

The Master Bedroom Comes of Age: Competition

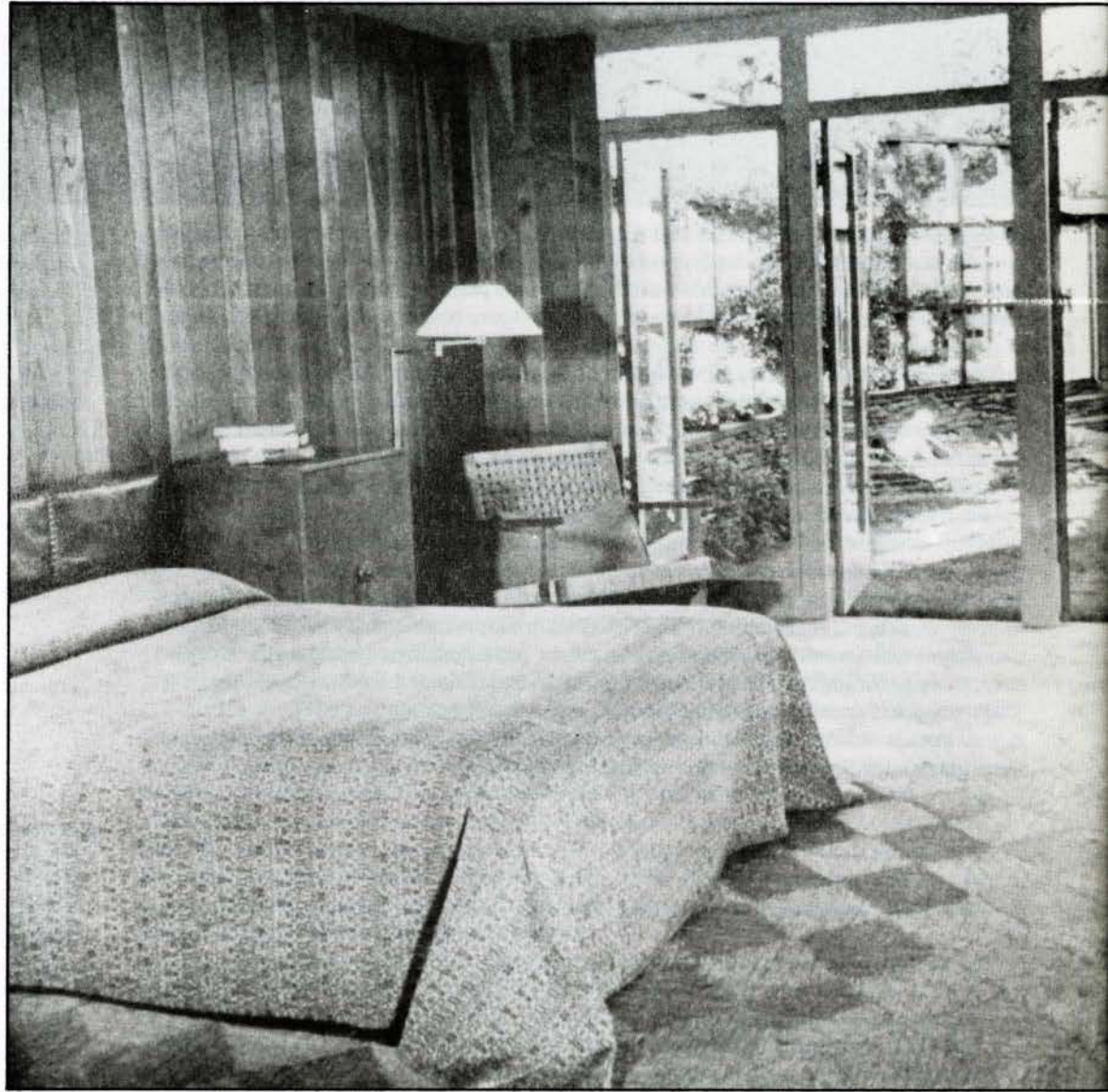
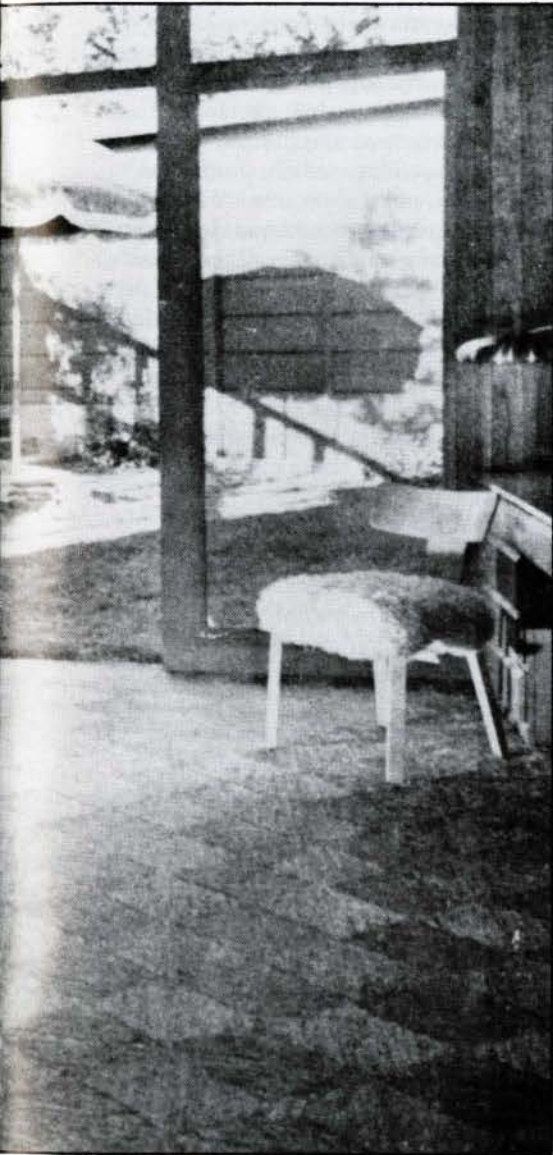


Figure 4. The master bedroom, with a view onto the children's play area. ("Designed for Living—With Kids," *Architectural Record*, March 1949, 109 [Julius Shulman]. Permission for use granted by *Architectural Record*)

BY SUSAN

Gender, Sexuality, and the CMHC Series¹



J A M E S

“Gradually, rebelling against the ‘open living area,’ parents are rediscovering the joy of closed doors Builders report that the master bedroom has become the single most important room in selling a house.”²

Postwar North America saw a fundamental change in the function, layout, and location of the parents’ bedroom space in the typical middle-class home.³ Architectural drawings and the popular culture of the postwar era provide evidence of the changing roles of women which contributed to, and was spurred on by, changes in the planning of master bedroom suites.⁴ This paper focuses on the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Small House Competition Series, on women’s garments intended for home use, and on magazine advertisements to show how bedrooms in the late 1940s exhibited little consideration of the age, gender or sexuality of its occupants; how, with time, the double-edged parental desire for separation from, and surveillance of, children was expressed spatially; and finally, how the “master bedroom” came to be an insulated, luxurious, and sensual retreat for the woman of the family home.

LE PRIX MARTIN-ELI-WEIL

1995

MARTIN ELI WEIL PRIZE

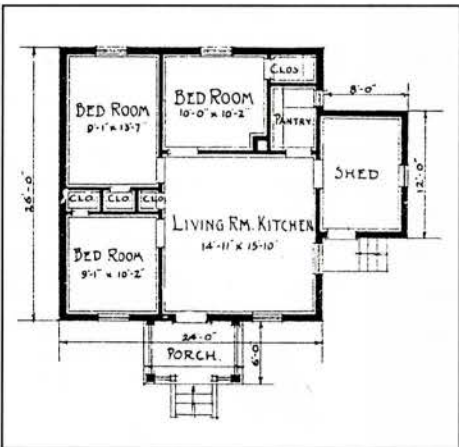
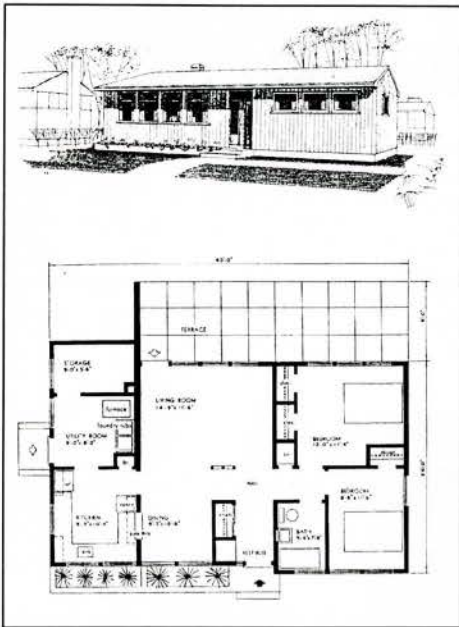


Figure 1 (top). House #130, designed in 1954 by Winnipeg architects Kenneth R.D. Pratt and Stewart E. Lindgren. (*Small House Designs* [Ottawa: CMHC, 1958], 10, 11)

Figure 2 (above). Plan of the "Eastacre." (*Plan Book for Ideal Homes* [Winnipeg: T. Eaton Co., 1919], 21.

The CMHC Small House Competition began in 1947 and comprised annual design calls until the late 1960s. The competition solicited built designs by architects. These entries were judged by panels of architects, social researchers, and trade representatives from all regions of Canada.⁵ If the drawings met the design criteria, they were compiled, bound, and sold in the form of catalogues entitled *Small House Designs*.⁶ Purchased by contractors, designers, and prospective home buyers, these catalogues contained numbered design drawings that corresponded to working drawings on file at the CMHC in Ottawa.⁷ By contacting a local CMHC office, working drawings could be retrieved and copied for a fee of ten dollars.⁸ These drawings, unlike a custom design for one client or "ideal" house plans, were unique examples of popular architectural production and dispersion. They were intended as affordable homes appealing to everyday people and, as such, were accurate reflections of postwar society and culture.

The early years of the competition produced mostly wood-framed, pitched-roof, single-family detached houses of one or two storeys. These houses were generally centred on suburban lots, the front lawns sometimes defined by a carport or a garage, the back yards reserved as a children's play area and for entertaining.

Design #130 typified these entries (figure 1). Winnipeg architects Kenneth R.D. Pratt and Stewart E. Lindgren submitted this standard bungalow plan to the CMHC in 1954. Its shallow-pitched roof and bands of windows emphasized the breadth of the 40-foot-wide facade. The bi-focal plan grouped the spatially continuous living, dining, kitchen, and service rooms into one zone, and the discrete volumes of the bathroom and bedrooms into another. Divided according to social and sleeping functions, this plan did not overtly express the age, gender or sexuality of the house's occupants through the placement of its bedrooms.

In her research on American bedrooms, architectural historian Elizabeth Collins Cromley has suggested that single-storey house and apartment designs "force us to ask what functions could go next to a sleeping room and which ones had to stay apart."⁹ Cromley has shown a planning arrangement that was typical of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one that placed bedrooms immediately adjacent to social spaces. This planning arrangement was also a characteristic of some Canadian house plans, as seen in the "Eastacre" published by the T. Eaton Co. (figure 2).

Conversely, CMHC plans from the early 1950s, such as the Pratt and Lindgren plan, showed that postwar designers preferred "grouping all family bedrooms together in a sleeping zone instead of linking a bedroom with reception spaces."¹⁰ Bi-focal planning typified CMHC's bungalow, split-level, and two-storey house designs from the early 1950s. Yet, bi-focal planning was not an inherent predisposition of any of these housing types. The arrangement of rooms is a function of cultural, rather than geometrical, influences.

Like many houses of its day, the Pratt and Lindgren plan was spare, boxy, and modest by today's middle-class standards.¹¹ This 960-square-foot house was an average-sized design solution for many North American middle-class families.¹² However, given the growing size of families in the Baby Boom era, this popular two-bedroom house often accommodated more than a couple and a child.¹³ Architects were well aware of the potentially close quarters in which families lived.¹⁴ But often, the only provision for privacy took the form of strategically placed closets that served as sound buffers. In Pratt and Lindgren's 40-by-24-foot bungalow, the two bedrooms and one bathroom were tightly grouped on one side of the plan. They were separated from the social spaces by the vestibule located at the front of the house, and by a row of closets separating "Bedroom #1" from the living room at the rear of the house.

Like other CMHC plans of the period, the Pratt and Lindgren drawings lacked room names that assigned bedroom space to children or parents. Although not explicitly named the "Master Bedroom," "Bedroom #1," judging from the twin closets, was probably the parents' bedroom. In this design, like other houses of the period, the husband and wife were expected to share their bedroom space, since middle-class houses rarely allocated separate rooms for spouses.

Cromley has noted that "the 1920s and 1930s saw the rising popularity of twin beds for married couples who did not have the budget or the taste for completely separate suites of rooms."¹⁵ After the Second World War, however, there was a considerable change of heart concerning the sleeping arrangements of couples. In 1950, the Roman Catholic Church, in an attempt to allay the rising rate of divorce among Catholics, offered a frank, explicit, and detailed series of lectures on marriage.¹⁶ The teachings included advice on bedroom furniture. The lesson prescribed the following:

"A single nuptial bed is highly preferable to twin beds under all circumstances. Much of the persistent discord in certain homes can be traced to the use of twin beds."¹⁷ Not only did these teachings prescribe bedroom furniture, they also gave advice on conjugal relations. "Conjugal fidelity is essential to a happy marriage," the lesson read, "but it is the responsibility of both parties to see that all desires of their mate are completely satisfied."¹⁸ These teachings were dispersed throughout the Church community and reproduced in major publications, thus contributing to the mainstream concern with the state of marital relations in postwar North America.¹⁹

In this popular quest to strengthen seemingly frail marital bonds, many stories of marital struggle were published in the popular media. An article entitled "How the Maybury's Saved Their Marriage" stated: "Both parents blamed the youngsters for spoiling what time they might have had together."²⁰ The Maybury's observations articulated the parental dilemma of the decade by implying that their parental responsibilities were the cause of much of their marital discord.

Many solutions to this all-too-familiar problem were offered in architectural terms. Whereas in the late 1940s and early 1950s privacy was bestowed through the ingenious planning of closets as buffer zones, these "marital crises" called for more drastic measures. The concept of the parental retreat within the family home thus emerged in the popular media, in architectural sources, and in house designs as an antidote (and preventive measure) to unhappy marital relations.²¹

As noted, during this period children were inextricably linked to the parents' "bedroom problems" and the dream of the parental oasis was often marred by custodial responsibility. Although frequently blamed for the couple's alienation and often banished to their rooms, children invariably needed adult supervision. The text accompanying an architectural project in *Architectural Record* cautioned:

The Parents' room, a duplex suite consisting of bedroom, sitting room, and bath, is removed from the main activity area but not so completely isolated that control of and contact with the children are lost.²²

Significantly, the text accompanying designs in architectural and women's periodicals highlighted aspects of supervision, control, and contact with children, while advocating the separation of the parents' bedroom into a third zone, the "parental zone." While also the case in the 19th-century house, the radical separation of children and adults was problematic for the servantless house of the mid 20th century.²³ Provision for supervision, when the era of the maid, the nanny or the governess had long since passed, thus became a maternal and an architectural responsibility.²⁴ Women were seen as the parent with whom the custodial responsibilities rested. Yet, while aware of these responsibilities, mothers also longed to fulfil their roles as thinking, feeling, and sexual beings. CMHC designs from the late 1950s answered these needs by providing for the supervision of, and separation from, children as an intrinsic feature of master bedroom suites.

Designer Forrest W. Sunter of Nanaimo, British Columbia, and architect David L. Sawtell of Vancouver designed a house in 1958 (#288) that exemplified this parental quagmire through the careful juxtaposition of the parents' bedroom and the children's play area (figure 3). Their flat-roofed ranch house measured 39 by 49 feet. A spacious carport, exposed structure, and large living room windows defined the facade. The centrally located atrium of the inward-looking plan was defined by the concrete walls of the carport and the storage rooms, and by the windows of the dining room and the master bedroom. The major living spaces were located at the front of the house, and grouped together at the back were the two children's rooms and the master bedroom suite.

The parental retreat, sequestered in the deepest part of the house, featured two 29-by-48-inch windows that offered a view of the atrium play space. An article describing an architectural project similarly concerned with the supervision of children considered the question of visibility. It stated: "The master bedroom ... looks directly onto the children's sandbox which will be converted to a reflection pool when the children have outgrown it"²⁵ (figure 4; see pp. 104-5). This room with a view was deemed particularly important for the vigilant mother of the house.

Architectural historian Annmarie Adams' analysis of a postwar suburban ranch house in California uncovered a similar feature in the parents' bedroom: to provide supervision through unobstructed window walls.²⁶ In the "Eichler" home,

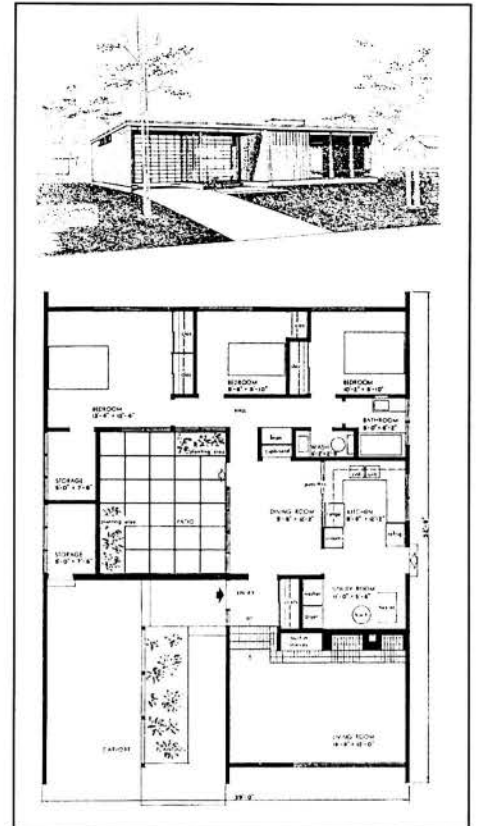


Figure 3. House #288, designed in 1958 by Forrest W. Sunter of Nanaimo, B.C., and architect David L. Sawtell of Vancouver. (*Small House Designs* [Ottawa: CMHC, 1958], 92, 93)



Figure 5 (above). This postcard of the "Eichler" house shows the kitchen and its unobstructed view of the play areas. (Annmarie Adams, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," in *Gender, Class, and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture V*, ed. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 168 [courtesy Annmarie Adams])



Figures 6, 7, 8 (right). "White Angel" home uniform. (Simpsons catalogue, 1945); The "Lounger." (Simpson Sears catalogue, 1964); The "Shift." (Simpson Sears catalogue, 1963)

of which thousands were constructed in the 1960s, the housewife was intended to survey the play areas while performing her daily chores (figure 5). This type of architecture allowed for what Adams has called "Spock-style mothering," encouraging the mother to be in constant contact with her children.²⁷

Of the four windows facing onto the courtyard in the Sunter and Sawtell plan, two looked out from the "private" master bedroom zone while the others defined the "public" corridor and dining room. This suggests that, during the day, the housewife could retreat into the bedroom "apartment" without severing visual contact with her children. Hence, the woman's multiple roles, her routine, and her desires were woven into the architectural fabric by the designer of this project through the provision of a view onto the play area from the master bedroom.

The concerns voiced in articles such as "Safety for Children—Privacy for Adults," "Designed for Living—With Kids," "Planned for Adult Privacy and Supervision of Children," and "Joyous Living and Five Children" were echoed in many of the CMHC plans designed in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Notably, these articles claimed that inward-looking courtyards and atrium spaces were particularly suitable for this double-edged approach to living with children.²⁸ Ideally, the children could play outdoors while being safely contained within the confines of the house and observed by the mother from any one of many observation points.²⁹

Not coincidentally, the roles of women in the home as revealed in architecture are also seen in other everyday material things.³⁰ Decorative arts, clothing, and interior decor are, like architecture, products of their time. Concurrently, culture and behaviour are enacted through the things that we build, buy, and make. For example, changes in women's fashions, the use of fabrics, and the changing female silhouette point to the increased or decreased mobility of women, or to their sexual expression or repression.³¹ Hence, the analysis of material things—women's garments intended for home use, for instance—can provide evidence of the changing roles of women in the home.

During the postwar period, the Simpson Sears catalogue included a wide collection of women's clothes intended for home use.³² Until the early 1950s, the catalogue even included the home uniform as an item suitable for the housewife's daily use (figure 6). The "White Angel," for example, was described as a "uniform of linene [sic] finished cotton conveniently styled for the home nurse, beautician or as a working costume at home."³³ Although images of women in uniforms made reference to paid employment during wartime production, an advertisement published in *Chatelaine* in 1943 suggested that these fashions were unpopular, as well as unfeminine.³⁴ In this advertisement aimed at encouraging the participation of women in the war effort, a woman was shown walking on the sidewalk wearing work pants while passers-by glared. Its headline pleaded: "Please don't stare at my pants!"³⁵ By the mid 1950s, these asexual, utilitarian, and austere garments were supplanted by house garb that reflected contemporary ideas about feminine roles in the house.

The "Lounger" and the "Shift" emerged during the early 1960s (figures 7, 8). These were body-conscious, colourful, and comfortable. Whereas the uniform was task-specific, the Shift and the Lounger were suitable for daytime entertaining, shopping

or housework. The Shift was promoted as a versatile dress that, with the addition of a thin belt, converted easily from a housework frock to a pert and proper dress. As the name suggested, the Lounger was billed as a comfortable leisure suit, suitable for home or vacation. It even came with its own transparent plastic travel case. Their simple lines, washable fabrics, and convertibility were part of a growing language of powerful, yet attractive, women's wear.³⁶

Significantly, these changes in women's clothing pointed to changes in women's role in the house. The modern and flirtatious lines suggested that women wanted to break the boundaries of the home, the radius of their power, and the constraints on their sexuality. And, just as the Shift and the Lounger were seen to be appropriate for use in the home or in public settings, the master bedroom was increasingly seen as a space for women that was separate from home life.

Just as the changing roles, routines, and desires of the housewife could be read in the changes in the layout of the master bedroom suite, so too did the changing views on feminine sexuality find expression through the suite's increased isolation and sensualization. During the early 1960s, this room was often referred to as a separate apartment for the adult couple within the family home. A *Time* magazine article from 1961 stated:

As houses grow smaller and families larger, man's home is fast becoming his kiddies' castle. Already teen-agers have overrun the living room, kitchen and den, driving their parents into the last bastion of apartness—the fortress bedroom.³⁷

This article suggested that children were not only taxing marital relationships, as previously articulated by the Mayburys, but they were now invading all corners of the house. The only answer, according to this article, was to build a private "apartment" within the family home.

"We've made a fetish of being with the children," one mother declared. "I intend to make more time for my husband ... without juvenile accompaniment."³⁸ This new declaration of parental "apartness" was seen in the master bedroom suites of CMHC designs. Increasingly, these designs provided a luxurious retreat for the adult couple living in the family home.

The lower level of a two-storey house designed by Vancouver architect Geoffrey E. Hacker in 1963 (#614) featured the major living areas in an open-plan arrangement (figure 9). The upper level included one large bathroom, three children's rooms, and a master bedroom arranged in pinwheel fashion around the centrally located stairs. Its master bedroom showed the transformation from a mere parents' room to a "parents' suite."

The descriptive paragraph that appeared with the drawings in the *Small House Designs* catalogue boasted: "The main bedroom, with the luxury of its own fireplace and balcony, is well separated from the children's bedrooms."³⁹ In the master bedroom suite, two identical closets lined the far end of one wall, and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors opened to the balcony. Located against the window wall was the very large master bedroom fireplace. Acoustic privacy was ensured through bedroom walls abutting the stairway and the bathroom. In this 1,680-square-foot house, the parents were afforded privacy and luxury.⁴⁰

One development in particular set the master bedroom apart from the other bedrooms of the house: the addition of a master bathroom. Rarely touted for their function or convenience, master bedrooms were typically promoted as part of a luxurious ensuite arrangement that often included a dressing room, a vanity, and a boudoir, as seen in the two-storey house (#615) designed by Toronto architect Ralph Goldman in 1964 (figure 10). In contrast to the open planning of the major living spaces on the lower level, the master bedroom suite was comprised of a private bathroom, dressing room, and balcony. Abutting the main bathroom, the master bathroom had a tub, a sink, and a toilet, thereby eliminating the need to share the main bathroom with other members of the household. These ensuite amenities—along with built-in versatility and planned separation—served to isolate, insulate, and privatize the suburban Shangri-la.

The master bathroom brought glamour and luxury to the master bedroom suite. In popular magazines, the female form was repeatedly used in depictions of these spaces.⁴¹ The broad-reaching changes in these images throughout this period reveals much about the roles of women. In the early postwar period, as seen in an advertisement for Crane from 1947, women were often shown interacting with bathroom space

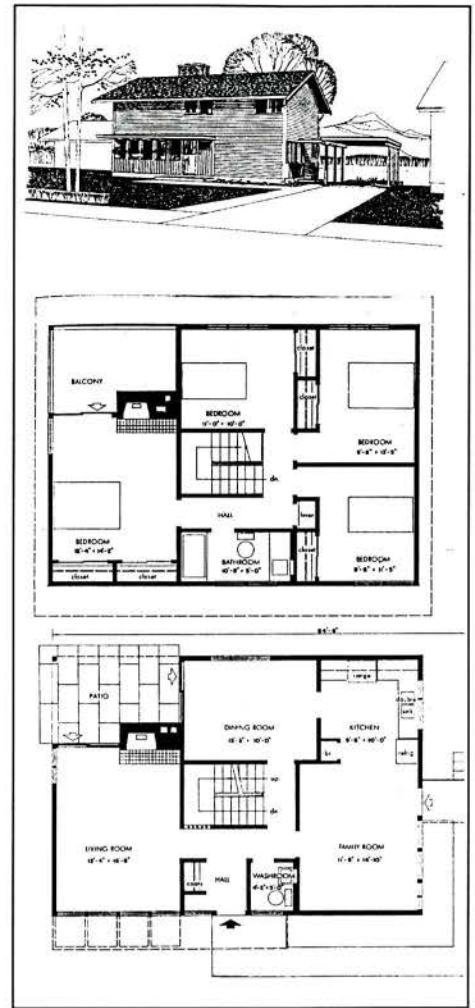


Figure 9. House #614, designed in 1963 by Vancouver architect Geoffrey E. Hacker. (*Small House Designs* [Ottawa: CMHC, 1965], 252, 253)

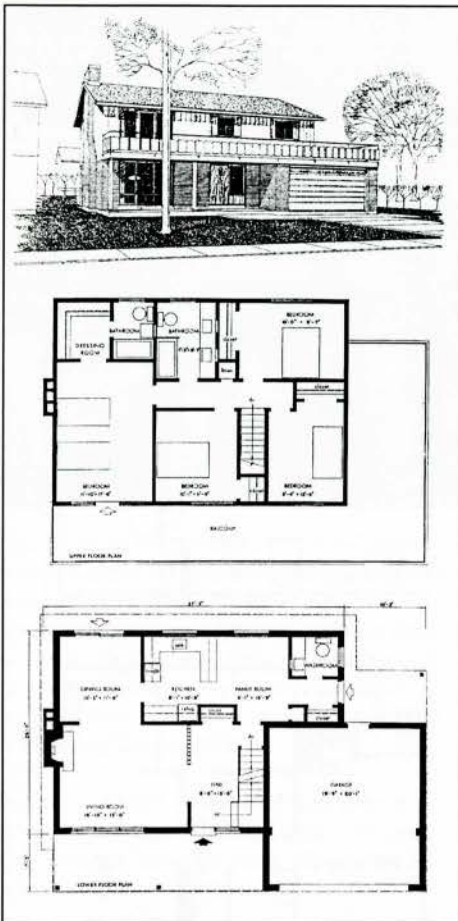


Figure 10 (above). House #615, designed in 1964 by Toronto architect Ralph Goldman. (*Small House Designs* [Ottawa: CMHC, 1965], 254, 255)

Figures 11, 12, 13 (right). Crane bathroom advertisement. (*Canadian Homes and Gardens*, November 1947); "Soft-Weve" bathroom tissue advertisement. (*New York Times Magazine*, 4 May 1958); "Peignoir Set." (Simpson Sears catalogue, 1963)



at a distance (figure 11). In this advertisement, the woman gazed up at the image of her vanguard bathroom through a telescope. The image of the bathroom was presented with other celestial objects orbiting in a faraway galaxy—a distanced relationship between the bathroom and the female form that disappeared in later years.

By the late 1950s, these types of images were completely supplanted by new images of women and bathrooms—like the "Soft-Weve" bathroom tissue advertisement—that were so inextricably linked that it was difficult to see where the woman ended and the bathroom began (figure 12). The female form seemed truly "at home" in these depictions. This new proximity of woman's body and space suggested that the master bathroom was now a site of luxurious and sensual delight. The garments worn by women in these advertisements also signalled changes in bedroom fashions and, by the early 1960s, Simpson Sears included these garments in their catalogue.

Flannel gave way to nylon; modesty to appetite. Supplanting the conservative house coats, nightgowns, and pyjamas of the 1940s and early 1950s, peignoir sets, baby-dolls, and nighties flooded the pages of the catalogue (figure 13). Nylon was touted as the new modern fabric because of its ease of care. This sheer, lightweight material was available in a range of colours to complement both the complexion and the female form. The new nylon peignoir set was described in the following way: "How wonderful to be a woman wearing this exciting ensemble! Bewitching nylon peignoir and gown set is lavishly ruffled ... thoroughly feminine"⁴² This innovation in women's garments, as well as the sensual depictions of women in the master bedroom and bathroom, suggests that, increasingly, popular culture was "at home" with feminine sexuality.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSE PLANS PUBLISHED BY THE CMHC, together with these garments and the images of women produced in the popular press, provide a unique glimpse into the world of women in the postwar era. Especially revealing is the changing role of a single room—the master bedroom—in the landscape of middle-class family life. It evolved from a space indistinguishable from other bedrooms of the family home to an architectural expression of increased isolation and sensualization. The withdrawal of this space, and women, from middle-class family life is evidence of women's increased power in postwar society. Indeed, this change in the family home foreshadowed the women's liberation movement, which is usually considered to have begun with the publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963.⁴³

Typically, the spatial separation of women at home in the suburbs has been construed as a mark of their marginalization in a society that valued motherhood over women's participation in the labour force. A closer look at the master bedroom, however, reveals the process of separation as a manifestation of women's power and independence.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This paper is drawn from a larger chapter which appears in my Master's thesis, "Bedroom Problems: Women, Agency and Architecture, 1945-63" (M.Arch, McGill University, expected 1996).
- 2 "Fortresses with Bath," *Time*, 26 May 1961, 54.
- 3 The early development of the master bedroom is discussed in Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (London: John Murray, 1865). The social analysis of its development is examined in Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978).
- 4 This social analysis of domestic architecture relies on the work of Annmarie Adams, "Architecture in the Family Way: Health Reform, Feminism, and the Middle-Class House in England, 1870-1900," diss., University of California (Berkeley), 1992; Clifford Edward Clark, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: The Queen Anne Movement 1860-1900* (London: Yale University Press, 1977); David Handlin, *The American Family Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915* (Boston: Little, 1979); Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981); Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- 5 Minimum cost was a prime criterion in the judging of designs. The design problem for the 1947 Small House Design Competition stated that houses had to be built for under \$6,000. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *67 Homes for Canadians* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1947), 74.
- 6 The *Small House Designs* catalogues were issued by the CMHC sporadically from 1947 until the early 1970s. The catalogues were usually released as specialized compilations, "The Bungalow," for example, or "The Split Level House," or "The Two Story House." In later years the designs were bound in book format, under the same title.
- 7 Working drawings could be obtained from the main office or from branch offices across the country. The CMHC in Ottawa still retains some of the original working drawings.
- 8 CMHC, *67 Homes for Canadians*, 11.
- 9 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Sleeping Around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms," *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 1 (1990): 5.
- 10 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "American Beds and Bedrooms," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. Jessica Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 123.
- 11 The average house size in the 1980s was 2,000 sq. ft. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *50 Years of Innovation, 1945-1993* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1993), 21.
- 12 Housing statistics from 1955 list the average house size as 1,100 sq. ft. *Ibid.*, 8.
- 13 The births per woman aged 15-49 increased from 2.8 in 1941 to peak at 3.9 in 1959. Ottawa, Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Catalogue 11-008, 10 (1990), p. 34.
- 14 On the growing demands for larger homes, see Annmarie Adams, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," in *Gender, Class, and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture V*, ed. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 167.
- 15 Cromley, "American Beds and Bedrooms," 123.
- 16 The 1951 census shows that approximately 43% of Canadians were Roman Catholics. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census of Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1962), 6.
- 17 Francois Roy, "A Frank Formula For Happy Marriage," *Maclean's Magazine*, 15 August 1950, 6.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.* The article claimed that, although the lessons were produced by the Roman Catholic Church in Canada, they were appropriated by other religious groups as well.
- 20 Sidney Katz, "How the Maybury's Saved Their Marriage," *Maclean's Magazine*, 15 April 1951, 22.
- 21 The separation of parents and children prevalent in the 19th-century home is discussed in Adams, "Architecture in the Family Way," 218.
- 22 "A Strong Emphasis on Privacy," *Architectural Record*, April 1958, 199.
- 23 Adams, "Architecture in the Family Way," 218.
- 24 For a discussion of the dwindling numbers of women and men entering domestic service after the First World War, see Claudette Lacelle, *Urban Domestic Servants* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987). On the role played by domestic technology on work in the home, see Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), and Adrien Forty, *Objects of Desire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 207-221.
- 25 "Design for Living—With Kids," *Architectural Record*, March 1949, 108.
- 26 Adams, "The Eichler Home," 168-72. Adams has argued that windows such as these were frequently curtained. Still, I believe large windows overseeing play areas were an important characteristic of post-war master bedrooms.
- 27 Adams' term "Spock-style mothering" refers to the advice given to mothers by Dr. Benjamin Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Dell, 1946). On the relationship of mothers to the open plan, see Adams, "The Eichler Home," 170. For a discussion of the relationship between Spock's ideas and the plans of ranch houses, see Clark, 206-7.
- 28 The CMHC house designs produced in the mid 1950s and later were stylistically different from the houses of earlier years. On the Modern Movement in architecture, see Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 2:779-869.
- 29 Adams, "The Eichler Home," 168.
- 30 In this study, the analysis of architecture and other everyday material things is used to gain a clearer picture of how people perceived and engaged with space—a picture that is not accessible when looking at any of these sources on their own. For more on the study of material culture, see Gerald Pocius, ed., *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture* (St. John's, Nfld.: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991).
- 31 For more on the social analysis of fashion, see Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Karal Ann Marling, "Mamie Eisenhower's New Look," *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 7-49; Anita Rush, "Changing Women's Fashion and its Social Context, 1870-1905," *Material History Bulletin* 14 (spring 1982): 37-46; Leila Whitemore, "Theatre of the Bazaar: Women and the Architecture of Fashion in 19th-century Paris," *Architecture Research Criticism* 5 (1994-95): 14-25; and Lee Wright, "Objectifying Gender: The Stiletto Heel," *A View From the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, ed. Judy Atfield and Pat Kirkham (London: The Women's Press, 1989), 7-19.
- 32 The Simpson Sears catalogue, like many other North American mail order catalogues, was sent to women across the country, even in the most remote regions. Other Canadian mail order department store catalogues included the T. Eaton Co. and Les Frères Dupuis.
- 33 Simpsons catalogue, 1945.
- 34 "Please Don't Stare at My Pants!" *Chatelaine*, March 1943, 1.
- 35 For a discussion of gender and dress, see, for example, Christina Bates, "'Beauty Unadorned': Dressing Children in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Material History Bulletin* 21 (spring 1985): 25-34; Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele, *Men and Women: Dressing the Part* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1989); and Barbara E. Kelcey, "What to Wear to the Klondike: Outfitting Women for the Gold Rush," *Material History Review* 37 (spring 1993): 20-29.
- 36 The relationship of women's fashion and liberation is discussed in Wright, "Objectifying Gender," 7-19. This issue was recently presented in an exhibition on sexuality and design, and discussed in the accompanying exhibition brochure: see Rachel Gotlieb, curator, *Pop in Orbit: Design from the Space Age* (Toronto: Design Exchange, 1995).
- 37 "Fortresses with Bath," *Time*, 26 May 1961, 54.
- 38 Dorothy Barclay, "Resolved: Parents Need More Time," *New York Times Magazine*, 1 January 1956, 26.
- 39 Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Small House Designs* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1965), 252.
- 40 The average size of a house in 1963 was 1,200 sq. ft. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Canadian Housing Statistics* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1972), 68.
- 41 Annmarie Adams, "Building Barriers: Images of Women in Canada's Architectural Press, 1924-73," *Resources for Feminist Research* 23, no. 3 (1994): 11-23. Adams shows that these images appeared as early as the 1920s and ran through the 1970s.
- 42 Simpson Sears catalogue, 1963.
- 43 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1963).

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Annmarie Adams; fellow students Jennifer Cousineau, Kelly Donati, Juan Garcia-Wernher, Deborah Miller, Tania Martin, and Rana Samara; Patrick Banister; Charla Sandrock and the staff of the CMHC Library; and the staff of the National Library of Canada. The McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women funded this project, and for this I am sincerely grateful.

Susan James works as an exhibit researcher for an upcoming exhibition entitled "Love, Leisure, Laundry" at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, and is completing her Master's degree in architecture at McGill University.