(RE)-CONCEPTUALIZING HOUSING FOR WOMEN WITH PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND DESIGN

Submitted by Erin McCleery

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of City Planning
University of Manitoba

Advisor: Dr. Sheri Blake
Internal Reader: Dr. Richard Milgrom
External Reader: Dr. Fiona Green

August 2007
THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

(Re)-Conceptualizing Housing for Women with Participatory Planning and Design

BY

Erin McCleery

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

Erin McCleery © 2007

Permission has been granted to the University of Manitoba Libraries to lend a copy of this thesis/practicum, to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to lend a copy of this thesis/practicum, and to LAC's agent (UMI/ProQuest) to microfilm, sell copies and to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.

This reproduction or copy of this thesis has been made available by authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright owner.
This research is concerned with how gender, housing and participation intersect to create more meaningful opportunities for understanding the housing needs of women and, ultimately, to establish more responsive housing options. Specifically, the research explores the role of participatory planning and design in improving the housing conditions and quality of life for women with low-incomes. Through this research, participation is examined for its potential to derive both physical and social outcomes in the context of affordable housing development.

A qualitative research strategy was employed, including literature review and interviews based upon a case study. The case study examines a participatory design process undertaken by Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society toward the design of affordable housing for women. Through a successful participatory design process, ENF created a venue for women to describe, create and control their own housing circumstances. What emerged from the participatory design process was the development of a responsive and women-oriented housing model. Through this process, women were also given meaningful opportunities to build their own capacity and skills, which they were able to apply to other areas of their life.
This practicum provides a discussion of lessons learned and considerations for supporting the participation of women in the design and development of affordable housing. This includes proposing policy recommendations. Suggestions for future research are outlined in the final chapter.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of individuals whom I would like to acknowledge. First, thank you to my advisor Dr. Sheri Blake for her guidance and support in writing this practicum. Thank you as well to my committee members, Dr. Richard Milgrom and Dr. Fiona Green. Your insight and encouragement in my research have been greatly appreciated.

A special thank you to those who participated in this research. In particular, thank you to the women who shared their personal stories and experiences for this research. These stories have been a source of inspiration and have re-affirmed that the personal is political.

I would also like to thank my friends and family for their constant support. I would particularly like to thank my papa, whose spirit and kind heart is a constant reminder of the beauty and goodness that exists in this world.

Finally, I would like to recognize the support received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship Program.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................... ii

1.0 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 1

1.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Project Statement ............................................................................................................. 2
1.3 Scope and Objective of the Research ............................................................................. 7
1.4 Biases and Limitations ................................................................................................... 10
1.5 Organization of Practicum ............................................................................................. 12

2.0. RESEARCH METHODS ............................................................................................... 14

2.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 14
2.2 Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 14
2.3 Case Study Design ........................................................................................................ 15
2.4 Interview Design .......................................................................................................... 17
  2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews .................................................................................... 20
  2.4.2 Interviews and Feminist Research Methods .......................................................... 20
  2.4.3 Interview Sample .................................................................................................... 21
  2.4.4 Interview Analysis .................................................................................................. 22
2.5 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 24

3.0. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................... 26

3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 26
3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings: Applying a Gender Lens to Planning ............................... 27
3.3 Women & Housing ........................................................................................................ 34
  3.3.1 Why Women with Low-incomes ............................................................................ 34
  3.3.2 Critical Issues in Housing Women with Low-Incomes .......................................... 39
  3.3.3 Women & Housing: Affordability and Accessibility ............................................. 40
  3.3.4 Women & Housing: Planning and Design ............................................................. 45
3.4 Housing Policy and Gender Mainstreaming ................................................................... 53
  3.4.1 Overview of Canadian Housing Policy ................................................................. 56
  3.4.2 The Invisibility of Women in Recent Canadian Housing Policy ............................ 67
3.5 Participatory Planning & Design: A Case for Greater Participation in the Design of Affordable Housing by and for Women

3.5.1 Participation

3.5.2 New Ways of Conceptualizing Participation using a Gender Perspective

3.5.3 Empowerment

3.5.4 Capacity Building

3.5.5 Participatory Planning & Design: Re-conceptualizing Housing for Women

3.5.6 Participatory Planning and Good Design

3.5.7 Praxis: The Application of Participatory Theory into Practice

4.0 CASE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Political Context: Housing Policy and Planning Practice in Vancouver

4.2.1 Overview of Women-Oriented Housing in Vancouver

4.3 Women Learning By Doing: The Participatory Practice of Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society

4.3.1 Entre Nous Femmes History and Background

4.3.2 Relevance of Case Study to Research

4.3.3 Limitations of Case Study to Research

5.0 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

5.1 The Design Committee Perspective

5.1.1 Structure, Membership and Process

5.1.2 The Cooperative Role of the Architect and Participant

5.1.3 The Role of Participation

5.1.4 The Physical Dimensions of Housing

5.1.5 The Social Dimensions of Housing: Capacity Building and Empowerment

5.1.6 Barriers of Participation

5.2 The Residents Perspective

5.2.1 The Alma-Blackwell Experience

5.2.1.1 The Physical Dimensions of Alma-Blackwell

5.2.1.2 The Role of Participation at Alma-Blackwell
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation ........................................... 74
Figure 2 – Rocha’s Ladder of Empowerment ........................................... 86
Figure 3 – Wates and Knevitt’s Chart on the Distinction Between Conventional and Community Architecture ......................... 97
Figure 4 – Front Façade of Alma-Blackwell ........................................... 143
Figure 5 – Interior Courtyard of Alma-Blackwell ................................. 148
Figure 6 – Jessica Place ................................................................. 156
Figure 7 – Interior Courtyard of Jessica Place ................................. 163
"One thing is certain: WE DON'T NEED A THOUGHT POLICE. We need discussion. We need thinking. We need critical faculties. We need to embrace the dilemmas and conflicts in design, and take responsibility for the outcomes of our work. When we use the term "we", we don't mean designers as separate from clients, or some extraordinary class of powerful overseers. We mean "we" as citizens collectively imagining our futures. It is critical that the discussions go beyond the design fields themselves and reach out to the broadest audience, to the people directly affected by the work of designers. The effect of the new conditions is to distribute potential, or capacity, worldwide and allow contribution by anyone, anywhere. The future of global design is fundamentally collaborative. In this condition there is no room for censorship” (Mau, 2004).
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research explores the role of participatory planning and design in improving the housing conditions and quality of life for women with low-incomes. Through this research, participation is examined for its potential to derive both positive physical and social outcomes in the context of housing development. It is being argued that participatory planning and design can result in better housing design, thereby contributing to improved and more appropriate physical environments for women. Further, participatory planning and design has the potential to support the capacity building and empowerment of women. Through the participatory process, women acquire and develop knowledge and skills, while also exercising choice in shaping their environment. This two-way exchange and transfer of knowledge between participants and professionals not only enables women to make decisions about their immediate dwelling, but this knowledge can also be transferred to other areas of their lives. Physical and social outcomes of participation also intersect, whereby physical spaces, such as common areas, can be designed to provide additional support to women by strengthening social networks within the housing development.
The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the lack of fit between women's housing needs and current affordable housing design and practice, and how participatory planning and design can improve women's housing experience. In turn, this research also identifies barriers to women's participation, as well as the limitations of participation in the context of housing development. In recognition of this, this research examines Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society, a successful Canadian women-oriented non-profit housing organization that engages in participatory methods in the planning and design of their housing projects. The case study research focuses on evaluating the physical and social outcomes of participatory housing design on the participants and ENF residents. From this case study, the research identifies key recommendations to support participatory design processes within affordable housing policy and practice. This includes proposing policy recommendations to support the participation of housing users in the design and development of affordable housing.

1.2 Project Statement

There is a greater need, than is met by current practice, for women to be involved in the design and planning of their own housing. Women with acute housing needs are a growing demographic group, and yet their needs are often unacknowledged and overlooked by mainstream
affordable housing strategies (McCraken and Watson, 2004, 6). This research explores participatory planning and design as a critical and effective strategy for improving the housing condition for women. Participatory planning and design provides a means for realizing more suitable physical shelter that accommodates women's unique housing needs. Furthermore, participatory planning and design legitimizes the role of women as agents of change through capacity building and the fostering of women's self-empowerment, thus not only strengthening their housing experience but also women's overall quality of life (Gilroy & Woods, 1994, 72; Feldman, 2006, 34).

This research addresses an area that is significant to both theoretical and practical aspects of planning, as well as critical to understanding and ultimately improving the social and economic conditions of women in North American society. Women with low-incomes, such as single-parent mother families or single older women, are a growing demographic group and an increasingly permanent social phenomenon. However, their housing needs for the most part continue to be ignored. Further, research demonstrates that the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on women and that households that experience the greatest poverty are those headed by single female parents. Therefore, the demand for affordable and responsive housing to accommodate women with low-
incomes is immediate (Friedman, 1999; Gilbert, 2000; Madigan et al, 1990; McCraken and Watson, 2004, Peters, 2000).

Currently there is no nationally or internationally accepted definition of low-income or poverty, as these are dynamic concepts for which multiple definitions and methods of measurement exist. This research is not concerned with quantifying women's experiences of poverty. As well as, it does not only focus on the housing needs of a particularly defined group of low-income women. This practicum proposes a more holistic understanding of poverty and one that considers more than income levels in determining poverty and which recognizes multiple variables that intersect to create impoverished conditions for women. Mainly, this research validates women's ability to self-identify as living in poverty and their experiences of poverty, whether grounded in quantitative or qualitative evidence. However, in order to provide a general picture of the realities of poverty facing women and to demonstrate the urgency of the issue, the following paragraph considers Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off Rate (LICO) as a category of inquiry.

The LICO measure is a relative calculation based on the percentage of income that individuals and families spend on the basic needs or necessities in comparison with the rest of Canadians. In view of the LICO
measurement, it becomes apparent that women make up a disproportionate share of the low-income population in Canada. In 2001, 2.4 million women were living with low-incomes, compared to 1.9 million men (Statistics Canada, 2000). In 2003, 31% of unattached women aged 16 and over had incomes below the LICO line, while this was the case for 28% of men. Two out of five families headed by lone-parent mothers had incomes below the LICO. Further, 43% of all children in a low-income family were living with a single female parent. Low-income rates were highest among lone-parent families headed by women. In 2003, 38% of female lone-parent families were below LICO, compared to the 12.6% of male lone-parent households (Statistics Canada, 2006).

It has been well documented in housing research that women lack safe, affordable and adequate housing. In particular, women have urgent housing needs and are at greater risk of living in unsafe and unstable shelter; and require specific supports to attain quality affordable housing. As such, women are disproportionately dependent on housing in the public sector. This includes public housing, non-profit and co-operative housing. Further, women who are unable to gain access to public housing tend to be dependent on slum landlords and poorly maintained rental housing. In more extreme cases, homelessness is a reality affecting women with low-incomes (McCraken and Watson, 2004; Weisman, 1992).
Yet considering what we know about the lack of affordable and suitable housing for women with low-incomes, too little affordable housing is developed; and when it is developed the housing is generally unsatisfactory. At present, affordable housing policies and strategies are limited in scope, and tend to focus on the basic provision of physical structures. This "bricks and mortar" approach to affordable housing ignores the fundamental social and community dimensions of housing that are necessary for creating positive housing experiences for women with low-incomes.

Housing advocates and providers must find new ways of looking at and legitimizing housing for women that recognize both the need for affordable housing and the need for a network of social and economic supports. One way of achieving this is to include women in the planning and design of their own environment through participatory processes.

In view of the above project statement, the key research questions that guide this research are:

1. To what degree do existing affordable housing policies and strategies fail to meet the housing needs of women with low-incomes?

2. In what ways does participatory planning and housing design address the physical and social dimensions of women's housing need?
3. What are the barriers to participatory planning and design in the context of housing for women and what strategies have been employed to overcome these barriers?

1.3 Scope and Objective of Research

The research is concerned with how gender, housing and participation intersect to create more meaningful opportunities for understanding the housing needs of women and to ultimately establishing more responsive housing options.

The main objective of the research is to bring to the forefront of planning thought and action an understanding of gender issues. In particular, the goal is to develop an awareness of the acute housing needs of low-income women. The research examines the literature on women’s housing needs and experiences in the context of affordable housing in Canada.

Once a clear understanding of women’s housing issues have been established, a second objective is to posit participatory planning and design as a valuable and effective strategy for improving the housing experiences of women. This involves an examination of the key principles of participation and their implications for planning and design practice, including an exploration of the barriers and limitations of participation. Following, the research considers various methods and mechanisms of
participation in the context of affordable housing design that are particularly relevant to women with low-incomes, including tenant participation, women-led groups and community architecture.

To gain a richer understanding of participatory planning and design and its impact on women's housing experience, the research undertakes an in-depth examination of Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society, a housing organization in Vancouver British Colombia committed to providing secure, safe, affordable and appropriate housing for women. Through interviews with key informants, design participants and residents the research focuses on the participatory process carried out to address the housing needs of women, the impact of participation on the residents' housing experience, the degree to which their needs were met, and the barriers to women's participation in the design of ENF housing. This includes drawing on the experiences of those interviewed in order to recommend possible solutions to overcoming the barriers identified by the design participants and residents.

The goal is to bring together the data on participatory planning and design in order to examine the potential to implement and develop participatory methods in mainstream affordable housing. More specifically, the research draws on ENF as a successful model of
participatory planning and design to support and advocate for the
application of participatory theory and action in both Canadian housing
policy and resulting housing strategies.

Before advancing further, a brief discussion on the meaning and scope of
planning and design in the context of this research is necessary.
Planning and design are not necessarily distinct categories or mutually
exclusive disciplines. Bartuska (1994) argues that design requires a
consideration for planning, and planning requires a careful consideration
for design (12). As such, the terms are often used interchangeably. For
the purposes of this research, the scope of planning and design is
theorized and explored in the context of affordable housing. The role of
planning in housing is multifaceted. In general, the role of planning and
housing converge with the development and delivery of housing and
land-use policy, as well as the formulation of a system for providing,
producing, maintaining and managing affordable housing. Planning in
the context of housing can also include the production and management
of broader programmatic features and activities within the housing.
Design, in the context of housing, is often more specific and involves a
creative process that often results in the implementation of three-
dimensional housing interiors, structures and surrounding landscapes
(Bartuska, 1994). Participation is relevant to both disciplines and requires
that users and/or citizens be involved in development of housing policy and the design, maintenance, management of their own housing.

1.4 Biases & Limitations

The research does not intend to label housing as specifically a women's issue, rather the researcher recognizes that affordable and appropriate housing is a universal right of all individuals. However, the researcher illustrates that women have unique needs within the issue of affordable housing and as such it is concerned with examining participatory planning and design from the perspective of women's housing needs. As such, the research is limited in that it explores participatory planning and design from the perspective of women users. Participatory planning and housing design present significant opportunities to various user groups. However, due to the limited scope of the research the focus will be specifically on women with low-incomes as a housing user group.

Furthermore, the research does not intend to suggest that participatory planning and housing design is suitable for all women and that participatory processes will attend to all the housing needs of women. More accurately, the researcher intends to demonstrate participatory planning and design as a viable alternative that has tangible benefits that can improve women's housing experience and quality of life. Rather than
suggesting that all women should engage in participatory planning and housing design, this research is an attempt to advocate that the option of participatory planning and design should be made available to women.

Finally, the research is limited in that it explores participatory planning and design in the context of permanent housing. Participatory planning and design will not be explored in the context of emergency or transitional housing for women. While the researcher recognizes the importance of emergency shelters and transitional housing as strategies to improve women’s quality of life, participatory planning and housing design for these two types of housing present distinct challenges that would ultimately alter the direction of the research.

This chapter establishes the context and parameters of the research. It includes a discussion of the scope and objectives, the key research questions and the biases and limitations specific to this study on participatory housing design for women with low-incomes. The following chapter describes the research methods that were used in order to meet the aforementioned research objectives.
1.5 Organization of Practicum

This practicum is organized into seven chapters. Following the introduction, chapter two summarizes the research methods employed. It outlines the rationale for the case study research and qualitative interviews undertaken, as well as the analysis conducted.

Chapter three examines the available literature relevant to this research. It begins by exploring the literature on women and housing in the context of affordability, accessibility, planning and design. Following this, an overview of Canadian housing policy and its implications for women is provided. The review goes on to examine the concept of participation. This includes an examination of dominant planning theory of participatory planning and design, as well as more recent ways of conceptualizing participation using a gender perspective. The chapter ends by bringing these sections together to explore the potential to re-consider housing for women through a participatory planning and design lens.

The case study description is provided in chapter four. This chapter discusses the planning and design process undertaken by Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society in the design of Alma-Blackwell and Jessica Place housing projects. In addition, the political background
surrounding ENF is discussed.

Chapters five and six provide an analysis of the case and lessons learned for the field of planning and design. Specifically, chapter five provides a review of the interview findings and a discussion of the main themes. Chapter six discusses the lessons drawn from the literature and case study for housing practitioners, including architects and planners working with women. The chapter concludes by proposing housing policy recommendations.

The final chapter provides a summary of the research. The concluding chapter discusses some of the limitations of the research and offers suggestions for future research.
2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Introduction
The purpose of this section is to define the empirical research methods used in this practicum. The research draws on the case study method as the main research tool, which will include two separate sets of qualitative semi-structured interviews: key informant interviews and resident interviews. This methodology section provides a rationale for selecting case studies and interviews as the research methods and identifies how these methods are used to address the key research questions.

2.2 Literature Review
The first stage of this research consists of a literature review. This research method involves the formal survey, evaluation and critique of existing literature related to the particular field of research and key research question (Hart, 1998).

The literature review examines various theories and perspectives in the context of participatory housing design for women. This includes the examination of feminist and gender planning theory, affordable housing theory and policy, as well as participatory planning and design theory. These perspectives are summarized and considered in the development.
of lessons learned and housing policy recommendations to support participatory housing models for women.

The purpose of the literature review is to define the scope of the research, situate the research within a historical and gender perspective, to draw connections between various sources of literature and to determine existing gaps in current research. The literature review also helps to frame the case study research and provides a foundation to inform the interview questions.

2.3 Case Study Research
The case study method provides the main framework for the research and informs the subsequent interview stage. Yin (2003) defines case studies as a distinctive form of empirical inquiry that examines contemporary events or phenomenon within their real-life context (13). The author maintains that case studies are used extensively and are relevant methods for social science research, particularly in practice-oriented fields such as urban planning and public policy (Yin, 2003, 1). The case study relies primarily on two sources of evidence: (1) direct observation of events being studied and (2) interviews with persons involved in the events (Yin, 2003, 8). What distinguishes the case study method from other types of ethnographic or observation-focused
research is the role of theory. Case study research involves the construction of preliminary theory related to the topic of study prior to the data collection phase. Theory development is a critical part of the design phase that allows the researcher to generalize the case study results, as well as to test existing theory and formulate new ones (Yin, 2003, 28-33).

In the context of Yin's criteria for case study research, this practicum involves direct observations and site visits to ENF housing projects and uses photography to document key design features, as well as it involves interviews with key informants and residents to uncover their contextual and real-life experiences of participation and housing. The practicum also draws on housing and participatory planning and design theory to ground and inform the research on ENF Housing Society.

It should be noted, that this case study research is limited in that it does not involve direct observation and study of the actual ENF design process in action. In contrast, this case study research focuses solely on the retrospective descriptions of interviewees on the ENF design process. Further, typical case study research involves the intensive application of a broad array of investigative tools. This case study research is limited to
site visits, photo documentation and post-occupancy evaluations of ENF housing, interviews, as well as theory development and construction.

More specifically, Grannis (1994) describes post-occupancy evaluation as a form of research that evaluates a facility or design of the physical environment to determine how well it supports desired human activities. Essentially, post-occupancy evaluation explores the relationship between the built environment and the quality of life. This research includes a component of post-occupancy evaluation in that it explores ENF residents' satisfaction with their housing and living environment. Arguably, it moves beyond this method to include case study research by focusing also on the physical and social impacts of the ENF participatory planning and design process.

2.4 Interview Design

Interviews are a critical source of case study information. Interviews allow the case study investigator to explore insights into a matter, while also providing sources to confirm evidence or theory (Yin, 2003, 89-90).

Miles and Huberman (1994) note that, "qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's 'lived experiences' are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and
structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them" (10). More specifically, Ziesel (1981) maintains that the interview process enables participants to define a concrete situation, what they consider important about it, what effects they intended their actions to have in the situation and how they feel about it (137). As such, interviews allow for the exploration of personal thoughts and experiences of the participant, while the interviewer provides direction.

Since the primary objective of this research is to explore the role and impact of participatory planning and design on the housing experience of women, interviews were well suited for this research. Two sets of interview groups were recruited, key informants and residents, in order to elicit their ideas, opinions and experiences of participatory housing design.

The first set of interviews were held with key informants who were directly involved in the development of ENF's housing and who were instrumental in the participatory design process for Alma-Blackwell housing. Key informants included planners, architects and design committee participants. The key informant interviews were intended to provide an understanding of participatory planning housing design process. This included an examination of the key motives for undertaking
participatory planning and design, the principles that guided the participatory process, and the benefits and limitations of participatory housing design.

The second set of interviews were held with ENF residents currently living in two ENF housing projects: Alma-Blackwell and Jessica Place. The resident interviews were intended to provide a thorough understanding of the impact of participatory planning and design on the housing experiences of women with low-incomes and to specifically determine the physical and social outcomes of participation for women.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted on an individual basis and lasted between 45 to 60 minutes in duration. The interviewer utilized a separate interview guide for each research group in order to provide a context and direction for the particular interview, as well as to ensure consistency of topics for each interview group. An audio tape recorder was used to capture the interview sessions, and the interviewer recorded additional notes and observations of the participants’ body language and behaviours during the interview. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed.
2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

This research specifically involves semi-structured interviews, which allows the researcher to explore the personal thoughts and experiences of the participants, while allowing the researcher to provide direction. As opposed to closed questions and heavily directed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews utilize interview guides, which provide a set of open-ended questions designed by the researcher. The intent is to solicit specific information, as well as provide the ability to direct the interview process. The flexibility of the interview guide gives the interviewer and participant the freedom to explore certain issues or topics within the context of the research study in more depth. While all interviewees are asked the same set of questions, the use of open-ended questions allow participants to draw on a range of meanings. In general, semi-structured interviews are employed when the interviewer has broad knowledge of the subject matter and an understanding of the types of information they are seeking but not enough to anticipate the interviewees responses (Morse and Richards, 2002, 94-95).

2.4.2 Interviews and Feminist Research Methods

Semi-structured interviews are also consistent with many feminist research principles. And while there is no single method for undertaking feminist research, one common theme underlying all feminist research is
the notion that women’s lives are important (Reinharz, 1992, 241). Reinharz (1992) maintains that interviewing offers researchers access to women’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher, thereby legitimizing women’s voices and ideas as valid knowledge. The author further argues that semi-structured interviews reflect feminist interests in avoiding control over others by affording respondents a greater role in constructing data about their lives (19-21).

This research is committed to undertaking feminist research methods and attempts to legitimize the knowledge of women’s subjective experiences regarding housing and participatory design. With the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher sought to understand the relation between women’s individual stories and the larger social systems in which they operate. Ultimately, allowing the researcher to draw the necessary connections between women’s experiences and the macro gender inequalities that are part of society.

2.4.3 Interview Sample

Interviews are an effective research method for smaller sample sizes. While there is no steadfast rule for sample sizes, generally the goal is to establish a sample size that will provide the researcher with a sufficient
amount of data to fully explore the particular topic of inquiry. The objective of this particular research is to obtain a rich understanding of women’s housing needs and the impact of participation on their housing experience. As such, this research sought a sample size that provides a diverse and complex range of perspectives.

A sample size of nine key informant interviews was conducted, including three interviews with planners and ENF staff indirectly involved in the planning and design of ENF housing and six interviews with design committee participants who were directly involved in the actual planning and design of ENF housing. A sample size of ten resident interviews were also conducted, including seven residents living in the first ENF housing development Alma Blackwell Place and three residents living in a later ENF housing development called Jessica Place.

2.4.4 Interview Analysis

Within each interview set, the individual interviews were examined separately, as part of a thematic group and in relation to all other interviews in the corresponding set.

In order to analyze the data collected from the two interview sets the researcher used Mason’s (2000) concept of literal reading and
interpretive reading as a reference to guide and inform the analysis process. A literal reading of data enabled the researcher to consider and become familiar with the language, sequence of interaction, structure of dialogue, as well as the literal content of the data. However, Mason (2000) argues that a purely literal reading is not possible, since it is impossible to approach data from a purely objective framework and because the researcher brings his/her own social meanings and constructions to the data. As such, an interpretive reading involves the construction and documentation of a version of what the researcher thinks the data represents (Mason, 2000,148-149).

The objective of undertaking a literal and interpretive reading of the interviews was to elucidate and retrieve the common themes that emerge from the interview transcripts, as well as to identify the differing perspectives that existed in the data. This involved answering the key research questions and finding common themes between the interviews and literature. The researcher applied cross-sectional indexing techniques to identify common themes, the relationship between multiple themes, exceptions and ultimately to determine how well the data addressed the research questions and theoretical concerns.
Cross-sectional indexing involves devising a consistent system for indexing or coding the data set according to a set of common principles and measures in order to turn the data into a resource that can be accessed and analyzed in various ways (Mason, 2000, 150-151). Cross-sectional indexing enabled the researcher to link two or more sets of information by themes. As such, it supported the researcher in identifying the similarities and differences between theory (literature review) and practice (interview data).

2.5 Conclusion
Through the ENF Housing Society case study and related two sets of interview groups, an arguably extensive understanding of participatory housing design was developed. By revisiting the research questions during the analysis stage, the researcher obtained an understanding of the benefits and limitations of undertaking participatory processes in the context of housing, the impact of participation on women's lives and key considerations for applying participatory housing design in Winnipeg and/or Canada.

The following chapter examines the somewhat disparate literature on women, housing and participation in order to bring these three areas
together into one body of research and to provide a framework for subsequent case-study research.
3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the current literature regarding participatory planning and housing design for women. First, the literature review presents the key theoretical underpinnings supporting this research. In particular, concepts of gender theory and feminist theory as they relate to the field of planning are examined. This is followed by an examination of the key issues regarding women and housing, mainly issues of housing access and affordability, as well as topics pertaining to the planning and design of housing. The literature review focuses on the role of participatory planning and design in improving the housing conditions and experiences of women. The significance of participatory planning and design in the context of affordable housing for women is also highlighted, including its social benefits of empowering women and building capacity, as well as its physical benefits in providing more responsive and quality housing. Finally, while participatory planning and design are critical in improving the housing experiences of women and other marginalized groups, there are nevertheless several barriers that prevent participatory planning and housing design from being fully realized. The literature review concludes by addressing the key obstacles of participatory planning and design from both the perspectives of
women as participants and of planners as facilitators of the participatory
process as is identified in the literature.

There is currently limited and inadequate literature available that links
the three areas of focus involved in this research: gender, housing, and
participatory design. One of the purposes of this research is to fill this
gap by bringing together these three somewhat disconnected areas of
literature into one cohesive body of work and to ultimately identify
connections between gender, housing and participatory design.

3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings: Applying a Gender Lens to Planning

Urban planning and design is an extremely diverse and complex
discipline that in general is concerned with the social, economic, physical,
and environmental development of cities. Planning is mainly interested in
how these multiple layers of space and activity intersect and interact to
create urban areas. It is this profound knowledge of cities that allows
urban planners and designers to develop strategies and policies to affect
positive change and to ultimately create supportive spaces and
environments for people to inhabit. However, it is only recently, with the
emergence of postmodern doctrines, that the field of urban planning has
become more concerned with social and cultural diversity and with how
difference affects the planning and design of the spaces in which we live
and work. In particular, gender has increasingly become a site of inquiry within the field, and one that has contributed to a greater understanding of how cities and their spaces limit women’s access and control within the urban landscape.

In order to appreciate the importance of feminist and gender theories in reshaping planning thought, it is necessary to first deconstruct the meaning of gender as a category of analysis. Gender as a concept is not static, but rather is dynamic and constantly in a state of flux. Fainstein and Servon (2005) cogently define gender as encompassing “the associations, stereotypes and social patterns that a culture constructs on the basis of actual and perceived differences between men and women” (3). The authors argue that gender is not specifically about women and men, but more about the roles ascribed to women and men, the relationships between them and the differentials of power and access that are the outcome of such relationships. Therefore, when a gender lens is applied to planning thought or action, the focus is not on women or men as such, but the focus is on understanding the systems in which women and men are intertwined and the assumptions embedded within those systems (Fainstein and Servon, 2005, 3-7).
While gender is not the only lens that allows us to examine and question planning and policy issues, it nevertheless provides a critical perspective for understanding the various urban systems and structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Gender theory allows us to identify and question assumptions about women and men that are deeply rooted in planning theory and practice, and to ultimately challenge these assumptions through the development of new theories and policies that legitimize both women’s and men’s experiences (Fainstein and Servon, 2005, 8-10). Similarly, though not identical, feminist theory is fundamentally concerned with struggles for women’s equality, and as such focuses primarily on women as a category of analysis. However, feminist theory, in its efforts to uncover and challenge the overarching structures that perpetuate gender inequality, is also comprehensive in scope and includes an overall concern and recognition of multiple women and the oppression of other marginalized groups (Macgregor, 1995, 26-29).

While this research explores both feminist and gender theories as a framework for the study on participatory housing for women, it also recognizes the differences between the two theories. Underlying feminist theory is the assumption and critique of women’s oppression and as such it refers to conceptual approaches whose primary focus is women and
gender as it influences women's status. In contrast, gender theory seeks to understand both women and men and the interaction between the two roles. Despite the differences that set feminist and gender theory apart, the connections between the two theories have also been debated among scholars. Schrijvers (1995) argues that feminist theory would not be possible without the use of a gender lens. However, the application of gender theory does not by itself represent a feminist approach. Further, gender theory is often seen as a progression of feminist theory, whereby gender theory, supported by feminism, can enhance the role of both women and men in social research and action (Schrijvers, 1995, 23).

Though the application of feminist and gender theories in planning is quite extensive and wide-ranging, MacGregor (1995) effectively describes three areas of planning to which feminist and gender theories have contributed: (1) the planned environment, (2) planning processes, and (3) planning epistemology (29-42).

First, gender theory's critique of the built environment has demonstrated how certain planned spaces have served as barriers to women's struggles for equality. This has included the examination of public transportation and its impact on women's mobility and participation in the public sphere, the implications of suburban neighbourhood design in
segregating women and limiting their access to city life, and the role of the built environment in contributing to women’s fear of crime (Hayden, 1980; Hillier 2001; Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995). Of importance is feminist theory’s contribution to demonstrating how the built environment is not a neutral landscape, but rather an active source of physical and social power that contributes to human struggles and the maintenance of gender inequality (Weisman, 1992).

Second, feminist and gender theories, through their critiques of the planning process, have demonstrated how the citizen consultation process tends to exclude marginalized groups such as women. It has been argued that more conventional consultation processes conceive the public as undifferentiated and gender neutral. Therefore, they overlook the various barriers that silence women and prevent them from participating meaningfully in public discourse. Barriers such as overt power differentials and hierarchical relationships that exist between planners and women as participants or the devaluing and dismissal of alternative forms of communication function to undermine women’s ability to participate and engage in planning processes. This is particularly relevant today, where there is a major trend towards participatory planning processes taking place throughout mainstream planning systems. However, while many planning agencies and officials
claim that participation and public consultation is happening, all participatory approaches are not the same, and there still exists an overall lack of concern for inclusive and accessible planning processes. Feminist planners recognize the importance of inclusive participatory processes in addressing gender-related concerns of women and for ultimately enabling women to exercise decision-making authority on issues that affect the quality of their life and their community (Macgregor, 1995, 33-35).

Third, feminist and gender theory has helped to redefine planning epistemology and to broaden its scope by recognizing other ways of knowing, such as storytelling or life experience as legitimate sources of planning knowledge (Friedmann, 1987; Sandercock, 1998, 2003). In contrast to mainstream notions of planning knowledge, based on abstract principles and objectivity, feminist theory recognizes women's voices and experiences as valid sources of planning knowledge. According to Macgregor (1995), planning, as an academic discipline and as a professional practice, is at an intellectual crossroads where theorists are re-evaluating the legitimacy of its methods and principles. The outcome of this re-visioning process is the challenging of purely rationalist and positivist planning approaches, whereby feminist and other critical theorists have revealed how the concept of rationality is
totalizing and one-dimensional. Feminist theorists are not rejecting rational approaches outright, rather they are trying to move beyond dualistic notions of rational versus non-rational knowledge and in doing so are calling for a multi-dimensional paradigm that is inclusive of diversity and other ways of knowing within planning theory and practice (37-38).

While there is no single or overarching feminist or gender theory that can be applied to all planning problems, at their foundation is a genuine concern for how planning thought and action impact the lives of women. In recognition of this, the basic tenets of gender and feminist theory will serve as a framework to support and guide this research. This research attempts to address the three areas of planning as outlined above. First, the role of the built environment on the lives of women is examined in the context of housing. In particular, the role of Canadian housing policy and practice on the lives of women with low-incomes will be explored. Secondly, the research examines alternative planning processes that empower women and give voice to women’s needs within the context of housing design. Mainly, principles of participatory planning and design are reviewed. Thirdly, this practicum considers women as primary subjects for the research and explores women’s housing histories and experiences as legitimate sources of planning knowledge.
Despite significant advances in integrating a gender perspective into the discipline of planning, the concept of gender still remains marginalized in the application of and education on urban theory. It is the hope of the researcher that this practicum will help advance the recognition of gender as an important category of analysis in planning and design and serve as a source of educational material to support the application and communication of gender theory in planning and design education.

3.3 Women and Housing

This section provides an overview of the literature on women and housing. It involves a close examination of the current issues surrounding housing women with low-incomes. In particular, the housing needs of women are reviewed from the perspective of housing access and affordability, as well as from the planning and design of housing. Finally, participatory planning and design in the context of housing for women is explored. However, prior to reviewing the literature on women and housing, a brief examination of women as a distinct housing user group is necessary.

3.3.1 Why Women with Low-incomes?

This research is mainly concerned with innovative and affordable housing models for women that are both responsive to their unique needs and
which are a source of empowerment and capacity building for women. The research explores the process and outcomes of participatory planning and design as fulfilling both the physical and socio-economic dimensions of women's housing needs. While the primary focus of this research is women as legitimate housing users, it is important to note that the motivation for grouping low-income status with gender into a single category of inquiry is not to diminish the impact of each factor on the lives of women. Nor is the intent to consider all women as belonging to low-income status, or to suggest that only women experience poverty. Rather, there is sufficient evidence that demonstrates that there is a strong connection between low-income status and gender, which impact women concurrently. In general, current research maintains that the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on women, and that women predominate in some of the poorest types of households, particularly single elderly and single parent households (Friedman, 1999; Gilbert, 2000; Madigan et al, 1990; Peters, 2000).

Gender and feminist research have focused on multiple areas within the planning and design disciplines, including transportation planning, landscape architecture and design and public facility design. Of particular importance to this research, is the focus of research on gendered roles within the private or domestic context and the impact of these roles on
women’s access to education and paid employment. Research has demonstrated that women are likely to undertake the majority of unpaid domestic work and childcare provision, all of which restricts women’s labour market choices and ultimately affects their incomes and ability to improve their economic status (Pressman, 2003, 353). Essentially, assumptions about reproductive roles and women’s dependency on men in marriage prevent women from attaining financial autonomy (Harrison and Davis, 2001, 168). Difficulties are especially created for single mothers who lack resources and support with childcare provision, and who have limited government support for childcare expenditures (McCraken and Watson, 2004, 3-4). Women living in less traditional household forms, including single mothers and single elderly women whose resources and needs are unique, face financial difficulties and are therefore over-represented amongst poor populations (Harrison and Davis, 2001, 168).

Though some academics argue that women are becoming less confined to the domestic sphere, women are still faced with challenges in the public sphere. Women tend to occupy lower-waged and part-time jobs and have significantly limited opportunities to move up within occupational hierarchies (Harrison and Davis, 2001, 169). Pressman (2003) identifies occupational sex segregation, in which women are
systematically excluded from higher-paying occupations, as a major factor that contributes to women's greater chance of being poor (354).

As a result of these barriers that sustain women's low-income status, women have urgent housing needs and are at greater risk of living in unsafe and unstable shelter and require specific supports to attain quality affordable housing (McCraken and Watson, 2004, 2). Women are disproportionately dependent on housing in the social sector, including public housing, non-profit and co-operative housing. Further, women who are unable to access public housing tend to be dependent on slum landlords and poorly maintained rental housing (Wekerle, 1993, 97). In more extreme cases, homelessness is a reality affecting women. In particular, divorce and domestic violence against women often contribute to women leaving their home and, in turn, may result in insecure accommodations and financial uncertainty (Harrison and Davis, 2001, 170-171).

In current poverty debates, the term "the feminization of poverty" has been coined to describe the growing and disproportionate impoverishment of women (Gilbert, 2000; Pressman, 2003). While the term recognizes the disadvantaged economic status of women, it has also been criticized for essentializing gender and ignoring the very
structures of inequality that give rise to different types of constraints and survival strategies that women face. Gilbert (2000) maintains that poverty cannot be explained solely by gender, but that discussions of poverty must also take into account processes of race and class that contribute to the economic status of women (68). The theory of feminization of poverty has also been criticized for being politically divisive, in that it fails to encompass the disproportionate number of men of color who are also living in poverty (Pressman, 2003, 353). Therefore, though the term has helped raise public awareness about the interconnections between gender and poverty, any discussion of women and poverty must also recognize how constructs such as ageism and racism are intricately intertwined with poverty.

While this research recognizes that poverty affects both men and women, it also acknowledges that women with low-incomes are confronted with different challenges and have unique housing needs. As a result, women experience poverty and housing differently. It also appreciates that poverty for women intersects with, and is intensified by, other variables such as race, ethnicity, ability, age, and sexuality. Finally, this research acknowledges that strategies to address housing poverty must apply a gender lens to ensure that policies and programs support the equality of both women and men.
3.3.2 Critical Issues in Housing Women with Low-incomes

The literature on women and housing is somewhat outmoded and limited in scope. The majority of the literature available either focuses on women’s housing needs or the inadequate housing options available for women. There is a lack of current research examining women’s unique housing needs in a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach and how existing housing options fail to address these needs. It is the objective of this literature review to pull together the various disconnected sources of literature into a cohesive body of research by examining the lack of fit between current housing and women’s housing needs. By bringing the literature together, the researcher anticipates providing a better understanding of what type of housing options are needed to meet the needs of women and to ultimately improve their overall housing experience.

Of the numerous sources of literature reviewed, two main themes emerged in the context of women and housing: (1) affordability and accessibility and (2) the planning and design of housing. First, the concepts of affordability and accessibility refer to women’s core housing needs and the critical factors influencing women’s ability to procure adequate shelter. Second, the conventional planning and design of affordable housing has been heavily scrutinized for ignoring both the
physical and social housing needs of women. The process and outcome of planning and housing design are seen as fundamental in contributing to women's overall positive or negative housing experience. While these two areas of interest are not meant to encompass all the issues related to women and housing, they nevertheless provide an effective framework for understanding the relationship between women housing need and housing development and practice. The following sections elaborate more specifically on these two themes.

3.3.3 Women & Housing – Affordability and Accessibility

Housing affordability and accessibility refer to the fundamental aspects impacting women's ability to procure and maintain housing. Without the availability of affordable and accessible housing women will continue to be threatened by the immediacy of homelessness.

Conventional understandings of housing affordability have been put forward by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC), which has developed a measure of housing conditions and a method for determining acceptable housing in Canada, called core housing need. Core housing need is assessed using three standards: adequacy, suitability, and affordability. Adequacy refers to the physical condition of the housing. Suitability refers to the size of the dwelling in relation to the
household composition. Affordability refers to the cost of the dwelling in relation to household income. CMHC considers a household to be in core housing need if it fails to meet one of the three criteria and if the household would have to spend 30% or more of its income to pay the median market rent (Drummond et al, 2004, 17). According to research conducted by CMHC using 2001 census data, the incidence of core housing need was extremely high among specific groups, with elderly females and female-headed lone families making up a disproportionate share of those in core housing need (Drummond et al, 2004, 25). While CMHC’s concept of core housing need addresses the physical and economic dimensions of housing and illustrates the need for affordable housing for women with low-incomes. Nevertheless, it fails to acknowledge the importance of other factors in improving the housing experiences of women with low-incomes.

More recently, Carter and Polevychok (2004) recognize that women with low-incomes are confronted with difficult housing circumstances and are specifically faced with affordability and accessibility problems in housing (27-28). They explain that affordability problems in housing are the result of two conditions: high shelter costs and insufficient income, which together impact women’s ability to improve their economic status and overall welfare (13). In contrast, accessibility problems are often the
result of the inadequate and poor location of the majority of housing available to women, which ultimately affects their mobility and, in turn, their ability to access employment, education, and other necessary amenities and networks. Locational factors can include the level of neighbourhood safety or the proximity of housing to key services. These factors often have implications on the overall affordability of housing for women. For example, women’s ability to afford housing can be compromised if the housing is in a poorly located area of the city, forcing women to travel longer distances to employment or even preventing women from maintaining employment (Bulos, 1990, 2).

Accessibility, or more appropriately the lack of accessibility, also refers to the discrimination by landlords and financial institutions experienced by women, which hinders their ability to access the limited affordable housing stock that is available. For example, women often have difficulty finding affordable housing and a neighbourhood that will accommodate children. Though discrimination by landlords is difficult to prove, numerous studies have shown that women’s requests for housing are often rejected on the basis that they have dependent children (Novac et al, 2004, 137; van Vliet, 1998, 13).
More comprehensive understandings of housing accessibility have been put forth in recent years, and concepts such as "lifeboats" or "shelter-plus" have been coined by housing advocates to illustrate the complexity of women's need for accessible housing (Birdsall et al, 1992; Sprague, 1991). In particular, Sprague (1991) posits the important concept of "lifeboats" to describe the social and economic supports necessary within housing to support and enrich the lives of women. The author argues that the provision of affordable housing alone does not help women and their children, as it does not foster the self-empowerment and self-sufficiency necessary for creating positive housing experiences for women. "Lifeboats" represents a new way of looking at and legitimizing housing for women, and one which recognizes both the need for affordable housing, and the need for a network of social and economic supports within housing to improve the accessibility and quality of housing for women with low-incomes (27-28). Mainly, the concept of "lifeboats" illustrates that in order for housing to be accessible, it requires more than economic and locational considerations, and must include physical and social considerations, such as shared living space, on-site childcare or housing that fosters a sense of community and encourages co-operation.
Housing affordability and accessibility are interrelated and interdependent concepts and together they represent the core housing needs of women with low-incomes. While it becomes evident that for women to meet their basic shelter needs, housing must be affordable and accessible, more conventional concepts nevertheless present a narrow understanding of housing, focusing solely on the purely technical economic and physical housing needs of women. More progressive concepts recognize the broader and multiple dimensions of housing and the connections between economic, physical, locational, social and physiological aspects of housing, which together impact the affordability and accessibility of housing for women. In particular, concepts such as lifeboats represents a gender sensitive approach to housing, acknowledging or legitimizing the interrelationship among the economic, physical, social and cultural characteristics of housing which impact women concurrently.

Though not complete by any means, after reviewing the literature on housing there appears to be a sufficient collection of literature that examines the unique housing needs and preferences of women. For the most part, however, this literature remains largely separate from mainstream housing theory. In contrast, there has been limited literature attempting to translate women’s housing needs into the planning and
design of affordable housing. This remains a fairly untouched area within housing theory, with only a few feminist housing advocates serving as primary contributors to this area of literature. The following section attempts to bring together the literature available on the planning and design of affordable housing for women and to elicit the key issues that emerge from the literature.

3.3.4 Women & Housing: Planning and Design

It is from the perspective of the planning and design of affordable housing that we can begin to determine the lack of fit between existing affordable housing models and women's real housing needs, as well as identify potential solutions for improving the housing conditions for women with low-incomes.

The main providers of affordable housing in Canada are primarily government agencies through the limited provision and maintenance of public housing and subsidized co-operative housing. As well as, non-profit developers, like neighbourhood renewal corporations and community organizations, through the provision of a diverse range of housing programs. While some private-market affordable housing providers exist, they remain relatively insubstantial and therefore are not addressed in this research. Public housing once remained one of the only
affordable housing options for people with low-incomes. However, since 1996, when the federal government began to phase out its formal role in the provision of social housing, the provision of affordable housing has become decentralized and, for the most part, the responsibility of informal and voluntary local non-profit organizations (Wolfe, 1998, p.121). Although the development of public housing has essentially become dormant and obsolete in Canada over the last decade, it is nevertheless important to examine the general planning principles and design guidelines that supported the development of public housing using a gender lens.

The majority of literature on public housing design is written by American authors citing American precedents. However, this literature is nonetheless valuable, as Canadian practices have for the most part emulated American public housing traditions and arguably with little deviation (Purdy, 2004, 520). Perhaps the most significant difference between the Canadian and American experience is one of scale. The micro level of the individual development and at the macro level of the city, American practice tended to result in larger and more public housing developments, making the impacts of American public housing more visible and widely scrutinized.
Franck (1995) explains that while the design of public housing has changed over time, public housing design has a tendency to adopt a single set of dominant directives (215). Early public housing design of the 1950s and 1960s espoused economic utility and efficiency as its rationales, which translated into simple and repetitive patterns and massive structures. Economic efficiency and functionalism were achieved through the design and implementation of massive and monotonous high-rise projects with limited green space. Weisman (1992) maintains that the exterior design served to identify and isolate low-income residents from nearby neighbourhoods. In contrast small bedrooms, the absence of storage space, thin walls and a general lack of design details often characterized the interior units of public housing developments, all of which ultimately functioned to remove the possibilities of privacy, choice and often residents own self-respect (Weisman, 1992, 108-110).

Weisman (1992) cogently describes early public housing developments as female ghettos, wherein women were segregated and stigmatized by public housing because they were too poor to find more suitable and secure accommodations elsewhere (105). Similarly, Feldman (1999) maintains that public housing is a women’s housing program and a distinctly gendered urban problem (136). Public housing has been criticized for its poor design and the lack of opportunities it presents to
women and their children. It has been argued that the massive concrete structures lacked, among other things, adequate exterior and interior lighting and, as a result, incited crime and vandalism. Public housing design has also been criticized for ignoring the important relationship between the interior of the dwelling unit and the surrounding exterior site. In particular, the limited number of windows and views to the outdoors from the interior units, in combination with the lack of outdoor green space, often required women to keep their children indoors and prevented children from being able to play outside. The undersized and sterile interior dwelling units and limited community facilities on site or nearby have also been criticized for contributing to women's feelings of crowdedness and isolation (Hayden, 2002, 168; Sprague, 1991, 9).

Furthermore, public housing served to control women's lives through the strict policies and regulations it often enforced. Polices such as those preventing overnight guests, rules about keeping pets, rules limiting the use of washing machines and regulations on what changes tenants could or could not make to their interior living space together functioned to exercise stringent control over women's personal lives and activities. Early public housing policies also barred tenants from establishing any economic activities within their units, thus preventing women from setting up home childcare and earning money (Weisman, 1992, 110).
Early public housing developments represent a top-down planning and design approach to housing women with low-incomes. Inappropriate designs, the unfavourable location, a lack of adequate services and limited employment opportunities were imposed on women and implemented without any effort to understand women's unique housing needs. Women as users of public housing were not consulted.

In later years, attitudes about public housing began to shift. During the 1970s, public housing developments moved away from large-scale, high-rise developments to smaller-scale, neighbourhood oriented public housing design (Feldman, 1999, 146). Housing providers recognized the stigma and alienation associated with early public housing and searched for a new paradigm to guide public housing reform. This new paradigm included a focus on community building and strategies to foster connections between public housing development and its surrounding neighbourhood. In recognition of this, public housing was integrated into existing neighbourhoods as opposed to on the periphery or in isolation of neighbourhoods as in previous periods. It was designed in a way to enable residents to interact with neighbours and the larger community. Town-house or row-housing style developments were mainly implemented with increased outdoor green space to encourage resident interaction and a range of activities (Hayden, 2002, 215; Ley, 2000, 292).
However, despite these improvements, public housing was still overly standardized and lacked any real design innovation. In general, public housing continued to be unresponsive to the unique and changing needs of women. It continued to adhere to centralized or top-down approaches to housing, which provided no means for women to influence and assert a degree of control over their living environment. The emphasis on community in public housing increased women’s access to key services and potential employment opportunities. However, it failed to address the social dimensions of housing, such as enhancing women’s overall sense of security and empowerment through improved housing design and planning (Werkerle, 1997).

As stated previously, by the early 1990s public housing essentially came to a halt, and the responsibility of affordable housing was decentralized from the federal government to non-profit and local community organizations. Although the federal government’s disengagement from public housing had a detrimental impact, by restricting and depleting the availability of public resources to support affordable housing production, it also presented significant opportunities. The shift of responsibility to community organizations presented favourable circumstances to improve the housing condition of women and, in theory, it opened the door to more bottom-up approaches by enabling communities to define their own
housing needs and to develop diverse local strategies in response. Yet, in spite of the possibilities for grass roots and community driven housing solutions, many local organizations continue to produce unsatisfactory housing due to limited funds and resources. For the most part, community based housing initiatives simply emulate and reinforce conventional planning and housing design, rather than create new innovative designs and alternative models to better accommodate the unique needs of women (Drummond et al, 2004, 58).

A dominant trend in current affordable housing practice is the rehabilitation of deteriorated or abandoned single detached houses that are often located in inner city neighbourhoods (van Dyk, 1995, 834). This is viewed by many community organizations as an effective solution that both increases the supply of affordable housing and revitalizes older and declining neighbourhoods. Community organizations have demonstrated significant innovations in their efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing through the creation of various mechanisms, such as sweat equity programs, housing partnerships or community land trusts. Third sector organizations have also been fairly effective in introducing and integrating community building strategies into the development of affordable housing, which is a necessary component to improving the overall housing condition of women. However, the actual design of
affordable housing developed by the majority of third sector organizations remain unyielding and are predominantly limited to standard spatial layouts and internal/external housing arrangements characteristic of conventional single detached dwellings. As such, affordable housing design tends to maintain the assumption of the nuclear heterosexual family even though in reality, housing needs are much broader than the assumed norm. Further, these designs do not consider new household arrangements and lifestyles, such as those occupied by women, whether single mother families or single elderly women (Madigan et al, 1990; Ottes et al, 1995).

Third sector affordable housing for the most part does not take into account issues of gender and, more specifically, precludes efforts to undertake meaningful consultations with women as expert housing users. Thus, it can be argued that the prescriptive and rigid scope of current affordable housing design forces women into moulds and eliminates the possibility for women to explore new and more productive ways of living in the home (Hayden, 2002, 60; Wekerle et al, 1980, 83; Weisman, 1994, 124-125).

Evidently, there remains a poor fit between the housing needs of women and the planning and design of affordable housing. Conventional
affordable housing design, whether it be government operated public housing or community driven social housing, for the most part continues to hinder women’s housing experience rather than supporting and empowering them in their living environments. To more fully understand the housing problems women face requires a closer look at the housing policies to which the planning and design of affordable housing is embedded. As such, the following section examines key periods in Canadian housing policy and the principles driving those policies using a gender lens.

3.4 Housing Policy and Gender Mainstreaming

Canadian housing policy has been characterized by many scholars and analysts as being “gender-blind”, meaning that housing policies and programs ignore gender as a category of inquiry and lack a clear understanding of and commitment to gender equity (McCraken and Watson, 2004; Rude and Thompson, 2001, Status of Women Canada, 2001). Without a gender-based approach to the development and implementation of policies, programs and legislation, housing strategies will continue to perpetuate inequalities between men and women. More importantly, women’s profound housing needs will continue to be overlooked.
To challenge gender-blind policies, global strategies such as gender-mainstreaming have become critical in both exposing the gender inequities embedded within existing policies and programs and in developing new gender equal policies. Developed out of the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, gender-mainstreaming has become a widespread strategy defined as:

"A process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated" (Status of Women Canada, 2001, 1). 

Gender-mainstreaming is interested in ensuring policies and programs achieve equality of outcomes for both men and women respectively. It also represents a strategy that effectively links gender theory and practice, advancing gender theory and developing a range of practical tools and methodologies for undertaking gender-based analysis of existing policies and for implementing gender-sensitive strategies (Status of Women Canada, 2001, 1-4).

However, gender-mainstreaming in practice has not been without criticism. In particular the abandonment of women-specific policies and programs has been identified as a major risk of implementing gender-
mainstreaming strategies. The concern is that with the introduction of a broader focus on gender inequality that gender-mainstreaming brings to policies and/or programs, a likely result will be the discontinuation of policies and initiatives that address women's unique disadvantage and women-specific empowerment (Saulnier et al, 1999). The criticism surrounding gender mainstreaming is valid and should serve as a caution to organizations practicing gender-mainstreaming strategies. It should be viewed as a supplement and not a substitute to women-specific initiatives.

In the context of Canadian housing policy, gender-mainstreaming provides a framework for assessing the different impacts of housing policy and programs on women and men. It is an effective tool for evaluating both the social and economic outcomes of housing policies and government assisted housing programs on the lives of women. Gender-mainstreaming also maintains that a gender-based analysis of housing policy must go beyond identifying the impacts of policy on the lives of women to also include an examination of the larger context and principles driving the policies. Therefore, an understanding of the gender inequalities embedded within the society in which the policies are developed and implemented is also necessary.
Using the basic tenets of gender mainstreaming as a framework, the following section will examine more closely Canadian housing policy and its impact on women.

3.4.1 Overview of Canadian Housing Policy

Hulchanski (2002) clearly explains that decent housing is important both to individual households and to the broader social and economic well being of a city or region. He argues that, “housing has an impact on individuals disposable income, their ability to access employment, their health and their inclusion in society” (1). Despite an extensive amount of research illustrating the importance of housing on the health and well being of individuals and communities, access to safe and quality affordable housing is still insubstantial for a significant proportion of the Canadian urban population (Carter and Polevychok, 2004; Engeland et al, 2005; Hulchanski, 2002). In particular, women face difficulties in acquiring and maintaining decent and affordable housing.

In general, the current Canadian housing system can be described as one in which the private market is the main provider and supplier of housing. This reliance on a market-oriented approach to housing provision has resulted in an extremely limited and inadequate supply of affordable housing. In turn, this has created an exclusive housing system
(Hulchanski and Shapcott, 2004, 3). Women represent one housing group that continues to be excluded from the Canadian housing system and, as a result, experience considerable housing inequity. McCraken and Watson (2004) argue that the housing problems women face can be traced back to key changes in Canadian housing policy within the last 15 years, during which social housing programs by federal and provincial governments experienced a withdrawal of funding (5-6).

To fully understand the implications of the federal governments' retreat from social housing on the lives of women, a brief overview of Canadian housing policy is necessary. Hulchanski (2004) has effectively identified four key periods in which the federal government played a significant role in addressing the housing need of low-income groups, and will serve as a framework for the following discussion.

**Period One: 1949-1963**

The first period occurred between the years of 1949 and 1963, and has been described by housing critics as mainly devoid of any significant government support in social housing. During this period, only 12,000 public housing units were built. Amendments to the National Housing Act (NHA) in 1949, included provisions for a joint federal-provincial role in creating public housing (Hulchanski, 2004, 178). However, Bacher (1993)
explains that in order for the public housing programs to be carried out, individual provinces were required to initiate the process by passing related legislation of their own, and while some provinces chose to become involved, others did not (13-14). Consequently, the construction of public housing was limited given the complex process involved. Some provinces transferred a considerable amount of the costs to municipalities that were not prepared to undertake the financial responsibility (Bacher, 1993, 15).

The slow development of public housing was further exasperated by amendments to the NHA in 1956, which promoted urban re-development in tandem with the construction of public housing. Urban re-development involved clearing out designated slum areas, relocating the residents into newly built public housing, and increasing the commercial development of the cleared land. Bacher (1993) argues that in many cities more housing units were destroyed than were replaced by public housing, thereby increasing the affordable housing shortage. The author further criticizes past urban renewal strategies as being implicitly discriminatory, explaining that these strategies often targeted non-white communities in an attempt to clear cities of minorities. For example, Chinese communities were targeted in Vancouver, and areas destroyed and cleared in Halifax were typically Black communities (218).
Early federal housing policies benefited the private business sector through market stimulation, job creation, and increased commercial land development. The needs of low-income people, including the needs of women, were largely ignored. Mitchinson (1987) argues that early Canadian housing policy was not meant to address women’s housing needs, as this was considered the responsibility of the private domain. At the time, women’s primary role was considered to be in the home as domestic caregivers, where they were financially dependent and subordinate to men. Women’s access to housing was mainly through their dependence on a husband. Further, single women were considered to be a temporary condition that could be rectified through marriage. Mitchinson (1987) maintains that early housing policies reflected this experience and ignored women’s need to access adequate and affordable housing on their own (87-92).

Period Two: 1964-1984

The second period identified by Hulchanski occurred between the years of 1964 and 1984, and was marked by the federal government’s active commitment to building and developing an extensive non-market social housing sector. In 1964, the federal government initiated an extensive public housing program to help alleviate urban poverty and to provide
support to low-income citizens (Hulchanski, 2004, 180-181). This included four key strategies: the expansion of the urban renewal program, direct financial lending by Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to non-profit organizations to build low-income housing, expanding public housing programs to include dormitories and hostels, and increasing the federal governments share of capital loans to promote low-income rents (Rose, 1980, 55-64).

The 1964 public housing program saw an unprecedented increase in affordable housing in Canada. Yet, despite the federal governments’ efforts to maximize the number of public housing units, public housing programs nevertheless presented many problems for women. Often erected quickly and with little consideration for its users, public housing was criticized for its substandard designs, poor locations and the lack of access to basic amenities, all of which resulted in women’s feelings of isolation, safety concerns, lack of privacy, and lack of control over one’s environment. Also, to maximize the number of public housing units being built, large high-rise developments were often constructed, which further contributed to women’s feelings of isolation (Alvi et al, 2001, 642-643; Feldman, 1999, 136).
Overall, public housing programs at the time ignored the social dimensions of housing that were and continue to be relevant to women's housing needs. Instead the focus was on providing a meagre and basic physical shelter to its users. According to Dennis and Fish (1972), public housing was never intended to become a permanent home for residents, and one of the considerations in the development of public housing was ensuring that it would not compete with the private market. Public housing was seen as a temporary solution for low-income residents that would allow tenants to accumulate wealth and become financially independent, at which point they were expected to leave and enter into private market housing. Therefore the sterile design of public housing, with its plain features, poor location, high density, and inadequate layouts, was intentional in order to dissuade residents from becoming too comfortable and settled in the housing (174-185).

By 1973, a number of social housing programs were operating throughout the country. Though social housing policy was for the most part led by federal government, by the late 1970s provinces and the non-profit sector also began to play an increasingly vital role in the delivery of social housing (Hulchanski, 2004, 180-181). More accurately, the 1973 amendments to the NHA resulted in ten new housing programs, of which
four were related to social housing specifically and included co-operative and non-profit housing programs.

Co-operative housing consists of units that are owned and managed by a collective made up of the tenants living in the units. Each person who lives in the co-op becomes a member, entitling them to vote and participate in the management of the co-op (McCraken and Watson, 2004, 8). Non-profit housing is typically owned and operated by a non-profit organization and is generally more diverse, and can include housing targeted to specific populations, housing for mixed income groups, as well as permanent or transitional housing (Van Dyk, 1995, 832-34).

The increasing development of a third sector in the delivery of low-income housing had a significant impact on the state of low-income housing at the time, and it particularly proved to be an innovative approach to housing women. Underpinning these housing programs were women-centred principles such as community building and resident involvement in the control and management of the housing, which provided additional social supports to women (Wekerle, 1993, 99-101).
The previous period in Canadian housing policy was guided by a market approach and benefited mostly middle and upper income groups. This period (1964-84) was marked by the federal government’s acknowledgement that public intervention was necessary to address the shelter needs of low-income groups. Hulchanski (2002) describes Canadian housing policy prior to 1980, as "one of the most comprehensive housing programs in the world, whereby it effectively addressed a wide range of housing needs and accommodated diverse groups of low to moderate income households" (3). However, despite these advancements in social housing, non-profit and co-operative housing programs were short-lived and phased out soon after the amendments of 1973 that helped to realize them. Co-operative housing, being the longest lived of the programs, was terminated in 1992 (Dreier and Hulchanski, 1993, 55-57).

**Period Three: 1984-1993**

The third period, between the years 1984-1993, saw a major decline in the allocation of new federal money for affordable housing programs. According to Hulchanski (2002), in the early 1980s social housing policy underwent a transition and, as a result of rising debt and deficits, the federal government began making cut backs to housing programs and budgets. These cut backs continued throughout the eighties until in the
early 1990s nearly all federal and provincial support for social housing was withdrawn (3-7). More explicitly, in 1993 the federal government terminated all funding for new social housing and essentially retreated from its responsibilities in the provision of affordable housing (Hulchanski, 2002, 12). Carter and Polevychok (2004) explain that during this time, the number of new social housing units fell to almost zero, while the condition of existing social housing stock began to decline dramatically, having a substantial impact on the state of affordable housing in the country. Carter and Polevychok (2004) regard this period as, "one of the weakest periods from a social housing policy perspective in recent Canadian history" (3-4). Without a national housing policy and federal financial support and with limited provincial funding, the authors explained that Canada experienced an affordable housing crisis (4).

According to the National Council of Welfare (1996), the sudden and unexpected termination of all social housing programs resulted in an increasing number of women living in poverty and an increase in the occurrence of women’s homelessness. Carter (1997) reveals that during this time there was a limited number of government funded housing programs for low-income groups. However, they were targeted to specific circumstances such as housing for people living with disabilities or temporary shelters for women leaving domestic violence. With only short
term housing options and no efforts to increase the overall permanent social housing stock, a rising number of gaps in the affordable housing sector disproportionately affected women (599).

**Period Four: 1994-Present**

The fourth period, from 1994 to the present, has been characterized by many housing critics as one in which the federal government has relied heavily on private market solutions in the development of affordable housing strategies. Starting in 1996, the federal government declared that it planned to phase out its role in social housing completely, initiating the devolution of social housing responsibility to the provinces. This in turn resulted in many of the provinces retreating from their responsibility in the provision of social housing. During this time, a number of community development corporations and non-profit groups emerged to try to fill the gap left by the federal governments. While these organizations have made significant strides in the provision of affordable housing, the gap continues to remain unfilled (Drummond et al, 2004, 58).

More recently, there has been a resurgence of federal support for affordable housing. With the 2001 federal budget, $680 million was allocated for what Hulchanksi (2004) calls a “small” affordable housing
program. While these funds are significant, they were to be spread over a period of five years, which amounts to a mere $136 million a year to be distributed across the entire country. In dedicating these funds, the federal government had hoped that provinces would contribute an equal amount. However, with the exception of Quebec, most provinces did not fully match the federal contributions (Hulchanski, 2004, 184).

Accordingly, the governments' role in promoting access to affordable housing remains somewhat limited in scope, and the majority of affordable housing programs being implemented today are geared towards the promotion of homeownership. Commonly known as assisted homeownership programs or housing partnerships, these programs are developed with the purpose of increasing opportunities for low-to-moderate income households to purchase a home. A variety of mechanisms have been implemented such as sweat equity, subsidized down payment, or the elimination of initial housing costs such as legal fees to reduce the financial burden associated with homeownership. These strategies were essentially designed to allow low-to-moderate income households access to the private market. However, these programs have been highly criticized by recent housing advocates as limiting tenure and housing options for low-income citizens and for
perpetuating the homeownership myth that homeowners make better citizens (Gilbert, 2004, 390).

3.4.2 The Invisibility of Women in Recent Canadian Housing Policy
While it can be argued that recent affordable housing programs have helped to increase the overall affordable housing stock, homeownership is not always an option for low-income residents. Drummond et al (2004) argue that housing affordability is not a problem that affects all households equally, and therefore it is unrealistic to expect that all low-income households can maintain market standards even if they are government subsidized (60-61). Wekerle (1997) maintains that considering the unremitting poverty and low-incomes of women, homeownership continues to be inaccessible for many women. Men, on average, have higher paying and more permanent employment, whereas women typically earn less, occupy less stable jobs and often depend on part-time employment. Further, the author points out, there are reports of lending institutions being less likely to grant credit to or provide women with mortgages, thereby further exacerbating the inaccessibility of homeownership for them (173-174).

For a large proportion of Canada's low to moderate-income citizens, including women, private and public rental housing is their only option
for shelter. In view of this, housing policies that promote homeownership almost exclusively as an affordable housing strategy exclude women from accessing housing (Hulchanski and Shapcott, 2004, 4; Novac et al, 2004, 138). Hulchanski and Shapcott (2004) argue that housing policy has failed to effectively address rental and alternative housing as legitimate options, and they describe the current Canadian housing system as one that is out of balance and discriminatory in the way it favours the homeownership sector (6-7).

Homeownership strategies have also been criticized for reinforcing the nuclear family and women's economic dependence on men. In concert with owner occupation, the new construction or rehabilitation of single detached dwellings has become the dominant affordable housing type, and this ultimately functions to privilege the two-parent family as the norm, while excluding non-traditional households, such as single mother families or single women (Novac et al, 2004, 139). Ottes et al (1995) argue that housing policy maintains the assumption of the nuclear heterosexual family and, therefore, fails to accommodate the diverse types of households that women represent and the multiple housing needs of women with low-incomes. The authors claim that a variety of alternative housing models is necessary in order to effectively accommodate the diverse housing needs of women. However, until
housing policy acknowledges single mother families and single women as permanent and legitimate housing users, rather than temporary ones, it will continue to ignore alternative housing models as viable housing options for women (98).

Finally, current housing policy has also been criticized for adopting a simplistic view of shelter. For the most part housing continues to be viewed in purely physical terms, and housing policy fails to acknowledge the broader dimensions of housing that are fundamental to a positive housing experience for women (Franck, 1994, Rude and Thompson, 2001).

In order for housing to accommodate the needs of women, a broader context of housing is required, which takes into account the political, economic, and social factors that operate concurrently to influence women's access to and ability to afford safe and adequate housing. Overall, Canadian housing policy has been characterized as being gender-blind. Even though current housing policy demonstrates some commitment to the provision of affordable housing, it still lacks a clear understanding of gender and its impact on women's housing need. This lack of a gender lens in housing policy has essentially resulted in

3.5 Participatory Planning and Design: A Case for Greater Participation by Women in the Design of Affordable Housing.

"If people are to feel a sense of belonging to the world in which they live, an involvement in the spaces they inhabit is a good starting point". (Peter Blundell Jones, 2005).

The following section explores the role of participatory planning and design as a mechanism for realizing more successful housing options for women and in turn for ultimately improving their overall housing experience and quality of life. Prior to theorizing participation in the context of affordable housing design and planning, the fundamental values and principles of participation as a planning concept are examined.

3.5.1 Participation

In recent years, participation has become a widely accepted catchword in planning and design literature. Increasingly, practitioners are advocating for increased participation within planning and design processes. Yet, despite growing consensus on the value of participation, the definition of participation in the context of planning and design remains to be unanimously undecided amongst the profession. Participation as a
concept and category of inquiry is imprecise and, as such, makes it impossible to provide a single and all encompassing definition to reflect the diverse range of participatory processes and projects that have taken place in recent times. Yet, while participation is a general concept that covers a range and multiplicity of meanings, modestly it denotes a process of information exchange and decision-making by a number of involved individuals and/or groups (Sanoff, 2000, 8). Similarly, Hood and Woods (1994) suggest that participation is about "supplementing and strengthening traditional democratic [planning] mechanisms with more sensitive ways of giving people a voice with decisions that they are most affected by" (67).

Participation is essentially about local communities and/or citizens playing a more active role in the planning and design process, development and implementation that impact them. As such, inherent in this definition are concepts of collaboration and dialogue, citizen rights and control, and shifting balances of power within the planning and design process. Participation necessitates dialogue and the opportunity for debate between various interest groups. Implicit in this definition is the legitimization of citizen rights and increased control over matters that affect their quality of life. This in turn, necessitates the redistribution
of power between the “expert” and “non-expert” players or between the professionals and the local community.

More traditional planning and design processes reflect a power-over relation, whereby the professionals exercise dominance and control over the process that often results in the exclusion of citizens. In contrast, the participatory process ideally involves a power-of relation, which involves drawing on collective strengths of both individuals (professionals and citizens) who come together to share their resources and knowledge to achieve group empowerment. The participatory process and the implicit power-of relation is considered a two-way process that demonstrates a recognition of collective agency and a commitment to sharing power (French, 1995, 37-42).

Driskell (2002) further theorizes participation by identifying three guiding principles to support the application of participatory processes, which are as follows:

1. Development must, first and foremost, be in the interest of local residents.
2. People who live in an area being planned have the most intimate knowledge of the area and its issues.
3. People who will be most affected by decisions have the most at stake and therefore have a right to participate in making those decisions. (32)
Driskell's principles of participation are significant in that they clearly provide a rationale for undertaking participatory processes and, thus, validate the importance of participation in the field of planning and design.

Yet, as we move away from these general concepts and towards more specific models of participation, it becomes increasingly evident that participation is not a homogenous or static process. Arnstein (1969) effectively argues that participation is not a monolithic system or process and makes a distinction between varying levels of participation. In her typology of eight levels of participation illustrated in the form of a ladder (Figure 1), Arnstein identifies three main types of participation: non-participation, tokenism and citizen power. Non-participation includes manipulation (1) and therapy (2), which Arnstein describes as processes that do not enable people to participate but rather allow professionals to "educate" or "cure" participants. Tokenism includes informing (3), consultation (4) and placation (5), which she describes as processes in which the have-nots are allowed to hear and have a voice, but under these conditions still lack power to ensure their views and opinions will be seriously considered and followed through. Finally, citizen power includes partnership (6), delegated power (7) and citizen control (8),
which Arnstein describes as genuine participatory processes where citizens can exercise degrees of decision-making and power (246-247).

While Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" has been criticized for being too simplistic, it nevertheless serves as an effective tool to evaluate and monitor participatory processes and to ultimately determine the legitimacy of a particular planning process (Titter and McCallum, 2006, 158-160).
Finally, despite the obvious and potential positive outcomes of participation, there are nevertheless significant barriers that impede meaningful processes from taking place that require consideration. Although by no means complete, Sanoff (2000) identifies several potential barriers to participation, which are summarized below:

1. The technical complexity of planning issues and problems can function to discourage or inhibit citizens from participating in the process.

2. Citizens can be excluded from the planning process on the basis that either their preferences will vary making it impossible to satisfy all people's needs or that all people have identical requirements thereby making participation unnecessary.

3. Participation can be threatened when professionals feel their role as experts is compromised by the implicit shift in the degree decision-making control to the users.

4. Involving citizens in the planning process can be more time consuming and therefore more expensive.

5. Participation is unequally distributed across society and often the people involved do not represent the majority and many affected citizens are left out of the process.

6. Lack of adequate experience by professionals to facilitate the process can limit the effectiveness of participation (22-23).

The barriers identified by Sanoff are important in that they demonstrate potential shortcomings of poorly designed and managed participatory processes. Though arguably, many of these limitations can be overcome. For example, technical complexity can be challenged by developing more
transparent processes and through the facilitator's efforts to demystify complex design language and concepts so that participants can become more fully engaged in the process. Also, though participation may require an increase in resources, be it time or money, at the onset of the design process, it often results in a decrease in overall time and costs (Sarkissian et al, 2002,12). Meaningful participatory processes provide the designer with unique opportunities to negotiate design options with participants, such as building materials or layout selection. This process enables the designer to work with participants to refine the design in order to meet budgetary requirements. Further, participatory processes involve collaboration between the designer and participants, in which the needs of the user are clearly identified and whereby the participants' role in shaping and informing the design is elevated as compared to more conventional design processes. As such, there is more potential for participant buy-in and acceptance of the design throughout the design process, thereby reducing the likelihood that the designer will have to make significant changes during or after the construction phase, thereby significantly reducing cost/time factors (Creighton, 1994).

While an increasingly intelligible and clearer understanding of participation is emerging within the planning profession, there still remain significant limitations that prevent participation from being fully
explored and carried out in planning and design processes. Of particular concern to this practicum are the limitations related to gender that ultimately restrict women's access to the planning and design processes and from realizing the benefits of participation. The following section explores the implications of gender on participation theory.

3.5.2 New Ways of Conceptualizing Participation Using a Gender Perspective

There is limited research into the role of women in participation, and while research on women and participation has been extensively explored in the context of international development, there does not appear to be the same effort and urgency within the rest of planning theory (Akerkar, 2001, 2; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992, 67). Hood and Woods (1994) maintain that it is commonly recognized that women are not well represented in planning processes despite the fact that planning issues often directly and uniquely impact women (58). Similarly, Lennie (1999) explains that women's issues are often given a low-priority for planners. She argues that planners need to develop an understanding of participation that takes gender issues into account and to find new and more empowering ways of involving women in the planning process. Central to Lennie's plea is the need for planners to acknowledge gender
differences and how women are excluded from and may contribute differently to the planning and design process (98 -108).

There are numerous examples of constraints that prevent women from fully participating in planning and design processes that have been cited in the research. Hamdi (2006) argues that minority groups, such as women, may be hesitant to express their ideas and opinions for fear of reprisal or harassment. To prevent women from feeling reluctant in expressing their needs and concerns it may be necessary to undertake separate workshops with women participants (84). In addition, participatory processes may increase the burden placed on women who may not have the time or energy to dedicate to the process. Women with children may also feel overburdened by planning processes if they lack accessible and reliable childcare. To attend to these concerns, planning processes must attempt to address women’s real time and space constraints by accommodating women’s often unpredictable and hectic schedules, arranging transportation to and from the planning venue and/or by providing on site child-care.

Akerkar (2001) explains that, "both participation and gender are political issues and that making participation gender sensitive is a political process" (25). Political in the sense that women have been historically
excluded from public institutions and processes, thereby resulting in an array of policies and programs that do not reflect the realities of women and their specific needs and concerns and, in turn, the disenfranchisement of women.

Participatory planning and design provides a genuine venue to challenge women's exclusion from political processes and an opportunity to bring women's issues to the forefront of policy-making and program development. Participation is seen as providing positive benefits to women and it has been regarded as an effective mechanism for the expression of marginalized groups (Akerkar, 2001, 25; Hood and Woods, 1994). In particular, the role of participation in fostering empowerment and building capacity and social capital has been extensively explored in the research. The concepts of empowerment and capacity building are further examined as positive outcomes of gender sensitive participation.

3.5.3 Empowerment

Empowerment, much like the term participation, is a difficult concept to concretely define, as there is no single definition to encompass the varying levels of experiences and processes that comprise empowerment. In general, empowerment denotes a process by which people's control over their lives is increased (Mattessich and Monsey, 1997, 63-64;
Sommerville, 1998, 233). Further, Harvey (1992) effectively characterizes empowerment planning as supporting the movement of marginal groups out of powerlessness where they are unable to express political power or engage in self-expression, and into situations where groups are able to identify their own needs and interests and build their own futures (591).

In the context of participation, Feldman (2006) states that, "empowerment is developed through an ongoing accumulative process to help people cultivate individual and collective skills and resources that help them effect positive changes in their environment and lives" (34). However, it is important to make clear the distinction between participation and empowerment. Participation does not necessary lead to empowerment, but more accurately represents a potential channel for which empowerment may be realized. Cooper and Hawtin (1998) warn that while participation may lead to a shift in the balance of power between professionals and citizens, few processes have collective rights, citizenship and empowerment as guiding tenets of the participation process (324). Similarly, Feldman (2006) argues that to achieve empowerment goals, participation must move beyond simply informing citizens to creating real opportunities for citizen control of programs and designs so that they can contribute meaningfully to improving the conditions of their lives (34-35).
Underlying Feldman’s statement is an understanding that participation must involve a two-way exchange of knowledge and resources between the professionals and citizens so that citizens can acquire the skills and information necessary to influence change over their environment and life, and to ultimately support the empowerment process. Feldman’s notion of empowerment-oriented participation is representative of the upper Citizen Power levels of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. Citizen Power, which includes Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control stages, is described as a process in which power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power-holders and whereby citizens become actively involved in determining the outcome of the planning process (Arnstein, 2003, 246-254).

Arguably, the concept of empowerment has been misappropriated in urban planning and other social science disciplines. Underlying many of these professions is the assumption that planners and/or social workers can actually make citizens become empowered. It is important to clarify that regardless of the profession, empowerment cannot be bestowed upon someone. Empowerment is a personal process of self-actualization that is initiated by the individual and not the professional. Therefore, the role of the respective professions is to create an environment that supports the empowerment process and that allows for the redistribution
of power to the citizens so that they can become agents of their own change. This does not however mean that in order for citizens to achieve self-empowerment they should be left to their own devices and navigate the process on their own. Planners still play an important role in providing information and direction to participants to support them in making their own informed decisions about their environment and lives.

It should also be noted that all empowerment is not equal and that varying levels of empowerment exist. Using Arnstein’s ladder of participation as a point of reference, Rocha (1997) conceptualizes five types of empowerment (31). Rocha defines empowerment broadly as encompassing a range of power experiences and her typology of empowerment moves from individual empowerment to community or group empowerment.

The first level, ‘atomistic individual empowerment’, refers to increased individual skills; and planning under this category focuses on the provision of or access to services to target individual circumstances and provide immediate resolution (34-35).

The second level, ‘embedded individual empowerment’, views individuals as being part of a larger context that affects their circumstances.
Planning under this category is concerned with understanding and addressing an individual's or group's immediate environment as means to empowerment. Participation, though in a very limited sense, is central to this type of empowerment, and it generally materializes in the form of an individual's involvement as a member or volunteer of an organization or neighbourhood group to promote the development of skills, knowledge and self-efficacy (35-36).

The third level, 'mediated empowerment', views the empowerment process as relying on the expert or professional, whose objective is to provide knowledge and information necessary for individual or community decision-making and action. A key example of planning under this category is earlier advocacy planning practices, whereby individuals or groups gain informal access to the planning process with the guidance of professionals (36).

The fourth level, 'socio-political empowerment', is concerned with a community transformation or change and views collaborative social action as a mechanism to alter social, political or economic relations. Rocha describes this level as a shift from the individual or community as an object that is acted upon by outside forces, to a subject capable of acting upon itself” (38). Rocha identifies two critical interrelated
elements of socio-political empowerment: (1) critical reflection by the community and the examination of their relationship to structures of power and (2) collective action upon those structures. Socio-political empowerment planning is generally characterized as a collaborative process that seeks to harness the social and political power of the community. Rocha cites Community Development Corporations (CDCs) as examples of planning that support socio-political empowerment. While she maintains that not all CDCs work within this model of empowerment, the majority focus on developing individual and community capacity as a mechanism for addressing both the physical and social problems of a community (39).

The fifth level, 'political empowerment', conceptualizes the community as a network and is concerned with political action to effect institutional and legislative change and to realize emancipatory outcomes for the community. This type of empowerment is concerned with the larger political context that impacts the entire community, and while the individual will likely benefit from planning under this model, the focus is not on individual participation or transformation. Rocha cites equity planning practices, which challenge the institutional arrangements that disempower marginalized communities, as an example of political empowerment.
Rocha's 'Ladder of Empowerment' (Figure 2), effectively demonstrates the multiple empowerment processes for which planning can engage in and the differing outcomes that each model presents. Not only does the distinction between individual and group empowerment become evident, but also the variations in method and intentions also become clear. For instance, while both socio-political and political empowerment represent community empowerment models, the socio-political model is concerned with change from within the community and therefore places importance on building local knowledge and capacity to realize both individual and group empowerment. In contrast, political empowerment is concerned with change at the external or institutional level and therefore importance is placed on building the capacity of governments to effect change and community empowerment.

Essentially, the higher the rung on Rocha's 'Ladder of Empowerment', the broader the implications for empowerment become. The lower rungs are primarily concerned with individual levels of empowerment, whereas the higher rungs place importance on community and political levels of empowerment. Her typology clearly reveals that the appropriateness or suitability of each model is dependent on the context, audience and objectives of the particular planning program. As such, this research is mainly interested in empowerment that falls under the mediated and
socio-political models, as both models focus on engaging both the individual and the community in a participatory process in order to build capacity and skills necessary to exercise choice and effect change.

Figure 2. Rocha's Ladder of Empowerment
The potential for empowerment in participatory processes is significant in that it provides women with meaningful opportunities to engage in and make choices about their lives. Empowerment-oriented participatory processes challenge the cycle of disenfranchisement that women have experienced by traditional planning mechanisms, which ultimately functioned to exclude, isolate and marginalize women.

3.5.4 Capacity Building

Capacity building is a process of collective learning or, more accurately, it involves the identification, mobilization and transferring of skills to local citizens. Wates (2000) defines capacity building as, "the development of awareness, knowledge, skills and operational capacity by certain actors, normally the community, to achieve their purpose (183). Through a process of capacity building, citizens tap into existing skills and develop new abilities that are necessary to make informed decisions about issues that affect their environment and quality of life. As such, capacity building is two-fold. It is an introspective process of looking within and releasing the skills and experiences that citizens bring with them to the planning process. As well, it is an enabling process in which citizens learn and shape new experiences and capacities to ultimately maximize their opportunities and range of choices (Kretzmann and Mcknight, 1993, 13).
Kretzman and McKnight (1993) characterize capacity building as an asset based approach to planning. Rather than viewing people’s needs as problems or shortcomings, the planning process is focused on the talents, skills and knowledge of local citizens as a mechanism for attending to their needs. The authors maintain that the essential focus of capacity building is creating a participatory process that assists and supports citizens in the development of their own skills and efforts, rather than a process that is concerned with how citizens can support the efforts of planners (13-15).

Capacity building is closely connected to the principles of empowerment and the two concepts are mutually supportive. Through a process of empowerment, citizens develop the confidence and the inner strength to take control of their environment and their daily lives. While through a process of capacity building, citizens develop the skills, knowledge and training that is vital to becoming fully empowered and to begin questioning their social situation and promoting positive social change. As such, capacity building is significant to supporting a gender perspective in planning and to ultimately nurturing the participation of women. Planning processes that are committed to capacity building provide women with meaningful opportunities to develop their own skills.
and knowledge in order to voice their needs and experiences about the unique issues that impact them (Sarkissian et al, 2003, 51).

Capacity building is a potential outcome of meaningful participation. However, in the context of Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation", for participants to achieve capacity building goals, planners must move away from non-participation processes to the upper rungs of citizen power processes. Like empowerment, capacity-building is characteristic of processes that enable partnership, delegated power and citizen control.

While empowerment and capacity building are not the only measures of gender sensitive participation, they do represent two particular outcomes that benefit women's lives. Not only does participatory planning have the potential to result in more effective and tangible policies, programs and developments, it can also address the social dimensions of women’s lives through fostering empowerment and building capacity. Similarly, Kernohan et al (1992) make the distinction between instrumental participation that is concerned with efficiency and physical outcomes with transformative participation that views participation as moving beyond the limited realm of physical outcomes to also changing social consciousness (144).
It should be noted that not all participatory processes are the same or will have the same outcome and, in particular, not all processes regard empowerment and capacity building as priorities. When evaluating participatory processes with a gender lens, close attention must be therefore paid to the underlying objectives informing the process. It is important to determine if the participatory process effectively recognizes women's skills, supports women's advancement, legitimizes women's voices and views women as active participants in decision-making matters, or whether the process is tokenistic and manipulative by continuing to reflect the ideas of planners rather than those of women.

3.5.5 Participatory Planning & Design: Re-conceptualizing Housing for Women

In the context of housing, a meaningful and gender sensitive process will ultimately be concerned with empowering and assisting women to create and control their own housing. Despite the fact that women have unique and urgent housing needs, there continues to be little dialogue between housing providers and women as users. Conventional planning and design continue to disregard women as active agents in decision making around housing development, thereby resulting in ineffective housing designs that do not support women’s roles and changing lifestyles. Yet, having said this, there have been significant strides made to advance and
improve women’s access to housing through participation that cannot be dismissed. In particular, there is a long history of women led projects that, though often overlooked in planning literature, have helped draw attention to the value of participation and which have ultimately helped pave the way towards more inclusive and meaningful housing designs for women.

One of the earliest examples of participatory planning is Advocacy Planning, initiated by Davidoff during the mid nineteen-sixties. This concept transformed conventional planning thought by challenging the notion of a unitary common good and by demanding more inclusive planning processes that would include the dissenting voices of others, such as women. In his well-known essay, *Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning*, Davidoff (1965) argues for a more democratic politics of planning and he specifically identifies public debate and participatory methods as tenets of democratic planning (331). In order to establish an effective urban democracy, Davidoff maintained that planners must participate in public processes as advocates of both the government and other marginalized interest groups (1965, 332). At the foundation of advocacy planning is the concern for disadvantaged groups and their unique needs.
Although advocacy planning recognized the importance of providing space for marginalized groups, such as women, it has been criticized for ignoring unique forms of knowledge and history that women bring to the planning process. Advocacy planning continued to conform to dominant language and technical knowledge, and essentially the planner remained the gatekeeper of communication, while minority groups continued to be muted. Grant (1994) argues that while advocacy planning in theory represents an inclusive participatory strategy, in practice it advances an elitist concept of democracy, since planning continued to adhere to the idea of the technical and expert planner and ignores other ways of knowing (207).

Finally, advocacy planning did not attempt to alter the unequal power relations and oppressive social patterns between dominant and marginal groups. Rather, advocacy planning continues to operate within a system of power-over in which the planner ultimately controls the planning process and the voices of difference. Advocacy planning envisioned a situation in which planners provide knowledge to clients, and does not consider a condition for mutual communication where the planner and client share information and knowledge. Clavel (1994) argues that advocacy planning represented a superficial system of citizen participation that does not give power to groups to determine their own
planning needs, but instead the planner controls and manipulates the
group interests by speaking for them (149).

Tenant participation is another form of participation that often included
women as participants. John Turner (1972), an early advocate of dweller
control over the housing process, studied the role of tenant
organizations and resident groups as an effective venue to encourage
group discussion about housing problems and to stimulate joint action
and control of residents to improve their own housing situation (183).
Early tenant groups often materialized when a group of residents, often
living in semi-detached accommodations such as apartments or
townhouses, became frustrated by the lack of commitment by landlords
to maintain their properties. According to Turner (1977), tenant
participation represents a shift from the conventional caretaker model
that is authoritarian, hierarchical and centrally controlled to a more co-
operative model that allows residents to have some decision-making
authority over management related matters (194).

While the goals of tenant participation are rooted in principles of tenant
control and landlord accountability, the participation of tenants is
nevertheless restricted to certain aspects of housing provision. Tenants
are generally not involved in the design and implementation of their
housing, but are more likely to participate in the maintenance and management of housing. As such, proponents of participation, such as Ottes et al (1995) have argued that there is little equality in resident groups, and the balance of power is most often weighted to the advantage of the professionals rather than towards the residents’ (98).

A variety of women-led and initiated groups emerged out of the tenant participation movement with the purpose of bringing women’s specific housing needs to the forefront of the affordable housing debate. According to Wekerle (1993) many of these women-led groups represented new and significant practitioners in the non-profit housing system that helped to address the gaps in shelter and service provision (95). Wekerle identifies three types of women-led housing projects in Canada: second stage and transitional housing, non-profit women’s housing projects, and non-profit co-operatives. In her research, Wekerle has demonstrated how women-led housing groups have pioneered new and alternative housing models that integrate women’s unique spatial requirements with essential service components such as childcare and employment training (95). Further, Wekerle illustrates the varying levels of women’s participation that are possible in the three types of housing models. Though women were integral in the development of transitional housing, due to the intermediate and non-permanent nature of this type
of housing it is more difficult to engage transitional housing users in the planning and design process.

The second type of housing, non-profit housing, is generally owned and managed by a non-profit organization. This model presents significant opportunities for women as users of the housing to participate in the planning and design process, despite the limited control they may have over the on-going management of the housing once it is erected. Finally, non-profit co-operative housing presents opportunities for women users to participate both in the planning and design process, as well as be in control of the management and maintenance of the housing once it is erected (96-98).

Women-led housing groups, such as the ones highlighted by Wekerle, not only recognize women’s acute housing needs, but have also contributed to the development of safe and sensitively designed housing to increase women’s choices and autonomy by engaging in participatory planning and design processes.

In more recent times, community design or community architecture has been gaining importance in design education and practice and, according to Curry (2004), "over thirty percent of North American architecture
schools operate university based community design and research centres to engage the public in decision making about the built environment” (62-63). In contrast to conventional architectural practice in which the architect is viewed as the expert and exclusive designer, a community design model considers the whole community as the designer, developer, contractor and end user (Curry, 2004, 63). Further, Sanoff (2000) maintains that community design is guided by the philosophy that people who will be affected by planning and design decisions should be included in the design process and given decision making power (23).

Similarly, Wates and Knevitt (1987) elucidate the key characteristics of community architecture and what distinguishes it from conventional architectural practice. The following chart (Figure 3) by Wates and Knevitt illustrates this distinction:
### Table: Distinction between Conventional and Community Architecture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional Architecture</th>
<th>Community Architecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users are passive recipients of an environment conceived, executed, managed and evaluated by others with professional experts.</td>
<td>Users are the clients. They take control of commissioning, designing, developing, constructing, managing and evaluating their environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-down, emphasis on product rather than process, bureaucratic, centralized and compartmentalized, secretive, impersonal, anonymous.</td>
<td>Bottom-up, emphasis on process rather than product, flexible, personal, localized, continuous, holistic and multi-disciplinary, evolutionary, familiar, people managed and open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts occasionally make superficial attempts to define and consult end users.</td>
<td>Experts are commissioned by and are accountable to users, or behave as if they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-conscious about style. Most likely modern or post-modern environment.</td>
<td>Unself-conscious about style. Most likely to be contextual, regional, with concern for identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3 - Wates and Knevitt's Chart on the Distinction between Conventional and Community Architecture.**

In the context of housing, conventional architecture disregards the role of the user in the housing process and, by consequence, housing is reduced to fixed and standard designs. In contrast, community design has become a significant mechanism for bottom-up citizen participation by which the housing design reflects the actual needs and aspirations of the community (184). Milgrom (1992) further supposes that the paternalistic approach of conventional architecture has resulted in affordable housing designs that alienate residents from their homes and their surrounding community. He instead advocates for a design method that is open to community involvement in which dwellers can assume...
control over their environment (18-22). In addition to the implicit participatory process, community design is also about good design, which is essential for sustainable affordable housing. Community design serves as a tool to change the publics' often-negative perception of affordable housing and functions to effectively integrate housing into existing neighbourhoods. Therefore, meaningful community design not only has the ability to address the social dimensions of people's lives through capacity building and empowerment oriented participatory processes, it also presents opportunities to improve the physical dimensions of housing through the production and design of responsive and quality housing.

Community architecture represents considerable opportunities to include women in the design of their housing and to ultimately create houses that reflect and acknowledge the unique and changing lifestyles of women. Hood and Woods (1994) maintain that through the participatory housing design process, women gain mutual support and confidence, are able to share ideas and learn from each other, recognize their own skills and the values of their own experiences and develop a network of supports (72).
3.5.6 Participatory Planning and Good Design

"Good design augments human possibility and reduces complexity" (Bruce Mau, 2005).

The concept of designing for people living in poverty emerged out of the 1970s self-help initiatives and the proceeding social architecture and community design movements. As previously mentioned, the common theme connecting the various community design approaches is participation, in which the inclusion of low-income or marginalized groups in the design of their environment is strongly advocated and strived for (Towers, 1995, 157). Community design theory makes two cases for design participation. First, participation produces more appropriate design solutions and in turn greater satisfaction for the users. Second, participation generates greater commitment by users in the management and maintenance of the design schemes, resulting in more sustainable designs that endure over time (173).

Towers (1995) argues that community design challenges architectural conventions and more specifically, in the context of housing, community design subverts the design traditions that have resulted in monotonous and overly large scale housing developments. Community design favours alternative housing design that gives users choice to express their own taste and identity and which results in more sensitive structures (74).
Despite a growing body of literature in support of community design and a large number of design professionals backing the movement as offering real opportunities for good design, community design has also been discredited as a form of "anti-design". Mainly, opponents argue that participatory design requires the architect to relegate its design skills to the users, thus resulting in an inferior design (Tower, 1995, 191; Wates and Knevitt, 1987, p.21). Dispelling the myth of community architecture as anti-design becomes a difficult yet worthwhile task. Difficult in the sense that it necessitates an examination of what constitutes good design, and worthwhile in that only through such contemplation can community architecture become legitimized as a valid architectural process that results in good design.

What defines one building as an expression of good design and another as mediocre design is a question that has been long debated by architectural and art critics alike. Some argue that the quality of design is a matter of subjective preferences and therefore no universally accepted standards can possibly exist to determine the quality of building design. Others argue that good design should be assessed purely on aesthetic merit and as such have developed inventory of patterns or stylistic formulas and criteria for which to evaluate building
design (Alexander, 1977; Lynch 1981). Further, some critics argue that
design quality is rooted in a combination of both form and function.

Despite these often competing arguments of what defines good design,
the architectural profession is beginning to explore the implications of
community architecture on design theory and to accept it as a legitimate
form of design. Community design is gaining recognition not only for its
role in the social justice movement, but it is also being recognized for its
role in proposing more innovative design processes and in pushing the
boundaries of architectural design. Wates and Knevitt (1987) maintain
that community architecture is far from being anti-design; rather it
redefines good design as emphasizing both the process of design and
the end product, and one not at the expense of the other (21). Good
design also becomes that which “looks good” to the user in addition to
the design profession (21).

In the context of affordable housing, the notion of good design has been
further theorized. The Affordable Housing Advisor (AHA), an on-line
resource for affordable housing practitioners, has defined good design
as, “that which consciously and aggressively tries to meet user needs,
enhance its neighbourhood, responds well to its context and is built to
last”. The AHA goes on to provide more detailed explanations to
support its definition. It argues that good affordable housing design
must translate the needs of the occupants into the physical design, while also maintaining a flexible design that allows for changes to be made to the dwelling and to accommodate new users over time. Good affordable housing design is also concerned with enhancing the neighbourhood in which the housing is built, and in doing so it considers landscaping and other details such as front porches to improve the overall quality of the neighbourhood. The AHA further argues that good design is concerned with the permanence of the structure and as such uses quality materials and finishes to contribute to the durability of the project.

The AHA has also developed a toolbox, “20 Steps to Design Quality”, to support practitioners in developing and implementing quality designed affordable housing projects. Under Step 9, “Assembling the Right Project Design Team”, the AHA advocates involving resident and community participation in the design process and selecting an architect who demonstrates a strong ability to work well with communities. Similar to Wates and Knevitt’s notion of good design, user needs and the role of the user in defining good design is also central to the AHA definition. Both sources identify cultural specificity as a tenant of good design, favouring culturally specific design solutions over universal or standard solutions.
Grdadolnik (2006), in describing the work of Canadian architect Gregory Henriquez, maintains that it is the designers ability to integrate the poetic (aesthetic) with the ethical (activism) that results in good design and meaningful architecture to the broader society. While his practice has not been labelled community architecture, Henriquez’s work has been described as socially responsible and the architect has become known for his design process that involves collaboration with the users. Grdadolnik further demonstrates how Henriquez’ approaches design, explaining that the architect addresses both the ethical and poetic dimensions early in the process, rather than as an afterthought. She argues that despite it being ineffective, conventional architecture typically considers the ethical and poetic dimensions of design as separate and mutually exclusive categories of inquiry (66-68).

For Henriquez, ethics is synonymous with the dialogue between the architect and community and the active involvement of the user in the design process. Henriquez’s exploration of an integrated poetic-ethical architectural practice demonstrates how good design can coincide with and be the outcome of user participation. Similarly, Perez-Gomez in describing the work of Henriquez’s, argues that the architect’s work represents good architecture in that it allows for participation and opens
up a space for the individual's (users) experience (Grdadolnik, 2006, p.69).

3.5.7 Praxis: The Application of Participatory Theory into Practice

Up until now, this research has considered participatory planning and design from a theoretical perspective. Despite participation becoming more accepted in the design profession, literature on this subject continues to remain general and broad in scope. While research has successfully demonstrated that there are varying levels of participation, the majority of literature continues to view each of these levels as a somewhat homogeneous process. There is limited literature that considers the various applications of participatory planning and design and the different opportunities and challenges each one brings. Further, the differing scales of planning and design and the implications on the participatory process are rarely discussed. For example, research rarely considers the differences between residential design and civic design or the differences between a single unit dwelling and a multi-complex apartment; and ultimately how these differences impact participation.

Also, research rarely addresses other components of participatory planning and design that are critical to the success of a project. Designers and planners are often required to be knowledgeable in the
areas of funding, the development and construction process and other areas of technical assistance. In addition to producing physical design solutions, planners and designers must also engage the users in meaningful two-way dialogue about the technical aspects of design, allowing users to make informed decisions on issues regarding the social and economic implications and the feasibility / sustainability of the project. As such, participatory design is much broader in scope than conventional design, despite the literature rarely acknowledging these other technical areas.

The in-depth investigation on specific applications and scope of participation is critical to understanding the outcomes of participatory planning and design, as well as to informing new participatory theories. Without grounded knowledge of participatory outcomes, theory will continue to generalize and in some cases even idealize the concept of participation. Research on the real and tangible outcomes of participation is also necessary to provide evidence to further support participatory movements.

In particular, there is a lack of in-depth investigations on the multiple applications and outcomes of participation in the context of housing design. Participatory planning and housing design presents unique
issues of scale and space, all of which raise important questions for research. What are the key considerations or challenges in designing a participatory process for a single housing unit involving a small group of related users versus a large-scale multi-unit dwelling involving multiple and diverse users? Also, housing represents multiple spaces with varying uses, including private, semi-private and public spaces. How are these varying spaces addressed in a participatory process? What challenges are designers faced with in managing the needs of multiple users within these varying spaces, such as the needs of children versus the needs of parents?

Finally, though not specific to housing design, it is common in practice for the actual users of the physical setting to not be identified until after the design and development stage is complete. This issue presents particular challenges to participatory planning and design practice, and this factor is often cited in the literature as a significant impediment to designers in undertaking a participatory process. This is often the case in multi-unit housing developments, where although the intended user group may be identified prior to the design phase, the actual users are commonly not known until after the project has been completed. Literature that explores strategies to address these practical issues is
necessary for supporting the effective and successful application of participatory planning and design.
4.0 CASE STUDY

4.1 Introduction
In examining the planning and design process undertaken by ENF Housing Society, this research aims to develop an understanding of the outcomes of participation, as well as to reveal the tangible issues and resulting strategies that arise in the application of participation, such as those outlined in the previous section. However, prior to this, in order to establish a context for ENF, the political circumstances, including housing policy and planning practice in Vancouver will be briefly examined.

4.2 Political Context – Housing Policy and Planning Practice in Vancouver
The role of ENF in the provision of affordable housing and in promoting women’s participation in the creation of their own housing cannot be fully understood without examining the political context which the housing society grew out of.

Though the country’s state of affordable housing was severely affected when the federal government withdrew financial support in the mid-nineties, British Columbia (BC) was one of few provinces whose provincial government continued to support the social housing portfolio. The BC
government continued to allocate the provincial portion of the early joint federal-provincial funded programs to social housing. Therefore, unlike many other Canadian provinces, BC remained relatively active in the development and provision of social housing. The continued provincial commitment to social housing ultimately enabled local housing organizations to continue building affordable housing units.

However, in 2001 provincial funding for new social housing developments was reduced, resulting in the cancellation of several new and existing projects (City of Vancouver, 2005, 9). In more extreme cases, third sector housing organizations dissolved and were forced to shut their doors. While ENF was spared the unfortunate fate of many other likeminded housing organizations and was able to remain in operation, the reduction in government funding nevertheless had an impact on its ability to build new and additional affordable housing for women. It has been fifteen years since ENF’s last housing development was built and the limited and often restricted government funding is one factor contributing to the organization’s inactivity.

It becomes evident that the non-profit sector’s capacity to build affordable housing and to engage in innovative design and planning
practices is closely linked to the governments' financial commitment and resulting funding models.

4.2.1 Overview of Women-Oriented Affordable Housing in Vancouver

Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities have a number of social housing developments created specifically for women. These housing projects are the result of several key non-profit organizations operating in the Greater Vancouver Region, that with financial support from the Provincial and local government, have been instrumental in the development and management of affordable housing for various women user groups. Numerous examples of women-centred housing exist in the Greater Vancouver Region. Several housing projects are particularly innovative and have included some level of participation in their planning and design.

Bridge Housing is a 49 unit affordable and supportive housing development specifically designed for hard-to-house single women. Located in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Bridge Housing provides accommodation for women dealing with a range of issues, including homelessness, mental illness and drug addiction. Bridge Housing represents an extremely marginalized group with complex housing needs. These women have experienced varying levels of homelessness in
the past and continue to be at risk of becoming homeless again. The unstable circumstances that characterize this user group present a significant challenge to undertaking a participatory process. Like many affordable housing projects, the actual residents that were expected to live in Bridge were not identified until after the project was completed. This, in addition to the somewhat nomadic and unpredictable nature of the client group, made it difficult to engage in an organized and cohesive participatory process. Despite these challenges, however, the architect conducted several workshops and visioning sessions with the community, including hard-to-house women from the area, in order to engage in a discussion about local housing needs and design opportunities. These sessions were spread out throughout the design process, allowing the community to provide feedback at key stages of the design. The information generated at these sessions and from the discussions with the user group formed the basis for the design of Bridge Housing (Key Informant Interview #2, 2007).

Mavis McMullen is another example of a women-oriented participatory housing design. Designed by the same principal architect as Bridge Housing, Mavis McMullen is a 34-unit housing development designed to accommodate women over 45 and women with children. Similar to the design process undertaken for Bridge Housing, Mavis McMullen involved
engaging women throughout every step of the design process (Key Informant Interview #2, 2007).

Finally, Women In Search of Housing Society (WISHS) is a non-profit housing organization that has been responsible for the development of several women-oriented housing developments. WISHS Coop is a 36-unit co-op located in downtown Vancouver targeted mainly to women. WISHS Wave is a 23-unit development located in Port Moody for mature single women without children. WISHS Wave, in particular, provides housing to women between the ages of 40-64, which is a unique group of women who are often isolated and marginalized due to age, income and social status and are often at risk of homelessness. The design and planning of WISHS Wave involved extensive participation by women, including future tenants. Since the WISHS mainly operated in the city of Vancouver they were aware of the housing needs impacting Vancouver women, however the organization felt that in order to create meaningful housing in Port Moody that they needed to reach out to women living there. As such, they connected with women from a local senior community group called Age to Perfection. These women became highly involved in the design and development of WISHS Wave. Through this process, women were given the opportunity to talk about their issues and were able to identify a number of design criteria that would inform the final design of the
housing. They were instrumental in ensuring that a disability lens was incorporated into the design. Universal accessibility, storage for motorized scooters and features to support residents with hidden disabilities, such as arthritis, were incorporated into the design of WISHS Wave. The design process also served to legitimize women’s issues particular to this age group, such as common feelings of isolation. Design features such as common rooms, communal kitchens and safe outdoor gathering spaces were integrated into the design to support interaction amongst tenants (Key Informant Interview #1, 2007).

While there are multiple and intersecting forces at play that allow participatory planning and design to happen, it is impossible to dismiss the impact of recent government initiatives on the movement towards participatory housing design that is occurring in Vancouver, despite it being a somewhat haphazard movement.

Vancouver’s local government has undergone a shift in the way it approaches planning and at the core of this shift is an understanding and appreciation of participation and public engagement. In its efforts to become a more transparent and accountable government body, the City of Vancouver identified public involvement in City decision-making as a priority and in 1998 adopted a Public Involvement Strategy consisting of
sixteen directives or actions. It is within this context that numerous innovative participatory housing processes were undertaken.

In particular, as part of an overall affordable housing strategy for the Downtown Eastside, the City of Vancouver undertook an arguably innovative design process for the retrofit of Single Room Occupancy units. The City erected and displayed full-scale model suites to demonstrate potential options for the future design of SRO’s. The community was invited to view and walk through the displays and provide feedback. The feedback and discussions with community members informed the development of a City Housing Plan, including design and planning criteria for the retrofit and design of SRO’s (City of Vancouver, 2005).

The above-cited examples represent unique cases of participatory design and they serve to demonstrate that a culture of participation is beginning to emerge in British Colombia’s affordable housing sector. The cited examples provide a brief description of the varying levels in which participatory planning and design has been carried out. However, to more fully appreciate the practice of participatory design, the following section examines key interview findings from the case study for this research, Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society.
4.3 Women Learning by Doing – The Participatory Practice of Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society

Architecture is a process of giving form and pattern to the social life of the community. Architecture is not an individual act performed by artist-architect and charged with his emotions. Building is a collective action (Hannes Meyer, in Architecture for Humanity, 2006).

The following section focuses on Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society as the main case study for this research. In order to fully appreciate ENF as a successful model of participatory planning and housing design, the history of the housing organization is briefly examined. Following, the research concentrates on the participatory design process undertaken by ENF. Using key informant and resident interviews as the primary source of information, the research examines the impacts of participation on the lives of women living in ENF, with a particular focus on physical and social outcomes of participation. The limitations and barriers to participation are also considered as they specifically relate to ENF’s participatory process.

4.3.1 ENF History and Background

Entre Nous Femmes (ENF) Housing Society is an organization in Vancouver British Colombia committed to providing secure, safe, affordable and appropriate housing for women. ENF was founded by a core group of single mothers who believed that women had a place and a
right to describe and create their own housing circumstances. Since its inception in 1984, ENF has been responsible for the development of eight multi-unit women-oriented housing projects throughout the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

The first housing project built by ENF was Alma-Blackwell in 1986, and the most recent project, Nathalie Terrace, was built in 1992. It has been nearly fifteen years since ENF has been involved in the development side of housing. However, the organization’s strategic plan identifies increasing the portfolio of available housing units by a minimum of 60 units, with a minimum of 20 new affordable housing units, by the year 2010.

While building housing for women-led families is the primary intent of the organization, creating linkages to other facets of women’s life is also the focus. Housing is viewed as being broad in scope and interconnected with issues such as childcare, income and community development.

Though the principal target population and impetus for ENF is women, the organization offers housing to a wide range of people. ENF does not want to create female ghettos by segregating or isolating women. ENF acknowledges that a healthy community is synonymous with a diverse or
mixed community. As such, while maintaining its focus on women, ENF housing developments represent a mixed community of tenants including single fathers, people living with disabilities and seniors (Geary, 1992, 17-23).

4.3.2 Relevance of Case Study to Research

ENF was selected as a case study for this research for several reasons. More generally, this research is concerned with housing for women. ENF is one of the few, if not the only, organization currently operating in Canada that is involved in the development of affordable housing with a particular focus on women. ENF represents a long-term and successful approach to providing and maintaining housing for women for which no other comparable Canadian precedent exists.

More specifically, this research is concerned with participatory design and its potential for producing more appropriate housing for women, as well as offering opportunities for women’s empowerment and capacity building. ENF recognizes that women bring with them unique realities and experiences. In its efforts to provide housing for women-led families, the organization seeks to provide an environment of opportunity and empowerment where women can share their knowledge and skills while developing new knowledge and skills. Collaboration and
participation are fundamental principles that inform the planning and
design phase, as well as the post-occupancy and maintenance phase of
the ENF housing process.

ENF, as a case study, presents several interesting and unique
perspectives into the practice of participatory planning and design, which
are of importance to this particular research and to the larger body of
literature on participation and planning. First, like many multi-unit
housing projects, ENF residents were not selected until after the housing
projects were completed, thereby preventing the actual residents from
participating in the planning and design of their homes. Despite this
limitation, in the planning of the first housing project Alma Blackwell, ENF
established a design committee comprised of women, several of whom
became residents after the housing project was completed. This design
committee strategy enabled women to participate in the planning and
design of ENF housing. The role of this committee was to direct the
design phase, which involved actively participating in the design process
to ensure that their experiences as women and their housing needs were
being addressed and translated into the design. The decision by ENF to
establish a design committee comprised specifically of women with low-
incomes represents a unique strategy that addresses the barriers of
participatory design, while also allowing the organization to carry out a
participatory process. Even though the users were unknown prior to the design phase, rather than dismissing participatory design entirely as an option, ENF effectively came up with an approach to realize a successful participatory process.

This design committee approach is a major focus of the research on ENF. The research involved interviewing members of the design committee, including the architects and planners, to gain an understanding of the design process and the impact this process had on the women involved. The research also examined the connections between the women's experiences and housing needs and specific design elements of the housing in order to gain a thorough understanding of how women's needs and experiences were translated into the design. The research also involved interviews with current women residents of Alma Blackwell to assess the impact the design has on their housing experience.

While the design committee was directly involved in the design of Alma Blackwell, ENF undertook a somewhat different approach in the design of their later housing developments. The design committee was still responsible for reviewing and approving the design, however they became less active and hands-on in the design of the later housing developments. Instead, the design committee developed a list of design
guidelines based on the original participatory design process for Alma Blackwell to inform the future designs of ENF housing.

In view of the changing role of the ENF Design Committee from an active group participating in the design process to a more passive group indirectly involved in the design through the development of design guidelines, a secondary focus of this research will be to examine the impact, if any, that this change had on the design quality of ENF housing. Mainly, this research is interested in exploring whether the creation of design guidelines can be considered as participatory planning and design.

This involved interviewing ENF members to determine the intent of the design guidelines, as well as interviewing residents from Jessica Place, a more recent ENF housing project, in order to assess their satisfaction with the design of their home and ultimately whether the intent of the design guidelines were achieved.

4.3.3 Limitations of Case Study to Research

Despite the importance of ENF to this research, the case study presented some limitations that should be noted prior to further examination. The housing projects that were examined, Alma Blackwell and Jessica Place,
were built in 1986 and 1990 respectively, resulting in a significant amount of time between the date of housing construction and the date of this research. This gap in time posed a challenge in locating and contacting all the design participants. Of the twelve participants involved in the design of Alma Blackwell, the researcher was able to interview six of the twelve original participants. The gap in time also posed a challenge in evaluating the quality of design of ENF housing. It was anticipated that when answering questions regarding the quality of their home, residents would likely base their responses on current design standards and innovations. As such, it is possible that recent design innovations, such as green building practices, may have limited residents' ability to associate ENF design features with the innovative practice of the time in which the building was built.
5.0 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This section outlines the ideas, experiences and concerns of key informants who participated in the participatory design process and residents of ENF housing. Design Committee participants included two architects, two of the original founders of ENF, one planner and one original ENF resident. The ENF Design Committee participants were actively involved in the design and planning process of the first ENF housing, Alma Blackwell; with the exception of the original resident who became involved with the second ENF housing, Beatrice Terrace. Residents included seven tenants living in Alma Blackwell and three tenants living in Jessica Place. The resident interviewees represent women tenants who were not directly involved in the design and planning of ENF housing. However, many of the residents interviewed have been involved in the management of their housing either as tenant board members or as participants in a variety of tenant established and driven committees.

During the interviews with Design Committee participants, the overall participatory process, including the role of design committee structure, were discussed. Areas of inquiry included the outcomes of participation on the physical and social dimensions of the home and the broader role
of participation as a mechanism for fostering women's empowerment and capacity building.

The main impetus for interviewing ENF residents was to evaluate the indirect impacts, if any, of the design process on women as recipients rather than active participants in the ENF Design Committee. During interviews with residents, the quality of design and its impact on women's lives were discussed. Areas of investigation included women's housing need, the role of design in meeting these needs and the role of participation in their everyday housing. Another objective of resident interviews was to evaluate the impact, if any, that the changing dynamic of the design committee from an active structure in the design process to a more passive structure had on residents' housing experience. As such, interviews with residents from Alma Blackwell where the design committee was active, and interviews with residents from Jessica Place, where the design committee was more passive were compared, to determine if any variations in the quality of design could be identified.

5.1 The Design Committee Perspective

This section discusses the findings from interviews with key informants who participated in the participatory design process of ENF housing.
5.1.1 The ENF Design Committee: Structure, Membership and Process

As previously mentioned, ENF was founded by a core group of single mothers who shared and believed in women's abilities and wherewithal to create and control their own housing. As such, the active participation of women in the design and planning of ENF housing was fundamental to realizing the housing society's purpose and vision.

When the possibility of developing their first housing project was realized and funding was secured, the women began interviewing potential architects to design the housing. Through this process, two architects were identified as potential candidates. The first candidate was a male architect who had considerable experience in designing affordable and co-op housing, as well as experience with engaging in participatory design processes. The other was a female architecture graduate, who despite having limited practical design experience had invaluable experience as a single mother. Recognizing that this was their first project and that the women had no experience with planning and developing housing, and despite wanting to support the female architect whose principles aligned with those of the housing society, ENF was hesitant to enlist an architect with no applied experience. In the end ENF came to a comprise that allowed them to hire both architects in different capacities. The male architect was hired as the principal architect, while
the architecture graduate was hired to develop and support the participatory process and to work with the women in articulating their design needs and ideas (Interview with Design Committee participant #2, 2007).

With the architects appointed, ENF then invited women from the community and potential residents to participate in a design committee structure. Having realized that they would not be able to identify the actual residents until after the housing project was completed, ENF sought to bring together a group of women that would be able to translate their experiences as single mothers and their unique housing needs into the design of ENF housing. Eventually, an ENF Design Committee was established that consisted of the two architects and approximately twelve women who participated and remained consistently engaged throughout the design process, including the four founding members of ENF.

The Design Committee met regularly throughout the planning and design stages, often meeting weekly to review, critique and modify the evolving design. One of the design committee participants described the committee and design process as an iterative one, in which each stage or committee meeting was defined and informed by the preceding one. The
participant went on to state it was the iterative process that allowed for a fluid and dynamic collaboration between the designers and women to occur. Rather than a prescribed process with pre-defined stages, the ENF Design Committee process allowed the members to have a level of control over process and ultimately the final design (Interview with Design Committee participant #1, 2007).

The principal architect confirmed the participant's sentiments and described the ENF design process as being an organic and evolutionary one. He explained that workshops with the Design Committee were ongoing throughout the design process. The overall process followed a typical sequence of design from broad programming and preliminary schematic designs to design development (including site planning, spatial layouts, material selection and other technical specifications) and construction. At the same time, it remained an open and flexible process, which ultimately allowed the committee to inform the direction of the process (Interview with Design Committee participant #4, 2007).

The principal architect went on to describe the participatory design process as symbolizing the growth of a tree. The branches of the tree represent a continual design path that has opportunities of developing in multiple, but interconnected directions. The branches are fluid and
represent the path that participants follow, allowing them to meander in
different directions and if necessary permitting them to return to the
trees roots, symbolizing the opportunity for participants to re-group
(Interview with Design Committee participant #4).

5.1.2 The Co-operative Role of the Architect and the Participant

The interviews with design committee participants clearly revealed that a
collaborative two-way exchange of knowledge took place throughout the
design process. The architect described his role as being both a
contributor and receiver of knowledge and experience. He explained that
his role was to walk the participants through the various stages of design
and to educate them on how to read and understand plans.

The idea was to use the process to first educate the women
about buildings and how buildings functioned. The next step
was to create and engage in a dialogue about their design
needs and wants and to translate this knowledge into the co-
creation of a building with spaces that works for them
specifically (DC4).

He also explained that his role on the design committee was one of a
receiver of information:

Through the participatory process you are able to tap into
the nuances of peoples individual needs and you get a sense
of how each person might use the home. This knowledge
allowed me to develop a repertoire that resulted in a design
grounded in real life experience and which would also inform
my later work and career (DC4).
Similarly, the women who participated in the design committee process explained they shared their experiences of housing needs, as well as gained knowledge and skills about design and planning.

The architect learned about how to manage the phases of design within the dynamics of a group process. He definitely became more versant in the needs of women and children in housing. He probably also learned to apply patience to his practice (DC4).

A lot of time experts think they have consulted and their definition of consultation is only scratching the surface. Not that experts don’t have a role, they bring a lot of knowledge and expertise at the table. When you combine real experiences and women’s voice with the voice of technical experts, you are going to create a healthier and well-balanced community (DC2).

What was happening was a two-way dialogue between the architect and the women, where we were learning from each other (DC5).

5.1.3 The Role of Participation

The interview discussions with participants clearly demonstrated the importance that design committee members placed on participation. The participants identified a strong connection between participation, women and housing. Participation was viewed as a mechanism to support women’s rights and a vehicle to liberate women from oppressive systems.

My view is that housing, in this country, is conceived, developed, designed and managed by men within a patriarchal systems and assumptions. And, yet women are the occupiers, so I think that despite the fact that housing provides the basis for which women can make all their other opportunities in life happen, it’s essentially populated by
women, but controlled by men. Participation defies this system and creates a new system where women have a place and a right to create their own housing. It [participation] allowed us to control our own housing destinies (DC3).

Similarly, participants also referred to the role of participation as carving out both a symbolic and actual physical space for women’s voices.

*I see a role for the grass roots voice. Participation is about creating spaces for the grass roots voice. It is about talking to the people that are going to live in the (ENF) community. It is about listening to the women and children. The grass roots voice is a vital voice (DC2).*

It also becomes evident from the interviews that design committee participants viewed participation as an invaluable and necessary process that lead to the creation of liveable and functional spaces, as well as that supported positive community development. More specifically, when asked to identify the physical and social outcomes of the participatory design process, respondents described and confirmed the role of participation as creating better physical spaces, as well as supporting women’s capacity building and empowerment.

The following sub-sections examine more closely the physical and social outcomes of the ENF participatory design process for Alma-Blackwell.
5.1.4 Physical Dimensions of Housing

Design committee participants clearly viewed participation as leading to better design. The principal architect explained that participation, by the end user or a representative group in the design of housing, promotes and fosters collaborative decision making and that such a process ultimately results in a building that works for the user, rather than a building that requires the user to conform to it. The architect explained:

*The end result is better and good design, which is both unique and responsive to the group who will be occupying and using the space. In terms of Alma-Blackwell, not only did the physical design meet the women’s particular needs as single mothers, but the spaces were in essence an extension of their values and philosophy (DC4).*

The architect was asked to expand on the relationship between participation, the final design of Alma Blackwell and the women’s needs:

*Perhaps the most crucial design feature to emerge from the participatory process was the central network system that consisted of two adjacent courtyards. The building was designed to promote interaction and allow the women’s paths to cross. The overall site planning of Alma-Blackwell was unique, particularly for its time, and it might have been different had the participatory process not occurred. Unlike typical multi-unit housing that is designed with anonymous corridors, there are no corridors but instead the individual homes are designed around the courtyard, which provides space to interact. The need to maintain residents as a cohesive group where women could provide support to one another was something that was consistently expressed by the women throughout the design process. Even minor design features support this concept. For instance, the placement of the mailboxes, rather than being off in one corner, the women deliberately decided to place them near the common*
room so that when collecting the mail, women's paths might cross (DC4).

The women on the design committee reinforced the observations made by the principal architect and further articulated the role of participation in creating better quality designs. When asked to comment on the relationship between participation and the physical design of Alma-Blackwell, the women provided detailed descriptions of the design and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the final design addressed their housing needs. The participants identified the following design features as the key physical outcomes of the participatory process.

*Visual Access*

Visual access was critical to the success of the Alma-Blackwell and the women expressed the need to monitor their children as the single most important design consideration. The interior and exterior spaces of Alma-Blackwell incorporated specific design elements to support the women's concern for visual access. The kitchens included pass through windows that opened onto the living room and dining room, providing women with visual access between rooms and allowing them to supervise their children from the kitchen. One participant provided the following remark:
The design provides opportunities for parents to take care of their life duties inside the unit, while being aware of what their kids are doing (DC5).

Visual access extended to the exterior spaces of Alma-Blackwell and the units were situated around the central courtyard system. Large windows from the kitchen looked onto the courtyards, allowing women inside the home to observe their children playing outside.

Separation Between Living and Sleeping Spaces

The layout of the individual units was given careful consideration. The participants voiced the need for privacy within the units and a layout that would prevent noise from travelling throughout the home. In the end the design committee selected a layout in which the living spaces (living room and dining room) were physically separate from the bedrooms. Situating the sleeping space on the top or basement level and placing the living spaces on the main level of the unit achieved the women's need for the division between spaces. One participant provided the following comment:

Noise isn't a problem, and when the children are sleeping, we can either get our work done, cleaning up and preparing for the next day, or just hang out and listen to music and not have to worry about disrupting the kids. It is good for the kids too, because if they need privacy, especially as they get older, they can retreat to their rooms (DC3).
Differentiation and Variety in Individual Units

The women on the design committee expressed the desire to be able to delineate and distinguish one unit from the other. The women did not want a design that consisted of identical and standardized units repeated throughout the site. Instead, they identified differentiation and variety between units as a key design consideration. This served as a symbol and expression of women's individuality. One participant provided the following insight:

*I need to know that my unit is different from your house so that I can have a sense of ownership. But the ability to distinguish between units also served as a powerful symbol of women's individuality. It provided a balance to the common areas, which symbolized women's connections and community (DC1).*

Social Interaction and Community Focus

Community was integral to the values and philosophy of ENF and the participants continued to advocate for housing that would support positive social interaction and a sense of community. This was achieved with the central courtyard system, the integrated seating areas and green spaces situated throughout the site, the common room and balconies facing the courtyard. In particular, the two courtyards, one with a play structure and the other open green space, provided places for kids to interact. One participant provided the following comment:
Building a community in the design encourages tenants to interact. One of the things I learned from looking at specs [specifications] and drawings, and this sounds very weird, is that squareness is not conducive to creating community. But roundness is, communities are round and they have a central area where people can interact. So we made the courtyards round, we added meeting places, places for kids to play and hang out, seating. It sounds very weird. And a path that allowed you to meander through the housing, rather than something straight and square. And I really think that it is an environment where women and children can thrive in (DC2).

To further support a sense of community, the participants advocated for moving the parking area away from the main housing. An underground parking garage was included in the final design. One participant remarked:

When you visit Alma-Blackwell, the parking is not part of the community. There is a central area, then the units and then parking. Usually, parking is in the middle, we tried to maintain the village in the centre of the community, with privacy options as well. We switched the importance of the car, most housing is designed around the car and most women don’t have cars. So we relocated that space for play areas and green space (DC1).

Balance and Choice: Private, Semi-private and Public Spaces

Despite a strong focus on community and social interaction, the women also expressed the need for the design to provide opportunities and choice in both community and privacy. The design of Alma-Blackwell is a layering of spaces with varying levels of private and public areas. A second egress was provided in all the main floor units. One door
provided access directly to the central courtyard, while the second door provided private access to the main street. In addition, private balconies facing the courtyard provided semi-private areas for residents.

Safety
Safety is a critical feature in the design of Alma-Blackwell and, throughout the design process, participants continuously examined each stage of the design for its impact on women and children’s safety. The notion of safety manifested in two main concerns. First, the women wanted a design that would provide safe spaces for children to play, free from accidents and injury. To address this, interior and exterior materials were carefully selected, as well as the units and overall site was designed to avoid creating accidental gaps or crevices where children might wander to and potentially become injured. Also, the front community entrance gate was secured with a childproof lock. The locked gate allowed children the freedom to explore the community spaces, while it provided parents with a sense of security in knowing that there children could not leave the community grounds. The following comment by one of the design committee participants demonstrates the role of housing design in supporting the women’s concerns of safety:

_By pushing the building envelope to the edge of the property and opening up the centre, the courtyard became the protected area for children. The units were designed around_
the courtyard so that parents could monitor the children at play (DC5).

Second, the participants wanted the design to foster a sense of safety from intruders and other acts of violence committed by strangers. Exterior lighting throughout the unit and the deliberate orientation of the units facing onto the interior courtyard and the main street provided women with optimum visual access. One participant provided the following comment:

*Safety is really important. Well-lit spaces and eyes on the street are important. Women have such a different sense of safety. And, if women and children feel safe at night then you know the design works (DC2).*

The design features illustrated above are the ones that were consistently raised by the women during the interviews. Other design elements that were mentioned less frequently included material selection, consideration to flooring, access to amenities and the diversity of the surrounding neighbourhood. It is evident from the detailed and comprehensive responses of the design committee participants that the participatory process resulted in good design and more specifically a design that meets the needs of women. Participation was viewed as an effective mechanism for translating women's experience into the design of
housing. The following comment by a design committee participant effectively highlights this conclusion:

*The physical design of Alma-Blackwell was the best match for the women living there. Despite the site planning, code and by-law and budget constraints, the design is innovative and most importantly it works. It is a little village on the corner of the city and people that live there will describe it as a little village. And when you walk inside it feels like a village - the kids are safe, parents are neighbours. It takes a village to raise a child and Alma-Blackwell is a real village experience in terms of supporting women and raising children (DC1).*

5.1.5 Social Dimensions of Housing: Capacity Building and Empowerment

The design committee participants certainly viewed the participatory process as contributing to women’s capacity building and empowerment. The skills and knowledge that the women gained as a result of their active participation in the design process contributed positively to their housing experience, as well as supported other areas of their life. It becomes evident from the interviews that the participatory process moved beyond the physical design to also have a profound impact on various aspects of women’s lives.

*Capacity Building*

The participants were asked several questions with regards to the social outcomes or benefits of participation. Many participants cited examples of how the participatory process allowed them to develop knowledge and
technical skills about housing and building, including funding, government approval processes and the construction process.

Women learned more about the actual function of buildings and how the pieces fit together. People came away knowing a lot more than they did before. Women knew about the surfaces and materials and the cost implications of their decisions (DC1).

One of the things I learned when I was on the design committee – we had a woman architect graduate on the committee – she was able to explain to us what the drawings meant. I learnt so much from her. The training and skills that I learnt was invaluable. You learn how to read drawings and understand how buildings function. And because there are some things that you can’t change about buildings, because of codes and laws, we understood why and learned to work around these barriers (DC2).

Women also talked about the skills they developed with regards to group dynamics. Women learned how to work in a group setting and build skills around collaborative decision-making, group organizing, conflict resolution and mediation. The following comment by one of the participant’s highlights the importance that women placed on the skills they gained related to collaboration and community building:

We learned about group organizing strategies and how to contribute to a collaborative decision-making process. For example, we had to organize to get government approvals and to get our parking relaxation (DC3).

A re-occurring message that emerged out of the interviews was that the participatory process provided women with an opportunity to develop
skills, knowledge and experience that they were then able to apply to other venues. This is perhaps the most significant and unexpected outcome of the participatory process and many of the participants were able to make a strong connection between their role as a participant on the ENF Design Committee and employment opportunities.

*People gained skills that worked for them in their life. I went on to a career in housing (DC3).*

*It turned into employment to support my child and myself. It allowed me to take those skills and apply them to other aspects of my life. It was a huge learning opportunity for me, I developed skills, marketable skills. I learned about the housing sector and I was able to qualify for work in the non-profit sector. It really created a life for me and my child, and myself as an individual. I don't know how to describe it but it had an impact both socially and financially. I no longer felt isolated and I became connected to society. (DC2).*

The women learned from each other and through this process they developed a network of social supports. An indirect outcome of the participatory process was that women created a venue to share their stories and exchange advice about parenting and life skills.

*We were surrounded by dynamic female role models. We talked and listened to each other's stories. This was a great experience; we tapped into the stories that never get told and the voices that never get heard (DC2).*

*It led to personal support. It is something that is really important and something that the participatory process can help develop, the personal support group for women that are involved (DC6).*
Empowerment

The participatory design process also served as a valuable exercise in women's empowerment. Women identified an increase in self-esteem, sense of control and empowerment as key outcomes of the participatory process.

When you talk with women they feel a lack of self-esteem and control over their own lives. And I think participation helps enhance women's self-esteem, control and a sense of hopefulness. Women are participating in their housing and this gives us an incredible sense of control (DC3).

It was a door of opportunity that I walked through. It was an opportunity to learn new things and be part of something very empowering for me. I remember being asked a question at my first meeting, and we were talking about million dollar budgets and a massive building with forty units and government and architecture stuff that was all new to me. But just to be asked my own opinion, that was just empowering. It really opened a door that allowed me to fully participate and I had a voice. It gave me a sense of having a voice that people would listen to (DC2).

One participant in particular explained that the participatory process brought out the leadership qualities that all women possess but are expected to conceal and hide.

Personal leadership and development is something that happens with participatory design, it brings out women's leadership qualities. Participation forces you to look at all the components you are participating in. You look at what your day is like, how are you going to use the building, and how are you going to maintain the building. So all of this becomes part of the process and it is hands on - all this helps to develop your confidence, but also helps women become
leaders within their own family and in their own group. Just from being part of a creative process and actually going through it and seeing the housing being built (DC6).

The role of participation in supporting women’s empowerment was clearly demonstrated in the interviews with design committee participants. The women became active agents in determining the outcome of the participatory process and contributed meaningfully to improving the housing condition for women. The participants truly saw their participation on the design committee as a positive experience that contributed to both their personal and professional development.

5.1.6 Barriers of Participation
Participants were also asked to identify any challenges or barriers of participation that they may have experienced during their involvement on the design committee. The majority of the participants, including the principal architect did not offer any examples of barriers or disadvantages of the participatory process. However, one participant did identify concrete obstacles, such as funding models and government policy, as not always supporting a participatory design process. Finally, two of the women interviewed identified what they considered to be a form of inequality that was deeply entrenched in the philosophy about participatory design. The women argued that though participatory design
recognizes the designer as a paid professional, women are still
considered volunteers and are not recognized financially for the
experiences and expertise that they bring to the process.

5.2 The Residents Perspective
This section discusses the findings from interviews with residents from
two ENF housing developments: Alma Blackwell and Jessica Place. Seven
interviews were conducted with residents of Alma-Blackwell and three
interviews with residents of Jessica Place. The residents interviewed in
this section were not part of the design committee and did not
participate in the design process.

The purpose of interviews with residents was two-fold. First, interviews
with residents from Alma-Blackwell were conducted to determine whether
or not the design process and resulting final design was successful in
meeting the needs of the women living in the home. This includes
exploring the level and impact of resident involvement in the
management of the housing. The role of the design of Alma-Blackwell on
women’s housing experience and overall quality of life was also explored.

Secondly, interviews with residents from Jessica Place were conducted to
determine the effectiveness of design guidelines as a participatory design
tool. The ENF Design Committee became less active in the design of the later housing developments, including Jessica Place. Instead the committee developed a list of design guidelines to inform the design. The design guidelines were considered a direct product that grew out of the women's experience as active participants in earlier ENF housing, particularly Alma-Blackwell. The role and impact of resident involvement in the management of Jessica Place is also explored.

5.2.1 The Alma Blackwell Experience

Alma-Blackwell is a 46-unit housing project located in the Commercial Drive area, an inner city neighbourhood of Vancouver.
5.2.1.1 Physical Dimensions of Housing

Women living in Alma-Blackwell were asked several questions about what they liked and disliked about their housing within the context of women's housing needs. It was clear from their responses, that women saw a strong connection between the physical design of their home and how certain features served to support their lives. All of the women interviewed were satisfied with the design of Alma-Blackwell, with only a few reporting minor issues with particular design features. Of particular interest, was that the women identified many of the design features that were previously described in the interviews with the ENF Design Committee. This demonstrated that many of goals and objectives of the design committee were met and continue to benefit the current residents.

In order to present the interview findings in an organized manner, the same design categories that were used in the previous section 5.1: The Design Committee Perspective have been repeated in this section.

Visual Access

There was wide spread consensus among the women living in Alma-Blackwell that the design of their home maximized visual access within the individual units and to the exterior central courtyard system. Women certainly appreciated this design feature
and commented on the role visual access played in supporting their role as primary or sole caregivers to their children.

_The layout of the units allows you to watch your kids. When the kids were younger I could have the door open while they were in the courtyard and I could be in the kitchen doing dishes while they were outside. You can tell there was thought put into the design, for example, there are second peepholes put on the doors at child height, so that children can also see what is going on outside and who is at the door (AB3)._

_Because the courtyard is there, it has made parenting a lot easier. I raised one child not living here, and I have noticed a difference in parenting with my second child who was born here. It is a lot less hands on and it has made it easier. I am not responsible for every moment outside of school and the kids can play outside or in the living room and I can be working at the kitchen table and watch them from a distance (AB4)._

Another women talked specifically about the location and design of the laundry facilities and how it made performing daily tasks easier. The laundry facilities were located between the two courtyards on the ground level of the housing development. Three of its exterior walls feature large windows that allowed women visual access to the courtyards while they did laundry.

_The laundry room is central and on the main floor and has windows all around it, so you can watch your kids while you are doing laundry. This is unlike other places where I lived, where I would either have to drag my two children with me down to the laundry room or stress out about having to quickly throw laundry in before my children woke up from their nap. Here, the design makes being a mother and a caregiver a bit simpler (AB5)._
Separation Between Living and Sleeping Spaces

Most of the women commented on the spatial layout of the individual units and particularly identified the division between the living and sleeping spaces as a feature that allowed them the freedom and flexibility to live out women's multiple roles. Several women insisted that while being a mother was their primary role, they also identified with other roles and that their home allowed them to express these roles. For example, the living room could be a place for children to play and watch television during the day. At night it could become a place for adults to socialize and interact or a place for women to study and work.

*I like the fact that it is two floors, when you have kids you can put them to bed downstairs and you can have adult time upstairs. Watch movies or have friends over. That has been the biggest blessing. The two-floor thing because you need adult time (AD5).*

Differentiation and Variety in Individual Units

Only one of the resident's interviewed identified the differentiation between unit size and layout as being an important feature of the housing. The differentiation in individual units was viewed as symbolizing or representing opportunities for residents to personalize and individualize their own spaces.

*There are a variety of unit types here and there is variation in the layouts, which I like. I also like the ability to*
personalize my space and that I am not barred or restricted and that my home can be an extension or expression of myself and my family (AB1).

Social Interaction and Community Focus

Each of the woman interviewed associated the design of their housing as directly contributing to a sense of community and supporting social interaction between residents. The positioning of the individual units around the central courtyards, the common room, the transparent-like design of the laundry facilities and informal gathering spaces throughout the site were identified as key design elements that promoted social interaction. The emphasis on community was viewed as an invaluable feature of Alma-Blackwell and one that helped move women and their children out of isolation and into a supportive and nurturing environment.

I really like the sense of community and that I feel safe because of the sense of community. My neighbours have been a form of social support for me and were supportive of me becoming a single mother (AB3).

The design of the place has everything to do with the courtyards. It allows us to get to know and interact with our neighbours. We sit out there, we have benches and we sit and talk. Everybody gets to know each other and it is not just a passing thing. The two courtyards are the most crucial and amazing thing about this home. We have a real community and all the kids go out there and play sports. It is just amazing. This is the place where kids learn to ride bikes and it has been really neat to watch the kids grow up (AB5).
One woman, in particular, commented on the role of community in enhancing her quality of life and providing a venue to share her experiences of poverty and motherhood with women in similar circumstances. The design of their home provided women with opportunities to interact with each other, and through these interactions, women's experiences were legitimized.

There is a real network or sisterhood amongst. Isolation is a dangerous thing when you are poor. As a single mother on low-income it is really great to be in a place with other people facing these challenges of exhaustion and poverty because we could do things for each other and ourselves in a group. It really enhanced the quality of our lives (AB1).

Figure 5 – Interior Courtyard at Alma-Blackwell
Balance and Choice: Private, Semi-private and Public Spaces

Several women cited the balance between private and public spaces as an important feature of their home, which ultimately provided them with the choice to either interact with residents or to maintain a preferred level of privacy.

*I guess I am bit of a private person and this environment forces me to interact. Which is a good thing. This house allows me to have both privacy, which I appreciate, as well as a sense of community. There is a good balance between privacy and public space here, and having privacy allows me to appreciate interacting with my neighbours (AB4).*

Safety

Most of the women described their home as a secure and safe place to raise children. Safety was considered a critical housing need and the women identified several design elements of Alma-Blackwell as effectively addressing their concerns, including the enclosed courtyard and the placement of lighting throughout the site.

*The fact that this whole place is secure. The thing is that it is really really safe and there are times when we don’t have to have such a close eye on our kids all the time. There are enough people here, enough mothers and we watch out for each other’s kids. It is an amazing place, our kids call it Sesame Street (AB5).*

One woman described the multiple egress routes within the individual units as an important safety feature.
Safety is built into the design of this house. The doors are secure and there is no fear that someone might break into your place. And, if there is a fire on the stairs that is separating my family from the front door, we can exit from the patio on the second floor (AB1).

Despite women describing their housing as a safe environment, two women referred to the narrow platforms of the staircases in the individual units as hazards. According to the women, the staircases were not designed to meet the building code. Women expressed fear that their children or people with disabilities might fall and become injured by ascending or descending the staircases.

It was very clear from the resident’s perspectives that the design of their home had a positive impact on the women’s housing experience by enhancing their quality of life. Through the interviews with women living in Alma-Blackwell, it was apparent that the participatory design process for Alma-Blackwell was successful in responding to the housing needs of women. The participatory design process was successful in translating the participant’s experiences as women and mothers into the final design of the home. This was reinforced by the experiences of the women currently living in Alma-Blackwell, who continue to benefit from the participatory design process.
One of the women living in Alma-Blackwell poignantly described how the design of Alma-Blackwell contributed to her positive housing experience:

One of the most difficult issues with housing that I had experienced was finding places that were safe and where kids could cry, run up and down and learn to walk without neighbours banging on the walls and doors. It is an incredible oppression to live under, if you have a baby or a toddler who sometimes squeals or yells with joy. It is just a horrible feeling when you feel you can't let them do that because you are afraid of the guy upstairs will start pounding his broomstick on the ceiling. One of the greatest things about living here was that it was okay to have kids and even if they do yell or scream or drop their toys it doesn't disturb the neighbours. This is partly a result of the design, noise doesn't travel and the bedrooms are situated on the exterior wall of the building and separated from the living spaces. But it is also because of the community here, which is accepting of children. It is incredible freedom (AB1).

5.2.1.2 Role of Participation

Despite not being involved in the design of their own housing, other opportunities for participation were presented to the residents of Alma-Blackwell that were also explored during the interviews. Being the very first ENF housing development, Alma Blackwell was perhaps the most visionary and innovative of the ENF models. This is partly the result of the housing society's active involvement in the early stages of the housing.

While ENF presently manages all its housing developments, in the past it was particularly more active in the day-to-day operations and programming of its housing, including Alma-Blackwell. Long-standing residents of Alma-Blackwell explained that in the earlier days of their
housing, ENF had a stronger presence at Alma-Blackwell. ENF was actively involved in establishing resident committees to encourage residents to participate in the management of their housing. However, while ENF continues to provide funding to residents for smaller-scale project and resident events, over the years the organization’s presence within Alma-Blackwell has diminished.

ENFs belief in women’s participation and control over their own housing was further supported by encouraging and supporting the women of Alma-Blackwell in establishing resident committees, including a social committee, gardening committee, newsletter group and tenant selection committee. The tenant selection committee provided women with an opportunity to review prospective new tenants and to provide recommendations to ENF on the tenant selection process. At the time of the interviews, many of the resident committees had disbanded, with the exception of the social and gardening committees who meet on an as needed basis.

Many of the women interviewed described their involvement on the various resident committees as a positive experience. One of the women explained:
I felt a sense of duty to become involved on the various committees. At one time a great proportion of residents were active on the committees, both formally and informally. I was on the tenant selection committee to help assess potential new residents. This was an opportunity to share with potential residents the type of culture at Alma-Blackwell and to assess their willingness to participate in our community. Obviously there was a level of need that was a priority in selecting residents, however being on this committee allowed us to discuss our values and our culture that promoted participation with potential new residents (AB1).

In the early stages of the housing society, the ENF Board of Directors included resident representatives, providing another venue for residents to participate in the planning of ENF. In the past, one seat was assigned to each of the ENF housing developments, resulting in multiple resident representatives. However, at the time of the interviews, only one seat was reserved for a resident representative. The ENF Board of Directors underwent a structural change in which they moved away from an original management model to a governance model. With this shift, the number of seats reserved for residents was limited to a single representative. Interviewees cited that the earlier board structure became overwhelmed with addressing specific resident issues and complaints, preventing them from focusing on broader programming issues and the housing society's overall mission and mandate. The change to a governance model was seen as allowing the Board of Directors to focus their attention on the goals and mandate of ENF. However, several
interviewees acknowledged that the change in board structure also resulted in the Board having fewer connections with the women and residents that they ultimately served.

Two of the residents interviewed were involved on the board as tenant members in the past. Participation on the board was described as a valuable learning experience, as well as an opportunity to contribute their own experiences and knowledge of women's housing needs. One of the women expressed the following:

*I was on the board as a tenant member for five years and it was an extremely positive experience. It enhanced my quality of life by being able to give back and to further support the goals of the society and to extend its service. It was a great learning experience and I was able to work with a group of committed and passionate women. I was mentored by the board members and learned a great deal, and in turn I was able to contribute in a positive manner. I also contributed by keeping the board grounded in women's experiences as a tenant (AB1).*

Similar to the interviews with design committee participants, the women living in Alma-Blackwell were presented with informal and formal opportunities to participate in the management and planning of their housing. The sense of community and social interaction that occurs between residents provided women with an opportunity to participate in each other's lives. Out of the social supports that were developed, women's experiences were legitimized and served as a source of
empowerment. Further, women's formal experiences of participation, either on the resident committee's or the ENF Board of Directors, provided multiple venues for women to develop skills and build capacity. As well, these venues provided meaningful opportunities for women to contribute to the broader political movement related to women's access to housing, which was regarded by many of the women as also being an empowering experience.

5.2.2.1 The Jessica Place Experience

Jessica Place is a 40-unit housing project located in Surrey BC. It is one of the last housing projects developed by ENF Housing Society and it was completed in 1991. Unlike earlier ENF housing projects, Jessica Place did not involve an extensive or active participatory design process. While ENF staff and its Board of Directors worked with the architect in reviewing and approving the design, the housing society's role was less hands-on than in earlier projects. The Jessica Place design process was more representative of a consultative one than a participant/user centred and controlled process. The reasons for the shift in approach to design cannot be reduced to any single cause. A number of factors led to this change. Government funding models had become more restricted and regimented, which meant it was more difficult for ENF to secure funding for pre-design work to support a participatory design process. The
housing society had also grown and was now responsible for the management of three large-scale housing developments and, as such, ENFs energy and capacity to undertake a meaningful participatory design process was limited.

![Figure 6 - Jessica Place](image)

However, despite the barriers that ENF were confronted with, the housing society had already developed considerable expertise and experience in planning and designing housing for women, which they realized could be applied to the future design of ENF housing. Essentially, what grew out of the earlier participatory design processes was a set of design guidelines. These design guidelines were a product of the participatory process that would inform the design of later ENF housing, such as Jessica Place. Even
though the role of the design committee had diminished, their personal experiences and technical knowledge were developed into a design tool to ensure that women’s perspectives would continue to be translated into ENF housing designs. As such, the overall goal or intent of the design guidelines was to ensure that women’s perspectives were still considered in the design of housing.

Recognizing that the design guidelines were not an equivalent replacement for a participatory design process, ENF nevertheless considered them an effective mechanism to ensure women’s housing needs remained central to the overall design of their housing. The ENF Design Committee developed five main design guidelines. Following is a brief description of each:

1. **Safety and Security**: the design should increase women and children's safety and sense of security. Consideration should be given to how the spaces are used by different user groups during different times of the day.

2. **Light and Liveability**: interior spaces should maximize access to natural light. Spatial configurations should consider multiple roles of the family unit and include a variety of private, semi-private and public spaces.

3. **Easy Maintenance**: exterior and interior materials and surfaces should be durable and easy to maintain. Consideration should be given to child-friendly materials.
4. **Ability to Monitor Children**: the design should recognize the realities of having only one adult to supervise children and should maximize visual access to support responsibilities of parenting.

5. **Accessible Common Areas and Play Areas**: the design should provide multiple informal and formal opportunities for residents to interact. The design should also maximize opportunities for children to socialize and interact.

Interviews with three women living Jessica Place were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the ENF design guidelines in supporting women's housing need. The main purpose of the interviews was to determine whether the intent of the design guidelines was achieved and to explore the potential for participation to be about the use of design guidelines to frame the design process.

During the interview, the women were asked general questions about what they liked and disliked about their home in the context of women's housing need. The women were also asked to comment on more specific questions regarding the five main ENF design guidelines. However, it should be noted that, in view of the limited number of interviews conducted with women from Jessica Place, the following findings should be considered only a cursory exploration of the topic. It was difficult for the researcher to draw firm conclusions given the small sample size. However, the findings may be valuable in that they offer rich insight into the women's personal housing experiences.
Overall, the women were very satisfied with their housing and they described Jessica Place as meeting the majority of their housing needs. The women identified a number of design features related to the individual units, indoor common areas and outdoor spaces that had a positive impact on their current housing experience. Only a small number of design elements of Jessica Place were described as being unfavourable or poor. When describing what they liked and disliked about their home, the design features that the women identified corresponded to one of the five ENF Design Guidelines.

_Safety and Security_

The women identified a lack of safety as the single and primary concern with their housing, citing numerous examples of break-ins and acts of vandalism over the past few years. The women also recognized that the issue of security was not specific to Jessica Place, but was a larger issue affecting the City of Surrey as a whole. However, several design features of Jessica Place were described as magnifying concerns of safety, including the lack of a secure gate at the entrance of the housing development and poor location of trees that interrupt visual access to the outside. In addition, one woman cited the lack of people using the courtyard and occupying the outdoor spaces as contributing to a sense of insecurity. She associated this with the overall site planning of the
development, explaining that the individual units are staggered and located far apart from one another, resulting in undefined outdoor spaces.

The units are secluded and isolated from one another and you don’t feel a connection with the units or the outdoor common spaces. I think this is why people don’t use the green spaces a lot of the time (JP1).

Despite the abovementioned design flaws, the women all identified exterior lighting as providing some sense of security.

To address the concerns of safety, a number of residents from Jessica Place developed a safety watch program involving a number of strategies to reduce the incidents of crime on site and in surrounding areas. The resident-driven program included conducting safety audits of the site, tree maintenance to improve sightlines and vantage points throughout the site and resident walk-abouts to monitor the site on a regular basis.

**Light and Liveability**

The women described their individual units as having good access to natural light. One woman, in particular, cited the natural light as an important design feature that connected her to nature and helped in maintaining a healthy mental state.
For me having access to natural light it is fresh and invigorating – makes me feel positive and makes a connection between the inside and outside and makes me feel like I am not living in a box. You are able to respond to the weather and are connected to it. I like to be connected to that (JP2).

The layout of the individual units was described as spacious and providing a good balance between common living spaces and private space. The women also appreciated that the design of the units included large storage spaces.

In general the space is very well laid out, it is practical and there are no fussy details that are unnecessary uses of space. It is laid out to consider simple furnishings and basic necessities. There is built in storage, which is good if you don't have dresser drawers or wardrobes. They are already provided and considered for you. That is useful.

The living space on one floor and the sleeping space on another – so the separation – you know clutter and children areas are separate from your living and eating areas (JP3).

One of the women expressed the desire for the children's bedrooms to be larger to better accommodate play areas and friends, as well as accommodate a double bed for older children.

*Easy Maintenance*

When asked about the level of ease in maintaining their homes, the women described the materials of good quality. Overall, the women did
not experience any difficulty in maintaining their homes in their original state.

One woman, however, noted that she would have preferred if the floors were hardwood or imitation hardwood rather than carpeting, as it would pose less of a challenge in maintenance with kids growing up in the home.

*Ability to Monitor Children*

There was widespread agreement amongst the women that the design of their homes contributed to and made it easier for them to raise their children. Visual access, both within the units and to the exterior courtyard, was cited as a key feature of their home that allowed them to supervise their children while performing their day-to-day work. Visual access was emphasized with the pass through windows between the kitchen and living room and the large windows facing the courtyard.

*Accessible Common Room and Play Areas*

The women placed high importance on the common areas and play spaces, describing them as key features of their home that contributed positively to their overall housing experience. The common rooms were frequently used for birthday parties and social gatherings. The women
attributed the common areas as providing them with opportunities for children to socialize and play together and interacting with neighbours. The women described Jessica Place as having a real sense of community and they viewed common areas as venues for developing important social and emotional supports.

You get to know your neighbours, and they become your friends and someone you can rely on when you need emotional support. You can draw strength from one another, just knowing that they have gone through similar experiences. It is a really amazing thing (JP3).

![Figure 7 – Interior Courtyard at Jessica Place](image)

While, overall the women were satisfied with the play areas for children, two of the women identified the need for more areas for older children. This was seen as an oversight in the design and one of the woman
speculated that the designer most likely did not consider the different stages of growth and development from an infant to young adult.

The women living in Jessica Place had a strong understanding and knowledge of the design of their home and its impact on their housing experience. This was perhaps most evident by the fact that when asked what they either liked or disliked about their housing, the women associated certain design features as supporting principles similar to the ENF design guidelines. The women made connections between their home and the role of design in supporting women's daily life, even prior to the interviewer making mention of the specific design guidelines.

Overall, the design of Jessica Place effectively reflected the intentions of the design guidelines. However, it is unclear as to whether the first design guideline, safety and security, was adequately addressed in the design of Jessica Place. Without further investigation, it is difficult to determine whether women's concerns of safety were the result of poor design or other external societal factors, or a combination of both.

Finally, the interviews revealed that the static nature of the design guidelines were not effective in capturing changing or new attitudes towards design that women might otherwise have brought to a
participatory process. One woman living in Jessica Place commented on the importance of green building techniques in improving the overall sustainability of housing and in reducing the cost of operating housing. The woman drew connections between living in poverty and the role that energy efficient features would play in alleviating the burden of poverty. The woman further explained that energy efficient building strategies are something that she would have advocated for had she been consulted in the design of the housing.

The following section discusses the interview findings more closely by examining the key themes that emerged out of the interviews in relationship to the theory on participatory design and women and housing.

5.3 Discussion
ENF Housing Society’s commitment to providing secure, safe, affordable and appropriate housing for women goes beyond typical affordable housing practices. Rather than creating housing for or on behalf of users, ENF views women as key agents of housing change, and as such, it creates housing with women. The housing society truly represents a women-centred organization, whereby women are at the center of ENF as active participants in its organizational structure and processes.
Design Comparison between Alma-Blackwell and Jessica Place

While the principles of women-oriented housing design remained consistent in both Alma-Blackwell and Jessica Place, the resulting housing designs are not all together the same. The interior layouts of both housing developments are generally similar. Each unit consists of two levels with the living spaces on one level and bedroom spaces on the other level. However, all Jessica Place units consist of ground entrance with upper levels, whereas Alma-Blackwell consist of a combination of ground entrance with lower-level units and ground entrance with upper-level units.

The main difference between the design of Alma-Blackwell and Jessica Place relates to the respective site designs and surrounding neighbourhood context. Alma-Blackwell is located in an inner-city neighbourhood in Vancouver city and as such the housing represents a more compact and single urban form. All 46 units of Alma-Blackwell are contained and stacked within one building and on a comparatively smaller site than Jessica Place. In contrast, Jessica Place is located in Surrey, which can be characterized as a sprawling city. Jessica Place is a 40 unit low-density development on 2.6 acres of land. The units are in clusters of four side-by-side townhouses oriented around a central area and connected by a continuous pedestrian path. A further design
difference is the location of the parking lots. Underground parking was intentionally provided at Alma-Blackwell to limit the presence of the automobile within the housing environment. Whereas, roofed carports are located throughout the site at Jessica Place, resulting in the visual presence of the automobile throughout the housing environment.

The interviews with Design Committee participants and women living in ENF housing reveal several key points about participatory planning and design. Two main themes are highlighted in this discussion, including the transformative nature of participation and gender and the role of power.

**Transformative Nature of Participation**

The first theme, transformative nature of participation, refers to the role of meaningful and genuine participation in transforming physical spaces, as well as the lives of those participating. The transformative role of the ENF participatory process supports Kretzman and McKnights (1993) notion that participatory design moves beyond physical benefits to also change social consciousness.

The success of the ENF participatory design process was the result of multiple intersecting elements, including a flexible and iterative nature of the process, dedication amongst participants, a commitment to collective
decision-making and the emphasis on two-way communication and exchange of knowledge. In the context of Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation (1969), the ENF design process is representative of the upper level of Citizen Power, as the women exercised a high degree of decision-making and control that enabled them to participate throughout the process (246).

The transformative nature of participation is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the role of the ENF Design Committee in serving as a mechanism for women’s capacity building and empowerment. The women on the design committee consistently drew strong parallels between participation and the opportunities it presented with regards to personal growth and the development of skills. This is consistent with the literature on participation, which maintains that meaningful participation aspires to develop local skills and talent (Sanoff, 2000; Wates, 2000).

Similarly, the ENF participatory design process is reflective of what Rocha (1997) defines as ‘socio-political empowerment’, which involves community transformation and the collective action of groups to act upon structures of power (p.38). Through the ENF participatory process, conventional power relationships between architect and client were transformed from one in which the architect controlled the outcome of
the design to one in which the group had collective control. Furthermore, Rocha argues that the socio-political model of empowerment is concerned with change from within the community and therefore places importance on building local knowledge and capacity to realize both individual and group empowerment. This is particularly true of the ENF participatory process, in which it represented a bottom-up process that provided women with meaningful opportunities to build local knowledge and capacity and realize empowerment from within the group.

Through their participation, the women have also contributed to the way in which housing is developed for women, by presenting a successful women-centred and women-led housing process. As a result of the women's efforts on the design committee, they revealed the possibilities that exist to create more responsive and appropriate housing for women and children.

*Gender, Participation and the Role of Power*

The second theme relates to the role of gender and power relations between the architect and the women participants. According to Bell, the very nature of participatory design, "raises important questions about who has access to design information and who has a say in architectural decisions" (111). The participatory process undertaken by ENF
confronted and addressed these questions directly. The women involved with the design committee consistently described the design process as collaborative process sharing decision-making and control over the process and the final design. This is consistent with French’s concept of “power-of relation”, which involves drawing on collective strengths of both individuals (professionals and citizens) who come together to share their resources and knowledge to achieve group empowerment (French, 1995, 37-42). Similarly, the ENF participatory design process recognized collective agency and demonstrated a commitment to sharing power.

Though the participants described the design process as a collaborative one that valued collective-decision making, the role of gender in contributing to the unequal distribution of power was also discussed during the interviews. Several women speculated that underlying the participatory process was the assumption of women as naturally assuming volunteer roles, which in turn was equated with the notion of women as occupying inferior social positions. These comments were in reference to the fact that the architect was financially compensated for his work on the design committee, whereas the women did not receive any payment for their efforts. The women, however, viewed this as a larger socio-political issue and not necessarily specific to the ENF design process. Nevertheless, these concerns raise important questions about
the real value of local or non-expert knowledge in participatory planning and design. Does the participatory process privilege the architect’s knowledge and skills over those that women bring to the table? To reconcile these questions necessitates the field of planning and design to further hypothesize and explore the value of local knowledge and its implications on power dynamics within the context of participation.
6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

The participatory design process for Alma-Blackwell was undertaken by ENF Housing Society to create a mechanism for women to describe and develop their own housing. Through a process of engaging local women in the community, ENF transformed conventional understandings of affordable housing practice and created new possibilities for women-centred housing. Further, ENFs belief in women’s innate abilities served to legitimize women’s experiences and add value to the life of the women who participated in the process. This focused research provides several lessons for the wider discipline of planning and design to consider.

Inter-disciplinary and Inclusive Design Process

The ENF Design Committee process indicates that participatory design process is an inclusive one that requires the architect/designer to work with and alongside other key stakeholders and disciplines in a holistic manner. The role of the architect can no longer be contained within traditional discipline boundaries. The ENF design process involved architects, city planners, community groups and user representatives working together to realize a collective vision of women-centred housing. The participatory design process also required the architect to be knowledgeable in areas outside traditional design professions, including
group facilitation, consensus-building, mediation and conflict resolution skills. The architect for Alma-Blackwell identified skills related to managing group dynamics as essential for undertaking participatory design.

Understanding the broader context in which participatory design operates illustrates the need for the disciplines of architecture and planning to develop stronger connections and more formal communication with one another, as well as with other critical stakeholders. Paying attention to the inter-disciplinary and inclusive design process creates a stronger basis for which participatory processes can excel and advance.

*Flexible and Fluid Design Process*

A critical success factor in the ENF participatory design process was the iterative nature of the process that promoted flexibility and fluidity. While the architect followed standard stages in design, the process remained open allowing the participants to exercise a degree of control over the direction of the process. The fluidity of the process also allowed participants to move at a comfortable pace, in which their level of participation was not hindered. Permitting the process to move along unintended paths is also a site for accidental creativity and energy that
ultimately drives the participatory process. This is an important factor to consider in designing participatory processes. However, this is not to say that more structured processes are ineffective. Rather, what the ENF design process demonstrated is the importance for architects to remain flexible and allow the process to move in unexpected directions, at the discretion of the participants.

*Gender Matters*

A consideration for and acknowledgement of gender is paramount to the success of participatory planning processes. The women that participated on the ENF design committee cited the provision of childcare, the scheduling of meetings after dinnertime and the overall appreciation for women's multiple roles as important factors that allowed them to participate more fully in the design process. Reflecting on gender and the importance of designing processes that are inclusive of gender is imperative for all participatory processes. It is not limited to women focused projects, such as ENF Housing Society.

*External Factors*

It is indisputable that the success of the ENF participatory process was the result of the internal capacity and commitment of the housing society and the design committee participants. However, having said that, the
external factors that influenced and supported the housing society cannot be overlooked. At the time when ENF was becoming established as a housing society, the political context in British Colombia was one that promoted a culture of participation. The concept of participation was recognized by government as a legitimate and valid mechanism to support community and neighbourhood development. In addition, during the early period of ENF, government funding models, the main source of financial assistance in the development of affordable housing, recognized pre-design work and the role of an architect as a necessary expenditure. This provided non-profit organizations with the required finances to hire an architect to undertake a participatory design process. The architect for Alma-Blackwell cited changes to government programs as the main reason for moving out of the non-profit housing design market. Eventually, housing programs under the BC Government metamorphisized into more cost-effective models in which the architect’s role and fees available to the architect diminished.

Understanding the external factors, that either support or hinder participatory planning and design processes, illustrates the need for government to consider how housing policies and practice impact participation. The challenge of governments is to re-design its housing
polices and practices to include and support participatory housing design.

The following section offers policy recommendations for meeting this challenge.

6.1 Housing Policy Recommendations

Evidence from interviews with ENF Design Committee participants and residents point to the positive role of the participatory design process in creating responsive and appropriate housing for women, while also supporting women’s empowerment and capacity building. Therefore, the recommendations that follow begin from the perspective that ENF Housing Society represents a successful participatory housing model. At the same time, the broader role of housing policy in supporting non-profit housing organizations, such as ENF, cannot be overlooked. The following recommendations consider women’s housing needs and participatory design requirements.

- Restore Federal government leadership role in social housing.
- Reinstate and increase funding to build affordable housing, including women-centered housing, from all three levels of government.
- Establish women’s housing advisory groups in each province, allowing women to provide input into housing policies and programs and
ensuring women’s housing needs and perspectives are considered.

- Designate funding for affordable housing projects to hire architects and/or planners to undertake participatory design process.

- Provide resources and tools to community and non-profit housing organizations to promote and support participatory planning processes, as a mechanism for enriching the housing experiences of women.

- Promote women’s participation in new housing programs, by proving opportunities for women to be involved in the design and delivery of housing. The existing one size fits all housing programs do not consider women’s unique housing needs.

- Incorporate gender sensitive targets and indicators in housing policy strategies and programs.

- Incorporate evaluation of housing that considers outcomes such as women’s empowerment and capacity building as measures of affordable housing success. The evaluation of housing programs should move beyond measuring the number of housing units created or number of citizens served.
7.0 CONCLUSION

The key question driving this research has been what role can participatory planning and design play in improving the housing conditions and quality of life for women with low-incomes. The goal of the research was to identify the interconnections between three areas of inquiry: gender, housing and participatory design; and to reveal how though an understanding of these connections housing can become a mechanism to transform women’s housing conditions and support their advancement in life. The three guiding questions have been:

To what degree do existing affordable housing policies and strategies fail to meet the housing needs of women with low-incomes?

In what ways does participatory housing design address the physical and social dimensions of women’s housing need?

What are the barriers to participatory design in the context of housing for women and what strategies have been employed to overcome these barriers?

To answer this questions a combination of literature review and in-depth interviews based upon a case study were employed.

The literature review on Canadian housing policy and strategies clearly revealed that existing programs do not meet women’s housing needs. For the most part, housing policy and the resulting programs continue to
view users as a homogeneous group and having identical needs. Mainly, policy continues to ignore gender as a critical factor in determining appropriate housing programs and their design. Furthermore, housing policy does not recognize the role of participation in addressing and improving housing quality for women.

However, through the case study research, several housing projects in Vancouver and Port Moody, British Colombia were identified as successful women-oriented and participatory housing models; including Bridge Housing, Mavis McMullen, as well as the main case study for this research, Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society. The success of these projects is largely the result of the commitment of the non-profit housing organizations responsible for their development. These organizations have a keen understanding of women's housing issues, as well as are strong advocates for participatory planning and design processes. That being said, partial success of these projects can also be attributed to the local and provincial government that supported and provided funding for these projects. These government bodies through its respective policies, to some extent, recognized the need for community engagement and participation in the housing design process.
The research also demonstrated the critical role of government in realizing affordable housing for women, and more importantly the consequences of changing policies and scaled down funding on the ability for housing organizations to carry out participatory processes. Overall, the case study research revealed the extent to which policies both support and hinder participatory processes and, in turn, the provision of quality housing for women.

The case study examined the role of participation in addressing the physical and social dimensions of housing for women. The research clearly indicated that participatory design processes led to more suitable and responsive housing for women. Through participation, women's housing experiences and needs were translated into the design of housing. The research also revealed that participation provided meaningful opportunities for women to contribute to the production of knowledge that directly impacted their lives. Participation created an empowering space for women to build capacity and develop skills that supported their housing experience. As well, it positively impacted other areas of their life.

A barrier to participatory design often cited in the literature is that actual users are often not identified until after the design is completed. The
case study examined the effectiveness of participatory processes that engage user representatives as a substitute for actual users. The research demonstrated that engaging user representatives is an effective mechanism for creating responsive and successful designs for women. This is particularly significant for design projects in which the actual users are not identified until after the project is completed, such as is often the case in affordable housing developments. ENF successfully engaged women in the community to represent women’s housing perspective and to inform the design of the housing. The success of the design and its impact in improving women’s housing condition was clearly indicated through the interviews with the women actually using the housing.

However, the decision to engage user representatives in place of actual users in the participatory process presented one possible limitation. While the actual users benefited from the final design by becoming its occupant, they did not experience the benefits derived from the participatory process, such as opportunities to build individual and group capacity. Similarly, the representative group benefited from the opportunities to build capacity that emerged out of the participatory process, but, with the exception of some, they did not directly benefit from the final design through the experience of occupying the space.
While, this was not necessarily the case of ENF, as the philosophy of participation carried on with the management of the housing, offering the resident’s opportunities to build skills and develop knowledge and adding value to their lives.

The case study research revealed that design guidelines, a product of the participatory process, served as an effective participatory tool for informing and framing responsive and quality housing for women. In the case of ENF, the design guidelines were successful in creating housing that was safe, secure and appropriate for the women living in the housing. However, it also revealed that the use of design guidelines as a substitute for carrying out a participatory process did not provide women with opportunities to build capacity and develop skills that actual participation presents. This is a significant disadvantage of relying on design guidelines. The research also revealed that the static nature of design guidelines is not effective in capturing changing attitudes towards design or experiences that women would otherwise bring to a participatory process.

7.1 Limitations of the Research

The research contained several limitations that had an impact on the findings. To begin, the main focus of the case study, the participatory
design process for Alma-Blackwell housing, was conducted in 1986. The resulting gap between the time the participatory process took place and the time of this research prevented the researcher from making contact with many of the original design committee participants. In the end, the researcher was able to secure only six of the twelve design committee participants. The research would likely have been enriched through more interviews with design committee participants.

A second limitation was the limited number of interviews with women living in Jessica Place housing. The researcher was only able to secure three interviews with Jessica Place residents. As such, findings on the value of design guidelines, in lieu of participation, in creating appropriate housing for women was limited. In order to draw more concrete conclusions, a greater number of interviews was needed.

7.2 Future Research

While there are limited examples of housing models for women that involved participatory design in Canada, further in-depth case studies, both Canadian and international, are necessary. Comparative studies of multiple examples of "better practices" would result in a clearer understanding of the methods, applications and tools for undertaking participatory housing design. This research would benefit the discipline
of planning and architecture, as well as government agencies responsible for the delivery of housing.

In addition, the field of affordable housing would benefit from further investigations on participatory planning and design as a mechanism for improving the quality of housing for multiple housing groups. While this research was concerned with housing for women, arguably participatory processes would benefit other user groups.
APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDY LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a Master student of City Planning in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba and am currently working on my final practicum, which is titled "Re-conceptualizing Affordable Housing for Women with Participatory Planning and Design". I am looking for potential case studies to explore as part of my practicum work, and in particular am interested in case studies (housing models or planning & design organizations) that have engaged in participatory planning and design in the context of housing for women. As such, I am inquiring as to whether your organization would be willing to share your experiences with me at a future date and time.

Benefits of Participating and Supporting this Research
Having your organization or housing model showcased in this research presents significant benefits, which are as follows:

- It presents an opportunity to increase the visibility of your organizations and its contribution to good design and positive social change. It is anticipated that this practicum will be distributed to academic professionals, students, professional planners and designers and key government representatives.

- The practicum may be beneficial in supporting future funding applications and for demonstrating the integrity and importance of your organizations work.

- You will be contributing to the increased literature on participation and planning, which in turn supports the legitimization of participation as a valuable strategy for improving housing conditions and overall design.

- Your efforts and achievements will be documented and will be used to support important policy and program recommendations to support the implementation of participatory planning and design in the context of Canadian affordable housing.

Key Words & Research Concepts
Participation
Participatory planning & design
Community Architecture or Community Design Centres
Tenant participation & control
APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

**Research Project Title:** Re-Conceptualizing Housing for Women with Participatory Planning and Design.

**Researcher:** Erin McCleery, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba.

This consent form, a copy of which will be provided to you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand the accompanying information.

This project is being undertaken to fulfil a Master’s requirement for the Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba. It is being carried out under the supervision of Dr Sheri Blake. The purpose of the research is to uncover information about the role and implications of including women residents in the planning and design of their housing. The purpose of key informant interviews is to gain a better understanding of the processes of developing women’s housing projects. Learning about the programs and services in the housing projects, as well as the physical and social benefits of including women in the design of the housing will help establish some “best practices” to support housing policy and practice in Canada. Interviews with residents who currently reside in housing projects will then be carried out to explore their opinions and experiences. The anticipated benefits of this research will arise by actively involving residents in helping to determine how their housing conditions and quality of life have improved through their participation in the planning and design of their own housing. This research can help produce tangible results in the physical and social aspects of housing for women with low-incomes.

Your involvement in this research entails participating in an interview with the principal researcher. This interview should take less than an hour. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time. There is minimal risk associated with your participation in this research and in particular there is no risk greater than that ordinarily encountered in life.
With your approval, the interview will be recorded on an audio-cassette to be transcribed at a later date for research purposes. Such audio-recordings will be kept in a secure place, in a locked drawer in the researcher’s home office. At the conclusion of this study, all records that identify individual participation will be destroyed. As the primary researcher of this project, my supervisor and I will be the only people who have access to the information gathered during the interview.

Although your name will not be used in any publicly disseminated materials arising from the study, readers may be able to attribute comments to you because your job title will be included in the dissemination of findings, pending your approval.

It will be possible for you to obtain verbal or written feedback about the results of the study when it is completed. If you wish to receive feedback, please contact Erin McCleery by phone at 204-xxx-xxxx or by email at emccleery@xxxx. Once completed this project will be available on-line through the National Library of Canada at www.collection.nlc-bnc/e-coll-e/index-e.htm.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation by contacting:

Erin McCleery ph. 204-xxx-xxxx emccleery@xxxx
Dr. Sheri Blake ph. 204-xxx-xxxx blakes@xxxx

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculties Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at ph. 204-474-7122 or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.
I, ______________________________ (name of participant), consent to the dissemination of material provided to Erin McCleery. I understand that all information will be treated as confidential, stored in a private and secure place, and subsequently destroyed once the project is completed and disseminated.

Please check one, some or all of the following:

___ I agree to being audio-taped (I may request the taping devise to be turned off for all or any part of the interview).

___ I agree to allow my job title to be used in the text. However, I would like the right to review the text in advance of it being publicly disseminated.

___ I would like to be notified when research findings are available (please add contact information in space below)

______________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________

Signature of Participant  Date

______________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________

Signature of Researcher  Date
APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM FOR RESIDENTS

Research Project Title: Re-Conceptualizing Housing for Women with Participatory Planning and Design.

Researcher: Erin McCleery, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba.

This consent form, a copy of which will be provided to you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand the accompanying information.

This project is being undertaken to fulfil a Master's requirement for the department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba. It is being carried out under the supervision of Dr Sheri Blake. The purpose of the research is to uncover information about the role and implications of including women users in the planning and design of their housing. Your involvement in this research entails participating in an interview. To facilitate an informal discussion, the researcher will ask several open-ended questions about your housing experience of living in your current home. The anticipated benefits of this research will arise by actively involving residents in helping to determine whether their housing conditions and quality of life has improved as a result of the planning and design process. This research can help produce tangible results in the physical and social aspects of housing for women with low-incomes.

The interview will take place at a location that is convenient and suitable to you. The interview should last about an hour. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time. In particular, if you feel that you were pressured into participating in the interview you may withdraw before the interview begins. Your withdrawal from the interview is confidential and no one will be notified of your decision not to participate.

With your approval, the interview will be recorded on an audio-cassette to be transcribed at a later date for research purposes. Such audio-recordings will be kept in a secure place, in a locked drawer in the researcher's home office. At the conclusion of this study, all records that identify individual participation will be destroyed. As the primary
researcher of this project, I will be the only person who has access to the information gathered during the interview. With your permission, pictures of your housing may be taken as well.

Your name or other personal information will not be used in any publicly disseminated materials arising from this study.

There is minimal risk involved in your participation in this research. However, even though your name and other personal information will be omitted from the research, because the interview focuses on your personal housing experience, it may be possible that some readers will be able to identify you based on your responses. To mitigate this possible risk, the researcher will, to the best of their ability, remove any other information that may lead to your identification. Also, you may choose to pre-review all direct quotes prior to the research being publicly disseminated.

It will be possible for you to obtain verbal or written feedback about the results of the study when it is completed. If you wish to receive feedback, please contact Erin McCleery by phone at 204-xxx-xxxx or by email at emccleery@xxxx Once completed this project will be available on-line through the National Library of Canada at www.collection.nlc-bnc/e-coll-e/index-e.htm. You can also contact the researcher, and a hard copy of the practicum will be mailed to you at no charge.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation by contacting:

Erin McCleery       ph. 204-xxx-xxxx        emccleery@xxxx
Dr. Sheri Blake     ph. 204-xxx-xxxx        blakes@xxxx

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculties Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat
at ph. 204-474-7122 or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, ____________________________ (name of participant), consent to the dissemination of material provided to Erin McCleery. I understand that all information will be treated as confidential, stored in a private and secure place, and subsequently destroyed once the project is completed and disseminated.

Please check one, some or all of the following:

___ I agree to being audio-taped (I may request the taping devise to be turned off for all or any part of the interview).

___ I would like to pre-review all direct quotes in advance of the research being publicly disseminated.

___ I would like to be notified when research findings are available (please add contact information in space below

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Signature of Participant          Date

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Signature of Researcher          Date
APPENDIX 4: KEY INFORMANT (DESIGN COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS) INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Could you describe your role with ENF Housing Society?

2. What planning and design considerations do you think are important in the provision of housing for women?

3. How do you define women’s participation and what value, if any, do you place on participatory design?
   - What are the benefits of participation?
   - What are the challenges of participation?

4. Could you describe the planning and design process that ENF undertook in the development of its housing projects?

5. Could you describe how the design committee process relates to women’s participation or participatory design?

6. Could you describe some of the key features of the ENF housing?
   - What are some unique physical features?
   - What are some of the features that you really like about the ENF housing?
   - What do you dislike about the housing?

7. What do you consider the main outcomes of the participatory (design committee) process?
   - Are there physical features that you attribute to this process?
   - Did you notice or witness any social outcomes?
   - What were the impacts of participation on you or the other women involved?
8. What was your overall experience of participating in the design of ENF housing?
   • What did you like about being involved in the design process?
   • What did you dislike?

9. Meaningful participation is often described as a process in which there is a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills. Do you agree with this statement and if so, what, if any, skills and knowledge do you feel you gained from this experience?
   • What skills and knowledge do you think the planners and architects gained from working with you?

10. Can you describe the ways in which the process could have been improved to enable women to further participate?

11. Do you have any further comments or information you would like to share with regard to this topic?
APPENDIX 5: RESIDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
   • What is your current household situation? Who is living with you?
   • How long have you been living in this house?

2. How did you come to live in an ENF housing development?
   • How did you learn about ENF?

3. Can you describe your home and the housing development that you live in?
   • What do you like about it?
   • What do you dislike about it?

4. Could you identify and describe to me your key housing needs?
   • What housing features or qualities are important for women?

5. Does the housing that you live in meet your described housing needs?
   • Is there anything missing?

6. Can you describe your role, if any, you have had or have in the planning, design and management of this housing development?
   • What level of involvement do you have, if any, with ENF or other tenants in this housing complex?

7. What impacts, if any, has this house and ENF had on your housing experience and quality of life?
   • Has your physical housing experience improved?
   • Have you experienced any social benefits? Have you gained skills or knowledge as a result of living here or being involved with ENF?
• Has living in this house impacted other aspects or areas of your life? If so, how?

8. Do you have any further comments or information you would like to share with regard to this topic?
REFERENCES


City of Vancouver (2005). *City of Vancouver Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside*.


a Canadian Rental Strategy (pp. 389-399). Toronto: University of Toronto


Status of Women Canada - Gender-Based Analysis Directorate (GBA) (2001). *Canadian Experience in Gender Mainstreaming Canada: Status of Women Canada*.


