

Better Houses For Canadians

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Better Houses for Canadians

An Appeal for the Co-operation of Women in House Planning and
a Review of Various Government Proposals

EVERY woman in Canada must be interested in the action of the Dominion Government in appropriating \$25,000,000 as a loan for building houses. We need more housing accommodation. Therefore we approve a building programme. A building programme will relieve unemployment. For this reason also women approve the decision of the Government. The Province of Ontario appointed a Housing Committee in June, 1918, arranged to loan \$2,000,000 for building purposes in July, 1918, and has entered into an agreement to co-operate with the plan of the Dominion Government. Other Provinces are preparing housing programmes. Many hundreds of houses will be built this spring.

No woman so far has been appointed to any Canadian housing commission. But we do not need to defer consideration of the details of house planning because of this fact. The Women's Department invites correspondence from women who are interested in housing. Your recommendations will be forwarded to the Dominion and Provincial Governments, or, if you prefer to do so, send your own recommendations direct to the Government.

It is important that the details of house planning for Canadians should be made the subject of round table conferences among groups of women. Questionnaires may be drawn up and circulated, from which it will be possible to gather knowledge of the requirements of women home makers and of families. Finance, taxation, land tenure, transportation and town planning are all involved in the problems of housing. Women should study these problems; doubtless some women are studying them now. But, with regard to house planning, women are already prepared to advise. They can speak with knowledge and authority on this subject.

Immediate action should be taken to secure Better Houses for Canadians. These houses which are to be built this spring should be planned to make the work of the home maker easier and more efficient, and the life of the family healthier and happier.

A Suggested Questionnaire.

1. What do you consider the most important points in planning a house to make work easier, when the woman does her own work?
2. Suggest details which will secure cleanliness without increasing work.
3. What provision do you recommend for the keeping of food?
4. Recommendations with regard to cupboard and closet accommodation.
5. Other recommendations with regard to how houses should be planned
6. General recommendations as to the number of rooms required, etc.

Several features of outstanding importance in house building from the woman's point of view, and for better family life, may be summarized as follows:

There should be an adequate and convenient supply of hot water in the working room of the house. The hot water supply is probably the most essential feature in house work.

A porch or shelter should be built over the front door, and, if possible, over the back door.

The space under the stairs does not need to be closed in, but can be used for keeping the baby's carriage and go-cart. The stairs should not wind, but should turn with a landing.

Provision should be made for keeping food.

There should be an arrangement to make easy the hanging out of clothes.

There should be a minimum of surface which requires polishing.

The ventilation of the house should be carefully considered.

The sink in the kitchen should be deep and fitted with a waste outlet and plug. The relative position of all fittings in the kitchen should be planned to save work.

When money is available, washing accommodation should be provided on the ground floor.

Special attention should be given to the aspect of the living room and the kitchen. There should be a view, preferably over the garden, from the kitchen window.

As much attention as possible, having regard to reasonable outlay, should be paid to the attractiveness of the house, more especially in design rather than in decoration.

A campaign should be instituted in connection with the new building programme to make use of the ample land space provided for each house as a home garden. Canadians should become a gardening people. Otherwise the land will be neglected and wasted, with loss of needed food and beauty.

In any housing scheme provision should be made for girls and young women employed away from home.

Women should be represented on local housing committees. If this representation is not secured, women should not fail to present the case of Better Houses for Canadians to the proper authorities.

Own Your Own Home

Begin an Own Your Own Home Campaign in your neighborhood. No other campaign can lend as effective aid to the new building programme. One method of preventing slums and the deterioration of neighborhoods is by owning the houses we live in, and helping others to own their own homes.

Read These Recommendations.

The extracts which follow are from "Recommendations of the Ontario Housing Committee as to Types of Inexpensive Houses." Read these excellent housing recommendations, and think out your own contribution to planning Better Houses for Canadians. Do not forget to communicate with the Town Planning Institute, the Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, the Provincial housing authority and local housing authorities, or write to the Women's Department, Canadian Reconstruction Association, Royal Bank Building, Toronto, and your recommendations will be duly forwarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ONTARIO HOUSING COMMITTEE.

"What Constitutes a House?"

What constitutes a desirable house? By what standards do we measure desirability? A standard has been defined as that which has been established by investigation and authority as a reasonably attainable maximum of desirability. Some standards are fixed; some are constantly changing.

There must, however, be some definite classification taken as a basis in formulating standards. Careful investigation of living conditions has established certain requirements as essential, and others as desirable. There will undoubtedly be some criticism of any attempt to classify essentials and there is bound to be a diversity of opinion, but for our purpose the *essential* features may be summarized as follows:

1. Sufficient land to give each family privacy and plenty of air.
2. Watertight floors, walls and roof.
3. One, or more, rooms for cooking, eating and general day use.
4. Bedroom for parents' use.
5. Bedroom for male children.
6. Bedroom for female children.
7. Provision for toilet with sanitary water-closet and sewer connection.
8. Running water supply fit for drinking.
9. Kitchen sink with waste connection to sewer.
10. Uninterrupted daylight and ventilation through windows in every room.

Additional features which are so desirable as to be almost essential are:

1. Bath tub and lavatory, with hot and cold water supply.
2. Laundry tub with hot and cold water supply.
3. Direct sunlight in all principal rooms.
4. A second room, in addition to that used for cooking.
5. Clothes closets.
6. Porches and verandahs.

Further additions of desirable features would include:

1. Electric light.
2. A separate dining-room.
3. A cellar.
4. Furnace for heating.

In the commercially built dwelling of the past, the mistake has been made of providing too many, and frequently too small rooms. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the use of rooms provided and their place in relation to one another. The average workman does not need many rooms. His wife does not wish to add to her duties by caring for more rooms than are needed. A man's dwelling is governed by his earning capacity, just as his clothes, food, or any other commodity; but there is a limit beyond which we cannot go and maintain decent living standards.

Recognition of these facts and a careful study of the actual requirements suggest that houses ranging from four to six rooms are best suited to the needs of the average workman. Of these the five-roomed type, containing three bedrooms, should predominate. The four-room type, providing only two bedrooms, is suited only to a workman without family, or to one with a small family. One of the most important on the list of essential items is the provision of a bedroom for parents, and a separate bedroom for children

of each sex. This in many cases requires a minimum of three bedrooms, and is the reason for the greater need of five-room houses. If more than six rooms are provided, the tendency is to make up the additional expense by sub-letting to roomers, usually with injurious effect to home life.

STANDARDS.

These standards represent minimum requirements for safety, health, comfort and convenience in industrial houses.

It should be possible to exceed in most cases the minimum stated both in the size of rooms and in the size of lots. It is suggested that in new developments Ontario may aim at least to equal the new English standard of twelve houses to the gross acre in urban centres and eight houses to the gross acre in less populous districts.

Grouping.

It is recommended that a space of at least twelve feet be preserved between houses or groups of houses in all new developments; also in the case of houses with side windows, other than those from stairs, halls or pantries. However, where the size of lots is fixed, or where existing buildings interfere, a narrower space may be unavoidable, but such passage should be at least four feet wide, without windows other than those from stairs, halls or pantries. Houses of frame construction, in whole or in part, should have a space of at least fifteen feet between them.

Duplex houses or cottage flats are recommended only as a substitute for tenements. They should not be more than two storeys in height, and not more than three rooms in depth, except the end house of a duplex group, which may be four rooms in depth.

Open Spaces.

Space for gardens is desirable, also play space for children. Local conditions will determine whether there should be individual or community allotments and playgrounds. Access to the rear should be provided; in the case of group houses service lanes are desirable. These should be paved, drained, lighted, and not less than twelve feet in width. Four-foot passage ways between buildings should be paved.

Outbuildings are not desirable.

Fences.

Open fences or hedges are recommended. Close board fences are not acceptable.

Size of Houses.

Minimum number of rooms, four, exclusive of bathroom and kitchenette.

Arrangement of Rooms.

No house should be more than two rooms deep unless it has at least twelve feet of clear space between it and the next building, in which case detached, semi-detached and group houses may be three rooms deep, and duplex houses may have a depth of four rooms.

Types of Houses

Four-room type: Living room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms and bath-room, or living room, dining room-kitchenette, 2 bedrooms and bathroom.

Five-room type: Living room, dining room-kitchenette, or kitchen, and 3 bedrooms and bathroom.

Six-room type: Living room, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms and bath-room.

Minimum Size of Rooms.

Living room	144 sq. ft.	narrowest dimension	11 ft.
Dining room	120 "	" "	10 "
Kitchen	80 "	" "	8 "
Kitchenette	50 "	" "	6 "
Bedroom No. 1	120 "	" "	9 "
Bedroom No. 2	100 "	" "	8 "
Bedroom No. 3	75 "	" "	7 "
Bathroom	35 "	" "	5 "

Where the kitchenette opens from the dining room with a doorway of six feet, the minimum combined width of dining room and kitchenette, including the intervening partition, may be fifteen feet.

Clothes Closets.

Clothes closets to be provided for every bedroom, in addition to the areas specified, the closet to be not less than 22 inches deep, to be fitted with rod for coat hangers, and to have a door at least two feet in width.

Ceilings.

Minimum height of ceilings --8 feet.

Sloping ceilings will be acceptable only under the following conditions: Roof space above that portion of ceiling to be of ample size, preferably ventilated; space between rafters of sloping portion to be adequately ventilated into roof space; bedroom to have greater window area and better ventilation than the minimum permissible for a standard flat-ceiling room; bedrooms to have a minimum height of 8 feet over an area of at least 40 square feet, with a minimum flat ceiling width of 3½ feet, and a clear height of not less than 6 feet over an area of at least 75 square feet with a minimum width of 7 feet.

Furniture Space.

Beds to be indicated to scale on plans (double beds 5 feet by 6 feet 6 inches; single beds 3 feet by 6 feet 6 inches). Location of beds not to interfere with windows or doors. It is recommended that beds be free standing and not located in a corner or with the side against a wall. Space to be provided for two pieces of furniture in addition to bed. To allow moving of furniture, doors to be not less than 2 feet 6 inches in width.

Stairs.

Risers to be not more than 8 inches high, and treads to be not less than 9 inches wide. Winding stairs to be accepted. Treads to measure at least 9 inches wide, 18 inches from rail. Two winders, and not more than two, are required in a right-angle turn.

To allow for moving of furniture, stairs shall be not less than 2 feet 9 inches in clear width.

Cellars.

No living quarters to be in basement or cellar except where the land has a decided slope.

Cellar to be lighted by at least one window opening directly to the outer air and to be provided with another opening located so as to provide cross ventilation.

Cellars or basements to have a clear height of 6 feet 6 inches.

The walls and floors to be damp-proofed or water-proofed, as conditions may require. Where conditions require waterproofing, weeping tiles to be placed around the footings and graded to follow the natural flow of the ground water.

Floors to be of concrete, with cement finish, graded to drain, to be connected with the sewer.

Where the cellar is omitted, foundations may consist of either continuous masonry wall, or masonry piers two feet from finished grade to first floor. The space under the house to be drained, enclosed and ventilated.

Light and Ventilation.

Windows may be double-hung, pivoted or casement. If double-hung, upper and lower sash to be the same size, and both to be moveable.

Every room to have at least one window opening directly to the outer air. One window is sufficient in small bedrooms, but more than one is desirable in other rooms. Each room to have a window area of not less than 12 square feet. Minimum window area to be measured between stop beads. Window head to be as near ceiling as practicable.

Cross ventilation, as direct as possible, to be provided for all rooms through windows, transoms, or doors.

Every bathroom to have a window of not less than 6 square feet in an area opening directly to the outer air.

Every water-closet compartment to have a window of not less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ square feet in area opening directly to the outer air. A skylight in the roof, with an equal amount of glass area and provided with adequate ventilation will be accepted in lieu of such window, but skylights are not desirable.

Plumbing.

Bath-tub to be a one-piece fixture; shower not sufficient.

Sink to be in one piece, preferably of enamelled iron with integral back; rim to be 36 inches above the floor.

Wash tubs to be in kitchen or cellar. When placed in the kitchen, an enamelled iron one-piece combination sink and tub is recommended. When placed in cellar, two tubs are recommended, to be of enamelled iron, preferably, or of cement. Rim to be 36 inches above the floor.

Water closet to be inside the house in bathroom or in well-lighted and ventilated compartment (not in cellar) opening upon hall or passage way. Fixture to be of porcelain, of the siphon, or siphon-jet type, to have a large water-way, and to be provided with an individual flush tank.

House drain to run from bottom of soil stack to a point 3 feet outside the wall of the building, to be medium weight cast iron pipe, of a minimum size of 4 inches. Soil pipe to be of cast iron standard weight, minimum size of 4 inches, and to be extended through the roof for a distance of at least 3 feet.

Hot and cold water to be provided to sinks, laundry tubs, baths, and lavatories.

All fixtures to be provided with proper drains.

All fixtures to be separately trapped, except in batteries of laundry tubs and combined sink and laundry tub, where one trap is sufficient.

Venting of traps to conform to approved practice, except that the back venting of the top or only fixture on a line is not required. Sink and lavatory traps to be connected direct to the vertical wastes, and not to floor branches. Exposed pipes preferred: where possible lines to be concentrated, and kept from outside walls.

Heating.

Where furnaces are not provided, rooms to be arranged and chimneys located so that stoves may be conveniently placed. The bathroom to be adequately heated. The kitchen flue to be of sufficient size to permit the use of a coal range for cooking, and to be either lined with tile flue lining or parged.

Lighting.

Electric light is preferable.

Materials.

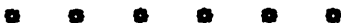
Brick, hollow tile, stone or concrete preferable.

Wooden frame with exterior walls of stucco, shingles or clapboard acceptable for detached or semi-detached houses.

Wooden frame with exterior walls of stucco acceptable for group houses.

Outer walls to be insulated against dampness and condensation. Ratnogging to be provided.

Division walls to be of brick, hollow tile or concrete.



It is very desirable that all rooms should have direct sunlight during some portion of the day. If group houses, two rooms in depth, are placed on streets running east and west, the north room will of course be devoid of direct sunlight. This can be avoided—first, by planning houses only one room in depth; second, by placing houses at right angles to the street, so that rooms will have an east and west exposure.

The first solution will, in many cases, be found impossible, owing to the extensive street frontage required, and in many instances the second solution may be difficult to carry out, especially where individual groups, which do not form part of the development, are being constructed.

This difficulty is not encountered when houses naturally face east and west, and it becomes apparent how very important it is in laying out sites to place and group the houses so as to get the best results from each site. Care, however, should be taken to avoid monotonous regularity of frontage. This can be avoided by variation in exterior treatment of the houses themselves, and frequent breaking of the building lines.

It is not sufficient merely to consider the placing of houses in relation to frontage lines so as to insure sunlight. The spaces behind buildings must not be forgotten. There is nothing which more thoroughly expresses civic spirit and the community attitude towards housing and town planning than the treatment of spaces at the back of buildings. Unfortunately, it seems to be forgotten too frequently that the outlook from many houses must be on the backs of houses opposite, and since these are not seen from the street, nor by the public generally, too often no attempt is made to make the rears even presentable. By limiting houses in groups to two rooms in depth, and detached and semi-detached to three rooms, deep courts will be eliminated, and by exercising a little care in arrangement and design, the rear can be made as attractive as the front.

The tenement at its best has always proven unsatisfactory, and although it may be a necessary evil in larger cities, such as London or New York, there can be no excuse for it in Canada. The duplex group house, because of reduced frontage per family and simplified plumbing, offers a solution, less desirable, it is true, than the self-contained group house, but vastly preferable to the tenement. Duplex houses, however, need careful planning, both in regard to the arrangement of rooms within individual apartments, and the grouping of these apartments, if desirable living conditions are to be encouraged.

In all housing work it must be remembered that the children of to-day are the citizens of tomorrow. Their need of air and play space should always be considered.



The workman's home is essentially a house where all the household duties fall upon the shoulders of one woman. It is, therefore, important that the relation of rooms to one another, and conveniences within the rooms, should be planned to lighten those duties. Under such conveniences the bath-room may be included. Three bedrooms have already been suggested as a minimum, except for the smallest type of house. It will be found, however, that to provide three bedrooms, bathroom, closets, and necessary hall space on an upper floor, the first floor will be unduly increased in area, and consequently will constitute an extra, unwarranted charge upon the tenant. It is suggested that in some cases the bathroom may be placed on the first floor with a saving of expense and work, and generally with advantage, provided the arrangement of rooms and stairs is such that privacy is not sacrificed. The workman's wife, with a family of small children, will appreciate the saving in steps which such an arrangement will insure. In addition, there is the equally important saving in cost, due to simplified plumbing and the ease with which a bathroom may be heated.

The kitchen is a workroom and should be planned for comfort and convenience in handling work. For a few hours a day direct sunlight is desirable, but sunlight during a long period, especially in summer, renders the kitchen almost uninhabitable. Good ventilation is extremely important. This can be best accomplished by openings on two sides of the room, but frequently in small houses this is not possible, and it is quite impossible in group houses. Ventilation may be greatly aided by using the kitchen flue as a ventilating flue, if cooking is done by gas. When a coal range is used, a separate flue will be found necessary.

Where expense need not be considered there is a wide range of floor materials for the kitchen. It is extremely doubtful, however, if anything can be found which will give more satisfactory results than a good quality linoleum upon a reasonably well-finished wood floor.

Wall paper is not recommended for kitchen walls. Where the money available will permit, an oil paint will give a very satisfactory washable finish. The least expensive wall finish is cold water paint, which, if renewed often enough, will be perfectly satisfactory.

The enamelled iron sink is the most practical choice. The selection should, however, be confined to the product of a favourably known manufacturer. Frequently, in the more cheaply made products, the finish will rapidly

disappear under the action of cleaning powders. The height of the sink is most important. In practically every kitchen and laundry to-day these fixtures are placed too low, resulting in frequent backache. For a woman of average height, a height of 35 inches from floor to rim will be found none too great.

* * * * *

There can be no question as to the desirability of clothes closets. Houses in which these are omitted are justly criticised. A clothes closet which is too narrow or too shallow to permit of orderly hanging of clothes is worse than none at all. The standards accordingly suggest a minimum width which good practice has established. In addition to clothes closets for each bedroom, all houses should provide space for storing bedroom linen, towels, etc. A coat closet on the first floor is a further convenience which should be included in a house plan where space will permit.

Additional copies of "BETTER HOUSES FOR CANADIANS" may be obtained
without charge from the Women's Department

CANADIAN RECONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

ROYAL BANK BUILDING, TORONTO

Secretaries of organizations are requested to bring this pamphlet on Better Housing
to the attention of their Associations.