Housing for New Immigrants in Park Extension, Montreal, Quebec: 
Current Conditions and Alternative Future Adaptations

By

Alexandra T. Ross

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Abstract

This research is focused on the current state of the housing available for new immigrants to Park Extension, a neighbourhood of Montreal. Included is a literature review that examines the nexus of social interactions that enable immigrants to find housing prior to leaving their home country, the current housing tenure of Montreal, as well as the way housing quality and affordability is dictated by the available housing stock. To situate the condition of housing and level of immigration in Park Extension, a background of the state of current housing and immigration in Montreal is also presented. Drawing on a combination of archival data, observations, and government reports and statistics, this paper provides a history of Park Extension which leads into a discussion of its various waves of immigration, the types of immigrants currently moving to the area, the reasons why they are moving to the area, and the kinds of housing they are finding upon arrival. This leads into a detailed analysis of the predicament of government-assisted housing and the inability of new immigrants to be eligible for this housing. The recommendations outline two ways the government can enact policy to make government-assisted housing more attainable for new immigrants; additionally, a new way to design future government-assisted housing buildings is introduced to address religious concerns while still making the units inclusive, affordable, and complementary to the existing streetscape. This thesis argues strongly that the federal and provincial governments are not currently investing adequately in the public housing stock and that it is imperative that accessibility to this stock be opened up to new immigrants.
Acknowledgements

I was born in Australia and moved to Canada at the beginning of high school with my mother. Despite our little family unit being white, fluent in English, from another Commonwealth country, and her being a doctor, our search to find adequate, suitable, and affordable housing upon arrival in Canada was difficult, long, and forced us to rely on our own social networks. Since coming to university and studying geography with a focus on planning, I have been made to realize how privileged we were, and are. If it was difficult for us, I couldn’t imagine how a family of colour, not fluent in English or French, from a country not friendly with Canada, and with non-transferable skills could possibly find an adequate, suitable, and affordable home. This thought caused me much unease and discomfort and so was the seed from which this thesis grew.

I would like to acknowledge Mr. Sasha Dyck, Ms. Mary McCutcheon, and Professor Vikram Bhatt for giving me their time, candor, and ultimately for participating in my study.

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My friends must have at least a line of note as they have suffered through my thesis alongside me as rocks of support and encouragement as well as mutual commiseration at times.

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Table of Contents

Abstract 2
Acknowledgments 3
Introduction 5
Definitions 6
Immigrant Housing 6
Literature Review 7
Finding Adequate, Suitable, and Affordable Housing 7
Finding Housing: Social Networks 8
Housing Tenure 9
Housing Quality 10
Housing Affordability 11
Background 12
Montreal (Current) Immigration Rates 12
Current Housing Situation of Montreal 14
History of Park Extension 15
Methods 17
Park Extension Case Study 21
Immigrant Population 21
Social Networks 22
Housing 23
Government-assisted Housing Study 28
Recommendations 30
Current Housing Laws 30
Current Market Housing 31
Future Public Housing 31
Design Considerations 32
Conclusion 34
Works Cited 37
Appendix 41
A Informed Consent Form for Participants 41
B Montreal Research Questions 43
Introduction

Canada’s reputation for being a multicultural, diverse, and welcoming country is beginning to become unstuck as the continued neglect of government-assisted housing is dramatically affecting new immigrants’ access to safe and affordable housing. While this is a nationwide problem, it is becoming an epidemic in some of Canada’s most immigrant-rich neighbourhoods. Newcomers to Park Extension (Park X), a neighbourhood of Montreal, are experiencing dire housing circumstances and their needs are not being addressed by the provincial or federal governments. This thesis presents Park X as a case study to highlight the high levels of immigration, the low levels of government housing assistance available, and the ramifications of these two circumstances colliding.

This paper will cover the current literature on new and recent immigrant housing in Canada and Montreal. This overview is important, as it will demonstrate the national and provincial standards against which Park X can be measured. Background information on the status of immigration into Montreal as well as the current housing situation in the city will be examined, again, to provide a comparison for Park Extension’s immigration rate and housing accessibility. The methodology used will be discussed as well as some of the limitations of the study. The Park X case study will begin with a history of the area, specifically looking at the different waves of immigration over time. Here, how housing regularly occupied by immigrants is chosen will be investigated and the types of housing will be identified. This will then lead into an analysis of government-assisted housing and how its shortcomings are significantly impacting new immigrant communities in Park X.

The most significant conclusions to come from this research centre on the ways in which new immigrants find housing. Social networks that are utilized prior to leaving the home country are the main avenues new immigrants use to secure housing before arriving in Canada. This has been shown throughout the literature and is also confirmed by Government of Canada documents (“The Newcomer’s Guide to Canadian Housing” 2007. 12). There are various reasons for this, which will be discussed later, but one main reason is the distinct lack of government support. New immigrants who are not classified as refugees are not eligible for government-assisted housing and so must find shelter
through the private sector. This is ethically as well as logistically problematic as Canada continues to admit high numbers of international migrants while failing to that ensure a complementary supply of adequate, suitable, and affordable housing is made easily accessible. I will recommend that a certain amount of housing in cities be allocated for new immigrants, much in the same way that some subsidized housing is incorporated into other kinds of market housing, such as condominiums. A design component will also be offered as a way to help the transition to Western housing architecture for those coming from different cultures. For example, floor plans with more, but smaller, bedrooms as well as smaller windows could be made available to those with larger families or Muslim families who want to have more privacy for the females in the house. Working groups with new immigrants will be recommended through collaboration with religious organizations as well as schools and immigrant services. These will be crucial if a design component is added as this is the most immigrant-specific part of the recommendations and its purpose of aiding transition can only be accomplished if immigrants feel it is beneficial and tailored to their needs.

**Definitions**

Before delving into the complex web of issues surrounding new immigrants and housing, definitions of key terms within both of these categories, as well as the sources of these definitions, must be outlined.

**Immigrant**

This paper is focused on the needs of new immigrants. According to the Government of Canada, *immigrants* are “persons residing in Canada who were born outside of Canada, excluding temporary foreign workers, Canadian citizens born outside Canada and those with student or working visas” ("Definition of "Immigrant"" 2010). *New* immigrants are “those who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006”, however this definition will likely change to ‘those who arrive in Canada between 2006 and 2011, in the next year or so as new immigrants are those who arrived during the previous census period ("Data and Definitions" 2009). The decision to focus on new immigrants reflects the fact that these immigrants are most at risk in the housing market. These are
people with less grounding in Canada and who have less access to public housing; therefore, making them more susceptible to low rental vacancy rates and decreased government support.

Housing

As defined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), adequate dwellings are “those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs”, suitable dwellings “have enough bedrooms for the size and make up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirement”, and affordable dwellings “cost less than 30% of before-tax household income” (Jakubec 2001, 4). A household is in core housing need “if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability, standards” and spends “30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable” (“Definition of Variables: Core Housing Need Status” 2010). These definitions are important to establish at the outset, as these characteristics are the basis for the type of housing being recommended. The ways in which immigrants currently find housing will be explored to find out if government programs in place are being used, and if not, why they are failing. The state of public housing available to immigrants will be examined, as well as whether the standards are truly high enough to provide affordable yet safe and secure lodgings. Public housing refers to housing owned by government where residents usually pay rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or 30% of their income.

The Canadian Housing Mortgage Corporation has designated three levels of housing stress: no housing stress means a household has savings equal to at least 12 months of housing costs or spends 0% to 30% of its income on housing; moderate to high housing stress means a household has savings less than 12 months of housing costs and spends more than 30% of its income on housing; extreme housing stress means a household has savings equal to less than 3 months of housing costs and spends more than 50% of its income on housing (Hiebert 2006, 27).
Literature Review
Finding Adequate, Suitable, and Affordable Housing

Drawing on scholarly literature as well as government reports, the following sections explore how new immigrants typically find housing in Canada, the types of housing they are likely to access, and the quality and affordability of that housing. Some of the difficulties that new immigrants face in this search will also be discussed, as well as why these difficulties arise.

Finding Housing: Social Networks

It is rare for individual people or families to migrate independent of others of their native background. Rather, it is networks of nationalities or religions that migrate to and establish a presence in a new community (Mendez et al 2006, 87). It is these networks that draw in new members by offering a home away from home. Social networks, when studied in relation to immigrant networks, quickly emerge as one of the central ways that immigrants choose where to move and how to do so (Rose et al. 2006, 2). Mendez et al (2006, 86) found “that most immigrants [to Canada] acquire housing remarkably quickly, and their success in the housing market [hinges] on the strength and quality of social ties”. Social ties between people of the same immigrant group have proved to be irreplaceable for creating communities in the new country, capable of providing security, charity, and quasi-social services for incoming immigrants. Ley’s 2008 (2062) study of immigrant churches in Vancouver saw ethnicity, language, place of origin, and shared religion as very strong binding agents of bonding social capital. Here, social capital is defined as the relationships and networks of people within a relatively homogeneous social group (Ley 2008, 2058). This array of similarities among new immigrants “creates a community of trust and reciprocity where considerable bonding social capital is amassed and advice, counseling and practical services are shared to aid in the rigours of settlement” (Ley 2008, 2058). Social ties amongst new immigrants have been shown to be integral for providing quasi-social services such as language classes, job training, and finding a home (Ley 2008, 2062). Classes are given by retired first-wave immigrants to second and third generation Canadian-born children to keep the native language in use.
These parallel English classes given by the children of the first-wave immigrants and parents of the Canadian-born children to incoming immigrants (Ley 2008, 2064). Help from within their native community is often less jarring for new immigrants when trying to find a job, as well as providing any counseling that may be needed to acclimatize to life in the new country (Ley 2008, 2065).

This communal support often begins before future immigrants have left their home country. 80% of newcomers to Canada have organized housing arrangements prior to leaving their home country, with almost a quarter never needing to look for housing themselves, rather having relatives or friends on the ground doing the searching for them (Mendez et al 2006, 85, 86) (Zamprelli 2007, 8). The few problems that did arise centred around financial difficulties such as cost of housing, and not being able to find a co-signer or present tenable credit history (Mendez et al 2006, 87) (Rose et al. 2006, 2). Less than 10% of immigrants reported getting help from settlement organizations, with most relying on the aforementioned social ties to their ethnic community (Mendez et al 2006, 87).

If social ties solved the problem of affordable immigrant housing, there would be no need for the further investigation this paper provides (Rose et al. 2006). Issues finding suitable and adequate housing do arise, however. One very important sign of this is that new immigrants almost always move out of their initial housing in a short time period. While just over half of non-immigrant Quebec households moved between 2001 and 2006, a huge 92% of new immigrants moved households ("Myths and realities: Immigration and housing in Quebec" 2012, 7).

Housing Tenure

Less than 6% of new immigrants to Montreal live in owner-occupied units compared with more than a quarter nationwide (Mendez et al 91). However, this should not necessarily be seen as a negative sign of immigrant inroads into home ownership. McGill University Professor of Architecture Vikram Bhatt (2012) stated in an interview that Montreal has traditionally been a rental city; a lot of the building stock comprised duplexes, triplexes, and superposed flats with owners generally living below and renting out the upper floors. However, in the late 1970s the province permitted condominium
ownership, which changed the once citywide rental housing landscape (Bhatt 2012). These previous duplexes and triplexes were dissected into individual condominiums, making homeownership more attainable as there was now more inventory available but entrance into the rental housing market less attainable, as rental prices have since increased substantially (Bhatt 2012). Mendez et al. (2006, 97) state that just over half of the immigrants in Montreal live in low-rise apartments, as well as more single person households than in Canada’s other CMAs.

Housing Quality

Housing quality may sound easily quantifiable; however, there are more subjective measurements that can be used aside from the actual specifications of a building. The quality of a living space can be measured by its conditions, how these conditions are experienced, and how important each of these conditions are to the people living there (Apparicio et al. 2007, 360). This can be opened up even more to the concept of quality of life, the definition of which can be capricious. Housing is a hugely important factor in a person’s quality of life as it affects their health, and their participation in social and economic activities (Rose et al. 2006, 1). There is even a geographical slant on quality of life which is angled more to the place rather than the person, and outlines the “objective and subjective measures of social and environmental conditions in a place and how these conditions are experienced by the people living there” (Cutter 1985, 1 as quoted in Apparicio et al. 2007, 357). This geographic, or environmental, lens can be used to assess housing quality from a qualitative stance, rather than just the statistics of what constitutes a good quality housing unit.

Often new immigrants find themselves in cramped quarters when they first arrive in Canada as extended families or multiple families will live in a single family dwelling to pool resources to afford house payments (Zamprelli 2007, 7). Immigrants coming to reunite with family members are the most likely to live in multiple family dwellings. Less than 1% of Canadian born families suffer from overcrowding, compared to over 10% of recent immigrants (Immigration Housing in Quebec 2012, 7). Bhatt (2012) explains that because much of this is transitional housing, there are inevitably going to be compromises made by immigrants on the choice of housing, with factors such as
transportation, schools, jobs, and familiar neighbourhoods vying for prominence. It is understandable that circumstances will often dictate the quality of house a person can afford. However, the question then arises, what if the available housing quality had already been pre-determined, and so was less a choice of the consumer, but more a previous choice by the producer?

Housing quality can include not just the physical qualities of the dwelling, but also the geographical location of that dwelling. It can be argued that public housing, or low-income housing, is often located in the rather insalubrious parts of a town or city. Apparicio et al. (2007, 356) look at the issue of public housing buildings that, despite being spread across the city of Montreal, are relegated to the residual, or less appealing, spaces of the city. Furthermore, Apparicio and Seguin (2006, 198) found that of the almost 750 public housing buildings in the former City of Montreal (an area that includes Park Extension), libraries were the closest cultural service at a distance of approximately 1200 metres. Cinemas and museums were an average of 2 to 4 kilometres away, which is thought to be due to the majority of such services being concentrated in the downtown core (Apparicio & Seguin 2006, 198). Health services were located just half a kilometre away and due to universal health care, these services are not based on local income levels. Sports and recreation facilities were seemingly widely dispersed yet rare commodities as most public housing buildings were at a minimum 6.4 kilometres away from such a facility (Apparicio & Seguin 2006, 200). Other services measured were educational, and other facilities included daycares, supermarkets, and banking facilities (Apparicio & Seguin 2006, 197).

Housing quality is important for the physical and mental health of a person. New immigrants are more likely to be in overcrowded housing than Canadian-born residents making them more susceptible to housing-related stress. This stress can also be caused by living long distances from amenities, something they may not have had much control over due to placement of the housing stock by government and private landlords.

**Housing Affordability**

While Mendez et al. (2006, 92) state that most new immigrants to Canada had little to no trouble finding housing, more than half of the renters were under some sort of
housing stress with 24% spending more than 50% of the family income on rent with very little to no accumulated savings. Quebec sees 52% of its new immigrants using more than 30% of their income on housing, with 22% using more than 50% (“Myths and realities: Immigration and housing in Quebec” 7). The percentage of immigrants renting in Quebec who qualify as having core housing need (a household spending more than 30% of its income on housing) rose from 25% before 1981 to 39% in 2006 (“Myths and realities: Immigration and housing in Quebec” 3). Stress associated with housing has become another problem of unaffordable rents and 34% of Montreal renters experience extreme housing stress, more than double that of Vancouver and around 30% higher than Toronto (Zamprelli 2007, 7; Rose et al. 2006, 2).

Montreal immigrant households are more likely to have children than Canadian-born households, and 45% of their main household wage earners are under 35 compared to just 18% for Canadian-born (Immigration and Housing in Quebec 2012, 6). Having more people in a household requires larger houses or apartments with more rooms, which inevitably leads to an increased rent. However, many of these immigrants cannot afford the larger apartments resulting in overcrowding. Younger people often earn less due to less experience or a lower education level and so an inflated rent coupled with a lower job position can be seen as two main causes for the high percentage of income used for rent. Six months after arrival, 34% of immigrants to Montreal are experiencing extreme housing stress, perhaps because just under 50% are spending at least half their income on housing (Mendez et al 2006, 98) (Rose et al. 2006, 2).

Urban scholarship on the current state of housing nationwide is extensive; as well, there is a satisfactory amount of government issued comparative studies that analyze primary data on the state of general housing and housing specific to immigrants in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Despite this, more geographically specific studies of known immigrant-rich neighbourhoods are absent from the literature. These are necessary to more precisely identify the reasons new immigrants choose these neighbourhoods to relocate to, what avenues they went through to find housing, and if that housing is adequate and affordable.
Background

International Immigration to Montreal: Current Situation

Park Extension has been home to many different cultures and ethnicities since it was first annexed by Montreal in 1910, but increased international immigration over the years has created a neighbourhood that now plays host to dozens of nationalities. It is difficult to understand Park Extension’s immigrant background without first understanding the immigrant population of Montreal. A quarter of Quebec’s full population and 70% of its foreign-born population live in Montreal ("The Montréal region at a glance" 2012). Montreal’s foreign-born population is increasing at nine times the rate of its Canadian born population, and its “share of recent immigration to Canada (14.9%) is greater than its share of Canada’s total population (11.5%)” ("Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Portraits of major metropolitan centres." 2009). Of these foreign born immigrants, 31% were from Asia; 26% were from Africa; 22.5% were from Western European countries like France with increasing numbers from Eastern European countries such as Romania; 20% were from the Americas ("Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Portraits of major metropolitan centres." 2009).

With these different nationalities come different religious backgrounds. While statistics could not be found for Montreal specifically, in Canada as a whole, Greek Orthodox immigration tripled between 1931 and 1971 and went from approximately 100 000 to 315 000, while Jewish immigration grew from 155 000 to 275 000 in the same time period. Both increased more 1941 to 1951 than other decade interval, likely as part of the European exodus during and post World War II ("Principal religious denominations of the population, census dates, 1871 to 1971" 2012). Between 1996 and 2001, 29% of immigrants listed themselves as Muslim, 25% as Roman Catholic, and 8% as Orthodox Christian. These figures stand in stark contrast to the immigrants pre-1986 who were only 3% Muslim, over half were Roman Catholic at 53%, and 10% Orthodox Christian. The religious landscape of Montreal has changed substantially over the last 20 to 30 years ("Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas: Montreal-A Comparative Profile Based on the 2001 Census." 2012). Today, over 90% of recent immigrants to Montreal
choose the Island to settle versus Laval, the North Shore, and the South Shore (Rose et al. 2006, 9).

**Housing in Montreal: Current Situation**

Montreal is known to be the renter capital of Canada, with a history of reasonable rental prices due to traditionally low home ownership rates in the city. This is significant because across Canada, home ownership is central to Canadian housing policy. This is demonstrated by the fact that over two thirds of Canadian households own their own homes. The distinctiveness of Montreal’s situation has meant that many studies comparing home ownership rates between the three largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) in Canada – Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver – have provided skewed data, as Montreal has always had the lowest rates. Low home ownership rates for immigrants usually points to some kind of disadvantage not apparent for Canadian born residents. However, these comparative studies cannot be used effectively to determine if immigrants in the Montreal CMA truly are disadvantaged more than Canadian born Montrealers, as many of the latter rent as well and it is not seen as an undesirable form of tenure. Despite this, some studies have demonstrated changes over time, so while there may be comparisons with Toronto and Vancouver, these comparisons now show structural shifts within Montreal’s real estate market.

Rental housing in the City of Montreal has seen relatively steady real monthly rents in the last decade or so. This differs from Toronto and Vancouver and so for the last twenty years the difference between Montreal and the other two CMAs in terms of the cost of rental housing has been increasing (Duhamel 2006, 3). However, new housing built primarily for home ownership and condominiums has created a transformation of the housing stock (Hiebert 2006, 3). “It is less costly to acquire new or existing property – either a house or condominium apartment – in Montreal than in Toronto or Vancouver” (Duhamel 2006, 5). This established renter-ruled city has become a metropolis of homeowners (Duhamel 2006, 5). Duhamel (2006, 6) has predicted an eventual increase in vacancy rates of rental housing due to new housing starts in 2003 being greater than the predictions for household growth. However, presumably this growth is still home ownership-geared growth. While some of these homes may be rented, if this housing is
not geared to renters, they do not contribute to the rental housing stock of a city (Rose et al. 2006, 13). The current supply and low production of rental housing in the city can only absorb so much shock to the system, and the once vast supply of rental housing has been saturated and vacancy rates now hover at below 1% (Duhamel 2006, 7) (Hiebert 2006, 4).

**History of Park Extension**

Park Extension, as its name suggests, is the extension of Park Avenue, one of the main streets traversing the island of Montreal. The northern part of Park Avenue was semi-rural with scattered farms and only a few houses at the end of the nineteenth century (McCutcheon 2012). The Canadian Pacific Railway was built in 1881 and where the railway lay began to define Park Extension’s boundaries: the original rail line became the east border, a new line along Beaumont Avenue created the south border, and l’Acadie Boulevard separates the neighbourhood from a more suburban area on its west side (McCutcheon 2012; see Figure 1).

For much of the early 20th century this was a working class neighbourhood with high immigration rates from the British Isles and much of Europe (Dyck 2012) (Rose et al. 2006, 3). Advertising was done in these regions to entice tradespeople and craftsmen to move to this new area, as their skills were needed in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (McCutcheon 2012). Starting around 1908 these farm plots were bought by realtor developers and subdivided into smaller lots to sell to the incoming men and their families (McCutcheon 2012). Even though these newly subdivided lots were mostly 60 by 25 feet, many newcomers built their own homes on them, and many of these same houses are still standing today (McCutcheon 2012). Park Extension began as a very homogenous group of British immigrants who were then joined by Italians as well as people from unhealthy industrial parts of Montreal looking to live in a cleaner and fresher part of the city (McCutcheon 2012). The French came mainly as businessmen to open another branch of their respective tavern or hardware stores. However this did not necessarily mean there was a large French population as initially there was no existing parish to entice them to move there (McCutcheon 2012). The Jews only came following World War II but the population did swell during mid-century. The Park Extension
Jewish Community Association was established and through fundraising and donations this association was able to build Congregation Beth Aaron in the early 1950s (Archives) ("Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation Of Cote-Saint-Luc"). The Jewish population of Park X has since significantly decreased, with many moving to Cote St Luc when Beth Aaron merged with Beth Israel of Cote St Luc in 1986 ("Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation Of Cote-Saint-Luc"). There was an influx of Greeks to the area in the 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in the creation of two main Greek Orthodox churches, though there were other smaller ones in the area (McCutcheon 2012).

Figure 1. A land plot map circa 1929 showing Jean Talon, L’Epee, Querbes, Durocher, and Hutchison roads ("The Pure Air of Park Extension" 2010).
The cycle of religious metamorphosis in Park Extension has illuminated the issue “of how ethnicity is understood and maintained in changing ethnic communities and neighbourhoods” (Smajda & Gerteis 2012, 618). Smajda and Gerteis (637) discuss the boundaries around group membership and cultural content, and how they are influenced by an area’s change in dominant ethnicity. Park Extension is a traditionally immigrant neighbourhood, and so has always enjoyed a melting pot of cultures and religions. At some points in history however, there have been more dominant religions in the area, such as Protestants at the turn of the 20th century, Jews in the 1950s, and Greek Orthodox in the 1970s. The area has seen a substantial increase in the Muslim community in the last decade or two, reflecting a provincial increase. As Rose et al. (2006, 10) note, despite growth in new immigrant neighbourhoods in recent years, these neighbourhoods are usually extensions of older immigrant neighbourhoods. The ethnic identification of an area is often heavily influenced by religion but does not necessarily infer it (Smajda & Gerteis 637, 638). In Park Extension however, it can be seen that religion plays a large role in the definition of self for immigrants.

Methods

The data presented in this thesis were collected through the following methods and sources: interviews conducted during the GENV 4821 Montreal field trip in October of 2012 (See Appendices A and B); observations of Montreal during the same trip; archival records supplied by the Park Extension Historical Society; and census data taken from Statistics Canada. Finally, secondary data has been presented through a literature review of urban scholarship on Canada, Montreal and Park Extension.

The GENV 4821 Montreal field trip allowed the class two days to collect information and meet with interviewees. I met with Professor Vikram Bhatt at his office at McGill University. Dr. Bhatt is a professor of architecture specializing in low income housing, as well as Indian housing design. We had an approximately 30 minute interview where I asked questions (see Appendix B) relating to a general overview of Montreal’s immigrant and housing situation, as well as how design can be used to help immigrants acclimatize to a new country. Dr. Bhatt provided me with very useful information regarding Montreal’s housing structure over time. He also indicated that the design aspect
of this thesis must be strictly defined to structural changes that did not appear overtly
different from the rest of the streetscape so as to avoid segregation or othering of the
housing development.

I interviewed Ms. Mary McCutcheon, President of the Park Extension Historical
Society, who has lived in Park Extension since the 1960s and has therefore experienced
much of the neighbourhood change first hand. I met Ms. McCutcheon at her home in
Park Extension, where the Park Extension Historical Society archives are also housed.
Our interview covered material mainly related to the GENV 4821 course (see Appendix
B); however, much of this material provided background information and history about
Park Extension. This interview went for an hour and 45 minutes and ended due to a
following interview engagement. I left Ms. McCutcheon’s to go interview Villeray-Park
Extension Borough Councilor Ms. Mary Deros, whose office is also located in Park
Extension. Unfortunately, there was a scheduling conflict and Councilor Deros was not
able to meet with me at our scheduled time.

The next day I met Mr. Sasha Dyck, the Secretary for the Park Extension Historical
Society, in Park Extension. Mr. Dyck answered questions pertaining to both the GENV
4821 course as well as this thesis (see Appendix C). He provided valuable insights on
Park Extension’s community ties, reasons why immigrants prefer the neighbourhood,
housing issues there, and what changes the residents themselves are trying to make. As
well as being the PEHS Secretary, Mr. Dyck is also a member of other community
organizations such as a co-op café, proposed co-op housing, and a guerilla gardening
group. Despite being newer to the area than Ms. McCutcheon, Mr. Dyck is very involved
with groups that include and benefit immigrants and lower income residents, making him
informed in the areas I was questioning him on. This hour-long interview was very
helpful for getting a feel for the area’s draws as well as drawbacks.

After my first two interviews, I took the afternoon to tour the area and observe the
kinds of houses and amenities in Park X. I took pictures of the houses, took note of what
types of restaurants were available, and how frequent the buses were in the area. Most of
the houses are old, many being built by the founding Englishmen at the turn of the
century or later during the European move to North America following World War II.
There are still Greek restaurants, relics of the once thriving Greek community, many now
taken over by Arab eateries, fruit stands, and halal butchers. I took both the bus and train to access the area from my hostel south of Park Avenue and with a direct subway stop as well as an express bus I found the area very accessible. Mr. Dyck confirmed this, saying many people live in the relatively less expensive Park Extension to be close to their family and community and commute to downtown as transit is widely available and accessible. Following my interview with Mr. Dyck, I explored more of the area and documented my observations by taking pictures of elements unique to the area such as the prevalence of halal meat shops, Muslim community centres, prayer centres for many different religions, as well as numerous mosques (See Figure 2). These observations were important as they were a physical representation of the statistics I had read earlier suggesting that Park Extension had a large Muslim population. I was also fortunate to be in the area on Eid-Ul-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice, the day following Arafat. That day I saw hundreds of men and boys in traditional garb on their way to the prayer centres and mosques to pray.

Figure 2. Mosque Assuna-Annabawiyah on Park Avenue (photo by author).

It would have been preferable to have had more interviews, especially with residents of the Park Extension community, however many emails went unanswered and
it was difficult to attain contact information for other potential interviewees. Meeting with community members who are not affiliated with organizations was very difficult as there is no clear way to contact such people during a short visit. My lack of French language skills also hampered my investigations, and I could not communicate effectively with some organizations via email. The interviews gathered from the Park Extension Historical Society’s President and Secretary were invaluable for the breadth of information they provided. However, it is unwise to base an entire paper off the words of one or two people. This is why the local archival support was beneficial. Interviews with people from the area were thought to be most helpful as there is little archival support from provincial or federal institutions for smaller areas of the city, and this first hand knowledge was strong.

Archives supplied by the Historical Society have been compiled over many years, with many original documents adding to their legitimacy. Much has been written on the churches of the area, as they founded many of the incoming communities. This helped when looking at which immigrant communities have now taken over these previously Anglo-Christian predominant places. Church records, neighbourhood bulletins, drawings of the area, realty maps as well as newspaper clippings are the main sources I accessed from the archives. There are also some informal papers written by community members who have collated archival information on events into chronological order. I took pictures of these records during my meeting with Ms McCutcheon, with her permission, and later transcribed these documents.

Scholarly research on this particular geographical area is also lacking. There is some urban scholarship on the public housing situation in Montreal with a few words about the housing climate in the Park X area; as well, while the presence of immigrants in Montreal has been well-documented, there has been little investigative work done on specific areas or neighbourhoods known to be immigrant rich. Where the secondary sources may have been lacking, primary sources such as statistics from the Canadian government provided hard facts to fill in some gaps, although diligent interpretation was then required.

The information in this thesis has been collated to outline the situation of immigrants in need of housing in the urban core. Despite looking at the neighbourhood of
Park Extension as a case study and basing my recommendations on what would benefit this neighbourhood, it was important to provide a broad information base to begin to grapple with some of the larger issues that are seen mirrored on a smaller scale. As of 2006, Canada’s population was 20% immigrants (“Chart 2: Immigrant Population” 2011). The City of Montreal’s immigrant population makes up a third of its overall population, and almost two thirds of Park Extension’s population (“Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Portraits of major metropolitan centres” 2009). Starting large and looking at Canada, then Montreal, then Park Extension is important as it gives a standard to measure by, and a comparison to describe the intensity of the issues. This approach was also important when explaining some of Montreal’s statistical discrepancies. Without prior knowledge of Montreal’s history, statistics that point to a certain conclusion in other areas of the country could be misread and inferred to mean the same thing in Montreal. Information specific to Park Extension must be embedded into the context of broader data about Montreal as a whole in order to ensure accurate analysis.

**Park Extension Case Study**

**Immigrant Population**

It has been demonstrated that Montreal attracts high numbers of immigrants from all around the world. Therefore, a neighbourhood must have a very high rate of immigrants living in it to be unique. Immigrants comprise 62% of Park Extension’s population, double that of Montreal Island, and of that 62%, 61% are visible minorities (“Territorial Profile: Villeray, Saint-Michel, Park Extension” 2009). Urban areas are also likely to have higher concentrations of recently arrived immigrants; however, Park Extension is home to a disproportionate amount of new immigrants accounting for 18% of the population (Mendez 2009, 91) ("Territorial Profile: Villeray, Saint-Michel, Park Extension", 1). These immigrants are not the wealthy French and Americans moving to the Plateau and other areas of the downtown core (Bhatt 2012). Therefore, it is important to note is that “78% of [Park Extension’s] residents have a mother tongue other than French or English”, and almost always fall into the low-income visible minority category ("Territorial Profile: Villeray, Saint-Michel, Park Extension", 1).
Social Networks

Park Extension can be held up as a typical example of a dense immigrant area built upon strong social networks that help more new immigrants move to the area. However, an issue addressed by Mendez (2009, 91) is that these social networks can also be seen as transitory. While strong community and religious foundations make these social networks rich, many neighbourhoods have seen these networks diminish as the Canadian-born generation of immigrant families become upwardly mobile and move to new areas. Mendez (2009, 92) is looking at the issue from a Canadian standpoint but not at one area specifically. The argument in recent years is that perhaps not all immigrants are turning their back on their heritage and embracing Canadian traditions with the gusto they once had. In the case of Park Extension it is argued that later generations of immigrant families move from the area to buy larger houses with yards for their families, but still have strong connections to the area and return for religious holidays and family gatherings (Dyck 2012). Dyck (2012) tells of Park X, once a flourishing Greek Orthodox neighbourhood, now with barely any trace of its Greek heritage due to a large withdrawal in the late 1970s and 1980s of younger Greeks moving their large families to more spacious suburban areas like Laval and the West Island. While the younger generations of Greek Canadians have mostly moved out of Park Extension, many return on Sundays for church and feast days (McCutcheon 2012). This demonstrates that despite a geographical displacement of younger generations of religious groups, the founding social networks of the area continue to bring them back to the neighbourhood to celebrate festivals and feel connected to their community.

Dyck (2012) states that many times the community is focused around the religion and the religious sites. This has proved true throughout the years in Park Extension, where new religious communities have enticed others to move internationally to the neighbourhood. Currently the mosques and availability of halal meat, not found so easily on the rest of the Island, have drawn many already in Montreal to the neighbourhood (Dyck 2012; see Figure 3). People are able to move to Park Extension to join their community without sacrificing job options. Park Extension was the north end extension of the Park Avenue tram line and so has always had good public transportation.
connectivity that has allowed people over the years to use the tram, bus, or metro to access downtown employment opportunities (Bhatt 2012). Today there are two metro stops that service the area as well as multiple bus routes. This rare collection of abundant religious life, accessible transit systems, and engrained immigrant social networks have made Park Extension one of Montreal’s most obliging neighbourhoods for new immigrants looking to locate to the Island.

![A halal meat and vegetable shop in Park Extension](image)

**Figure 3.** A halal meat and vegetable shop in Park Extension (photo by author).

**Housing**

Park Extension is part of the former City of Montreal, “the territory of the city prior to the recent municipal merger of January 2002 which led to the creation of the new larger City of Montreal” (Apparicio & Seguin 2006, 188; see Figures 4, 5, 6, 7). As studied by Apparicio and Seguin (192), the former City of Montreal exhibits higher rates of unemployment as well as low-income households; however, this region has also benefited from many provincial and federal contributions to welfare and social services like increased numbers of medical clinics. Accessibility to services restricted due to municipal boundaries was seen to be a problem in all sectors except public housing,
which Apparicio and Seguin (2006) suggest means there was little underestimation of the need for public housing in this region. However, when the distances of municipal services are plotted on a map of the area of the former City of Montreal, it becomes plain that Park Extension, despite being one of the most central rental areas with one of the highest rental rates for its small size, is consistently at a disadvantaged distance from important facilities like cultural, recreational, and educational services (Apparicio & Seguin 2000, 199; see Figure 8).
Figure 4. A map of Park Extension’s current geographical area, with the neighbourhood shaded in blue. Note Park Avenue (Avenue du Parc) on the far right. (“Park Extension” 2012).
Figure 5. Political boundaries pre-2002 merger of the City of Montreal (orange) and 27 unaffiliated municipalities (blue). Park Extension is in the orange shaded section just north of Mont-Royal (in blue).

Figure 6. Political boundaries post-2002 merger. Whole Island of Montreal becomes City of Montreal (“Montreal 2002” 2006).

Figure 7. The political boundaries following the 2006 demerger of the City of Montreal. The Island now has the City of Montreal and 15 municipalities (“Montreal 2006” 2006).
Fig. 8. The above is a screenshot from Apparicio et al (2008, 369) and refers to this thesis’ Housing section regarding facilities located near the former City of Montreal’s public housing. Note that Park Extension is “IV” and is on the central lower section of the diagram with the dark circles indicating high levels of social depravity located near public housing buildings.

Not only does Park Extension have a higher density of immigrants, it has a higher density of people in general, five times the Montreal Island average ("Territorial Profile:
Villeray, Saint-Michel, Park Extension", 1). This is a considerably large number seeing as Montreal Island is considered urban, and does not include the lower density suburban areas like Laval or Champlain. This creates greater competition amongst residents for housing, allowing for lower housing quality standards to be kept by landlords (Dyck 2012). This area has always been a landing pad for immigrants, most of whom have rented, especially upon first arriving. Park Extension, while not alone as a predominantly immigrant neighbourhood on the Island of Montreal, is rare in its population’s relationship with housing.

Since much of the urban scholarship in this area may not provide significant insights, primary sources originating from Montreal must be relied upon to provide an accurate view of neighbourhoods on the island. Centraide, a philanthropic organization providing funding for community organizations, published a report on the borough of Villeray, Saint-Michel, and Park Extension in 2009 outlining basic immigration and housing tenure levels. Here it is evident that even in a renter-ruled city, Park Extension at 81% is still overrepresented by renter households ("Territorial Profile: Villeray, Saint-Michel, Park Extension", 1). “Certainly there are segments and zones of the city where there are very high rental property building stock, and Park Extension is one of them” (Bhatt 2012).

The housing of Park Extension is limited in quantity, geographically dense, and the majority is renter occupied. These constraints already limit the quality of housing that can be found in the area, and so negligible municipal facilities and services further degrade the housing stock of the neighbourhood.

**Government-Assisted Housing Study**

Despite Mendez et al.’s (2006) contention that social networks of immigrants are the most important and helpful factor for new immigrants in finding housing, the significance of government at all levels addressing housing policy inadequacy was also noted as critical to creating “settlement programs, support for non-market housing, and broader social-welfare provisions to smooth the housing trajectory of a diverse population of new Canadians” (Mendez et al 2006, 101).
While it may seem that many new immigrants find themselves in low-income housing, this low-income housing may not necessarily be affordable housing, and it is almost always privately provided. A common misconception is that these poorly maintained and low cost and quality buildings are public housing projects. However, for new immigrants, this simply cannot be the case. A person must at least be a permanent resident before being eligible to apply for public housing (“Myths and realities: Immigration and housing in Quebec” 4). It takes two years of residence in Canada to first become eligible for permanent residency, which means these people are no longer new to Canada. Permanent immigrants and refugees can get on the waitlist but are almost never admitted over Canadian-born residents and immigrants cannot get on the waiting list before leaving their home country and arriving in Canada ("Government Assisted Housing" 2013). The only time a permanent resident may be admitted to public housing quicker than a Canadian-born resident is if they can demonstrate greater levels of hardship (“Myths and realities: Immigration and housing in Quebec” 4).

Government-assisted housing varies from province to province but generally this housing has long waiting lists and new immigrants, excepting refugees, are never eligible. The four main types of government-assisted housing are public, non-profit, cooperative, and rent supplement. Public refers to housing owned by government where residents usually pay rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or 30% of their income. Non-profit is community or faith-run organizations owning and operating buildings with a mix of RGI and market rents. Cooperative, or coop, housing is owned and operated by the residents and is similar to non-profit in that they have a mix of RGI and market value rents. Rent supplement or subsidized housing is supplied by private landlords who provide lower rent apartments in exchange for government subsidies ("Government Assisted Housing" 2013). These definitions are often used in everyday language without an understanding of the difference between them. It is important to specify because much of the peer-reviewed literature addresses just public housing; CMHC documents cover a broader range but often focus on rent-geared-to-income as this is an option increasingly used by governments in housing projects. I will propose rent-geared-to-income housing options later, in the Recommendations.
Even if a new immigrant were for some reason eligible for government assisted housing, finding such housing is another challenge in itself. Local libraries are often the home of waiting lists for housing, yet this is hardly an obvious place for them. The CMHC advises to check libraries for lists of coops and non-profit organizations. These groups then in turn have their own waitlists. Despite partially funding non-profit housing, “because governments do not run non-profit housing there is no central list of what is available” (“The Newcomer’s Guide to Canadian Housing” 2007, 9). It is perplexing that there would be no central database, at least online, of non-profit organizations offering housing. There people could find the appropriate organizations and through each non-profit find the properties available. The key problem here is a seemingly inactive federal government that is not making a concerted effort to accommodate new immigrants and is forcing these people to rely on the previously mentioned social networks. “It is both possible and wise for various levels of government to adjust policy – through settlement programs, support for non-market housing, and broader social welfare provisions – to smooth the housing trajectory of a diverse population of new Canadians” (Mendez et al. 2012, 101). Continuing from Mendez et al.’s recommendation, I will elaborate on various ways the federal, provincial, and municipal governments can make a greater, more unified effort to make allowances and accommodations for new immigrants in their search for adequate, suitable, and affordable housing.

**Recommendations**

High rates of immigration to this very dense neighbourhood raise questions of availability, quality, and affordability of housing in Park Extension. The kinds of new immigrant households coming to live in Montreal, and Park X specifically, are largely Muslim, and families, and disproportionately in Park Extension, new immigrants. It has also been shown that 80% of Arab immigrants to Montreal are in core housing need (Hiebert 2006, 27). This is important to specify so that the type of housing most appropriate for the incoming demographics can be ascertained. This paper has outlined serious deficiencies in the government’s social security network around housing and demonstrated that new immigrants often bear the brunt of this apparent nonchalance towards the current state of public housing. Demand for subsidized housing is
understandably high, especially in cities, where waiting lists can be as long as 4 or 5 years (“The Newcomer’s Guide to Canadian Housing” 2007, 10). However, while housing is always at a premium in cities, these are the areas where most new immigrants congregate upon arrival to Canada, and so housing shortages cannot be ignored.

Current Housing Laws

The laws governing who is or is not eligible for public housing need to be overhauled to be more inclusive of new and recent immigrants. This paper has demonstrated that new immigrants are more at risk for overcrowding, core housing need, poor quality housing, and ultimately, being unable to access affordable housing. The main reason for this increased risk is the inability to access government-assisted housing. While Canadian-born residents must be accommodated in government-assisted housing programs, new immigrants pay tax, whether they are landed or temporary residents, and so should be entitled to some of the social benefits of that tax. Furthermore, the government of Canada is campaigning to increase its intake of immigrants to compensate for labour market shortages and a systemic low birth rate, yet actively ignores the problem of insufficient accessibility to housing. Permanent residency wait times are not definite and can vary by years, making them impossible to plan around. Due to these lengthy time barriers to public housing, many new immigrants end up in substandard, unaffordable market housing. This is unacceptable and can be relatively easily remedied, as it requires passage of legislation rather than monetary commitment by government. However, indirectly, it does require increased financial investment as already long waiting lists will become much lengthier, and so more housing will inevitably need to be built. The contradictory message of the Canadian government recruiting immigrants to work in Canada yet not helping to provide housing must be changed and policy altered in order to open up accessibility to government-assisted housing.

Current Market Housing
Park Extension has been the prime example of an immigrant rich neighbourhood with well-founded concerns for the state of its inhabitants’ housing. A lack of government interest in the area has led to few public infrastructure investments, as well as a relaxing of safety standards and regulations of the market housing in place (Dyck 2012). If the government continues to refuse to build and manage its own subsidized housing, the next best alternative is the contracting out of these responsibilities to private owners and landlords. Current market housing needs to be assessed for its adequacy, suitability, and affordability, and upgraded if need be. New buildings need not be built immediately if housing in place can be kept up to date and inspected on a regular basis. This also avoids the stigma of new overtly purpose built public or subsidized housing, and the risk of displacing existing tenants of another building.

**Future Public Housing**

The final, and perhaps the most radical recommendation, comes in the form of a design consideration to be implemented into new builds. As indicated earlier, the majority of immigrants coming to the Park Extension area are Muslims, and families. To ease the transition from home country to Canada, some simple design changes to regular public housing blueprints can make a large impact on the way families function. The design considerations outlined here will focus on features assessed as needs for Muslim families in the UK. Nevertheless, as will be explained, design adaptations specific to Muslim families can easily be transferred to those of other origins or religious backgrounds. The intent of these recommendations is not to segregate new immigrants from the communities they move to, but rather to integrate them with appropriate housing into the areas they are already likely to move to (Park 2012, 14). Rather than demolish a corner block and build a public housing building interchangeable from the rest of Montreal, “the aim should be to complement, rather than duplicate, what already exists nearby” (Park 2012, 14).

It has already been acknowledged that the current public housing is not serving the population as it could, and is “unable to meet the needs of a significant minority of people whose needs and circumstances are such that they would be better served by ‘other types’ of housing” (Park 2012, 13). This is where alternative design principles
come into the forum. These new builds will hardly be wholly unique to a certain immigrant group, as it has been demonstrated that Park X is in continual flux and there are always new immigrants from different parts of the world arriving in the area. The housing must remain affordable and accessible to a wide range of people; nonetheless, it can still easily incorporate certain features that may greatly alleviate transition stress for one family that may go unnoticed by another. It has to be built well to serve as many families as possible as well as being “easy and affordable to run and maintain and as energy and water efficient as possible” (Park 2012, 13). Interior design features, like movable wall partitions for large rooms, can be introduced in simple and temporary ways so as to accommodate more types of people. I suggest that these new units be rent-gear-switched-to-income to allow for as many financial situations as possible.

Design Considerations

The following alternative design concepts are an amalgamation of Park’s (2012), and my own recommendations. Park (2012) is a report compiled for and partially by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in England. The HCA is the national housing agency for England that provides publicly funded housing in a plethora of categories including build-to-rent housing, care and support specialized housing, housing for vulnerable and older people, and the National Affordable Housing Programme (“Our Work” 2013). Park’s 2012 report was compiled by two architecture firms to illuminate non-mainstream design principles that would make housing for groups such as the elderly, and faith-based communities, more agreeable as well as adjustable to future tenants.

The following design principles are tailored to Muslim families (Park 2012, 53, 55, 58, 192, 193, 195). This tailoring assumes that a family larger than the Canadian average will be occupying the unit, that this family will include practicing Muslims in need of prayer considerations. As well, it addresses the potential that there will be people staying home during the day (whether they be older relatives or younger children accompanied by their mother or other family members).

Kitchen
- Separate the kitchen from the main living space (as well as the dining room preferably)
  o Allows for men and women to socialize separately
- Double sinks that are deep and have drainers
  o Helps with traditional food preparation
- Gas ovens
  o Helps with traditional food preparation
- Extra storage space
  o Helps with traditional food preparation

Bathroom
- Large, deep wash basin
  o Aids in washing before prayer (five times a day)
- A drain on the bathroom floor (as well as, or instead of, the overflow drain in the bathtub itself)
  o Aids in washing before prayer, allows for the floor to be splashed and not stay wet
- A shower
  o Some prefer to bathe under running water (vs still water (a bath))
- It is preferable to avoid positioning the bathroom in alignment with Mecca
- An additional half bath (just a toilet and sink) is recommended for families with over 5 people

Energy Efficiency
- Low flow faucets to account for increased water usage
  o Washing for prayer
  o Typically larger families
- LED lights to account for increased electricity usage
  o Some families may have members at home during the day

General Location
- “Many ethnic groups tend to prefer locations which have an established community of the same ethnicity” (193)
- Lift access to upper floors, imperative at five storeys
- Maximum of 25 dwellings (or 100) people per “core” (?) (58)

Conclusion

This paper’s goal has been to illuminate the variety of problems with the public housing system as it applies to new immigrants, and the potential legislative changes as well as structural changes to buildings that could remedy these issues. While Canada continues to stand as a pillar of open and welcoming multiculturalism in the Western world, its outdated policies are making the lives of new immigrants harder when attempting to access one of the most basic requirements for human life, a place to live. These policies are in place at the federal and provincial levels, yet negatively impact some neighbourhoods disproportionately. Park Extension, a traditionally and predominantly immigrant neighbourhood has suffered from a lack of public housing, and due to the high amount of new immigrants, many of those most in need have not been able to access said housing.

A severe insufficiency of government assistance in recent years, as well as the discriminatory laws in place against new immigrants accessing housing, has led to most new immigrants needing to rely on social networks within their ethnic community to find housing. Despite this often being an instinctual way to become familiar with an area, immigrants should not be forced into this as the only channel to find housing. With no governmental support, they are entirely reliant on word of mouth avenues, through which they may only find housing in ethnic enclaves or in overcrowded apartments with friends and relatives. The lack of external choices is a significant problem, especially for people moving independent of an ethnic community.

Traveling to Montreal to conduct interviews greatly enriched this paper. It enabled me to involve Park Extension-specific people, a professor of architecture with intimate knowledge of Montreal’s housing stock, as well as visibly take in the landscape of the area. My own observations were able to corroborate Mr. Dyck’s comments about increased Muslim immigration to the area due to a significant number of Muslim community organizations, prayer centres, mosques, and halal meat shops.
A shift in housing tenure in the City of Montreal and a liquidation of rental units and increase in home-ownership has created a serious modification of the housing stock to make this traditionally renter city much harder to rent in. Over half of the new immigrants to Quebec are in core housing need as they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Housing stress is much more prevalent amongst new immigrants than Canadian-born renters, and it can only be assumed that a lack of available market rental housing has forced new immigrants to take the units they can find, seemingly irrespective of affordability, while Canadian-born renters can still find hope on the public housing waitlists. Despite there being little literature on these causal connections, it is a connection that is ubiquitous and undeniable. Fewer available rental units mean less choice and more stress on the renters rather than the landlords. Public housing only being available to Canadians and permanent residents rules out new immigrants. These factors make the housing selection for new immigrants narrow, expensive, and uncompromising. Park Extension has such a high density of new immigrants that it provides an ideal case study for assessing new immigrants’ issues with housing.

The recommendations are rigorous and wide reaching. This paper has drawn to light the expansive holes in the social security net, and provides ways in which these holes can be tightened. Obvious and relatively easy changes, such as maintaining building code for current market housing and offering subsidized units, are some ways that government can provide more units with minimal financial input. Overhauling the prerequisites for eligibility for public housing may require some public coaxing, but it is the cornerstone of creating more affordable housing for new immigrants. Finally, the most demanding of the government, but the proposal with a potentially huge reward is the alternatively designed rent-geared-to-income units. Subtle changes that will be felt and appreciated by new immigrants will go largely unnoticed by Canadian born families, thereby making the unit flexible and still able to amalgamate to the streetscape.

Changes are necessary. It is clear the present system is not serving the people who require its assistance most. New immigrants are often the most vulnerable when it comes to housing tenure, and a scarcity of adequate, suitable, and affordable housing is hampering their ability to integrate into Canadian society and workforce.
Works Cited


McCutcheon, Mary. Interview by author. Personal interview. Montreal, October 25, 2012.


Appendices

A Informed Consent Form for Participants

Consent Form: Oral History Interviews

The changing landscape of sacred spaces in the built environment of the culturally diverse Park Extension neighbourhood in Montreal

Alexandra Ross
Geography
Mount Allison University

I am a fourth year seminar student in the Department of Geography at Mount Allison University. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Reiffenstein. I am inviting you to participate in my study. The purpose of the study is to examine the changing landscape of sacred spaces in the built environment of the culturally diverse Park Extension neighbourhood in Montreal.

This study involves looking at the evolution of religious buildings in the Park Extension neighbourhood of Montreal. I am researching the history of the immigrant population, the religions they brought with them, and the construction of sacred buildings. My focus will be what happened to these buildings of old; were they sold, demolished, or repurposed? All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous unless permission is given by the interviewee to the interviewer for a specific context.

The results of this study will be presented collectively and no individual participants will be identified without their permissions.

Acknowledgement of Study, Consent, and Agreement to be Recorded:

I have been informed of and understand the purpose and procedures of this study and the purpose and procedures of this interview/these interviews.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation in this interview or study at any time. I understand that I can choose to answer only the questions that I wish to answer.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped or digitally recorded and then transcribed.

I agree / wish not (circle one) to be audio recorded.

Permission to Quote:

I may wish to quote your words directly in reports and publications resulting from this. With regards to being quoted, please check yes or no for each of the following statements:

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<th>No</th>
<th>I wish to review the notes / recordings collected during my interview.</th>
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I agree that researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me under the following conditions (checking YES to any of the below means that you grant copyright permission to the researcher for the purpose of publication):

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Yes  No  I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published (I remain anonymous).

Yes  No  I agree to be quoted directly if a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.

Permission to Donate Interview Materials to the Archives:
☐ I agree to the donation of my interview to an accredited archival institution [name the institution]

I wish to have the interview recording and transcription to be (select one):
☐ sealed for 20 years
☐ sealed for 5 years
☐ made available to researchers at any time.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature ___________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________

Researcher's signature: __________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________

If you have any questions about this study, please contact
Student: Alexandra Ross
Phone: 506 364 9393 or Email: atross@mta.ca
Professor: Dr Tim Reiffenstein
Phone: 506 364 2412 or Email: treffen@mta.ca
This research has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Geography which reports annually to the Mount Allison University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Dr. Nauman Farooqi, Chair of the Mount Allison University Research Ethics Board, by phone (364-2281) or by e-mail at reb@mta.ca.
B Montreal Research Questions

*Ms Mary McCutcheon*, Park X Historical Society, was asked questions 1-9

*Mr Sasha Dyck*, Park X Historical Society, was asked questions 1-13

*Professor Vikram Bhatt*, Architecture Professor at McGill, was asked questions 10-19

1) Why do you think Park Extension has been a historically immigrant neighbourhood?
2) From your perspective as a long-standing public servant, what do you see as the attractions (main reasons) for immigrants to move to Park X?
3) What do you think draws Muslim immigrants to the Park X neighbourhood?
4) What influences do you think affect the migration of certain communities out of Park X? (ex. Jewish movement to Cote St Luc)
5) What do you see as the reasons for the turnover in types of immigrant communities? (ex. Predominately Jewish, then Greek Orthodox, now Middle Eastern/Caribbean/African/Latin American)
6) When the majority of a religious community moves out of the neighbourhood, is there a greater Park X community desire to keep that religious community’s religious building standing (whether deconsecrated and repurposed or not)?
7) Why do you think some religious buildings are being repurposed and some are being relegated?
8) How strong do you believe the pull of religion is in Park X these days? Does that vary between religious groups?
9) How important is heritage to a community that is constantly changing?

10) What type (apartment, single family dwelling) of housing do immigrants typically live in when first arriving in Montreal?
11) What standards or quality do these dwellings usually represent?
12) What are the biggest problems you see facing recent immigrants looking for housing?
13) Of the barriers that exist, what are due to government failings and what are due to expected international moving stressors?
14) What type (apartment, single family dwelling) of housing do immigrants typically live in when first arriving in Montreal?

15) What is the quality of housing that most recent immigrants inhabit?

16) How is immigrant-directed housing tackled from an architect’s perspective? Is this perspective often in conflict with the government’s?

17) Is there a place for architecture in helping immigrants acclimatize to a new country?

18) What types of foreign design principles have been implemented in the past in Montreal?

19) Park X has been seen to be a continually changing immigrant community. Do you think there is a point in designing dwellings that are aimed at making transition to Canadian life easier for a particular group of immigrants, if in the next decade they are replaced by another group? For example: if we build an apartment building designed with Muslim immigrants in mind, will that building be relevant in ten years time when most immigrants are from South East Asia?