



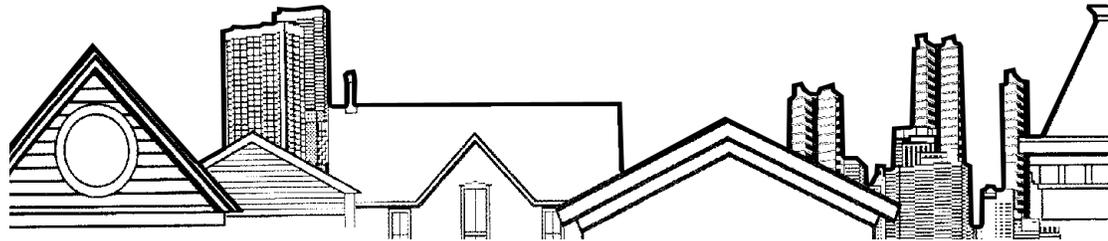
ACT CASE STUDY

PLANNING AN ARTISAN COMMUNITY

CITY OF SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE

SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE, QUEBEC

ACT - Affordability and Choice Today



Canadian
Home Builders'
Association

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HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada

AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE TODAY (A•C•T) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Planning an Artisan Community

**City of Sainte-Geneviève
Sainte-Geneviève, Quebec**

Prepared for:

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Canadian Home Builders' Association
Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**

Prepared by:

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May 1998

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FOREWORD

The project documented in this case study received funding assistance under the Affordability and Choice Today (A•C•T) Program. A•C•T is a joint initiative, managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders' Association, and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, together with the funding agency Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The A•C•T Program is administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

A•C•T, which was launched in January 1990, was designed to foster changes to planning and building regulations and residential development approval procedures in order to improve housing affordability, choice and quality.

Through A•C•T, grants are awarded to municipalities, private and non-profit builders and developers, planners and architects to undertake innovative regulatory reform initiatives in municipalities across Canada. Three types of projects are awarded grants under A•C•T Program: Demonstration Projects, Streamlined Approval Process Projects, and Case Studies (of existing initiatives).

- *Demonstration Projects* involve the construction of innovative housing that demonstrates how modifications to planning and construction regulations can improve affordability, choice and quality.

- *Streamlined Approval Process Projects* involve the development of a method or an approach that reduces the time and effort needed to obtain approvals for housing projects.
- *Case Study* grants are awarded for the documentation of existing regulatory reform initiatives.

Change and innovation require the participation of all the players in the housing sector. A•C•T provides a unique opportunity for groups at the local level to work together to identify housing concerns, reach consensus on potential solutions, and implement action. Consequently, a key component of A•C•T -sponsored projects is the participation and cooperation of various players in the housing sector in all phases of each project, from development to realization.

All projects awarded a grant under the A•C•T Program are documented as case studies in order to share information on the initiatives and the benefits of regulatory reform with other Canadian communities. Each case study discusses the regulatory reform initiative, its goals and the lessons learned. Where appropriate, the cost savings resulting from modifications in various planning, development, and construction regulations are calculated and reported.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Increasingly, artists and artisans are being recognized as important economic allies in promoting reinvestment in a city, drawing tourism and rejuvenating derelict neighbourhoods. Planning an artisan community to revitalize a municipality is a creative solution that benefits both artisans and the community as a whole. Incorporating live/work accommodation into the concept reflects today's trend in home-based businesses, with the advantages of optimal space use, reduced transportation costs, and an improved quality of life. Permitting artisans to live, work, and sell their products on the same premises, however, may require regulatory reform in many municipalities.

In the Montréal area, there is an urgent need for artisan live/work accommodation. Economic constraints and the need for suitable workspace cause many artisans to seek space in older, industrial buildings. Health and safety hazards such as the risk of fire, noxious emissions, noise, and a lack of residential rent control are part of the artisan's lot in exchange for affordable live/work space.

In 1994, the City of Sainte-Geneviève, a small municipality located on Montréal's West Island, was awarded an A•C•T grant to carry out a demonstration project that would encourage the development of affordable, mixed-use artisan accommodation. The project was part of an initiative called *Sainte-Geneviève, Ville artisanale*, aimed at encouraging artisans to establish themselves in the community. The municipality conceived this plan to revitalize its downtown core and stimulate economic growth. With many centrally located buildings vacant, businesses closing and a working population migrating to neighbouring towns, the project was considered critical to the community's survival.

The project involved consultations with local artisans, property owners, and representatives of other municipalities with sizable artisan communities to achieve the following:

- Evaluation of the impact of mixed-use accommodation on the community
- Examination of current regulations affecting mixed-use accommodation
- Development of solutions to meet the needs of artisan activity while maintaining acceptable standards of health and safety
- Adoption of new regulations for mixed-use accommodation
- Renovation of a demonstration building and documentation of the results
- Preparation of an information kit for artisans and property owners wishing to renovate their premises for mixed-use accommodation.

The City of Sainte-Geneviève introduced two innovative regulatory changes in order to encourage the development of accommodation that would meet the needs of artisans:

- The *Plan particulier d'urbanisme* (municipal development plan) was modified to permit artisans to live, work and sell their products from their workshop or residence; and to create artisan districts or zones.
- A *Plan d'intégration et d'implantation architecturale* (siting and architectural integration plan) was adopted that would allow flexibility in applying regulations, while preserving heritage, character and standard of living quality objectives through specialized criteria.

On November 20, 1995, the project team, municipal and provincial officials and other key stakeholders cooperating in the project gathered in Sainte-Geneviève's newly renovated demonstration building to celebrate its official opening. The A•C•T renovation project fully embodied the City's objectives in establishing mixed-use accommodation for artisans.

The demonstration building is a converted garage on property owned by a cabinetmaker and his family. The cabinetmaker, in consultation with the project team, added a second floor over the garage adjacent to his heritage home to display and store furniture. The ground floor of the building was converted into a workshop and an office. The building's new façade harmonizes with the City's architectural heritage, providing an attractive example and stimulus for other artisans and property owners.¹

Sainte-Geneviève, in encouraging mixed-use accommodation, is reviving a tradition of working artisans that is very much part of the community's heritage. The initiative is also encouraging small business, the primary area of employment growth in Canada, and making home-based businesses an important part of local development.

The City of Sainte-Geneviève's A•C•T project demonstrates that mixed-use accommodation offers new housing options and makes possible better planned spaces for artisans and others who work out of their homes. Projects similar to the A•C•T demonstration renovation were subsequently undertaken, and at the time of publication, applications for new projects were in the works. The A•C•T project has also become an example for neighbouring municipalities interested in economic and community revitalization.

¹ The results of the A•C•T project are documented in *Une Ville en art ! Les incidences des artisans du boulevard Gouin*, prepared by Sylvie Laurier (City of Sainte-Geneviève, December 1995). The report is available in French only. For information on obtaining a copy, contact the Canadian Housing Information Centre, 700 Montreal Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P7, Tel: (613) 748-2367, Fax: (613) 748-4069, TTY: (613) 748-2143.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Background

Few communities in Canada possess a strong nucleus of artisans. In Europe, however, communities centered around artisans have existed for centuries, and in modern times, they play a central role in maintaining regional tourism and an area's fiscal health.

Sainte-Geneviève is a small community dating from the mid-18th century. Situated on the Rivière-des-Prairies on Montréal's West Island, the population in the mid 1990's was approximately 3,200. In October 1994, the City of Sainte-Geneviève launched an initiative entitled *Sainte-Geneviève, Ville artisanale* to attract artisans to live and work in the community.

The initiative was considered vital to Sainte-Geneviève's economic survival. In recent years, businesses had closed, property values had declined, and the working population was migrating to newer, more dynamic communities nearby. The City hoped to revive an artisan tradition that was very much a part of the community's heritage, and a key contributor to Sainte-Geneviève's economic stability and growth.

Economic constraints and the need for suitable workspace cause many artisans to seek space in older, industrial buildings. Within the City of Montréal, for example, there is a dense concentration of artisans sharing space in three-storey, industrial buildings along the Lachine Canal in illegal live/work arrangements. Paying a single rent or mortgage for both living and working

accommodation can cut costs dramatically and eliminate considerable travel time and related expenses for artisans. However, these live/work spaces may present a number of hazards related to health and safety, such as the risk of fire, noxious emissions and noise. The City of Sainte-Geneviève's initiative would revitalize the community and benefit artisans in return, by encouraging the development of safe, affordable accommodation that would meet their specific needs.

1.2 Objectives

The City of Sainte-Geneviève was awarded an A•C•T grant to carry out a demonstration project that would encourage the development of mixed-use artisan accommodation. The municipality established the following broad objectives for the project:

- Encourage improvements in the quality of buildings in the core area
- Create affordable live/work housing for artisans
- Revitalize Sainte-Geneviève.

1.3 Methodology

The City of Sainte-Geneviève worked with an urban planning consultant, an architect and a representative from the West Island Industrial Commission. The project team consulted with the City's planning advisory committee, local artisans and property owners who rented to artisans, as well as representatives of other municipalities that have a substantial artisan population.

The project involved the following steps:

- Evaluation of the impact of mixed-use accommodation on the community
- Examination of current regulations affecting mixed-use accommodation
- Development of solutions to meet the needs of artisan activity while maintaining acceptable standards of health and safety
- Adoption of new regulations for mixed-use accommodation

- Renovation of a demonstration building and documentation of the results
- Preparation of an information kit for artisans and property owners wishing to renovate their premises for mixed-use accommodation.

The project resulted in regulatory changes to address the issues related to home-based artisan businesses, and the renovation of a demonstration building that promoted the benefits of live/work artisan accommodation.²

²Please refer to footnote 1 for information on obtaining a copy of the A•C•T project team's final report which documents the results in detail.

2.0 PROJECT RESULTS

2.1 Regulatory Changes

The project team began by examining the experiences and concerns raised in several communities with relatively large artisan populations, including Montréal and the Lachine Canal area, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Val David, and Knowlton. The following factors were considered:

- Types of artisan activity
- Needs of the artisan
- Architectural criteria
- Criteria for locating mixed-use accommodation
- Standards and requirements for new buildings
- Effects of home-based businesses on artisans
- Extent of artisan activity
- Trends.

As a result of the review of study areas in other municipalities, the project team:

- developed recommendations in order to modify the *Plan particulier d'urbanisme* (municipal development plan)
- identified criteria for a *Plan d'intégration et d'implantation architectural* (siting and architectural integration plan).

2.2 Municipal Development Plan

Sainte-Geneviève's modified municipal development plan permits artisans to live, work, and sell their products from one location. It also allows for the development of mixed-use artisan accommodation

in specially designated areas to address issues related to health and safety. The changes to the municipal development plan will help to achieve the following goals:

- To revitalize the City's downtown core and stimulate commercial activity on the main street
- To improve the urban environment and encourage mixed-use artisan accommodation
- To ensure artisans receive local and regional recognition.

Revitalization of Sainte-Geneviève's downtown core would help the city remain competitive with commercial activity in neighbouring municipalities.

Buildings in need of repair, poor signage, and unappealing commercial façades characterized Gouin Boulevard, Sainte-Geneviève's main street. The project team identified strategies to make the main street more appealing:

- Create a fresh store-front image for the street that would attract clientele
- Create space in front of businesses for outdoor cafes and flower markets, with adjoining parking spaces
- Provide space to exhibit artisans' products
- Have a public display case for advertising and presenting local products
- Provide more parking space and limit parking time in order to give more people an opportunity to stop and visit the area
- Improve infrastructure (sidewalks, paving, electrical cable).

Other strategies were identified to address the deterioration and lack of use of secondary buildings:

- Promote artisan activity on the streets adjacent to designated artisan zones along Gouin Boulevard
- Support local artisan residents by encouraging improvement of secondary buildings for artisan use
- Offer access to community premises reserved for professional artisans
- Allow artisans to identify themselves using specified signage (shape, height, location)
- Restrict artisan work that causes pollution in residential zones.

The project team developed strategies to increase the local and regional profile of the artisan community:

- Create community signage to promote artisan settlement
- Authorize construction and renovation of buildings conforming to existing architectural types
- Facilitate creation and acquisition of community space for artisan projects and artistic expression
- Create a sculpture garden at the entrance to the city.

The A•C•T project team broadly defined an artisan or visual artist as:

- *An individual involved in the creative production of goods who is not governed by a corporation*

Assessing Artisan Needs

The team determined that the needs of artisans applying for mixed-use accommodation could be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Size of enterprise
- Type of pollution produced
- Type of equipment used.

The project team categorized crafts by the material or materials employed (see figure 1), identified the related crafts within each material category, and defined various forms of visual arts (see figure 2).

Figure 1. Craft Categories by Material

Craft Material	Related Crafts
Leather and skins	1
Wood	16
Glass	12
Textiles and fibres	15
Metal	11
Stone	2
Paper	7
Earth	8
Paint and ink	11

Figure 2. Visual Art Categories by Equipment Used

Video	Installations
Textiles	Painting
Design	Performance
Engraving	Sculpture
Illustrations	

Evaluating artisan needs according to this system would enable the City to direct an artisan toward a specific zone designated in the municipal development plan to accommodate the environmental effects and physical space requirements associated with the particular activity.

National Building Code Implications

The City of Sainte-Geneviève determined that rigorous application of the National Building Code could discourage construction or renovation of buildings to provide live/work artisan accommodation. The City decided to use the National Building Code to determine equivalencies and assess applications for building and renovating live/work accommodation on an individual basis. Flexibility would be required in interpreting the Code in order to encourage uptake while maintaining acceptable levels of health and safety.

For example, the Code suggests that activities representing less than 10 per cent of the main use in a residential building are secondary, and do not require extra health and safety security measures. Activities representing 10 per cent or more of a dwelling's use are deemed primary use, not secondary, and require additional measures. These additional measures could represent substantial increases in renovation or construction costs, which could be prohibitive for artisans.

The City estimated that 40 per cent or more of an artisan's dwelling could be required for work and selling space. Consequently, the municipal development plan would allow that more than 40 per cent of a dwelling be devoted to work, or "secondary", activities.

2.3 Siting and Architectural Integration Plan

The siting and architectural integration plan (*plan d'intégration et d'implantation architectural*—PIIA) is an innovative regulatory approach provided for under the Quebec *Loi sur l'aménagement et l'urbanisme* (the provincial planning act). Compared to a traditional regulatory approach, a PIIA provides quality-control of housing projects using specialized criteria.

Although projects must meet standard regulations, municipalities can allow for more flexibility if qualitative objectives can be met through the PIIA approach. Building permits for individual projects are issued only when the planning committee of a municipality has made its recommendations to council, which in turn gives final approval.

When construction or renovation proceeds on a specific project, the time involved in obtaining building and subdivision permits should be minimized, as the detailed planning was completed for the PIIA.

The City of Sainte-Geneviève adopted a PIIA to preserve the community's heritage character and quality and standard of living, while encouraging artisans to locate there. The PIIA serves the following objectives:

- To improve and preserve the dominant architectural characteristics, existing heritage property and natural surroundings along Gouin Boulevard (the city's main street)
- To maintain the original character of buildings of historical and architectural interest without compromising the character of the city as a whole
- To ensure harmonious integration of all new and renovated buildings

- To improve buildings that lack visual using Sainte-Geneviève's heritage as a source of inspiration
- To recognize the importance of original site planning and character of the landscape as a whole.

Permit applications governed by the PIIA are examined within the following parameters:

- Location of existing and proposed buildings
- Construction and permanent installation requirements
- The state of the terrain and type of development proposed
- The architecture of the building to be constructed, renovated, moved or used for signage or other exterior changes

- The proposed building in relation to adjacent buildings
- The impact of the proposed building or development changes on neighbouring properties.

Siting and Architectural Integration Plans

Siting and architectural integration plans are a provision of Quebec's Loi sur l'aménagement et l'urbanisme, introduced in June 1989, which provide municipalities with greater flexibility in applying their by-laws. These plans make it possible to achieve the following:

- *Better siting and architectural quality for projects*
- *Effective application of regulatory standards while being attentive to quality objectives.*

A municipality can require a siting and architectural integration plan, before issuing subdivision and building permits, which provides information on such aspects as a building's siting, vehicular access, landscaping and other features.

2.4 The Demonstration Project

The renovation of a cabinetmaker's garage put the regulatory changes to the test, giving the project team more insight into the needs of artisans and highlighting further modifications that needed to be made.

The renovation project involved the addition of a second floor above the cabinetmaker's garage to create space for a showroom and storage. The ground floor was converted into an office and a workshop. External signage advertising the artisan's business, conforming with the municipality's new regulations, was also part of the project.

Sainte-Geneviève's existing regulations restricted additions to no more than a 30 per cent increase in size over the existing structure. This was not sufficient to meet the cabinetmaker's needs, and the regulation was changed to permit an increase of up to 40 per cent.

Situated at an intersection of Sainte-Geneviève's main street, the demonstration project showcases the objectives of the artisan accommodation initiative and how they can be met.

The architecture of the new, two-storey workshop and display area is consistent with the artisan's heritage home. A side door serves as the business entrance and gives direct access to the garden between the workshop and the house.

The garage door was left in place in order for the cabinetmaker to move large pieces of wood into the workshop area. It also facilitates access to material storage, moving equipment or furniture in or out for repairs and disposing of waste materials (figure 3).

An interior door on the ground floor separates an office area containing telephone, fax and other business equipment from the woodworking equipment and activities carried out in the workshop. The ground floor was designed to absorb the weight and vibrations of heavy equipment used by the cabinetmaker (figure 4). The second floor of the workshop serves as a boutique and display area (figure 5).

Figure 3. The Gaudry Workshop – Exterior

Source: City of Sainte-Geneviève

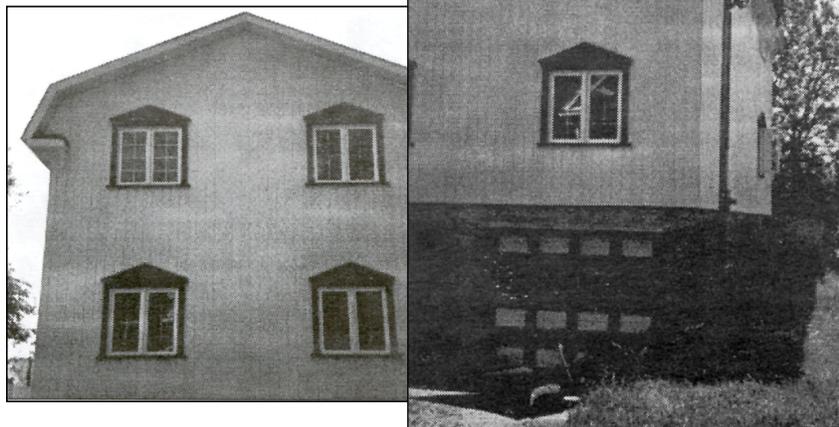
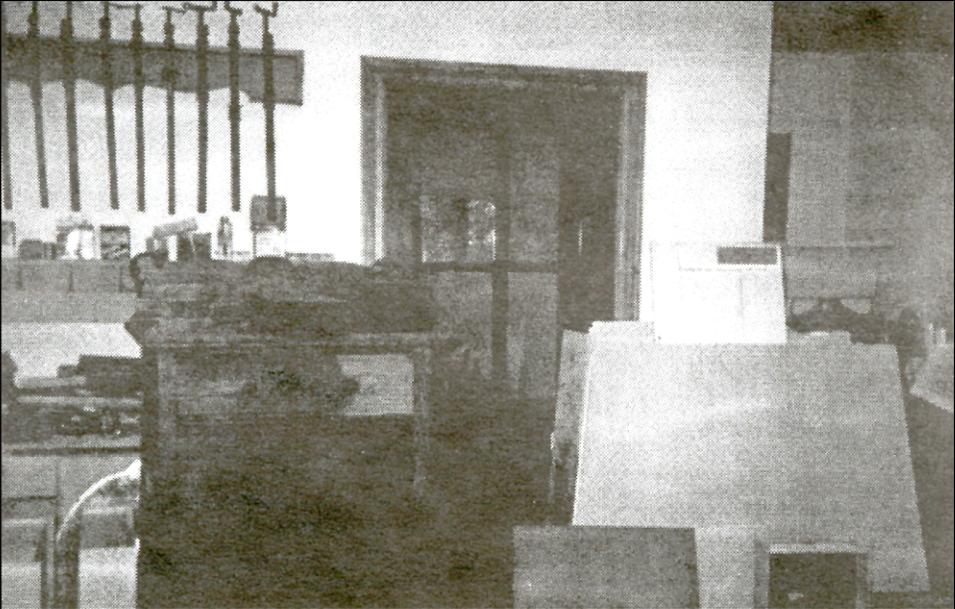


Figure 4. The Gaudry Workshop – Ground Floor Work Area



Source: City of Sainte-Genève

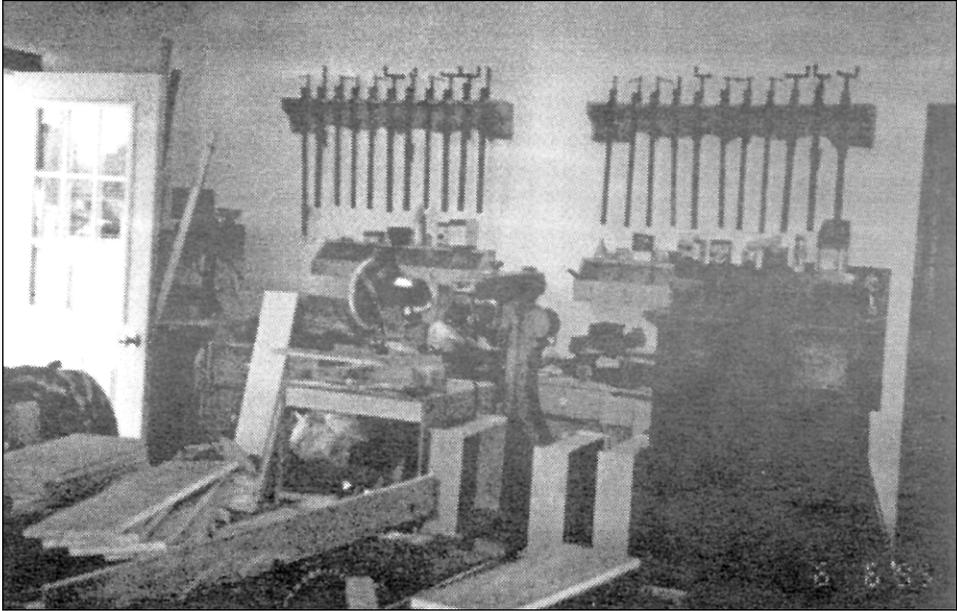
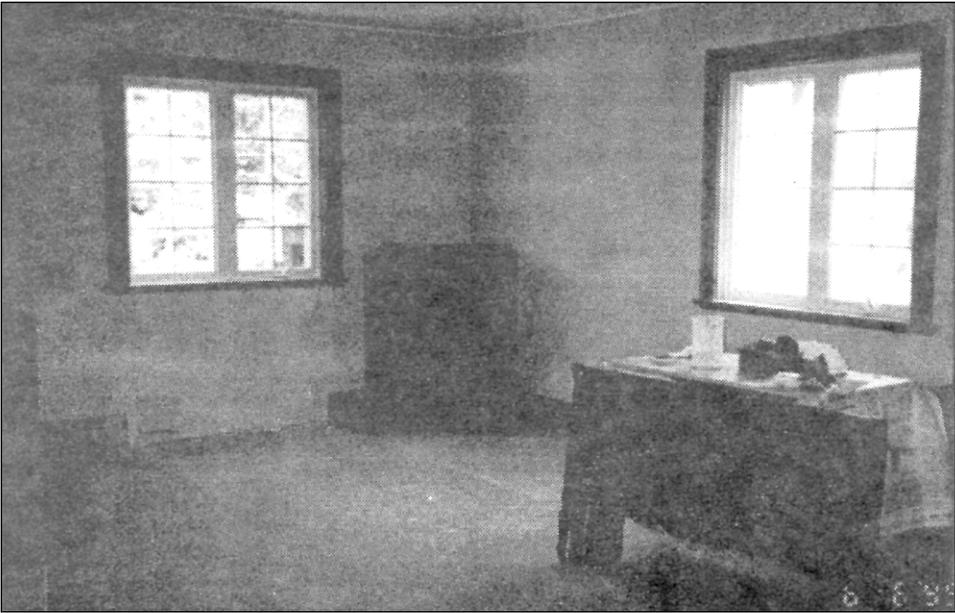


Figure 5. The Gaudry Workshop – Second Floor Display Area

Source: City of Sainte-Genève



Demonstration Project Costs

Material costs for the workshop and showroom were estimated at \$30,000, or \$600 per m². The material costs were considered to represent a relatively low investment, an important factor in attracting artisans to Sainte-Geneviève.

Much of the labour was carried out by the cabinetmaker himself, and some, such as the electrical work, was done on an exchange of service basis. As such, labour costs were somewhat difficult to determine, but were estimated at being roughly the same as the cost of materials, \$30,000. An estimated breakdown of costs by item is presented in figure 6.

Fifteen months passed from the time the cabinetmaker applied for a building permit to the official opening of the workshop and showroom. The amount of time required when an artisan carries out his or her own construction or renovation work could be considered a drawback in terms of meeting project goals quickly. If artisans have the required skills, they might consider it more affordable to carry out the work themselves. However, this limits the amount of time they will have left to devote to their craft and promoting their business.

Financial Programs

Sainte-Geneviève introduced a number of financial programs intended to assist artisans or landlords with the cost of converting their premises to mixed use. Through the City's *Action-RenovArt* program, artisans and landlords could qualify for a tax exemption on the increased value of their properties for a period of four years. Other programs were designed to assist Employment Insurance recipients, entrepreneurs under 35 years of age, low-income homeowners and those who had homes built before 1981.

Typical Modifications

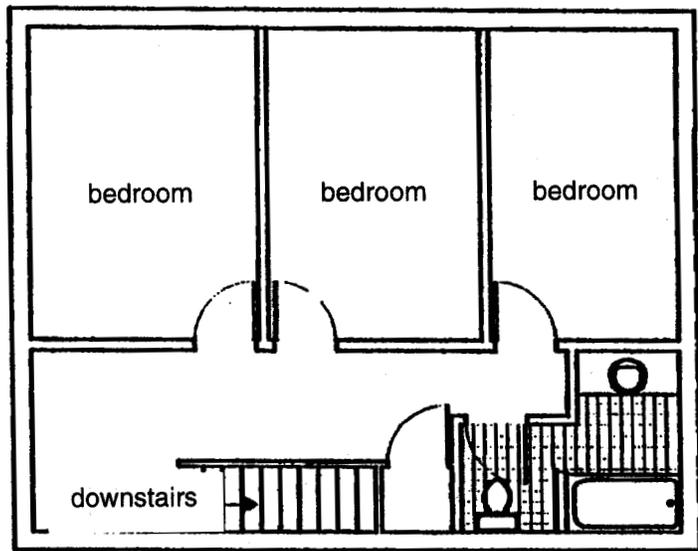
Following the demonstration renovation, A•C•T project team developed generic plans showing basic, affordable modifications that could be made in order to accommodate living, working and display areas in a typical residence in Sainte-Geneviève. Figure 7 illustrates the typical layout before modification; figures 8 and 9 illustrate how an artisan might conduct modifications in two stages.

The project team estimated it would cost \$2,000 to complete the first stage, in which the garage is converted into a workshop. In the second stage, the basement is converted into a workshop, and the ground floor display area is much larger, at an estimated cost of \$5,800.

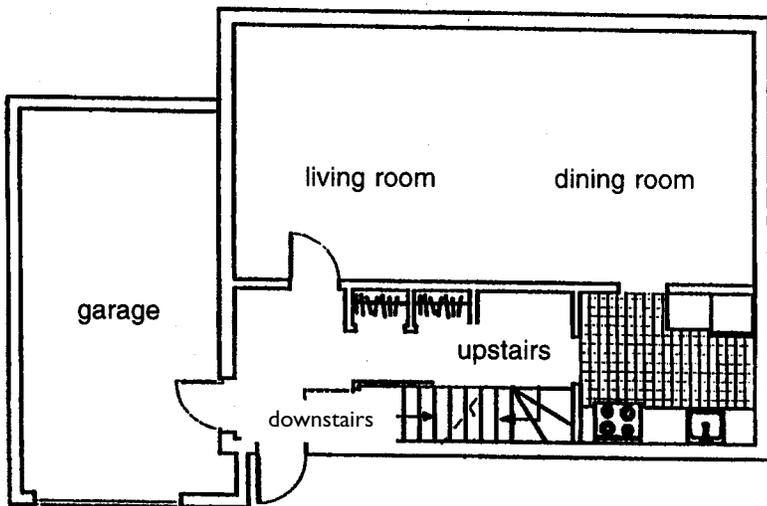
Figure 6. Itemized Breakdown of Costs

Item	Cost
Basic material: cement, gypsum, wood, insulation, finishing, floors and ceilings	\$35,600
Windows and doors	6,000
Roofing	3,000
Exterior panelling	3,000
Electrical wiring	2,500
Heating and ventilation	2,000
Painting, interior and exterior	1,900
Lighting equipment	1,600
Access ramp	1,600
Air conditioning	1,200
Plumbing—upgrading	1,000
Hardware	600
TOTAL COSTS	\$60,000

Figure 7. Typical Layout – Before Modification



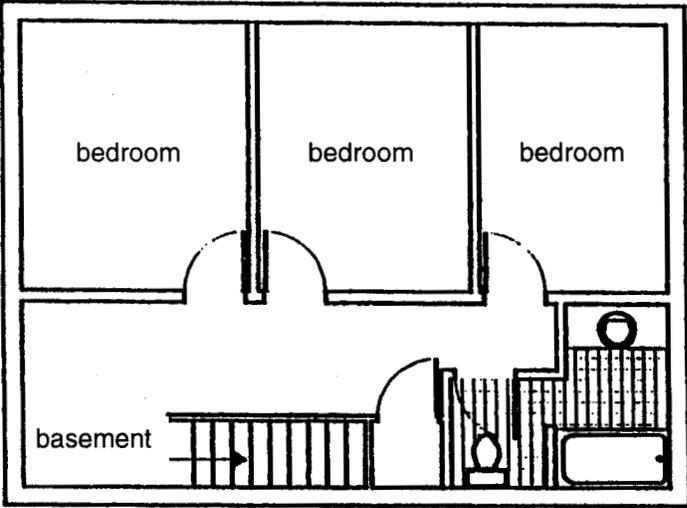
Second Floor



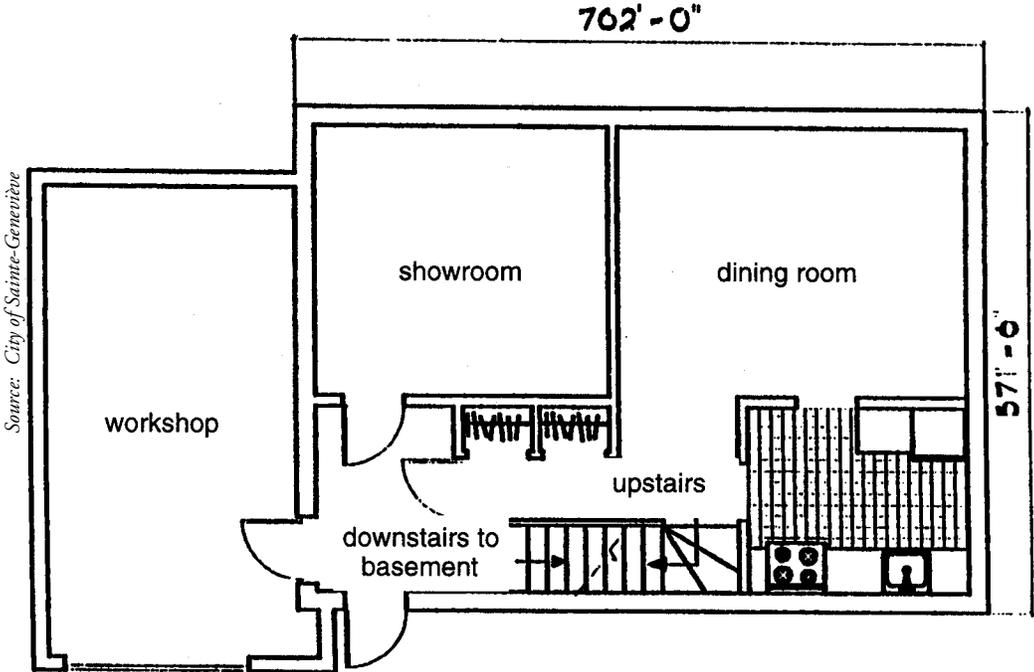
Ground Floor

Source: City of Sainte-Genève

Figure 8. Typical Layout – First Stage Modification

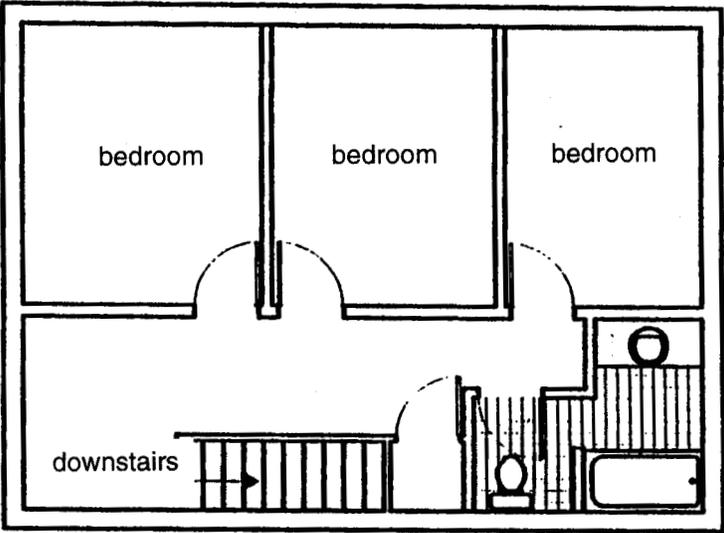


Second Floor

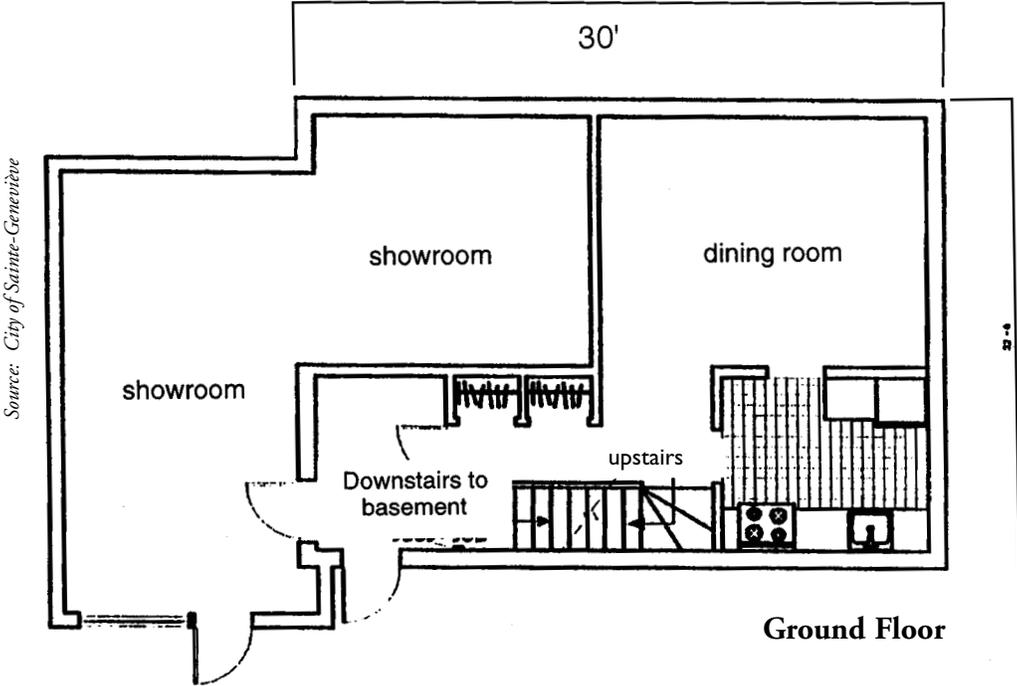


Ground Floor

Figure 9. Typical Layout – Second Stage Modification



Second Floor



Ground Floor

Source: City of Sainte-Genève

2.5 Promoting the Project

The A•C•T project had three promotional phases. The first was the official launch of the City's overall revitalization initiative. The second phase consisted of ongoing public promotion and events aimed at generating community interest and attracting artisans to the municipality. The third phase involved the official opening of the A•C•T demonstration building.

Project Launch

On October 5, 1994, the City invited its citizens to the official launch of the *Sainte-Geneviève : Ville artisanale* initiative. The event was used to announce the City's receipt of the A•C•T grant to undertake regulatory reform and the demonstration project for mixed-use accommodation. Media coverage of the launch helped to confirm the importance and originality of the project and the community's interest.

The City distributed a pamphlet, *L'artisanat, ça transforme*, promoting the benefits of mixed-use accommodation for artisans and outlining various programs intended to encourage renovations and help artisans establish in Sainte-Geneviève.

Ongoing Promotion

Posters and bulletins about the initiative, the adoption of new regulations and the official opening of the demonstration building served to keep the public's attention on the project. A brochure was produced to inform artisans and property owners of the regulations and administrative steps necessary for any mixed-use renovation or construction project. The brochure discusses the following:

- The proposed work
- Municipal regulations
- Zoning, lot and construction regulations
- Required documents
- Permits
- Financial assistance and grants
- Role of the municipality's planning committee
- Reasons for municipal requirements.

Two months before the official opening of the demonstration building, more than 30 artisans joined in an outdoor gathering at *Rendez-vous des Arts 1995* to learn about the benefits and possibilities of mixed-use accommodation in Sainte-Geneviève.

Official Opening

The official opening of the A•C•T demonstration building November 20, 1995 included the mayor of Sainte-Geneviève; the mayor of the neighbouring town of Pierrefonds, who represented the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; the local Member of Parliament, a representative from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, members of the project team and the local media. The West Island's bilingual weekly newspaper, *Cités Nouvelles/City News*, serving Sainte-Geneviève and neighbouring municipalities, carried an article about the project. It detailed the aims of the A•C•T Program, the reasons why Sainte-Geneviève had been awarded an A•C•T grant, current trends in home-based businesses and how the demonstration project was an excellent example of how Sainte-Geneviève and artisans can benefit from the new regulations and assistance programs aimed at encouraging artisan activity.

3.0 THE COMMUNITY AND THE KEY PLAYERS

3.1 Sainte-Geneviève: A City for Artisans

The initiative to revitalize Sainte-Geneviève by attracting artisans would not only benefit artisans and stimulate much-needed economic growth, it would revive a long tradition of artisan activity within Sainte-Geneviève. The municipality's plan to create an artisan city was considered vital for its survival, since businesses were closing, property values were declining and the working population was migrating to newer, more dynamic municipalities nearby.

Sainte-Geneviève offered an ideal setting for artisans, with its rural surroundings, close proximity to industrial sectors such as Dorval and Saint-Laurent, attractive heritage buildings and riverside location. Reasonable rents and available space were added advantages.

Revitalization of the downtown area would address a combination of problems. Many of the buildings were empty and badly in need of repair, and renovations were crucial for the city to compete with neighbouring municipalities. A poor road infrastructure and lack of parking space also had to be addressed.

3.2 The Key Players

Efforts to revitalize Sainte-Geneviève were the result of cooperation between government and other key housing stakeholders.

The A•C•T project team comprised municipal representatives, an urban planner, an architect and a representative of the West Island Industry Commission. The team worked closely with the City's planning advisory committee, representatives of other municipalities with artisan communities, local artisans, and property owners to develop regulations that would permit mixed-use accommodation. The urban planner on the A•C•T project team was charged with coordinating the following tasks:

- Research and analyze different options, develop project requirements and finalize the concept
- Draft zoning modifications and conduct public information meetings
- Arrange demonstration project
- Prepare and verify renovation cost data
- Submit zoning change for approval
- Prepare information kits for artisans and builders
- Apply for regulatory changes
- Evaluate the project.

4.0 REGULATORY REFORM INITIATIVES AND IMPACT ON HOUSING COST, CHOICE AND QUALITY

Artisans are increasingly being recognized as important economic allies in attracting and retaining a working population of highly educated individuals, promoting reinvestment, drawing tourism and revitalizing derelict neighbourhoods. The concept of planning an artisan city to revitalize a municipality is a unique solution benefiting both artisans and the community as a whole. In the case of Sainte-Geneviève, it is also restoring a tradition of artisan activity that is part of the city's unique heritage.

The A•C•T project enabled the City of Sainte-Geneviève to respond in a positive and dynamic way to stimulate economic development within the municipality. The regulatory changes achieved by the A•C•T project team will promote affordability, choice and quality in live/work accommodation for artisans.

Some of the benefits that Sainte-Geneviève's new regulations provide are that artisans can live, work and sell their products all in the same building.

— Sylvie Laurier
A•C•T Project Team Coordinator

"The trend towards live/work housing in the future requires that municipalities rethink their planning and economic development policies for both the medium and the long term."

— Bernard Patry, M.P., Pierrefonds-Dollars
At the Official Opening

Sainte-Geneviève's new regulations and assistance programs for mixed-use accommodation have already had a positive impact beyond the project itself. Soon after, another local artisan converted the front hallway and corridor of his home into a studio and an art gallery. Other projects were subsequently undertaken, and at the time of publication, applications for new projects were in the works.

Other municipalities have shown interest in the project's initiative as a means of community revitalization, and are looking at mixed-use accommodation as a means of providing new housing options and better planned spaces for artisans and others working out of their homes.