially, the structure of populations, of families and of cities was in a state of rapid change by the mid nineteenth century. With the growth in urban centers occurring at such high rates, old problems got worse and new problems arose which previously did not exist. One author provides the following description:

"By the beginning of this century (twentieth) the industrial towns of Britain had become accretions of chaos superimposed on an existing pattern of country lanes; they were choked by repetitive gridiron streets of terraced workers' houses, skewered by the lines of clanking railways and asphyxiated by the belching industry which was both their cause and their effect. The town was in an appallingly noxious, noisy, insanitary and unhappy state."¹¹

¹¹ E.R. Scoffham, "The Shape of British Housing", pp.4

It is interesting to note that it was private industry which initially devised housing standards, not only in Britain, but in North America as well, through the use of demonstration or model projects. Built to represent a model standard for sanitary (workers) housing, these projects were likely initiated for a number of reasons, not the least of which would have been to maintain a healthy labour source for industry. Eventually it was government, which in both cases, took on the role of 'regulator' and institutionalized development standards to what they are today. However one would be naive to assume that all actors involved in the setting, administering and enforcing of residential development standards share the similar purpose of creating a better environment as it is quite often self interest or self preservation which takes precedence, as has been demonstrated. Essentially it all comes down to being able maintain a balance of resources with needs and equally importantly, perceptions relative to existing social, economic and political conditions to acceptable levels. It is through the interplay of these variables that one may begin to comprehend the changes which have appeared in the application of residential development standards since their formal inception and mass acceptance in the mid nineteenth century. The evolution of planning under these same conditions provides further evidence of the pressures to respond to change.

The first 'codes' as enacted in England in the late nineteenth century "were concerned primarily with health, overcrowding and structural safety.¹²" Examples of such legislation, national in scope, include the Torrens Act of 1868 which "made landlords responsible for keeping properties in a state fit for human habitation¹³" and the Public Health Act of 1875 which "empowered local authorities to inspect privately owned properties and condemn any that were unfit due to the failure of the landlord.¹⁴" One particular section of this act empowered the same local authorities to create by-laws with which to regulate the layout, width and construction of new streets, a precedent for what was to follow in the next century.

At the same time, similar action was being taken in the United States and later in Canada, with the catalyst remaining much the same; health and safety concerns in rapidly growing, often overcrowded cities. The year 1850 was viewed as the the beginning of 'The Great Sanitary Awakening', in the United States with the publication of the 'Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts' in that year. Under the guidance of Lemuel Shattuck, the commission recommended action from local boards of health to combat the spread of disease and prevention of other crowding related maladies.

¹² David Levitt, "Housing Standards: Space Standards Are Not Enough", pp. 77

¹³ Ibid, pp. 77

¹⁴ Ibid, pp.77

One problem somewhat unique to North America was the added influx of European immigrants, particularly to eastern seaboard cities, during the mid to late nineteenth century. This, in addition to internal migration to the same cities, created similar problems to European cities, but at a much larger scale and quicker pace. The net result, however, was much the same; housing shortages supplanted by tenement housing, often of poor construction, overcrowded and lacking proper sanitation facilities. A number of acts were passed such as the Tenement Act of 1867 of the State of New York in an effort to address this problem, however, the ability to enforce them was limited. The problem of enforcement may be viewed in relation to similar problems in Britain, wherein "if the 1866 Sanitary Act had been enforced, it would have compelled 10,000 to sleep in the streets of Hackney (a sector of London) alone."¹⁵

In Canada, as in the United States, immigration from Europe and internal movement to eastern seaboard cities, created similar pressures on housing conditions. The resulting problems of overcrowding, poor sanitation, ventilation, etc, eventually forced government to plan and design 'model' projects in order to "demonstrate an appropriate standard of housing."¹⁶ (See Figure 2) Government involvement in housing regulation came about a lot slower in Canada than in the United States, though the British North America Act provided

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 77

¹⁶ John Archer, A History of Housing Standards, pp. 10

for the existence of such powers.

In any case, many of the early concerns with housing standards in both Britain and North America were overwhelmingly concerned with issues of public health in a physical sense. Perhaps there was too much faith placed in the notion that 'a well housed worker is a good worker', however, primary health issues took precedence at the time, and given the description of conditions, understandably so. Similarly, in approaching issues of safety, ie. construction materials, means of egress, etc, there appears little doubt as to the necessity of standards, at the time. Even today, safety is often identified as the highest priority of any building code or set of standards. A 1985 address given by the Buildings Branch director of the Ontario Ministry of Housing reinforces this point:

"Ontario's building industry has one of the best track records for life safety in the world. We are recognized for this internationally and are admired for our lack of major structural failures and fires which plague our jurisdictions.

Maintaining this level of public safety will remain our top priority.¹⁷

Minimum levels of safety and sanitation have come to be understood and accepted universally across the western world. They may vary in generosity of facilities or durability, however legislation in Britain and North America, largely in the form of building codes or regulations, have

¹⁷ Honourable David Hodgson, Director, Buildings Branch, Ontario Ministry of Housing, "Remarks at the June 1985 Regulatory Reform Workshop, Toronto."

become the means to address these particular issues.

Other issues such as ventilation and daylighting requirements, service requirements, and perhaps more important, land use and density, concerns which transcend primary public health, were not so easily reconciled. Addressing these types of issues, given their potential psychological, social and economic impacts, required the setting up of a system of values and priorities in order to assess perceptions and desires. This concurs with the transition in residential development standards and subsequently the beginnings of current problems and concerns. It is at this point that the objectivity of standards appears to have broken down and the divergence in government involvement strategies become most apparent.

2.3 THE ROLE OF PLANNING

The entrance of planning into the arena of residential development in Britain and North America may be viewed as somewhat of a reactive measure, in response to the deteriorating and seemingly uncontrollable conditions which were observed in cities at the time. In this sense, the first real involvement of planning may be viewed as social reform. The first responses followed a number of ideological beliefs, either to remove the populus from these 'horrible' cities in what came to be known as the Garden City movement, or by redesigning cities to function as efficient, organized

and clean places for different activities to take place in what came to be known as the City Efficient movement. While proponents of the City Efficient movement viewed urban problems as being largely a result of engineering deficiencies, those involved in the Garden City movement viewed the conditions of cities as being physiologically as well as psychologically unacceptable.

The Garden City movement, credited to Ebenezer Howard, represented a radical response to industrialization, promoting a rethinking of values. Some clue as to the radical nature of this change in popular thought is evidenced in Howard's own book, Garden Cities of Tomorrow which states:

"Each generation should build to suit its own needs, and it is no more in the nature of things that man should continue to live in old areas because their ancestors lived in them, than it is that they should cherish the old beliefs which a wider faith and a more enlarged understanding have out-grown."¹⁸

Based on the notion that vast and dense urbanism is not something which is endemic to man, proponents of the Garden City movement advocated an 'image' of the ideal life based on low densities and green space, etc. Partially an idealist response, at least in Britain, it represented one response to the conditions of cities and one which epitomizes the dream of village and country life which is seen as being inherently British.

¹⁸ E.R. Scoffham, "The Shape Of British Housing", pp. 4

The City Efficient movement, which received more attention in North America than in Britain, provided yet another response to urban conditions of the time, in this case, accepting that cities must exist and something must therefore be done to them. This was a result of the influence of European (ie. non British) urban experiences. Perhaps the strongest imprint this particular ideology has left is in the notion of zoning land uses, a concept which was originally brought over from Germany by reformers of the nineteenth century:

"By promising to equip the energetic young American planning movement with controls essential to shape city growth with civilized restraint, the new zoning institution won the hearts of early twentieth-century urban reformers. The prospect of being able to arrange the distribution of urban functions of work and residence, to keep a limited hand on the height and bulk of urban buildings, and above all, to have a decisive effect on the concentration of urban populations, was indeed intoxicating."¹⁹

Given the relatively large degree of private land ownership within both the United States and Canada, coupled with comparatively limited levels of development, zoning was viewed as a means of retaining control and stability while allowing existing land tenure patterns to continue. Private landowners saw yet another benefit to be derived from zoning; the maintenance of property values, later to become an issue of concern to progressive planning.

¹⁹ Nino Hason, "The Emergence And Development Of Zoning Controls In North American Municipalities: A Critical Analysis", pp.7

In this sense, planning was (and until recently continued to be) inextricably bound up in growth, especially in North America. Given the particular set of circumstances, it is not surprising that physical (quantitative) values were thus being determined as to optimal density, house form, neighborhood size and layout, etc, not only in North America, but in Britain as well. The variation exists in the particular systems which were implemented to bring about the desired ends, Britain adopting a system of development control and the United States and Canada adopting zoning as the system of development regulation. (In the U.S. adoption of this particular system of development regulation was not mandatory. Many cities in the state of Texas, including Houston, did not adopt zoning, preferring, instead to make use of private agreements among landowners.)

By the turn of the twentieth century, planners and urban theorists, by nature of their professional base in one or more of the design disciplines, were able to have significant influence within the realm of architecture, both domestic and otherwise. This point is significant given that at the same time, architecture itself was having to face the challenge of the new machine age. New lifestyles based on changing social and economic conditions were viewed as requiring new forms of housing and possibly new forms of communities. Technology was seen as being able to provide the solutions which would free the populus from the 'drudgery' of household chores, etc.

Regardless of whether the architects of the day wholly embraced the machine age as Le Corbusier in Europe, or rejected it outright as did Frank Lloyd Wright in America, similar issues of concern were debated regarding the optimal design/environmental response to changing human needs and desires. In an attempt to determine the conditions favourable to eliciting such a response, a number of postulates had to be established regarding density, servicing, amenities, transportation, housing form and construction, the effects of which are felt today in the layout and design of cities, rather more so in North America than in Britain. Thus planning and design were to some degree interconnected, though the relationship evolved to the current split between designer and 'regulator' of housing.

Though represented by a number of ideological 'phases' or 'movements', in the form of Garden City or City Efficient, the aim of planning in both Britain and North America revolved around the problem of adequately responding to change (seen until most recently as 'growth'). Whether the core idea was the creation of 'new towns' or simply the zoning of land uses, these were planning solutions which then did not anticipate future problems such as limited resources, the proliferation of private automobiles or high speed jet travel. However, as each of these new phenomena appeared, the particular planning scheme(s) in place at the time had to respond accordingly, necessitating further pos-

tulation as to the optimal fulfillment of both needs and desires.

The process may have been somewhat different in Britain than in North America, in part due to the perceived abundance of both land and resources in North America though as well as to differences in government philosophies, legal systems and existing class structures. As a result, the role of planners and architects in determining the shape of the residential environment varied significantly. Even between Canada and the United States there is a noticeable degree of difference not only in the patterns of cities, but in the forms of housing as well. Within each country, regional variation on forms of cities and housing is dependent on such external variables as climate, topography and geographic location.

2.4 GUIDING THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

As previously indicated, the methodologies devised and propagated to regulate development in Britain, the United States and Canada, though initially borne of common concern, began to diverge in method of application. Such is the case when one glimpses beyond the initial concerns of public health to issues of distribution of resources. As is often the case, once basic needs are seen to, objective decision making becomes more difficult, given that human desires vary much more than human needs for survival.

2.4.1 Britain

Perhaps the most significant point which set British housing apart from the United States or Canada (and continues today) was the active role of the public sector, beyond mere regulation to active development. The creation of the London County Council in 1880 was followed by the Housing of Working Classes Acts of 1890 and 1900. These acts empowered local authorities to purchase and develop residential sites. Early experiments attempted to address not only the buildings themselves, but the surrounding external environment as an integral part of the development. Perhaps it was this concern with the total environment of housing which led to early attempts to move people out of existing cities into more humane, planned surroundings.

It is important not to underestimate the impact of the Garden City movement on the way in which residential development took place in the twentieth century, both in Britain as well as in North America. The notion of 'the good life', which the proponents of this movement envisioned continues today; however, the costs of attaining this goal are increasing, both from an economic and a social standpoint. However, unlike the case of the North American suburb as it exists today, the British remained conscious of the need for efficiency in design as related to land use, density, sizes and types of houses, as well as sizes of communities. This was essentially the result of smaller land supplies (and

subsequently higher costs) as well as a significantly smaller per capita gross national product available to devote to housing.

It was not until 1918 that some national consensus came into force in Britain regarding residential development standards. The Report on Questions of Building Construction in Connection With the Provision of Dwellings for the Working Classes known as the Tudor-Walters Report set out the first uniform building standards. based on a 'target life' span of 60 years. In summarizing its impacts, one author notes:

"its recommendations were those which are, in the main, readily accepted today: among them a third living room, a separate bathroom, and three bedrooms, a maximum of 12 houses to the acre (30/ha.) and a minimum spacing between facing houses of 70 feet (21m.). These were undoubted improvements on nineteenth century working-class housing standards and they became, at the same time, both the image and reality of social aspirations for the ordinary person."²⁰

This marked a turning point in British housing policy and represented the nation's commitment to improving the overall quality of its housing. Space standards remained an important issue in determining the shape of British housing, given the significantly higher level of public involvement in Britain.

However, it was not simply housing standards which shaped the form and layout of British housing. From the time that concern was being expressed about urban congestion, another

²⁰ E.R.Scoffham, "The Shape of British Housing", pp.7-8

variable was at work; land cost. The escalation of urban land costs, a phenomenon not isolated to Britain, when combined with the imposition of development restrictions in the form of density, layout and separation, etc. led inevitably to affordability problems in the development of urban housing. Not surprisingly, suburban and new town development provided a means of controlling the impact of this additional cost, given that the only alternative would have been higher densities. The report of the Marley Committee, published in 1934, reiterated concerns over development limits:

"It advocated adoption of the type of development usually associated with the idea of a garden city, yet went on to say that once a town reaches a certain size further growth should take the form of complete and separate planned units. Interestingly enough it also rejected ideas for higher buildings and increased densities."²¹

Further support for this notion of decentralization followed in 1939 with the release of the Barlow Report which reported "that national action was necessary in order to decongest urban areas and advocated a policy of decentralization in which garden cities were to be included."²² The recommendations of the Barlow Report were in part realized with the adoption of the County of London Plan in 1943, in which "the intention was to to discourage further growth within the London region and to redistribute what was already in existence to improved standards."²³

²¹ Ibid, pp. 10

²² Ibid, pp. 12

²³ Ibid, pp.13

The next significant change in housing standards occurred with the replacement of the Tudor-Walters standards for those recommended by the the Dudley Report of 1944 as found in the 1944 Housing Manual. The new manual allowed for an overall increase in standards via the rearrangement of internal spaces, generally increasing spatial allotment in the process. This manual superceded the 1942 Housing Manual and represented the most generous space standards to date in British Housing.

From this point, British housing appeared to move in two distinct directions; new town development and urban residential development, a result of increasing costs of both land and meeting the minimum requirements set out in current development standards. Firstly, the most obvious response, not an altogether new idea, was the promotion of the concept of 'new towns', wherein some semblance of control could be had regarding land cost and required densities. However, the renewed interest in the new town was not entirely an economic response. It was also a response to an increasing concern with the quality of the social environment. The New Towns Act of 1946 recognized such concerns, especially as relating to standardization. On this point:

"the adverse effects of taking averages when designing houses were recognized in that a variety of house sizes was seen to be necessary for 'there are no average people'. Research was admitted to be necessary on the subject of dwelling sizes, but in establishing standards the act felt that each new town should devise its own, to which all those buildings in the town should conform. Then it added a word of warning, that standardisation,

'should not be tolerated for its own sake' as it could easily 'become a substitute for work and thought'. Individuality and personal feelings should be allowed expression, with standardisation being practised only when it was relevant. Sameness and monotony were seen as the dangers."²⁴

The other direction which British housing followed involved urban residential development. It had become clear by the 1950's, that increasing density was the only means available to address the economic crisis brought about by high land and service (both hard and soft) costs. To some degree spurred on by technology, but also by the novelty and glorified image surrounding this building form (primarily in the minds of architects), the high rise concept came to Britain from continental Europe, as a potential solution to the crisis. The arrival of Le Corbusier and modern architecture allowed housing designers a new alternative;

"to marry the dual advantages of town and country within the congested city, whereas Howard, Unwin and Reith had performed the same marriage to decongest the city outside its boundaries."²⁵

However economic conditions were not the only factor which affected the size and quality of housing in Britain. Politics, in the form of government intervention played a significant role in the setting and administering of housing standards. Not surprisingly, standards generally tended to increase under socialist labour governments and decrease under Conservative administrations. Such a broad statement is misleading if one considers that it is often in times of

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 17

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 79

poor economic performance that conservative governments are elected to power, for the primary purpose of changing those conditions. Thus it was one such desire for economy which allowed the propagation of high rise-high density housing in Britain. One author states, though somewhat one-sidedly, that:

"The reluctance to take up the advantage of (100ppa or 247ppha low rise solutions) ...was a by-product of fear of the kind of development which took place under nineteenth-century by-law control. While many architects were aware of the shortcomings of high rise and sprawl, they were prevented from achieving a more compact, urban alternative by regulations governing road widths, traffic movement, daylighting and services which were devised and enforced by authorities who saw their infringement as the thin edge of a wedge that would permit speculative development."²⁶

However, the problems associated with high density-high rise housing, for certain social and economic groups were becoming increasingly apparent by the 1960's, not only in Britain but in North America as well. The high incidences of crime in many of these projects compounded with the increasing inability to deal with the rising level of private automobile ownership forced serious consideration of this housing form in Britain, though the automobile problem was shared by new towns. On this subject, one author notes:

"A frequent solution was to locate as many cars as possible underneath dwelling blocks. This was very much a policy of 'out of sight, out of mind'. The apparent visual problem of the car outdoors had been dealt with; but that the car might be less convenient so accommodated, or that the parking place itself might be more unsightly than cars grouped on the surface or that it might provide

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 101

opportunities for antisocial activity, were only realised later, when economic and social pressures forced change."²⁷

In 1958, there was considerable emphasis (the result of a conservative government) on the quantity of housing in the country, followed by a subsequent reduction of space standards in order to accomplish the goal of increasing the housing supply. Perhaps a step backwards, reaction to this approach led in a very short time to the emergence of a new valuation system.

By the 1960's, Britain passed a third threshold in housing standards confronting concerns of adaptation to change. A conscious reaction to changing social, economic and technological conditions led the Parker Morris Committee in 1961 to speculate on the need to respond to such change. What appears most interesting about the findings and subsequent recommendations of the committee is that it identified a number of concerns which have yet to be addressed today, though the need to do so has not subsided. In the report, aptly titled Homes for Today and Tomorrow, sample concerns included:

"Chapter 1-New Patterns of Living

- 1.The social and economic revolution since the war, the greater general prosperity, and the easier more varied home life now possible make timely a review of the sorts of homes now built.
- 3.To meet the needs of the future there should be space for activities demanding privacy and quiet, for satisfactory circulation, for

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 109

better storage generally; space to keep the new household machinery, and kitchens arranged for easy housework with room in which to take at least some meals.

- 7. The starting point for thinking about houses and flats must be the activities that people want to undertake in them. This approach to the problem of design starts with a clear recognition of these various activities and their relative importance in social, family and individual lives, and goes on to assess the conditions necessary for their pursuit in terms of space, atmosphere, efficiency, comfort, furniture and equipment.

Chapter 2-Homes for family Needs

- 12. There is no substitute for architectural advice. Our recommendations are made on the basis that architects must be employed and [recommendations] are framed so as to allow for the very wide variety of circumstances and site conditions confronting designers, and to leave them free either to develop conventional plan-forms or to explore new living arrangements to suit changing needs.
- 15. Homes should be designed so that they fulfil the reasonable requirements of the way in which prospective occupiers are likely to want to live and work in them, furnish them and store their possessions.
- 41. The human problem for the future in the design of flats and maisonettes is to provide for people who live in them an environment as workable and as satisfactory as for people who live in houses. the economic problem is to reduce the costs."²⁸

The degree of comprehensiveness to which the design of housing was addressed continued throughout later publications relating to new communities. The 1967 publication, The Needs of New Communities noted the need for provision of amenities and services within new communities as an integral

²⁸ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "Homes for Today and Tomorrow", pp. 49-52

part of maintaining housing quality levels. The consideration of external amenities as having direct bearing on housing quality, within standards, is indicative of changing conditions and changing values, not only in Britain but throughout much of the western world.

Perhaps the most distinguishing trait of British housing and housing standards is that the private market contributed very little to the evolution of standards, following, rather than setting the norm. In this sense, the orderly, comprehensive appearance of British housing standards and development in general is no coincidence, it was a conscious objective.

2.4.2 The United States

It appears from previous discussion that British ideas and ideals in the public sector performed an important role in the shaping of American housing; in fact one may go as far as affirming that both countries initially faced similar social and economic crises (in the form of public health concerns), responding and subsequently evolving in vastly different ways.

Of primary difference is the basic approach taken toward personal property rights, with the Americans upholding as absolute the right to use and dispose of property. In Britain such rights did not and do not exist today, with government control over land use and housing regulation being much more extensive and comprehensive as a result. (see chapter

1, Legal Realities) Thus a significant concern of residential (or any) development regulation in the United States was and still remains the task of limiting (or encouraging) growth via private development. The adopted means for achieving this end was zoning.

The emergence of zoning in the United States may be viewed as an extension of early restrictions on height, area, location and use of buildings, including the separation of incompatible land uses, as it was concern over such issues which initially attracted the attention of reformers to zoning. For example:

"In 1909, Los Angeles created distinct residential and industrial zones. Seven industrial districts were established, the remainder of the city was reserved exclusively for residential use."²⁹

These controls were supported by law, being upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. One historian views the emergence of 'formal' zoning as an extension of the City Efficient movement, itself rooted in the primary concerns of public health and urban congestion noted earlier:

"In comprehensive zoning, many reformers saw the final cure for all these evils. Zoning, they argued, would help bring about decentralization and hence reduce congestion; could stabilize property values through the separation of incompatible users; and could provide unprecedented legal authority to carry out real planning schemes."³⁰

²⁹ Nino Hason, "The Emergence and Development of Zoning Controls in North American Communities, pp. 5-6

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 5

In this sense, the intents of zoning to some degree paralleled those of British development control. Whereas in Britain a development agency may have developed a new town, the American equivalent would have been brought about by a private developer. Under the British system, government was left to wield greater control over the administration of the system, a necessity due to its much more active role in the development of housing. Zoning, whether applied in urban, suburban or rural settings was intended as a tool with which to predict and maintain orderly development while ensuring the stability of existing neighborhoods. Given these aspirations, it is not difficult to understand why planners were eager to see the system implemented as it provided the ideal compromise; a semblance of control within an otherwise free market.

How then has the basis for the acceptance of the practice of zoning shifted, in order to account for its present level of effectiveness and influence? Though a difficult question to answer, it is likely that the answer partly lies in a number of areas, including a shifting emphasis in zoning and the broadening of regulatory control in the United States since the turn of the century, to include separate building and housing codes, where building code standards relate to safety oriented issues including construction and fire protection and housing code standards relate to issues of occupant safety and health.

On the shifting of zoning emphasis, one author states:

"At the same time that popular recognition of zoning was in full force during the mid-1920's, intellectual discontent with zoning grew considerably in planning circles. From an emphasis on effectuating the planned development of a municipality, zoning was increasingly being used to protect property values in residential areas and to enhance property values in commercial and industrial districts. In 1931, William Munro, then vice president of the National Municipal League, complained that the original purpose of zoning had become "distorted". He explained:

'The rank and file of the people are coming to look upon (zoning) as merely a matter of maintaining and increasing property values. Whenever a question of rezoning comes up, the issue is not usually approached from the standpoint of what the city needs, but of what the private owners desire and what their immediate neighbors feel disinclined to let them have.'³¹

These same problems with zoning have persisted to the present and have effectively served to nullify much of the potential gain which could result from effective planning.

Regarding the broadening of regulatory control, a number of American cities developed model housing laws in the early twentieth century in an effort to address those issues which zoning could not control, effectively granting themselves control over the condition and design of housing, relative, of course, to legal confirmation. Unlike Britain or Canada, there is no one national standard in the United States, for residential development. Instead there is a suggested standard with each state (or city) free to adopt whatever standard it sees fit.

³¹ Nino Hason, "The Emergence and Development of Zoning Controls in North American Municipalities: A Critical Analysis", pp. 41

It was not until 1934 that the U.S. government passed the National Housing Act, thus creating the Federal Housing Administration. In much the same manner as its Canadian counterpart, the then Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the FHA attempted to employ minimum residential development standards as a means of assessing the insurability of any proposed housing project within which it became involved. This was a function which had its roots in concerns of public health and safety but, as in Canada, became more and more concerned with minimizing financial risk for the particular agency (often to the detriment of innovation). As the FHA became more involved in funding private homes and apartments (notably after the second world war) its power broadened with its scope, creating yet another significant level of residential development control.

Further change occurred in 1965 with the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a result of public concern about the problems of the environment and pressure from professional planners. Eventually, incorporating the NHA, then president Johnson described the intended role of HUD in a message to congress:

"This new department will provide a focal point for thought and innovation and imagination about the problems of our cities... it will work to strengthen the constructive relationships between nation, state and city - the creative federalism - which is essential to progress. This partnership will demand the leadership of mayors, Governors and state legislatures..."³²

³² John Delafons, "Land-Use Controls in the United States", pp. 121

It must be recognized that given the lower percentage of public housing in the United States, relative to Britain, the role of national agencies such as the FHA (and later HUD) addressed a much different set of concerns. These included:

- Affordability related to individual home ownership.
- Regulation and control of private development.
- Other issues related to balancing inconsistencies or irregularities in distribution within the market.

Public housing in the United States was handled as a unique commodity, providing for a small segment of the population which could not be adequately served by the free market.³³

2.4.3 Canada

In keeping with previous discussion, the Canadian experience in establishing housing standards grew out of the same public health concerns which spurred similar action in both Britain and the United States. Government intervention in housing during the early part of the twentieth century was, as in the United States, not looked upon favourably, given a similar high degree of private land ownership. At first restricted to developing 'model' projects, government activity broadened to the granting of loans for municipal non-profit housing by 1918, though this did not occur on any regular basis until the passing of the Dominion Housing Act

³³ Note - until relatively recently, the goal of home ownership in Britain was not promoted, unlike the United States and Canada. In Britain, it was a central policy of government to provide public housing.

in 1935. The basis for these loans was that their recipients followed acceptable, sound building practice. Meanwhile, a similar process of incorporating the principles of land-use zoning was underway in Canada, under the leadership of Canadian, American and British planners and reformers. For example:

"The province of Ontario, in 1912, empowered its cities with more stringent authority to control the location of apartment buildings, tenement houses and public garages."³⁴

The British North America Act and its provisions for greater government control over private property made the task of implementing zoning far easier than in the United States, though conflict between proponents of private vs public ownership of land has never been totally resolved.

By 1941, the National Research Council of Canada had developed the National Building Code which was to apply to all buildings as an industry standard. However the end of the second world war saw both a significant housing shortage and a need for improving existing dwellings. The 1945 National Housing Act set out to address these issues:

"The preamble to the Act clearly summarizes its purposes: 'An Act to Promote the Construction of New Houses, the Repair and Modernization of Existing Houses, the Improvement of Housing and Living Conditions, and the Expansion of Employment in the Post-War Period.'³⁵

³⁴ Ibid, pp.6

³⁵ John Archer, "A History of Housing Standards", pp. 12

The Act provide for the creation of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a vehicle for the administration of the Act and to ensure an adequate 'standard' of housing in Canada. It was empowered:

"To prescribe design, planning and construction standards for its own purposes. The need for this power was a result of the absence of both effective municipal town planning in Canada and a sophisticated house building industry."³⁶

CMHC was thus able to regulate housing in a number of ways:

1. Via the administration of the National Building Code and subsequently developed residential standards.
2. Via the provision of guidance to municipalities in administering site planning standards.
3. Via the provision of mortgage insurance on any project involving the use of government funds.
4. Via direct funding or the granting of loans, subsidies, etc, to initiate projects deemed desirable by the corporation.

The particular problems endemic to Canada, however, are evidenced in the objectives of CMHC standards, if one considers them relative to 'planning for change':

- "The first objective has been to protect the public interest, in particular public health and safety, through the requirement that a minimum physical standard be met. This objective was most important during the first decade of CMHC activity. In an environment of weak municipal and provincial controls and high demand for housing, it was important that a measure of control over the housing industry be exercised.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 12

- The second objective has been to protect CMHC from excessive financial risk. The application of the standards served as a quality-control tool (beyond simply protecting public health and safety), ensuring that the housing in which CMHC had established a financial interest would hold its value in the marketplace over the long term.
- The third objective has been promotion of an idealized model of the residential environment—an appropriate standard of housing quality for Canadians. The standards were applied across the country and an effort was made to encourage small builders in less sophisticated areas to provide the quality of the residential environment on which the model was based."³⁷

Continuing problems thus involve administrative efficiency, whether said standards ought to represent a 'minimum standard' or a 'desirable standard', as well as their impact on the development of new housing forms. Otherwise, the basic form of residential development and development standards in Canada parallels that of the United States, though marked by a greater level of public intervention within both private and public housing realms.

2.5 STANDARDS AND DESIGN

A brief study of the design consequences of residential development standards indicates at least on the surface, a degree of correlation between the involvement of professional architects and the quality of design produced. Though it is difficult to label any particular design as inherently bad without first defining the basis for definition (eg.

³⁷ Ibid, pp.16

economy, user satisfaction, adaptability, etc.), one cannot overlook the degree of sophistication which has evidenced itself in the design of British housing, particularly in the public sector.

There is little doubt that in all cases examined, proliferation of standards has vastly improved the design of housing from the perspective of public health, overcrowding and safety. However, from the perspective of user satisfaction, adaptability, sense of place, etc, the postulation made regarding optimum standards (re density, services, site improvement, etc.) has not had such a unanimously positive effect on the design of housing, notably in the area of housing rehabilitation and the adaptation of standards to meet this different set of circumstances.

What has followed is a series of regulatory devices and responses which attempted to counteract the negative effects of development realities in light of changing social and economic conditions. This is exemplified in innovative forms of zoning and the use of performance standards, among others, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. However, the net effect has been to force the reconsideration or at least reexamination of the direction, intents and reasons for being of residential development standards, both in Britain and in North America.

2.6 SUMMARY

Though born of similar public health concerns in Britain, Canada and the United States, the evolution of residential development standards in all three countries took on separate routes, a result of different legal systems, political systems and socio-economic conditions over time. Though there is little doubt that the introduction of standards increased the basic quality level of housing since the nineteenth century, there appeared to be early evidence of difficulty, particularly in adapting to change.

The following chapter will outline the scope of recent changes which have affected the direction and rate of development to date as well as in the future. These changes have touched all segments of society and have given rise to new concerns of long-term viability.

Chapter III

THE CHANGING REALITIES OF HOUSING: BASIS FOR CHANGE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Not unlike other facets of life, it has been within the last twenty-five or so years that the rate of social, economic and technological change unequivocally surpassed the ability of most of the world to 'respond' or 'react' positively, relative to issues of housing. One author contends that:

"The scale, pace and complexity of economic and social change have served to compromise many of the notions we have held about the dynamics of urban and regional development."³⁸

This has been a time within which national economies have been made or broken over very short time periods. Consequently, we are currently experiencing increasing levels of uncertainty and instability within the world economy, supplanted with (and often driven by) social change and political will (or lack thereof). Technology has been accepted wholeheartedly though often inappropriately used as a tool for maximizing efficiency, thus unable to keep pace with the social and economic changes often operating against it.

³⁸ Thomas A. Hutton, "Prospects for Planning: An Economic Perspective", pp. 51

Within Britain, North America and much of the western world, we have witnessed a social revolution in the 1960's, an environmental revolution in the 1970's and finally an economic revolution in the 1980's. All have had significant effects on housing and whether directly or indirectly, on the evolution of residential development standards. Over this period, not only has the attitude of planners changed, but equally has the attitude of consumers relative to needs, values and most significantly, perceptions (wherein perceptions may appear as relevant as realities).

These changes have affected and will continue to affect the residential environment at all scales, from the individual household to the neighborhood, to the level of city region and beyond. The fact that many of these changes are surprisingly common not only to Britain, Canada and the United States but also to much of the western world, provides an indication of the magnitude of potential related problems and concerns.

3.2 CHANGING SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Traditionally, housing has invariably responded to social change, notably as relating to the makeup of households. The evolutionary changes to British housing standards over the span of the twentieth century provide an excellent example, both in the use of space and the surrounding environment. Unfortunately, one may argue and rightfully so, that housing

in Britain, at least in the public sector, has been more responsive to both political and economic pressure than those of social change. Nonetheless, the impact of social change on housing and the determination of housing standards ought not to be underestimated. Many of the social changes which have occurred over the last twenty-five or so years, both in Britain and North America, may no longer maintain media prominence, but their impact(s) may still be felt today and likely will continue to be felt in the future.

Basically, social change as affecting most western countries may be categorized as belonging to one of three broad areas: Population composition, household composition, and changing social norms. The first involves the relative composition of a specific population and the percentages of specific age groups within that population. The second category involves the makeup of households within a specific population and the impact of a change in structure. The third category involves changing social norms, ranging from accepted behavior to legal rights and freedoms. Changing social norms are often partial causes of structural changes to household and population structure. In addressing housing and housing standards, social change has significant implications on the needs, values and perceptions of those affected.

3.2.1 Population Composition

It has become common knowledge that the populations of most western countries are aging and in this sense, Canada, the United States and Britain provide no exception. This phenomenon, a result of decreasing birth rates coupled with longer life expectancies, is the result of a complex set of variables. While increased medical knowledge and a higher standard of public health contribute to greater life expectancy, decreasing birth rates are not as readily explained. To a certain extent the reasons are purely economic (ie. high costs, unemployment, both parents working, etc.) yet equally important are less obvious reasons, themselves a result of changing social values, including a greater interest in self-fulfillment, self-satisfaction and increasing desires to minimize domestic responsibility, to name a few.

However, of primary interest to this study are the resultant effects of such changes on housing and housing standards, both at present and in the future. How we respond today, given the lifespan of housing units and required support infrastructure as well as the time lag in the provision of adequate supplies of housing, will subsequently affect our ability to respond to change in the future. Keeping this scenario in mind, a number of changes in approaching housing and housing standards should result. This is, of course, based on the premise that different populations have different needs, values and perceptions, whether based on cultural

experience and social norms, or prevailing economic conditions.

In Canada, the United States and Britain, these phenomena have evidenced themselves in a number of areas, including:

- Increasing concerns with the quality and supply of seniors housing.
- Crises in affordability for older people (often on fixed incomes) to maintain their existing dwelling.
- A general decline in average household size, subsequently creating an increase in the total number of households.
- Changing requirements for housing related services.
- A change in the taxpayer profile, most notably fewer taxpayers to support more non-taxpayers.

Though a decrease in birth rate serves to counteract an increase in dependency ratio, (the percentage of the population under 15 and over 65 years of age) demographic shifts will nonetheless continue to have an impact on housing needs and affect both housing forms and styles. This is further complicated as birth rates among different socio-economic and cultural groups are not consistent, many actually rising.

3.2.2 Household Composition

Major shifts in the structure of household composition which have occurred in the recent past, have had significant impact on housing and housing standards. While an increase

in the elderly population, ever more often living in separate households, serves to alter the composition of households. Other variables such as increases in divorce rates, incidences of single parent families, dual income families, childless families and single person households, all at the expense of the traditional 'nuclear' family, further alters the structure of household composition. Relative to the United States, one author notes:

"The trend away from traditional households and toward more varied living arrangements mirrors the basic age and sex structure of the society. It also reflects specific changes in the makeup of households and families:

1. A shift in the age when children leave home.
2. A rise in the proportion of families made up of women living with children or other relatives but not with husbands.
3. A decline in average household size, and a rise in the proportion of single-person households.
4. A decline in husband/wife households as a proportion of all households.
5. A decline in the number of people who live neither alone nor as nuclear family members—for example, lodgers, boarders, siblings, parents, or grandparents of the couple or individual heading the household.³⁹

The pace of change is so rapid that many of these structural changes are recurring, within increasingly shorter periods of time.

³⁹ George Masnick and Mary Jo Bane, "The Nation's Families: 1960-1990", pp. 11-12

In any case, the net effects of this change are twofold: Firstly, an increasing fluctuation in the total number of households, followed by a divergence in the needs, values and aspirations of the general populus as a direct result of the variety of household types. This may evidence itself via changes in demand, no longer simply for housing per se, but for more adaptive and alternate styles of housing, as well as a variety of related services. This holds especially true given the diverse range of economic conditions prevailing across the household spectrum, as social change by itself does not necessarily bring new housing forms.

Regardless, the setting of minimum standards for housing, be they relative to use of space, allowable density, etc, has become and is likely to remain an important issue in determining the ability to respond to the aforementioned changes in household structure. Evidence of response, or at least acknowledgement of the problem, may be seen as early as 1961 in Britain with the recommendations of the Parker Morris Committee, entitling their report Homes for Today and Tomorrow. The response was to remove the barriers imposed by minimum standards by effectively removing them, thus allowing architects to respond in a manner appropriate to the circumstances present and foreseen. The consequences of standards ignoring changes in household composition in Britain would have been disastrous given the high percentage of direct public involvement in housing coupled with the limit-

ed resources available for housing. In North America, we have thus been able, via greater resources (income versus cost ratio) to provide an overall higher standard of housing than in Britain, notably in terms of generosity of external space and services.⁴⁰ Current economic conditions, however, suggest that such practices may not be able to continue indefinitely.

In any case, it is impossible to ignore the effects of changing household composition without examining this phenomenon relative to the term 'family'. This is important when one attempts to predetermine any set of residential development standards based, as they often are, on what constitutes such a definition.⁴¹ What has become clear is that few if any comprehensive definitions currently exist as to what constitutes the term 'family' and most zoning legislation has not responded to any changes in what determines a family, in terms of household composition.⁴² Barbara Shilling notes that restrictive definitions of family openly discriminate against new or emerging forms of 'family'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Note - internal space standards for the public sector were lower in the United States and Canada than in the Parker Morris recommendations.

⁴¹ Note - The common zoning designations 'single family' and 'multi-family' are indicative of such practice.)

⁴² Note - Some progress has been recently made in this direction in Canada, with the recent publication of a Quebec government Green Paper on family policy, entitled "For Quebec Families". A description of this document and response to its contents are documented in an article appearing in "Transition", June 1985, pp. 3-4

⁴³ Barbara A. Shilling, "Exclusionary Zoning. Restrictive

Within the United States the same author has indicated no consistency in the provision for such a definition. Such example groups as extended families, foster children, family groups, communes, students, elderly, handicapped and retarded groups are viewed as often being discriminated against.

3.2.3 Changing Social Norms

Recent changes in social norms have produced perhaps the most profound changes to the structure of society. Such demographic changes as have been mentioned previously, ranging from increased divorce rates to decreased birth rates may be attributable, in part, to changing social norms. These phenomena have been most pronounced in North America, in part due to increases in overall wealth coupled with the absence of strongly developed social customs and patterns. However, Britain also went through much the same social revolution in the 1960's and early 1970's, wherein traditional values were challenged along with the need for conformity. Throughout the western world, feminist issues and the drive for equal rights emerged during the 1960's as society began to question traditional roles and norms.

Increased financial resources coupled with increased options which technology had delivered (in the areas of transportation, entertainment, etc.) served to change not only personal lifestyles, but more significantly, increased personal expectations and desires for getting 'more out of

life'. It would be difficult to refute the role of television and other mass media in propagating such an attitude. However economic times were generally good in both Britain and North America during this time and no one would have anticipated any major change in the state of the world economy.

Corresponding changes in housing and housing standards then followed in response. Britain responded with an open set of housing standards and alternate forms and styles of housing re-emerged (eg. commune, co-op, etc.). Other technological developments served to alter the manner in which people perceived their dwellings. Advances in transportation coupled with cheap fuel, allowed a mass exodus from the cities in the post-war period, followed in turn by a return to the cities by a different generation (and by immigrants with different origins, values and resources at their disposal). This was in part a response to higher energy cost, but equally a response to changing lifestyles, values and socio-economic conditions.

3.3 CHANGING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

If one word is to be found to describe recent world economic change, it is uncertainty. Since the late 1970's, a vast number of structural economic changes have occurred, many a result of global economic change, but many more a result of mismanagement of resources and 'borrowing on the

future' for present gain. A combination of high inflation coupled with limited economic growth had created, by the 1980's, a situation within which the cost of housing, at least in North America had become prohibitively expensive. One author notes that:

"Between 1970 and 1978 the median price of an existing single family home in the United States rose by 112 per cent. For much of this period incomes failed to keep pace with rates of increase in the cost of homeownership."⁴⁴

As a consequence, it remains difficult to determine whether housing itself is becoming more expensive or simply whether the standard of housing which we have come to expect, is becoming more expensive. The problem does not end at the individual dwelling unit as the cost of maintaining both hard and soft service within residential environments have forced a reconsideration of past models. Approaching the design of cities. Given these circumstances, it becomes difficult to comprehend how any building standard may hope to address this situation, short of eliminating all design and planning standards entirely, or at least dropping the levels significantly.

Regardless, close observation of the consequences of recent economic change in Britain, Canada and the United States reveals the potential for a severe crisis in the near future. This becomes obvious given the combination of high debt loads and unstable money markets, together with a rap-

⁴⁴ Thomas K. Rudel and Alan Neaigus, "Inflation, New Home-owners and Downgrading in the 1970's", pp. 129

idly decaying urban infrastructure. Planning for change is then likely to become more of a struggle to cope let alone being able to anticipate change, given these conditions.

3.3.1 Uncertainty

As has been previously stated, much of the structural economic change which has occurred in the recent past may be attributed to global conditions. This becomes readily apparent when one examines the high level of uncertainty which, from all current indicators, is not subsiding. Changes in world industrialization/production patterns have created severe unemployment among certain sectors of even the wealthiest countries. As well as affecting the financial resources available for housing, instability in the area of employment creates additional problems for the securing of individual mortgages and housing loans. It creates a problem for the borrower in being able to not only qualify for funds, but to ensure repayment. Also, it creates a problem for the lender and insurer in guaranteeing the funds and minimizing financial risk.

Related to this change are sudden shifts in 'employment centers', a phenomenon which has evidenced itself in Britain, Canada and the United States in the last 10 years as a significant determinant of social as well as economic change. This phenomenon has altered earlier conceptions regarding such variables as resident mobility, length of tenure and as a result, the 'meaning' of neighborhood.

Inflation, another phenomenon which comes and goes in cycles, serves to drive up the cost of housing and housing related products and services, thus directly affecting the cost of development. In addition, the effects of inflation remain long after the phenomenon has subsided given that prices drop in response to decreased costs at a much slower rate than they increase in response to higher costs.

Fluctuations in markets such as oil prices have played havoc with entire national economies since the 1970's, as have fluctuations in interest rates over the same period (See Figure 3). While phenomena such as oil price increases affected housing (and all building) more indirectly, via increased material and transportation costs, interest rate fluctuation directly affects the cost of housing given the duration of mortgage amortization periods.

Combining the net effects of economic uncertainty with many of the aforementioned structural changes in household and population composition, would suggest that meeting (basic) housing needs is getting increasingly difficult as one encounters an increasingly complex and different set of problems than those existing at the turn of the century. The situation in the United States (1984) is described thus:

"The symptoms...begin with young couples, who even if they are both employed, often cannot qualify for a mortgage... To lower their housing costs, they must commute long distances to remote suburbs where land is cheaper. At the same time, the elderly who live on fixed incomes alone or in couples—even those who own their houses outright—often find they cannot meet the property taxes, heating bills and the demands for physical mainte-

nance of single-family homes. The frail elderly often cannot drive, a necessity in most suburban locations. Single-parent families often lack the support system of social services that such a family requires if the parent is holding a paid job. Infant care, day care, after school care, public transportation so that older children can move about independently, closeness to stores and health services, all are almost always lacking in neighborhoods where the housing was originally designed for households with a full-time housewife caring for husband and children. Two-earner couples experience many of the same strains if the employed wife is also expected to carry the greater burden of family tasks.

Single people...often find that housing options available to them lack flexibility, variety and complexity. Coming home to an empty house or apartment every night can be dreary, but sharing traditional housing designed for the closeness of one family can be frustrating in its lack of privacy. More subtle options are hard to locate, and harder to finance.

Couples undergoing divorce or separation experience additional frustration. If the two incomes are needed to support one mortgage, neither partner may be able to afford to buy the other's share of a jointly owned house. At the same time, it may not be feasible to relinquish one low interest mortgage in favor of two high rentals. Furthermore, couples with children will find that the majority of urban landlords simply will not rent to families with children."⁴⁵

Consumer response to economic pressures of this sort as relating to housing appear in a number of ways, ranging from the scaling back on housing expectations (re size, location, etc.) to the rise in two income families. With such high levels of uncertainty, governments are often forced to enter the housing market, either directly or indirectly, if conditions prove too risky for private investment. These and

⁴⁵ Dolores Hayden, "Redesigning The American Dream", pp. 13-14

other responses to current housing problems, for better or worse, represent reactions to increasingly uncertain economic times. One thing which such responses serve to affirm is the need to reconsider what our present 'standard' of housing is costing us, both in the short and long term and whether or not we can, or indeed want, to afford it in the future.⁴⁶ Given that residential (development) standards are purported to reflect the society (and its values, preferences and resources) within which they operate, perhaps it is then time for their reconsideration.

3.3.2 Urban Decay and Costs of Servicing

The question of whether or not we can afford the 'standard' of housing which has, until now been propagated, is significant if one proceeds to examine the level of decay of urban infrastructure, prevalent within many older cities in the United States, Canada and Britain, coupled with the high cost of providing new services. Any debate on the issue is likely to bring up concerns of density and land-use relative to service-use efficiency. In the United States, Canada and to a degree in Britain, high social value appears to be placed on low densities and private yards. Partly a cultural phenomenon and partly a result of increasing expectations, individuals, private developers and governments are increasingly forced to reconsider this 'ideal'. This is pri-

⁴⁶ Note - it also raises the question of the degree to which governments should/should not intervene in the housing market to maintain some semblance of social stability.

marily due to the costs of providing this form versus available resources and the political will to allocate them.

In Britain a compromise has been struck, given the poor success record to date of high density-high rise as a universal solution. Since the inception of the Parker Morris standards, and as early as the 1952 report Density of Residential Areas, the government had been attempting to encourage high density-low rise solutions, viewing this housing form as a compromise between both social and economic concerns.⁴⁷ Financial crises in North America have only recently forced the reconsideration of housing and servicing expenditures, not only on the part of consumers, but private developers and governments as well. In North America, there has been a gradual escalation over the last 25 or so years in the level of service which private developers must provide within new developments. It is likely only a matter of time before they will be required to provide more 'soft' services and perhaps even longer term maintenance costs as a prerequisite for development. Given such circumstances, higher densities would likely be reconsidered from all perspectives.

⁴⁷ Note - recent abandonment of the Parker Morris standards has brought about a renewed sense of uncertainty, ultimately relying on cost effectiveness as a basis for development decisions. The possibility of this situation responding to economic concerns is quite strong, though at what social cost?

In addition, increased costs to cities and municipalities are a result of having to replace worn out hard services such as roads, sewers, etc as well as having to respond to aforementioned changes in population and household structure. School requirements provide a typical example as this is now becoming a serious issue in older parts of many cities in North America and Britain. Regulatory response to such conditions in North America has been limited and applied on an ad hoc basis in the form of reduced lot, road and other servicing standards. However considerations of this sort have been the norm in Britain since the 1960's, with the reevaluation of road and access standards becoming a national issue. However, the implications of reducing road standards, given the increasing proliferation of private automobiles remains to be seen.

3.3.3 Limited Growth and the Boom-Bust Cycle

Economic growth slowed down for much of the western world during the recession of the late 1970's and early 1980's. However, many places hit by economic uncertainty, often as a result of changes in global, national or regional economies, have recently been placed in situations where real economic growth does not exist, or is in decline. The net result of this phenomenon is the need to recognize that such conditions may modify both housing requirements and the ability to pay for services.

This phenomenon makes North America, in particular Canada, somewhat more vulnerable, due to the prevalence of resource based communities, though, in any case this type of community will always remain susceptible to such problems, especially if a single resource is involved. However, it is the mature, slow growing community which is of particular interest as many of these communities exhibit similar characteristics, though they may range in size from small towns to large cities. An aging population is often inevitable as is a decrease in industrial and manufacturing growth. In terms of housing, normal market forces may not be able to be counted on to provide an adequate supply of housing, as incomes and demand may be lower and the overall tax base may also be lower. This same set of conditions inevitably reflects on housing standards, wherein a limited growth center may not be able to afford the level of service (though in fact the demands/needs may be higher) that a high growth centre can, with its larger tax base.

What this points toward is a reconsideration of the application of national housing standards and political priorities, or at least a reappraisal of the national priorities given to housing, in order to account for this phenomenon. Unless governments are willing to subsidize the bulk of housing and related services across the country, as in Britain, problems are only likely to get worse. However, the use of constant subsidies used to alleviate regional dispar-

ity (essentially as transfer payments), as Jane Jacobs points out in Cities and The Wealth Of Nations, ignores the long range problem. This offers a temporary solution with a potentially high long term dependency association in areas which likely may never be able to afford the 'standard'.

3.4 PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION: MINIMUM/SUBSTANDARD

As a result of the increased pace of social, economic and technological change over the last 25 or so years, a significant number of tenets have subsequently come to be challenged relative to housing, particularly in urban centers, where pressures for change tend to appear strongest. In attempting to relate housing standards to a rapidly changing world, one inevitably must ask the question of how (or on what basis) to define what the minimum acceptable standard ought to be, so as to then determine what constitutes 'sub-standard' (See Figure 4). Looking back to the turn of the century, one would have had little trouble determining such levels, given, as has been previously stated, that primary public health concerns on a large scale had yet to be met. However, in recent years the bulk of the housing in Canada, the United States and Britain has been upgraded to meet these needs (See Figure 5). It is this new combination of social diversification and economic uncertainty which has, and likely will continue, to force a rethinking of the basis for some of the more subjective housing standards which

affect mental health and well being and the 'quality' of the residential environment. These include such areas of concern as density, land-use, setbacks, etc, all of which affect the ability of the environment to respond to change and support necessary amenities, without unacceptable public subsidy.

The basic problem emanates from the contention that if one attempts to set uniform development standards which move beyond the issues of primary health and safety, then some basis ought to exist for doing so. Unfortunately, in North America in particular where zoning exists, standards have been construed as a means of ensuring social conformity more than simply public health and their subsequent ability to respond to change is often sacrificed as a result.

3.5 THE ROLE OF PLANNING

The role of planning has not and is not likely to remain stagnant as a result of recent social, economic and technological changes. Perhaps the most noticeable change of the recent past came about during the 1960's as a result of concurrent social upheaval. At this time, planning professionals (notably young planners) began to question the relative merits of their work. Born of this thought process was advocacy planning, neighbourhood planning and a rekindling in the minds of planners, (and other professionals) of the values of urban living and of living patterns of the past. Jane

Jacobs alluded to these concerns in The Death And life Of Great American Cities. Planners suddenly found themselves faced with issues of equity, quality of life and social interaction, (as did early reformers) no longer simply meeting engineering requirements, as planning had largely become.

What many failed to realize, however, was that social upheavals were only beginning to take effect and that new and more difficult problems would soon be facing planners as well as governments, in light of harsh economic times.⁴⁸ Pressure for change would then emanate not only from public sources, but from private ones as well. Planners, at least in North America, do not exert tremendous financial, political or other pressure, given their limited influence. Contrary to Britain, where planners and government continued to take a strong active role in the provision of housing, North American planning, in general, has lacked the ability to significantly direct the future and subsequently plan for change. This is partly a result of the aforementioned differences in national policy, legal rights and socio-economic conditions.

⁴⁸ Note - many public programs which seemed possible in the growth-oriented 1960's are now in full retreat (at least in the United States).

3.6 SUMMARY

As has been alluded to, the implications of recent social, economic and technological change on all facets of life, not only housing, is enormous. Many of the specific variables and issues have thus been identified, along with some semblance of potential and actual effects relative to housing and development standards.

The question which then should result is whether regulatory response to said change has kept pace with changing needs, values and perceptions and subsequently attempted to address future planning concerns.⁴⁹

The following chapter will highlight the range of response to change, from the standpoint of residential development and development standards. As well, a brief summary of the range of existing concerns and concern groups will be presented, in order to put the range of responses in proper perspective.

⁴⁹ Note - the question is also political - ie. should change be initiated by governments, or should we attempt to ride out the economic storm by allowing the 'market' to decide. This is a fundamental debate of the 1980's, and housing is caught in the middle of it. Put another way, should we even attempt to adjust to change?

Chapter IV

REACTING TO CHANGE: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN TRANSITION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the aforementioned rate of social, economic and technological change over the last 25 or so years in Canada, the United States and Britain, (though not exclusive to these countries) one may reasonably expect an equally significant rate of change in the evolution of housing, specifically housing standards, to these changes. These are in response to pressure/concern generated from a number of sources including: Planners, housing organizations and agencies, private developers, homebuyers, homeowners and renters, to name a few. The particular concerns expressed by each of these different sources have also, to some degree, served to shape the response(s) of government regulators as pertaining to residential development standards. In some cases, particular responses are based on social change. However, in most instances pressure to address economic crises have initiated regulatory and other response involving such variables as interest rates, inflation and land supplies, for example.

This is not to say that economic based action is wrong, per se. Whatever one may have to say regarding the negative effects of economic crisis on housing, there is a positive side to such situations; the resulting pressures serve to force a reconsideration of what we are getting and what is being spent to obtain the current level of housing. It also can force efficiency, reasonable compromise and ultimately, new approaches to solving problems, in order to at least cope with the situation. However, such pressures ought not to form the sole basis for decisions re residential development and development standards as this is where many of the current reforms have fallen short from the perspective of 'planning for change'. By reacting to change, often in an ad hoc manner, long term social and economic goals are often compromised as a result of temporary economic conditions.

4.2 CURRENT CONCERNS AND INTERESTS

As has been previously mentioned, concern over the state of residential development standards over the last 25 or so years has been expressed by a number of particular groups on a number of issues, influenced to a large degree, by the economic and political climates in existence at any particular time. The political climate imparts a significant degree of importance, especially in attempting to comprehend the situation in Britain as:

- The government in Britain performs such a key role in housing and the setting of standards therein.
- The polarization of British politics (labor-conservative) is much more pronounced than in Canada or the United States.

Regardless, one may separate the affected groups and their particular concerns into three distinct divisions.

Firstly, there are public interest concerns involving planners, government bodies or agencies and in Britain, housing organizations. Secondly, there are private interest concerns involving developers, insurance companies (as landowners or otherwise) and private home/land owners. Finally, there are other public concerns, not necessarily belonging to either previously mentioned group. Such concerns are represented by potential home buyers or renters, groups which do not have financial interest at risk or official status.

Given the diversity of interests expressed by these various groups, what appears surprising is the unanimous agreement among most of those affected, that housing regulation, as it currently exists, is in need of change. This is an attitude which has taken time to gain recognition, but the flood of literature on the subject since the 1960's evidences a growing concern not only with current regulation, but as well with much of the reform generated as response to these same conditions.

4.2.1 Public Interest Concerns

Planners and public (housing) agencies in Canada, the United States and Britain, share a number of common concerns over the state of residential development and development standards, particularly relating to density and access to housing. Relative to density, problems range from a basic non-consensus of what level(s) of density are adequate or ideal in order to support a particular minimum level of services (both hard and soft) to what densities allow for optimum flexibility in use. The situation has been further complicated, in recent years, by economic pressure to increase density (especially in urban areas) so as to decrease the high land/service cost component and thus maximize efficiency. This factor affects public as well as private housing to varying degrees.

In Britain, the use of high density- high rise has been overtaken by high density-low rise as an appropriate housing form, while in North America, the single family detached house is a much more favoured housing form. However, density is most often regulated by local government and more often than not, is approached on an ad hoc basis.

A significant amount of literature has been produced over recent years attacking the basis upon which density (and zoning) policy is founded. Regarding North America, one author states that:

"there is no articulated uniform policy upon which density controls are based. Instead there exists unsupported notions about what people require and

desire in respect of density. Some of these notions are conflicting and, as a result the legal controls upon which they are based often accomplish inconsistent and contradictory purposes.

The closest notion to a uniform approach is the idea that high density of population is bad per se. This concept is perhaps the true legacy of Raymond Unwin's Garden City idea and has led to one-directional municipal policies to prevent [high] density."⁵⁰

Another author notes that technological advantages and specific site conditions, to name a few, may throw off any generalization one may make on the subject.⁵¹ The same author contends that the significance of density as an indicator of housing quality is ill founded, given, for example the tendency of household to trade off density for location or proximity to particular services, notably in urban areas. This particular phenomenon may be evidenced in Britain as well as in North America.

Relative to access to housing, concerns of public interest groups have tended to revolve around affordability as well as quality. The trade off between density and proximity to services is a difficult to ignore indication that values, and subsequently perceptions about housing, are changing. Government bodies and agencies which directly provide housing, and to a degree those who regulate housing, have attempted to bypass the problems of regulation by providing cost incentives (direct or indirect) in the form of write-

⁵⁰ Leslie A. Stein, "The Relevance Of Legal Density Controls In Town Planning To The Human Use Of Space", pp. 1

⁵¹ Barry Goodchild, "The Significance of Density"

downs or low-interest loans in order to alleviate problems of affordability and access. Also, alternate styles of living have sprung up in response to these issues involving co-op ownership and other inventive financing procedures. However, these housing styles often fall victim to obsolete or non-flexible regulation and development standards which may defeat the purpose of the innovation. This is especially the case in approaching the adaptation of existing structures, where more often than not they must conform to 'new construction' standards; often a physical and economic hardship as well as one which may serve to destroy the integrity of the building, from a design standpoint.

4.2.2 Private Interest Concerns

Concerns of private interests involve a number of different groups, notably business (including developers, financiers, etc.) and existing homeowners. For the most part, concerns of business interests are economically based. They are derived from pressure to maintain reasonable margins of profit, and where individual dwelling owners are concerned, to maintain existing levels of service and general status re land value. This is not to be construed as resulting in a purely economic response in approaching housing and housing regulation. Business is and must remain cognizant of the needs, desires and perceptions of consumers if it is to survive. Thus, social change has had significant impact on how housing is designed, built and most noticeably, marketed.

This can be evidenced by the growing move toward 'target' marketing strategies based on lifestyle, location, image, etc, rather than simple supply and demand (See Figure 6). However, it should be noted that business is responsible for propagating the demand for exaggerated living styles, often well beyond what the 'standard' requires. Though inevitable in any consumer oriented society, long term problems of maintenance and mortgage are now beginning to emerge, given current economic uncertainty.

The concerns of private homeowners, unlike those of business interests, often work against the need to adapt to changing conditions. This may be a result of this particular group's (often unrealistic) expectations that:

- Costs for maintaining existing conditions must not rise.
- Levels of service should not decrease.
- Density should not increase.
- Neighbourhood integrity must remain intact.

Thus the base exists for the proliferation of what has become known as 'exclusionary zoning' (the use of high or restrictive minimum standards such as minimum lot size and minimum lot areas in order to retain or ensure future exclusivity) in North America; an issue which has received much attention and caused much debate among planners and regulators in the recent past.

As has been indicated, business response to social and technological change ought not to be underestimated given

the potential marketing (and cost saving) potential which may otherwise go untapped. However, in responding to economic or political pressures, business attitudes are likely to turn defensive. In dealing with residential development standards specifically, it appears obvious that recent economic changes have largely affected the cost of business and increased the risks of development significantly. Therefore, being burdened with increasing development costs as a result of regulation (in terms of monetary and delay costs) is of increasing concern to developers, as a significant amount of literature on the subject indicates.

Government involvement in housing development, though not as extensive in North America as in Britain, can and does serve to influence the process by which development takes place. Local governments may make decisions regarding land use, density and services but given the magnitude of housing subsidies, higher levels of government are exerting their own pressure on regulation via the control of grant and loan money, mortgage guarantees, land banking and the construction of major public works (eg highway networks); all of which may provide incentives or disincentive to following the existing set of rules. This serves further to influence the nature of private development and to some degree, the effectiveness of the development controls in place.

In many cases it is not the rigidity or restrictiveness of development regulation which cause the most problem; it

is the uncertainty involved in obtaining either variances or development permits (depending on the system of regulation) which is voiced as being of greatest concern to private developers. This is especially prevalent in North America where limited planning scope often provides little basis for predictability. Thus, private interest concerns may be seen as an eternal conflict among a number of groups striving for control. As a result, many of the changes demanded and changes opposed are not always in the public interest.

4.2.3 Public Concerns

In moving down the list of concerned groups, the public (those who are not property owners) as consumers of housing represent yet another set of concerns as relating to housing standards. Their concerns reflect issues of both affordability and the provision of amenities. Affordability has been and is likely to remain a primary concern of anyone concerned with buying or to a lesser degree renting a dwelling. The role which development standards play in this sense, is significant (especially in times of economic restraint) given their role in determining the costs and to some degree, the design of residential districts. Granted there are other factors which serve to determine the shape of housing, however, in most cases some form of regulation ultimately will determine allowable density, building bulk, required services and even finishes in some cases, to name a few.

The other concern of consumers is the provision of related housing amenities ranging from stores to daycare facilities. Our changing social, economic and technological environment has altered not only the need for specific services, but also the means available to access them. One may proceed to ask whether or not there ought to be some standard set in this area, as a basis for the determination of density, etc. If such is the case, determining said need and projecting the change over time would create an immense challenge to planners though it could, in turn, provide an objective basis for planning decision making.⁵²

Though not an organized 'force', this group indirectly wields tremendous power in its own right, representing, in essence, the emerging market for the future. In this sense, specific concern groups have been able to achieve some degree of recognition when banding together as a common concern, be it for code reform, zoning changes, etc.

4.3 REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

Regulatory agencies, local governments, housing code administrators, developers and consumers have responded to social, economic, technological and political change in a number of ways and with varying degrees of sincerity. Each response is however, highly dependent on a number of variables, including:

⁵² Note - The British government publication "The Needs of New Communities" stands as an excellent example of the basis upon which such standards may be derived.

- Current government philosophy and subsequent policy.
- Current economic conditions and financial resources available.
- Current state of physical resources (housing stock, infrastructure, etc).
- Historical development and evolution of standards.
- Levels of pressure exerted by growth/no-growth.
- Current land-use and ownership patterns.
- Available land resources and cost structure.
- Perceived changes in taste and living habits.

In this sense, it is important to note that the particular merits of any perceived solution to housing problems must be assessed relative to the particular set of circumstances in existence. What works in New York may not work in Houston and what works in Vancouver may not work in Winnipeg.

A number of recent approaches to change within the realm of housing follow, not necessarily in order of importance or appearance. Though some may continue to be in effect today others have been abandoned, revised, etc. Outlined within each section will be comment regarding the scope of the response, an explanation of the process or method of operation as well as commentary on the social and economic impacts relative to desired results. The range of responses includes:

1. Development Moratoria
2. Development Control
3. Performance Standards (Design)

4. Performance Standards (Cost Maxima)
5. Streamlining Requirements
6. Reducing Standards
7. Flexibility Indices
8. Densification Policies
9. Resubdivision/Redistribution
10. Model/Demonstration Projects
11. Zoning Modifications

4.3.1 Development Moratoria

Development moratoria represent a regulatory response to changing conditions which often appears in a situation where development is perceived as proceeding out of control. Basically freezing development for an unspecified period of time, this response represents a temporary approach to addressing problems of change, allowing the particular municipality, etc, time to regroup and reconsider what its direction ought to be. The range of methods employed to halt (thereby controlling) development employed in the United States include sewer moratoria, building permit ceilings or development timing ordinances, to name a few.⁵³

Obvious problems with taking such an approach to development control include the potential misdirection of such policies; using them as a basis for legitimizing exclusionary zoning. The basis for determining such controls provide the potential for such problems to occur, especially if they

⁵³ Anne McGowan, "Government Regulation and the Cost of Housing: A Partially Annotated Bibliography"

originate at the local level, as many do. In this context, often: "'the public interest' usually means merely the interests of the residents who located in the community first. It does not take into account potential residents or regional considerations."⁵⁴

In this sense, the potential for problems and abuse are immense. From the perspective of the consumer or supplier of housing, such practices can lead only to increased costs for development; a result of both time delays and land shortages. However, such controls used on a long term basis are equally damaging from a planning perspective as they are seen as doing little to improve the quality of development, only making it more expensive, however indirectly.⁵⁵

4.3.2 Development Control

Development control as a regulatory response is not to be confused with development control as a national policy, as is the case in Britain and many European countries. Development control works in Britain as a result of significant professional involvement within the approval system as well as restricted private land ownership rights. Applying such a system within the North American realm, particularly in the United States has created serious difficulties in application, ranging from uncertainty and inconsistency to corruption and delay.

⁵⁴ Arthur P. Solomon, "The Effect of Land Use and Environmental Controls on Housing: A Review", pp. 28

⁵⁵ Ibid

However, what appears most disturbing about this shift toward what should be more appropriately called 'discretionary zoning' is the often misdirected basis for doing so; as a means of bypassing an inefficient zoning system. Such was the case in New York when the New York State Urban Development Corporation was designed, with the option to ignore local zoning codes. On this matter, one author states:

"This is not the path to sound zoning reform. It is a path toward splitting a zoning ordinance into a variety of issues that a community must resolve by doing right, on pain of reversal by special-interest wise men from outside the community."⁵⁶

This is not to say that the concept is inherently a bad one. However, the basis for its determination and application ought to be to improve the overall quality of development rather than merely to simplify development, given that the latter is not likely to result. Development control requires a significant degree of planning sophistication coupled with long term goals, in order to succeed. The rules in this instance are not predetermined, and some basis is thus required for responsible decision making. In this sense, the City of Vancouver, though plagued by many of the above mentioned problems, comes closer to achieving positive results from a planning perspective than many other cities employing such a process. However, the greatest battle has been alleviating tension between private developers (property owners) and getting them to work with, rather than

⁵⁶ American Society of Planning Officials, "Zoning As An Obstacle", pp. 17

against the system.

4.3.3 Performance Standards (Design)

The use of performance standards as a means of achieving both flexible response and improved quality of development are becoming increasingly attractive to governments/municipalities as a means of dealing with rapidly outdated and obsolete standards. This is not to be confused with impact zoning which is to be discussed later in this same section, or building performance standards (for specific components) which do not form part of this study. Essentially, such standards represent a compromise between strict zoning and total development control; however, one potential problem with the use of performance standards is the setting of the standard itself and the basis for the level desired. The basis may be public health, it may be user satisfaction or it may just as easily be the maintenance of a minimum level of service or appearance. Given the range of possibilities, there is potential for abuse if the system is used to restrict certain development by setting standards unrealistically high. Setting standards too low, on the other hand, may bring in or encourage undesirable development. The legal implications, especially in North America must also be considered.

The use of 'design controls' as supplements to existing zoning ordinances, often the approach taken, is not likely to achieve much more than compounding problems for all involved, from regulators to consumers unless:

- There are long term goals in place.
- The performance standard replaces the existing zoning ordinance.

In another sense, performance standards may be associated with a need for flexibility on a broader level. Such was the case with CMHC in Canada during the 1970's in the dispute over the composition of site planning standards for residential environments.

"The dispute was over whether a further increase in flexibility in the application of standards would result in a loss of control over housing quality...Flexibility was seen by many as the loss of both the power to refuse projects of poor or marginal quality and the influence to push the housing industry into producing a better product...The application of performance standards is not straight forward. It requires knowledgeable staff capable of evaluating individual projects and capable of taking the responsibility of judging whether the performance standards have been met."⁵⁷

The publication Site Planning Criteria which replaced the Site Planning Handbook in 1977, responded to these concerns:

"New standards for spaces around the dwelling were set, based on a shift away from the specification of physical sizes and locations toward the requirement that spaces be able to accommodate identified activities or uses."⁵⁸

As well, the use of 'tradeoffs' in the provision of facilities was attempted, in order to encourage good quality while meeting increasing cost constraints, an increasingly critical issue.

⁵⁷ John Archer, "A History of Housing Standards", pp. 14

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 14

The recent CMHC publication Internal Spaces of the Dwelling provides an example of the evolving sophistication in governments' approach to the description and interpretation of housing standards, wherein the standard is based on use and activity rather than a minimum space requirement. Such response is by no means new given that Britain had reached similar conclusions long before. The 1961 publication Homes for Today and Tomorrow notes in paragraph 151:

"We believe that it is advantageous for standards of floor space to be expressed as sizes for the whole house or flat, thus giving the necessary flexibility to the designer while ensuring essential minimum levels of space for families of different sizes."⁵⁹

In this sense, complications may arise in the administration of such a system, given the judgement level required by administrators at the local level. In dealing with changing conditions, this form of standard is only as flexible as those who enforce it, depending on smooth operation at all levels. As well, setting performance standards themselves is not an easy task, given the difficulty in determining what the minimum requirement ought to be and who is subsequently best able to determine what that level should be. The idea works well in theory but becomes much more difficult in practice.

⁵⁹ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "Homes for Today and Tomorrow", pp. 33

4.3.4 Performance Standards (Cost Maxima)

The use of cost maxima as providing the basis for performance standards is an experience shared by public housing authorities in Britain, Canada and the United States, often to the dismay of those responsible for bringing such housing on stream. In North America, the basis for control is a maximum insured value which the designated national housing authority (CMHC in Canada) will allow, effectively limiting costs. Thus, in this sense, an economic ceiling is set with virtually unlimited discretion given to the local authority in most cases.

In Britain, the abolition of the Parker Morris Standards and the Housing Yardsticks in 1981 left a similar system in place for all local authority housing.

"The new system is based on total scheme costs for acquisition, works and fees. Approvals are only given where total costs do not exceed a cash limit and where they bear a fixed relationship to the residual market value (cost/value ratio). Local authorities are now expected to produce their own design brief and standards, provided, of course, that the resulting project costs are acceptable."⁶⁰

However, in Britain, uniform design standards have been largely eliminated, the task of determining them becoming another factor of the cost maximum equation. One difficulty with the system in Britain (and to a degree in North America) in the public realm is that the maxima often prevent the tackling of difficult projects, as both renovation and new

⁶⁰ David Levitt, "Housing Standards: Space Standards Are Not Enough", pp. 82

construction, given their tendency to go above average in total cost.

From the perspective of private development, cost maxima have always existed as market conditions and subsequent development costs dictate maximum allowable costs. If the resulting costs are too high, development will then not proceed. Unfortunately, however, cost maxima react to economic change but are rarely responsive to social change or (social) need. From a planning perspective, though, they are perceived as an often necessary evil and one which must be dealt with as best as possible.

4.3.5 Streamlining Requirements

As response to various pressures at the local level, many municipalities in North America have taken the initiative to attempt a 'streamlining' or simplifying of their development regulation systems. However, a significant amount of the pressure for reform is often generated internally. On this point one author lists the following potential motives for regulatory simplification:

- To contain rising administrative costs.
- To control one of the factors that increase the price of new housing.
- To save time for public officials.
- To encourage the kind of development the community wants.
- To establish better working relationships between applicants and reviewers.
- To structure citizen participation.

- To make the regulatory system more accountable.
- To assure fairness and due procedure.⁶¹

These are, of course in addition to concerns over time and cost delays as expressed by developers and concerns of limited flexibility and consistency as expressed by planners. In many places, the situation has ultimately reached a state wherein it has spawned a "new breed of consultant whose services extend far beyond traditional engineering or architectural design to include guiding the homebuilder through the regulatory labyrinth."⁶²

Included among methods of streamlining regulations are the changing of development cost formulae and the simplification of legal requirements. However, many municipalities, faced with the prospect of losing development, have gone this route and much further, in attempting to streamline regulations. A recent example exists in British Columbia wherein the province has:

- Stripped planning powers from regional districts to remove one level of government from the development process.
- Changed the formula for development cost charges to allow developers to pay only one-third (instead of the entire amount) up front and phase in the remainder of the charges over two years.

⁶¹ John Vranicar, Welford Sanders and David Mosena, "Streamlining Land Use Regulation: A Guidebook for Local Governments", pp. 3

⁶² Ibid, pp. 6

- Streamlined the requirements for prospectus prior to the sale of subdivided land, including the removal of prospectus requirements if subdivided land is sold from one developer to another.
- Eased the land title process to allow quicker access to the Land Titles Office. There is even a provincial suggestion to allow private computer access to Land Title files.
- Closed down provincial land development offices and sold off Crown Land zoned residential to the private sector.
- Removed rent controls.
- Warned municipalities that "community development officers" could be appointed if bureaucrats are responsible for unnecessary development delays.⁶³

Thus the potential for problems with this approach become apparent, if, as often is the case, the sole desire to attract development provides the basis for reform. One author states the case in the following manner, keeping in mind the responsibilities of regulators in approaching reform:

"First and most important, pursuing administrative efficiency cannot be allowed to compromise the valid public purpose for which regulations were adopted. Efficiency must not be achieved at the expense of effectiveness, fairness, and procedural due process."⁶⁴

⁶³ John Fennell, "Action Needed On Regulations", pp. 41

⁶⁴ John Vranicar, Welford Sanders and David Mosen, "Streamlining Land Use Regulation: A Guidebook For Local Governments", pp. 6

4.3.6 Reducing Standards

The actual reduction of development standards is a phenomenon which most often appears alongside weak economic conditions or inflationary circumstances. It is perhaps the most direct response which can be made to changing conditions and may subsequently appear as official reductions of standards/requirements, to simply cutting back on the part of the individual homebuyer or developer, in terms of design extras or actual expenditure.

Actual reductions of development standards have not been as significant in North America as in Britain, partially a result of the higher level of government involvement in Britain and the stringent control exerted over time on space standards coupled with variation in the financial resources available for housing in the different countries. In Britain, space standards have fluctuated significantly over time and are especially vulnerable to shifts in government ideology or policy, though standards since the turn of the (twentieth) century have increased overall (See Figure 7). In Canada, and the United States, similar changes have occurred in the sizes of building lots, as one example. the emergence of 'zero-lot line' housing as an alternative to the increasingly expensive single family detached dwelling came about at the municipal level, often the result of pressure from developers.

A 1976 report completed by the Ontario Ministry of Housing, demonstrated means to achieve significant savings (6,000-8,000 dollars per lot) on residential development.

The study indicates:

"Of the total savings identified approximately 75% can be attributed to permitting reduced lot sizes - down to 30ft. x 80ft. for a single detached dwelling in the major metropolitan areas, and to 30ft. x 100ft. elsewhere, together with comparable reductions in lots for other house types."⁶⁵

Other reductions in standards may include reducing the required quality of construction, though this option has not achieved a significant level of acceptance given the potential for compromising health and safety, as well as the slow rate of change within the construction industry.

However, the bulk of reduced standards as evidenced in North America are the result of cutbacks on the part of individual homebuyers and to a degree, developers. Smaller lots, smaller houses, lesser quality construction, purchase of more existing housing and moves to increasingly distant areas where costs, taxes and codes may be less restrictive represent some of the more common reactions. Others have accepted lesser quality or a more crowded environment in return for location and/or proximity to amenities, though many do not have the flexibility required to make such tradeoffs (eg. large families, etc). This option, however is becoming increasingly less lucrative given the rapid

⁶⁵ Ontario Ministry of Housing, "Urban Development Standards: A Demonstration of the Potential for Reducing Costs", pp.ii

escalation of inner city housing costs within most major cities.

Thus, the reduction of standards represents an economic response to changing conditions. Perhaps the best thing about such a response is its being a reflection of individual circumstances and changing needs, values and aspirations. However, the fact that much of the reduction in standards is economic in nature may place severe limitations on the ability to adapt to future change, given that the lifespan of housing is usually longer than many particular economic crises and that less/poorer quality housing is simply that; not necessarily representative of a more appropriate response.

Notwithstanding, the real problem facing planners in dealing with reduced standards is the dilemma that often it is those who can least afford the higher standards (in the form of services, amenities, space, etc) who most require them. The solution to this problem is more likely to be found in the sharing of services, a tradition which is not uncommon to Britain, but one which has never been appealing in more affluent North America.

4.3.7 Flexibility Indices

The use of flexibility indices as a basis for the application of standards has occurred in the recent past primarily on an experimental basis, often appearing as a form of performance standard. As has been previously mentioned, the

Parker Morris Standards, established in Britain during the early 1960's foresaw the need to respond to changing social and economic conditions with flexible design and responsive design standards. During this time, a significant amount of experimental work had been undertaken in the area of industrialized housing. The Archigram Group in Britain, N.J. Habraken in Holland and Moshe Safdie in Canada represented just a few of the innovators in the design of industrialized housing.

The fusion of mass production with flexible design was brought about in Britain in 1967 through the development of PSSHAK (Primary System Support Housing and Assembly Kits—See Figure 8). Though hailed as a highly innovative system, the PSSHAK was short lived in Britain, a result of a number of variables including:

- Arguments that the standardization of components was not only too rigid, but ultimately too expensive in the long term, relative to traditional housing.
- An increasing concern with environmental issues, public participation and the adaptation of 'existing' housing to meet changing conditions.

The Byker Wall, designed with the participation of Ralph Erskine, represented a culmination of environmental, participatory and flexibility concerns as it integrated existing housing within a new 'wall' which was to not only house people, but to shield the development from cold winds and noise

from a proposed expressway. Though not as readily adaptable as one may have hoped for, the project itself represents a unique approach to the concerns of the day, maintaining a high quality environment and sense of uniqueness to the present (See Figure 9).

On another front, the Cambridge Center for Land Use and Built Form Studies, during the 1970's became prominent in Britain. It took an essentially mathematical approach to housing and density, the resulting work openly praised for its honesty:

"...their advocacy for setting down facts, 'before rushing into producing exciting physical answers to non-existent problems', stood to alter the nature of housing architecture; to prevent the kind of 'intellectual pleasure that is derived from a clever arrangement of inadequate space'."⁶⁶

Though a primary concern of the group had been the solution of present problems, the Cambridge group was concerned to a large degree with adaptation to future need in their quest for optimum standards.

"The framework that had been derived out of the work of LUBFS at Cambridge appeared to answer long-term objectives of adaptation and change without any disruption of the original intent. At what stage that adaptation or change may occur will depend to a large measure on how successfully the present housing accommodates it. The simplicity of the house plans...would seem to answer the need for an amply-dimensioned shell that permits renovation and adaptation to change."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ E.R. Scoffham, "The Shape of British Housing", pp.200-201

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 209

One concern which planners have expressed in the provision of increased flexibility regards the emphasis, particularly with the British experience, on physical conditions and physical change. On this subject, one author states that:

"While flexibility and adaptability have been prime motives in the planning framework they have been translated at the level of physical provision, not as part of a developing social system - a pattern that will continue to develop while the physical framework remains the same."⁶⁸

Though contrary to the aims of the Parker Morris standards, this response is not entirely surprising given the realities of translating policy to physical quantities.

4.3.8 Densification Policies

Densification policies represent a regulatory response to both social and economic pressures, especially as evidenced in large cities. Whereas moratoria are put in place to control development by halting it entirely, densification policies are put in place to control development by encouraging it. From a planning perspective a recognition of the need for increased densities is a positive step, given ever increasing support service demands. A shortage of land in central sections of many large cities coupled with an increased demand for downtown housing may have forced much of the action toward densification. However, in reality, it is often pressure from developers whose costs are requiring higher densities in order to break even, that may be chang-

⁶⁸ Ibid, pp.209-210

ing the mind of local legislators. The impact on the community is often not considered in this situation.

In Britain, the issue of density has been one of concern for a very long time, the debate not being whether or not to densify but in what manner to do it (ie. high rise vs low rise). In North America, there has been less pressure until more recently to consider such problems, given existing urbanization policies and more abundant land supplies. The degree of sophistication evidenced by the use of density in Britain highlights this longstanding concern with the issue.

Thus, it appears as no surprise that the City of Vancouver, for example, has recently adopted a policy of densification. The intents and long-term effects of this policy, however, are somewhat unclear given the type of development currently being approved. A recent article states that:

"Vancouver, which has the same basic land area as Toronto, houses 75% less people. Recently the City approved the first waterfront high-rise towers on the B.C. Place site at False Creek to accommodate 150 luxury condominiums."⁶⁹

Regardless, densification schemes provide strong evidence that current policies in the area of density control must adapt in order to meet changing conditions as they emerge.

⁶⁹ John Fennell, "Action Needed on Regulations", pp. 41

4.3.9 Resubdivision/Redistribution

The recent emergence of resubdivision and subsequent redistribution of housing types is representative of the growing problem of accommodating changing social and economic conditions as relating to existing housing and communities. This is accomplished in a number of ways including the use of accessory buildings, the subdivision of existing dwellings and the resubdivision/amalgamation of lots and/or dwellings (See Figure 10).

Perhaps the most publicized approach in this respect is the spreading use of accessory buildings as seniors housing, often termed 'granny flats' or 'granny annexes'. Common to Britain and more recently introduced in the United States and Canada, such units are often completely mobile and may be moved where and when needed. The primary logistics problem associated with the introduction of such structures into North American communities has been in obtaining the cooperation of local zoning officials. From a planning perspective there has been mixed reaction to this particular form of housing; to some degree it solves a basic need problem, but many view the temporary structures as evoking second class treatment of the elderly. Other use of secondary structures may include conversion of accessory garages behind existing buildings into dwellings. In some cases the structures may be attached while in other cases the two may be intentionally separated.

Another common response to change within existing neighbourhoods is the (often illegal) subdivision of single-family dwellings. The obvious benefits in performing such a conversion are numerous, as in many cases, the owner may be older, may not require the entire house, or the owner may be alone and not able to physically maintain the entire dwelling (a result of fixed incomes). Again, zoning and to some degree building code requirements provide the greatest barrier to furthering (or legalizing) this form of redevelopment, given:

- The tendency for municipalities to treat such structures as 'apartments', therefore requiring often excessive amounts of upgrading in order to meet local fire/building regulations.
- The tendency for neighbourhoods which are predominantly composed of single family dwellings to want to retain that status, thus forming local opposition if and when variance is requested.

One recent article notes an unusual provision in a particular local zoning ordinance. It allows a house which is over 25 years old to be divided into a two-family dwelling.⁷⁰ The article notes that within the same community, a study group found that a significant percentage of houses over 25 years old essentially have two families living in them already.

⁷⁰ Mildred F. Schmertz, "Housing And Community Design For Changing Family Needs", pp. 104

Yet another response to changing socio-economic conditions in recent years has been the resubdivision/amalgamation of existing lots and dwellings, be it to add another dwelling within or to consolidate an entire block to form a large green space. This, of course, would require varying degrees of co-operation, both among private land owners and local zoning officers. Perhaps what is most promising about such an approach, from a planning perspective is that the scale and coherency of the existing neighbourhood may then remain intact while increased densities provide a stronger support base for local amenities, etc.

While resubdivision within existing communities may appear to be a positive response to changing conditions, all too often consolidation of lots is accomplished not with the intention of infilling, but with the intention of demolition and resale of the larger package for higher density development. Perhaps more prevalent in very large cities where land prices (and values) are continually escalating, it is ironic that the often criticized local zoning ordinance provides the primary measure of control in such cases.

4.3.10 Model/Demonstration Projects

The utilization of model or demonstration projects to promote innovation, whether initiated by government or non-profit organizations, is not by any means a new concept. This particular approach formed the earliest British and North American responses to the need for uniform housing

standards. Distinct from the American 'model codes' which describe the various building codes in force across the country, the use of demonstration projects has been useful in promoting innovation and bringing new ideas to the forefront.

One example of a recent project in the United States dealt with what were perceived as excessive building standards.

"In Aurora, Ill., west of Chicago the Greater Chicagoland Housing Foundation, a not-for-profit group that seeks to foster innovations, in housing, persuaded city officials to allow the construction of an inexpensive prototype home with features that normally would have violated the building code."⁷¹

Yet another example of a model project is the experimental use of 'granny flats' in the Province of Ontario. In this situation, the Ministry of Housing in co-operation with municipal officials, is currently promoting the use of this housing form. The provincial government developed the model unit and arranged for the implementation of the project into various communities. Response to date from the project has been positive.

4.3.11 Zoning Modifications

There have been a tremendous number of modifications made to supplement existing zoning patterns in North America, particularly in the United States as regulatory responses to change. Though much of the recent response has been aimed at

⁷¹ Newsweek (April 8, 1985), "When A House Can't Be Home", pp. 53-54

commercial, industrial and downtown development, the net cause for action has been the result of increasing development costs, a major concern within the spectrum of housing. In this sense, two basic approaches have been taken, one wherein disincentives are made to redirect development and another wherein positive incentives are offered with the same objective.

Exemplifying the disincentive approach to zoning reform are:

Conditional Use Zoning:

wherein development is permitted subject to prior review and approval.

Transition Zoning:

wherein property within a buffer zone is essentially downzoned.

Holding Zoning:

wherein fringe property may be placed in a temporary holding zone such as agricultural, etc, until such time as appropriate proposals for development are presented.

Others: including provisions which are primarily intended to force developers to live up to their obligations, including phased and contract zoning.

These types of zoning modifications may apply to all forms of development, though from a planning perspective, the approach is often viewed as being counter-productive to co-operative development. What is looked upon more favourably are positive incentives which reward good behavior rather than punish bad. Such an approach is exemplified by:

Incentive Zoning:

wherein developers are given incentives (eg. higher density) if they meet other requirements for additional services, amenities, etc.

Potential Zones:

wherein certain types of development are given special consideration for rezoning, being desirable to the community at the time.

Overlay Zoning:

which places a particular piece of property within two zones, thus encouraging mixed-use development, etc.

Transfer of Development Rights:

though used primarily in downtown and historical districts, this system allows the development potential of an existing property to be transferred to another.

Planned Unit Development:

essentially is a form of performance zoning wherein a plan of subdivision is submitted, effectively allowing the developer freedom over land use mixture, setbacks, open space, etc, within give performance guidelines. The ordinances which control this form of development however, are often much more complex than those which they replaced.

The potential of zoning reforms to consider long term planning issues have only recently come into being. Impact zoning which bases land use on the capacity of services was observed by one American author in 1977 as being in its

infancy. However, the potential for furthering this concept in order to provide an objective basis for forming development standards will be explored in the following chapter.

4.4 MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

From a planning perspective, what is perhaps most encouraging about recent response to change, from all sectors, is the expanded conception of what constitutes 'quality' in housing. There has been a noticeable trend toward including the total environment, in the form of services, amenities, location, density, as well as the amount and quality of space in and around the home, as contributing to total housing quality. Such a change is to a large degree, a result of dramatically improved standards of housing since the turn of the century, in both Britain and North America, compounded by the tremendous social, economic and technological changes which have occurred simultaneously.

However, recent responses have not taken all of these changes into consideration. The bulk of reform has been generated in response to economic pressure or crisis. In much the same manner as the rash of urban sprawl since the second world war has not considered future implications, much of the current regulatory reform and other response, in the area of residential development has not considered these same implications, in terms of changing needs, preferences and equally importantly, financial resources. Unfortunate-

ly, many of these current crises may have been addressed without proper forethought and past mistakes are likely to repeat themselves unless action is taken to prevent (or at least anticipate) their recurrence.

Much of the problem with regulatory reform appears to be based in the particular approaches which are taken in formulating responses to changing conditions. This is especially important when dealing with public regulatory controls upon which the supposed community interest is entrusted. In this sense, controls ought to reflect this situation, providing comprehensive rather than ad hoc responses to change. There should be some solid basis for making change beyond mere coping. One author states the case in this way, relative to this concern:

"What is needed is less emphasis on **standards** (which relate to methods) and more emphasis on **policies** (which relate to objectives). A clear statement of the principles on which the exercise of control is based and the objectives which it is intended to serve, can be just as effective in eliminating discriminatory practices (and provides a sounder basis for judicial review) but at the same time can afford much greater scope for initiative and allow control to adapt more readily to the needs of changing circumstances and the unpredictable. In this view the system of control ceases to be a static set of standards related to a fixed pattern of land use and becomes a process progressively developing as the unknown factors which shape a community's growth reveal themselves. Standards remain an important part of such a system, but they are governed by stated policies, and are used as guides rather than absolutes."^{7 2}

^{7 2} John Delafons, "Land-Use Controls in the United States", pp. 109-110

Approached in this fashion, changes to residential (or other) development standards may then be attempted without fear, apprehension and uncertainty, as is often the case.

It appears from many of the aforementioned regulatory responses, that both design and financial components of development and development standards often follow a similar path, in responding to change. In this sense, part of the problem associated with planning for change may be due to this separation. The lack of long term goals for standards, a problem in many jurisdictions, may be at the root of the current problem given that under these circumstances, regulatory, design and financial considerations often work independently toward different, rather than common goals. Regulations then ought to be able to encourage maximum design quality and economic efficiency if on track with these other considerations.

4.5 SUMMARY

The range of regulatory and development solutions to recent social, economic and technological change as well as fluctuating political conditions are as diverse as the range of interests involved and the various investments each has (or has not) at stake. The only agreement among private, public and consumer interests is that development regulation is in need of reform. Examination of a variety of regulatory and resulting development responses, highlights a number of

concerns from a perspective of planning for change. These include:

- An absence of defined goals for development, in many cases.
- An inability to come to consensus on defining what is meant by the term 'minimum' and how it should be applied.
- Standards often not being geared to producing quality, efficient housing, simply perpetuating an existing (obsolete) set of values or conditions.
- The intent of regulatory reform not always being met, given that misapplication or oversight may bring unanticipated results.

A number of approaches to achieving positive response form the bulk of the following chapter, An in depth look at the value of standards and their intents is also included in order to place the recommendations in perspective.

Chapter V

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND THE FUTURE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In examining a range of regulatory response to changing conditions, it becomes clear that the end result of many such reforms often differed significantly from the expectation(s) of their advocates. Whether as a result of uncontrollable circumstances or improper administration/application. The responsiveness of housing to social, economic, technological and political change as a result of regulatory reform appears, for the most part, to be unable to keep pace with present concerns let alone those of the future. This concern results from the rate of change, coupled with uncertain resources with which to address it. There may be a number of reasons for this occurrence, however one obvious problem rests in often unclear and/or misdirected intentions which provide the basis for regulatory reform. In many cases the reform is a result of current pressure, often generated by groups which are unaffected by the future outcome of current action (eg. Housebuilders concern ends with the sale of a house or end of a warranty period).

The question again arises as to whether we can or should, in certain circumstances indeed 'plan' for change or at least allow for greater responsiveness to change, especially given our uncertain knowledge of the future coupled with the rapid pace of change. In this sense, economic pressures often serve to strain the effectiveness of planning.

Affordability, in a present (rather than long term) sense is for the most part seen as having priority from the perspective of both suppliers and consumers of housing. Building-in the ability to respond to changing conditions may be a concern of planners and/or governments, however such concerns are not universally shared. Coping with change under current circumstances, notably toward achieving higher levels of efficiency, represent a more realistic picture of current areas of real concern. As a result of uncertain knowledge, the future is often seen as being too far ahead and too uncertain to attempt to second guess. However, few would refute the need to properly plan for change, given the impacts of only the last 25 years of social, economic, technological and political change, on the residential environment. The problem remains largely unsolved but the need to come to terms with it are affecting and will likely continue to affect the direction of development and ultimately, the quality of the residential environment.

5.2 RETHINKING THE VALUE OF STANDARDS

A number of questions have arisen to this point relating to the use of residential development standards as a means of making development more responsive to change. To some degree, the use of standards has proved counterproductive in achieving this end, though the value of standards themselves is not often questioned. An examination of the value, limitations and responsiveness of standards may then prove useful in addressing areas for reform and reevaluation.

5.2.1 The Value of Standards for the External Residential Environment: A Study

There is a dilemma involving the value of standards for residential environments, given the level and pace of current social, economic and technological change. Their value is perceived as being essential to assuring quality yet, their inability to keep pace with change often works against this objective. In Britain, where standards have been in force longer and more uniformly than in North America, the net effects of maintaining standards may appear more readily. One recent study, entitled The Value of Standards for the External Residential Environment questioned practitioners about standards. They discovered the following four perceptions:

- "Standards are instruments of good"-Based on past performance and initial inception (health related).

- "Standards are authoritative"-Therefore they are often obeyed without question and/or consideration of consequence(s).
- "Standards are essential as controls"-Seen as a necessary means to ensuring a comprehensive basis for development control decision making.
- "Standards stifle creative design"-Given that the multitude of them often contradict and thus counteract one another's effectiveness.^{7 3}

In attempting to respond to these perceptions, the same study team proceeded to identify a range of limitations related to the use and propagation of standards. These included:

- "The housing Environment is Infinitely Complex."
- "The narrowness of Standards."
- "Standards do not ensure the right quality of provision."
- "Esthetic and social qualities."
- "Intended benefit of the standard may depend on other conditions being met."
- "Standards may have adverse side effects."
- "Inappropriate aims."
- "Inappropriate quantities."
- "Lack of intelligibility."

^{7 3} George Woodford, Kirstine Williams and Nancy Hill, "The Value of Standards for the External Residential Environment", pp. 65-66

- "Insufficient experience."⁷⁴

Their conclusions, as may be expected, identify the value of standards as being limited to a number of specific concerns.

These include:

- "Standards which are essential to safety concerns."
- "Wider policies to which local needs may have to be subordinated."
- ""Where sanctions of a kind leading to the loss of important benefits would result with failure to comply to standards."⁷⁵

However, the study team concedes that the role of design within the administration of standards is of primary importance to improving the quality of housing. On this point, they state:

"...design cannot improve in an overall way until changes of a wide-ranging nature take place. Among these changes is the strengthening of the design side of development control. Control based mainly on standards as a makeshift is no sort of answer."⁷⁶

5.2.2 Responding To Original Intentions/Goals

Perhaps the primary area of concern for the future, in evaluating past and current regulatory reform, is the debate over the perceived intentions of standards. In looking at such areas as building bulk, density provisions, setback regulations, servicing requirements, etc, with the diversity of

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 66-68

⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 70

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 71

both conditions and subsequent regulations affecting these areas, one must begin to question the bases for the determination of whatever values are accepted as minimum standards. In most urban centers, the original intent of housing codes; to protect the health of the community, has largely become the responsibility of public health departments. As a result of much improved building standards, most public health related concerns surface within run-down existing buildings.

However, early development standards which as a result of health of health concerns, regulated such areas as building bulk, setbacks, density, etc, not only affected the original layout of many North American cities, but continue to do so today, since these areas have developed a number of patterns, etc as a result.

Perhaps one universal difficulty with setting standards is the need, in doing so, to somehow establish minimum requirements, a particular problem given that values and preferences are not only diverging, but they are doing so at an increasing pace; partly the result of increasing choices and options. In this sense, the difference in approach taken by Britain and both Canada and the United States becomes evident. The British have used standards in a much more comprehensive sense, addressing issues of design, quality of life, quality of environment, etc, much more directly than has been attempted in North America to date; though politics and to some degree, economics have disproportionately influ-

enced the outcome in Britain. It is mainly the result of high levels of direct government involvement in housing which have subsequently forced some sense of order and organization on the issue.

However, in doing so, a number of hard value judgements, in terms of allocation of resources and the setting of standards have subsequently been made. In attempting to plan for change, only time will tell if the right decisions have been made in Britain. Regardless, one cannot help but be impressed with the sincerity with which the British have approached their housing problems, given the resources at hand. This is also true in several European countries, many of which have had significant impact on the design of British housing and vice-versa.

5.2.3 Responding To Change (Needs, Values and Perceptions)

To a large degree, regulatory reform emanates from attempts to match the needs of the present with existing and anticipated resources. This in turn is complicated by the uncertainty of our knowledge of the future, as has been previously noted. Also, the problem is becoming more complicated as a result of the increasing economic uncertainty the world is currently experiencing. The paradox, from a planning perspective is that often, economic (and political) conditions do not allow for adequate fulfillment of social concerns. It becomes difficult to plan toward a future which it is currently uncertain that we can (or want to) afford.

Perhaps the only reasonable response in attempting to address this confusion is to place particular emphasis on those values which have not changed significantly over time, relative to housing needs and perceptions. Such 'universal' values as are alluded to are difficult to identify, often biased by cultural upbringing, social norms and class structures. A clue to such values is offered if one attempts to analyse what gives any particular place its own character. A number of authors have alluded to such values though it took Jane Jacobs' The Death And Life Of Great American Cities for North Americans to realize that sense of place, of community and of history make each place unique. This opinion has been shared by many other writers, in the recent past, and is slowly beginning to evidence itself in recent urban development via increased urban design awareness and subsequently, more sensitive urban revitalization schemes (involving residential and other uses).

5.3 ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR DERIVING HOUSING STANDARDS AND DIRECTING DEVELOPMENT

Concerns relating to 'planning for change' have not often been echoed in recent response to the design and regulation of housing, specifically in approaching future needs and long term implications, costs, etc. Ultimately, the responsibility for dealing with such concerns will fall on governments, given their long term investment in housing infras-

tructure and related services. In Britain, as in many European countries, the concern about long term costs is more evident, given the higher cost of housing relative to income, relatively limited land supplies and less mobile populations (though this last variable may change). Housing is subsequently designed to last longer yet still be able to accommodate change over time; at least that is the premise. In North America, the rate of physical growth and technological change, coupled with the population's seeming infatuation with novelty and newness has led to the development of often poorly designed dwellings surrounded by equally poorly designed communities as far as durability goes. However, progress in this direction is readily apparent if one compares many newer "Planned Unit Development" projects with comparable projects from the 1950's and 1960's, such as Levittown and the like. However, given the nature of the market and its short-term, reactive orientation, both developers and consumers for that matter, are not likely to be concerned about long term effects of development relative to change, especially in North America.

In this sense, government (at various levels) must take the responsibility in attending to these concerns. (This need not be done on a disincentive basis as incentives of various sorts may be given to conforming development in much the same manner as incentive zoning -See chapter 4, Zoning Modification) This of course assumes that the municipality, local authority or other form of government has some percep-

tion of what desirable traits (relative to goals, values, etc.) that it would like to see within its housing, both new and renovated. The following areas provide a representative sample of alternative approaches to increasing the responsiveness of housing and housing standards to change. These areas include:

1. Define Meaning of Minimum/Substandard
2. Rethinking the Meaning of Neighbourhood
3. Involving Architects in Housing
4. Flexibility Incentives
5. Reevaluate Density Formulae
6. Deregulation
7. Reevaluate Quality Indicators
8. Financial Consideration/Arrangements

5.3.1 Define Meaning of Minimum/Substandard

A major concern, at least in North America, is the inconsistency associated with defining what constitutes 'substandard' housing (ie. What is the minimum level of acceptability). In this sense, there is similar inconsistency in determining what constitutes the term 'home' itself, and how it relates to the external environment. One author attempts to describe the meaning of this term in a manner which relates to overall quality:

"HOME is the sum total of all the physical and social components that form the flesh and bones of the built-up area; and the relation between those components provides the background that permits the satisfaction of our desires, and contributes to the residents' pride in the place where they

live - or leaves them empty, lonely, frustrated and uninvolved."⁷⁷

The 1949 U.S. National Housing Act, which established the goal of providing "...a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family"⁷⁸ has not, as has been previously mentioned ever been adequately (or at least uniformly) defined in terms of what 'decent' represents. This is perhaps one area where Britain has had distinct advantage as has Canada, to a lesser degree, the result of flexible building and site development standards over the recent past. In moving from specific physical space standards toward descriptive performance standards for housing, the British have learned, often by trial and error, that standards, and their derivation, are becoming increasingly more complex. This is seen as the result of:

- Social, economic and technological change often having increased the quality of housing available to most people.
- Increased expectations, a result of increasing wealth have muddled perceptions of housing need, especially given a sudden drop in the economy.
- The use of minima may not be an appropriate measure when attempting to determine desirable (vs merely tolerable) housing.

⁷⁷ Rami Carmi, "Human Values in Urban Architecture", pp. 159

⁷⁸ Eric W. Mood, "The Development, Objective, and Adequacy of Current Housing Standards", pp. 35

- Minimum is essentially a transitive term given that what is acceptable at one time and place may not be at another.

Many of these same concerns have been identified by both Canadian and American sources, though the response to date from authorities has seen slower progress. The harsh economic realities faced in Britain coupled with the higher level of government involvement in housing, makes addressing such concerns more of an impending necessity but in addition an easier task than in North America.

What is needed is a positive approach, or at least some recognition of the need to address this concern of defining the meaning of minimum /substandard. In this sense, two possible approaches are offered. One particular solution, offered by the U.S. National Commission on Urban Problems in 1969, suggests the following general approach:

1. Define the meaning of 'Decent Home'.
2. Compare existing criteria for achieving the goal to what is needed.
3. Review existing criteria which move beyond the provision of 'basic facilities, relative to goal.
4. Amend criteria as required.
5. Prepare criteria in a form which is easily understood.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Eric W. Mood, "The Development, Objective, and Adequacy of Current Housing Code Standards", pp. 35-38

Another possible approach to addressing this concern would involve an examination of the particular 'standards', associated with private housing; these assumedly being representative of the needs, values and tastes of the general public. These particular standards could then provide the basis for the determination of acceptability. To some degree, such a solution would be responsive to demands of consumers as well as economic limitations. Perhaps the only shortfall is the client group, as at least in Canada and the United States, public housing is built for a much different client group than its private counterpart. However, one may find that the aspirations of the public housing group may be closer to the standard of private housing than many government authorities would care to admit.

In any case, additional research is likely the most deficient area within the realm of defining the meaning of minimum/substandard. This is particularly problematic given the transitive nature of the term 'minimum', yet any attempt to positively respond to (and plan for) change must somehow address this issue, or at least be aware of its potential implication.

5.3.2 Rethinking the Meaning of Neighbourhood

Rethinking the meaning of the neighbourhood concept must form a necessary component of any attempt to plan for change, as the neighbourhood has for a long time, provided a model for the design the residential environment:

"The concept of the neighborhood unit was originally formulated in the 1920's. It offered in concrete terms a model layout of a neighborhood of a specified population size, with specific prescriptions for the physical arrangement of residences, streets, and supporting facilities. Based on the then-popular notion of separation of land uses and the segregation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, it emphasized boundaries and an inwardly focused core. Thus, it was cellular and was relatively self-contained, to be used in building-block fashion to construct a larger realm of neighborhoods.

The prestigious American Public Health Association adopted it in the late 1940's as a basis for formulating "healthful and hygienic" standards for planning, designing, and managing the residential environment. Subsequently, it was adopted, modified, and institutionalized by various professional organizations and public agencies. It was incorporated into many local planning manuals and zoning ordinances in the United States, and it was used in New Town development in other parts of the world. Planners have embraced its purpose of creating a sense of community; public agencies have adopted its purpose of protecting (and promoting) the public health, safety, and welfare; private developers and lending institutions have sought its protection of property values and investment decisions. For more than fifty years, it has been virtually the sole basis for formally organizing residential space."⁸⁰

Given the scope and pace of social, economic and technological change, notably involving increased mobility and social diversity, one must question the basis for defining the concept of neighborhood and whether indeed it is any longer appropriate as a basis for 'formally organizing residential space'. In responding to change, the term 'flexibility' often comes to mind. As related to the meaning of neighbourhood, flexibility is a crucial element. As one

⁸⁰ Tridib Banerjee and William C. Baer, "Beyond the Neighborhood Unit", pp. 2

author states:

"...flexibility means that design professionals must be able to adapt criteria and standards to differing circumstances. To do so, the professionals must not only be presented with a set of criteria and standards; they must be told how these criteria and standards were derived so as to modify them intelligently. Planners must not depend solely on standards formulated by others, in another place, at another time, for different people with different needs. They must be told how to adapt these standards, the the often unique circumstances that each of them faces."⁸¹

One note of interest regarding the meaning of neighbourhood is the previously mentioned notion that there may indeed be a some real basis for the promulgation of the term. This is especially apparent when one examines the diverse, nineteenth century urban neighbourhoods to which Jane Jacobs alluded in The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Since the publication of that particular book in 1961, there has been a significant re-emergence of such 'urban' neighbourhoods in numerous large cities across the world. Though the particular makeup may be different from the past, in terms of age, income, etc, the 'essence' of the old neighbourhoods often remain intact relative to diversity of uses. This would lead one to believe that the concept of neighbourhood may not be dead at all, though evidence may appear to point the opposite way.

Perhaps the key is to approach 'neighbourhood', not from a purely physical objective but equally from an individual satisfaction perspective. The notion of using the neighbour-

⁸¹ Ibid, pp.10

hood unit as a basis for protecting property values need not disappear; it simply needs to broaden its scope as to what constitutes 'value'. In this way, the concept of neighbourhood may then be used as a means toward fulfilling needs, desires and aspirations, while remaining a flexible device, responsive to the changes occurring within and around it. One author states the case in this way:

"Rather than creating a device to enforce elite values or to impose them on society so as to mold better citizens or at least save them from the ravages of the unplanned and unregulated city, the newer values of physical and mental well-being take a more individualistic approach. Rather than designing residential areas in some particular fashion to accomplish some larger social ends, the new approach is: How do we design the residential area so as to achieve well-being in each resident?"⁸²

5.3.3 Involving Architects in Housing

The most sophisticated approach to housing design within the recent past has manifested itself in Britain, a result of the involvement of professional architects within the realm of public housing. In contrast, private housing in Britain is seen as not having kept pace, in terms of quality and sophistication, though this may be more the result of the competitive market than poor design skills.

However, in North America, the involvement of professional architects in housing has been much more limited. Subsequently, the quality and sophistication of housing reflects this phenomenon. Again, the pressures of the market may to

⁸² Ibid., pp. 196

some degree account for this often poor showing, though one must not underestimate the value of the creative mind in attempting to respond to change. In this sense architects and designers may be of tremendous value in a number of ways:

- To develop prototype/model projects via design competition.
- To interpret needs, values and aspirations to local conditions.
- To increase the level of design appreciation within housing.

The involvement of architects into housing, in a wider sense, may provide the expertise and innovation which is necessary to meeting the challenge of 'planning for change'. In addition to direct design involvement, one author envisions an important role for architects within the area of housing related research, including:

"...the external; environment, purchasers' preferences and values, the needs of possible purchasers who don't buy, and the establishment of specification and construction standards that are appropriate to the state of the industry."⁸³

5.3.4 Flexibility Incentives

One area where residential development standards may be used to advantage in addressing concerns relating to change is in the provision of 'flexibility' as an integral part of development standards. This may be achieved either by posi-

⁸³ Colin Davidson, "The Architect's Dilemma", pp. 370

tively rewarding initiative (by allowing other concessions) or by forcing compliance as a necessity for obtaining development permission.

The invocation of particular flexibility indices affecting the design (and modification) of housing provides a potential means of addressing change, from a planning perspective. As a variable directly related to the evaluation of housing quality, the application of such indices as a basis for the determination (and administration) of development standards may prove useful. However, a number of concerns must first be addressed relating to the scope and useful limits of flexibility at various scales of development. These include:

- Assessment of the costs vs benefits of providing for flexibility.
- Resolution as to minimum vs desired levels of flexibility.
- Scope of influence relative to scale of development.

Further concerns are likely to arise in the administration and implementation of such a scheme, given the variety of potential applications. However, the benefits to be potentially derived from considering such an exercise are equally important, given that this would force those involved in the regulation of development to reconsider:

- What constitutes 'obsolescence'.
- What constitutes 'flexibility'.
- What constitutes 'good' design.

- What constitutes a 'good' residential environment.

The use of flexibility indices need not be restricted to local governments and their concerns regarding long term costs, etc. Any public agency which is involved in the direct development of housing may choose to implement its own set of criteria, relative to the situation in which it is involved. Lending institutions may also benefit from such indices given that they may ensure the long term value of the project, dwelling, etc. The basis for derivation may extend beyond flexibility with the use of other performance type indices such as

- Adaptability (Of land and buildings)
- Durability (Of structures)
- Maintenance Cost (Of structures and services)
- Relative Comfort (Amenity levels)

Regardless of the specific basis, the common element among all such performance indices is the attempt to improve the quality and economy of design (at a number of scales) relative to changing needs, values and perceptions.

5.3.5 Reevaluate Density Formulae

The use of performance standards as a means of allowing for flexible response in the design of the residential environment has already been discussed in the past chapter as a legitimate and more commonly occurring phenomenon. However, one form of performance standard which has not received recognition is the use of minimum (as opposed to maximum) den-

sity requirements, as a means of addressing changing social and economic conditions.

The basis for establishing such criteria become evident if one examines almost any North American suburb which is at least 25 years old, composed of densities of 4-8 units per acre, for the most part. Built during times of cheap transportation, cheap land and economic prosperity, little concern existed for the future implications of this development. However, unlike automobiles which have a life span of 10-15 years, housing tends to be built to last much longer, and is largely fixed in space as well as services. As has been noted earlier in this study, changing social and economic conditions, including such variables as changing household composition, aging populations, higher fuel and transportation costs, tax poor cities, poor economic performance, unemployment, inflation and a host of others, gradually upset the equilibrium within which many of these subdivisions existed. Response to many of these changes has manifested itself in many of the ways outlined in the previous chapter, (See chapter 4. Resubdivision/redistribution) though often as a last resort.

Given that the potential problems associated with such forms of development are now known, most municipalities continue to place maxima on densities while at the same time complaining about the increased costs of services or reducing them proportionately. One thing which has been learned

from past experience is that density is required to support the level of amenities which are increasingly expected, ranging from daycare to public transit. In this sense, we have been too preoccupied (in Britain and North America) with what maximum to set on density so as to promote a 'healthy' environment, while ignoring the need to set minimum densities in order to support many of the services and amenities which increase the quality of life. The unprecedented size of many cities has in some cases forced any new development increasingly further from the center city and the services it provides. The solution need not be high-rise development, though in many cases it provides the best (and sometimes only) solution.

An example of responsive design may be found in many European cities and new towns, which are often designed on their ability to support a rapid-transit link and maintain reasonable distance from it. Such a system has ensured the continued, efficient provision of services while maintaining a link to the center city (in the suburban model), using a simple 'economy of scale' model. Municipalities are subsequently not left to foot the bill for costly but often inefficient services, as is often the case in North America.

There is an inherent difficulty in establishing such guidelines given the missing research regarding the levels of services required and the subsequent densities required to support them. Though a difficult task for any municipali-

ty to face, attempting such a performance standard would force a reconsideration of what benefits are to be derived from development and at who's expense.

5.3.6 Deregulation

Deregulation has appeared in the United States as a response to perceived bureaucratic and regulatory inefficiency, within many industries, ranging from airline travel to long distance telephone communication. The argument put forth in favor of deregulation highlights the potential benefits to be derived. These include:

- Increased competition.
- Increased efficiency.
- Lower prices and/or better service for consumers.

While the universal benefits of deregulation remain somewhat suspect, one must consider the specifics of the American situation, primarily the dominance of and belief in the free market system. In approaching the deregulation of residential (or any other form of) development, the particular system in place in parts of the state of Texas, notably in the city of Houston, provide an example of the potential effects.

In reference to the Houston situation, it is interesting to note that the system has, by all appearances, worked itself out without the need for public land-use control. Essentially, market structures have given rise to development which one author describes as both logical and sensible. This includes:

- Increased density with proximity to downtown.
- Separation of incompatible land uses by cost/marketability factors.
- Provision of amenities relative to density.
- Development density based on land value/use potential.
- A competitive rental market.
- Financing dependent on project marketability/viability.

Though it is the lower income groups which would appear to be most vulnerable to the effects of a non-regulated system, experience in Houston has demonstrated that:

"...higher income precincts in the newer areas of the city generally supported zoning and that the lesser-income precincts in the older areas generally opposed it."⁸⁴

The use of restrictive covenants among private landowners may be invoked in those cases where long term stability is desired, and all parties are in agreement.

Such a deregulated system has had significant effect on the role of planners, placing them in the position of assisting private landowners in the design and layout of development plans. One author views this as a positive change, noting that planning is presently based on the misguided notion that "the planner's redistributive values are superior to those of the market and will result in a net gain to the aggregate welfare..."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Bernard H. Siegan, "The Houston Solution: The Case for Removing Public Land-Use Controls", pp. 6

⁸⁵ Douglas W. Kmiec, "The Role of the Planner in a Deregulated World", pp. 9

However, the convincing nature of the argument for deregulation of land development should be placed in context. In Houston, where such a system has been in existence for a long time, no greater problems than in some other cities with zoning in place are readily apparent. Moving such a system to some other place, which has had public land-use controls for a long time, will undoubtedly cause problems, particularly during the transition period.

5.3.7 Reevaluate Quality Indicators

The use of indicators as measures of housing quality is not a new phenomenon. Such devices not only allow for current measure, but more important, allow for long term comparisons. An indicator may be defined as:

"...an identifiable quality associated with a building and its use to which a measure (value) can be assigned."⁸⁶

One list of housing quality indicators includes:

Image: degree of appropriate residential character projected by the development, its components and spaces.

Identity: degree of recognizability of the development, its components and spaces.

Privacy: degree of freedom from interference, extent or level of separation between public, semi-private, and private realms.

Safety and Security:
degree of freedom from danger or fear through protection from potential hazards or threats.

⁸⁶ Cornerstone Planning Group Ltd., "Proposal For: A Housing Evaluation Framework", Appendix B, pp.3

Convenience:

degree of ease in performing daily living activities.

Amenity:

degree to which quality of life or a sense of well-being is enhanced by features additional to basic requirements; and

Upkeep:

degree of ease of maintenance of the building and grounds in terms of work and cost.⁸⁷

The problem remains not in identifying the indicators per se, but in 'weighing' them relative to some quality or value standard. In doing so, an interpretation of desired quality is then made. How such standards then address issues of change or remain responsive to change is a result of this weighing process and the position of importance that this attribute is then given. In this sense, one method responding to change is to re-examine the weighing of quality indicators, relative to the changing conditions surrounding their application. Determining which are universal, which are long term related and which are prone to rapid obsolescence may then help to redefine the basis for continuing many current housing standards, certainly as relating to 'planning for change'.

There has been some indication from past history that 'quality' is a timeless commodity and the ready adaptability of many older housing forms (and neighbourhoods) provide strong evidence of some truth to this theory. Certainly, many of the indicators in the previously mentioned list

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp.3

could not be restricted to one particular time or place. However, it is the relative level of acceptability and/or importance that has been allotted to each, which will change, though certain physical characteristics may lend themselves better to adaptive reuse than others.

In this sense, one must remain cognizant of the relativity of application of indicators over time and from place to place. The increasing 'value' placed on the quality of the external environment as a component of housing quality, in the recent past (both in Britain and North America), represent one example of changing values. Applied in this way, indicators may then become instrumental in guiding changes to standards, even re-determining the basis for their existence and propagation.

5.3.8 Financial Considerations/Arrangements

In response to the need to address issues of change, primarily associated with long term costs, many municipalities, etc, are finding themselves in somewhat of a financial crisis. Whether it is an older area with significantly deteriorated infrastructure or a new area which requires high levels of public services, the costs of maintaining or supplying new services is often hampered by relatively low population density. Examples of problem areas include public transit, police, fire, street maintenance and public parks, to name a few. Densities are not often at a level where, as has been previously mentioned, such services can

be provided without significantly increased costs to municipalities, and ultimately, to taxpayers. This situation is very much symptomatic of North America and the majority of new development follows a similar pattern. In this sense, a number of financial options exist which may address the various concerns relating to existing and more importantly, new residential districts:

Density Levies:

wherein taxation, which supports provision of local services, is levied in direct proportion to density (ie. percentage of actual land area occupied per square foot of housing).

Maintenance Levies:

wherein maintenance and service costs are levied (within taxation), proportional to density, or as an alternative, such services are left to private contractors and private expense thus effectively serving the same end.

Such considerations provide another level of flexibility to residential development and development standards, allowing proportionally lower densities based on the ability of the resident to pay for the increased service and maintenance costs. This eliminates the need to set a uniform or minimum level to which all must conform, effectively no longer penalizing those who choose to live in denser accommodation. The only exception to the pattern would be high-density luxury apartments/condominiums which may then

receive an unfair tax break. However, this may be an unwarranted concern, given that the cost to the municipality would be no greater than for other high-density housing and more area would increase levies proportionally. Perhaps the real problem in being able to derive benefit from such a levy system is whether or not municipal hookup services can accommodate variation in density and more importantly, whether zoning, in North American municipalities would provide the necessary range of choices.

5.4 ACHIEVING RESPONSIVE DESIGN AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Any housing standard or set of standards anticipates the achievement of some goal or set of goals. These goals may range from the achievement (or maintenance) of public health to maintenance of property values. The range of administration involves similar variation, moving from strict predetermined values to flexible performance rated values. In this sense, the 'quality' of the residential environment is then a result of how adequately the standard has allowed (promoted) the achievement of the intended goal(s). As has been previously mentioned, the setting of goals/objectives is a critical issue, but it is not a solution in itself. These goals must also address issues of change, incorporating relevant values in their description, as a basis for changing standards, and with it, the focus of residential development. In this way, one may then be in a position to obtain responsive development.

An alternate solution which has been presented to obtaining responsive design involves the elimination of standards entirely, via deregulation. However, a number of qualifiers must be attached to this method. Firstly, there is an assumption made by the proponents of such schemes that the free market is ultimately representative of the values, preferences, etc. of society. This argument in itself has been criticized by some, yet touted by others as the only true democratic response. Another qualifier involves responsiveness to long term change. For the most part, free markets tend to address short-term demands, and in doing so, are significantly more responsive to such concerns than any non-market situation. However, in the long term, a potential problem may occur, being that long term costs (to the municipality and homeowner) may not be market concerns in most cases. Public intervention may still be required if such concerns are deemed important enough to justify action. A municipality may demand higher quality hard services to circumvent this problem, though long term costs must ultimately be borne by taxpayers. Assuming that there is no control on density, one who chooses to live in denser accommodation would likely incur a proportionately smaller percentage of long term maintenance costs. The deregulation option offers a degree of choice in this respect.

As has been demonstrated, there are a number of basic approaches which may be taken toward achieving responsive

development and development standards. However, regardless of which approach is taken, the need exists to reexamine present values, beliefs, etc. which are often taken for granted as being static, although this may not be entirely the case.

5.5 THE ROLE OF PLANNING

Planning has had, at least in North America, a rather convoluted role within the realm of residential development and development standards. Partially a result of the proliferation of zoning and its inherent limitations, planners have found it difficult to accomplish a great deal beyond the granting (or refusing) of development permits and reaction to emergency situations as they arise.

In contrast, the British system of development control provides a significantly more comprehensive role for planning. However, planning in Britain is also subject to political intervention, wherein changes in government (and government policy) may often serve to destroy any planning gain which may have been made.

However, planning may indeed perform a significant function in making development and especially development standards more responsive to change. Given their training, planners may, and indeed should be, involved in the setting and interpreting of goals and the values which determine them, assuming such a direction is taken by municipal (and

/or other) governments. Such a role ought to extend to the preparation and application of such regulatory standards which may result. Within a deregulated system, the role of the planner would essentially involve assisting private developers in the preparation of land use development plans, as currently is the case within the Houston model.

5.6 SUMMARY

In summary, there are a number of potential directions which development and particularly development standards may follow, in an attempt to respond to changing social, economic, and technical conditions, ranging from total deregulation to reevaluating housing quality indicators. Though highly dependent on local circumstances, the options presented within this chapter all exhibit one common concern; that being the need to reconsider the basis for current development standards (and subsequent response to them), bringing them more in line with long term needs, values and preferences than they have often been in the past, thus requiring a rethinking of goals and ultimately, values. It has been discovered that there is value to maintaining standards, however, there is increasing potential (the result of economic crises etc.) for them to do more harm than good, in the long term. This is because housing is a long term commodity, and the quality of what is built today will ultimately affect the ability of and potential for response in

the future. Privately initiated response to change has often been geared (a result of the existing market) toward short term 'coping', with the 'interest' limited to the individual developer or homeowner, often at the expense of the long term well being of the community. In order to achieve development that is responsive to change, those responsible for the continued administration of development standards must first consider (or reconsider) the consequences of their application, and indeed the basis for their proliferation.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The preceding thesis outlines the breadth of both potential and tried solutions for making residential development and development standards standards more responsive to socio-economic change. Noting that particular approaches as well as responses are significantly different in Britain, The United States and Canada, it is interesting to note that in spite of these differences, all share the common concern that public controls are not working optimally (They have recently been dropped, in part, in Britain) toward achieving long term objectives. For the most part, change is addressed in a reactive manner, providing a means for coping with immediate concerns while often avoiding the base problems themselves. The term 'coping mechanism' is used by one author as a means of describing current methods of action. In approaching standards from a design perspective, technological advances in housing have, to a large degree, proved unsuccessful in responding to many recent socio-economic changes, though it is not as much the technology itself which is at fault as its often wrongful application coupled with overly high expectations.

What appears certain, is that the basis for standards themselves must be rethought in order to achieve any significant increase in the responsiveness of the physical structure of the residential (and non residential) environment to said socio-economic change. In the United States, two disturbing cases emerged which confirm a potential crisis situation. Firstly, the case for removal of land use controls, as demonstrated by B. Siegan in Houston, is surprisingly convincing and difficult to refute in light of performance. Given the particular quality level(s) we have been able to achieve for residential environments, in general, with the existence of controls, it is not likely to be any worse without them. Siegan's arguments demonstrate that it may even improve quality, at the very least via the levels of convenience provided. The only cautionary note is that Houston has never had any system of public land use control in place, whereas other cities and/or municipalities, which have developed under public control systems, may find sudden de-regulation causing a state of chaos. Such appears to be the case in Britain with the sudden removal of the Parker Morris Standards. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the second indication of a potential crisis situation is exemplified by New York City and to a lesser degree by San Francisco. In these cities, traditional zoning systems have done such a poor job of responding to change, that they have invoked what may essentially be considered 'development con-

trol', in order to achieve their particular land use objectives; a peculiar response in a country which places such a high priority on private property rights, per se. In Canada, Vancouver is viewed as providing a further demonstration of this response, with its system of discretionary zoning. In any case, it is observed that these problems are not restricted to residential development, but appear to be endemic of development in general. Other evidence of changing development and development standards have been examined, including:

1. Development Moratoria
2. Development Control
3. Performance Standards (Design)
4. Performance Standards (Cost Maxima)
5. Streamlining Requirements
6. Reducing Standards
7. Flexibility Indices
8. Densification Policies
9. Resubdivision/Redistribution
10. Model/Demonstration Projects
11. Zoning Modifications

6.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

What appears certain is that there is a renewed interest in reevaluating both the scope and purpose of residential (and general) development standards, in Britain, The United

States and Canada (appearing at different times and intensities as conditions dictate). In making an attempt to address many of the concerns expressed over reforming existing systems, a number of points are raised repeatedly, as necessary responses to achieving positive change. These include:

- The need to set goals/objectives.
- The need to establish criteria for evaluation of both existing and future product.
- The need to reconsider the bases for current standards and their subsequent methods of operation.
- The need to critically examine the long term effects/consequences of maintaining current standards.
- The need to reexamine historical examples, both for their positive and negative attributes.
- The need to allow skilled designers the opportunity to design better housing (especially in North America).
- The need to change attitudes and correct false perceptions in the minds of those involved in both the supply and demand sectors.
- The need for government(s) to address issues of socio-economic change, in dealing with housing regulation and development, given their involvement in and ability to affect, housing markets.

The thesis outlines a number of potential solutions which reflect these concerns, offering potential bases for establishing goals/direction within the realm of residential

development and development standards. Included among them are:

1. Define Meaning of Minimum/Substandard
2. Rethinking the Meaning of Neighbourhood
3. Involving Architects in Housing
4. Flexibility Incentives
5. Reevaluate Density Formulae
6. Deregulation
7. Reevaluate Quality Indicators
8. Financial Consideration/Arrangements

6.3 PLANNING FOR CHANGE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

To a large degree, this thesis may be used as a reference source relating to issues of 'planning for change' within the realm of residential development. However, it would be unfair to the subject by not attempting some further comment relating to directing and organizing responses to change. In order to do so, it is necessary to put forward a number of questions which ultimately must be asked by any concerned group or groups attempting to initiate change. Again, it is important to recognize that each particular situation may require different responses, though the same questions will undoubtedly emerge in all cases. These questions include the following:

1. Is 'planning for change' indeed a better option than (case by case) reacting to change. Is it indeed possi-

ble, given existing circumstances to plan for change at all?

Perhaps the answer lies in differentiating between long-range planning and incremental planning, subsequently judging the relative merits of each. Regardless, in the area of residential development, building services and land subdivision serve to place more restrictions on future redevelopment than the buildings themselves; primarily in terms of capacities. Any present decision which serves to restrict future value/potential must be weighed relative to present gain vs long term implications. The long term implications of many such decisions are now becoming apparent, especially in North American cities. Whether indeed the level of research within these area is defined well enough to provide an adequate basis for decision making remains to be answered. Without this backup, 'planning for change' will then become a difficult, if not impossible task.

2. Are 'standards' themselves set unrealistically high or are they simply inadequate?

If one views the breadth of standards currently in existence and the subsequent regulations which serve to support them, it is necessary to examine each case on its individual merits. However, there is little doubt that standards are intended to serve some pur-

pose, though it may be naive to assume that 'the public interest' is high on the list. The lack of support for standards from a range of groups including planners, private developers and governments indicates that something is not working.

The problem may then be simply a matter of misdirection. It may be the result of misapplication of standards and the flexibility with which they are regulated; it may be within the particular goals/values upon which the standards are based; or again, it may be the absence of a defined basis for the standards. Standards ought not to be used as an end in themselves, they must be used as a means to an end. Whether that end is to provide better quality or simply more efficient development, it is necessary that it be identified in any case.

3. **Should standards, and as a result, regulations reflect cyclical change or permanent change?**

It is necessary to differentiate between which changes follow which patterns. While technological change is often permanent, social, economic and especially political change is often cyclical in nature. Even within cyclical changes, it is difficult and often impossible to predict how long a particular cycle will last. In this sense, one answer will not cover all situations.

4. **What guarantee is there that 'relaxed' standards will foster better quality development?**

If it has been demonstrated (and it has in many cases) that rigid application of standards has failed to meet prescribed objectives, the chance may be well worth taking. It is difficult if not impossible to make any guarantee in such a complex and dynamic area, however there appears to be a need to use judgement in the setting of standards and subsequently in the enforcement of regulations. On this issue at least, all parties are likely to agree in principle.

5. **What specific concerns should standards be responding to?**

Some response to this question may result from asking what standards should not respond to. Given the complexity of the residential environment, the range of actors involved, and the fluctuations in political and economic circumstances, there are no shortage of concerns to respond to. In this sense, ignoring any particular concern is likely to create problems. The suspicion is that if a potential concern is ignored, then a potential misapplication exists, as a result.

6. **Who should be responsible for determining and regulating standards?**

There are four potential bodies which may be candidates. These include federal/national governments,

provincial/state governments, local/municipal governments, and private developers. Others such as private/public agencies and consumer groups may participate as well.

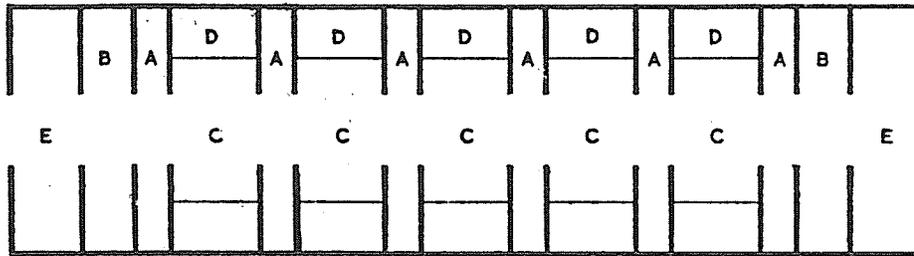
National policies are often criticized for their lack of flexibility in response to issues of regional disparity. Provincial/state initiated policies, in turn are often criticized for overlapping too heavily on local government jurisdiction. This must be examined relative to the effectiveness and capacities of local governments within the particular state/province. However, it is difficult to ignore the value of local/municipal government in addressing standards related issues. This is the one level of government which is in contact with a workable range of concerns and where goals have some chance of being effectively worked out. The case is made stronger if one considers that local/municipal government is ultimately responsible for the long term management of housing and housing related services, in most cases. Limited expertise and limited resources (financial and human) are problems which most local/municipal governments must realistically face, in attempting to address standards and 'planning for change'. The notion of private developers as a source for the setting of standards is one which has been underestimated and

underutilized in the recent past. There has been a constant fear that the industry may not be able to adequately police itself as well as whether 'the public interest' can be adequately defined in terms of marketability. Whether or not the private sector has the capacity to provide leadership in this area cannot be answered here. However, if one examines the range of innovation within the private sector in the United States in particular, the question may be partially answered. In addition, the involvement of other private/public agencies and consumer groups may serve to identify specific areas of concern relating to standards , at the very least.

Appendix A

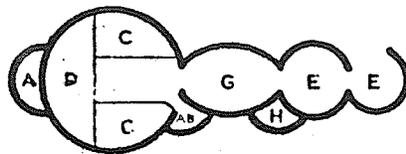
FIGURES

Figure 1: EARLY HOUSING STANDARDS
 . (From W.V. Hole, "Housing Standards and Social Trends",
 pp. 137)



IROQUOIS LONG HOUSE

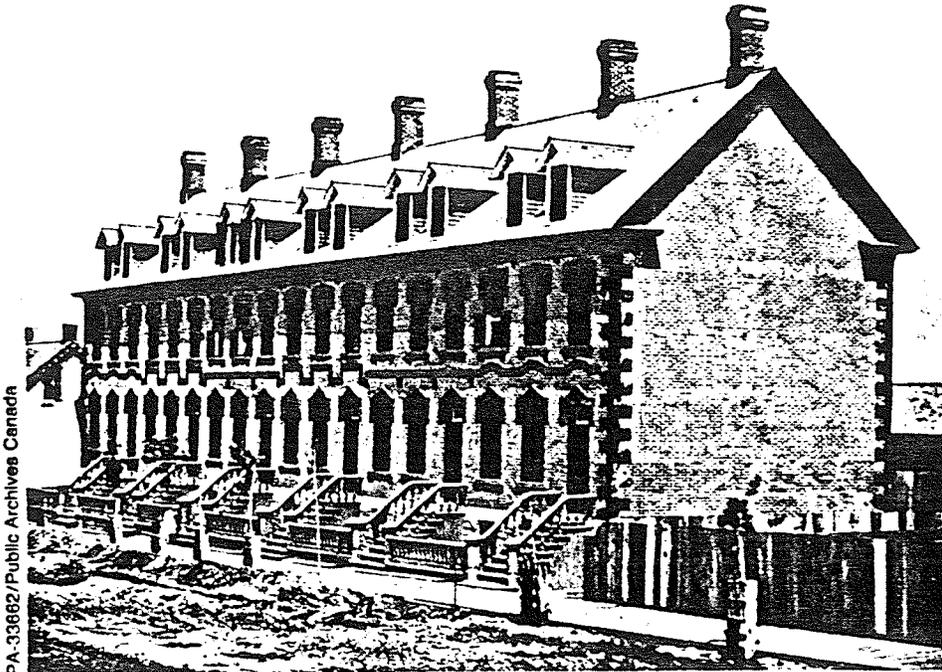
- A food storage
- B fuel storage
- C cooking
- D sitting and sleeping
- E entrance
- G dogs sleeping space
- H harness storage.



DAVIS STRAIT ESKIMO IGLOO

Simple Forms of Housing: One Room per Family

**Figure 2: GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATION OF APPROPRIATE STANDARDS
IN CANADA**
(From: John Archer, "A History of Housing Standards",
pp.10)

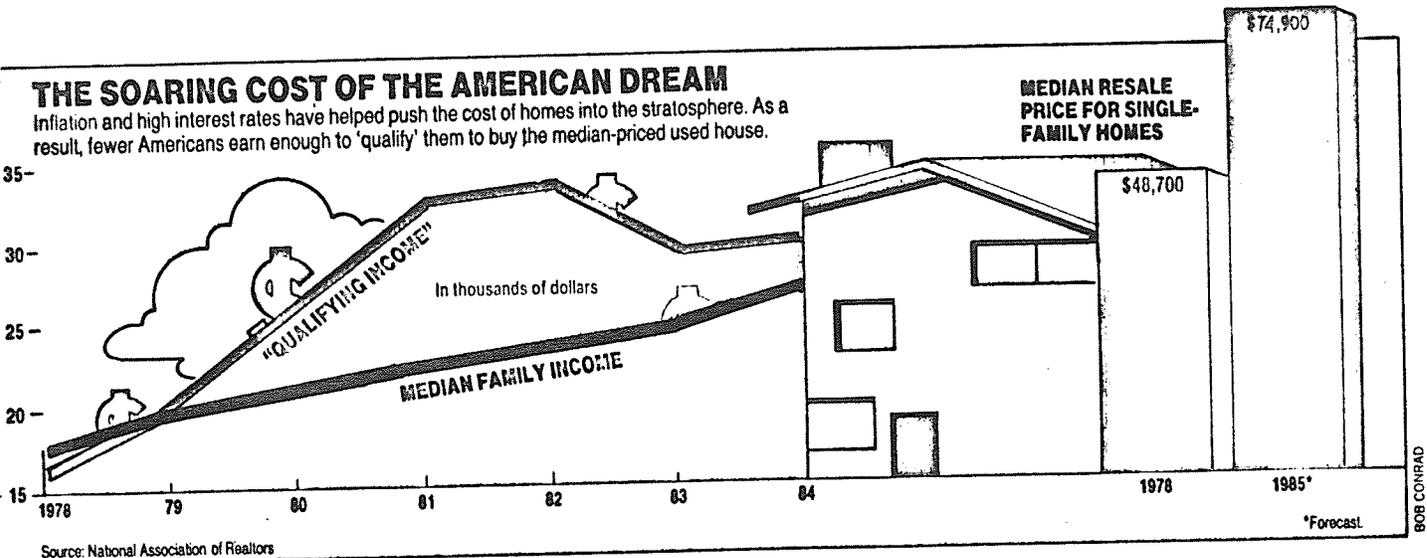


PA-33862/Public Archives Canada

Government involvement in the planning and design of model projects, such as this one in Toronto, was intended to demonstrate an appropriate standard of housing for the "poorer classes".

Figure 3: HOUSING PRICES AND INTEREST RATES

THE COST OF HOUSING IN THE UNITED STATES
 (From: Newsweek, "When A House Can't Be Home", pp. 53)



CONVENTIONAL INTEREST RATES
 QUARTERLY AVERAGES; CANADA
 (From: Government of Canada, Consultation Paper on Housing, January, 1985, pp. 10)

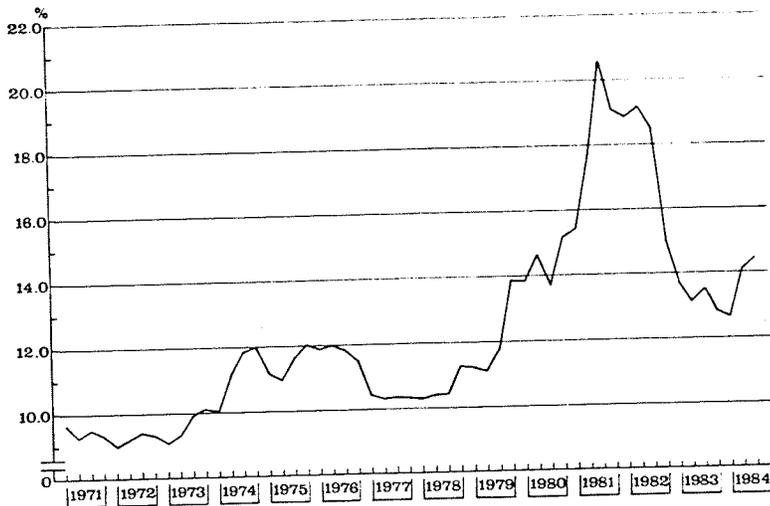


Figure 4: EVOLUTION OF MEASURES FOR STRUCTURAL QUALITY OF HOUSING UNITS AND BASIC FACILITIES (UNITED STATES), 1934-1970

(From: William C. Baer, "Housing Indicators and Standards in the U.S.A.", pp. 371)

	1934-1936 Real Property Inventory	1940 Census of Housing	1950 Census of Housing	1960 Census of Housing	1970 Census of Housing
S T R U C T U R A L	Good Condition	Not Needing Major Repair	Not Dilapidated	Not Dilapidated Deteriorating	No Measure of Structural Quality
	Need Minor Repairs				
Q U A L I T Y	Need Major Repairs*	Needing Major Repair*	Dilapidated	Dilapidated	SUBSTANDARD†
	Unfit for Use				
B A S I C F A C I L I T I E S	Items‡	Lacking any of the following: Private bath Private flush toilet Running water	Lacking any of the following: Private bath Private flush toilet Hot running water	Same as for 1950	Same as for 1950
	Shared or no bath Shared or no toilet Without running water				

* Not comparable to the later used classification "Dilapidated."

† "Since substandard housing may result from a variety of objective and subjective conditions, it is not possible to set up a precise and rigid definition of the concept. However, absence of sanitary facilities, unsafe condition of the physical structure of the dwelling, overcrowding, and the presence of extra families are all factors which render a dwelling unit substandard." (WPA, 1938:4)

‡ Not a Bureau of the Census designation. Officially adopted by HIFA (HUD) in 1950. Can be used for 1940 data as well.

Other surveys

1959 Survey of Components of Change and Residential Finance (SCARF): same as for 1950.

1968 Current Population Survey (supplement): same as for 1950.

1970 Components of Inventory Change (CINCH): same as for 1950.

Sources: Works Progress Administration, Division of Social Research, *Urban Housing: A Summary of Real Property Inventories Conducted as Work Projects, 1934-1936*, compiled by Peyton Stapp (Washington, D.C., 1938); Executive Offices of the President: Office of Management and Budget, *Social Indicators, 1973* (Washington, D.C., 1973).

Figure 5: PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN PHYSICALLY SUBSTANDARD UNITS (UNITED STATES), 1930-1970
 . (From: William C. Baer, "Housing Indicators and Standards in the U.S.A.", pp. 374)

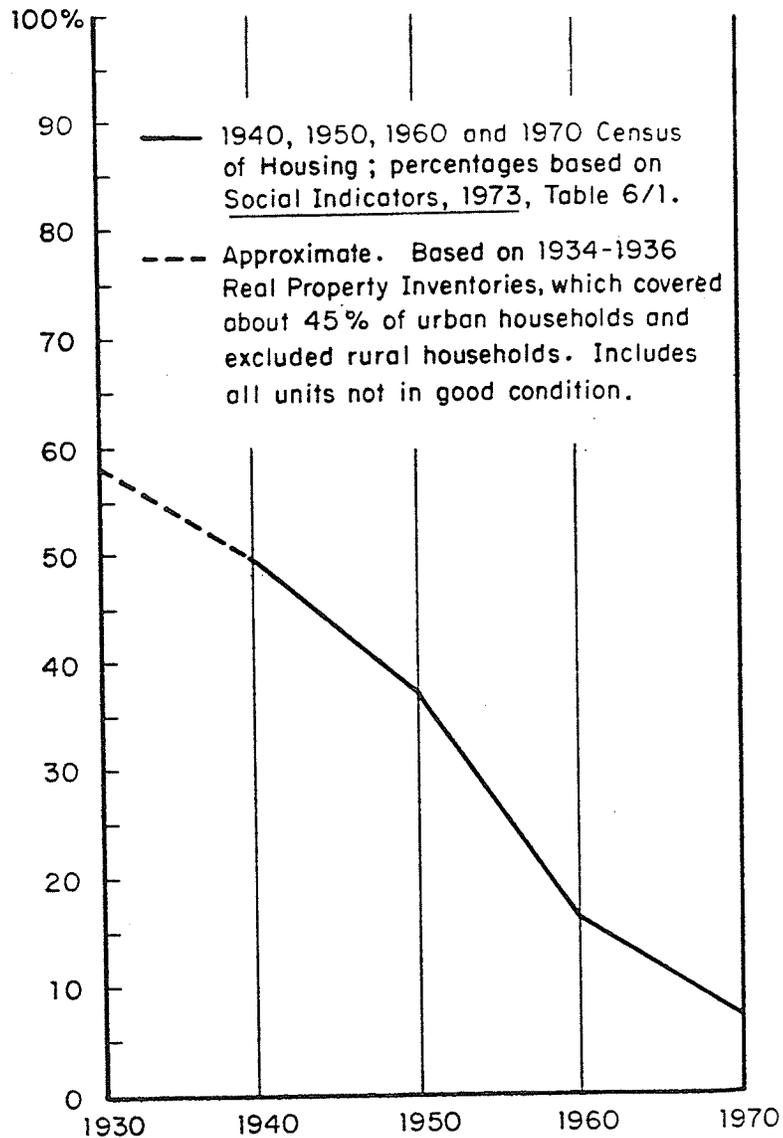


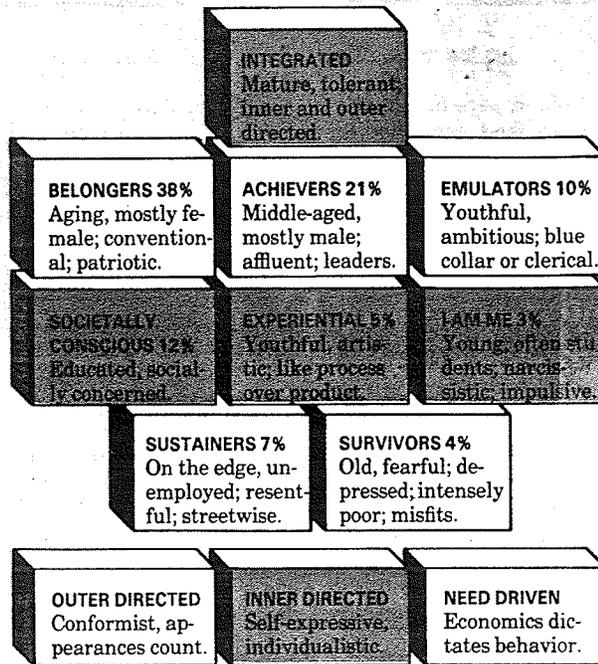
Figure 2 shows that the proportion of substandard housing declined from 48.6 percent in 1940, to only 7.4 percent by 1970. More recent census data suggest that this trend is continuing.

Figure 6: VARIETY OF TARGET MARKET GROUPS (UNITED STATES)
 (From: Newsweek, December 30, 1985, pp. 7)

Inside the Consumer's Mind

Increasingly, marketers are using "psychographics," a categorization of the U.S. population by "values and lifestyles." The

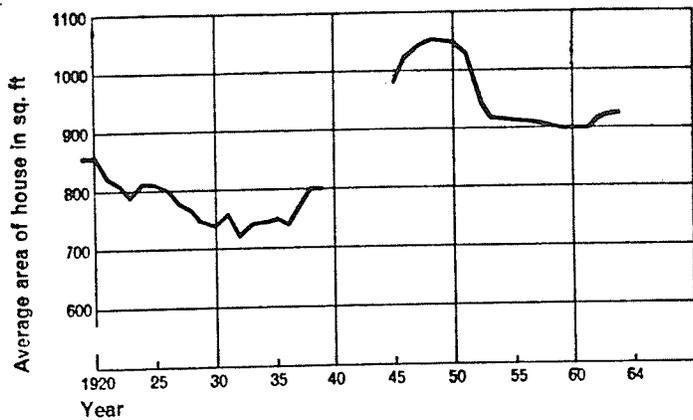
technique—with mixed results—has been used to sell everything from beer to autos. The categories and distribution:



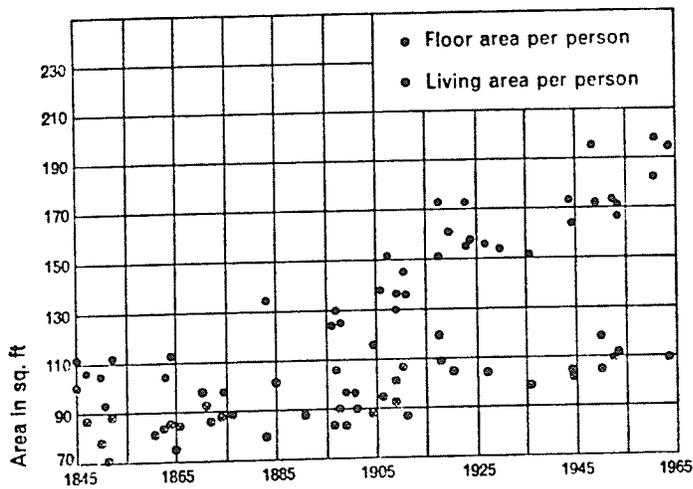
SOURCES: SRI INTERNATIONAL, SIMMONS MARKET RESEARCH BUREAU, 1985

SCOTT MacNEILL

Figure 7: CHANGE IN BRITISH HOUSING STANDARDS, 1920-1965
 (From: D.V. Donnison, "The Government of Housing", pp. 252)



Average floor areas of three-bedroom houses built under subsidy in England



Recommended space standards for minimum family houses

Figure 8: PSSHAK VARIATIONS WITHIN A STANDARD SHELL AT STAMFORD ROAD
 . (From: E.R. Scoffham, "The Shape of British Housing", pp. 150)

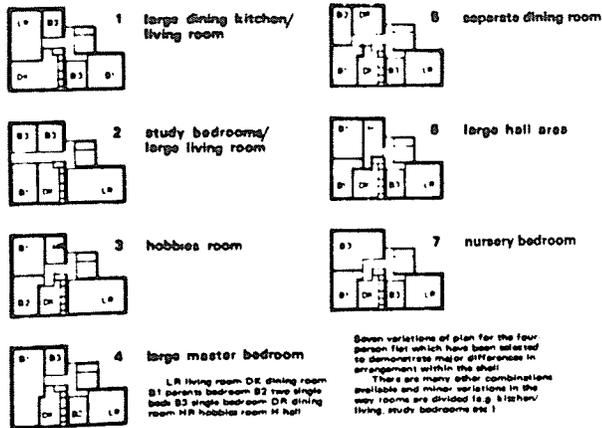
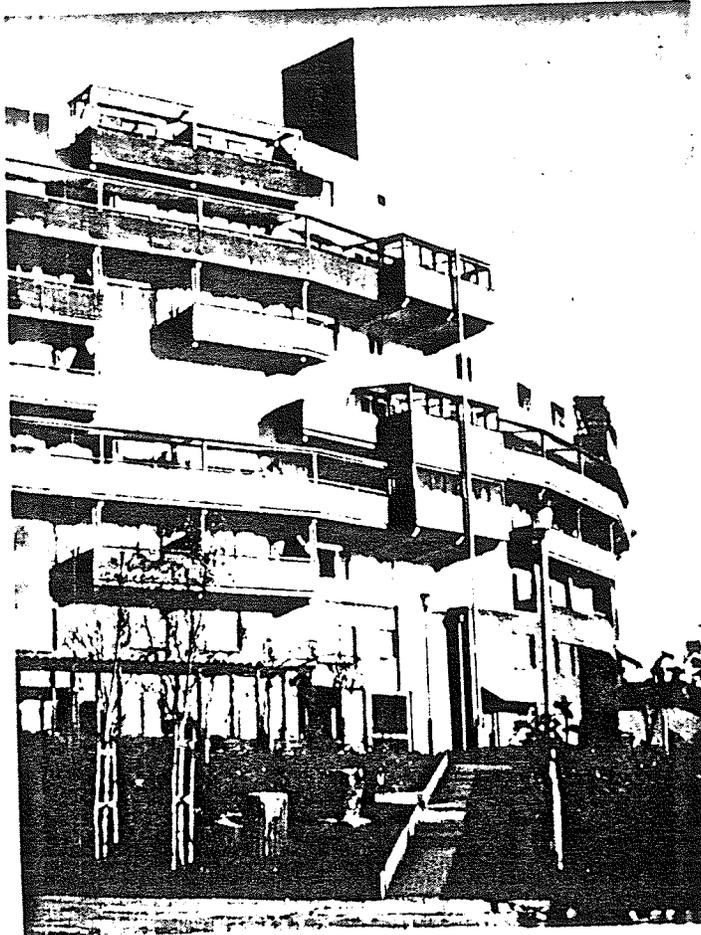
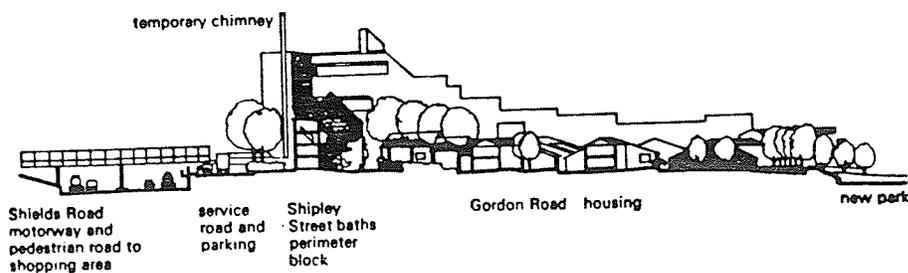


Figure 9: BYKER WALL (SECTION AND PHOTO)
 . (From: E.R. Scoffham, "The Shape of British Housing", pp. 157-160)

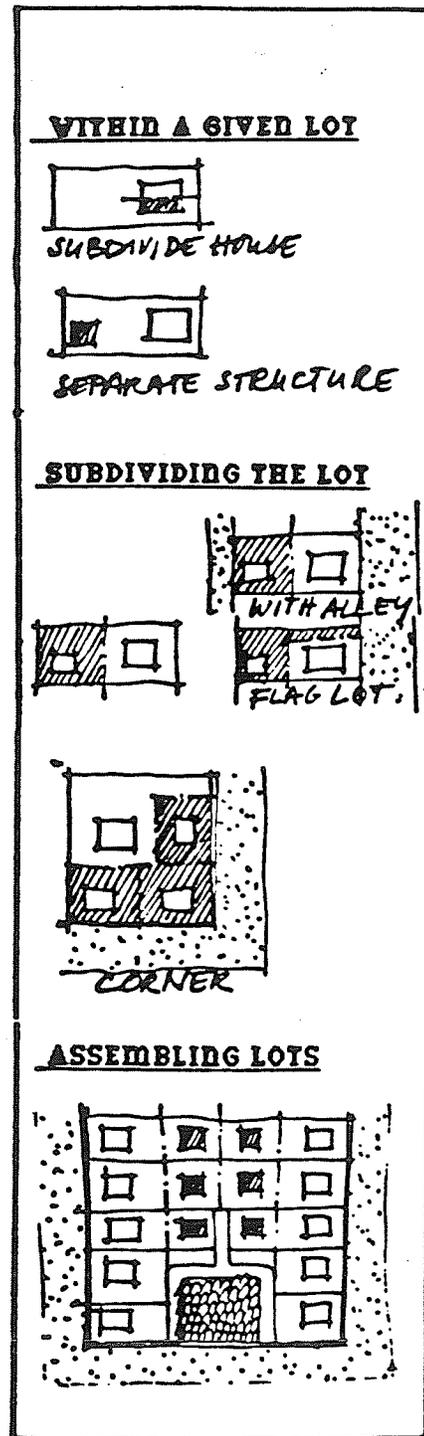


Byker Wall (John Ford)



Section through Byker redevelopment (*Architectural Review*, December 1974)

Figure 10: RANGE OF RESUBDIVISION/REDISTRIBUTION IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS (UNITED STATES)
 . (From: Anne V. Moudon, Chester Sprague, Marina Botta and Hattie Hartman, "Transform! A Typology of Consolidation For Single Family Properties and Neighborhoods", pp. 12)



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