



Age- Friendly Home Modifications

Photo Credit: Zonda house plans

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“As we age, tasks that were once easy can become much more time-consuming, difficult, or unsafe” Careside (2023)

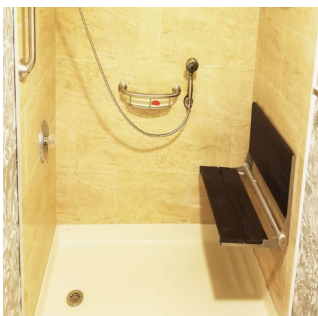


Photo Credit: Alison and Sheehan

Figure 1: Quality inclusive bathroom with walk in shower

1.0 Introduction

Many homes where older people live were built without considering the aging population, which is a global phenomenon imposing societal challenges in many communities (Barbosa et al., 2011). Almost 90% of older people normally want to stay in their homes as the age, which promotes self-esteem , independence, and keep them happy and healthy (Buffel 2017). But as people age, they frequently face a number of health issues, such as cognitive decline and decreased mobility, which can be major obstacles to living independently. Yet people do not consider home modifications until they are faced with a medical problem, which is viewed as a health remedy rather than a proactive, forward-thinking strategy. As a result, as the numbers of elderly increase, so do the problems associated with homes. Practical solutions to these problems include home modifications that are convenient to older people. This report addresses the need of making older people’s homes accessible as they age in and offers case studies from different countries as precedents for addressing these challenges.

2.0 Defining Aging-in-Place

Aging-in-place is the choice of older adults to live in their own homes, maintaining independence and comfort, rather than moving to assisted living facilities or nursing homes. Some individuals may opt to move in with a family member or relocate to an assisted living facility. Anyone wishing to age-in-place intentionally decides to modify their existing home to fit their evolving needs.

3.0 Concept of Age-Friendly Home Modifications

The goal behind age-friendly house modification is to modify living areas to meet the special requirements and difficulties that frequently accompany aging. I see it as a comprehensive strategy that takes into account a variety of factors with the goal of assuring the security, usability, and general wellbeing of older citizens in their homes.



Figure 2: Zero- Step entrance



Figure 3: Stair lifts for older with mobility issues

3.1. Meaning of home modification

Home modifications are any changes made to the home to help a person be more independent and safer and reduce the risk of injury to their careers and care workers (Lantz & Fenn 2018). These modifications range from simple things like replacing turn-style knobs with cabinet pull handles and lever-style door and faucet handles to complex renovation projects that involve structural changes to the home and require a skilled building professional.

3.2 Significance of Home Modifications- Lantz & Fenn (2018)

- Reduces the demands of their home environment on aging individual or caregiver
- Increases the safety of their home or reduce risks (e.g. of falls)
- Enhances the accessibility and ease of people of all ages to visit (e.g. no step entry, clear passageway, accessible bathroom)
- Enables ability to accommodate live-in care, or multigenerational living or shared living options

4.0 Precedents Of Age- friendly Home Modification

4.1 United Kingdom: The Lifetime Homes Standard

In order to age in place, people may need to adapt to their current housing situation. No matter what stage of life an individual or family is in, lifetime design features support their changing needs. Its design criteria emphasize creating houses that are flexible, inclusive, and accessible so that residents may live happily for the rest of their lives. To guide the design of age-friendly homes, Goodman (2011), provides 16 design criteria.

1. Parking (width or widening capability)
2. Approach to dwelling from parking
3. Approach to all entrances
4. Entrances
5. Communal stairs and lifts
6. Internal doorways and hallways
7. Circulation space
8. Entrance level living space
8. Bathrooms layout
9. Potential for entrance level bed space
10. Entrance level WC and shower drainage
11. WC and bathroom walls
12. Stairs and potential through-floor lift
13. Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom
14. Glazing and window handle
16. Location of service controls

**We shape
our buildings;
thereafter, our
buildings shape
us. –Winston
Churchill 1943**



Figure 4: Wider doors, hallways and stairs



Photo Credit: Accessible System

Figure 5: Wheelchair / Scooter ramp



Photo Credit: Super Steel Implex

Figure 6: Stainless Steel Stairs Wall Mounted Handrail

4.2 Home Modification Support Programs- Canada

Changing the flooring in older adults' homes to make it slip-resistant or installing ramps can make them more independent. For older people needing home modifications, several financial assistance programs are available.

- New Brunswick Home Improvement Program
- Home accessibility tax credit (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)
- Residentail adaptations for disabilities program (Government of Manitoba)
- Home adaptations for older's independence- British Columbia

Minnedosa can explore opportunities to obtain grants or establish programs promoting age-friendly modifications by researching available funding sources at federal, provincial, and local levels, such as those offered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) or provincial housing authorities.



Photo Credit: Independence Now

Figure 7: Automatic porch lift next to a stairway leading to an elevated door

4.3 New Zealand: Accessibilty Modifications

The program was design that properties are equipped with necessary modifications to cater for the specific needs, thus foster inclusive and supportive living environment (CRESA & Public policy & Research & Auckland Disability Resource Centre., 2007). The most common things people get help with are: 1. Fitting handrails or shower rails 2. Installation of ramps 3. Widening of doorways 4. Converting their bathroom to a wet room 5. Lowering the kitchen bench.

4.4 Vistable Home Regulation- Manitoba

Visitable housing provides residents with a convenient home and a friendly atmosphere for guests of all ages and abilities. Through this service, those with mobility challenges can connect with friends and family and become more involved in their communities (Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, 2016). Features are; 1. No-step entrance 2. Clear passageways 3. Accessible Bathroom

5.0 Final Thoughts

Minnedosa, which is an age-infrastructure town for older people, We can draw inspiration from these precedent-setting success stories to create age-friendly modifications for homes. Minnedosa can give its elderly inhabitants the chance to age in place with a higher quality of life by employing comparable universal design, flexibility, and supportive housing concepts.

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