

CMHC should rate home builders

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Homebuyers must do some research

Letter, May 1.

Brian Johnston's letter highlights a key problem: Consumers have no reliable, objective means of knowing who the good builders are. His suggestions for consumers are, unfortunately, ineffective.

Just because a builder is not a member of the local builders' association does not mean the builder is not a good builder. Knocking on doors may help, but often owners are not prepared to disclose their negative experience with a builder for fear of lowering their own property value and the possibility of litigation by their builder. Just because there is no occupancy permit from the municipality does not mean that the purchaser can delay taking possession of the home.

Tarion's website does not disclose sufficient information about a builder's past performance. For example, the builder may make a cash settlement with the homeowner for construction defects and these construction defects may, therefore, never be disclosed on Tarion's website.

Consumers desperately need an objective, reliable rating system for builders. We have been encouraging Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to take on this role for some time.

This would be an excellent role for our federal Crown corporation.

Karen Somerville, President, Canadians for Properly Built Homes, Ottawa