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Helen J. Breslauer Fonds

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Biographical note

In 1972, Professor Breslauer, who was then an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto, collaborated with Professor Andrews, then an Assistant Professor of Geography, to undertake a case study of the Ashworth Square Housing Co-operative in Mississauga¹. Entitling their research report "Co-operative Housing: a case study of decision-making in design and user satisfaction," Breslauer and Andrews researched the housing cooperative from its initial inception, through the design and construction phases, the formation of the co-operative association and its first full year of occupancy.

Through the use of interviews, activities diaries, and analysis of existing documents and proceedings of meetings, Breslauer and Andrews undertook to investigate both the decision-making processes in the design of the housing project and the satisfaction of users or resident members of the housing cooperative. Their research question examined the relationship between the expectations of those individuals who were instrumental in developing co-operative housing and the evaluation of various aspects of quality of life by those who use this model of housing.

The Ashworth Square Housing Co-operative (ASHC) began as a result of extensive discussions among several organizations, but principally between the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the United Church of Canada and the construction company, all of whom funded and helped administer the initial stages of the project. ASHC consists of 153 suites in a single 11-storey high-rise building of one- to two-bedroom units and surrounding low-rise buildings of three- to four-bedroom units. The co-operative was initially operated by the Co-operative Habitat Association of Toronto (CHAT), an association formed for the express purpose of implementing the design and construction of the ASHC and acting as its first board until the residents of the housing co-operative could resume control.

Funded by federal Ministry of State, Urban Affairs Canada and in agreement with the University of Toronto, Office of Research Administration, the research project took place between January 1, 1972 and to January 1975, with the bulk of the research being carried out from December 1972 to June 1974 over four phases, each one covering about a four month period. However the analysis of existing documents and the proceedings of meetings began as early as 1971 and some of the analysis was completed in the second half of 1974 as a result of delays in funding.

The study produced 6 interim reports, from 1972 to 1974 and one 4-volume final report, dated April 1975, to the Ministry of State, Urban Affairs Canada and the University Office of Research Administration. From the final report, Professors Andrews and Breslauer produced a series of five research papers and one major report published by the Centre for Urban & Community Studies (CUSC) at the University of Toronto. These reports, all published in 1976, deal with the different aspects of research undertaken and are available at Robarts under the following titles:

¹ The information for this biographical sketch is derived from the Interim reports, the published reports, correspondence with the donor, Professor Breslauer, and from their original research proposal.

- "Cooperative housing project: an overview of a case study, methods and findings"
(CUSC Research Paper #73)
- "Reflections on the housing process: implications from a case study of cooperative housing"
(CUSC Research Paper #74)
- "Residential movement: choice of a cooperative housing project"
(CUSC Research Paper #75)
- "Cooperative housing study: a preliminary analysis of activity diary data"
(CUSC Research Paper #77)
- "Moving from a cooperative housing project: residents' expectations and former members' perspectives"
(CUSC Research Paper #78)
- "User satisfaction and participation: preliminary findings from a case study of cooperative housing" (CUSC Major Report #6)

In addition, Professors Breslauer and Andrews participated in the development of a course, GGR/SOC 340E: 'concepts, methods and values in urban planning', which they co-instructed with Professor Gad, in the Urban & Community Studies programme at Erindale college.

Scope and content

Date range: 1968-1976

Extent: 2.6 m (14 boxes) of architectural, sound recordings, textual and graphic material

Scope and content

Personal records of Helen J. Breslauer, consisting primarily of a study of which she was a principal investigator along with Professor Howard Andrews, "Co-operative housing: a case study of decision-making in design and user satisfaction" (1968-1975). This fonds also includes files relating broadly to the development of an urban studies programme at Erindale College, with particular emphasis on course CGR/SOC 340E: "Concepts, methods, and values in urban studies" (1972-1976).

Seven of the eight series in this fonds deal with the Co-operative housing case study and are arranged according to the areas of research mapped out in the interim reports [see Series 7]. In addition there is an administrative series and a reports series which provide an overview of the research methodology, findings and administration of the research project.

Access: Records relating to the study: "Co-operative housing: A case study of decision-making in design and user satisfaction" (Series 1 to 7) are restricted for 100 years. All other files are open.

- Series 1: B2011-0008/01 (01)-(14)
- Series 2: B2011-0008/002 - /006
- Series 3: B2011-0008/006-/007

- Series 4: B2011-0008/007-/009
- Series 5: B2011-008/009, /001S
- Series 6: B2011-0008/010- /011, /001A
- Series 7: B2011-0008/011- /012

Boxes: B2011-0008/001 - /012
B2011-0008/001A
B2011-0008/001S

Related accessions: (re Professor Howard Andrews, and Centre for Urban and Community Studies): B1989-0002, B2008-0011, A1982-1066

Series 1: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Administration and Correspondence

Date range: 1968-1975

Extent: 0.13 m (1 box) of textual records

Scope and content: This series includes drafts and notes on the initial research proposal, including notes on their research strategy, possible funding, research team meetings and administrative working notes, as well as correspondence and notes regarding the review and evaluation of the research project by the Ministry of Urban Affairs. In addition, this series includes information about contract negotiations as well as a signed copy of the agreement among the Ministry of Urban Affairs, the principal researchers and the Governing Council of the university. The correspondence files include correspondence with the Ashworth Square Cooperative, the Centre for Urban and Community Development, and the Review Committee, Office of the Finally this series includes administrative files detailing personnel and budget and financial management of the research project.

Arrangement: The files have been arranged in order from the initial drafting of the research proposal and search for funding to correspondence regarding the review and evaluation by the Ministry of State, Urban Affairs of the research project as it progressed.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/001 (01) – (14)

Series 2: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Meeting Minutes & Transcripts

Date range: 1971-1974

Extent: 0.59 m (5 boxes) of textual records

Scope and content: This series consists of meeting minutes, agendas, notices and notes by both Breslauer and Andrews for meetings of the Co-op Habitat Association of Toronto (CHAT) Board of Directors and staff, as well as the Ashworth Square Co-operative Board of Directors, staff and general membership covering the period from 5 October 1971 to 2 January 1974. It also consists of paper transcripts of meetings from 12 January 1972 CHAT staff meeting to the 18 September 1973 ASC Board of Directors meeting.

Arrangement: The minutes, agendas, notices and notes are organized chronologically and grouped according to the four phases of research outlined in the Interim Progress Reports (see Series 7) . The transcripts are arranged chronologically by date of meeting.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/002 – /005
B2011-0008/006 (01) – (05)

Series 3: Co-operative Housing Case Study: User Interviews

Date range: 1972-1974

Extent: 0.19 m (2 boxes) of textual records

Scope and content: These files contain the instruments, schedules and coding manuals for the first wave of user interviews of Ashworth Square Co-operative housing residents as well as the follow-up surveys with residents and interviews with prior residents. The files contain raw data collected as well as write-ups and notes on Professors Breslauer's and Andrews' findings.

General files precede files pertaining to the 1st interviews including the coding manual, follow-up interviews, including the coding manual, and interviews with prior residents.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/006 (06) – (15)
B2011-0008/007 (01) – (11)

Series 4: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Activities Diaries

Date range: 1971-1974

Extent: 0.19 m (3 boxes) of textual records

Scope and content: These files contain the instruments, schedules and the revised coding manual as well as the working notes on the design, execution and instruction for the in-depth

activities diaries. In addition, this series contains the raw data from the sample interviews conducted within the co-op and within the non-co-operative housing environment used for comparison purposes. It also contains personnel files for this phase of the research, records of payments to participants and a draft progress report. The actual interviews were conducted in June of 1983. The rest of the time was spent developing the instruments, scheduling and coding the interview responses.

Arrangement: The files are arranged so that the working notes on development of the instruments, scheduling, design and coding manual precede the coding manual itself. It is followed by the scheduling, progress reports and interview surveys.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/007 (12) – (16)
B2011-0008/008
B2011-0008/009 (01) – (03)

Series 5: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Non-User Interviews

Date range: 1971-1974

Extent: 0.23 m (2 boxes) of sound recordings and textual material

Scope and content: Interviews were conducted with several staff and board members involved in the design, construction and administration of the Ashworth Square Housing Co-operative. Included in this series are the interview transcripts and tapes, as well as some interview notes. These interviews were conducted over two years from 25 May 1972 to 13 May 1974.

Arrangement: The interviews are arranged by date of interview, and where possible include the name and position title of the person being interviewed.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/009 (04) – (12)
B2011-0008/001S

Series 6: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Background materials and research

Date range: 1972-1974

Extent: 1.17 m (3 boxes) of architectural, sound recordings, graphic and textual material

Scope and content: In addition to the attendance at meetings of CHAT and ASC board, staff and member meetings, and interviews and surveys of users and non-users, the researchers also collected background material on the Ashworth Square Housing Co-operative, and the United

Church of Canada Board of Evangelism and Social Service National Housing Committee as one of its main funding bodies.

The background materials on the Ashworth Square Housing Co-operative itself include architectural drawings of the suite plans, a copy of the original proposal for its development, a copy of the occupancy agreement and by-laws, as well as general publicity for the co-op and information regarding the initial election of members to the Board of Directors. There are also seven b/w photographs of co-op members and children. The background materials on the United Church of Canada Board of Evangelism and Social Service National Housing Committee includes minutes of meetings of both the housing committee and the Technical Subcommittee, correspondence, reports, a brief on housing to Hon Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport).

Professors Breslauer and Andrews also conducted research into housing issues, and co-op housing alternatives across Canada, the US and abroad. These files include information on the Co-op Housing Foundation, and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation papers on co-op housing and in particular, on the Ashworth Square Housing Co-op. They also include information on co-op housing conferences, other housing co-operatives and organizations, and general housing issues and research published during this time period. Included in this series is a CBC radio special on housing cooperatives which includes a piece on the ASC.

Arrangement: Files are arranged by subject from specific background on the Ashworth Square Housing Cooperative to more general information on housing cooperatives and housing issues. The file of photographs immediately follows the files containing background material on the ASC.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/010

B2011-0008/011 (01) – (04)

B2011-0008/001A

Series 7: Co-operative Housing Case Study: Interim and Final Reports

Date range: 1982-2000

Extent: 0.13 m (2 boxes) of graphic and textual material

Scope and content: This series includes five bound interim reports to the Ministry of Urban Affairs on the progress of this research study, as well as notes for the sixth interim report. It also includes correspondence, working notes and drafts of the four-volume, eight-chapter final report published in 1975 by the Centre for Urban & Community Studies for the Ministry of Urban Affairs.

Access: Restricted for 100 years

Boxes: B2011-0008/011 (05) – (18)
B2011-0008/012 (01) – (03)

Series 8: Urban Studies Programme at Erindale College

Date range: 1972-1976

Extent: 0.06 m (1 box) of textual records

Scope and content: This series consists of files pertaining to the development of an Urban Studies Programme at Erindale College. In particular, there are files relating to the curriculum for two courses: one addressing Urban Canada, and the other entitled 'Concepts, Methods and Values in Urban Planning'. In addition there are files pertaining to the Urban Studies & Community Living programme at Innis College.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2011-0008/012 (04) – (09)