

Multiple Dwellings

In recent years, with the accelerating trend toward urbanization, buildings that make more intensive use of expensive land have become an increasingly important part of the Canadian housing scene. In 1970, more than 60 per cent of the new housing units constructed were multiple dwellings.

High-rise apartments have long been a feature of Canadian cities, at times grouped with row or town houses and shopping centres, schools, parks and recreation areas to form an entirely new residential complex.

Condominiums, however, are a relatively new feature of urban Canada that appeals to the growing number of Canadians for whom rising construction and land costs have made home ownership -- in the traditional sense of a detached house -- an expensive undertaking.

Typically, condominiums are high-rise apartment buildings or row or town houses similar to those constructed in Canada for many years. But instead of renting a unit, a prospective homeowner may buy his own apartment or row unit, just as he would buy a detached house. In addition to his mortgage payment, he would pay a monthly sum into a fund for the maintenance of commonly-owned, shared facilities such as hallways, elevators, parking lots, land and recreation areas.

Condominium units are generally priced in the same range as bungalows, and in many cases, the equity -- the down-payment -- required to purchase such a unit is somewhat lower than that required for the average bungalow.

Need for Community Planning

More and more municipal governments have turned their attention to programs of civic improvement, establishing new departments to direct these activities and employing town-planning specialists. The object has been to help solve the problems consequent on the rapid growth of cities into the suburbs and, at the same time, to reinvigorate the centres of the cities and rescue them from the effects of decay.

To stimulate good housing design and to encourage further research on urban planning, the CMHC supports the Community Planning Association of Canada, the Canadian Housing Design Council and the Canadian Council on Urban and Regional Research. These three groups, though separate in organization and aims, serve as a focal point for many private and university programs being carried on in Canada. They also serve as a clearing-house for the exchange of information and research data.