

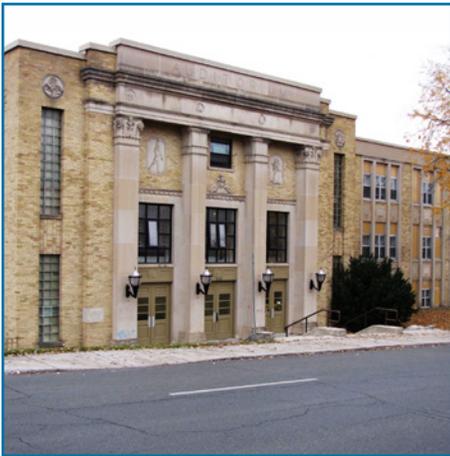


CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

# PROJECT PROFILE

## TVM Schoolhouse

Peterborough, Ontario



A converted primary school in Peterborough offers independent living for adults with physical and mental disabilities, with 48 new affordable and accessible residential suites. TVM Schoolhouse, which opened in May 2009, is the province's first fully accessible, affordable heritage conversion, according to its developer. The building is owned by the TVM Group, a Toronto-based property management company dedicated to residential, commercial and redevelopment projects.

### Highlights

TVM Schoolhouse provides accessible and affordable apartments for people with disabilities, by combining heritage features with modern accessibility.

**Client group:** People with moderate incomes, people who have physical or mental disabilities

**Developer:** TVM Group

**Number of units:** 48

**Tenure:** Rental, set at affordable rates (39 units are rented to KPP clients, 7 are rented to clients of the CMHA in Peterborough and 2 units are referred through the Peterborough Housing Resource Centre)

**Who was involved?** Government of Canada (CMHC), Province of Ontario (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing), City of Peterborough, TVM Group, Kawartha Participation Projects

TVM Group worked closely with Kawartha Participation Projects (KPP), a local organization that serves adults with intellectual and physical disabilities—many of whom now live in the building.

“This is a very special place—it has changed the lives of people living here,” explained Amit Sofer, Principal of TVM Group. “Many of the tenants lived with aging parents, and this was their first opportunity to be independent.”

While the building's heritage character was carefully preserved, TVM Schoolhouse has some of the most modern accessibility features available today.

### The Affordable Housing Solution

Originally the main primary school for Peterborough, the 1940s-era building had a large indoor running track and an 800-seat auditorium. It was declared

18-07-13



surplus in the late 1990s, as families moved to newer developments on the city's perimeter. Located in a transitional area between downtown and residential sections, TVM Schoolhouse is close to services, parks and amenities.

TVM Group purchased the building in 2006, intending to redevelop it as a residential project.

"When we looked at the building, we knew it would be a shame to take it down," said Sofer. "It's a beautiful piece of work and an important part of the community. Many of the adults living here today schooled there."

TVM Group always works closely with municipalities and local service providers to create connected, supported communities. After meetings and discussions with KPP, the company decided to provide accessible housing for adults with physical and intellectual disabilities. Seven of the units are rented to clients of the Canadian Mental Health Association in Peterborough.

"KPP has a huge waiting list. We just put a small dent in it," Sofer explained.

The \$6-million project was made possible by strong community partnerships and the support of all three levels of government. TVM Schoolhouse received combined federal and provincial funding of close to \$3,360,000 under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing

Program Agreement. The City of Peterborough provided a \$75,000 grant to help defray the costs of the elevator.

The extensive conversion took 16 months to complete. The auditorium and stadium on the south end of the building each had 7.3-metre (24-foot) ceilings. The spaces were each converted into two floors, requiring major structural work. "It was like creating a new building within the building," Sofer explained.

Many of the ornate details were restored or matched, including exterior glass block, pillars, window details and limestone. TVM worked closely with the City's Heritage Department and obtained heritage designation for the property. The building interior was gutted, and new mechanical, interior wall, plumbing and electrical components were added.

The building is universally accessible. All doorways are 91.4 cm (36 in.) wide, hallways are 152.4 cm (60 in.) wide and suite entry doors are power-assisted. Features include lowered kitchen counters and light switches, roll-in showers and roll-under cabinets, raised commodes, and appliances with front controls and side openings to make the living space accessible to people with mobility challenges. The building has scooter parking and battery recharge areas, an elevator, and the coin-operated laundry in the basement has front load

appliances. For safety, the building features enhanced audio and upgraded fire alarms.

Kawartha Participation Projects offices are on the ground floor, plus a common room and restroom. KPP staff is available around the clock to provide direct services to the tenants.

To help reduce operating costs for long-term affordability, building longevity and energy efficiency, TVM invested in high quality materials and insulation.

"We went well beyond the scope of normal construction," Sofer explained. "This was our first massive conversion project. This project earned our company significant recognition. We've been invited to bid on four other projects."

In addition to the construction challenges, the project required rezoning and faced some community opposition. "People were opposed to having affordable housing in their neighbourhood. We held lots of community meetings in order to resolve these concerns," said Sofer.

Sharon Adams moved into TVM Schoolhouse in July 2009. The affordable apartment where she lived for the previous 13 years was not fully accessible, and her health was deteriorating. Sharon uses canes and a walker and has a wheelchair for longer distances.

“I started losing my balance and had some falls. I needed more care,” Sharon explained. “I applied to KPP and put my name in for this new building. They help me with showers and housekeeping and with meals when I’m having a bad day.”

“I love the building—it’s got quite a lot of history,” she added. “I know the area well and was glad to come down here. I’m much better off here—everything is handy. It’s a ten-minute wheelchair trip to the shops and close to my church.”

#### **CMHC Contact**

Contact a representative of CMHC's Affordable Housing Centre  
[www.cmhc.ca/contactahc](http://www.cmhc.ca/contactahc)