

The Salvation Army Harbour Light
128 – 138 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

November 1, 2019

Project Description

About the Salvation Army Harbour Light

The Salvation Army (TSA), a non-profit Christian organization, has been caring for and changing lives of men and women at Harbour Light since 1953: *We believe in people*. The proposed Vancouver Harbour Light facility is the largest single contribution to meeting a wide variety of critical social needs and housing in the Downtown Eastside. The Salvation Army is committed to retaining and expanding its role in the City, which it has undertaken for over 65 years, serving thousands of people in the community with practical and compassionate care. We are proposing this project at a time of unprecedented challenges for the City in affordable housing and other significant social issues. We have the opportunity, with this project, to improve and continue to deliver major social programs and 46 affordable rental units.

Existing Building and Programs

Renovating or converting the existing north side is not considered viable because of the building configuration, failing mechanical systems, and seismic upgrade requirements. TSA has significant experience operating various programs in cooperation with government authorities.

Summary

The proposed new Harbour Light will provide housing for 300 residents in the various programs and continue their community feeding program of 150,000 meals annually.

Design Rationale

The design considerations for the new building are as follows:

1. Provide a warm, welcoming and non-institutional space;
2. Meet TSA program needs and operating policies;
3. Ensure safety and security for clients, staff and local community;
4. Ensure financial viability;
5. Ensure physical accessibility;
6. Ensure durability and cost effective operation;
7. Ensure flexibility for short and longterm changes in use;
8. Design for neighbourhood integration and serve as an asset to the local community;
9. Ensure maximum daylighting for health and safety;
10. Incorporate accessible wayfinding for clients, staff and visitors;
11. Maximize space utilization and design efficiency.

This proposal at 128 – 138 East Cordova Street is a development permit application in the Gastown HA-2 Zoning for the redevelopment of Harbour Light. This initiative represents a significant commitment to build on the City's network of social and supportive housing projects. This property at East Cordova is owned by The Salvation Army.

The project consists of eight major program areas: Community programs, food services, client programs, administration, supportive residential, shelter, CRF and long term housing. Please refer to drawing A-002 for more detail.

Site Context

The site is located at the south side of East Cordova, mid-block between Columbia Street and Main Street and is currently occupied by TSA itself, (shelter and administration). The area contains a mixture of supportive housing, social services, offices, grade level retail and light industrial uses. Cordova Street is a busy exiting vehicular route with from the downtown core.

The Site

The site is approximately 53.341 m x 37.209 m and has an area of approximately 1,985 sm. From the low point at the northwest corner of the site it rises 2.49 m at the northeast corner. Along the west side of the site it rises 0.05 m and on the east side it drops 0.13 m.

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The form of the building emerged from a desire to develop a strong urban street definition on Cordova and embrace the Gastown Heritage Guidelines. In order to maximize the number of units and increase the perimeter windows the shape has two small courtyards on the west and east and a larger southern courtyard. Internally, the mandate was to design a straightforward efficient building with clear circulation.

Building Height

As per our review with City of Vancouver Planning, there will be a height variance to allow for 9 storeys. This is to accommodate two additional floors of affordable rental housing. These two floors have been set back from E. Cordova Street to make them less visible.

We have additional height and three two storey spaces for the lobby, multipurpose room and dining rooms. For reasons related to security, staff safety, client mental health, movement and comfort, it is essential that these main two floors have a sense of openness, breathability, increased visibility and an abundance of natural light. Our building will house upwards of 300 individuals nightly. Many of these individuals will access services multiple times per day on the main and second floors. An average of 1100 clients, community meal guests, volunteers, and staff will flow through the main and second floors daily with a daily average of 1000 meals being served. In terms of the total number of movements of persons passing through front entrance & lobby, we are looking at 4300. In terms of the total estimated daily movements of persons utilizing the 4 elevators, that number is 3300. "Elbow" room is critical. Good visibility for security and support staff is vital.

The floor to floor height for the program and residential floors (3 to 9) has been established at 3.24 m. This is to meet the requirements of a Step Code 3 Plus energy target. Due to the density of units on these floors, cooling will also have to be provided that necessitates ceiling ductwork. Energy modeling is underway and we anticipate that cooling will be required, particularly for units on the east, south and west sides.

Outdoor Amenity and Landscape

Outdoor amenity areas with southern exposure has been provided on the third floor level for residents and staff. There are also balconies from the fourth floor to the 7th floor for the residents to use. The 8th floor has a large outdoor patio on the northwest corner for the affordable rental suites. As the existing Harbour Light second floor courtyard has mature landscaping, Durante Kreuk will incorporate some of this plant material in their landscaped design for the new building.

The landscape treatment for Cordova will be developed in coordination with the CoV to reinforce urban design considerations. This includes the introduction of street trees, decorative paving and bicycle racks.

Architectural Expression

We're cognizant that this project has the opportunity to enhance Gastown's historic character and aesthetic at the eastern edge of this zoning. hold the eastern edge of Gastown. As per the *Gastown HA-2 Design Guidelines* we are proposing a *new architectural vocabulary that complements the heritage character of the original Gastown buildings*. Gastown is known for its masonry brick and we are suggesting using warm tone brick in two colours on the north façade. This will be welcoming to the community and brighten the north side of the street. We've split these masonry elements into two heights to enhance the "sawtooth" profile that is fundamental to the character of Gastown. The upper floor windows have been oriented vertically as punched openings in the masonry surface. We've maintained a repetitive pattern as suggested by the *Design Guidelines*.

Since the building is on the north side of the street, we've provided generous height for the entrance and multipurpose room in order to bring in as much natural light as possible.

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To reduce the massing of the building we've stepped back the upper two floors on the north and west sides. Many of the historic buildings in Gastown have had rooftop additions to them. We are proposing a similar approach with sections of the top two floors. These would be more streamlined architecturally and done in a silver or muted colour to blend in with the sky when you're looking up at the building.

Entry Canopy

We have a canopy over the main entrance to mark it as a wayfinder when you're looking down Cordova Street. Signage will also be developed to increase the entry location. We have not extended the canopy along the face of the building as the challenge with encampments below weather protection canopies is a growing problem in the DTES. Given that we are the largest single emergency shelter provider in the DTES, our location in close proximity to other services, including a safe injection site, a canopy, particularly one of such considerable length, would be certain to encourage "tenting", particularly in the evening and overnight hours, and in inclement weather. This would have a negative impact on our residents, building security, pedestrian traffic and our neighbours. In terms of the need for protection from weather for client queues for programs, we are designing our building such that queues will be mostly indoors.

Windows

We have a high percentage of clients with emotional, mental health and/or cognitive barriers. Windows on floors 1 to 7 would need to be non-operable to ensure residents are not throwing or hanging things out the windows. This would also contribute to the maximization of energy savings. Windows on the two top housing floors will be operable.

Communal Balconies

Due to the sheer number of our clients (300 all year and an additional 50 seasonal) fresh air and designated communal balcony spaces will be provided on all floors. As this user group has a high percentage of residents that smoke, we have allocated smoking balconies on each floor.

Residential Storage

For the 46 units of housing tenant storage will be included in the design. For the halfway house, emergency shelter and supported residential programs, although clients may reside in these programs for up to a year or more, many will reside with us for only weeks to months. Most come with a minimal amount of personal effects (back pack, small suitcase or duffle bag). Some short term storage will be designed on each of the program floors. Larger storage areas for bulk storage or longer term storage will be included in the basement area and will be staff or staff-with-client access only. Shopping cart storage for emergency shelter clients will be designed on the main level of the building with street front access.

Loading Docks & Delivery Traffic

We have one Class A off-site loading space and one Class B off-site loading space with raised platform. The Class B loading space will allow a 5-ton truck access and the ability to park fully inside our building when not in use. This is sufficient to meet our needs (currently we have no loading dock). We have three company vans and trucks that bring deliveries to our building between the hours of 8:00am and 1:30pm daily. These vehicles can be staged to deliver at alternating times. Our food delivery company delivers weekday mornings prior to the arrival of our company trucks.

Waste Removal

Waste and recycling removal will be accommodated in a separate alleyway accessible room designed in consultation with our waste management contractor to ensure ease of access and movement of their vehicles.

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Parking

Until four years ago when we acquired the empty lot at 130E Cordova ST, parking for staff was limited to 6 stalls in our 119 E Cordova St building. Only 5 of our current building long term residents own a vehicle. The majority of our staff use public transit. Out of our 310 remaining program beds (halfway house, emergency shelter and supported residential), only about 5 or 6 of these residents have a vehicle. These individuals generally use street parking. 14 stalls in the new building will be sufficient for our program vehicles and those staff who require parking for purposes related to their work.

Bicycle Storage

Separate bicycle storage for the 46 units and for staff will be accommodated in the basement of the building. Otherwise, almost none of our halfway house, emergency shelter or supported residential program clients use a bike. If we had to attach a percentage of client who would require bicycle storage, 5% (or 15) would be the estimate. We have two Class B bicycle storage spaces in a secured room off of the E Cordova Street sidewalk. Due to the prevalence of stolen bikes in this area it was decided to have the bikes in a secure room and this will be monitored by staff.