



PRESS RELEASE



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CMHC Announces Housing Studies Achievement Award Winners

OTTAWA, Ontario, November 03, 2009 — Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) today announced the six winners of CMHC’s Housing Studies Achievement Award. Six prizes of \$10,000 — three at a master’s level and three at a doctoral level — were presented by Mr. Douglas Stewart, CMHC’s Vice President, Policy and Planning, at an awards event held today in Ottawa.

“CMHC is proud to honour Canadians whose work is at the forefront of helping us foster a better future for quality, affordable housing in this country. I want to congratulate this year’s winners of the CMHC Housing Studies Achievement Award for their important contributions,” said Mr. Stewart.

The CMHC Housing Studies Achievement Award program, held every second year, was originally created to commemorate CMHC’s 60th anniversary in 2006 and the first winners were announced in November 2007. The academic work of the 2009 award recipients contributes to housing research and policy development in Canada, whether in social, economic, design or technical aspects of housing. In addition to paying tribute to the work of the award winners, CMHC is also acknowledging the work of four “honourable mentions” singled out for recognition by the expert panel of jurors reviewing submissions. Attached is a backgrounder profiling the work of the 2009 CMHC Housing Studies Achievement Award winners and Honourable Mentions.

As Canada’s national housing agency, CMHC draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant and healthy communities across the country. For more information, call 1-800-668-2642.

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Backgrounder

2009 CMHC Housing Studies Achievement Award

Winners:

- **Gendering Urban Revitalization: Women, Condominium Development, and the Neoliberalization of Urban Citizenship**

Leslie Kern
Doctor of Philosophy in Women's Studies
York University

The housing industry and the media have portrayed the past two decades' boom in Toronto condominium construction as liberating for women, but have glossed over some of the complexities and unexpected challenges that women face in condominium tenure. By exploring the experiences of women condominium-owners and key stakeholders such as development firms and city planners, this research sheds light on the effect of gentrification on condominium developments as communities, and on equitable housing for disadvantaged groups in Toronto.

- **Longitudinal Study of Day-to-Day Mobility and its Relation to Residential Choices: the Experience of a Group of Aging Seniors in a Bungalow Suburb**

Sébastien Lord
Doctor of Philosophy in Land-Use Planning and Regional Development
Laval University

In Canada and elsewhere, suburban areas have been principally designed around the automobile — forcing the large number of suburban senior residents to face difficult choices between mobility, community and autonomy. This study draws on two interviews with 102 seniors in 1999 and 2006 to shed light on suburban seniors' transportation choices, potential for mobility, and the impact on their lifestyles. The thesis reveals the importance that many seniors attach to remaining in what they consider a “normal” community and a familiar environment, pointing to ways that municipalities and other authorities can focus their planning to support seniors' autonomy.

- **Whole Building Heat and Moisture Analysis**

Fitsum Tariku
Doctor of Philosophy in Building Engineering
Concordia University

More than ever, developers depend on modelling software to explore and optimize options for building designs and retrofits with a view to making buildings more energy-efficient, comfortable and airtight. However, most available applications ignore the interdependencies of these goals, and do not take into account the hygrothermal (i.e., heat, air, moisture) properties of materials in the building envelope itself. This research puts forward a modelling application, called HamFitPlus, that applies a “whole building” approach both through computer simulation and to an actual, inhabited home in Yukon Territory.

- **The Performance of Rainscreen Walls in Coastal British Columbia**

Graham Finch
Master of Applied Science
University of Waterloo

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Rainwater penetration into face-sealed or concealed barrier wall assemblies has been a chronic problem in coastal British Columbia, prompting the development of rainscreen-wall assemblies with an increased potential for drying. However, the performance of this technology had not been verified for multi-unit residential construction in BC. To achieve this, the research team installed sensors in rainscreen walls of five Vancouver-area multi-unit buildings, ranging from four to 30 storeys. These sensors were monitored over six years to establish changes in temperature, relative humidity, moisture content, relative wetness, and the pressure differentials across the wall assemblies. In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of rainscreen walls, the research suggests ways to optimize their performance.

• **Scenarios for Carbon Neutrality in North American Suburbs**

Nicole Miller
Master of Advanced Studies in Architecture
University of British Columbia

As the predominant residential pattern in North America, suburban residential development has both critical and underused potential to mitigate greenhouse-gas emissions — yet suburban neighbourhood retrofits typically fail to extend beyond renovating individual homes. Working with a representative area for study in Surrey, British Columbia, this research assesses the feasibility and performance potential of various design- and technology-based retrofit strategies across four scenarios with different scales of implementation and degrees of challenge to the traditional suburban housing forms. The research then estimates potential reductions of greenhouse-gas emissions for each of these scenarios, showing in concrete terms the value of altering the existing forms of development and extending retrofits to the scale of clusters of buildings, blocks or entire neighbourhoods.

• **Building on Toronto's Main Streets**

Adrian Politano
Master of Architecture
University of Waterloo

Toronto's Official Plan calls for intense redevelopment in several areas, including its "main streets". While further densification of these already built-up areas could help to prevent urban sprawl and make use of existing infrastructure, such development carries risks of diminishing their diversity and versatility and the living standards of their residents. This research examines the historical and present factors shaping the development of Toronto's main streets and explores current perceptions and debate on the topic. Drawing on these, and bearing in mind the goals of flexibility, density and habitability, the research proposes a series of prototypical building designs for a selected site on Queen Street West.

Honourable Mentions:

• **The Origins of Montreal's Housing Tradition**

François Dufaux
Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture
University College, London

From the early 19th century, Montreal's housing tradition has been defined by rental tenure and an urban housing type made up of small buildings of two to eight flats. This tradition also reflects the contrasting French and Anglo-Saxon concepts of both space and ownership.

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This thesis documents the legal and financial conditions of 19th century Montreal and the architectural evolution of a multiple-dwelling building type in this uniquely bicultural city — and, through a synthesis of morphological (the range and distribution of residential compositions, configurations and construction systems) and space-syntax (the dwelling layout viewed as a network) analysis, offers a new understanding of the way that housing formed a common ground occupied by both French and English Montrealers.

• **Social Engagement in Relocated Older Adults**

Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard
Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
University of Alberta

For the growing numbers of seniors in Canada, senior-designated apartment buildings are a popular option for supportive or independent living. However, potential residents often lack the information needed to choose the right accommodations, and the buildings themselves can be ill-adapted to their tenants' diverse needs. In this study, a nurse-researcher undertook interviews with newly-relocated seniors in a designated apartment building, and took part in the building's orientation and social activities. The results of this study point to several environmental and social factors that could encourage engagement among residents.

• **Agile Architecture: An Innovative Approach to Mixed-Use Open Building**

Robert Blackett
Master of Architecture
University of Calgary

The residential Open Building typology has matured in the Netherlands and Japan as a way to design with flexibility in mind: fixtures, internal and even external walls can be adapted to the unpredictably changing needs of occupants over the life of a building. However, local conditions, labour codes and life-cycle costing of locally available materials can affect the feasibility of the concept. To explore the possibilities of Open Building in a Canadian setting, this thesis puts forward a design for a high-density, mixed-use development that is polyvalent, responsive to current inhabitants, and stratified with a successful mix of amenities for an inner-city site in Calgary.

• **The Spatial and Temporal Variations of Residential Real Estate Values and Social Change: A Toronto Case Study**

Markus Moos
Master of Urban and Regional Planning
Queen's University

Canada's urban housing markets are undergoing major changes, due to demographic shifts, immigration and globalization of real estate investment portfolios — but studies of the housing market have usually been on too large a scale to distinguish socio-economic groups, or have viewed changes in the housing stock as merely complementary to social change. This research applies methods traditionally used for larger scale regional analysis to the study of intra-urban housing markets. Focusing on the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area from 1971 to 2001, the thesis demonstrates that real estate market dynamics reinforce social segregation.