



CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

PROJECT PROFILE

Cedar Brook Apartments

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

A partnership between a community development corporation and a daycare co-operative has produced a project that provides inner-city families in Prince Albert with two badly needed services in one location.

The River Bank Development Corporation (RBDC) is a non-profit corporation with a mandate to promote social and economic development in Prince Albert's core neighbourhoods. RBDC's programs include affordable housing, a partnership with Habitat for Humanity at the local Habitat ReStore, and support for the Good Food Box Program operated by the Smart Families Food Co-op. For this 34-unit renovation project, RBDC rehabilitated two rundown apartment buildings in Prince Albert's downtown core and, by teaming up with the Children's Choice Daycare Co-operative, it was able to include 28 licensed daycare spaces, as well.

Highlights

Working together, a non-profit developer and a daycare co-operative have transformed two nearly derelict buildings into newly renovated apartments and a child care centre that serves kids at risk.

Client group: Lower-income families

Developer: River Bank Development Corporation

Tenure: Rental

Number of units: 34

Who was involved? River Bank Development Corporation; Children's Choice Daycare Co-operative; Governments of Canada, Saskatchewan and Prince Albert through the Centenary Affordable Housing Program; Grace Mennonite Church and Central Committee for technical support and management expertise

The Affordable Housing Solution

RBDC acquired two buildings that were in poor condition, and partially occupied. The two buildings were renovated and are now called Cedar Brook Apartments. As with any renovation project of this nature, the needs of existing tenants, as well as future ones, had to be accommodated. RBDC was able to move the current residents into one building while the other was under renovation.

In cases where the new family-oriented housing didn't meet the needs of existing residents, RBDC was able to find them suitable homes elsewhere.

Renovation projects can involve a greater degree of uncertainty than new construction. The extent of the work required may be concealed behind walls until the work has already begun. In this case, the heating, plumbing and building structure all produced surprises during the renovations.

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The developer was able to handle these surprises effectively by ensuring the construction supervisor who was hired, as well as all the subtrades, were highly qualified to deal with any renovation issues and were committed to the project. The developer considers this, along with careful planning and budgeting, a key factor in a successful redevelopment.

On the upside, acquiring an existing building can expedite the development process. RBDC was able to locate the property, receive funding approval and conclude its purchase in five months—an unusually quick turnaround.

During the course of the redevelopment, there were pleasant surprises, too. Originally, RBDC had set its sights on having just a home-based daycare unit run by an individual. Partnering with Children's Choice and accessing funds from Kids First—a provincial program committed to helping children at risk—allowed RBDC to create 16 spaces that included a provision for infants and focused on children needing care. The original renovations produced 16 spaces, but the daycare has since been expanded to include spaces for

8 infants, 10 toddlers and 10 preschoolers. Daycare users include Cedar Brook Apartments residents, but the centre is intended to serve the broader community.

Above the daycare, the apartment buildings provide affordable housing for 34 households. Rents range from \$350 for a bachelor apartment to \$490 per month for a two-bedroom unit. While tenants pay their own electricity bills, the rents include heating, which can be a significant benefit in Saskatchewan's climate. One of the renovated former units now serves as a community room.

CMHC, the Government of Saskatchewan and other partners, including the City of Prince Albert, provided \$1.43 million in funding through the Affordable Housing Initiative (referred to as the Centenary Affordable Housing Program in Saskatchewan). RBDC contributed

in-kind services and covered the \$90,000 mortgage. The developer also received strong technical support and property management advice from the Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert and the Mennonite Central Committee.

The Kids First program provided funds to furnish and supply the daycare at the outset, but RBDC took out a small mortgage to cover the balance of construction costs.

Since finishing Cedar Brook Apartments in 2005, RBDC has completed eight duplexes as at the end of 2009 and is currently building five more. When these are complete, the organization will have over 60 units under management. It has become the fourth largest provider of affordable housing for families in Prince Albert.

CMHC Contact

Jacquie Bevill, 306-780-5887, jbevill@cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Additional Information

News release (official project opening)

<http://cmhc.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2005/2005-01-24-1600.cfm>