GERMAN-CANADIAN CARE HOME
A VISION FOR A NEW BUILDING

June 2013
Our vision

To create a home for seniors with complex care needs, enabling them to enjoy daily life.

It is our calling to support seniors in their final years by integrating them into our community, promoting their autonomy and recognizing their contributions. This is made possible by a comfortable environment, caring companionship and excellent clinical care. We are committed to continuous learning about new therapeutic approaches and using these to improve residents’ quality of life.

We identify with the Eden Alternative philosophy as a way to eliminate the loneliness, helplessness and boredom of long-term residential care.

A new state-of-the-art facility will enhance our ability to provide high quality services and innovative complex care to future residents.
Our story

Since 1965 the German Canadian Benevolent Society of British Columbia has been caring for seniors by raising funds and erecting the present buildings. We are proud of our unwavering commitment to quality and a track record of innovation in complex care. As a public care facility we appreciate our collaboration with our partners in B.C.’s healthcare community.

Through diligent maintenance and ongoing improvement of the current facility we continue to provide a positive living environment to our residents.

In recognition of the challenges of operating an older building, we have also been exploring the possibility of creating a new facility. We have consulted with seniors and their families. Based on an in-depth review of best practice we refined our model of care and our understanding of residential care home environments.
Project overview

The new building is designed to accommodate 180 residents. It looks and feels like a residential space while being fully equipped for the delivery of complex care. Individual suites are nested in intimate ‘home units,’ and connected to recreational and social areas.

We also recognize the importance of providing respite beds for seniors recovering from passing health crises. Convalescing seniors are integrated into our community and benefit from the same level of care as our residents until they are ready to return home.

In addition, a adult day-care section will offer a welcome alternative and social activities for seniors usually cared for at home.
Model of care

We support residents’ abilities, whatever they may be. The building is subdivided into home units, which form a community.

Decisions about home units are made by its residents, acknowledging their particular tastes and needs. If possible, residents help with daily tasks, commensurate with their physical and cognitive abilities.

Trained staff is present at all times to help out. Friends and families are welcome. Nurses, care aides and other professional care staff play a supportive role. Our philosophy holds that medical treatment should be the servant of genuine human caring, never its master.

The architecture and interior furnishings support a continuum of care so that residents do not have to move once they are integrated into our community.

Plants are accessible both indoors and in sheltered outdoor spaces. And recognizing both the emotional and therapeutic value of pets, birds, fish and small animals can make their home here with their owners.

Residents can meet others and enjoy common activities and services. They can creatively express themselves with activities such as music and art at whatever level is comfortable.

There are opportunities to celebrate cultural roots through festivities, seasonal decorations and a diverse menu.
Home unit design

Home units typically comprise 12 single rooms with private bathrooms. Individual suites surround the common kitchen, dining and lounge areas.

The interior is as homelike as possible, featuring wood, carpeting and curtains. Home units convey a sense of safety, belonging and familiarity.

The standard layout of the units can be adapted to fit the needs, circumstances and cultural preferences of its residents.

Arches, islands and tables define the space above and below the line-of-sight. Small activity areas allow for informal social interaction among residents and visitors.

Residents with high-level care needs, who are unable to move around, are located close to the kitchen, which serves as the anchor point for home unit staff. This way they are integrated into social activities and personnel can observe when they may require more assistance.

The floor plan represents a typical home unit
Individual suites

Each individual suite has a large window and private bathroom. There is a small sitting area for quiet enjoyment and socializing.

Residents and their families are free to bring furniture and decorate their own rooms, reflecting their tastes, interests and personalities.

Standard options include built-in closets, carpeting and wood flooring and a mix of ceiling and wall-mounted lights. Beds are technical but blend into the homelike atmosphere of the room.

So as to ensure a continuum of care, all bathrooms are wheelchair accessible. All rooms are equipped with rails to the bathroom, so that lifts can be installed as needed.

Movement sensors monitor alert staff to possible problems without infringing on privacy. Video/wifi connections are available throughout the facility.

To facilitate timely admission, there are some private paid beds available.
Common areas

The entrance foyer expresses character of the home. There is a natural flow from entrance into common areas. Small seating areas allow residents to relax with friends.

The foyer can be configured for seasonal festivities and small concerts. There is ample space for volunteers to organize and engage residents in events.

Visiting seniors participating in the day-care programme can mingle with residents and enjoy a shared art and craft space.

Dedicated common spaces include a spa and hair salon, a rehab room, a library with computer access and a chapel/worship area.
Accommodating a range of needs

Technology is incorporated to meet the changing needs of the residents as they age in place.

Common areas are clearly structured, using a simple layout, direct lines-of-sight and contrasting colors that facilitate way finding.

Residents are invited to engage in activities and socialize. The design of the kitchen and dining area promotes resident participation in simple household tasks like setting the table, cutting vegetables and folding laundry.

Spacious common areas support residents with limited mobility.

Access to Internet allows residents to stay connected with families and friends.
Socializing

Common areas provide a venue for musical performances, dances and other gatherings. The architecture promotes spontaneous interaction among the residents, and welcomes families and friends. Meals can be prepared in the common kitchen. Spaces can be configured for small parties. A safe play area for children encourages family visits.

Seasonal festivities allow residents to celebrate cultural heritage with members of their community and visitors. The individual home units and common areas are designed to facilitate socializing.
Pets and plants

Small pets such as cats, fish and birds bring life inside the house, providing sensory stimulation and comfort. Plants create positive, healthy living environments, offering an opportunity for sensory engagement and meaningful activity. The new building features indoor plants, terrace planters, a winter garden, sun parlours and landscaped, sheltered outdoor spaces which residents can independently access.

Light and sound

Access to natural light is an important design consideration. The shape and aspect of building, the interior layout, as well as the location of windows optimizes the quality of light. This is enhanced by natural light channeling as well as high quality artificial light to reflect daily and seasonal light variations.

Noise levels are minimized through the interior layout design and acoustically absorbent floor and wall covers.
**Kitchen**

Each home unit has its own kitchen and dining area, which serves as an anchor point. Staff working in the kitchen has a good overview of activity in the rest of the common area, thanks to its central location and good lines-of-sight.

The open design of the kitchen allows easy access to plates and utensils. Residents are encouraged to help prepare meals. They are free to help themselves to snacks and drinks at any time.

**Furniture**

Mixed, non-institutional furniture upholstered in different colors creates a cheerful atmosphere. Home decor can be adapted by the residents to reflect individual taste and personality.
Respite and daycare

Our years of providing care for the elderly have given us an appreciation for the challenges faced by seniors living independently who are recovering from medical incidents. We also recognize the heavy burden born by those who care for relatives at home.

Our present plans include comfortable single rooms with an ensuite bathroom to be available for respite care. Seniors with physical and mental frailties will have a place to get professional and compassionate care. While at the new German Canadian Care Home they can take part in recreational activities and access in-house physio- and occupational therapy.

Plans also include an adult day-care facility, for seniors and care-givers who would like to benefit from the services offered at the facility without overnight stay.
Site and zoning challenges and opportunities

The new building will most likely be developed on the site of the present German-Canadian Care Home at 2010 Harrison Drive. However we may pursue alternate locations, depending on opportunities that may arise.

It is possible to rationalize the use of our land parcel, notably by shifting the public transit bus loop to the north west, and creating an underground parking facility for visitors and staff.

We are seeking to amend the City’s zoning by-law that applies to our site to provide for a similar density and height to the neighboring Icelandic home.

We do not anticipate construction before 2020. During the transition phase current residents will be cared for by familiar staff to the highest quality of life and care possible. Our discussions with Vancouver Coastal Health have indicated that an alternative site will be available in the interim.

Land parcel currently occupied by the present Care Home, without buildings, featuring a reconfigured bus loop.
Together, we can make it happen

The realization of this project depends on the support of Vancouver Coastal Health, as well as the broader community. Our objective is to start construction by 2020.

Contributions from private donors, including Society members, will build momentum towards mobilizing public funds.

We ask your support to create a new, state-of-the-art care home.

We are confident that the German Canadian community in British Columbia can create this lasting legacy.

Your donations will be gratefully received and held in trust until we are able to proceed. We will keep you informed about the progress of the project and the impact of your contribution.

For more information on how to donate, please call 604 713-6540, or visit www.GCCH.ca

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