

## Council OKs plans for new shelter

BY THERESA MCMANUS REPORTER  
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New Westminster city council has embraced a project intended to get people off the streets.

B.C. Housing purchased the College Place Hotel as part of its regional approach to dealing with homelessness. The application will permit 740 Carnarvon St. to become a mixed-use development, with 40 long-term transitional and supportive housing units and 15 emergency shelter beds on the two floors above grade.

Lisa Spitale, director of development services, said the housing development will target New Westminster residents.

"People should not be forced to leave their home communities just to have housing," said Karen O'Shannacery, executive director of the Lookout Emergency Aid Society.

Lookout housed 131 New Westminster residents at its Vancouver and North Vancouver shelters in 2007.

"That demonstrates some of the need," she said. "That reflects the reality on the street."

While many shelters require people to leave first thing in the morning and to line up in the evening, the emergency shelter will be staffed around the clock and provide access to support services.

O'Shannacery said that if someone comes to the facility who is "slightly under the influence" of drugs or alcohol, they won't be turned away, but if they're in need of detox, they'll be sent to those services. Lookout has a three-strike rule for people who break its policies, by continuing their drug use, for example.

"We don't tolerate that kind of behaviour in our buildings," she said. "We cannot."

Jamie McEvoy said the Cliff Block, a transitional housing program in a downtown New Westminster heritage building, was in horrible condition – even having bullet holes in the walls – until Lookout took over and made improvements. He believes the College Place will get the same treatment.

"It's been a great place to live," said Tracy Berry, who has lived at the Cliff Block for several years. "I have come a long way. When I moved in, I wouldn't go out of the house unless someone came with me. I was terrified. ... It's made a huge difference in my life. I don't know what would do if I didn't have the Cliff Block."

Roslyn Cassells, who lives and works in the downtown, said some of society's most vulnerable people are living in abhorrent conditions.

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**New heights:**

Fraser Hall, development manager for Onni, outside the highrises at Victoria Hill, which recently captured a Georgie Award for best residential development.

Larry Wright/THE RECORD

## Victoria Hill a winner

BY THERESA MCMANUS REPORTER  
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The Victoria Hill highrise residences received the 2007 Georgie Award for residential development of the year.

The Onni Group of Companies picked up the award, which recognized the third phase of a six-phase neighbourhood on the 26-hectare site. Victoria Hill is located on the former Woodlands property at East Columbia Street and McBride Boulevard.

"I was really pleased with the award," said Mayor Wayne Wright. "It shows the calibre of buildings in the city that are coming up."

The two towers are located on East Royal Avenue, which is the entry to the Victoria Hill community.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association of B.C. sponsors the Georgie Awards, which salute the outstanding professionals of the B.C. homebuilding, design and renovation industries. Entries are judged by a panel of industry experts from across Canada and the United States.

An Onni representative said residents are thrilled with the award. The company is pleased to be recognized for the project's excellence and for the opportunity to corporately celebrate the team's hard work.

According to Onni, the concept for Victoria Hill was born from a desire to create a timeless neighbourhood that would act as a complementary sub-community within New Westminster.

"As the flagship towers of Victoria

Hill, these highrise residences embody the Victoria Hills objective," said Onni's submission to the Georgie Awards. "The rich brick and glass façade is artfully reminiscent of downtown heritage buildings, while the construction of the building itself incorporates all up-to-date materials and standards. The tower's placement within the master-planned community lends itself to an atmosphere of privacy and peace of mind, while the height of the tower allows residents to appreciate the spectacular scenery of the waterfront."

Onni states that the two towers are landmarks that are noticeable from all directions, but they are also architecturally appealing additions to the New Westminster skyline.

with files from the Vancouver Sun

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