

Housing Design Catalogue

Supporting gentle density and industry efficiency

March 27, 2026



Housing, Infrastructure
and Communities Canada

Logement, Infrastructures
et Collectivités Canada

Canada



Today's Session

1. **CMHC: Housing Design Catalogue – What is it and Who is it for**
2. **CMHC: Implementation – How to Use the Catalogue**
3. **Discussion and Questions**



What is the Housing Design Catalogue?

The Housing Design Catalogue is a nationally developed collection of **50 standardized low-rise home designs**. It serves as a practical tool for builders, developers, homeowners, and local governments to support the creation of more housing in existing communities across Canada.

The Catalogue **promotes gentle density** by introducing housing options such as fourplexes and rowhouses.



Overview

50

Home designs

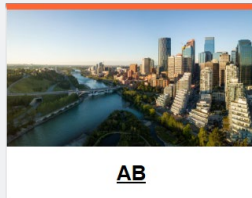


Diverse housing typologies



Focus on gentle density & standardization

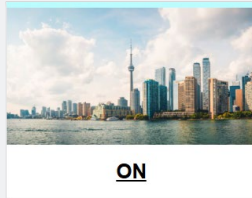
7 Regions



AB



BC



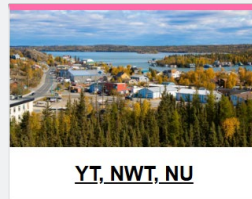
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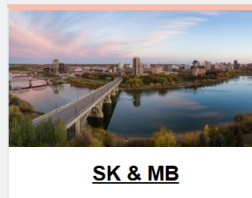
QC



NB, NL, NS, PE



YT, NWT, NU



SK & MB



Regionally-informed



Adaptable by Design



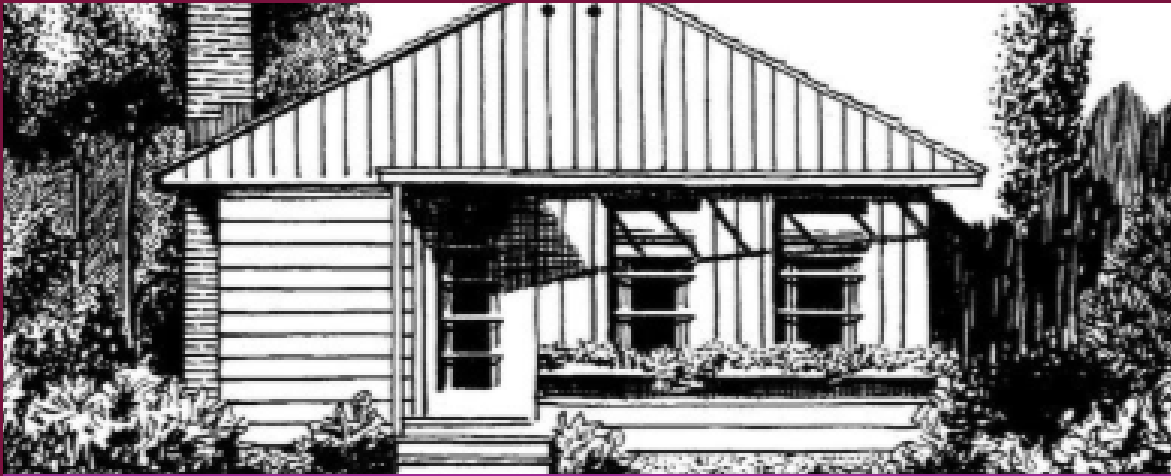
Energy Performance and Climate



Financial Feasibility

Catalogue Evolution

1947



1957



1967



1977



Today's Housing Design Catalogue

Today's catalogue draws on lessons from our history and taps into innovation.

Designs that prioritize energy efficiency, adaptability and accessibility, financial feasibility, and climate resilience.

Accessory Dwelling Units



Rowhouses and Townhouses



Fourplexes



Sixplexes



Link to the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)

- Over 200 HAF agreements with municipalities
- Increasing housing supply, diversity, and affordability
- Incentivizes modernizing land use and development approvals
- HAF set the stage for the Housing Design Catalogue



Zoning Reforms



Technical Advances



Faster Permitting



Financial Incentives and Grants

Core Design Principles



**Regionally
Informed**



**Adaptable by
Design**



**Performance
& Climate**



**Financially
Feasible**



Regionally Informed



Reflecting regional differences

The catalogue reflects regional differences in regional climate zones, housing needs, and construction methods.

Designed for compliance

The designs follow local codes and regulations from jurisdictions across Canada, helping to align with local approval processes to help Canadians build more homes, faster.



Ontario Region Designs



Accessory Dwelling Unit 01

- Single storey
- 1 Bed, 1 Washroom
- Accessible ready unit
- GBA: 59 sq.m (634 sq.ft)



Accessory Dwelling Unit 02

- 2 storey with carport
- 3 Bed, 1 Washroom
- GBA: 95 sq.m (1017 sq.ft)



Stacked Townhouse 01

- 3 storey, 2 units stacked
- 1-3 Bed, 1-2 Washroom / unit
- GBA: 201 sq.m (2165 sq.ft)



Stacked Townhouse 02

- 3 storey, 2 units stacked
- 1-4 Bed, 1-2 Washroom / unit
- Ground floor accessible ready unit
- GBA: 237 sq.m (2549 sq.ft)

Ontario Region Designs



Fourplex 01

- 3 storey
- 1-3 Bed, 1-1.5 Washroom /unit
- Ground floor accessible ready unit
- GBA: 362 sq.m (3897 sq.ft)



Fourplex 02

- 2 storey
- 1-3 Bed, 1 Washroom /unit
- Ground floor accessible ready unit
- GBA: 303 sq.m (3264 sq.ft)



Sixplex

- 3 storey
- 1-2 Bed, 1 Washroom /unit
- Ground floor accessible ready unit
- GBA: 450 sq.m (4842 sq.ft)

Adaptable by Design

CMHC collaborated with Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) on the approach to “accessible-ready” and “enhanced accessibility” in the catalogue.



“**Accessible-Ready**” designs can be converted to an accessible unit much more easily than homes designed without adaptability in mind.

“**Enhanced Accessible**” architectural layouts are aligned with principles *CSA/ASC B652-23 – Accessible Dwellings Standard*.

Energy Performance and Climate



All designs target energy efficiency that exceeds building code minimums and allows users to make climate resilient choices.

- Designs meet National Building Code of Canada (NBC) 2020 Energy Performance **Tier 3** or **Step 4** of the Energy Step Code in BC Region
- **Lifecycle Analysis (LCA)** reporting for each design
- Guidance to support **material selection** and **climate resilient design choices**



Financially Feasible

Construction Cost Estimate Summary | Ontario

The following table outlines an estimated range of hard construction costs anticipated when building from the Housing Design Catalogue. These ranges were informed by Class B construction cost estimates prepared by Vermeulens in Q1-2025 and in consultation with builders familiar with this scale of housing. Ranges are provided to account for differences in site, design selections, finish quality, material costs, and labour rates.

Actual construction costs may vary significantly and are subject to change over time due to a range of factors. Users should refer to the detailed list of assumptions and exclusions to understand what is included in these estimates. It is strongly recommended that users work with a qualified professional, builder and/or consultant when developing a project budget and financial pro forma model.

Housing Type	# of Units ¹	Gross Building Area (sq. ft)	Estimated Range of Total Construction Hard Costs (\$)	Average Range of Costs per Unit (\$/unit)	Average Range of Costs per Building Area (\$/sq. ft)
Accessory Dwelling Unit 01	1	634	\$251,000 to \$314,000	\$251,000 to \$314,000	\$396 to \$495
Accessory Dwelling Unit 02	1	1,017	\$343,000 to \$429,000	\$343,000 to \$429,000	\$337 to \$422
Stacked Townhouse 01 ²	6	6,495	\$1,969,000 to \$2,461,000	\$329,000 to \$411,000	\$304 to \$379
Stacked Townhouse 02 ²	6	7,647	\$2,260,000 to \$2,825,000	\$377,000 to \$471,000	\$296 to \$370
Fourplex 01	4	3,897	\$1,174,000 to \$1,468,000	\$294,000 to \$367,000	\$302 to \$377
Fourplex 02	4	3,264	\$1,108,000 to \$1,385,000	\$277,000 to \$347,000	\$340 to \$425
Sixplex	6	4,842	\$1,510,000 to \$1,888,000	\$252,000 to \$315,000	\$312 to \$390

- **Class B construction cost estimates** establish a reliable basis for financial feasibility and proforma analysis.
- **Standardized plans** reduce the time and cost involved in designing a home and can be used for both rental and ownership scenarios.
- Standardized designs can **support prefab and off-site construction methods** for components such as panelized walls, engineered trusses and bathroom pods.

How does it work?

Catalogue designs are “near permit-ready,” not pre-approved. Working with qualified professionals, the designs can easily be adapted for details such as:

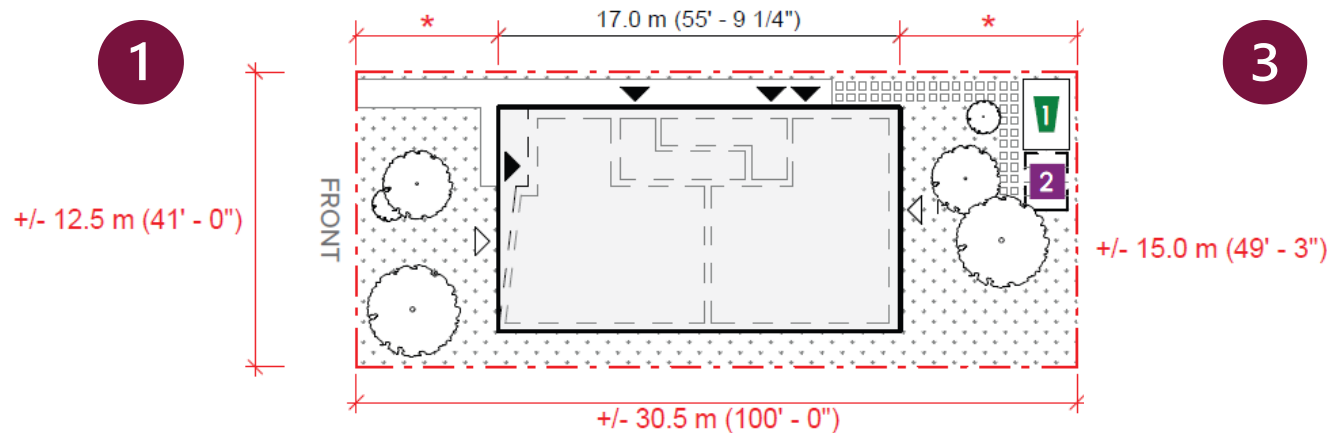
- Zoning compliance (lot coverage, setbacks, etc.)
- Parking, access, bike storage, and waste management
- Grading and drainage
- Foundations, basements, and crawlspaces
- Building orientation and siting
- Services and utilities requirements
- Cladding and material selection
- Energy performance, climate, and structural requirements

A user’s licensed qualified professional must finalize the design to create a 'Derived Design' and take on liability before making a building permit application.

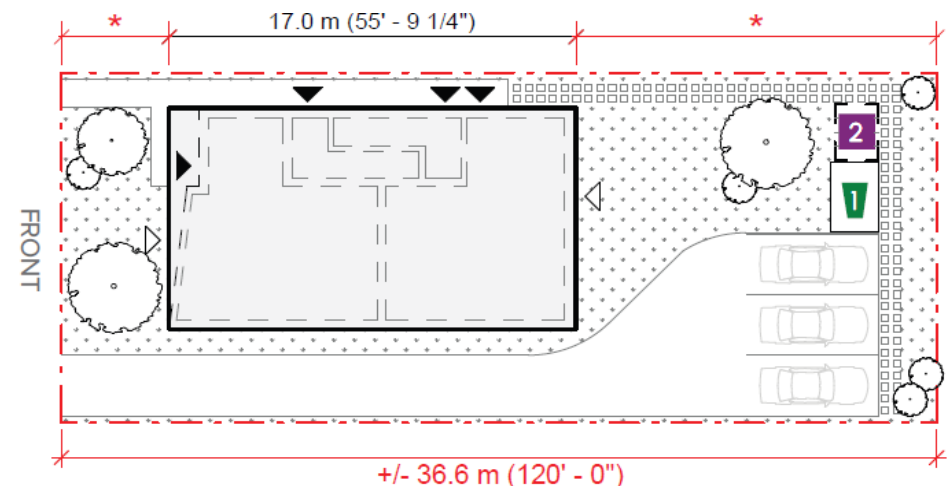
Local authorities can pre-review the prototypical Catalogue plans for general building code and zoning compliance.

Ontario Site Plan Examples

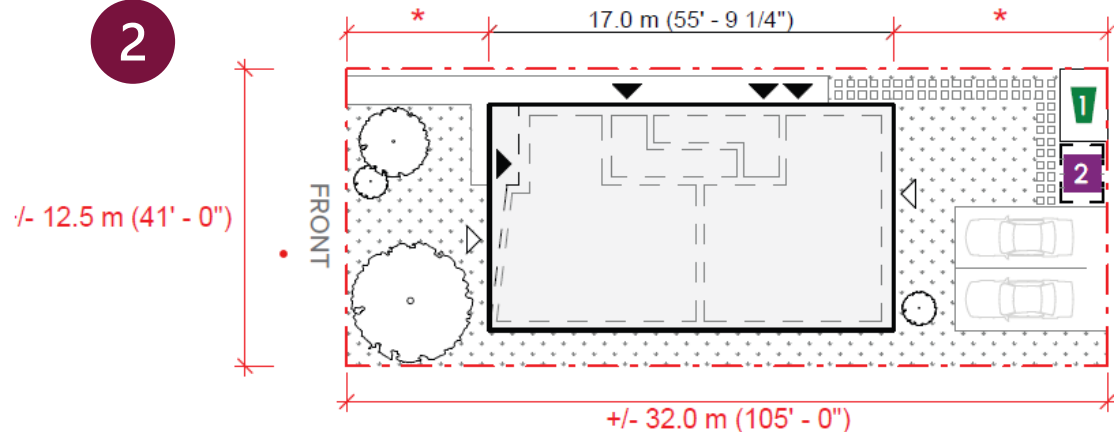
1



3



2



Option 1: Fourplex 02 prototypical site plan (per drawing set)

Option 2: Lane-access, parking via lane

Option 3: Street-access, parking at rear via driveway

4 Steps to Become a Local Partner

- Select which Catalogue designs to promote, at least 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and 2 multi-unit options (i.e. Row/Town/Plexes). Supporting all designs is encouraged where possible.
- Review prototypical Catalogue plans for “as-of-right” Zoning and Building Code compliance.
- Promote the pre-reviewed designs with builders, homeowners, and the public.
- Identify opportunities to streamline the approvals process. Start tracking building permits using the Catalogue and other standardized designs.



Select Designs



Pre-review designs for “as-of-right” zoning + Code compliance



Promote Designs



Streamline Approvals + Track Uptake

ON Local Partners



Visit the local government page on the Catalogue website for an up-to-date list

Province / Territory	Municipality	Supported Designs
Ontario	Town of Ajax	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02
Ontario	City of Belleville	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Fourplex 01, Stacked Townhouse 01
Ontario	City of Kitchener	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Ontario	City of Mississauga	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02
Ontario	Municipality of North Grenville	ON ADU 01, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Ontario	City of Ottawa	Coming soon
Ontario	City of St. Thomas	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Ontario	City of Toronto	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Ontario	City of Thunder Bay	ON ADU 01, Fourplex 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Sixplex
Ontario	City of Waterloo	ON ADU 01, ADU 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02

List of Local Partners



Visit the local government page on the Catalogue website for an up-to-date list

Province/Territory	Municipality	Supported Designs
Alberta	City of Edmonton	AB ADU 01, ADU 02, Rowhouse 01, Sixplex
British Columbia	City of Burnaby	BC ADU 01, ADU 02, Duplex, Rowhouse, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Courtyard Sixplex
British Columbia	City of Kelowna	BC ADU 01, ADU 02, Duplex, Rowhouse, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Courtyard Sixplex
British Columbia	City of Vancouver	BC Duplex, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Courtyard Sixplex
New Brunswick	City of Saint John	NB/NL/NS/PE ADU 01, ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Northwest Territories	City of Yellowknife	YT/NWT/NU ADU – Municipal, ADU – Tanked, Rowhouse – Municipal, Fourplex – Municipal, Sixplex – Municipal
Nova Scotia	Halifax Regional Municipality	NB/NL/NS/PE ADU 01, ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 01, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Sixplex
Nova Scotia	Town of Yarmouth	NB/NL/NS/PE ADU 02, Stacked Townhouse 02, Fourplex 02
Saskatchewan	City of Regina	SK/MB ADU 01, ADU 02, Fourplex 01, Fourplex 02, Rowhouse, Sixplex, Triplex
Yukon	City of Whitehorse	YT/NWT/NU ADU – Municipal, Rowhouse – Municipal, Fourplex – Municipal, Sixplex – Municipal

Benefits for Affordable Housing Projects



Cost-Effective Tool for Pre-Development



Energy and Accessibility



Opportunities for Off-Site Construction



Proforma Benefits

- Free-to-use standardized plans + local pre-review of designs = potential for significant reduction in pre-development costs
- Strong alignment with non-market objectives: creation of ground-oriented family sized units, energy efficiency, accessible-ready layouts
- Repeatability (including via off-site construction) can improve financial feasibility

Hear from a Local Partner

North Grenville: HAF + ARUs

Jackie Schoemaker Holmes

*Housing Accelerator Fund
Program Manager*



Thank you!

www.housingcatalogue.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Future Questions?

Email us at catalogue@cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Provide your
feedback on
our session!



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Canada

