How CMHC Revived Canadian Community Planning
1944-1970

Canadian Institute of Planners conference 2019

David L.A. Gordon
Queen’s University
Thomas Adams

- Joined Canada’s Commission of Conservation 1914 as Town Planning Advisor
- Founded Civic Improvement League 1915
- Town Planning Institute of Canada founded 1919

Source: Planning Canadian Communities 6th Ed.
Author: Gerald Hodge, David L.A. Gordon
REVIVED Canadian Community Planning?

- 300 TPIC members in late 1920s
- Basic planning legislation in 8 provinces
- Advisory Town Planning Commissions in many cities
- Advisory plans prepared Vancouver and Kitchener
- Zoning bylaws in some communities

Noulan Cauchon, TPIC President 1924-5

Source: Planning Canadian Communities 6th Ed. Authors: Gerald Hodge, David L.A. Gordon
1930-45 → Great Depression & World War 2

- Great Depression 1930-39:
- Cities going bankrupt
- Annual housing starts dropped from 20,000 ?? to almost none
- Planning commissions folded across the country

1930 JTPIC article on bankrupt cities
1930-31 ➔ CIP Collapses

- Membership evaporates
- No fees coming in
- Last conference 1929
- Journal keeps going until 1931
- Leadership lost
  - DeVille 1924
  - Ewing 1926
  - Cauchon 1935
  - Horace Seymour 1940
  - Thomas Adams – 1940

Last *JTPIC* Issue, June 1931
ONLY FIVE PLANNERS IN CANADA IN 1944 – all part-time

Eric Thrift, MRAIC
Manitoba Reconstruction Committee

Tracy leMay, OLS
Toronto City Surveyor
City Planner

Eugenio Faludi, architect
Town Planning Consultants
(no commissions yet)

Charles-Eduard Campeau & Aime Cousineau
City of Montreal Town Planning Engineers
Three events with lasting consequences...

1. **Unemployment relief projects**

- Infrastructure construction *(roads, bridges, waterworks and parks)*
- Planning consultants became engineers and surveyors again

Source: Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence fonds/a034657
Three events with lasting consequences...

2. **Regional natural resources planning**

- **Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration** (1935) – prairie dust storm 1930s – Oktoks AB

- **Maritime Dykeland Rehabilitation Committee** (1943) - Failing Acadian dykes - Grand Pre
Three events with lasting consequences...

3. **Campaign for the introduction of social welfare by League for Social Reconstruction**

- Lawyer F.R. Scott
- Political Reformer King Gordon
- Sociologist Leonard Marsh
Humphrey Carver

Architect (AA London)
Arrived 1930
Joined League for Social Reconstruction
Articles on housing reform for Canadian Forum, JRAIC
Wants public housing and town planning
THE STRATEGY OF TOWN-PLANNING

By HUMPHREY CARVER, A.R.I.B.A.

An address at the thirty-fourth annual meeting of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

1. LE CORBUSIER'S romantic and scientific imagination dominated architectural philosophy during the nineteen-thirties. His design for a city of 3 million population showed what the Skyscraper Age might have been, had the resources of modern science been properly harnessed.

Source: Carver, RAICJ, March 1941, Figure 1, including his original caption.
• In the same article:
• The Garden City
• Radburn NJ garden suburb and
• The Neighbourhood Unit
POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PLANS

“Homes Fit for Heroes”

Canada:

• 11 million population
• 1 million in the armed forces

What happens when the veterans come home?

Source: Montreal Gazette
POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PLANS

Clifford Curtis

• 1944 Advisory Committee on Reconstruction in Canada after WWII – *Housing and Community Planning Report*

• Came to be known as the “Curtis Report”

Leonard Marsh
POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PLANS

Leonard Marsh

Recommendations:

• Financing and expanding housing production
• Recommended big housing programs and urban renewal
• Community planning mandatory and regulatory

Clifford Curtis
“Homes Fit for Heroes”

A million homes in *planned communities*

A lovely sentiment, except Canada didn’t have any...

- Developers
- Housing finance
- Community Plans
- Planners
- Planning schools
WARTIME HOUSING

Urban housing shortage
Small houses
War workers
50,000 units

North Vancouver

Toronto
January 1, 1946
Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Administered the National Housing Act

Responsible for...
- Housing
- Community Planning
- Research

David Mansur,
CMHC President, 1946-54
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION of CANADA - 1946

• Created by CMHC in 1946
• Drew from:
  • Canadian Welfare Council
  • Housing advocates
  • RAIC, EIC
• Promoted community development and community involvement in planning

Dick Davis  First CPAC President
Canadian Welfare Council
• CPAC divisions in every province within **one** year
• Newsletters
• Films
• Slideshows
• Lobby for new provincial legislation

CPAC Vice-President, Humphrey Carver, University of Toronto Housing Centre
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION of CANADA

- CPAC chapters in every major city within **two** years
- Fees $2.00/year
- National conferences
- Provincial conferences

Alan Armstrong,
First CPAC Executive Director

*Our New CPAC Branch*

by Agatha LeBlanc
Secretary-Treasurer of the Greater Sydney Branch
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION of CANADA

• CPAC over 7000 members
• More diverse membership than TPIC
• Advocacy campaign for municipal planning commissions

CPAC National Executive members Bessie Luffman, Barbara Lambert and Lin Good
CMHC RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Humphrey Carver

Peter Oberlander
LAND USE

LEGEND
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL LANDS WITH BUILDINGS
- RAILWAY
- ROAD
- PUBLIC BUILDING
- AGRICULTURE
- OPEN SPACE, UNDEVELOPED
- VACANT LAND
- PARK
- PRIVATE RECREATIONAL AREA
- INSTITUTIONS IN LARGE GROUNDS
- HOSPITAL
- SCHOOL
- CHURCH
- SURFACE WATER
- LOCK
- DAM
- MINERAL WORKINGS
- WASTE DISPOSAL

SAMPLETOWN A STUDY IN URBAN MAPPING

Urban Mapping, CMHC 1949

Blanche Lemco Van Ginkel
Jean Cimon
ACU Co-Director, 1949

Source: L'Association Canadienne D’Urbanisme, 1949
• Sponsored by CPAC
• Funded by CMHC
• Taught at McGill’s Macdonald College
• Professor Harold Spence-Sales
• Attendees:
  • Builders
  • Architects
  • Engineers
  • Landscape Architects
  • Surveyors
• TPIC re-established in 1952
• 45 members
• Small, volunteer-run professional association
• Supported by member fees
• Combined its conferences & news with CPAC
• Cousineau, Faludi & Thrift early Presidents
CMHC ADVISORY GROUP: Multi-Disciplinary Thinking for National Policy

CMHC PLANNING

- CMHC recruited planners and architects from Britain, the USA and Belgium
- CMHC planned and subdivided federal lands
- Reviewed subdivisions with CMHC mortgage insurance

Polson Park in Kingston
For as little as $1750 or $1850 you can buy a fully serviced residential building lot in CALVIN PARK, KINGSTON'S PROFESSIONALLY PLANNED COMMUNITY. See your local CMHC office for details.
Choosing a house design

Choosing a neighbourhood

CHARACTER Look for a place which has a large proportion of owner-occupied homes, well designed and constructed and of consistent character. Look for a place in which you are likely to find congenial neighbours.

Normal community requirements are a good school, shopping centre, churches, a park or playground and a community centre close by. Easy access to where you work and to the town centre (good connecting roads and dependable transportation service) should be considered. Factories and commercial buildings should not be too close to the site.
Source: CMHC, Principles of Small House Grouping, 1954, p.3.
• CMHC had a direct role in founding the first five Canadian planning schools
• Funded half of the first professors’ salaries
• CMHC Scholarships for half the Master’s students
• CMHC Doctoral Fellowships to become a professor
• $5 million research fund
(Diploma 1947)

Harold Spence-Sales

Source: CIP/ICU
Professor Joe Kostka & Eric Thrift
Jacqueline Tyrwhitt  
1951-3

Gordon Stephenson  
1955-60

(Diploma, 1951)
Jean-Claude La Haye
Early student winners of CMHC scholarships / awards

Harry Lash FCIP
Montreal
Vancouver
1949, McGill

Peter Oberlander OC
Head UBC
Dep. Min. MSUA
1949, Harvard

Thomas Shoyama OC
Dep. Min. Finance
1949. McGill

Brahm Wiesman FCIP
Vancouver,
Head UBC
1949. McGill

Raymond Moriyama, CC
Architect
1955, McGill
CPAC PROGRESS 1950s

- 9 of 10 provinces had new planning legislation
- Planning a mandatory activity, with regulatory plans
- Most provinces had planning bureaus
- Most cities had planning commissions or boards
- Many cities had consultants preparing comprehensive plans and zoning bylaws
- Some cities were hiring municipal planners
Gordon Stephenson
The traditional street layout which developed before the introduction of the automobile was the grid plan. Although this form of layout is still appropriate in some of the older urban parts of our cities, care must be taken to determine if it is suitable for new communities where the scale and type of housing is different, where the topography of the site does not often permit economic development in this manner and where the traffic pattern must be designed to reduce potential hazards to the minimum.

The maximum length of a cul-de-sac should be 350' to the turning circle.

Carver argues for suburban town centres that would provide jobs, services and facilities to make more complete communities.
• TPIC grew slowly in 1960s
• 200+ members
• Still a volunteer-run professional association

• *Plan Canada* 1960

• Blanche van Ginkel first female TPIC Councilor, 1962

• Carver TPIC President, 1963-64; made TPIC bilingual
CPAC PROGRESS 1960s

- All major cities had planning commissions or boards
- Some cities were making planning a regular staff department
- Most cities and towns had comprehensive plans and zoning bylaws
- Most cities and some towns had municipal planners on staff
- CPAC activists began to question slum clearance and urban renewal in the late 1960s

CONCLUSIONS

• Much of progress attributed to many background forces at work in immediate post-war era
• Remarkable achievement in establishing financial system and nurturing large-scale homebuilding industry
• Role in re-establishing community planning often overlooked
• Implemented federal policy from 1944 Curtis Report in an area where the federal government had little or no jurisdiction
• From advocacy to education, practice and research
CONCLUSIONS - Postscript

• CPAC collapsed in 1974 after CMHC wound down funding
• TPIC continued to grow slowly;
• Became CIP/ICU in 1970s; 7000+ members today
• CMHC reduced its role in community planning in the 1990s, but its critical role in re-establishing the profession should be acknowledged.
Thank you!

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Disclaimer

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For more information see

Presentation research and design by Chris Willms
Suburbs

Don Mills

Mill Woods

Source: ???

Source: ???
Urban Renewal

Regent Park BEFORE

Regent Park AFTER