

Central City Lodge

- 415 WEST PENDER STREET

Developer/Owner:	Central City Mission
Architect:	Neale Staniszkis Doll Adams Architects
Landscape Architect:	Guzzi Perry Ltd.
City Staff:	Jonathan Barrett (Development Planner) John Jessup (Housing Planner)
Year of completion:	1996

PROJECT DATA

Zoning:	Downtown District (DD)
Site area:	15,600 sq. ft.
FSR:	4.8
Use:	Special Needs residential
Floor area:	74,400 sq. ft.
Height:	95 ft.

This project for a special needs residential and alcohol recovery care facility is located in the downtown inner city neighbourhood of Victory Square, on the northwest corner of Homer and Pender Streets. The 125 ft. x 120 ft. site slopes down about ten feet from Pender Street to the lane. The surrounding urban context is defined by older buildings up to nine storeys, many of which are heritage listed. Buildings in the area typically use the full site area, and come right out to the property line. The unusually complicated building program, tight urban site, and surrounding heritage context, all posed major urban design constraints.

The architects have employed several key urban design strategies to address the site constraints, including:

- acknowledging the historical context while creating a contemporary urban design;
- continuance of the pattern of adjacent development in terms of scale and massing;
- differential treatment of the two street facades to reflect differing conditions;
- exploiting the slope by stepping the building height down to the lane; and
- creating a positive pedestrian interface at street level.

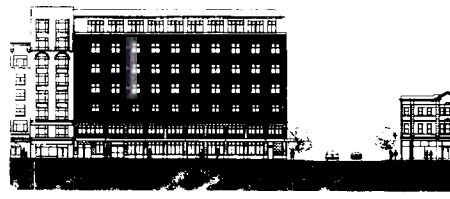
The building houses about 120 residents. It is H-shaped, and is comprised of a seven-storey wing facing Pender Street to the south, a six-storey wing facing the lane to the north, and - along the easterly Homer Street elevation - a three-storey element screening the internal courtyard and connecting these two wings. A connecting wing along the west side completes the assembly, with a secondary light well separating it from the adjacent Montgomery Hotel's windows which look onto the site.

The project is notable for the effort expended in creating an appropriate contextual fit, particularly with the adjacent 8-storey Montgomery Hotel, which is a listed heritage building. This has been done in several ways through the building's siting, massing and choice of materials, including:

- continuing the building line along both Pender and Homer streets, with the new building coming right out to the sidewalk, thus helping to define the street edge and providing continuity of built form;



Pender Street facade continues historic streetwell

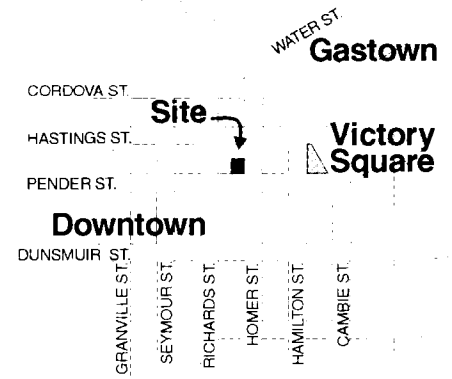


South Elevation



East Elevation

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- echoing the vertical bays of the Montgomery in the fenestration rhythm along Pender;
- achieving a continuity of scale by carrying the cornice line of the adjacent Montgomery Hotel across the new facade on Pender Street; and
- providing masonry and tile cladding to suggest the stability and permanence appropriate to urban buildings, and to relate the project to its heritage setting.

The building's principal facade has a very clearly defined base, middle section and top, which helps the building fit into its surrounding context of traditional structures, all of which have similar tripartite facade treatments. The top floor is carefully set back and capped with a broad overhanging cornice, which further enhances the building's profile and recalls the traditional profiles of surrounding older buildings.

The building program has been zoned horizontally, with amenity and activity spaces grouped on the ground floor to provide visual interest and augment the existing Pender Street 'storefront' experience for pedestrians. Continuous weather protection is provided along Pender Street, and returns around the Homer Street corner.

In keeping with the sensitivities of the building's program, separate, discrete entrances have been provided for the different program components. These are handled very carefully, with appropriately little attention being drawn to them.

The Homer Street facade helps to screen the raised private inner courtyard, while still permitting sunlight to penetrate this important open space amenity. This sunny, protected courtyard provides a secure outdoor open space with seating and good livability for fragile residents. The facade incorporates a third floor bridge connecting the Pender Street and lane wings, thus providing the required 'wandering loop' for psycho-geriatric residents.

The Central City Lodge is a textbook example of creating an appropriate 'background' building rather than a 'monument', that is, a building which integrates respectfully into its surrounding context and contributes to the city's urban fabric. At the same time, it creates an especially livable and supportive environment for residents with very special needs.

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Homer Street courtyard and bridge