

Innovation Building Group Best Practices for Modern Methods of Construction



11. Why Attainable Housing Must Compete with the Resale Market

One of the largest structural challenges in housing affordability is the growing disconnect between the cost of new construction and the financial capacity of the households expected to occupy it.

In many markets, new housing has become substantially more expensive than existing resale housing, even before operational costs are considered.

If this gap continues widening, affordability pressures will persist regardless of supply increases. This issue is particularly visible in communities such as:

- Pemberton,
- Whistler,
- Revelstoke,
- and other smaller British Columbia municipalities

where local workers and younger families increasingly struggle to access ownership housing.

Economist Mike Moffatt has frequently noted that Canada's housing challenge is not solely a supply problem, but also a productivity problem. If the cost of delivering new housing continues increasing faster than household incomes, supply growth alone may not restore attainability.

This observation aligns closely with what we observed through projects such as the Alders in Pemberton. The objective was not simply to deliver another high-performance project. The larger goal was to deliver family-oriented housing capable of competing directly with existing resale housing on both:

- purchase price, and
- long-term operating affordability.

Achieving this required rethinking the delivery process itself through:

- integrated systems,
- manufacturing-informed detailing,
- simplified mechanical strategies,
- repeatable assemblies, and
- early-stage costing integration,

Construction costs were reduced while operational performance and resilience improved. The resulting housing achieved pricing competitive with many existing resale homes while simultaneously lowering long-term heating, cooling, and maintenance costs.

This distinction is increasingly important.

If high-performance housing only competes with other new construction, the industry risks producing technically advanced housing that remains inaccessible to many working households. Meaningful attainability requires new housing to compete directly with the broader housing market.

Operational affordability is central to this equation. Therefore, we need homes with substantially lower energy consumption, maintenance exposure, and replacement requirements.

Improving attainability therefore depends not only on increasing housing supply, but also on improving delivery productivity, simplifying systems, and reducing unnecessary project complexity.