



CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

# PROJECT PROFILE

## Baker Gardens

Cranbrook, British Columbia



For some communities, modular or manufactured housing can provide a flexible, affordable and energy-efficient housing option. Such was the case in Cranbrook, British Columbia, where modular housing was recently used to create Baker Gardens, a 36-unit affordable housing development for seniors and persons with disabilities.

“When we look at providing affordable housing, there’s definitely an economy of scale,” said Peter Chau, regional director for the Interior at BC Housing. “It’s more cost-effective to build a large

### Highlights

Baker Gardens is the largest modular housing development to be built in the province through federal and provincial stimulus funding under Canada’s Economic Action Plan.

**Client group:** Seniors aged 55 and older and people with disabilities who are able to live independently

**Developer:** BC Housing purchased the modular housing, which is managed and operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Kootenays

**Number of units:** 36 one-storey, one-bedroom homes, built in groups of four

**Tenure:** Rental, with rents set at 30 per cent of occupant incomes

**Who was involved?** Government of Canada (CMHC), Government of British Columbia (BC Housing), Columbia Basin Trust, City of Cranbrook

development than a small one, but if it’s more than the community actually needs, it’s expensive and difficult to justify. Modular housing can be tailored to the need in the community—whether it’s for four or forty homes.”

Cranbrook, located in southeast British Columbia one hour west of the Alberta border, is a growing regional centre with 30,000 residents and a large transient

population living in the community for employment opportunities. Housing affordability became an issue a few years ago when new ski resort developments put pressure on real estate prices.

Baker Gardens, which opened in August 2011, is the largest modular housing development to be built in British Columbia for low-income seniors and people with disabilities who are able

26-11-12



to live independently under Canada's Economic Action Plan. Speed of construction was a factor for the project, as most of the funding for the new homes was provided under federal and provincial stimulus programs aimed at creating jobs and economic activity as quickly and effectively as possible. Baker Gardens is one of 20 developments across the province to use modular housing, creating a total of 400 units of affordable rental housing.

### The Affordable Housing Solution

Baker Gardens features 36 one-storey, one-bedroom homes built in groups of four. The housing is centrally located in Baker Park and close to amenities.

Thanks to energy-efficient features such as electric heat and thicker walls that allow for extra insulation, the modular homes at Baker Gardens have an EnerGuide rating of 80 (the EnerGuide rating system shows a standard measure of a home's energy performance; for a new house, a rating of 80 or higher is excellent).<sup>1</sup> Factory-built construction also improves a home's airtightness, thus reducing the heating and cooling load.

The homes were also designed to be accessible for seniors and people with disabilities. Rooms are wheelchair-accessible, for example, and the homes have lower light switches and counters.

### CMHC Contact

Contact a representative of CMHC's Affordable Housing Centre  
[www.cmhc.ca/contactahc](http://www.cmhc.ca/contactahc)

BC Housing purchased the homes outright, so they are mortgage-free. Baker Gardens is managed and operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Kootenays, with the rent for each unit set at 30 per cent of the occupant's monthly income.

One of the advantages of modular, manufactured housing is that it can be built year-round. Foundations can be constructed in most weather conditions except extreme cold, and roof systems can be installed quickly once the main structural modules are erected.

Federal and provincial funding for Baker Gardens was made available under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, which included federal funding from Canada's Economic Action Plan that was matched by the Government of British Columbia. With a total capital cost of \$5.6 million, the project received combined federal and provincial assistance of \$4,873,000, a grant from Columbia Basin Trust, and a contribution of land valued at \$647,000 from the City of Cranbrook. The City of Cranbrook also waived development fees of \$73,000.

In the case of Baker Gardens and other modular housing projects supported by stimulus funding, jobs were created both at the factory and on site. The modular homes built at Baker Gardens also used pine beetle wood, which helped to stimulate the lumber industry and create additional jobs in British Columbia.

"Historically, many seniors and persons with disabilities in our community have struggled to find safe, affordable, quality housing," said Wally Eddy, president of the board of CMHA – Kootenays. "These new housing units are a wonderful addition to Cranbrook's housing stock."

<sup>1</sup> <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/new-homes/upgrade-packages/energuide-service.cfm>