ONPHA Session 406 – Development Innovations
Review of OCISO Non-Profit Housing Corporation – 140 Den Haag
Presentation by Peter Trotscha, Project Manager

Christopher Simmonds Architect

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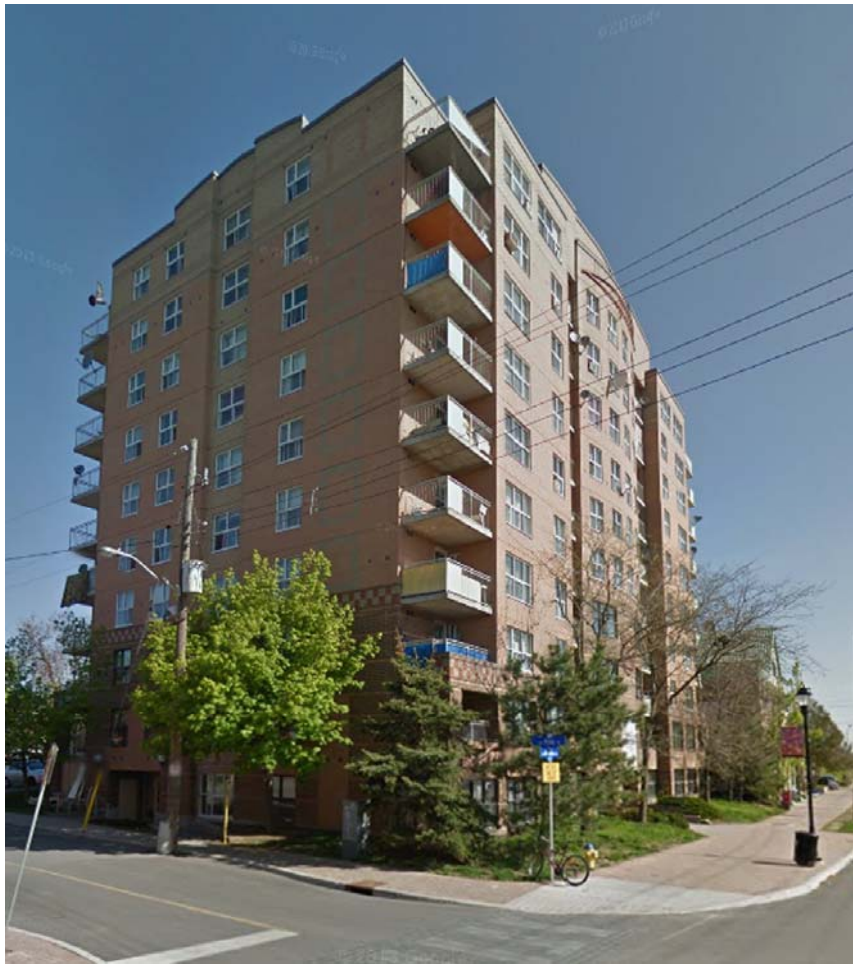


Project Origins

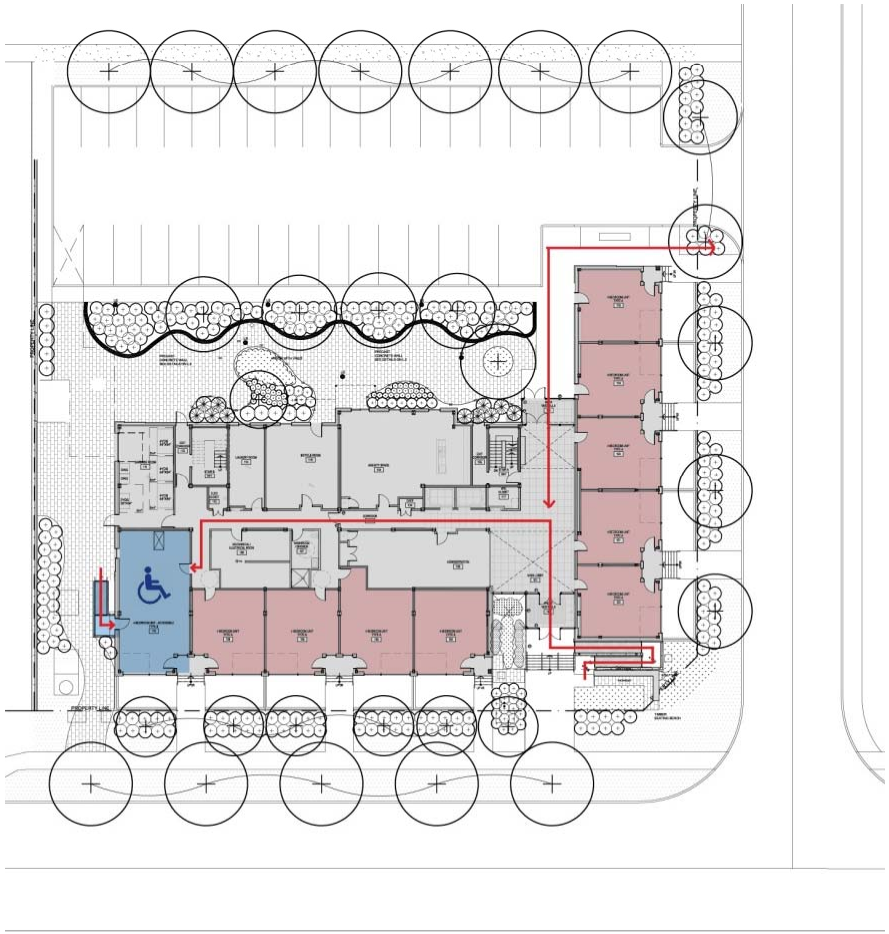
OCISO Housing responded to City RFP submission in April 2012. Approved in August 2012.

Proposal call included land for $1, and federal provincial funding @$120,000 per unit.

Track record: OCISO Housing already had managed a non-profit apartment building (62 apartments) for 18 years and had recently completed a 64 unit acquisition/renovation project of 64 townhouses using the affordable housing program.

Two major goals for OCISO Housing board in expanding number of units:

a) housing for refugees and immigrants; therefore some large family units (17) were a must (city supported this goal); and
b) Economically sustainable building characterized by low utility costs and provision for future capital investment;



Proposal:

74 unit apartment building containing:
10 x 4 bedroom townhouses; 7 x 3 bedroom apartments; 19 x 2 bedroom apartments; 38 x 1 bedroom apartments; 2 offices for property management and support services; and amenity spaces, e.g. formal community room and informal gathering spaces, bicycle room

Project Team included:
Architect, Christopher Simmonds Architect; general contractor, Warlyn Construction; and development consultant, Sound Advice Consulting; who together had previously developed four affordable housing projects as a team, in past 6 years.

Design elements:
An 8-storey tower surrounded on 2 sides by two and a half storey podium containing 10 x 4 bedroom townhouses. Tower also includes two office spaces, for property management and supportive housing services. Structure of building consists of red-steel frame, flooring of steel pans, sound mat and light-weight concrete; much more affordable (under $200/sf) than mostly concrete buildings. 37 surface parking spaces, including car sharing space and 2 accessible spaces.

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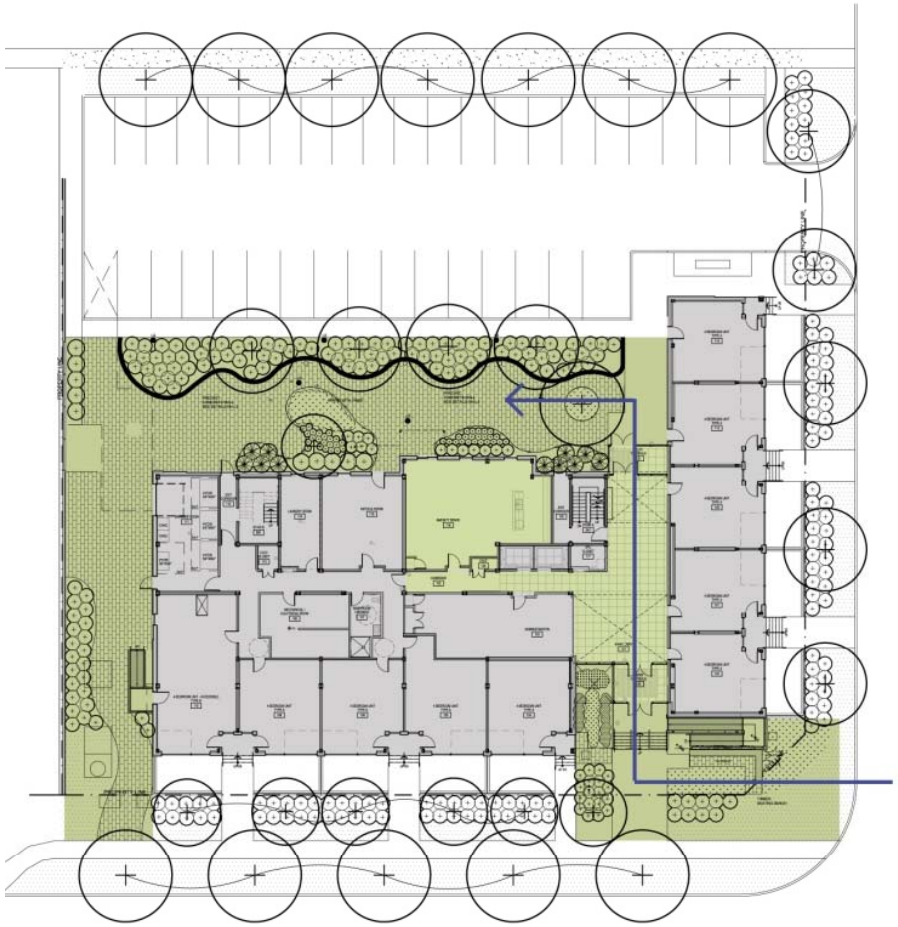

Financing:

N.B. Grant funding not available until building permit obtained. Project needed interim financing, $500,000, to finance design work to get from initial city approval to building permit. OCISO Housing was able to obtain financing, $400,000, from Community Forward Fund. Balance of funding from deferred fees from all members of development team, architect, development consultant and general contractor.

$120,000 per unit federal/provincial funding; total, $8,800,000 Canada Lands transferred lands using SRFI funding to City, and City sold land for $1 to successful proponent; land appraised/valued at $1,700,000.

City after negotiation provided additional funding $1,020,000 for additional City priority features (post-RFP): larger family units (3 & 4 bedroom); more accessible units; & meet LEED silver standard.

City also forgave following Fees: Parkland ($85,000), development charges($520,000) planning fees ($5,500) building permit fees($166,500);and paid school boards' development charges $120,325;

1st mortgage by Infrastructure Ontario, $7,120,000; Final Capital Cost $19,633,000.

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Schedule Outline

April 2012	Proposal submitted;
August 2012	Proposal negotiated and accepted; Site Plan and Preliminary design begin;
December 2012	Site Plan Application submitted, Foundation permit application
January 2013	Site Plan approved, Foundation permit approved
April 1st 2013	Construction begins
May 2013	Complete building permit approved
December 21st 2013	Structure complete, building enclosed, natural gas heat turned on
July 30th 2014	Substantial Completion and first occupancies, (12)

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LEED

LEED Silver standards to be met (estimated 53 point on LEED scale, 50 required for silver):

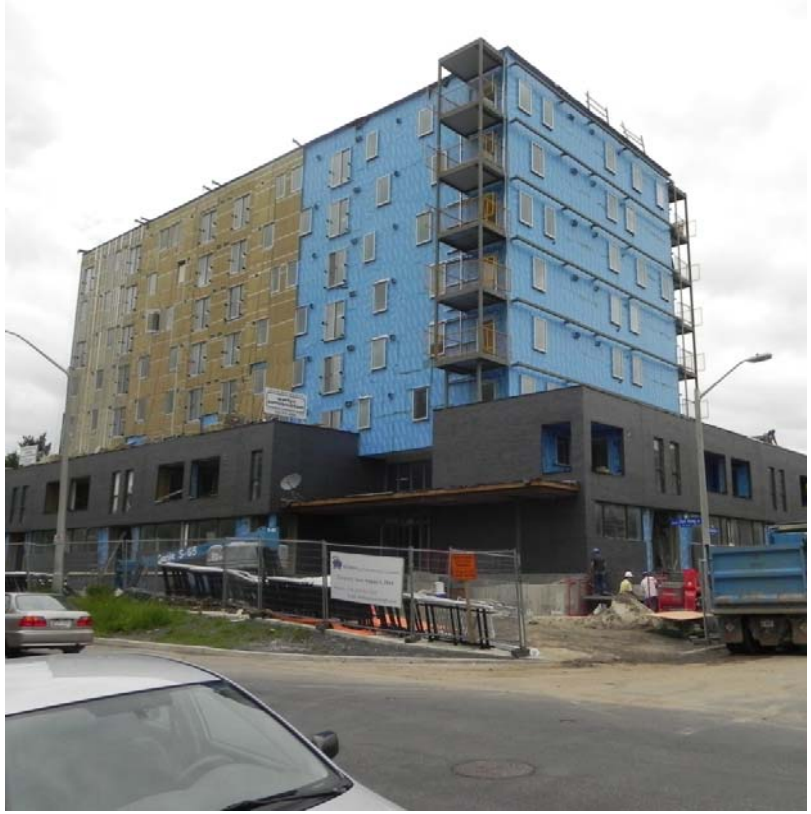
Environment sustainable features: esp development density (85 units/acre, 34.2/hectare) and community connectivity, and alternative transportation;

Optimized energy performance and use of renewable energy;

Use of recycled materials & construction waste management

Indoor environmental quality features (low emitting materials) and non-smoking building

Maximized water indoor efficiency and water efficient landscaping



Also notable in design:

-Insulation: RSI 3.8 in walls, RSI 5.67 in roof, and high quality windows and exterior doors;

-Advanced, but not too advanced mechanical system (e.g. conventional heat exchange units for heating and a/c), includes condensing boilers for hot water heating and domestic hot water; dc motors for pumps; cooling with conventional cooling tower on roof; natural gas heating during construction, not much propane used in contrast with other projects;

Basically a steel structure with red steel and steel stud/floor pan system. Floor pans contain sound mat and lightweight concrete. Relies on carefully specified and installed sound insulation between dry-wall. Much more affordable than concrete.

Natural gas emergency generator, adjacent to parking lot instead of roof (safer, more energy efficient);

Solar PV 10kw, (microfit) on south facing wall, room for 30% expansion in future;

Fully equipped bicycle room and shared auto provision (Vrtucar); 50% parking;

also room on roof for more solar pv or hot water; pre plumbing for hook-up to solar hot water;

landscape roof; energy star appliances

Other Features:

Pre-treatment for bedbugs (diatomaceous earth) in stud cavity of walls;

In-house support service office; property management office also, formal and informal community spaces for folks to gather;

Four internally generated rent supplement households; 20 City financed rent supplement households; 27-30 below market rent households (BMR, which are 70% of average market rent); 20-23 market rent households; and currently 25 occupied.

Sculpture: was a site plan requirement; seemed like a formidable challenge until we were referred to Federal Art Bank nearby; sculpture was leased for $3,300 per year.

Lessons Learned:

Much to be gleaned from others when confronting new issues. Example, the concept of providing public art seemed a tall order until I started discussing this with others. I spoke to about 5-6 colleagues until we got a handle on this and the resulting sculpture is both attractive and affordable. Lesson: Keep Networking.

The project would also have done Solar Hot Water but did not have a surplus at the end of the project to afford the installation. We were able to afford to pre-plumb domestic hot water system to allow for future addition of solar hot water when such an investment is appropriate. We did manage to fund a solar PV installation using Micro-fit program. Lesson learned: If you can't fulfill a specific design goal break it down into incremental steps to be achieved later when funds permit.

Biggest challenge for this project was managing difficulty with HST refunds. $700,000 withheld by Canada Revenue for more than 7 months. City assisted project cash-flow by "very prompt" delivery of grant funding. But general contractor and others bore the brunt of non-payment. Very recently resolved. Lesson learned: It's hard to predict how projects will be treated by CRA. A project audit for the large amounts of funds involved is appropriate, but delays can mean that, in future, only those with deep pockets can afford to develop projects.