FINDING THE WAY HOME:
A response to the housing needs of the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver

By

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The term "homeless" calls to mind images of unfortunate derelicts wandering the streets by day and sleeping in makeshift settings by night. It is argued here that our "homeless" problem in Canada is of a nature and extent far beyond what we generally perceive to be the case. Homelessness is difficult to address without a clear and working understanding of this phenomenon. As a foundation for an intervention, this thesis addresses the concealed and misapprehended problem of homelessness in our society. Key components of the study are clear definitions of "home" and "homeless". The social, political, economic, and ideological context of homelessness is explored in an attempt to understand why anyone in a country as generally wealthy as Canada could be without a home.

The study includes an examination of the issues related to the homeless predicament in general. The five factors which have been identified as contributing to homelessness - poverty and unemployment, poor health, social problems, and the shortage of low cost housing, are examined to provide a clear view of the problem, and to be used as tools in the provision of a response. It is believed that none of the factors which contribute to homelessness can be viewed in isolation. Each aspect of the phenomenon is often intimately related to the others and any solutions must therefore be fitted to respond to the range of contributing factors.

The predicament of the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver is the selected area of focus of this work. The community of the Downtown Eastside is the area where most of Vancouver's homeless population is concentrated. A close look at this vital and often misunderstood community of about 10,000 people serves to further clarify what a responsive intervention might include. The reality and needs of the women of the Downtown Eastside, who make up about 20% of the population of the community, are not widely understood. The search for understanding led to participatory involvement with feminist and
advocacy groups concerned with addressing the problems of these women. One outcome of
this involvement was an extensive but informal survey of sixty female residents of the
Downtown Eastside, which took the form of a "guided conversation". These discussions
produced valuable information with respect to living conditions and personal circumstances,
and yielded clear insights as to preferences and needs of these women.

The principal objective of the study is to develop a facility program for a project meant to
respond to the array of needs of the disadvantaged and/or distressed homeless women of the
Downtown Eastside. The importance of viewing such a project as a part of an existing
network of supports in the area is clearly appreciated, and thus the network has been
examined with some care. The principal resources already in place in the Downtown Eastside
which respond to physical, mental, and social health problems; to poverty, and to the need
for housing, have been briefly described. Links with such existing resources are meant to be
an integral part of the proposed specific solution. Appropriate models have been
recommended which would serve to fill gaps in the existing network, where such gaps have
been identified. The outcome of the exploration is a program for a first stage housing
project, tailored to meet the needs of the women without homes in the Downtown Eastside.
The project responds as comprehensively as possible to the factors which have contributed to
their painful situation. The intervention is meant to serve as an initial step on the path to a
home.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses the phenomenon of homelessness - what it is, who is affected by it, why it happens, and what could be done about it. The study begins with an examination of the issues surrounding the homeless predicament in general and the housing crisis currently being faced by low income earners in Canada. This is the foundation for a specific proposal.

The principal objective of the thesis is to develop a program for a project meant to respond to the needs of disadvantaged and/or distressed women of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver whose housing needs are currently going unmet. The range of facilities and ancillary support services of which this project would form a part will also be examined, with a view to filling the existing gaps.

The homeless women of the Downtown Eastside have been selected for attention because although their situation is not readily apparent to outsiders, it is a very real predicament and very much requiring intervention. Helen McMullen, who has long been at work helping the women of the area, discovered that the life expectancy of women in the Downtown Eastside has been found to be, on average, 22 years shorter than that of women in other parts of the city. (MacDonald 1988, p.B1) This fact in itself is sufficient to justify an intense interest in the needs of those women.

Scope

The issues relating to homelessness could be the subject of many theses, in themselves. The general inquiry here will be limited to those issues which serve to clarify the situation of the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside.

Although the study began with an overview of all facilities and services in Vancouver which might be of interest to homeless people, the scope of the inquiry has now been narrowed to include only key facilities and support services in the Downtown Eastside. The existing range of facilities and ancillary support services in the Downtown Eastside will be supplemented by
precedents in other parts of the city and further afield, but the proposal for intervention will be limited to this specific area.

The thesis culminates in a proposed program for a specific project. The broad insights gained in the foundation study with respect to both the issues of homelessness and the development of an appropriate response to the phenomenon are thus directed towards a particular project. It is expected, however, that those insights will prove to be valuable in a wide range of potential future applications.

Methodology

In the initial stages of this study, an extensive search was conducted of literature on the subject of homelessness in Canada, in British Columbia, and specifically in Vancouver. Included were sources containing material about the issues, policies, precedents and models for intervention. Especially in 1987, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, proceedings from conferences held on the subject were an especially rich resource.

First hand knowledge of the area of interest, the Downtown Eastside was obtained in a number of ways. Many people of the area, both residents and workers there, shared insights. Visits to facilities, both in Vancouver and other cities, notably Seattle and Toronto, were conducted to learn about interventions and to meet people using those places. Involvement in various actions and organizations within the community helped to increase awareness of what is and what might be. The design, delivery and detailed analysis of an informal survey of 60 women living in the Downtown Eastside provided a basis for understanding and response.

With respect to the development of the range and the program, participation in a group design exercise which attracted numerous members of the community for discussion of findings enriched the array of possibilities and made architectural intervention a more accessible and humane process in the minds of participants of all roles. The study of a wide range of programming processes and existing programs resolved itself finally into an articulation of some unifying themes which guide the culminating programming process here.
Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, each of which is the development of a specific objective.

Chapter 1 is an inquiry into the real nature and extent of homelessness as a phenomenon in our society. This chapter ends with a discussion of why an architect/programmer should be aware of these issues.

Chapter 2 is a discussion for a basic understanding of the social, political, and economic context of the problem. It is an attempt to understand why anyone could be homeless in a country as generally wealthy as Canada.

Chapter 3 is a description of the Downtown Eastside as context for an architectural intervention.

Chapter 4 is a profile of the women of the Downtown Eastside based on the informal survey conducted there. This profile is the principal basis for the subsequent proposal.

Chapter 5 is a summary presentation of some themes discovered in the research which have guided the development of the proposal.

In Chapter 6, a range of provisions which together form a strong supportive network of facilities and services for women of the Downtown Eastside is articulated. This range includes both the existing network of residential and institutional facilities and allied support services in the area, and outlines of additional models which would well serve to fill existing gaps.

Chapter 7 contains a detailed program for a specific project which is viewed as a much needed addition to the existing range of supportive facilities and services in the Downtown Eastside.
Use of the Term "HOMELESS" in this Thesis

"Homeless" is a misleading and misapprehended word in our society's current vocabulary. It is clearly impossible to address the problems of the "homeless" unless we come to a clear and collective decision about the meaning of the term. The word currently calls to mind images of eccentric or seemingly defeated people on the margin: ill-dressed vagabonds who have chosen to live in impoverished camaraderie beneath the viaduct, or lonely souls sleeping on tattered mattresses in back lanes or on park benches - struggling to survive in a variety of dismal or possibly even threatening ways. We picture the so-called "shopping cart people" and the "bag ladies", and we almost certainly think of New York City or other huge urban centres in the United States and the very visible phenomenon of homelessness there.

In Vancouver, we have very conflicting notions regarding the nature of the "homeless" problem. Surveys and our own eyes reassure us that the "homeless" problem is confined to a small group of unfortunate people. A survey conducted by the Urban Core Homeless Committee, composed of representatives of groups and agencies delivering social services in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, found that an average of about forty people were sleeping outside in that community at any given time in 1986. A survey conducted by the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC discovered that 1,460 beds are available in shelters of various kinds in Vancouver and that, on average, the occupancy rate of the shelters surveyed was between seventy-five and one hundred per cent. (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 6, p.2.) This might lead the casual observer to the soothing conclusion that nobody in Vancouver needs therefore to be "homeless". Those few street dwellers who do not use the available beds are perceived to be members of that category of unfortunates which generates little sympathy - the homeless by choice.

Peter Marin, a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, recently wrote that people without homes

"can be roughly divided into two groups: those who have had homelessness forced upon them and want nothing more than to escape it; and those who have at least in part chosen it for themselves, and now accept it, or in some cases, embrace it." (Marin 1987, 47)
Those in the first group want a home. Their names are very likely included on the very long waiting lists for social housing, and they are the people who are made to wait years for a chance at a decent home. In the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, the wait for social housing is typically at least five years. Death of the current occupant is in many instances the only reason for turnover of a unit. This compares very favourably with the estimated waiting time for a vacancy in a New York City housing project which is eighteen years. (Harper's Index, April, 1988)

Those in the second group, the "voluntary exiles", or "domestic refugees", may want a home but have an equal right to demur. A great deal of sensitivity is required in dealing with the needs of the "voluntary exiles", that we avoid "intruding ourselves upon those lives in the name of redemption". (Marin 1987, 47) As one social worker in Vancouver succinctly phrased it, "there are people here who choose not to take the responsibility for owning a coat". (Jo Cain, personal communication, September, 1987) Quite possibly there are factors operating within and upon these people which make such a choice beyond their reach. Simply offering a housing unit to this person is not likely to be an appropriate response to his/her needs or perhaps even desires. We must be very careful, however, not to base our dealings with these people on the assumption that it is their choice to be on the street, living beyond a supportive network. Their real and perceived options might well be abhorrent. Agreeable and suitable options might be gladly taken up.

Jim Green, director of the Downtown Eastside Resident's Association (DERA), has a very clear personal view regarding who is homeless. At a conference sponsored by the Planning Institute of BC held in 1988, he told how he is often approached by the media for help in locating "homeless" people to use as the subject of human interest news documentaries. The interviewer and the camera want to meet the hard core street dwellers. Jim Green's stock reply to these requests is, as he phrases it, "Sure, come on down, I can show you ten thousand homeless people living in this neighbourhood." By his definition, those approximately ten thousand homeless people living in tiny Downtown Eastside hotel rooms,
having no security of tenure, no place to cook a meal, and paying higher rates per square foot
than most other renters in the city, are homeless. If we accept the definition of "home" as a
safe, secure, adequate, appropriate and affordable dwelling place, then Jim Green's statement
holds. And if the statements holds, then our "homeless" problem is of a nature and extent far
beyond what we commonly perceive to be the case.

A very narrow definition of the term "homeless" seriously limits our society's response to
the problem. If the public consciousness is that the "homeless" problem affects a very small
portion of the Canadian population, it is not likely to become a serious issue on the public
agenda. As well, if the "homeless" are believed to have voluntarily chosen their
circumstances, the social motivation required to address the situation is unlikely to be rallied.

A clear look at the nature and extent of homelessness in Canada is necessary in order to
throw off the very limited but accepted current definition that we have of the term. If a
broader appreciation of the term is achieved, then it is possible to take realistic action for
change.
CHAPTER 1
THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS

In this chapter, the nature and extent of homelessness will be examined as a necessary basis for the preparation of an informed response. A clear definition of the terms "homeless" and "home" forms the foundation for a realistic assessment of who is really affected by this problem. The principal factors causing homelessness in our society will be discussed - at the global, national, and provincial level, and in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver - the particular area of focus. The question of what constitutes a "home" - in experiential and practical/policy terms will be addressed. The chapter concludes with a look at the role those involved in the discipline of architecture may play in solving the problems of homelessness in our society today.

The principal aim of this study is to propose action for change specifically for the homeless women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. The general inquiry will therefore be focused on the broad range of issues which serve to clarify this selected situation.
The "HOMELESS" Phenomenon - A Global Issue

According to an information brochure distributed by the United Nations (Habitat), over one billion people - a quarter of the world's population - live in absolute poverty, inadequately sheltered and serviced. The stated goal of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless - IYSH - is "Shelter for all by the year 2000". For many people in very poor and disadvantaged countries, the achievement of shelter would represent a major improvement in their lives; perhaps the difference between life and death in many instances. But we must recognize that once shelter is achieved, it is still possible to be homeless.

In the words of Jonathon Kozol:
"Drawing a distinction between home and shelter is, I hope, more than an academic exercise. Shelter, if its warm and safe, may keep a family from dying, Only a home allows a family to flourish and to breathe". (Kozol 1988a, 50)

When the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1987 the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, they clearly stopped short of making a commitment to eradicate homelessness by 2000. For many countries of the world, to make such a commitment would be totally unrealistic. In the wealthier nations of the developed world, the potential for commitment to eradicate homelessness has a different range.

Declaring 1987 the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) has contributed to a growth in consciousness of the plight of the unsheltered around the world. There has been a much heightened interest in the question of shelter and much has been said and done to improve the circumstances of those lacking shelter. But the word "homeless" still leads us astray.

The implication of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless - IYSH - is that shelter is what the homeless need. This implied connection between shelter as a response to homelessness has limited the value of the exercise in the wealthy countries of the world where homes as a response to homelessness are a conceivable option. The word "homeless"
as used in our culture and implied in the designated wording of the IYSH carries the meaning "without shelter", which is a very narrow reading of a potentially very powerful word.

A. Ramachandran, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) has suggested a much more powerful and encompassing meaning of the term "homeless". In his keynote address to the Canadian IYSH conference at UBC, he stated his belief that the situation of the homeless is a truly global phenomenon, not confined to developing countries, and one which involves more than simply the presence or absence of shelter. Moreover, he emphasized the belief that urbanization, economic and social policies and human settlements development, broadly conceived, all have direct effects on shelter conditions and consequently must be addressed through systematic and sustained programs of action.(Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 7)

The Global Definition of the Term "Homeless"

The United Nations defines the "homeless" to include "the pavement dwellers, those who must sleep in doorways, subways, and recesses of public buildings, and those rendered homeless by nature and manmade disasters", and also the hundreds of millions of people who lack a real home. In his deliberations on the subject of homelessness, Dr. Arthur Fallick has used the term "home" in its broadest sense to mean:

"one which provides protection from the elements; has access to safe water and sanitation; provides for secure tenure and personal safety; is within easy reach of centres of employment, education and health care; and is at a cost which people and society can afford."(Fallick 1987, 15)

The "cost which people and society can afford" clearly varies widely around the globe and generates a range of expectations and standards. This consideration is critical to the notion of a humane social minimum which each society must evolve, based upon its circumstances.
The Importance of a Definition

In an address to participants at a conference on homelessness held at UBC in 1987, Arthur Fallick neatly articulated the reasons why we must define and understand the term "homeless" correctly. He said:

"definitions are used to establish links between causes and effects, and to suggest specific courses of action. These actions become the legitimate solutions." (Fallick 1987, 16)

Fallick's reasoning is that if we define a problem in narrow terms, this will significantly influence the actions which will be taken to deal with that problem. If, for example, a society sees homelessness simply as the state of lacking shelter, it might provide shelter, but not necessarily a home. It is from this line of reasoning, perhaps, that the temporary hostel response emerges.

If the problem is viewed as residing within the individual; such as a mental or physical illness, a handicap, an alcohol or other drug dependency, individual rehabilitative solutions may be applied to battle the problem. Jim Ward, an organizer of the homeless in Canada and abroad, supports this view. He has concluded that "the whole notion of rehabilitation works to move the focus away from the problems within the socio-economic structure and towards the individual as the main problem". (Ward 1989, 111)

If homelessness is viewed as a mental health problem, we may provide professional expertise in the form of counselling and psychotropic drugs and in some instances a place in a care facility which often is a far cry from a real home.

If homelessness is viewed as an income problem, money may be spent, but homes again may not be achieved. The dramatic situation in some large urban centres of the United States where vast amounts of money are poured into the welfare hotel schemes, paying landlords to warehouse people in rundown hotels is an example of this partial solution cited by Fallick. The painful details of this way of life for many of the homeless in New York city have been vividly portrayed by Jonathon Kozol in his book Rachel and Her Children - Homeless Families in America.
Research has also shown that in countries where homelessness is viewed strictly as a housing problem, the solution may be to supply housing, but possibly to neglect the connection to wider social, political, and economic forces. Fallick gives the examples of Australia and the UK as nations where this narrow definition leads to trouble. Council housing is supplied, but the deeper structural problems of the society which caused the situation remain unaddressed. In the UK, furthermore, the Homeless Persons Act of 1977, meant to provide for the homeless,

> "does not cover single people, childless couples, elderly who live with relatives or friends, people from broken marriages, families living in substandard, unaffordable or inappropriate dwellings (like bed and breakfasts) or the so-called ‘deliberately homeless’." (Fallick 1987, 16)

This is a prime example of how a narrow definition can be almost counter-productive: the term "homeless" in this instance is clearly not meant to describe people without homes, but only a small segment of this group.

Problems can result as well if the definition is unclear or poorly articulated. Fallick has noted that:

> "In a conference on homelessness held by the European Common Market countries in 1986, homelessness was defined as being equivalent to poverty, and, as a result, the European Commission could offer no concrete course of action, because poverty is too vague a term to use to determine specific courses of action - poverty results from a wide range of inter-related factors."(Fallick 1987, 17)

The argument here is that homelessness, like poverty, results from a wide range of inter-related factors. A broad definition of the term "homeless" causes us to consider the wide range of factors contributing to this situation of being "without-a-home". This enables us to respond with a wide range of actions - appropriately fitted to the problem apprehended in its complexity.
A National Definition

In February, 1989, George Anderson, the President of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, (CMHC), spoke to an audience at UBC who had gathered to hear him discuss the housing situation in Canada. He concluded his remarks with the statement:

"We still wonder if there's a way to ensure that no homeless person will ever walk the streets of a Canadian city."

When asked about his own definition of the term, Mr. Anderson replied that to his mind, homelessness is a problem having two aspects. He believes that those people are homeless who are 1.) literally without shelter, and 2.) without permanent, safe, warm housing which they can call home. He believes that until we deal with the underlying problems associated with this lack, and until such a home is available to the homeless person, "We in Canada will still have a homeless problem."

The Centre for Human Settlements gives homelessness in Canada an intentionally broad definition which returns much of the power to the term. They define homelessness as:

"the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals and families have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic and cultural public services." (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 11)

With respect to the Canadian situation, it is argued that the UN definition of homelessness should be further enriched to include those "like battered women, who are vulnerable or potentially homeless...(and) those who are characterized as "at risk" as well as those who lack security of tenure for the next thirty days". (Daly 1988, 3)
FACTORS CAUSING HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA, AND ESPECIALLY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Terrance Hunsley of the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) acknowledges that research has led his group to conclude that "any serious effort to combat homelessness in Canada must address the underlying causes as well as the symptoms". (Ward 1989, ix) The recognition that homelessness, as it manifests itself in Canada today, results from and is perpetuated by a confluence of structural factors is critical to the response. This recognition makes clear the need to generate responses of a fundamental and multi-faceted nature.

In a background paper for the Conference on Homelessness in B.C., David Hulchanski and Arthur Fallick have identified what they see as the principal factors contributing to the proliferation of homelessness our society, with particular reference to British Columbia. They say that while the causes of homelessness are as diverse as the homeless themselves, they usually involve one or a combination of factors including:

- income problems
- work related problems
- health related problems
- problems with family and relationships
- problems related to housing (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.1)

This list provides a clear framework for an examination of the trends which have affected our society to the degree that we see homelessness in Canada as a growing problem today. If these are the fundamental aspects of the situation, then any intervention must be based upon a sound awareness of the factors, and a commitment to respond sensitively to the multiplicity of difficulties faced by the people without homes.
The WORK Factor

Oberlander and Fallick place unemployment, underemployment, and unemployability at the top of their list of the main precipitants of homelessness in Canada today. (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 11)

Since the onset of industrialization, most members of society have become increasingly dependent upon a regular cash income. This is ideally achieved through gainful employment. There are many people in Canada today who, for a wide variety of reasons, are unable to work.

The official unemployment figures for British Columbia have hovered at about the ten per cent mark since 1982, and have often been higher than any province outside the Maritimes and Newfoundland. Throughout much of that time Hulchanski and Falllick have judged that "about forty per cent should be added to the official figures to account for:

- the hidden unemployed whose frustration has prompted them to abandon the futile search for a job
- the partially employed
- women who would work at paid jobs if jobs and childcare were available
- people on government training programs". (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p. 3)

It is instructive to note as well that it is possible in B.C. to work full time at the minimum wage and still be thousands of dollars below the poverty line, depending upon the size of the household.

So what do people do if they can not accumulate enough money to pay for housing through the acceptable means of employment? We have in Canada a solution which we somewhat fancifully call the "safety net" of social security. There are two distinct societal attitudes towards this social provision. The differences between what is known as the "residual" and the "institutional" concepts of social security have been clearly articulated in a book titled The Emergence of Social Security in Canada. The author, Dennis Guest, expresses the difference this way:
"(The) approach, referred to as the institutional concept of welfare, has resulted from the growing recognition that because of the nature of social organization in an urban-industrial society, the risks to an individual's social security (such as unemployment) are part of the social costs of operating a society which has provided higher standards of living for more people than ever before in our history. This being the case, it is argued that society should not allow the costs of its progress to fall upon individuals and families, but should protect and compensate people who experience more than a fair share of the costs." (Guest 1985, 2)

On the other hand, according to Guest, the dominating notion of the residual concept of social security is the "idea of limiting social security to a role residual to those of the private market and the family", - in effect, gratuitous relief, with its accompanying stigma. (ibid.)

The Unemployment Insurance Program is an example of the institutional mode of social security designed to protect one from the more extreme consequences of unemployment. But it is a time-limited measure and thus many people who find themselves unemployed over a long period of time are not covered by its provisions. It is also, as we have recently learned, not invulnerable to alteration or possibly even destruction at the hands of legislators. When UI benefits are exhausted or otherwise unavailable, benefits from various income tested programs can be sought, and then the possibility of receiving social assistance can be investigated. These are the provisions which constitute the "safety net", intended to prevent the less fortunate members of our society from falling into destitution as a result of hard times.

We are now witnessing a situation in which many are said to be "falling through the cracks" in the safety net. The resultant destitution can easily and often does result in the inability to maintain a home - homelessness - in our society.

The WORK Factor in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Jim Ward has developed a theory linking homelessness to the demands of the labour market. This theory, based on historical as well as current demographic trends, gives a relevant insight into the situation in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.
The Downtown Eastside has carried that name only since 1973. Before that, it was commonly called "skid row". Ward has pointed out that "skid row" districts were often in the past seen as locations where inexpensive labour could be recruited. He writes that, historically, in order to satisfy the demands of employers seeking labourers willing to work on a casual or seasonal basis, "there had to be a system for keeping a ready labour force close at hand at relatively little cost; hence the development of 'emergency shelters' run by the Christian missions, and cheap rooming houses and hotels."(Ward 1989,4)

In his analysis, "During periods of widespread unemployment, the skid row areas became 'holding pens' for large numbers of unemployed, single men."(ibid.)

- Ward has noted a rapid decline in the demand for casual and seasonal labour since the early seventies and has noted that in many urban centres in North America, skid row areas have moved towards a "long-term welfare housing situation". Of the current skid row populations, he comments: "Together with an increasingly large part of populations of western industrialized countries they are being marginalized to the very edge of society. Their labour is no longer sought in the primary sector industries. What jobs are to be found are in the most poorly paid parts of the service sector. These people compete, often unsuccessfully, for dishwashing jobs that pay the minimum wage or less..."(ibid. 5)

Ward distinguishes between the traditional population of homeless men and the increasing population of homeless women that we are seeing today. Of the female group he believes: "It is difficult to link their homelessness directly to changing market demands rather than to a decision to end an intolerable marital situation."(ibid. 6)

In the traditional context, this situation could be viewed as a form of "work problem", if "housewife" or "homemaker" is seen as the ex-occupation. Ward guesses at any rate that homeless women tend to come "primarily from the working class and that they have fewer skills to sell on the labour market than their middle class sisters in similar marital situations."(ibid. 6)

A look at the current population of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver tends to confirm that this area is typical of Jim Ward's description. The population of the Downtown Eastside
is 80.7% male. The "average resident" according to the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association is:

"a Caucasian male who lives alone. He is 51 years old and a welfare/CAIN recipient... He has not worked in 7 years... He has a 47% chance of being disabled."(DERA 1988, iii)

While it is difficult to "average" males and females together, this "average resident" gives us a useful indicator of the male population at least, and reinforces the notion that unemployment in the Downtown Eastside is a major fact of life.

Several studies have been conducted recently with respect to the female population of the Downtown Eastside. More detail will be supplied in Chapter 4 of this paper, which will contain a detailed profile of the women of this area. It is sufficient to note here that in a recent informal study concerned with women of the Downtown Eastside, of 60 women surveyed, only 2 were employed at the time of the survey, and only a few had ever in their "legitimate" work history held jobs which were not in the low paid service sector.

The people in the Downtown Eastside, having in general low levels of education and a lack of currently marketable skills, are clearly placed on the economic margin of our society. This is especially true in light of the fact that the resource-based and industrial economies are transforming rapidly in this region. If work fails as a source of support, they must turn to the social assistance safety net which offers only marginal assistance.
The INCOME Factor

"I have again just read the Canadian Council for Social Development statistics on poverty, and realised that there is not a single jurisdiction in Canada whose social assistance allowances for any category of person and family meets the poverty level. Not one!... That is why 15% of the families in Canada, and 34 - 38% of unattached individuals in Canada are below the poverty line - amounting to something like four million Canadians.

Hon. Stephen Lewis, May 15, 1987
(then Canadian Ambassador to the UN)

The opening words of the Mission Statement of the British Columbia Ministry of Social Services and Housing in the Annual Report for 1986-87 read:

"The mission... is to help people in need by providing the basic requirements for food, shelter and clothing."

These 'basic requirements' are provided through the Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) Act. This acronym is thought by some to be a dark bureaucratic irony. Income assistance to needy British Columbians is provided through three types of GAIN programs: Basic Income Assistance, GAIN for handicapped and GAIN for Seniors Supplement.

"Handicapped persons", those who "have a permanent medical condition that is so severe that financial independence via employment is precluded"...(and who) "permanently require either extensive assistance of supervision to manage daily living or face unusual ongoing extra costs arising from the condition..." receive approximately 30.75% higher monthly income assistance than those recipients who are not similarly handicapped. (BC MSSH 1986-87, 60)

The Social Planning and Research Council of B.C.(SPARC) has calculated the gap between the GAIN Basic Assistance Rates and the real cost of living. The following figure provides a summary of the average percentage increase required in the GAIN Basic Assistance allowance to meet average basic costs for single people and families in the province.
We note that even when the 30% of additional benefits for handicapped persons is added to the basic rates, in no category does the total meet the amount needed to cover average basic costs. Not only are those British Columbians who are, according to the ministry's regulations, unhampered by handicaps, forced to live upon seriously inadequate incomes, those who have certifiably no chance of supporting themselves by means of work share the same problem.

Such considerations have moved observers to comment that:

"the (GAIN) program, however, has the effect of officially 'legislating poverty' by paying income and shelter support rates well below the levels necessary to meet average basic living costs...the inadequacy of the program is a major reason for the need for food banks and for growing numbers of inadequately housed families ad the large numbers of homeless. Many GAIN recipients cannot adequately feed and shelter themselves." (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.4)

In addition to its reputation for parsimony, the welfare scheme is also attacked for being confusing and subjective in decision making. In November, 1987, the National Council on Welfare observed that:
"The Welfare system in every province is Canada is a complex operation governed by a vast array of rules which require interpretation and the exercise of administrative discretion. Personal judgements invariably give rise to inconsistencies in the treatment of recipients."(Baxter 1988, 109)

As well, a major criticism of the social assistance system is that the incentive to work is often crushed for fear of losing welfare benefits. If a person on GAIN is presented with the opportunity to work to supplement the meagre amount supplied by the government, he or she runs the risk of losing all benefits if the opportunity is taken up. This is a difficult position for someone who is totally dependent upon benefits, especially if the job opportunity is short term, unstable, or as many jobs are, unlikely to provide sufficient remuneration to sustain one's basic needs. The B.C. MSSH policy "allows for an earnings exemption for up to $50 per month for a single person and up to $100 per month for a single handicapped person or a person with dependents."(BC MSSH 1986-87, 68)

In 1986-87 a new program called 'The Enhanced Earnings Exemption Program' was introduced which presents a complicated formula for determining whether or not additional earnings may be allowable. This formula appears to tangle the confusion even further.

Even if the maximum additional income were earned, in no category would the gap be bridged between assistance rates and the money required to meet average basic costs.

The precariousness and insecurity surrounding the dependency upon welfare is aptly summarized in this excerpt from an address delivered by a woman who knows this situation only too well. She said:

"An interesting sidelight, by the way, is that this money is not a right. The family allowance is every woman's. But not welfare. That's a loan. Payable anytime you have money. If you win $500 at bingo, they take it. If you get insurance money, they take it. If your husband pays child support, they take it. And if they catch you committing fraud, you lose the whole bundle. Fraud can be an estranged husband staying overnight a few times, or a boyfriend, even if they can't prove he contributed a penny; or (horrors) it can be working and not reporting the money."(Baxter 1988, 78)

The double-bind is apparent: not only are people who are dependent on the province effectively denied sufficient money to meet basic costs, they are also denied the opportunity
to supplement this income through their own efforts. We should perhaps be searching for another metaphor to replace the "safety net" fallacy. This system is more like a tangled sticky web which holds people in destitution than a preventive safety provision.

This "legislated poverty", particularly when complicated by other factors, is an important factor in the confluence of trends which can easily result in homelessness.

The INCOME Factor in the Downtown Eastside

According to the DERA survey of 1987-88, the "average (male) resident" of the Downtown Eastside lives on GAIN and has a monthly income of less than $439.00. This income comprises 47.5% of the amount that he would need to live at the poverty line. The survey does not distinguish between males and females with respect to income, but neither does GAIN - the same amounts are available to women. The survey has found that in the Downtown Eastside, a full 53% of all people receive GAIN and 25% more live on pensions or allowances, 2.2% of the population has part time work, and 4.9% of the people in the area work full time.

Clearly the population is heavily dependent upon the "safety net" in this area, and clearly the "safety net" does not provide for basic requirements - principal among which is a decent home.

In 1986, Emery Barnes, NDP MLA for Vancouver Centre, accepted the challenge put to all MLAs by the End Legislated Poverty (ELP) organization to try to live on what he would receive were he a welfare recipient. This experience will be discussed more fully in later sections. It is sufficient to note here that within the welfare budget constraint, Emery Barnes was able to afford only a ten by ten foot sleeping room on Jackson Street in the Downtown Eastside as his "home", and that he experienced a rather significant weight loss over the two month period because he was unable to afford an adequate diet.
The HEALTH Factor

Health and homelessness are intimately connected in our society today. As we have seen, any health problem which impedes one from earning an adequate income and forces dependency on the "safety net" can place that person at risk of becoming so poor that they cannot obtain a home. Furthermore, there are many serious health problems associated with the state of homelessness which complicate and/or perpetuate the circumstances.

It has been observed that the population of the new homeless are characterized by great diversity. A noted researcher on the subject in the United States, Mary E. Stefl, has stated that the new homeless:

- are younger, more often women and/or members of family units, more likely to be members of minority groups, and quite often mentally ill."(Stefl 1987, 47)

Stefl quotes a study in which psychiatrists examined 78 residents in a temporary shelter in the Boston area, which may give some insight into the Canadian urban situation as well. It was determined that:

"91 % had diagnosable mental disorders, including 40% with mental illnesses of psychotic proportion, (primarily schizophrenia), 29 % with chronic alcoholism, and 21% with character disorders."

(ibid., 53)

These figures do not tell us whether living on the street precipitated the mental distress or whether distress led to the homelessness. Either way, we know that many people on the streets require special support for at least certain periods of time.

Kozol believes that the labelling of mental illness is dangerous because it "places the destitute outside the sphere of ordinary life and because it bears a stigma". (Kozol 1988b, 17) This can lead mainstream society to endistance itself from the reality of the homeless person. It can also lead to attempts to heal or rehabilitate the homeless mentally ill person as a substitute for recognizing the more fundamental need to resolve the structural problems causing the homeless situation.
Deinstitutionalization

"Once deinstitutionalized, and (if) without adequate support services, ...individuals are effectively adrift in a sea of confusion. They are unable to compete for scarce jobs or housing and are at considerable risk of becoming victims of theft, violence or sexual exploitation. For most, this depressing situation exacerbates their insecurity or illness and induces chronic stress. Many make the endless rounds of shelters or emergency facilities in revolving door fashion, until they are admitted to an institution. This endemic stress is in part a consequence of extreme crowding, insecurity, and lack of privacy in emergency shelters. It does not help one's sense of equanimity or self esteem to be surrounded by a bedlam of depressed, ill and violent people. Nor does it help to be turfed out each morning, regardless of weather, ostensibly to search for accommodation or employment."(Daly 1988, 17)

The move towards deinstitutionalization of mental health care in British Columbia, begun in the sixties and carrying on to the present, has, for many, created a void where special support was once available. In B.C. the large Riverview Psychiatric Hospital now holds about 1068 patients, down from a high of approximately 4800 patients that it cared for in the late sixties. Plans are being considered for the release of the remaining patients soon.

This move towards deinstitutionalization has a number of potential advantages with respect to humane delivery of care and self-realization of the potential of the individuals affected. Furthermore, the financial saving by the ministry responsible for the delivery of service is obvious. But the ultimate success of deinstitutionalization is predicated upon the provision of adequate alternate living arrangements and a strong network of community services to provide the required support. This of course affects the financial saving.

It is the assessment of some observers that the movement toward deinstitutionalization in the province has saved the government a lot of money, but that the support network in our communities has never been properly developed. With this observation, I would heartily agree. I spent the summer of 1986 working with Prof. Joel Shack of the UBC School of Architecture, conducting a preliminary assessment of 30 residential care homes for ex-psychiatric patients in the Greater Vancouver area. Most of the residential facilities are contracted out to private operators who are free to develop programs as they like, with little
government supervision or assessment. We found that many residential facilities are overcrowded, and that the environments often devalue and stress residents with a lack of privacy, lack of space for programs, and general shabbiness. Although we discovered some meritorious examples of care programs and facilities, we found that many could be criticized as being "back wards" in the community.

We noted too that there has been inadequate accountability and review of facilities and their programs. We learned that, in general, community care licensing in Canada concentrates on more easily assessed technical aspects such as fire codes. More subjective indicators of the quality of life within the system of residential care are largely ignored.

This view was further corroborated by a City Health Department report on boarding homes dated August 9, 1988 and presented to city council during an in-camera session. The Vancouver Sun obtained the confidential report and has recently published excerpts from it.

The public was thus informed that:
"Two-thirds (at least 18 of 26) of Vancouver's boarding homes for the mentally ill are considered 'substandard' and should be replaced"... (They are) "significantly below the physical plant requirements for specialized residential care"...(They) do not meet the standards for privacy and for normal living space as required under the provincial Community Care Licensing Act."
(Pemberton 1989, 9 March, p.1)

Many of the homes are legally sanctioned due to a grandfather clause of ten years ago which allowed the homes to remain licensed because they comply with old standards. The real estate boom is aggravating the situation. Authorities worry that owners will sell out because of rising prices and the already scarce, though substandard, beds will be lost in this situation of escalating need.

John Russell, the executive director of the Greater Vancouver Mental Health Service, has commented that 200 subsidized apartments could be filled "overnight" in the tight situation in Vancouver. Currently the province provides funding for 1954 group home beds and 627 psychiatric hospital beds.(Pemberton 1989, 10 March)

The 1986 study team headed by Prof. Shack learned, however, that those who live in residential care facilities are to be counted among the lucky ones. A long look at those who
have "fallen through the cracks" of the safety net and are living destitute in the streets or in cheap hotels or rooming houses makes the residential care system of boarding homes seem palatial by comparison, despite its "substandard" assessment.

The Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services system

Helga Hicks, the Director of Support Services for the GVMHS is in charge of "housing, work, play, and emergency services" for ex-mental patients in the Vancouver area. (Helga Hicks, conference address at Christ Church Cathedral, 29 September, 1988) She believes that the system set in place to respond to the needs of the mentally ill in Vancouver is qualitatively a good one, but lacking in quantity. She notes that the city council is supportive of initiatives of the GVMHS; and that the financial structure, while not "great" is "OK"; and that the system is supported by the medical care scheme which leaves very few out because of inability to pay. She is guided by the principle that is a mentally ill person has no home or is badly housed, has nothing to do and lacks needed supports, the problem rests squarely with the system and not with the individual. At a recent conference focusing on the needs of the homeless mentally ill, Ms.Hicks stated that if an ex-patient doesn't have housing, he or she "has nothing and is like a refugee". Furthermore, because the system is meant to receive all kinds of people, she believes that a wide range of housing types is necessary.

The currently overloaded system is unable to supply those supports to many who desperately need them. John Russell reports that:
"Our caseloads have crept up to the point where we're no longer able to do what we're required to do...Staff spend less and less time with clients - they're less likely to visit in the home and less likely to do follow-up if the client drops out of contact...We don't have time to find someone who is out there who is probably avoiding us." (Pemberton 1989, 10 March, p.A15)

Caseloads of mental health workers are rising to as high as 60 clients per worker at this time, well above the 30 clients per worker that John Russell considers to be a reasonable load. Clearly, in such a situation, those who are least able to cope on their own are most likely to "fall through the cracks" without help.

In spite of the extreme pressure on the system, some notable interventions have emerged which provide excellent models for care. A pilot project called the Riverview Hospital Outreach Initiative provides the ex-patient with intensive follow-up care. A psychiatric nurse is assigned to a small number of clients and gives any help need on a personalized basis in the complicated and often painful re-entry to the community. One nurse involved in the program commented:

"Our job is to keep them out of hospital at any costs and that comes down to doing the nitty gritty." (ibid.)

This Outreach Initiative, which began in 1987 and which has proven to be a success, will end when its funds run out in June 1989.

Though initially opposed to the "ghettoizing" of former patients in group apartment settings, Helga Hicks has concluded that the apartments run by the Coast Foundation Society are a successful model. "Coast" is a non-profit organization which has 250 residents in its community homes and apartments in the Lower Mainland. These places are long term and known to be sensitive to the needs of clients, but the waiting list (of 300) is longer than the number of units in the system. The Mental Patients Association (MPA), also a non-profit organization, has five halfway houses which provide homes to 46 people as well. In addition to secure housing, these groups offer group activities, and the opportunity to build social ties in a supportive community.
The Therapeutic Voluntary Program is a new program administered by the GVMHS which serves as a rehabilitative tool for ex-patients not on the Handicapped Persons Income (HPIA). Such a program provides for structuring of time in purposeful activity which is a critical element in the system of care, and which, if lacking, leads to recidivism. Helga Hicks argues that public funds are far better spent on such preventive programs, in addition to housing and basic support services, rather than on the high costs of rehospitalization.

The Mentally ill People of the Downtown Eastside

It is widely agreed that the mentally ill people who are homeless, in jail, or in cheap hotels or rooming houses, are difficult to count. Statistics which are available are viewed with some scepticism. A subjective view of the situation in the Downtown Eastside was provided by Sandra, a woman who spent sixteen years on the streets of Vancouver working as a prostitute. Over the past seven years, Sandra has become something of a pillar of the community, successfully managing a thrift shop in the area. Her observation is that the character of the Downtown Eastside has changed dramatically in the years since the movement towards deinstitutionalization was begun. She has noted a very different feeling in the community in general and a higher level of fear amongst the residents since a large number of people who display obvious signs of inability to cope with life have arrived. She sees many people talking to themselves in the street, often acting out angrily, and has noted what she believes to be a much higher incidence of street crimes such as muggings and attacks by confused and overwrought people.(Sandra Peet, personal conversation, November 1987)

A worker on the Strathcona Care Team, Marsha Ablowitz, agrees with Sandra’s observation. At a meeting of women concerned with the homeless female population of the Downtown Eastside, she stated that many people who leave Riverview because of the deinstitutionalization movement are referred directly to hotels and rooming houses in the Downtown Eastside because that is the location of the only lodging that they can afford. The Downtown Eastside is also attractive to ex-patients because the people of the area are known
to be tolerant of behaviours that depart somewhat from the norm, and because most of the city's mental health services and free food outlets are located there. Ms. Ablowitz observes that the ex-patients are often lost to the system of care and unable to function effectively without supports, with resultant conflicts with others and the law. (Marsha Ablowitz, comments at a meeting, 30 August, 1988) It is estimated that hundreds of ex-patients in Vancouver spend time in jail on a revolving door basis, unable to cope on their own. For female ex-patients, the situation is especially critical in the Downtown Eastside because of their additional vulnerability to violence and abuse, if they are unable to find a safe refuge.

There are several notable facilities which provide critical front line crisis support to the disadvantaged mentally ill people requiring help in the Downtown Eastside. These facilities will be described only briefly here as a means to shed light on the health factor in the community. They will be more fully discussed in Chapter 5 which is concerned with the range of services available to homeless people in the Downtown Eastside.

The Lookout, a 40-bed emergency shelter, is always open to receive those who fall through the cracks in the safety net. Karen O'Shannacery, the executive director, says it is the "safety net underneath all others". The occupancy rate at the Lookout is over 90% which Ms. O'Shannacery recognises is far too high for an emergency centre; beds must be kept open for those in crisis and this is not always possible with the strong demand. According to statistics kept at the Lookout, 93% of the people who use the emergency accommodation part of the facility require psychiatric and emotional support.

Karen O'Shannacery sees the housing shortage as the key issue to be addressed in helping the homeless mentally ill. A portion of the facility has been given over to housing of a more stable and long-term nature for ex-residents of the emergency crisis area who can cope. More of this type of next-stage accommodation is urgently required, as successful referrals to other long-term stable supportive accommodations are rare. Ms. O'Shannacery observes that
if someone has no roof overhead, no other problems can be resolved. (Karen O’Shannacery, conference address, 29 September, 1988)

Victory House is a psychiatric facility run by St. James Social Services which takes clients that other boarding houses reject on the basis of their behaviour. At Victory House no-one is ever evicted. The option for the “hard-to-house” is to attempt to live on their own which can often result in a confusing round of evictions and jail terms based on their inability to cope with daily life at even the most fundamental level.

A woman who has lived at Victory House for ten years, whose background includes "more hotels than I'd like to remember" and beatings administered by landlords, had this comment to make regarding her present circumstances: "They won’t put up with hitting here. They don’t allow any mean words or yelling."(Pemberton 1989, 11 March, p.A10)

The co-ordinator at Victory House, Al Hyndman, sees a "grave need" for more places like this one, but budgetary constraints have prevented such development.(ibid.)

**Physical Illness in the Downtown Eastside**

Although definitive figures are not yet available, the director of the Downtown Community Health Care Clinic, Jeff Brooks, has made the observation that the clinic, in general, treats similar health problems to those which arise in other sectors of the population. This chief difference in the Downtown Eastside is the high incidence of TB which he believes appears in this community "at third world rates".(Jeff Brooks, personal interview, 5 May 1989) AIDS has begun to show up in the area as well, but not in the numbers that were predicted. This is likely a consequence of the free needle program which was supported by the clinic, which has kept down the incidence of infection amongst drug users.

The clinic is an important component of the system of care in the Downtown Eastside. The service will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6, as it fulfills a vital role in the neighbourhood network.
Although Jeff Brooks recognises the critical role that the Downtown Clinic plays in the Downtown Eastside, he acknowledges that space/financial constraints have put limits on the services which could be provided to respond to the needs of people in the area. His vision of an expanded service which includes a range of integrated aspects will appear as well in Chapter 6.

In November, 1987, the Canadian Health and Welfare minister stated that "we don't have equity in terms of healthfulness" between the rich and the poor in Canada. (Daly 1988, 17) The Downtown Community Care Clinic has been working to address this inequity, and though not yet an realization of the ideal, has gone far towards bringing a comprehensive and fair system to the people of the Downtown Eastside.

According to the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association Survey of 1987-88, the "average resident" of the community has a 47% chance of being disabled and thus at an increased disadvantage with respect to ability to support himself or herself without resorting to the "safety net". Clearly the health factor, meant to include disabilities of all kinds, is a critical one which must be carefully considered in designing a response to the needs of people without homes in the Downtown Eastside.
The SOCIAL Factor - Families and Relationships

"Some 85 per cent of Canadians live in families, but the makeup of those units continues to change, says Statistics Canada.

Single-parent families are increasing because of more divorces. There were 78,000 divorces in 1986, more than double the number 15 years earlier.

Thirteen per cent of families were headed by a single parent, compared with fewer than 10 per cent in 1971.

Most single-parent families are headed by women, but the number of men has been increasing. In 1986, there were 47,000 lone male parents and 209,000 lone female parents.

The poorest families are headed by single women."(The Vancouver Province, 3 March, 1989, p. 28 - a report based on the most recent census)

"Six out of 10 single-parent families who rent pay 30 per cent or more of their income on shelter."(The Vancouver Sun, 3 March, 1989 p. A13)

Household patterns are changing dramatically in Canada at this time. For the purposes of this discussion, a brief look at how housing patterns have reflected change in Canadian demographic trends over the last four decades will shed additional light on the the factors behind the proliferation of homelessness in Canada now.

The CCSD has noted that in Canada, "The human face of poverty is changing" and they note a "dramatic shift toward younger families, especially sole support mothers". (*ross and Shillington 1989, 8) About 85% of lone parent families are headed by women. As this group is growing rapidly, demonstrably poor, and often lacking the necessary social supports, its members are often at least "at risk" of being homeless.

Klodawsky and Spector have noted that:
"Between 1945 and 1966, most new housing took the form of single-family suburban dwellings. Private developers, influenced by building codes and mortgage insurance incentives, primarily built detached homes for traditional, two-parent nuclear families. Community support facilities were rarely emphasized; it was assumed that families would fill most of their own needs with the help of the neighbourhood school and district shopping centre. For families unable to
buy into this dream, social housing programmes, including public housing, were developed to provide temporary shelter until they could afford to purchase homes. "(Klodawsky and Spector 1988, 141)

The culturally dominant family pattern reflected in this housing of the mid-40s to mid-60s is that of the traditional two-parent nuclear family, living in relative isolation, bounded perhaps in many instances by the traditional white picket fence.

Klodowsky and Spector observe that by the early 1960s, central urban commercial facilities and adult-centred high rise rental apartment buildings had become more common, replacing low-cost housing which was often demolished to clear a site for the new developments. They note that it was in the early 60s that the dominance of two-parent families began to decline, while elderly households and mother-led, one-parent families increased. These authors have concluded from census material that the growth in the number of single-parent families has been extremely rapid and they co-relate this growth with the reform of the divorce laws which took place in Canada in 1968. Today, four out of ten marriages end in divorce. When households split up, more demand is placed upon the housing stock. Furthermore, for many ex-spouses, the need is for low-cost housing, which creates increased pressure at the already scarce low-rental end of the available stock.

Statistics published by the B.C. Teachers Status of Women Journal in October, 1987 show that within one year of separation, on average, a woman’s household income drops by 70%, while a man’s disposable income increases on average by 43%.

Klodawsky and Spector believe that single parents of the 1980s are "often caught in a 'web' of poverty aggravated by a general loss of experience and social and physical mobility". (Klodawsky and Spector 1988, 154) They are further constrained by having few options but to live in neighbourhoods designed to suit the traditional family patterns where household tasks such as cooking and child supervision cannot easily be shared and where large amounts of maintenance are required. In Klodawsky and Spector’s analysis, "the single parent lives as one adult in a world designed for nuclear families with two adults." (ibid.)
Observing the situation nationally, Klodawsky and Spector have noted that single-parent families headed by women are predominantly poor, with family incomes averaging 52% of those with two parents. They estimate that as of 1986, in "roughly 11% of families with children under 18, 550,000 families, (were) headed by a single-parent". (ibid., 141)

According to figures collected by the Status of Women, in 1985, in B.C., there were 67,485 female headed single-parent families, representing a 24% increase since 1980. These figures are indeed dramatic, especially when coupled with an understanding of the current shortage of low-cost rental housing in Canada which we shall examine more closely in the section on the housing factor.

The SOCIAL Factor in the Downtown Eastside

The Downtown Eastside has traditionally been known as an area of cheap rooming houses and hotel rooms housing a population composed mainly of single men over the age of 40. There is, however, a growing population of women in the area and the rooming houses and hotels are becoming more often used by low income families in transition and in some instances a long term residences. As we shall see in the next section, social housing is being set in place in the Downtown Eastside to accommodate families as well as the live-alone population, but the demand at this stage still by far outstrips the supply.

The changing demographic character of the Downtown Eastside is well illustrated in these excerpts from a letter written to the Vancouver Parks Board by the chairperson of the Downtown Eastside Parks Planning Committee, January 15, 1988. It reads in part:

"The popular image of the Downtown Eastside is of a neighbourhood of single older men living in hotels and rooming houses. This perception is becoming out-of-date. The Downtown Eastside is a neighbourhood in transition. There are thousands of women living in the area, more every month. Less recognized, but equally as significant, is the growing number of children moving in with their families...

How many children live in the Downtown Eastside? This is a question with no definite answer. No agency will hazard a guess. Children in hotel rooms are not routinely counted. Even in public housing projects, the true numbers are hidden. Where, for instance, three or four children may be officially
registered in one public housing unit, it is not unknown to find
twice that number because of extended families.
There have always been hundreds of (uncounted) children
in the area." (Moon Yee, letter to Vancouver Parks Board, 15
January, 1988)

It should be noted that the census definition for "household" describes individuals and
families living in self-contained dwelling units. Those living in hotel rooms or hostels are not
recognized as "households". Further, Canada Census only counts "families" (defined as
husband and wife or parent(s) with one or more children) if they live in "households". (Gates
1985, 10)

This perhaps helps to explain the continuing haziness with respect to the census figures in
the Downtown Eastside. Combined with a lack of agreement on the part of the City, Census
Canada, and the residents themselves, about where exactly the boundaries of the Downtown
Eastside lie, it is not surprising that some confusion exists.

In spite of the unreliable nature of the census figures, there is evidence to support the
claim that the population is changing. Some indicators of a growing population of single
parent families in the area are included in the letter quoted above:

"The Public Health Nurse for the North Health Unit, which
serves the Downtown Eastside, reports she now spends a
majority of her time concerned with follow-up on young
children and families. A few years ago, such follow-up
occupied only 20% of her time. She reports an increasing
number of families in the neighbourhood, mostly single-
parent, and many new pregnancies."

"Crabtree Corner, an emergency short-term daycare centre run
by the YMCA at Columbia and Cordova, is swamped with high
needs preschoolers. The demand is growing. In one recent
month, they had to turn away 98 calls for emergency daycare."

"The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre reports hundreds
of applications by women with children for their new social
housing project across from Oppenheimer Park." (This is
Mavis/McMullen, a project having 34 units, which opened early
in 1988.)

We do not see with our eyes the evidence of this new wave of women into the
Downtown Eastside or perhaps to the cheap-rental areas of other Canadian urban centres. It
is a hidden but growing phenomenon, inadequately tracked by the census and not readily
apparent to the casual observer. But if we accept the argument that those people living in
(and in the case of larger families - crowded into) tiny hotel rooms are without a home, then
we can understand that homelessness is indeed proliferating in our nation and more
specifically in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.
The HOUSING Factor - in the Nation and the Province

There is a housing crisis in Canada - a startling phenomenon when we consider that we are discussing one of the world’s wealthiest nations. Although 63.3% of Canadian households own or are in the process of owning the dwelling in which they live, and experience the attendant advantages of home ownership, the poorer people of Canada face a very different housing situation. (McLaughlin 1987, 13) And there are a surprisingly large number of poor people to be counted in Canada at this time.

Shirley Carr, the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, assesses the reality of the poor in this way:

"A two-tiered society appears to be emerging: a society with a large number of poor and a small number of rich people. The bottom fifth of Canada's population earns a mere 3.6% of all income while the top fifth takes 43.3%. Nowhere are these disparities more evident than in the distribution of housing."(Carr 1987, 51)

David Hulchanski also notes a very significant "trend toward the increasing polarization of income groups by tenure" (Hulchanski 1985a, 6) in Canadian housing. He observes that the home ownership option has been taken up by all who could afford it - leaving virtually all those who have no choice in the rental sector,...which is "increasingly becoming a residual one, containing virtually all lower income Canadians and very few higher income Canadians".(Carr 1987, 52)

The accompanying graph, provided by Hulchanski, shows the dramatic change in tenure related to income between 1967 and 1985. The obvious question is: how many renters can afford to pay the rent? - especially in light of the fact that rents are skyrocketing in the tight market.
CMHC estimates that 170,000 households - or 16% of all households in British Columbia are in "core housing need", that is, they cannot obtain adequate and affordable housing. (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.5) This is perhaps a somewhat conservative estimate.

Analysts from the School of Community and Regional Planning, UBC have a different estimate of the magnitude of the housing problem in B.C. which "places the number of households [in core need] closer to 250,000 (about 25% of all B.C. households". (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 5, p.1) They state furthermore that:

"The problem of affordable housing supply becomes more critical each year. More British Columbians live in poverty today than in 1980, yet rents keep going up, vacancy rates remain very low, few rental units are being built, and social housing starts are lower today than in the recent past." (ibid.)

The housing crisis in Canada serves varying degrees of discomfort upon those affected.

We acknowledge that possibly the bottom quarter of our society is in "core housing need".
Beyond that, we are becoming increasingly aware that for many, the finer points of housing quality are quite irrelevant - some people have no home, adequate or otherwise.

The Centre for Human Settlements assesses the problem in this way:
"Recent analysis of the scope and scale of social and economic deprivation across urban Canada indicates that homelessness and the risk of becoming homeless are affecting a broader spectrum of people in more areas of the city than at any time since the Great Depression."(Hulchanski 1987, Paper 2, p. 5-6)

If we limit the term "homeless" to refer to the most visible and dramatic examples of those without homes, we may as a consequence fail to consider those who keep a lower profile and live in a place which, by any reasonable and humane standards, cannot be called a home. We may also fail to recognize the plight of those very much as risk of being without a home - those who live, as the current sayings go, "one paycheque away from the street" or "a punch in the mouth away from homelessness".

The HOUSING Factor in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside

The CMHC Rental Vacancy Survey Report for October 1988 gives ample support to the claim that the housing crisis in Vancouver has reached serious proportions. The demand for rental housing is very strong. The summary states in part:
"The Vancouver census metropolitan area (CMA) apartment vacancy rate was 0.5 percent in October 1988. This is down by 0.5 percent from the rate of 1 percent in April 1988."(CMHC 1988, 1)

A vacancy rate of at least 3% is considered to be the minimum required for a healthy rental market.

Low income people are caught in two ways. The supply of low cost rental housing is clearly scarce, and the cost of such housing is rising relentlessly. The report noted as well that in general average rents in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) increased 3 percent over the April survey. Comparisons taken over the years indicate an upward trend in the average rent for all unit types ranging between 5 - 8 percent.

And growing pressure from in-migration further exacerbates the situation. CMHC notes:
"Strong demand from in-migration along with increasing house prices and a forecast of higher mortgage rates are expected to further tighten the rental market in 1989." (CMHC 1988, 1)

Excerpts from a fact sheet prepared and distributed by Hulchanski in 1988 demonstrate that, on the supply side, very little is being done in Vancouver to respond to the increasing pressure felt by low-income renters. In 1987, 463 non-subsidized rental units were started in the city. But the low-rental stock is not growing. Instead, it is dwindling at an alarming rate. On average, 220 units per year were converted from rental units to condominium ownership units in the years between 1979 and 1986. Such tenure arrangements place these units well beyond the reach of the low income people who are caught in the affordable housing squeeze. Hulchanski estimates that now we are losing about 200 low rental units in Vancouver each month. (Hulchanski, Urban core Workers Conference address, 18 April, 1989.)

The option of social housing, including cooperatives, public and private non-profit rental housing, with the attendant advantages of relative security of tenure and affordable cost, is for many low income earners the closest approximation they might ever achieve to home ownership. And this has proven to be an attractive option for many.

Another look at Hulchanski’s fact sheet proves the widespread choice of this preference. Hulchanski has examined the City of Vancouver data with respect to waiting lists for social housing. As of January 31, 1988, there were 17,268 households on waiting lists for new social housing projects. Even allowing for some redundancy, this is an impressive figure. Even so, the figure does not include the long waiting lists maintained by existing projects. Furthermore, it is estimated that there are between 22,000 and 25,000 second suites in single family dwellings - "illegal suites" - which are currently in jeopardy in the city. If these units are disallowed and those people presently living there are forced to look for low cost accommodation in an already near zero vacancy situation, the long waiting lists for social housing could conceivably swell to more than double the present size. But, as Hulchanski notes, the number of co-op and non-profit housing starts is very small, similar to the figure for
private sector rental starts quoted above. In 1987, only 438 co-op and non-profit housing units were started.

The preface to the British Columbia Housing Management Commission’s Non-Profit Housing Call for Submissions lists the proposed 1989 unit allocations for social housing. In the B.C. Lower Mainland, including Vancouver, 210 units will be allocated for seniors and 450 units are proposed for families. Clearly, the low cost rental accommodation shortage is not going to be greatly relieved by means of these programs.

The new special initiatives recently proposed by the provincial and municipal levels of government to relieve the housing situation are not well tailored to the needs of the poor. These schemes, which clearly favour private market development over the social housing option, will be discussed in more detail later. It is sufficient to note here that the new housing stock resulting from these special programs will be available for rents estimated to begin at about $650 per month. Provision of such stock will obviously have minimal effect on the crisis currently being suffered by very low income renters.

Housing the Poor in Vancouver

For people who have very low monthly incomes, the situation is very difficult. In early 1986, when Emery Barnes began his search for accommodation which he could afford while living on a welfare budget, he imagined a modest situation to be sure, but was unprepared for the reality he was forced to confront. He thought he would be able to rent accommodation with some degree of privacy, his own washroom and basic amenities, and he set about looking for such a place in various parts of the city. He spent hours searching, visiting 14 different places in the process, but was unable to find a place he could comfortably accept, even for one month. When he approached the Red Door housing agency for help, he was told that the only neighbourhood he would be able to afford on welfare shelter allowance would be the Downtown Eastside. After a very discouraging but illuminating search to find his "home" for the month, he was fortunate to locate a recently renovated room on Jackson
Street near to Oppenheimer Park in the Downtown Eastside. This situation - a small room containing a narrow cot, with no cooking or kitchen storage facilities, and only a tiny sink, appeared to him, in comparison to the other places he had viewed, to be a 'palace'. It had recently been painted, and it did not smell foul. The washroom down the hall was shared with the other residents, and his own room was shared with an extended family of cockroaches. (Emery Barnes, personal conversation, 15 March, 1989) This situation was the very best he could find given the allowance that GAIN supplies to single men on social assistance in the province.

In a recent survey of Downtown Eastside housing and residents, the Downtown Eastside Resident's Association (DERA) identified 216 buildings containing a total of 10,189 residential units. (DERA 1988,2) About 22% of these units are non-profit accommodation, which means that over 77% of the available stock is market accommodation, most of which is similar in character to the room which Emery Barnes rented. This stark fact about the community - that the vast majority of the population living there are in such circumstances - makes Jim Green's statement that there are "10,000 homeless people in the area" take on a new meaning. He is counting, with a minimum of poetic licence, those who live in single room occupancy hotels or rooming houses (SROs) who might have 80 - 100 square feet of space in which to dwell, and who pay, relative to other low cost rental fee structures, extraordinarily high rent per square foot. These places lack basic amenities to such a degree that they cannot reasonably be described as adequate. The people in these places have only recently been given the minimal protection guaranteed in the Residential Tenancy Act. DERA has been actively lobbying for this protection for 16 years.

Karen Howe, advocacy worker at the First United Church in the Downtown Eastside, has come to realize that helping people to find housing in the area is by far the most frustrating of all the tasks she performs in the course of her work. She understands that the waiting period for social housing in the Downtown Eastside is at least five years, and finds that rooms in the
very few "good" hotels, those that are reasonably clean and well maintained, are rarely vacant. (Karen Howe, personal interview, 3 March, 1988)

Evidence of the interest in the co-op and non-profit housing coming available is abundant. When the Four Sisters Co-op was underway, the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) received approximately 1300 applications for the 153 units. Those who obtained a place are considered to be very fortunate.

At the present time, it is estimated that only about 20% of the residents of the Downtown Eastside are women. Logically, most of the area services are oriented towards men. The situation in the SRO hotels is difficult for women. Substance abuse, threat of violence, and loneliness are strong characteristics of their situation. (Nicola Kozakiewicz, personal interview, 19 March, 1988) As most of the accommodation in the hotels and rooming houses of the area is not self-contained, women must leave the relative safety of their own rooms to use the washroom, telephones and other amenities; a necessity which underscores their vulnerability. The most reasonable option which our society has devised - social housing - is not readily available to but a fraction of these very poor women. The supply of decent, safe, secure, self-contained and affordable housing in the Downtown Eastside does not come anywhere near to matching the need.
WHAT CONSTITUTES A HOME?

If we accept the very logical definition put forward by the Centre for Human Settlements that homelessness is "an absence of a continuing or permanent home", then an examination of "home" will serve to further explicate and clarify the term "homeless".

The Experiential Aspect

"Home" is a fundamental human concept which may be perceived quite differently by each person who tries to articulate a definition. Many of us may never make such an attempt. We may take "home" for granted and never consciously question what it really means, especially those of us who have always had a real home.

The discipline of phenomenology as presented by the geographer, David Seamon, is a mode of study which attempts to cut through our unquestioning way of living in the world to see/articulate more clearly what we are experiencing. By focusing attention on the "lifeworld" - where we live - phenomenologists "attempt to establish generalisations about human experience", through "descriptive clarification of phenomena and events".(Seamon 1979, 21)

David Seamon has articulated a clear and conscious description of "home" based on his own phenomenological observation and the reports of other people who have shared their observations with him.

"Home", according to Seamon, "is the most important centre" that a person can experience.(ibid.,78) He has developed a theory that attachment to home is associated with the experience of "at-homeness" which he describes as the "taken-for-granted situation of being comfortable and familiar with the world in which one lives his or her daily life."(ibid.) He believes, furthermore, that for all environmental disciplines, the understanding of "at-homeness" is crucial because it is the experience associated with peoples' resting in a particular place on the earth and proceeding to live there.
From his observations on "home", Seamon has developed the idea that five underlying themes mark out the experiential character of at-homeness. The first theme, "rootedness", he explains is "the power of home to organise the habitual, bodily stratum of the person's lived-space." The home "roots the person spatially, providing a physical centre for departure and return". (ibid., 79) The second underlying theme he calls "appropriation" which involves a sense of possession and control over the homespace. "Regeneration", in his description, refers to the restorative powers of the home. The fourth theme Seamon calls "at-easeness" which he says refers to the freedom to be "what he (sic) most comfortably is, and (to) do what he most wishes to do". The fifth, the quality of "warmth", refers to an atmosphere "of friendliness, concern and support that a successful home generates". (ibid., 79-84)

It is clearly evident that measured against Seamon's framework, (or most other definitions), that people living on the street or even in temporary shelters do not have a home. It is a subject of some debate whether people living in Downtown Eastside hotels actually have a home. Seamon's framework could be used as a basis for deciding at least whether SRO residents are experientially "at home". We are aware that some people have lived in the Downtown Eastside for many years. The average length of stay in the area is over 10 years, making it the second most stable community in Vancouver after Dunbar. (DERA 1988, iii) These people are then potentially very "rooted" in terms of connection to the area and the community at large. But SRO residents have recently gained only the most basic protection afforded to most tenants, and are often forced to move around within the community due to circumstances over which they have little control. Those residents who have managed to avoid eviction and stay for considerable periods in one room may indeed have developed a "rooted" connection with their spot and experience the place as a strong centre for departure and return. Many who have been evicted at a landlord's whim, often a number of times, would not be able to develop this association. With such a tenuous connection, a sense of possession and control, Seamon's "appropriation", may be difficult to nurture as well. Many tenants of residential hotels have reported returning home to find their belongings moved out
and locks changed on their doors. The many summary evictions that took place at the time of
development for Expo and recent events at the Drexel Hotel where residents were given less
than twenty-four hours notice to vacate by the City Health Department (Sarti 1989) clearly
show how "rooted" and "in control" hotel residents really are. Without any protection, they
are in fact powerless.

There is a marked difference in the sense of appropriation as experienced by hotel
residents and their counterparts in social housing projects. Jim Green claims that the common
areas in co-ops especially are well maintained and free of trouble, as opposed to the hotel
common spaces which are typically neither appropriated nor maintained by the residents.

The atmosphere in the rougher Downtown Eastside hotels is noisy, violent and sometimes
very unpredictable. Walls between the rooms are typically very thin in many of the buildings
and sound transmission is near complete.

It is perhaps possible at times to find peace and tranquility - "regeneration" - in such a
setting, but as this is often not predictably so, it is difficult to think of a hotel room as a place
where one may assume rest and regeneration will be had.

An eight or nine foot by ten foot room is, among other things, quite restrictive, and would
likely inhibit activities and projects necessary for a person to be able to do what he or she
most wishes to do. The space constraint, combined with the noise factor, insecurity of tenure
and unpredictability of the behaviour of fellow tenants might often preclude the possibility of
feeling "at-ease". While it is possible and indeed likely for friendly relations to develop
among the residents, this is not always the case. Typical landlord-tenant relations in market
rental situations are not known to be characterized by the exchange of support and mutual
concern, a fundamental ingredient in the creation of an atmosphere of "warmth". Coming
"home" to a run-down hotel is not an experience that we easily see as hospitable or
enhancing to one's self image. The often unkempt and very spartan physical nature of the
building can hardly be associated with "warmth", the final quality mentioned in Seamon's
framework.
Many would argue that residents of Downtown Eastside hotels are in general quite happy with their homes. It is possible. But if we consider that because of economic constraints, most of these people have no option but to be there, and if we examine the lengthy waiting lists for social housing in the area, we may develop a certain scepticism with respect to that view. And when we use the framework developed by David Seamon to describe aspects of the experience of being "at home" to assess the situation in the hotels and rooming houses, we may conclude that there are indeed a large number of people-without-homes in the Downtown Eastside.
Practical and Policy Aspects of Adequate Housing

Access to adequate housing is a fundamental right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Article 25(1) states:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (sic) and his family including food, clothing, housing..."

The question of what criteria can be used in evaluating the adequacy of the living conditions for the Canadian situation is one which has been well addressed by policy analysts and practitioners in the various environmental disciplines. Kiodawsky and Spector have put together a comprehensive list of common housing assessment criteria drawn from a broad range of sources to evaluate the adequacy of housing. These criteria can be used to provide a base criteria for evaluating the adequacy of a home for anyone in our society. (Kiodawsky and Spector 1988, 144-146)

Affordability - The Canadian government defines those people paying more than 30% of their monthly income for housing as experiencing "core housing need". When very low income people are in this situation, it is recognised that they can be "at risk" of becoming homeless. Using the 30% on income factor as an indicator, it must be ascertained whether the person or family is able to afford housing sufficient for their needs and whether sufficient income will remain after paying for housing to satisfy other basic requirements.

Accessibility - Are required services such as schools, employment opportunities, and transportation facilities within easy reach of the housing?

Availability - Is the required housing stock available in sufficient quantities to meet the demand and are any forms of discrimination operating which restrict access?

Security of Tenure - Is it possible to create a stable home in the housing situation or is there insecurity because of such factors as rising rents, unit conversion?

Appropriateness - Are household facilities included in the unit adequate for the resident? This factor might include certain qualitative dimensions such as adequate space, maintenance, appropriate opportunities for sharing and support, sufficient privacy, and flexibility of financial
and housing arrangements which may need to change to meet the differing situations of residents over time.

Cost Effectiveness in the Use of Public and Private Funds

The efficacy of this factor may most effectively be judged by considering the social costs of not providing a fully adequate environment. If private and public resources are to be expended, the most cost effective options are logically pursued in the provision of adequate housing environments.
A HOME AS A FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL NEED

The Single Displaced Persons Project (SDPP) a self-established, informal organization of social service workers and clergy in Toronto, makes a clear distinction between simple shelter and secure housing, which provides a stable base for living. "This kind of housing", they believe, "is a fundamental human need and should be available to all, regardless of income".(Bosworth et al, 1983, 20-21)

The Housing Document Group of the SDPP explicitly state their values and assumptions in a document dated May 1987, which further clarifies their concept of this social need. These views will be examined as well in closer detail in later sections of this document as the theme of creating homes is more fully explored.

The SDPP believe that all people are entitled to a home to live in, which meets their basic shelter needs, and which offers a stable, secure environment. They believe that people should be free to make personal choices with respect to the satisfaction of this basic need, and that the opportunity must be there for individuals to manage their own living space and to choose their associations with groups and other individuals. Furthermore, people must share decision making power to the extent that they are affected by decisions. Security of tenure in one’s home is a critical aspect, and this security must not be conditional on participation in support services or programs.(Housing Document Group 1987, 7-8)

By the SDPP definition, "adequate housing" for low income people is housing in which they can make a home for themselves. It requires putting into place the same range of housing options as are available to people of higher income. These options include choice with respect to where and with whom one will live, the degree of privacy and space available, how long one might stay in a given place, and where to go upon leaving.(Ibid., 9)
A BROAD DEFINITION OF "HOMELESSNESS"

An excerpt from another document written by the SDPP in 1983 leaves no ambiguity as to what is involved when one is "homeless", and clarifies the broadened definition of this often misapprehended term. In the view of the SDPP:

"Homelessness is the lack of a secure, affordable "home" base for the rest of life's activities. It is more than the lack of shelter, for it involves a cycle of having and losing housing. The product of a complex socio-economic dynamic, it is the situation faced by the poorest in our society who are at the bottom of the housing system."(Bosworth et al 1983, 10)

If this definition is embraced, the phenomenon of homelessness assumes a new stature. We can no longer then believe that our homeless problem in Vancouver is confined to those few unfortunates who sleep in the streets. It is clearly a problem of much greater magnitude.
"While homelessness has become a problem of major proportions, no single government or international agency has an accurate estimate of the actual number of persons involved. Exact statistics are difficult to obtain, in large part because of problems of definition and the fact that homeless persons are rarely included in traditional methods of data collection."

(CAHRO 1987, 3)

The Canadian Council on Social Development reported in 1987 that:
"On January 22, 1987, nearly 8,000 Canadians slept in temporary and emergency shelters across Canada. During 1986, beds were provided to about 100,000 homeless and destitute people and over one million meals were served by about 300 of Canada's shelters and soup kitchens."(CCSD 1987)

If this were the full count of homeless people in Canada, the problem, though very serious, could be solved relatively easily with deft management. But the CCSD emphasizes that this survey "Shows Only Part of the Problem" and that these 8,000 people represent only part of Canada's homeless population. The CCSD analysts point out that the figure quoted does not include people who slept in the streets or in abandoned buildings, spent the night in restaurants or stayed with friends. Also not included in the count were "people sent to hotels or motels by social services, or put in jail...people in detoxification centres, maternity homes or other special needs centres were not included, even though those centres frequently serve people who have nowhere else to live."(ibid.)

Many of B.C.'s "obvious" homeless were not included in the count. B.C.'s contribution to the number was atypically low because January 22 happened to be the day after social assistance "cheque day", a time of the month when numbers of people requiring emergency shelter decrease significantly, if only temporarily.

If we accept the broad definition of "homeless" to mean people-without-homes, the numbers, though still very difficult to ascertain, surely increase. What if we include all those people whose homelessness is a concealed problem or those who are at risk? This includes people in very substandard dwelling places and and those in circumstances which are otherwise intolerable, but who are without options. It is acknowledged that at least one in
ten Canadian women will be abused in the context of their domestic relationships. What if a woman is forced to flee a violent situation and to leave behind all measures of support? What if a person's usual source of income is cut off or reduced unexpectedly? Such factors can push those already susceptible to homelessness beyond the point of risk. What of all of those people who may be evicted in order to make way for upscale development? Where do they go if they already live in the cheapest neighbourhood? What of those who have been released from mental hospitals after years of institutional support? How long might it take for such a person to slide into disarray if appropriate supports and accommodation are not available in the community?

What of people who live in SRO hotels? Can we say that a person who lives in a tiny bug- and rodent-infested room, lacking even the most basic amenities that our society takes for granted, and without any protection or rights, has a home? If we cannot support this claim, then Jim Green's statement that there are "10,000 homeless" in the Downtown Eastside makes sense. If we extrapolate from this well-considered estimate to gauge the total number of people-without-homes in Canada, we begin to appreciate that the 8,000 people who slept in shelters on January 22, 1987 are in fact only a small fraction of Canadians who are homeless or seriously at risk.

After observing the energy which is spent considering the magnitude of the problem of homelessness, it is refreshing to come upon the words of two prominent writers on the topic. They have both reached conclusions which are hard to debate in the contemporary forum.

Johnathon Kozol, author of the book, *Rachel and Her Children* - states in his preface: "We would be wise, however, to avoid the numbers game. Any search for the "right number" carries the assumption that we may at last arrive at an acceptable number. There is no acceptable number." (Kozol 1988a, 10)
And Nora Richter Greer summarizes the issue this way in her preface to the AIA landmark document on the subject - *The Search for Shelter*.

"The real issue is not the precise number of homeless, but the gravity of their situation." (Greer 1986, 11)
WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH ARCHITECTURE?

As key participants in the process of shaping the environment, the architect/programmer/advocate has an integral role in responding to the phenomenon of homelessness - the condition of being without a home. If this situation is apprehended in its broadest sense, then a humane and well-tailored response to the problem is possible. If the essential nature of the phenomenon is improperly grasped - if, for example, homelessness is equated simply with rooflessness or lack of shelter - an insufficient or inappropriate response is likely to result.

Arthur Fallick's notion is that homelessness is a multi-faceted problem and the result of a confluence of circumstances and trends in our society today. These are the social, political and economic context of the problem. The argument here is that an understanding of these elements is at least as important to the shapers of the environment as is the physical context of a given site. A grasp of these contextual dimensions leads to richer and more appropriate solutions. A failure to understand the issues can lead to as uneasy a fit as that which results when an architect fails to consider the site. A narrow or uninformed perception of such a phenomenon as homelessness can bring about partial or even counterproductive responses. By default perhaps, our society has indulged in the idea that access to dormitory hostels, tiny rundown hotel rooms, and other forms of insufficient arrangements are an acceptable option to "homelessness". If we accept the argument that homeless means without-a-home, and if we accept that a home must have certain attributes and standards to be truly an home, then we are guided by this stance in our action.

Based on a sound grasp of the factors contributing to the phenomenon, suitable and innovative responses can be well tailored to meet the multiplicity of needs.

The Housing Committee of the AIA has been addressing the phenomenon of homelessness in a focused way for some time. But in the winter of 1983-84 they recognized
that previous development strategies were, if anything, exacerbating the problem. In their analysis:

"We found ourselves a part of a process of reasoned solutions for community revitalization that has been a contributing factor to the increase in homelessness." (Greer 1986, 5)

Based on this insight, the committee began to seek out homeless people, and to look for a new and informed understanding of the situation. In their words:

"We began to discover they (the homeless) had basic human needs no different than our own. They displayed the same need for social supports, for the retention of identity, privacy, self-esteem, and personal values that we seek in our own housing situations. However; their conditions and the manifestations of their needs were different from ours." (ibid.)

Such perceptions are the foundation for the framing of useful and appropriate questions and a logical and necessary step in the development of right solutions.

The Role of the Architect

In a recent special issue of Progressive Architecture devoted to "Solving the Housing Crisis", the editors presented a rich portfolio of low cost housing projects designed to prevent and alleviate homelessness. Readers were urged to study the projects to:

"trace the ways in which these architects have rethought the problem of low-cost housing, making the most of tight budgets to provide shelter that suits particular occupants and their very specific needs...Review the funding, drawn with as much imagination as were these designs. And recognize that there is no one answer to the housing crisis. The problem, if it is to be solved, will be solved at the local level, project by project. And who better to help lead that process than architects." (Boles 1988, 68)

Homelessness needs to be attacked on a number of fronts, ranging from critical shifts at the ideological/political and economic structural foundation of our society to very specific intervention in the locale. The advocacy, programming and design actions of architects which lead to actual change in the built environment - the buildings - are a vital piece of the process of prevention and eradication of homelessness.
CHAPTER 2

WHY ARE THERE HOMELESS PEOPLE IN A COUNTRY AS WEALTHY AS CANADA?

In Chapter 1, the principal factors contributing to homelessness: the poverty, lack of work, poor health, social problems, and the housing crisis were identified and discussed. The focus of discussion in this chapter is WHY? What ideologies and attitudes form the setting and climate in Canadian society which allows the phenomenon of homelessness to exist and even proliferate today?

The Single Displaced Persons Project (SDPP) have summarized their assessment of the underlying attitudes of Canadians to the phenomenon of homelessness in a statement contained in their paper "The Case For Longterm, Supportive Housing". This assessment gives us an insight into why we are able to rather placidly accept the reality that many in our society - though most onlookers are unaware of how many - are without a home. The SDPP observe:

"As a society, we tend to respond to homelessness by using a set of labels. We have a tendency to seek explanations of the problem, not in socio-economic (structural) terms, but in discrete personal problems which can be 'diagnosed' and 'cured'. The homeless are then considered ex-mental patients, handicapped, alcoholic, lazy, stupid, or even 'socially retarded'. When we cannot find adequate diagnoses, we tend to blame the victim for her/his situation. ('He wouldn't be that way if he just tried a little harder to find a job' or 'She wouldn't be on the streets if she had stayed with her family'). Blaming the victim fails to take into account the economic and social realities behind the homelessness of the individual (unemployment and violence in the family, for instance). Even when our explanations move beyond the individual's failures or diagnosed problems, we tend to minimize the gravity of the situation by dismissing it a temporary ('a bed for the night', 'a cup of coffee'). Equally dangerous is our attempt to romanticize homelessness through images of the happy hobo without a care in the world. By focusing on the most visible and eccentric individuals we sustain the myth that the majority of homeless people are happy with their poverty, choose not to work, and seek to 'bum' off the rest of society." (Bosworth et al 1983, 8-9)
The observation that "band-aid" solutions are ineffective is of course not new. Many social reformers have phrased similar analyses throughout history. Charles Booth, after a thorough examination of the poor in London near the end of the last century, concluded that the dispensation of charity is irrelevant in that it fails to address the basic problem.

In 1933, George Orwell stated with characteristic clarity: "The problem is how to turn the tramp from a bored, half-alive vagrant into a self-respecting human being." (Orwell 1985, 182) His solution went far beyond the mere increasing of creature comforts to those in temporary shelter. A pauper in even "positively luxurious" casual wards, he believed, would "still be a pauper, cut off from marriage and home life, and a dead loss to the community. What is needed is to depauperize him." (ibid., 183)

An eloquent Vancouverite, Sheila Baxter, whose recently published book details the conditions and feelings of some selected poor women of the city, speaks out sharply against our society's response to the disadvantaged today. Not much has changed in several centuries. According to Baxter, unenlightened responses still prevail.

"The attitudes which lay behind the English Poor Laws established in the 1600's are still held today by those in authority. Then, the 'able-bodied poor', people who were considered to be responsible for their own poverty, were severely punished if they didn't work or if they begged. Three hundred and eighty years later, people are still punished for being unemployed." (Baxter 1988, 13-14)

Baxter, a poor woman herself, interviewed a number of poor women on the streets of Vancouver in a period of several months in 1986 and noted:

"The most common problem seemed to be... a lack of self worth, of self-esteem. The reason for this, the women said in varying ways, was society's attitude toward them. They felt that being poor, or having a psychiatric history or a criminal record, meant that they were outcasts. They felt they had been judged. One woman said, 'this is a throwaway society and I have been thrown away'. Another woman said, 'Not all the blame should go to the system, but it is often hard to see where it should go when you are too hungry to think straight'. (ibid., 12)

Baxter's words give us an unsentimental and tough-minded approach to the problems of the disadvantaged. She too is completely unwilling to accept the view that only the
individual is to blame for their circumstances and state of being. She claims, "Society must accept that poverty is a social problem, not a personal one."(ibid., 14)

Sheila Baxter spoke to homeless, hungry, broke and tired women and noted that "Most of the women I interviewed said that their biggest problem was the attitude society shows towards them when they become poor or sick." In her uncompromising view, "the issues surrounding welfare and unemployment must be faced, talked about, dealt with. Solutions must be found."(ibid.)

In a statement contained in the Centre for Human Settlements contribution to IYSH 1987, Oberlander and Fallick support the position that causes of homelessness are fundamental and must be so addressed. They state:

"Analyses of homelessness among the European Economic Community and in North America suggest that the homeless are becoming more economically and socially diverse, and that the sources of homelessness have their roots in the structural conditions of these societies rather than in personality deficiencies among homeless people."(Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 8)

The Recognition of Structural Issues

The question, "Why do we have homeless people in our society?" demands an answer that goes well beyond the individual manifestations of homelessness. The challenge, as proffered by these thoughtful and thought provoking perceptions, is to replace our societal mythologising and ineffectual wringing of hands responses, where they exist, with solid structural analysis and action in our society.

An outcome of 1987 being declared the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless was not that many actual homes were made available to people who desperately needed them. Most observers and analysts agree that homelessness is on the rise rather than in decline. The lasting value of the IYSH is that structural issues were recognized, many minds were focused on the phenomenon, and many thoughtful explanations, assessments and recommendations were articulated. A brief review of the literature emerging from national, provincial and local conferences on homelessness in Canada, and relevant papers published by the Centre for
Human Settlements and the School of Community and Regional Planning and other sources, has served to provide some explanation based on fundamental structural realities to the question of why many people in Canada are without homes today. Several main themes emerge, which together give a more comprehensive answer to the question than reliance upon the "individual as loser" position. These themes will be discussed in the following section.
Political Will

from House of Commons Debates:

Mrs. Therese Killens (Saint Michel-Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, my intervention concerns homeless people. Unlike Britain and Australia, Canada has no legislation to define government responsibility with respect to the obligation to shelter the homeless. The United States are now considering the possibility of passing such legislation, despite the pronouncements of the Reagan administration. In Canada this obligation does not exist at either government level, federal or provincial. In the meantime the federal and provincial administrations are throwing the ball back and forth in their respective courts...

I therefore urge the government to define government responsibility. Homeless people are already on the fringe of society. Does the Government want to integrate them? Where is the political will? (reported in "Under One Roof", the daily newsletter of the conference to observe IYSH, September, 1987)

"Politicians in Canada and around the world have learned that if they keep 75 per cent of the people happy, they can ignore the 25 per cent of people at the bottom of the social ladder." Canada's Ambassador to the UN, 1987

In his keynote address to the Conference on Homelessness in B.C. held at UBC in May, 1987, Stephen Lewis explained the existence of homelessness in our wealthy society in clear terms. He believes "that there can be, in an appropriate ordering of (our) society, the resources to respond" to homelessness. But homelessness proliferates throughout the globe, even in our "civilised and enlightened country", which fact he feels is "an affront, not merely to human dignity, but to the simple matter of logic and rationale". His explanation for this situation: "there is not the political will" to provide housing for people who do not have a home. (Fallick 1987, 8-9)

At the same conference, Rosemary Brown gave support to Lewis' reasoning behind why we have people without homes in Canada. She said:

"We have homeless people in this country because we choose to, not because we have to. It is in fact a political decision." (Fallick 1987, 23)

Rosemary Brown has observed that when governments establish priorities, those who are deemed "productive" - that is, those who generate tax income, are "at the top of the list".
Those who are perceived to be "non-productive" - those who need social services and those who deliver social services, which do not generate wealth, are low on the list. In effect, those people who are unable to supply for themselves the basic requirements of life, those people who are in need of homes, "are at the very bottom of the pile". Governments, she believes, try to determine the absolute minimum standard that we can set for support, that will keep these people from starving to death or becoming so angry that they will take to the streets.(ibid.)

Ms. Brown believes that only if the question of homelessness is taken seriously enough by the community at large - the voters - will it be meaningfully addressed. At this point in our evolution, however, she observes that "the political will in this country is that housing is not a priority".(ibid., 25) Unlike health care and education in Canada, a home is not yet broadly perceived as a basic right, and many of Canada's people are, as a consequence of this, without homes.

The Right to a Home

David Hulchanski has observed that "the debate over the right to housing comes down to a set of ethical questions", that we as a society must answer. He lays the responsibility squarely upon the community at large: "As voters, each of us must make up our minds about the kind of society that we want."(Hulchanski June 1988a, 10) Hulchanski believes that we must decide:

"* What does it mean to lead a life of dignity?

  * What are the necessary material means required to lead a life of dignity?

  * How does society devise those institutions which allow all people to live with dignity?

  * What role does housing quality, quantity, price and security play in living with dignity?"(ibid.)

In Hulchanski's mind, the answers to these questions form the philosophical and moral framework for the policy decisions that Canadians face. Unlike decisions which have been
made to guarantee access of all the society to adequate health care and education, the
decision to guarantee adequate housing for all Canadians has not been made. In his analysis:
"Access to adequate housing varies between rich and poor. It varies between two-parent families and one-parent families. Much depends on whether you are young, old, or middle aged."(ibid., 11)

Furthermore, housing in Canada has been traditionally delivered to the poor on an "ad hoc crisis management basis", based on "little more than a concern with production, that is, maintaining a reasonable annual level of private sector starts"(ibid., 46, 39). Housing construction is used as a stimulator for the economy and to create employment when necessary.

According to Hulchanski, the practical and technical problems of providing housing for Canadians are already solved. We have the capacity in Canada to build all the homes that we need. Canada is a wealthy country that delivers good housing to most citizens. Indeed, Canada is known to be one of the best housed nations of the world. The severe crisis affects the low income members of our society, not the well housed upper income groups. Instead of the practical considerations, it is the housing systems and institutions which are incomplete, which have failed to deliver housing to a large and growing number of people at "the bottom of the pile".

John Sewell, speaking as chairman of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority at a conference in Toronto in 1987, reinforced this view in his remarks. Presenting his historical perspective on why we have a housing crisis in Canada today, he said that the government, when creating CMHC, "had the wrong goal" - that of encouraging private profit enterprise to look after the nation's housing needs, success being measured by government agencies' lack of participation in the public housing field". (Sayne 1988)

Hulchanski calls the current Canadian housing system an exclusive system that permits access to housing according to economic status. (Hulchanski 1988a, 14). The solution to Canada's housing crisis is therefore, he believes, "to devise an inclusive housing system". This means that housing must be placed high on the political agenda based on the starting premise
"that all Canadians have the right to decent housing, and at rents and prices they can afford". (ibid., 14-15)

In 1948, Humphrey Carter wrote: "the crucial and ultimate test of effectiveness of our housing policy is the condition of the worst housed families in our communities." (Carver 1948, 123)

If we accept this argument, then those many Canadians living on the streets, and in grossly inadequate dwellings, are the most dramatic proof that our housing policy and programs have not yet succeeded in responding to the needs of many Canadians. The right to a decent home has neither been articulated nor satisfied amongst the least fortunate in our society.

In a brief paper from the Centre for Human Settlements entitled "Defining Human Settlements - People, Habitat and Development", the following statement appears: "One of the main criteria by which a society's values and achievements can be measured is the settlement conditions of its weakest social groups."

Human settlements are here defined as "not simply housing or, for that matter, merely the physical structure of a city, town, or village but an integrated combination of all human activity processes - residence, work, education, health culture, leisure, etc. - and the physical structure that supports them." The paper further states: "Human settlements and the systems they form are the expression of a nation's society, of its values, and of its achievements."

With respect to those values the paper somewhat optimistically observes that: "...judgement criteria have shifted from appreciation of isolated achievements of elite societal groups to the measure of the overall conditions enjoyed by an entire human settlements system and of a whole society."

If we accept the broad and logical view of settlements, then the situation that we envision goes well beyond the simple production of physical shelter to provision for a rich array of "activity processes" integrated into the solutions that we devise.

The following section contains a brief examination of the ideological positions which have been instrumental in shaping Canada's housing supply. A look at the policies and the
programs helps to understand the situation and points to what might be done to rectify the shortcomings in the Canadian housing stock.
CANADA'S HOUSING POLICY AND PROGRAMS

The Ideological Foundation of the Housing Problem

"Housing policy in Canada is shaped by the same forces that have shaped the government's social and economic policy. The core of this agenda is a renewed vision of a "market society". Human relations and human beings are being redefined in terms of the market place. Certain values and principles - profitability, productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness - are laws by which social relations are governed in a market-oriented society. Under such market criteria; labour, human needs, and human services are generally treated as commodities to be bought, sold, or exchanged in the market place."(Carr 1987, 52)

The ideological foundation of Canadian policymakers seems to reflect an "almost religious belief in the private market as the only fair and efficient mechanism for distributing society's resources".(Dennis and Fish 1972, 3) In the fifty year period since the inception of the National Housing Act, the overall direction of legislation reflects loyal commitment to the support of the private sector and the encouragement of private home ownership for those who earn healthy incomes.(Housing for People Coalition 1987, 16) But housing is a very expensive good, likely to be the largest investment that a typical household will ever make. At current prices, this investment clearly requires a bright financial picture on the part of the buyer. The bottom fifth of Canadian society, those who, taken together, earn but 3.6% of all the income, could hardly be described as having such an income profile.

If home ownership is therefore out of the question, the obvious option is low cost rental accommodation. But this is a major aspect of the housing crisis. Very low vacancy rates have been typical in many Canadian urban centres for over a decade. In Vancouver, the vacancy rate in October, 1988 was 0.5%.

Hulchanski points out that "According to conventional economics, low vacancy rates are a market signal for investors to jump in and build more rental units".(Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.6) But the reality is that private and non-profit rental starts are at their lowest point in
decades, and only 1880 units of social housing were started in B.C. in 1986 - a very small fraction of the need (ibid.)

Hulchanski explains the situation in this way:
"Low income people do not stimulate "market demand". They do not have the money to pay the rents necessary to stimulate private rental housing investment... Most of our housing is provided by the private sector which can only respond to the demand stimulated by higher income households. Most housing starts are for owner-occupied housing, both single-family houses and condominiums. There is no money to be made in building housing for low and moderate income renters." (Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.5)

We have known this in Canada for a long while.

As early as 1935, a Special Parliamentary Committee on Housing concluded: "There is no apparent prospect of the low rental housing need being met through unaided private enterprise building for profit." (Housing for People Coalition 1987, p.16)

In 1964, Ontario’s municipal housing authorities stated that:
"a constant claim of the proponents of "pure" private enterprise that it could solve the housing problem should be considered against the evidence of a historic ineffectiveness... Private enterprise seems to be at its most dynamic level when protected by extensive loan guarantees and substantial borrower's equity and when properties are all sited in the bustling urban market." (ibid., 18)

Many housing analysts recognize the current situation as "market failure", (Hulchanski 1988b, 37) a situation in which supply is not responding to demand, and in which stock is actually being reduced through condominium conversion, demolition, and renovation to appeal to upscale markets.

A particularly chilling assessment is that under the present system of housing supply: "the near total reliance on the private sector for supply, distribution and maintenance of national housing resources means that people who cannot generate market demand will most likely not have their housing needs met". (ibid.)

Government Subsidies - "Aided Private Enterprise"

If the unaided private market cannot produce the desired results, government aid or subsidy to housing schemes is an obvious option. Government housing subsidies are of two
different types. The most apparent subsidies are direct spending programs which provide benefits to both low and middle income earners through public housing programs, rent subsidies, and mortgage assistance. (McQuaig 1987, 14) These are programs which appear in the government budgets and which are the subject of intense scrutiny and, often, cutbacks. Indirect subsidies or tax expenditures are not so readily apparent in published documents. These are subsidies provided through the tax system which amount to generous tax breaks for the upper income groups. Indirect expenditures include such measures as the non-taxation of capital gains and non-taxation of imputed rent to homeowners. It is estimated that "for every $100 spent in direct housing expenditure, some $200-300 is spent through housing tax expenditures" - indirect subsidy. (Hulchanski 1985a, 6) In 1985 alone it was estimated that roughly 3.5 billion was kept out of the federal coffers through non-taxation of capital gains, and another 2.2 billion lost through non-taxation of imputed rent to homeowners.

In Linda McQuaig's analysis of Canada's tax system she has noted: "the hidden nature of tax expenditures has kept these disparities largely out of public debate. Instead of looking at how unevenly the benefits of housing tax breaks are distributed or at how to correct this bias, restraint-conscious governments have looked elsewhere to make cuts in Ottawa's housing subsidy. Leaving the tax breaks intact, they've gone after the direct spending programs for housing, even though these programs distribute benefits far more fairly". (McQuaig 1987, 13)

In 1984, $48.5 million was cut from social housing programs which provided direct subsidy for low and moderate income groups. (ibid., 14) This money was removed from the budget despite the fact that social housing is one of the smaller spending items in the subsidy system. It is tantalizing to consider what could have taken place in the social housing sector if the estimated $3.5 billion and $2.2 billion indirect subsidy had been rerouted instead to low cost housing supply programs.
Programs - the "Alphabet Soup" Response

The Canadian government's response since the early 1980s to the rental squeeze at the lower end of the income scale has not yet been to increase the supply of affordable housing units by any significant measure, but to design an array of programs to stimulate the rental market. These programs have in fact mostly benefitted Canadians in the upper income brackets.

The Assisted Rental Plan (ARP), and its most recent version, the Canada Rental Supply Plan (CRSP), provided loans to developers willing to produce rental accommodation. Multiple Unit Residential Buildings (MURBs) gave special tax breaks to individuals who invested in qualified rental housing. But almost all the rental units provided by these programs rent at the higher end of the market. Most of the units thus built were registered as condominiums to permit easy conversion and eventual sale. Furthermore, many of the sites for buildings thus constructed became available through the demolition of existing low-cost rental buildings.

It is hoped that the new housing initiatives will benefit from analysis of the apparent difficulties of these earlier programs. It remains to be seen whether covenants will be made to produce and protect low cost rental accommodation, or whether developers and upper income renters will be the beneficiaries of proposed schemes. If the rental units are allowed to be registered as condominiums initially, and if protections are not built in to preclude steep rises in rent, and if high rates of demolition of low rental accommodation are allowed to continue, then the housing crisis for low income renters will not be eased appreciably by these new moves.

A range of federal programs has been fabricated to stimulate home ownership in Canada, but these subsidies have done little to improve the situation of the poor. The Assisted Home Ownership Program (AHOP), and the Canadian Ownership Stimulation Program (CHOSP), gave grants to buyers of new homes. Few in the lowest income quintile found this to be a feasible option to pursue. The Canada Mortgage Renewal Plan (CMRP) gave grants to assist homeowners facing higher mortgage payments when renewing mortgages during periods of
high interest rates. This again affected few of the poor. The net effect of ownership
stimulation programs is that almost any Canadian household which has access to sufficient
income to make the option of ownership feasible is buying. The rental market is now almost
exclusively the domain of the poor.
The Non-Market Housing Sector

The non-market social housing sector in Canada is one of the smallest and least developed among western nations. (Hulchanski 1988b, 37) In fact, only about 4.2% of the housing stock in Canada is publicly owned. This stock is composed of units subsidized by government and managed either by government housing authorities, private non-profit housing societies, or not-for-profit housing cooperatives. (ibid., 11)

Although in quantitative terms it has a limited impact, it was said in 1985 that Canada's fledgling social housing program has "acquired the international respect of urban specialists for the creative, often innovative and usually sensitive approaches to supplying housing for lower income and special needs groups". (Hulchanski 1985b) The programs have been altered significantly since 1985, however, when the Study Team Report to the Nielsen Task Force on Program Review of Housing Programs was released. This report noted what team members considered to be "an imbalance" in housing policy to date. They recognized that stimulative programs and mortgage insurance have enabled moderate-, middle-, and higher-income ownership and investment. They noted that social housing programs have served moderate-to-middle-income households rather than exclusively the very needy. The thrust of the recommendations is found in the statement: "It is time to redress this imbalance, to favour those with the greatest need for assistance." (Study Team Report, p.9)

This position clearly is in opposition to the mix of incomes built into co-operative social housing projects, which is necessary to prevent 'ghettoization' of the poor, and to enhance quality and vitality in housing projects.

The report further stated its finding that the supply of new social housing units is costly and results in the long-term commitment of funds. The bias is clearly toward finding cheaper alternatives. The recommended solution - "a shift in the balance toward rental supplements and renovation programs (which) would create a more cost-effective housing strategy." (ibid.)

The continuing belief in the efficacy of the private market is revealed in the words: "If a single theme could be identified for the federal government role in housing and mortgage markets, it would
be one of encouraging a climate of stability in which the private sector can function most effectively."(ibid., 12)

The Study Team recommended therefore:
"a posture of less intrusive support to enable the markets to work well themselves (as the) better course to pursue."(ibid.)

CMHC - "A National Direction For Housing Solutions"

A mix of social housing programs with heavy emphasis on the rent supplement and residential rehabilitation assistance programs were articulated in the December, 1985 statement by CMHC - the national "direction". The new concept of the co-operative housing program "which relies less on government expenditure than has been the case in the past" was outlined. The co-op program was to be kept "intact" but "carefully controlled".

The 1986 revisions to housing programs emerge directly from the 1985 recommendations. Reflecting the call for greater targeting of housing assistance to those most in need, the term "core housing need " took on a new dimension. Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) were introduced as a means of determining eligibility for assistance. The income thresholds are based on the income required to access the average priced rental unit in a market area at 30% of income.

The Co-operative Housing Program has now been removed from the Social Housing envelope and has become a "quasi-market" program aimed at those households not in core need but nevertheless unable to pay for home ownership". (Steve Pomeroy, CMHC, address to students, 29 May, 1987) Non "core" households pay market rent. The element of social housing which has been retained in the co-op program is the stacking of rent supplements allowing 30% of co-op occupants to be core needy and to receive assistance under the rent supplement program. The co-op program features an innovative financing technique - index-linked mortgage loans (ILMs) which feature initial payments which are relatively low. Through a special provision, payments increase each year by 2% less than the national rate of inflation. This enables the co-op to maintain occupancy charges below rents in comparable rental housing.
The New "Global Agreement" - Provincial and Federal Roles

The 1986 Global Agreements on Social Housing established the roles and joint activities of the federal and provincial/territorial governments in the delivery of housing programs. CMHC's role is now to monitor agencies at the provincial level to ensure that federal objectives are being met. A "menu" of programs exists which is composed of responses tailored to identified needs. These programs are based on "the recognition that not all households, and particularly lower income households, cannot function in a market economy. These households generally have insufficient income to stimulate the private market to respond to their needs". (CMHC - Social/FP Housing Programs, received February, 1989 from Steve Pomeroy.)

The types of programs devised to respond to Canada's housing needs are of three principal types: those which increase the housing supply, those which address the demand side of the problem, and renovation and rehabilitation programs.

On the supply side, in tight market areas, new housing units are to be built under the Non-Profit Program, the costs of which are shared between the federal and provincial government. These programs would be most effective for households with a suitability or affordability problem in a tight market area where there are few vacancies. (CMHC - BC-Yukon Region info desk book, received February, 1989, from Steve Pomeroy)

Demand side programs would include the Rent Supplement Program. This program is offered on a shared basis as well, and is believed to be suited to the situation where an adequate supply of good housing exists that is already occupied by core needy households, but where high rents are creating an affordability problem.

An example of a renovation/rehabilitation program is the Residential Rehabilitation Program (RRAP), which is designed to be effective in areas where there is an available supply of inferior quality units.
For the cost-shared programs, a federal "base level" allocation is made to the province based on the relative incidence of core need in comparison to the rest of Canada. In 1986, for example, the federal budget for the non profit and the rent supplement programs provided an allocation of 1,264 units to British Columbia. With the provincial (33%) contribution added on, the number of units available to house needy households was increased to 1886 units.

CMHC delivers and unilaterally funds Native housing, the revised co-op housing program, and the rehabilitation program (RRAP).

Concerns

Besides the most obvious concern that budgetary allocations for housing do not match the demonstrated need, there are some other major concerns about the direction that housing policy is currently taking in Canada. The alterations and changes to (perhaps evisceration of?) the co-op housing program is a loss to this sensitive social construct that has been evolving here.

Our culture values home ownership very highly. This is said to be a goal "which is widely equated, however unfairly, with the virtues of thrift, good citizenship, self-reliance, and stability". (Guest 1985, 165.) But for many people in Canada even adequate rental accommodation is quite out of reach. A very logical way to combine some of the advantages of ownership - security of tenure, sense of control, - with accessibility, is co-operative ownership, an alternative of growing interest to Canadians.

The social mix of income levels originally built into the co-op program is an essential component. The new programs, though targeted to the "core-needy", carry the implicit potential for the creation of low income ghettos and may obviate a decrease in quality, both social and architectural, from the earlier co-op system which drew international recognition for its success.
The advantages of the co-op system with respect to security of tenure and sense of control are diluted somewhat in the new non profit-programs which have been devised. In the latter, the tenant is not nearly as involved in the ongoing management of the building as he/she is in co-op housing. In effect, the landlord is the government of the day and the project thus operates on the landlord/tenant model rather than the co-op, quasi home-ownership model in which residents take more responsibility themselves for their dwelling place. Moreover, in the non-profit projects, seed money is no longer available for groups wishing to sponsor a project to pay an architect to do the very detailed preliminary design work that is required for a proposal. Thus, new non-market projects tend to be turnkey projects presided over by market developers. This system effectively short circuits the opportunity for community participation in the development process.

A fundamental concern with respect to the new policy directions was expressed in "The Canadian Agenda for Action on Housing and Homelessness Through the Year 2000", arising out of the Canadian IYSH Conference held in Ottawa. The authors of the document state their belief that:

"the recent devolution of social housing funding to the provinces appears to be leading to disparity in the provision of housing services across the country. National standards on affordable housing are in jeopardy as some provinces resist providing adequate program support. As well, many municipal governments have imposed restrictions or have failed to remove historical regulatory barriers to the provision of affordable housing in a great number of communities across the country." (CAHRO 1987, 6)

The summary assessment of the authors of the agenda regarding the housing supply system in Canada is bleak:

"In all regions of the country, the demand for housing that is adequate and affordable to low income persons, and the willingness of local organizations ready to build, greatly exceed the availability of government funds to carry out effective housing programs." (ibid., 7)

This is a matter of priority - "political will" as it has been called.
HOW CAN WE APPROACH THE HOUSING PROBLEM?

Hulchanski argues that rather than viewing the housing crisis as a housing affordability problem,

"it is conceptually more helpful to define the remaining housing problem as a resource allocation problem: who gets what quality and quantity of housing at what percentage of their income and how is this decided? When we ask why, in the late 1980s, after more than fifty years of housing programs, so many Canadians have serious problems obtaining the housing they need, the only possible answer must point to the way housing resources are allocated. Canada is wealthy enough to guarantee every citizen adequate, appropriate housing at a reasonable cost."(Hulchanski 1988b, 46-47)

Beyond narrow self-interest in housing delivery and land profits lies an option - measures which would include all Canadians in the "well housed" category. Although the numbers of Canadians who are without permanent and secure long-term housing are ultimately unknown, we have ample evidence that Canadians in need make up more than the tiny percentage of the population that social housing programs have provided for. The very lengthy waiting lists for non-profit housing projects are the evidence that housing need is not nearly matched by housing supply in Canada at this time, and that non-market housing is an attractive and viable option. The other available evidence of the housing problem in this country are the homeless people living on the streets and inside some intolerably inadequate dwellings.

"RATHER THAN MARKET DEMAND, POOR PEOPLE GENERATE SOCIAL NEED"(Hulchanski 1987, Paper 3, p.5.)

"We operate in the context of a market economy. But there is another, less well-known market, which might be called a "social market". There is a cost to maintaining a healthy, well-functioning society. The costs may be up front to provide services, economic security, and to assist communities to plan their development. Or the costs may be to repair social damage, through institutional and social control bureaucracies. Or the costs may be hidden in "underground" markets, or in foregone social and economic benefits of a fully productive society. One way or another, we pay the price."(Hunsley 1987, 54)

In our society, we have made housing into a commodity whose value is measured in the market place. Housing is a consumer item, "to be purchased by those who can afford it or as
an investment option to maximize profit". (Bosworth et al., 1983, 20-21) Perhaps the converse - "decommodification" - is necessary now. We might then base housing on the principle of socially determined need rather than profitability.

Peter Marcuse and Emily Paradise Achtenberg, focusing on the housing crisis in the United States, have proposed as a strategy for social change, a program for housing decommodification which entails the removal of production, ownership, and financing of housing from the private sector. The primary goal of the scheme is:

"to provide every person with housing that is affordable, adequate in size and decent quality, secure in tenure, and located in a supportive neighbourhood of choice, with recognition of the special housing problems confronting oppressed groups." (Achtenberg and Marcuse 1986, 476)

This is a very comprehensive goal, and one which would meet with energetic disapproval were it to encompass the entire housing industry. It does, however, have some applicable rationale and strategy for the low income housing sector.

The group propose that housing should be converted away from holding for profit to social ownership including such alternate structures as government, or non-profit, or collective possession. The important point, as they see it, is not the form of ownership, but the idea that housing is to be removed from the speculative market permanently. This would enable residents to pay rents based on ability to pay, and to have a right to permanent occupancy as long as reasonable tenure obligations are complied with.

It is proposed that the housing supply be upgraded and expanded through direct government spending with direct grants to public and community developers. It is recommended as well in the plan that land banking and other measures to preserve and expand the existing supply of socially owned land be stepped up.

The decommodification plan is based on an understanding that reorientation of neighbourhood development and service patterns must reflect social and community needs rather than considerations of profit, and that responsiveness to community and user needs is critical. Built into the plan is the proposition that government should:

"allocate available resources for housing and neighbourhoods based on need; and provide adequate resources through the"
public sector, raising the necessary funds by progressive means."(ibid., 480)

It is observed that in order to facilitate the proposal, the level of resources allocated to housing and the role of the public sector would need to be substantially increased and "a major shift in public spending priorities as well as increased taxes on corporate and individual wealth and profits would be required in order to generate the needed revenues in a progressive way."(ibid.)

This same major shift would be required for change in the Canadian situation. If the principles of decommodification were adopted in a fundamental way in Canada, the market economy might eventually give way to that other, less prosperous, but more human needs oriented "social market", the attention to which leads to a healthy, well functioning society.

Many Canadians hold beliefs which run tightly parallel to the principles for decommodification as summarized here. Shirley Carr recently said:
"A commitment to affordable housing means supply strategies that put people ahead of investors or profits. A housing supply policy is one of the most effective ways of redistributing wealth and power among the people."(Carr 1987, 52)

If the poorest quintile - 20 per cent of the Canadian population - earns but 3.6% of the nation's income, then effective redistributive measures are required so that basic social needs can be adequately addressed.
PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

In Canada, the major conference held to observe the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless was held in Ottawa, and attended by almost 1500 delegates from around the world. Two Canadian non-government associations (NGOs): the Canadian Association of Housing and Renewal Officials (CAHRO), and the International Council on Social Welfare - Canada (ICSW) were the sponsors of the conference. An outcome of the conference is a report titled the "Canadian Agenda for Action on Housing and Homelessness Through the Year 2000", in which the following statement is found:

"To fully grasp the nature of homelessness, it is important to understand that, while poverty provides the essential context for the perpetration of homelessness, the lack of secure housing is a problem that is structured by causes other than income inadequacy. While there are many associated causal factors, for homeless individuals and families the critical requirement is secure, affordable housing. The housing problem must clearly be seen as a more permanent condition, which will continue to expand as more and more persons are excluded from participating in the private housing market and for whom the need for such secure and affordable housing, possibly with support services, is a prerequisite to gaining or retaining an acceptable quality of life. This reality is not widely understood, as many policies and programs intended to address homelessness either do not deal with housing conditions and supply or are erratic and short-term in nature...

The core of the problem of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing and a range of supportive housing arrangements for individuals with other social needs."(CAHRO 1987, 5)

Based on this position, the agenda outlines a series of principles for effective planning and action as a basis for establishing a strong and coherent Canadian strategy. These principles are intended by the authors to serve as guidelines for future action and are meant to express support for the full participation of community as well as government in housing action.

Recommendations from the Centre for Human Settlements' contribution to IYSH and from other researchers and sources are included here to support and supplement this agenda. The resulting recommendations form a framework for a comprehensive strategy meant to stimulate and guide the actions of all those who battle against homelessness. It is argued here that all the diverse players in the process of shaping the environment - from policymakers at the
grand scale to programmers and designers at the individual project level - can perform in their areas of expertise most effectively if their actions are grounded in an understanding of and a commitment to a comprehensive strategy for action.

Housing is a Right

The first principle is that access to secure housing be guaranteed as a fundamental right; a subject which has been discussed at some length earlier. This principle is a common introduction in most proactive writing, although the conservative view which does not support the right to housing is eloquently summarized by Walter Block, the senior economist at the Vancouver based Fraser Institute.

The abstract of an article Mr. Block recently prepared for Canadian housing reads:
"The right to housing...implies an obligation on the part of other people to provide it. Such so-called 'positive' rights - unlike the traditional 'negative' rights, which call for people to refrain, cease, and desist - have nothing at all to do with rights. Rather they are a disguised demand for wealth."(Block 1989, 30)

A Co-ordinated Effort

The second principle is that "housing solutions must be developed in conjunction with planning in such allied areas as employment, health and income security, and that formation of policies in all areas should be made with full knowledge of the housing implications. The authors of the agenda state that:
"National housing policies should become a central economic and social concern rather than the preoccupation of isolated agencies and institutions."
(CAHRO 1987, 8)

This integration at every level of planning is the only way that effective solutions in response to homelessness can be devised.

Peter Oberlander and Arthur Fallick reinforce this notion in the CFHS report which represents the Canadian contribution to IYSH 1987. They have concluded that:
"the viability of systematic, sustained and cost-effective strategies to alleviate problems of urban poverty and homelessness rests with the willingness and commitment of the public and non-governmental sectors to co-ordinate their
Gerald Daly, of the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, has studied the phenomenon of homelessness in Canada, the United States, and Britain, and written an assessment of programs dealing with the homeless population in the three countries. Daly argues that homelessness is a systemic problem and that any proposed solution must deal with the two basic issues of economic disadvantage and lack of housing stock. He suggests that not only do we need to form co-ordinated strategies to eliminate homelessness, we must view prevention as an essential component of the agenda. In his words: "The 'safety net' of housing, health and welfare benefits must be extended such that it will catch people before they fall over the edge."(Daly 1988, 34)

Empowerment and Control

The third principle is that people without homes must have the opportunity to participate in developing their own solutions, based on the belief that such programs will have the highest chance of success. Through development and management of housing, a sense of control and new skills and competencies can be developed by those whose position tends to be marginal and powerless within their society.

It is Daly's observation that: "Too much is done 'to' or 'for' the homeless. Many homeless people see themselves as a valuable resource group, willing and able to participate in the design, planning, and even construction of their own housing. They should be allowed, in a supportive environment, to determine their own future."(ibid., 33)

Informed Basis for Intervention

Successful policies and programs must be based on a strong network of communication between all organizations involved in housing delivery. This would provide an alternative to the present situation of unrelated 'piecemeal' and 'ad hoc' responses to the problem of
homelessness. Evaluation and assessment of evolving models is seen too as a tool for growth of a humane housing delivery system.

It is further argued in the agenda that a reliable base of information regarding demographic trends and changing needs is as essential basis for action. (The difficulties involved in obtaining reliable data with respect to households in the Downtown Eastside has already been discussed in Chapter 1 - The Social Factor. This issue will be addressed again in the following chapter in the section on the Downtown Eastside.)

Involvement

Another principle, that NGOs and community based organizations should take a lead role in development and management of housing for the homeless, is predicated on the notion that long term solutions require the support of all major actors - the private housing and finance industry, community and neighbourhood organizations, and governments. It is believed that NGOs and community organizations, which often come from a broad range of society, are "best suited to involve and represent homeless persons in devising housing solutions" and that NGOs are "sensitive and effective in working with poor communities and have had the most successs in developing housing with the full participation of the residents". (CAHRO 1987, 10)

Again, Oberlander and Fallick concur. To prevent and eradicate homelessness, they believe, it is necessary:

"...to combine, in the most optimal manner, the organizational capacity of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the poor, with government’s ability to intervene in the crucial areas of land, residential mobility, infrastructure, and the use of appropriate technology." (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 7)

This notion supports the next agenda principle as well.

Government as Enabler

Canadian governments at all levels should play an enabling role in the provision of affordable housing. It is recognized that all the levels of government hold significant influence
over "enabling strategies,...which are based in legislation, programs, bylaws and codes, (which) constitute a critical component of Canada's successful follow-up to IYSH". (CAHRO 1987, 11)

At the federal level, financial and technical resources can be made available through non profit housing programs. The provincial governments can become a critical player in the funding and delivery both of housing and needed support services. And the municipalities, which influence actual land use planning, can be instrumental in facilitating access to affordable land.

Political Will

In summary, "the commitment of governments to affordable and secure housing will be the essential ingredient for mobilizing the resources of NGOs and community based organizations in tackling homelessness." (ibid.)

The challenge is strongly worded by Oberlander and Fallick:
"Canada has the resources and the capability to eradicate homelessness; it must now harness the current political will and demonstrate its continuing commitment." (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 12)

The commitment, according to Daly, must be based on an understanding that there is no panacea or 'quick fix' to be found. To Daly it is clear that:
"Agencies involved in the provision of funding of housing and social services must make a long-term commitment to alleviate homelessness." (Daly 1988, 33)

Appropriate Response

The final agenda principle to be included here is the notion that "appropriate housing responses must be developed within a broader community context" - moving beyond basic accommodation to an inclusion of the other services required for "the full development of the community being created". This involves access to appropriate health and community services such as advocacy and information centres, job training and education services,
counselling and outreach, transportation, employment opportunities, childcare facilities and safe play areas. It is emphasized that the use of support services must be entirely voluntary and that "secure tenure of housing should not be affected by the use of services within supportive housing projects". (CAHRO 1987, 10-11)

Oberlander and Fallick give insight into the notion of appropriateness of response by listing some examples of 'inappropriate' shelter options which "are by default becoming permanent quarters for some". These options include abandoned buildings, public spaces, emergency shelters, and hostels. Of these, Fallick and Oberlander affirm:

"None of these options constitute an adequate home: they reinforce and perpetuate homelessness and do little to address the conflict inherent in the structure of the economy which pits the needs of the poor and unemployed against the marketplace; or relegates them to fragmented public support systems..." (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 15)

Daly adds that basic to providing appropriate responses, at the level of the individual project housing size, scale, physical design and management are critical questions to be addressed. He observes that:

"Government involvement often means large, bureaucratized projects; these will not work." (Daly 1988, 35)

"A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS" - in Vancouver

A broad ranging coalition of twenty-four concerned Vancouver groups, including DERA, the Vancouver and District Labour Council, Vancouver Status of Women, First United Church, B.C Housing Coalition, and the B.C. Women's Housing Coalition, has drafted a set of recommendations specifically tailored to the current housing crisis in Vancouver. These recommendations can be applied as both preventive and curative measures to the Vancouver situation in which homelessness or the risk of homelessness is a problem of increasing intensity. The recommendations are written in response to the threat of eviction and subsequent relocation which are becoming more common throughout the city and which can, when combined with other precipitating factors, lead to the state of being without a home.
Immediate actions which are recommended include tenant protections such as a fair rent review system and a strong city Rental Housing Protection bylaw which would allow demolition of affordable housing "only where a developer provides an equal number of affordable housing units or contributes to a social housing replacement fund". (from draft copy distributed by Tenants’Rights Action Coalition (TRAC)) This would help to prevent the city being developed at the expense of the people already living here, regardless of the economic bracket. Such bylaws in San Francisco linking upscale property development to the development of affordable rental projects have been very effective. An inclusionary bylaw was adopted in 1979, after a moratorium was placed on residential hotel conversions and demolitions in an effort to save threatened SROs there. The law requires a one for one replacement of any SROs lost, or a financial contribution equal to the replacement cost of the unit. A speculation tax on profits from flipping properties is recommended, and the tax revenue thus derived would also be directed to a social housing replacement fund. It is further suggested that a city moratorium on conversions from rental housing to condominiums be observed until the tight vacancy rate returns to a reasonable level. Such a moratorium has been declared in neighbouring municipalities, and some Lower Mainland districts only allow conversions when the vacancy rate reaches a minimum of 3%.

The coalition recommends as well that funds from all government levels should be used toward helping to upgrade existing affordable housing, which would include basement suites and other cheap housing arrangements such as hotels and rooming houses. This action would help to create homes for people who presently live in situations of insecure tenure and intolerable physical or social circumstances - people who are without homes.

With respect to increasing the stock of new affordable housing, the document contains a recommendation for funding for 20,000 new social housing units in Greater Vancouver as an immediate short term goal...provided through a range of housing alternatives including public housing, non-profit housing, and co-operative housing. Although this figure is much larger than present figures for actual social housing allocations, it is not an unreasonable number.
A fact sheet titled "Rental Housing Trends: City of Vancouver" distributed by the Centre for Human Settlements (CFHS) points out that the threatened "illegal" suites in the city number about 26,000. It has been noted that is said with some justification there are 10,000 homeless people in the Downtown Eastside. A recent CMHC survey reported that between October 1987 and October 1988, 1850 strata titled rental projects, for example, MURBs, were sold as condominiums and thereby lost to the rental market. (CFHS fact sheet distributed at the Urban Core Workers conference, 18 April, 1989) It is very disturbing to note that the number of SRO units in Vancouver, a critical type of accommodation option for the poor, has been steadily decreasing since the first survey of the area was made in 1978. Tables 1 and 2 show the decrease in figures. (Mopel 1989, 132, 134) In light of these figures, perhaps 20,000 is a relatively conservative demand.

### NUMBER OF LODGING HOUSES AND LODGING HOUSE UNITS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lodging Houses</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>11,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>10,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>8,617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Number of Lodging Houses and Lodging House Units

### NUMBER OF LODGING HOUSE UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>1986</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>housekeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown South</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>-401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown North</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>4,369</td>
<td>-576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Eastside</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>-355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>1,446</td>
<td>-307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Number of Lodging House Units
(Source: City of Vancouver Social Planning Department, 1986)
As the rapidly escalating costs of land are a major factor in the lack of development of low cost housing, the Vancouver coalition of concerned citizens and advocates very reasonably call for landbanking at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels to provide land for public, non-profit, and co-operative projects. A further suggestion is that city policy be passed which would force megaproject developers to provide land free for social housing, paid for out of the profits accrued from rezoning.

The strategy suggested in this local proposal is predicated on the belief in participation of the community in decision making. It is urged that the local area planning process be re-established in Vancouver. By this means and incorporating the above recommendations, an appropriate long term affordable housing strategy can be planned and activated, based on full community and citizen input. All participants in this process, including those whose expertise leads to the actual shaping of the city, have the responsibility to take an active and informed role in the direction of such changes within the community.
Hulchanski has noted that there are generally five stages in the process of addressing a social problem. (Fallick 1987, 21) It is interesting to speculate upon which stage Canadian society has reached in the process of addressing the problem of homelessness as it exists today.

The first stage is the recognition of the problem. IYSH did much to place the phenomenon of homelessness in the public consciousness and to some degree it has become a matter of more intense concern on the political agenda in Canada since 1987.

The second stage is that the problem must acquire broad social legitimacy. In this stage, widespread agreement must be reached on the definition of the problem and political solutions must be identified. Hulchanski believes that this is the stage at which Canadian society is now. Perhaps this is optimistic. Though it is commonly understood that we do indeed have a problem, the perception of the magnitude of the problem still varies a great deal. The broad definition of the term "homeless" has yet to be included in the everyday Canadian lexicon. Do we agree that those people whose dwelling, when measured against a humane social minimum standard, falls short, are homeless? In fact, such a standard has not been clearly articulated by our Canadian society. Those people who live in tiny hotel rooms or other grossly inadequate or compromising situations are not yet generally perceived to be "without a home". It still needs to be emphasized that "homelessness" is not necessarily limited in its meaning to the simple state of rooflessness. It is agreed, however, that some progress is being made along these lines. Potential solutions have been identified though are not widely applied throughout our society as yet.

The third stage in a problem's "career" is the mobilization of forces to address the problem. Though the responses which have been generated address the needs of just a small segment of the population in our society who are without homes, there are existing models which are qualitatively very promising. Some of the cooperative housing schemes which were generated under Sec 56.1 of the National Housing Act and projects in the spirit of those
developed by Homes First of Toronto are exemplary models which have rightfully earned praise within and without the country. The housing system developed in response to the needs of deinstitutionalized mental patients under the jurisdiction of the Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services is the envy of other Canadian urban centres - qualitatively sound, though lacking in quantity. The Mavis/McMullen housing project in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, the first such project to be sponsored in B.C. under the new global agreement, is an example of an intervention that has dramatically altered the lives of a number of previously homeless women. This example and other positive models will be discussed much more fully in Chapter 6. Forces have, in fact, been mobilized and the problem is being addressed but the response clearly does not yet match the magnitude of the need at this time.

The fourth stage is the development of a policy, a coordinated plan of action; and finally the plan is implemented. Current interventions to relieve or prevent homelessness in our society are often characterized by observers as "piecemeal" and "ad hoc". Overall coordination and integration of planning of the sort recommended in the "Agenda for Action" is far from being achieved.

Some optimism is appropriate here nevertheless. It is often noted that education and health care have gone through this process and become "rights". Apparently the jury is still out on the question of whether childcare is a right. The articulation and achievement of the Canadian humane social minimum in housing - the declaration that housing is a right which will preface the prevention and eradication of all homelessness in our society - will take a higher profile on Canada's public agenda in time. For many of our society, the correct time is now.

Acknowledgement Abroad

The degree of suffering brought about by the circumstances of homelessness varies throughout the world. The response to this need for a home varies throughout the world as well. We could be guided by the experience of countries where homelessness is, because of
its extreme nature, more readily acknowledged and more aggressively battled. The Asian Coalition of Housing Rights is composed of representatives from NGOs and CBOs of ten Asian countries. The coalition hopes eventually to expand throughout Asia and to become a coalition of the poor themselves. The coalition has made the commitment to articulate and to promote the awareness of people’s rights to housing, and to define and achieve the housing rights of all - as a means to "realize the fulness and wealth of the people of Asia". The goal of the coalition as articulated in a fact sheet distributed by the Habitat International Coalition - Asia is:

"to change the way people look at and think about housing so that eventually governments will also see housing in a new light: not as a means of quick profit for a few, but as an area worth huge (financial but non-profit) investment, since security in housing is an indispensable means to achieve general national security and development...In short, we hope... to bring about the full implementation of housing-as-a-basic-human-right so that every man, woman and child can live... with a sense of security, peace and human dignity."

The Canadian Response

The theme of the Canadian IYSH Conference in Ottawa, "New Partnerships - Building for the Future", was based on the recognition of "the necessity for innovative co-operation among the various sectors involved in housing, health, and social development". (CAHRO 1987, p.1) The aim of the exercise was to explore new ways of working together to resolve the problem of homelessness in Canada. Perhaps because in Asia the problem of homelessness is much more evident, there seems to be less avoidance of the issue and more commitment among those working to prevent and repair the problem. (Graeme Bristol, personal conversation, April, 1989) If we in Canada are to become more proactive, all the players will most effectively operate from a realization of the nature and extent of the problem, and an understanding of the political and socio-economic context of the problem. This forms a basis for the more specific response. The programming and design of a building is an integral step in the ongoing process of finding the way "home".
CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT: THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

This chapter deals with the specific context, the Downtown Eastside, as the area selected for a particular intervention - action in response to the needs of the women there.

A Visual Impression

"The built environment gives the Downtown Eastside a distinct character and a strong identity as a neighbourhood - despite its hodgepodge of building types, styles, heights, etc. Age, neglect, and scale are the unifying elements. Continuous facades with their narrow frontages march up and down the street, creating a building wall and contributing to the 'old main street' quality of the area - typical of older districts in many North American cities. The diversity of building types (a grab bag of every style, colour and material) with their intricate, idiosyncratic ornamentation add a richness and variety to the street which is sadly lacking in most of our modern cityscapes. Although run down, these structures still display a craftsmanship, individuality and feeling for human scale that our new 'main streets' (aka. shopping malls) with their machined modules and detailing cannot achieve. The patchwork of additions, renovations and countless paintings are witness to the multiplicity of owners and uses these buildings have had before. For many people who have lived and worked in the neighbourhood all their lives, these structures are important links with the past and their memories. Despite the slightly decayed quality these buildings exude, they are used. The panoply of signs blinking on and off, the muddle-jumble of merchandise in shop windows and the number of people on the street are evidence of a lively, if not thriving, community.

Unfortunately, what reads as nostalgic charm and character on the building facade, often translates into an shambles on the interior. Many of these hotels and office buildings are badly in need of upgrading - if only to bring them to an acceptable standard of habitation in terms of fire and health regulations."(Kozakiewicz 1986)

Location

There is some controversy regarding the actual boundaries of the Downtown Eastside.

The City considers the Downtown Eastside to be a small mixed-use inner city neighbourhood encompassing about twenty blocks. The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA)
considers that a much larger area is within the bounds of the Downtown Eastside. The map on the following page clearly illustrates the extent of this discrepancy.

The reasons behind the discrepancy are interesting to consider - and one can only speculate upon the relative advantages and disadvantages which are built into the various decisions. The outcome with respect to demographic analysis is clearly quite different depending upon which boundaries are considered. For present purposes, the DERA boundaries will be used. This decision is based on an agreement with a simple principle articulated by Jane Jacobs:

"A successful city neighbourhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them." (Jacobs 1961,112)

The DERA Housing Society, (to be called here DERA) has recently completed an intensive and comprehensive study of the needs and aspirations of the residents of the Downtown Eastside. Every residential building in the community was visited and ten per cent of the entire population of residents were interviewed. DERA has called the survey and subsequent report "an inside job" - produced by residents of the neighbourhood under the auspices of DERA, in contrast with a study undertaken by "disinterested" consultants or agencies. "The insiders" consider the Downtown Eastside to be the area within Howe Street, Clark Drive, Burrard Inlet, and False Creek-Terminal Avenue, excluding Strathcona. If they are so dedicated to keeping abreast of the needs and wishes of the people in that territory, then that argument is sufficient to convince this writer that these are indeed the boundaries of the neighbourhood.
Boundaries of the Downtown Eastside Community

Vancouver City Hall Boundaries of the Downtown Eastside/Oppenheimer Area

(Source: Marnie Healy. The Downtown Eastside Model Project Proposal. April, 1989.)
History

The Downtown Eastside is the oldest community in Vancouver and was the townsite where the city was rebuilt after the fire of 1886.

In the late 19th century this area, shown above, was the city's core - the centre for trade and commerce, transportation and civic politics - the heart of Vancouver. (Source: UBC Special Collections - BC 288-6)

In 1901, Cordova Street was one selected to be the backdrop for a royal visit. It is unlikely that many royal visitors have seen this same street in recent decades. (Source: UBC Special Collections - BC 276-1)
From its early years the Downtown Eastside was also home to many people who worked in the primary resource industries as well as longshoremen, seamen, sawmill and cannery workers and their families. According to the social historian Robert McDonald, Vancouver acted as a regional employment centre for workers seeking jobs on the railway and in the fishing industry and in logging. The seasonal pattern of resource industry employment generated in Vancouver a flow of single mobile workers who, when they were in the city during the off-season, lived in a relatively self-contained world defined by single room occupancy dwellings (SROs), waterfront area rooming houses, and saloons.

In the 1930s, City Hall was moved south and the business and financial centre shifted west. These events and the onset of the depression signalled a change in the fabric of the area. One outcome was that the area became something of a hotbed for political action. According to the DERA historians who have done much to keep the story of the area alive in the minds of the residents today:

"During the depression era the Downtown Eastside was the home of thousands of unemployed. The community also housed the waterfront union offices and organizations for the unemployed...

It was in the Downtown Eastside that the unemployed held massive rallies and occupied federal and civic buildings. Here too was the staging ground for the historical On-to-Ottawa Trek. Today, many of the veterans of the depression era struggles are still residents of the Downtown Eastside." (DERA 1988, 6)

Over the years, many seasonal workers have made their way back to the familiar area of the Downtown Eastside when their working days were done. Many returned with disabilities incurred at their jobs. This trend continues. The "average" resident of the area today, according to DERA, has not worked for seven years but was employed in construction, mining, or logging, or the service industries. (DERA 1988, 12) He has a 47% chance of being physically disabled as well. (ibid., 13) DERA guesses that about 20% of the population is composed of women, many of whom perhaps are in the area for similar reasons to the men. At any rate, for both sexes, seasonal labour has become much less a factor of the employment
scene in the recent past. The population of the SRO hotels remaining in the area now has become much more dependent upon welfare and disability pensions than on the "boom and bust" cycles of their employment heyday. Today, 2.2% of residents are employed part-time, 4.9% have full-time work, and .8% work at seasonal labour, according to the survey.

Another outcome of the 30s and 40s which continues on to today is that many of the residential hotels built at the turn of the century which provided homes for permanent and seasonal residents began to fall into disrepair. Deterioration leading to eventual demolition is a common history of many of these buildings. According to the Vancouver Social Planning Department, the stock is now diminishing at a pace of about 3% per year.

Community historians summarize the situation in the Downtown Eastside in the 50s and 60s in this way:

"Poverty increased but the residents were voiceless and powerless. Government responses to community problems were generally to hire more professionals to take care of the area. The community was seen as "skid road" and it became a convenient area to establish programmes that were not wanted in other more affluent communities. But housing programmes to replace run-down hotels were not put into play."(DERA 1988, 7)

Conditions were clearly right for a change.
And then, as the DERA historians now report:
"In the 1970s a change began to take place. The area's residents were no longer satisfied with outsiders plotting the course of development in the community." (DERA 1988, 7)

The early stages of this change are well summarized by Sean Rossiter, a reporter who had been watching the situation in that area for some time. DERA was formed in 1973 with Bruce Eriksen as its first president. The organization was meant to be the voice of the community and membership was restricted to area residents. The structure was designed along the lines of a democratic trade union. Almost immediately, DERA became a strong force in the area.

In November, 1976, Rossiter observed:
"What Eriksen has done in three years is take the worst part of the city, Skid Road, and give it a new name, a new identity, a healthy measure of pride, and the most diverse civic organization in the city. The Downtown Eastside is safer, more comfortable, better lighted, less inebriated, and a whole lot nicer place all around." (Persky 1980, 122)

One of DERA's most recognized accomplishments of its early days was the realization of the opening of Carnegie Centre - a heritage building which served as library and then museum for the city until 1967. At that time, according to a city biographer:
"the Carnegie building was boarded up. The social and cultural core (of the community) was gone; the low point for the neighbourhood had arrived. It had now truly become Skid Road. Always the centre of the drug trade - since the turn of the century, when opium was legal - narcotics became the pre-eminent economic activity for the area. (Canning-Dew 1987, 14)"

(Source: Robin Ward. Vancouver Sun, 8 April, 1989.)
DERA fought for years to have the building saved and put to use as a community centre. In January of 1980 it was re-opened as the Carnegie Community Centre and Branch Library. Today the centre is one of the principal social "hearts" of the community, serving upwards of 1500 people a day, making it the city's busiest community centre.

Pressure from DERA was also behind the upgrading of Oppenheimer Park, the most used park space in the city today. DERA also shared a principal role with the "Create a Real Available Beach" committee in the creation of CRAB Park, a $35 million project that allows for the first recreational access to Burrard inlet and the working port.

Over the years, DERA has struggled to make outsiders understand why the organization is so adamant about the principle of self help. DERA is meant to allow the community to take responsibility for its own improvement rather than being dependent on outsiders who come in to offer residents their aid. These people are often seen as "do-gooders" by the people of the community.

Some members of the city council have in the past implied that the "enormous" sums of money spent in the area on services to help the downtrodden there should quiet this "abrasive" grass roots organization and allow the status quo to be peacefully preserved. A very eloquent rejoinder to this line of reasoning was delivered by a DERA past president, Libby Davies, in 1977 when she remarked that indeed many outside people are paid to come into the neighbourhood daily "to improve the lives of people who live there". She wanted it understood, however, that this is a different function from the operation performed by DERA. In her words:

"We would point out that we (DERA) not only work in the area but live here seven days a week. That is a fundamental difference between DERA and social services. We work to change our area, not to act as a bandaid."(Persky 1980, 127)

Furthermore, with respect to the "enormous" sums of money being spent on services in the area, DERA's position was, according to Davies, that they would be "more than eager to assist in relocating the two detox centres, the Salvation Army, the missions, the soup lines, and maybe even a few beer parlours" (to another area of the city).(ibid.)
As a result of DERA's strong position and pressure, there is now in place a City moratorium preventing new or additional social services from being set up in the Downtown Eastside at present. Emery Barnes has commented that there is indeed an abundance of social services there, but that these services are often those which are not wanted in other areas of the city. Those agencies which provide support for the so-called 'losers' and the 'overindulgers' are likely to be located in the Downtown Eastside, with the result that the area becomes more stigmatized. In spite of the high welfare tab in the area, Emery Barnes is of the opinion that the people of the area do not receive their due as citizens. The welfare rates he calls "indefensible" - inadequate and not realistically tied to the needs. Some of the people in the area have less political clout than their more vocal and economically more powerful counterparts in other parts of the city. DERA has, however, given the people of the area a voice which is no longer ignored.

Emery Barnes believes that were the welfare rates to be tied to a serious economic plan, then the situation of the residents of the Downtown Eastside would change. Rent control, rent review, legislated assurances of security and safety, would be some of the logical outcomes of this marriage between planning and reality.

As a legislator, Emery Barnes believes that such areas as the Downtown Eastside, with inherent special needs and issues, must be addressed in very specific ways according to the conditions that prevail. Advocacy for, not neglect of such areas, he believes, is critical. This is a similar line of reasoning as that behind DERA's idea that the Downtown Eastside be classed as a special or "Priority Need Zone" which would generate sharper and more comprehensive responses to the realities of the neighbourhood.(Emery Barnes, personal conversation, 10 July, 1989)

DERA Today

DERA is a very powerful grassroots organization now. Over 4,000 residents of the area are members and regular monthly meetings at Carnegie Centre are always well attended. The
MLAs for the area meet regularly with their constituency in the same site, often as part of the DERA meeting. Housing for residents of the Downtown Eastside is seen as a critical need and much has been done by the organization to address this issue.

In 1985, Jim Green, the current leader of DERA wrote:
"The organization realizes that slum landlords will never provide decent housing for the people in need...the best answer to slum conditions is social housing designed and operated by the residents." (Green and Lane 1985, 191)

At a recent conference on Homelessness held at UBC in March 1988, Victoria Garland, the general manager for CMHC in B.C. and the Yukon, called DERA "the largest single example of service to the homeless in Canada", and pointed out that $20 million worth of social housing units have been set in place in the Downtown Eastside to date.

There is, however, much that remains to be done in the area. Jim Green maintains that there are 10,000 homeless people living there. He and his organization show no sign of resting until all those people have homes.

A recent hard won triumph represents a step along the way. The provincial government has recently acknowledged that people who live in residential hotels require some protective covenants upon their tenure arrangements. Legislation has recently been passed to provide some protection in the form of the Residential Tenancy Act which will, in theory, provide for fairer exchange between landlords and tenants with respect to security of tenure and other tenants rights. This Act may represent a step on the path towards "home", but the inadequacy of much of the available stock and the critical issue of displacement from even these rundown accommodations represent hurdles still to be overcome.
Current Pressures on the Downtown Eastside

"Distinctive and diverse places are manifestations of a deeply felt involvement with those places by the people who live in them, and...for many such a profound attachment to a place is as necessary and significant as a close relationship with other people.(Relph 1976, preface)

In 1985 and 1986, the Downtown Eastside had what might be considered a foretaste of pressures to be visited upon the area in the future. At that time, over 700 residents of Downtown Eastside hotels were evicted to make way for visitors to B.C.'s Expo 86. DERA was active in relocating those who had been displaced and workers in the organization had painful evidence of the effects of gentrification on their area.

Now, in the analysis of a housing advocate active in the area:
"the neighbourhood is faced with extreme development pressures from all sides. The Burrard Inlet edge has had a newly developed Design Centre, to attract new businesses and clientele. To the west, the Marathon Corporation is planning a large, 82 acre, mixed development ...along the water at Coal Harbour. The Concord Pacific Corporation is developing the North Shore of False Creek in a 204 acre mega project. This project will continue to develop over the next 20 years. The first stage, however, the International Village, adjacent to the community, will have a major impact on it."(Healy 1989)

The location of these developments are shown on the map on the following page, also provided by Marnie Healy.

DERA believes that this development of the North Shore of False Creek (B.C.Place) will be the major issue for the Downtown Eastside for years to come. (DERA 1988, 10) The organization recognizes that the problems of maintaining a stable community can only intensify in the face of this pressure. DERA is therefore lobbying with increased intensity for access to housing and amenities for the residents in these new developments. But low cost housing is not likely to ever be a priority in such projects. DERA is also working to set as much social housing in place as quickly as is possible to forestall the effects of nearby developments on the neighbourhood.
Large developments surrounding the Downtown Eastside.
   a: Coal Harbour
   b: Concord Pacific
   c: Design Centre area

(Source: Marnie Healy. The Downtown Eastside Model Project Proposal. April, 1989.)
On Thursday, June 22, 1989, the developer Li Ka-Shing of Concord Pacific was given approval to go ahead with the first phase of development of the B.C. Place site. This $1.75 billion first phase, adjacent the Downtown Eastside, accounts for just slightly more than one-tenth of his entire site. Stanley Kwok, vice-president of Concord Pacific, was quoted in the Vancouver Sun the next day as saying that this first phase "sets the tone for the redevelopment of the city".

The threat of dislocation and displacement of very low income residents as a consequence of yet another yet much more powerful wave of gentrification in the Downtown Eastside is clear. DERA knows that now, more than ever, the community must fight for its right to exist.
The City's Position

The City knows the extent of the threat of displacement to the people of the Downtown Eastside as well. A City Housing Report from Social Planning to the City Manager for City Council dated September 15, 1988 and marked IN CAMERA was received by housing advocates through unofficial means. Statements contained in the report leave no doubt as to the gravity of the situation with respect to the residents of the lower cost hotels or "lodging houses" of the Downtown Eastside. In the Conclusions - Highlights, "Companion Data" section of the report it is stated:

"The decline in the rate of construction of market rental housing; the vulnerability of a substantial portion of the housing stock (i.e. Downtown lodging houses, secondary suites, and rented condominium units); the continual erosion of low cost housing through strata title conversion, demolition and redevelopment; and the high cost of land in the city; all combine to suggest that should this pattern continue, fewer and fewer low and moderate income households will be able to live in Vancouver." (emphasis contained in report)

In the City Housing Report the situation for the poorer residents of Vancouver is outlined very clearly. The authors from the Social Planning Department believe that:

"the continuing loss of affordable apartment, lodging house and secondary suite accommodation would be a serious blow to that portion of the population who can only afford this form of rental housing and would likely result in their dislocation from the city."

The summary concludes with a statement that alludes to the city's attitude towards its own:

"If the City is to maintain its diversity...and if it is to be a place of opportunity for all people of all incomes; such economic and household diversity can only be achieved through City leadership..."

The Mayor's own initiatives are clearly powered by a different fundamental stance. Mayor Campbell's recently unveiled $220 million per year housing program in which 2000 "affordable" rental units will be built annually in the city will produce stock that rents for "slightly" below market rates. (Farrow 1989, B2) This would put the rent on a modest one bedroom unit at between $650 and $800. Jim Green's comment is that the new program directs "at least three levels of government subsidy...into private housing and I don't like
it". (ibid.) Tax money is indeed being directed away from those at the very bottom of the income scale who lack homes and who face dislocation from the inadequate accommodations which are their only feasible option in the city.

The new provincial housing plan actually cuts back the social housing allocations for 1989-90 while providing aid to the private sector to build 4,000 new "affordable" rental housing units over the next eighteen months. Peter Thomas, head of the B.C. Housing Management Commission, said that the rents for these new homes would be between $750 and $850 per month for a two bedroom unit is Vancouver. (Hamilton and Buttle 1989, A6) This does not enhance the position of the very low income renters of the city whatsoever. It is clear that the recent government initiatives at the municipal and provincial level are not meant to address the needs of the very poor people of the Downtown Eastside.

An independent consulting firm, Raphe-Can Consultants, hired by the City earlier in this decade articulated the problem and potential solution very precisely. They wrote:

"The Downtown lodging house situation reflects the total Vancouver housing crisis. This fact allows management (of the lodging houses) to be more exclusive in picking their clientele. It has been found that although adequate (numbers of) rooms are available, management will often withhold rooms from what they consider to be undesirables, notably: drunks, natives, the disabled, single mothers, single women. Since lodging house operators' profit-oriented attitudes are not likely to change, it cannot realistically be expected that welfare recipients will receive better lodging under the private market system of accommodation than currently exists. "Hard to house" groups who cannot find decent accommodation should be housed outside the existing lodging house system. Non-profit co-ops are an alternative approach that can deliver special needs housing for those whom the private market refuses to serve properly." (Raphael 1981)

Mercedes Mopel, a master's student in the School of Community and Regional Planning, has discovered through her research that the supply of SRO units in rooming houses and hotels has been steadily decreasing in Vancouver in recent years, to the point that the supply of SROs has been reduced to those units located in the Downtown Eastside alone. (Mopel 1989, 8) She notes that in the period from 1978 to 1986, there was a loss of 2,700 SRO units in the Downtown Eastside alone, and that according to the Social Planning Department, there
were 3,226 social housing units in the Downtown Eastside as of 1987. These represent a major accomplishment of the community-based organizations such as DERA, the First United Church, and the Chinese Benevolent Association, who sponsor, develop, and manage the government funded projects. Moves are being made to create homes for the people of the city who don't have them, but the supply has not yet come anywhere near to meeting the demand. The inadequacy of the available stock, and the very long waiting lists for social housing serve as proof that much is yet to be done to solve the problem of homelessness in Vancouver.

A Downtown Eastside resident recently wrote a letter to the editor of the Vancouver Sun to respond to statements made by a City Planner regarding the Concord Pacific project. The planner, Craig Rowland, had apparently commented that the "blow" of homelessness or displacement of Downtown Eastside residents due to upscale development adjacent and within the area would happen quite gradually and would be "cushioned" by provision of more social housing. The resident wished it to be understood that: "We don't need cushions in the Downtown Eastside. We want guarantees that our living quarters won't disappear overnight. We want city, provincial, and federal legislation to keep that from ever happening." (Jack Chalmers, letter to the editor of the Vancouver Sun, 21 November, 1988)

This man lives in the Tellier Tower, a recently renovated building which provides homes for former residents of the SROs of the area. Of his new home he states: "It provides me with safe, clean, affordable housing. Why can't we create more?" (ibid.)

Indeed. Again Rosemary Brown's comment comes to mind. It is in fact a political decision.

The View From Social Planning at City Hall

"The downtown area was not meant as an exclusive haven for older single men on welfare. Gradually our goal should be to bring in a broader socio-economic fabric to that area so it becomes a better community." (John Jessup, quoted by Kozakiewicz, 1986)

John Jessup, a City social housing planner, believes that both landlords and tenants are caught in a "syndrome of poverty" in the Downtown Eastside. He explains that hotels there
are often run by a lease-hold operator and that there are frequently two or three mortgages against them. (Purden 1988, 8) If the lodging houses were to be upgraded, he believes that "the rents needed to cover the capital costs would put the rooms beyond the tenants' range" leading to vacant buildings and eventual bankruptcy. In Mr. Jessup's view, between one-third and one-half of the commercial accommodation in lodging houses of the Downtown Eastside is considered adequate. (ibid.)

Vancouver City Planning

Zoning has perhaps kept gentrification at bay so far in the area. Certain areas have been made historical zones and the expense involved in providing the required seismic upgrading keeps those who would renovate for profit looking elsewhere. Another zoning regulation which requires that developers going beyond the floor/space ratio of one in the area must include non-profit subsidized housing in the additional space has also served to keep developers' interest minimized. This has not been encouraged by the province. Ben Macaffee has commented that this requirement for social housing cannot be met because it is dependent on the social housing allocations of the provincial government. (Mopel 1989, 151) It is not yet understood how the provision of 20% social housing in the nearby megaprojects will be delivered, and whether the cooperation from senior levels of government can be obtained. Furthermore, Mercedes Mompel notes in her findings that the province has no targeted housing programs to renovate SRO stock or any legislation to protect the stock from demolition or conversion. (Mopel 1989, 4) Clearly, co-operation from all levels of government will be required to make a meaningful response to this situation.

The City has recently begun to consider this question of low-cost accommodation with a new intensity. David Hulchanski, director of the Centre for Human Settlements at UBC, and professor in the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, has recently been engaged as consultant to the Vancouver City Planning Department to prepare a "Housing Impact Strategy". The following research question has been posed:

"What actions can be taken to maintain existing low and moderate cost housing in the identified areas of downtown (the Downtown Eastside, Downtown South, Strathcona, and
the eastern portion of downtown) and to address the
displacement of residents?" (letter to David Hulchanski from
City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1989 08 02)

Some of the questions noted as examples of issues which should be considered in the
study are:

1. What are reasonable targets for the creation of more non-
market housing in the downtown?

2. What government programs are, or would be, most useful
in creating more non-market housing?

3. Should government programs include single room
occupancy residences?

4. What actions should be pursued by the three levels of
government?

5. What role could there be for the Vancouver Land
Corporation?

Hulchanski's report, to be prepared by mid-September 1989, includes a thorough survey
of policy and program options used in Seattle, Toronto, Boston, and San Francisco, to respond
to these issues, and some analysis of the options chosen in other cities as well. As a result of
this research, Hulchanski intends to propose specifically tailored policy and program options
for the targeted areas of Vancouver. In view of the likely effects the developments at False
Creek North, False Creek East, Coal Harbour, and Downtown South will have upon the low
cost housing in the Downtown Eastside, this is a timely question. Nearby upscale
development could well spill over into the Downtown Eastside and radically alter the situation
there. The proposals and the prospect of their eventual translation into action can potentially
have a powerful effect on the residents of the Downtown Eastside community, who as the
city's poorest, are the most vulnerable in times of change.

Armed with insights obtained by careful perusal of strategies developed for other cities,
and with a series of recommendations regarding what might be best to save the stock of low
income housing in a city already facing a severe housing crisis, Vancouver may soon be in a
strong position to choose a strategy for dealing with homelessness in the inner core.
The Developers' View

The debate rages as to whether economics can be the single factor to be considered in establishing who gets to live where. A number of developers willing to comment on this issue have recently been quoted in the press. Fred Bucci, president of a corporation which is a major builder of apartments and townhouses, recently stated that although developers do have a social conscience, "there is only so much that we can do". He believes that as a result of the application of economic considerations as the bottom line principle, the harsh reality is that "Not everybody is going to be able to live in the areas that they want to live in." (Rebalski 1989)

John Evans, vice-president of Intrawest Properties Ltd. states further: "the principle should be no one has any more right than the next person to live in a particular community. It is really a function of what you can afford to pay...it is an economic reality you have to face."(ibid.)

The ultimate answer to this question has yet to be arrived at in the Downtown Eastside.

The grassroots organization of residents is doing its best to preserve the community based on a quite different appraisal of the bottom line. It works to keep abreast of the problems that this stable and vital community faces. In the process, the organization and the community are increasing in strength, but without outside co-operation from all levels of government, and a shift in values which help to form our political agenda, the future outlook for the people without homes of the Downtown Eastside does tend to look precarious.
The View from the Inside

In a recent edition of the Carnegie Newsletter, the following essay by Paul Taylor was included. It is repeated here because it helps to describe and explain that critical dimension of the context -the spirit of the Downtown Eastside community.

THE JOY OF LIFE HARD WON

"Skid Row" is a definite, though vaguely-defined, area of every major city. The term comes from the old days when roads in the poorest parts of cities were not upgraded, and trenches and gouges marked urban streets. In the aftermath of rain or just the Spring thaw, these roads were muddy quagmires. Junk wood from factory garbage poles was laid on the mud in a more or less useful way. Foot traffic and wagons soon made an incredible, ugly mess; pedestrians and transporters of goods, hoping not to get dirty, avoided these areas where the 'skids' were.

The name "Skid Row" is applied to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside by people who don't live here. A few of the residents, needing guilt, also call their home turf by the same name. For the rest of us, it's a dynamic and alive community, a neighbourhood. There is more going on in terms of non-material growth than anywhere else in the city. Most of the services started by local residents and ongoing work to alleviate our social problems are done by people who have paid their dues the hard way in the Universal School of the Street.

Imagine you're a first time visitor to this area, just wandering around looking for a week or two. If you arrived last weekend and chanced upon Oppenheimer Park on Saturday, you would have been amazed at the hundreds of people dancing in a circle, with drums playing, Elders speaking and kids racing everywhere.

Coming in to Carnegie Centre the next day, you might have no where else to go and decide to see what the meeting in the Theatre is about. Almost anyone could have filled you in on the history of Crab Park and the 2 year struggle over getting proper access to our park.

Carnegie itself would probably hold your fascinated attention for some time: It's truly unique. You might, along with hundreds of others, use Carnegie as your base for the time you're here, but be careful: people develop a definite liking for this Centre and end up staying for years...

You should be warned at this point that any activity or issue in this area has a long political history. If you're still saying "There's nothing I can do about....." then just stick to drinking coffee and watching TV. The sad thing is that you'll miss the rest of the tour if you shut down your mind now.

You'd miss the Youth Society's new Needle Exchange office on Main St. that's fighting against the spread of AIDS and the support the program has received from the strangest places...

You'd probably not hear about the tremendous work being done at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and the many aspects of the Health Project underway, or about Crabtree Corner, or the Dugout, or the Sisters...

You might hear someone from Four Sisters or Tellier tell a friend that they've finally found a home...

You might even end up volunteering an hour of your time for 2 coffee tickets. The worst (best?) possible scenario..you MIGHT get involved!!!
From the point of view of two poets of the Downtown Eastside:

SURVIVING
Strange noise in the night
apartment half falling down

Wind through cracks
Rain through roof runs
along slanting floor

"Taps dripping in Time"

Try to sleep - awake
awake

Cat chasing - mice-chasing
cockroaches...

Walls so thin, hear man down
hall snore

Better than two hours
before
Neighbours arguing after
partying with stereo at
full _________ bore

Toilet in hall backed up
use sink.
Back to bed, finally
dozing off

Awake-Goddam siren-awake

Law chasing crime/crime
chasing a need to survive...

C.C.Eckert
BEYOND HELP
they want me to
get my teeth fixed
and buy a new suit
my image holds me back they say

meanwhile I’ve established
a listening post on the void
and overhear the angels
assessing my condition

I camp inside
the rim of a volcano
of unknown proportions
and subterranean rivers of myself
appear and disappear
below me

I am beyond recognition
beyond help
memory banks inaccessible
energies unemployable
and my welfare worker
understands my case
having seen so many
strange creatures pass
this way before
TORA
A View From the Outside and the Future Outlook

"Vancouver has done something unusual with its homeless people - they live in a city of their own called the Downtown Eastside, population 10,000, formerly known as Skid Row...The community is a sociological curiosity. Though 8500 of the residents live in desperate poverty, the Downtown Eastside is the second most stable community in Vancouver. The poor have gathered there and most will remain until they die because the area contains...rundown hotels where they can rent cheap shelter."(Callwood 1987, A7)

It is startling to consider that this bleak picture painted by a visiting journalist could soon become a rosey snapshot of the past. Upscale development could destroy even this option for those Vancouverites at the very bottom of the income scale. Cheap housing and cheap food, clothing and supplies currently available in the area could be hard to obtain if the area is "improved" by those seeking to make a profit.

Besides applying continual pressure for increased social housing in the area, DERA has plans for the existing housing stock. They have observed that:

"Presently, but not for long, many hotels that were recently upgraded for tourist use during Expo 86 are on the market for reasonable prices. They require little renovation and no structural modification."(DERA 1988, v)

The idea is that such hotels could "act as a transition point between market hotels and self-contained social housing". The non-profit group would operate the hotel pubs and return the profits into development of more non-profit units. Then valuable land would be held and the improvements would increase the buildings in value. DERA sees this as a "very inexpensive way to develop future social housing".(ibid.)

The DERA recommendation with respect to zoning is that a bylaw similar to San Francisco's "Residential Hotel Unit Conversion and Demolition Ordinance" (HCDO) be initiated in the area. This bylaw requires a one-for-one replacement of low income units at the same rent level for any units that are lost due to conversion or demolition.(ibid., vi)

DERA believes that the Downtown Eastside must be viewed as a "Priority Need Zone". The organization has recommended that the CMHC should act as a catalyst agency, initiating
and overseeing the required participation of all levels of government needed to eradicate homelessness in the area.

Stephen Leary, spokesperson for DERA, claims that homelessness in Vancouver is a concealed issue, different from the situation in many of the large American cities today in that here we can easily ignore the real, but invisible homeless people - those who live on the fringe of our society - who inhabit any of the 370 rundown hotels and rooming houses in the area. If the present accommodations for these people are lost, the problem will be exposed and visible. Perhaps then the political decision to let this situation exist will no longer be possible.
From results obtained through the Downtown Eastside Housing and Resident Survey of 1987-88, a profile of the "average" resident of the Downtown Eastside was developed. It reads in part:

"The average Downtown Eastsider is a Caucasian male who lives alone. He is 51 years old and a Welfare/Ca`n recipient and has a monthly income of less than $439.00. He... has lived in the community for over 10 years. He has a 47% chance of being disabled."(DERA 1988, iii)

There is a certain logic to this claim. 80.7% of the residents of the Downtown Eastside are male, and in order to foster a clear and simple understanding of the people of the area, this is a useful sketch. It is difficult, however, to understand the situation in the Downtown Eastside from the female perspective using this profile.

A small informal committee of women who have a social or professional interest in the Downtown Eastside have observed that women's circumstances in the area can be difficult and somewhat different from the more documented male experience. These interested women, who have decided to act upon this observation, have been meeting together since mid-1988 to explore the reality of women in the area and to establish what interventions are needed and possible for these female residents. The core group of the committee is composed of 7 women, including myself. One is a coordinator at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and a recent graduate of the School of Social Work. Another is a woman who has been homeless in the past, who has worked with a previous incarnation of this new committee for several years prior to this time to set an emergency facility in place. This earlier vision never achieved reality, but very valuable foundation work was done by the previous committee which now helps to inform the actions of the current group. Also participating is an advocacy worker from First United Church who has discovered that finding
temporary or permanent accommodation for people in need is the most frustrating aspect of her job. A woman who works for the City in the Social Planning Department has contributed a great deal of advice and expertise. A native woman who has run voluntary outreach programs in the area for many years is also a frequent participant in the committee, as is a worker from the Battered Women's Support Services. Sympathetic to the goals of the committee, but less active participants at this stage are an architect, a real estate agent, and several social workers and support professionals from nearby agencies including the Ministry of Social Services and Housing - MSSH, the Strathcona Care Team, First United Church, and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.

In late 1988 and the early months of 1989, members of this committee decided to conduct an informal survey of women who live in the Downtown Eastside to determine needs and preferences from their perspective. The survey questions were drafted by a subcommittee composed of three women of the core group: the coordinator from the Women's Centre, the First United Church advocacy worker, and myself. The proposed questions were discussed in detail at several meetings of the entire group, and after eight drafts the survey was printed. Sixty women who live in the Downtown Eastside, and 40 women who live outside the area but who are somewhat familiar with the Downtown Eastside as frequent visitors to the area, were chosen to be the target group. It was thought that these women would be able to shed light on the daily reality of the living in the Downtown Eastside from the female point of view. The one hundred women were informally interviewed by members of the committee or by closely associated volunteers. All members of the survey subcommittee participated in the interviewing process. The informal interview was guided by a 3 page questionnaire (a sample of which appears in Appendix A) upon which responses were recorded as closely as possible to verbatim. As an option, the women were able to fill out the pages themselves. The object of the survey was not to acquire data that would be scientifically reliable and valid, but rather to stimulate information sharing and discussion with
the women of the area to gain insights about their needs which would form the basis for the
design of an appropriate response.

The questions were divided into 3 principal sections. The first page was designed to
establish facts about the woman's present living conditions - form of housing, rent paid,
access to amenities; and to explore her perceptions and feelings regarding her present
circumstances. A second page established general patterns of living - length of stay in the
area, usual length of stay in one place, and past and present relationships with social agencies
and other facilities. Some questions probed preferences, likes and dislikes and choices with
respect to life circumstances. The third page, on which each question was clearly understood
to be optional, contains questions of a personal nature - demographic information and
personal history. Included on this final page were a series of questions which invited women
to comment freely upon their opinions regarding the needs of women in the Downtown
Eastside. The committee had decided in advance to explore their idea that an
"emergency/safe house" (the term was deliberately kept very broad) is needed and would be
used in the area. The respondents were asked for their suggestions regarding such aspects as
location, length of stay, criteria for entry, supports and services, rules, and general concerns.

The results of the survey of 60 women of the Downtown Eastside were tabulated by the
survey sub-committee. These appear in Appendix B. Appendix C contains an analysis of the
replies of the 40 women met who know the area but live outside of the Downtown Eastside,
and a brief comparison of these results with the replies of the resident group.

From the Downtown Eastside residents' survey results, some inferences and interpretations
have been developed in order to make the information gathered more accessible and
meaningful.

The first outcome of the study is a broad interpretation of trends or generalizations about
potential users of an emergency/safe house for women which emerge from an examination of
the survey results. Included are factors which appear to be common to the vast majority of
women interviewed, and a very brief summary of the obvious needs of these women. This
impression is supplemented by excerpts from descriptions and assessments of the situation of the women of the Downtown Eastside and sketches of the lifeworld in general, borrowed from selected other sources.

The second outcome is a series of profiles of "typical female residents of the Downtown Eastside". These profiles, which are actually composites of small groups of women sharing common characteristics, appear after the generalized trends.

Based on the profiles, some related action-responses or interventions can be envisioned. These will be sketched in this section, following the composite profiles, but more fully elaborated in Chapter 6 which deals with a range of provisions required for a strong supportive network of care, and Chapter 7 which contains a program for a specific project response.

The third outcome is a close look at the suggestions made and insights shared by the 100 respondents regarding the "emergency/safe house". These insights offered by potential users of such a project follow the profiles, and form Appendix D of this document.
WHO MIGHT BE THE USERS OF AN EMERGENCY/SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN IN THE
DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE?

It is assumed here that the 60 women residents of the Downtown Eastside who responded
to questions put to them in this informal inquiry are a reasonably representative sampling of
the female population of the area who might at some time need a safe place to stay. DERA
estimates that the total population of the Downtown Eastside is about 10,000 residents. They
believe that about 20% of area residents are female. This figure is of course difficult to
ascertain due to the vagaries of daily existence and the census confusion already discussed.

The conversations were held at a range of locations within their district, including such
gathering spots as the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, First United Church and W.I.S.H.
Drop-in, bars in the local hotels, the park, the Kettle and Lookout; and in their own dwelling
places.

An analysis of the survey results shows that this group of women who responded share
certain common characteristics. A close look at those characteristics leads to a discovery of
certain very general patterns. It serves too to refute some of the "myths" or stereotypical
assumptions about the women and the area. Foremost among these myths are the notions
that the population of the Downtown Eastside is composed mainly of transients; that people
are there mainly because they choose not to do "honest" work, but to overindulge their
thirsts and appetites instead. A look at the information gathered in the survey and from
selected other sources logically leads to some inferences regarding what actions might taken
to respond to the needs of these women.
COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 60 WOMEN RESIDENTS SURVEYED

The Respondents

The number of caucasian and native resident respondents was about evenly divided though several women did not specify their race. They ranged in age from 18-66 years old; the largest group is composed of the 12 women in the 18-35 year old bracket.

Poverty is an overwhelmingly common characteristic of the respondents. While Statistics Canada considers $10,653 to be the poverty level for the unattached individual, (1987), it was found that only 3% of those surveyed had incomes which fell within 5% of the poverty level. The average income of the women surveyed is $508 per month, or 57% of the Statistics Canada poverty line figure.

The source of income in 92% of instances recorded is income assistance in the form of GAIN or HPIA. Three per cent of respondents reported that they obtain their income exclusively through employment.

The overwhelming majority of those respondents who had jobs in the past worked in low-paying clerical or service jobs, or at unskilled or semi-skilled labour. Three per cent had worked in the construction industry, and 6% had at one time held managerial or professional positions. It is possible that because the competition for jobs is becoming stiffer, an "incomplete" education; or inability to compete based on other factors such as health, social skills, ability to obtain good references etc.; could seriously hamper a woman's efforts to obtain a job.

The level of education reached by the majority of women interviewed is less than high school graduation.

-24% have grade 8 or less
-52% have grade 10 or less
-88% have grade 12 or less with no post secondary training.

There is a high incidence of health problems, and substance abuse has affected many of the lives of women in the group.

-38% reported physical problems which constrain their lives to some degree
-52% had been treated for major physical problems in the past.
-36% reported problems of a mental/emotional nature
-23% had been treated for major mental/emotional difficulties
-52% acknowledged that they have participated in some form of treatment for chemical dependency or abuse.

A large portion of the women reported that they live alone - especially the older women.

-63% of the women surveyed live alone.

Those women who do not live alone share accommodation with common law partners, or family, or friends. One person replied that she is married.

-84% of the women over age 40 are unattached individuals who live alone.

Many of the women have coped with very trying situations in the past and have been subject to a variety of forms of abuse.

-28% had been battered
-31% had been raped at least once
-31% had needed to find shelter and/or support on short notice because of threatened violence or harrassment.
-30% had been evicted
The housing situation in particular, and the lifestyle in general, has to be characterized as insecure and often dangerous.

-only about one-quarter of the group of 60 residents of the Downtown Eastside replied that they had not moved in the last year. (Over one-half of this small sub-group who did not move live in non-profit housing and wouldn’t consider moving.)

-almost one-half of the 60 women moved 1-3 times in the past year (usually within the area)

-an additional one-third of the group replied that they had moved 4 or more times in the past year (usually within the area)

-The most frequently given reasons for moving about were: to flee from or avoid violence, to search for better quality accommodations, and because of financial considerations.

-50% of respondents have been without a safe place to stay for the night at least once in the past year.

-53% of respondents have stayed at least once in an emergency shelter.

-26% have been in prison at least once.

It is questionable whether some of these women have access to the support systems that they seem to urgently require. Only about one-half of the women who had been to a primary treatment facility such as detox, prison, or a mental hospital, had ever been to a follow-up facility such as an addiction treatment centre, a halfway house, or a psychiatric support home.

The housing options generally available to these women are limited in scope, and often inadequate and unsafe.

-over 60% of the women surveyed live in hotel or rooming house accommodation. Of this group, over 75% share toilet and bath facilities, often with about 10 others.
-43% had personally experienced physical violence or harassment at their dwelling place in the last six months.

-In the overwhelming majority of instances, financial circumstances and availability of accommodation were the reasons given for living at the present place.

These women are experiencing severe "core housing need".
CMHC considers that households which spend more than 30% of their income on housing are to be defined as in "core housing need".

-The women surveyed who live in market housing - area hotels and rooming houses - pay an average of 44% of their monthly income for accommodation.

These women are receiving less value per dollar than many renters in other parts of the city.

Excepting those women surveyed who currently live in the street or who are doubling up with friends and therefore paying little or no rent in money (14% of respondents), and those living in a rent-geared-to-income situation (12% of respondents), the average rent paid by the women surveyed is $263 per month. If the average accommodation is a 10 foot by 10 foot hotel room - a generous estimate - this is a disproportionately high rate per square foot of space ($2.63 per square foot) compared to, for example, a rough estimate of the situation for renters in Kitsilano. According to CMHC as of April, 1989, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in Kitsilano is $546 per month. This is slightly more than twice the money paid by a resident of a Downtown Eastside hotel per month, but the floor space and amenities included in a Kitsilano apartment are, in general, much more than twice that which is available in an SRO situation.

In general, these women are not passing through or transient, but long term residents of a stable community. DERA maintains that the Downtown Eastside is one of the most stable communities in Vancouver in terms of length of residency in the area. It is generally
acknowledged that the Downtown Eastside is the second most stable community, after Dunbar.)

-one-third of the women surveyed have lived the Downtown Eastside for 6 or more years. Another approximately one-third have lived in the area for between 2-5 years. The DERA "average" resident has lived in the community for over 10 years.

-75% of the respondents listed their place of origin as being within this province.

The respondents' aspirations with respect to housing are conventional and modest. The vast majority of those surveyed want an affordable rental accommodation or a chance to live in non-profit or co-op housing. They commented:

"then I wouldn't have to worry about where to stay"

"I wouldn't have to move all the time."

"It would be a safe, good environment."

Some of the women who currently live in Mavis/McMullen, the non-profit housing project for women across from Oppenheimer Park commented:

"I have all the conveniences (a stove, refrigerator, kitchen sink and storage, a bathroom, and additional storage space, ample space). I feel safe, and there is no threat to tenure. This is heaven."

"This is the best - you are the boss."

"I wouldn't change this type of housing for the world."

And a woman who lives in a hotel room commented:

"It's secure (the lock works), but I don't call it home because it's just a little room to sleep in."

It cannot be said that a woman who has "just a little room to sleep in" has a home. If she is without-a-home, then she too must be included in the group we call homeless.
SUMMARY

In general, the needs of women of the Downtown Eastside are clearly articulated in the informal survey. If we look at the characteristics shared by many of these women, simple and logical responses to their situation come easily to mind. They need money. They need training and education and chances at jobs. They need support systems which offer sustained opportunity for themselves and perhaps their helpers to work at satisfying their requirements for physical, mental/emotional and social health. They often need sustained help at fighting their addictions. They need a safe situation where they can experience ease. They need a place that they can call home.
OTHER SOURCES SERVE TO ENRICH THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION OF THE WOMEN OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE.

Although the Downtown Eastside is not an area that has often been deeply addressed in the literature, there is some work available which helps to clarify the realities of life there from a female point of view.

Women at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre work tirelessly to respond to the needs of the women of the area. Part of their perceived responsibility is a strong research component. They have conducted surveys of their own to determine needs and to evaluate conditions, and the information thus obtained is put to good use.

A paper titled "Rationale/Statistics to Support the Need" was printed at the centre in 1986 as background for the development of the Mavis/McMullen housing project. The information in this paper was based on earlier research including a survey of 52 women, centre advocacy and referral statistics, City Health, Planning and Police Department reports, and Statistics Canada figures. The Rationale/Statistics summary reads in part:

"Women comprise 20% of the population of the Downtown Eastside. Most services are oriented towards men. On average, women in the Downtown Eastside die 17-20 years sooner than their counterparts in the City as a whole. Suicides are four times higher and homicides are about twice as frequent. The majority of the women are single and among the poorest in the Province."

"When women of the area are in crisis, or in need of support, they are less likely to seek assistance from services which host and/or serve a majority of men. Frequently, such services are at a loss (as to how to help the women)...(having) a lack of resources and expertise to assist them (in instances of rape, battering, incest, apprehension of children, psychiatric crisis etc.)."

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre put together a profile of the typical woman of the Downtown Eastside based on a survey done in 1986, which forms part of the paper meant to "Support the Need". An excerpt from the profile includes the following sensitive analysis of the situation of this typical (composite) woman:

...She lives in a small room "in an area where 80% of the population is male... She experiences isolation and fear of
physical or sexual abuse in these premises. Her room often has no cooking facilities, and is infested with cockroaches. She eats in cafes, at the Women’s Centre, or does not eat at all. She is malnourished. As a result, her physical and mental abilities are jeopardized.

She may have a grade 12 education, but she cannot continue her education because of the cost. She is unemployed and is looking for work. She has a variety of past employment experience and skills, but no job prospects. She supplements her income through volunteer work, earning another $50 per month, or turns to prostitution - a criminal offence.

She comes to the D.T.E.S. to look for work, or because she has friends here. Alcohol and drugs are a frequent way of coping with life. Suicide is something she may contemplate or attempt when poverty and isolation overwhelm her.

She is forgotten in the community and is not recognized for her strengths...

In an article in Kinesis in 1985, writer Miriam Azrael wove several discussions with Vancouver street women into a "conversation" which details the lifeworld of these women in the Downtown Eastside. The preface to the piece reads:

"Morning is a long time coming when you’re spending the night on someone else’s hotel room floor. For Aleta, its better than the parking lot where she spent several nights after fleeing the hotel she called home for a week, after being assaulted by the manager in her hotel room. ‘Yes, he owes me money. I was paid up to the end of the month,’ she says. ‘Of course I’m angry. But no way am I going back there.’"(Azrael 1985, 16)

In the article, Azrael further relates the story of the woman called Aleta, (names have been changed), who tells her:

"Over the years I’ve stayed in just about every hotel and rooming house in the area. You make the best of it, and when it gets intolerable, you move. It’s the neighbourhood, really the street community: not the physical part of it, but the people, that feels like home to me."

"...Here, not that everybody loves everybody, but we all know each other. To a certain extent, we all watch out for each other. At the same time, you have to watch your own back. There’s no way you can survive down here if you forget that for a minute."

("ibid.

Another woman, called Karen, comments:

"A lot of us were abused at home. That’s why we ended up down here. I’ve lost track of the number of foster homes they stuck me in until I got iced up and just took off on my own."

"...Sure it’s a fast life down here. I’ve done things I’m not proud of. Sometimes I can’t believe some of the things I’ve
done for money. Yet I've taken care of myself. I'm not a bad person. This isn't the life I planned for myself."

But Karen stays in the Downtown Eastside. She says:
"For all your talk about increasing choices for women, unless you're lucky, you don't get anywhere else from here but dead. Twice I've moved right out of the area. Both times I've ended up crazy. I'd sit in the house alone. I didn't know any of the neighbours. I need my community." 

Miriam Azrael has known homelessness close up, and has known and worked closely with other women of the Downtown Eastside for years. In the same article, she makes the following observations about the women and the community:

"These women are representative of a growing population that inevitably gravitates to the more depressed areas of all major urban centres. The problems that they face: chronic unemployment, sub-standard housing, lack of meaningful options, poor health, conflict with the law - are compounded by a sense of powerlessness and despair."

"...The street is a hazardous resource with its own demands. The protection, benefits and opportunities offered to mainstream women are not readily available for street women who are limited by their poverty and lack of education. Without the security of a home, subject to the demands of their precarious lifestyle, its violence and routine abuse, the street woman seldom gets the chance to take a step back and assess her life's expectations. Survival is an ongoing struggle.

While she must constantly reassess her situation there is rarely the opportunity to be systematic, thorough and objective. Yet without a careful analysis, realistic plans for an alternate future cannot be made or attempted." 

In an article published in Kinesis in 1982, writer Jan De Crass quoted a worker at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre who made the following observations about the women and the area:

"Many women don't have the confidence, the skills of the living situation to hold down a full time job. For those who are physically ill or have a history of mental turmoil, employment is simply not an option. For those who are younger or healthier, incentive is sadly lacking. The DTES is a jobless ghetto and their address holds a certain stigma. According to reports, police on this beat refer to it as the 'garbage detail'." (Vancouver Women's Shelter Society 1983, v)

Many observers of and actors in the life of the Downtown Eastside view the question of accommodation to be a fundamental concern and a critical factor in the well-being of the women there. Joy Thompson noted in an article in Kinesis in 1982 that:
"Housing, how to find it, how to afford it, and for many, being able to stand it, is a major topic of conversation."

In a strongly worded proposal submitted in 1983 by the Vancouver Women's Shelter Society for a Women's Refuge in the Downtown Eastside, earlier research was extensively used to demonstrate the critical nature of the need for housing. Corrine Lee Angell's 1982 study called *Residential Alternatives for Women on Vancouver's Skid Road* is quoted to help confirm the severity of the situation. Angell said that in the Downtown Eastside, "living space is not only inadequate...it is dangerous in that it increases women's susceptibility to assault and harassment". (Vancouver Women's Shelter Society 1983, vii) The proposal also quotes Angell's argument that women of the Downtown Eastside are likely to be "experiencing other difficulties, only one of which is obtaining and maintaining suitable shelter" and that "economic, health, and social considerations" must be part of any planning for this group. It is Angell's assessment that:

"Providing shelter combined with co-ordinated and appropriate services may be far more beneficial than the current emergency band-aid approach. In addition, it could reduce the demand for costly acute care in hospitals and emergency shelters."

The outline inventory with recommended supplements for a strong and supportive network of care, which is found in Chapter 6 of this thesis, is a broad response to an understanding of the lifeworld and the needs of the women of the Downtown Eastside. The program for a specific project which forms Chapter 7 of this document is predicated on a full agreement with the above assessment.
THE PROFILES

It was found that one "typical female resident" had simply too many different characteristics to be a reliable indicator of the population. There is a rich variety of women living in the area, of various ages and life stages and of a wide range of histories and present circumstance. Thus an attempt was made to form less general categories to organize the 60 women respondents of the Downtown Eastside. It was found that seven fairly homogenous groups could be formed. These groupings were based chiefly on very basic demographic considerations, and in one instance, a sub-group became present living conditions. Seven profiles result.

The "typical" women are:

- a long term resident of 40 years old or less, caucasian
- a long term resident of 40 years old or less, native Canadian
- a newcomer to the area, under 40 years old, caucasian
- a newcomer to the area, under 40 years old, native
- a long term resident, over 40 years old, native
- a long term resident, over 40 years old, caucasian, in market housing
- a long term resident, over 40 years old, caucasian, in non-profit housing

The final profile in the list above, the resident of non-profit housing, provides a marked contrast to the first six profiles which describe women who live in hotels or rooming houses.
TYPICAL FEMALE RESIDENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

PROFILE #1 - A Long Term Resident, 33 Years Old
(a composite of 12 women)

This woman has lived in the Downtown Eastside for about 5 years [range 2-10 years], is 33 years old [range 21-40], and is caucasian. She has worked in the past at a series of low paying jobs in the service sector, but because of limited education (average grade 11) and other factors, she is unlikely to find a suitable job, or for that matter, any job now. Her employability is further reduced by health problems. There is a 58% chance that this woman suffers from mental or emotional disturbances, and a 41% chance that she is coping with health problems of a physical nature. There is an even chance as well that this woman has either an alcohol or other drug problem which is currently affecting her life.

It is highly likely that this woman lives by herself and is supported solely by either GAIN or HPIA benefits. Her average income is $540 per month of which she pays an average of $237 [or 44%] for shelter. She lives in a hotel in the Downtown Eastside in which she shares toilet and bath facilities with other residents on her floor. She is likely to have either a stove or a hotplate in her room for cooking.

This woman states that she feels relatively safe in sharing facilities with the other residents in her hotel, but her opinion is divided with respect to whether she feels safe in general in her present place [50% yes - 50% no]. She expresses concern with respect to the incidence of violence, harrassment by neighbours, fear of intrusion, fear of eviction from her hotel, and is bothered by the dirty conditions and the general shoddiness of the building.

This woman moved [an average of] 3 times in the last year. Some of her reasons for moving in the past have included sexual assault or violence, generally inadequate dwelling circumstances, selling of the property by the landlord, and breakdown of a relationship. This woman states that she lives in the Downtown Eastside mainly for reasons of affordability and
convenience of the location. Although she sees herself as having few options to living in the area, she tends to like the Downtown Eastside and to feel comfortable in the community.

There is almost an even chance that this woman experienced a crisis in the past year that left her at least once without a place to stay. This crisis was typically an episode in which mental or emotional distress was a factor.

This woman believes she would benefit from increased availability of affordable rental accommodation in the area where she lives. She has expressed an interest as well in non-profit housing, and in over 50% of instances sees such an arrangement as a preferred option for solving housing problems. She would likely make use of a temporary safe house for women if she were experiencing a crisis. In such a place, she would appreciate having access to supportive counselling and interchange with other women, help with alcohol and other drug abuse problems, and assistance in finding a safe, secure, adequate, affordable and permanent home.

This woman is likely to be currently involved to some degree with the informal supportive community of women of the Downtown Eastside, and feels she would profit from a strengthening of the resources available. She would prefer, for example, if the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre were open for longer hours and were able to offer more programs and expanded services. She tends to think that a safe house for women would be most useful if it were available on a long term basis (3 - 6 months), so she ”wouldn’t feel pressured to jump from the frying pan into the fire”. She sees that short term stays in a safe place are sometimes necessary as well.
PROFILE #2 - A Long Term Resident, 30 Years Old

(a composite of 11 women)

This woman has lived in the area for about 7 years [range 2-12 years], is 30 years old [range 23-35], and is a native Canadian. When she had work in the past, it was in the low paying sector and her employment history is confined exclusively to service type jobs or relatively unskilled labour. Her level of education is grade 9 [range grade 8-12]. Health problems, which might include TB, mental and emotional distress [50% of instances], and problems with addictions to alcohol and other drugs [91% of instances], are other factors which often preclude the possibility of her obtaining and keeping a job. Her present source of income is social assistance and her average monthly income is $426 per month [range $390-$450], of which she pays an average $248 [or 58%] for shelter. Her yearly income brings her to 48% of the poverty line as defined by Statistics Canada.

This woman is likely to live alone in a small hotel room and to share toilet and bath facilities with other residents. She likely does not have cooking facilities in her hotel room. She does not consider her present place to be a secure, adequate home and [in about half of the instances] feels somewhat threatened by the need to leave her room to use the toilet and other facilities. She lives in her present place mainly because of financial constraints, and because she doesn't have references to help her obtain a better situation.

Her chief concerns in her hotel are the unpredictable behaviour of other tenants which is often the result of substance abuse; the fear of violence or intrusion, the limitation of her rights to have visitors, and the relentless fear of eviction. She has chosen to live in the Downtown Eastside mainly for financial and social reasons. She likely has friends and/or family in the area and feels accepted by the community and has a sense that she "belongs here". She recognises that she would have a great deal of trouble finding accommodations that she could afford anywhere else in the city.

This woman moved an average of 4 times in the last year, often because of eviction. The eviction was sometimes a result of drinking parties, and sometimes a result of inability to pay
the rent. Other reasons for moving included the desire to escape violence and the search for a cleaner and more adequate dwelling place - free of cockroaches and mice. In the past year, this woman has found herself without a safe place to stay for the night at least once. This emergency circumstance was likely to have been brought about by an eviction or the need to flee from violence. In the past she would possibly have approached Emergency Services on Drake Street in such a crisis but this is no longer an option. Her next most preferred option if family or friends were not a possibility would be Crosswalk, a facility which is open for drop-in emergency from midnight to about 6 in the morning, and which does not provide beds.

This woman is undecided as to whether an emergency safe house for women would be best located in the Downtown Eastside or outside the area. A compromise position would be "away from the action - but close enough to get there easily". She sees a need for a safe house allowing long term stay (up to 6 months) with heavy emphasis on counselling and help with maintaining freedom from addiction problems. She would prefer a "family" model, and believes that feelings of safety come mainly from the people involved. She believes that women in the Downtown Eastside need more access to support groups, counselling and substance abuse services, and beds for women who are withdrawing from addictions or returning to the community from prison.
PROFILE #3 - A Newcomer, 28 Years Old

(a composite of 7 women)

This woman is is 28 years old [range 18-33], caucasian, and is a relative newcomer to the area as she has lived in the Downtown Eastside less than one year. Her work history is spotty, and all of her jobs in the past have been in the service or unskilled sector. The jobs she has held range from newspaper carrier to janitor and waitress. She completed grade 11 of high school [range grade 9-12] and her present source of income is GAIN or HPIA benefits. There is a 42% chance that she suffers from some form of mental or emotional distress, a 14% chance of an alcohol or other drug problem and a 14% chance that she has physical problems to contend with. There is a 57% chance that this woman lives by herself (or she might live with a child or a male partner).

This woman’s average income is $590 per month [range $490-$818] and she pays an average of $263 per month for accommodation [or 44%]. According to the Statistics Canada estimates, this woman’s income brings her to 66% of the poverty line.

This woman has recently moved to the Downtown Eastside mainly for reasons of affordability of accommodation, and because she is familiar with the area. She currently lives in a hotel [or some makeshift circumstance such as a trailer in an unrestricted parking lot] and is likely to have to share toilet and bath facilities with others. She is very unlikely to have private cooking facilities. She generally feels safe with these arrangements [especially if she lives with a male partner], but she does not consider her present place to be a secure, adequate home. She is concerned about the incidence of violence and intrusion there and worries about the danger of eviction. She is hearing about non-profit housing and would like to know more about this option.

In the last year, this woman moved an average of 5 times, mostly for reasons having to do with finances, safety, and cockroaches. She has come to the area to look for accommodation because of the availability and affordability factors. She feels she has no choice. There is an
almost even chance that this woman was without a place to stay for the night at least once in
the past year. The reason for such a crisis was generally financial.

Perhaps because of her relative newness to the area, this woman differs from most other
typical female residents of the Downtown Eastside in that she tends to think that a safe house
might best be located outside the immediate area. She believes that a long term arrangement
for supportive living for a period of 3-6 months is preferable to short term support for
someone in crisis.
PROFILE #4 - A Newcomer, 34 Years Old

(a composite of 5 women)

This woman has lived in the Downtown Eastside for less than a year, and is 34 years old (range 28-39), and is native. If she has held a job in the past, it was at the low-paying end of the service sector, such as chambermaid or barmaid. She has [an average of] grade 11 education, and perhaps a little training at a native education facility. She is very likely to be troubled by problems related to substance abuse but less likely to have mental or emotional or physical distress. Most likely she lives in a common law marriage relationship or with friends. Her average income is $477 per month (53% of the poverty line) which she receives through social assistance.

She currently lives in a hotel room for which she pays [an average of] $241 per month. She shares toilet and bath facilities with other residents and is very likely able to cook in her room. When she is with her partner, she feels generally safe in her living environment, but on her own she often feels afraid. She does not consider her present place to be a secure, adequate home but stays there because she believes that she has no choice.

Experiences that concern this woman in her present dwelling place include the incidence of violence and intrusion, and the lack of security. Often she must secure her door with a knife to compensate for an undependable or faulty lock.

This woman would like to see a safe house which offered a long term (3-6 month) stay, in the Downtown Eastside. She would want the supports at such a house to include counselling with specific assistance for alcohol and other drug problems. She would want to see a rule prohibiting the use of alcohol and other drugs on the premises. She believes that security in such a place would be an outcome of consistent and sensitive staffing, and a dependable security system. She believes that what women in the Downtown Eastside need most are decent places in which to live.
PROFILE #5 - An Older, Longtime Resident
(a composite of 6 women)

This woman is native, [average] 51 years old [range 42-59], and she is a long time resident of the Downtown Eastside. She has been in the area [an average of] 10 years [range 5-14 years]. Although she does not have employment now, in the past she has worked at service, semi-skilled and volunteer jobs. Her [average] level of education is grade 8 [range grade 6-12].

Besides being constrained by her lack of education, this woman is likely to have health problems of a physical nature which further prevent her from supporting herself by means of income earned at a job. She has an even chance of being further troubled by problems associated with alcohol or other drug abuse, which may be a reason for her lack of employment or a consequence of this factor.

This woman receives income assistance or HPIA of [an average of] $466 per month. This amounts to 52% of the poverty level according to Statistics Canada. She pays [an average of] over 50% of her income for lodging. What she receives for her rent money is a small hotel room with a washbasin but very likely without a self-contained toilet and shower/bath. She probably has access to cooking facilities, but she has only an even chance of having a stove to cook on within the building. She may be forced to use a hotplate that she has brought into her room illegally.

Although this woman lives alone, she generally feels safe in her present place, but is divided in her opinion [50%-50%] about whether the place constitutes a secure, adequate home. She voiced concerns about the dirty conditions in her hotel, the fear of eviction, and the lack of security arrangements, especially at night. It is upsetting to this woman that the landlord is likely to closely monitor visitors to her room - even grandchildren are unlikely to be welcomed by the management.

This woman lives in the Downtown Eastside because she knows "everyone" and "everyone takes care of everyone". She mentions that she enjoys the view through her
window which overlooks the street, where she can see what is taking place and the faces of familiar people. She appreciates the convenience of the location with respect to shopping and services. She recognises that on her income, she could not afford accommodation anywhere else in the city.

This woman probably did not move in the last year, and was never without a safe place to stay for the night in that time. When she has moved in the past, it was usually in the hope of finding a situation where she could do her own cooking or enjoy basic amenities of a higher quality, or to avoid violence or harrassment or undue noise or cockroaches.

Although this woman is less likely than some of the others to need a safe place to stay in an emergency, she has some clear views about what this place might be like. She believes a long term arrangement (3-6 months) would be most useful to women in need, because she recognises that it takes time to "get a person’s head straightened out" and to find a new place. She believes that such a place would be useful for women who are homeless for any reason, who have been battered, who have substance abuse problems beyond their control. She would like to see supports include counselling services, referrals to other relevant agencies, and supports for single mothers. She believes that it is the women present in the facility and adequate security measures which would make a safe house feel really safe. Her opinion is divided on the subject of where a safe house should be located. She can see the rationale behind locating it in the Downtown Eastside because it could then be located in close proximity to other support services such as a church or social services office; but on the other hand, she feels that outside the area - "away from the street" - might be more beneficial.
PROFILES #6 AND #7 - Older Longtime Residents

(a composite of 13 women)

This woman is 53 years old [average - range 41-66 years], caucasian, and has lived in the Downtown Eastside "off and on" for [in over half of the instances] between 10 to 20 years. She has done a wide variety or service and semi-skilled jobs in the past, but is not employed now. Her [average] level of education is grade 6 [range grade 3-12 and 1 B.A. Psych.]. She receives monthly support of [average] $547 per month [range $400-$748] from social assistance, which may include a small pension from another source such as DVA. All told, her income from all sources brings her to 61% [on average] of the Statscan definition of the poverty level. This woman has about a 60% chance of being seriously constrained by health problems, mostly of a physical nature. There is about a 28 % chance that she battles against addiction to substances at times, but, in general, this is not a major problem to her.

This woman most probably lives alone, but with respect to present living conditions, this "typical resident" must at this point be split into two very different types.

PROFILE #6 - An Older, Longtime Resident, in Market Housing

(a composite of 6 women)

This woman lives either in a hotel or a rooming house in the Downtown Eastside. She pays [an average of] $210 per month for rent [range $165-$250] which amounts to about 38% of her income. She shares toilet and bath facilities with about ten other residents, and though she is likely to have access to cooking facilities, she does not have a self-contained apartment. There is an even chance that she feels uneasy or afraid when she leaves her own room to use shared facilities. This woman does not consider her present circumstance to be a secure, adequate home. She is likely to see alcohol and other drug abusers regularly and there is a high incidence of fights nearby. She fears harrassment and potential attack. She has little confidence in the security measures in her present place and specifically mentions that the doors are not secure.
This woman has chosen to live in the Downtown Eastside because of the affordable rent and lower prices for food, and because she likes the people, the community, and the convenience of the location.

In the last year this woman moved [an average of] 2 times. Some reasons which have prompted her to move in the past include: a rent increase, fear of harassment or attack, fear of fire or general lack of safety measures, difficult and noisy neighbours, and illness. This woman has not likely been without a place to stay for the night in the past year, though she feels housing is a "worry" in general. She sees herself as having no choice with respect to her dwelling situation at the present time, but is hearing about non-profit and co-op housing and [in about half of the instances] would choose that option if it were available to her.

This woman believes that a safe house for women in crisis is needed, but is divided in her opinion regarding whether it should be located in the Downtown Eastside, or away from the area. She thinks that the length of stay in a safe facility should be flexible and based on need. She acknowledges that it takes some time "to get life together" and "sort through confusion", and to find good housing, but knows that some women might need sanctuary for just a few days in some instances. She would like to see the safe house be available for all types of emergencies, and would like supports to include counselling, job training, recreation programming, and general "protection".
PROFILE #7 - An Older, Longtime Resident, in Non-profit Housing
(a composite of 7 women)

Although this typical resident has much in common with the woman just sketched, there is one major factor which in the past year has divided this fairly homogenous group of 13 women into two distinct subgroups. The last typical female resident we shall consider is a resident of the Mavis/McMullen Project on Cordova Street, a non-profit housing project which is open to women and possible their male partners, but in which tenure is always held by a woman.

In the Mavis/McMullen Project, rent is geared to income so that the average rent paid by the resident is 30% of her total income or about $145 [range $99-$217]. Again, in marked contrast to the vast majority of women who live in hotels or rooming houses, this clearly means that the women of this housing project have much more discretionary money to spend on food and other needs than the rest of the women who live in less adequate but far more costly housing on similar fixed incomes. The women of Mavis/McMullen pay an average of $145 for a fully self-contained unit. This is well below rates paid by the hotel and rooming house residents, who pay an average of $263 per month for what amounts to little more than a tiny sleeping room.

The resident of Mavis Mc/Mullen has her own private washroom and cooking facilities, and her unit, though very modest, also contains ample storage space. Again, as opposed to the women in market housing, this woman without any reservation considers this place to be a secure, adequate home. This woman sees relatively little violence in her building, but does hear about the occasional robbery. She nevertheless feels secure and well-protected by the security systems which are in place for her protection. The tenants have organized a security patrol composed of volunteer residents of the building, which operates at night to see that no undesirables or intruders gain entry. The gate system on the outside of the building, though sometimes requiring fine tuning, is considered effective and is well appreciated by the residents within. It is notable as well that besides volunteering energy and time to help
ensure that the building is safe, this woman and her friends tend to adopt maintenance and management chores which they often perform as contribution to the general well being of the place.

In the past, this woman moved from one place to another for reasons which included fear of violence, harassment, and assault, the desire to find more adequate quarters with respect to size and level of maintenance and safety, and to avoid theft and other occurrences associated with her circumstances. In the past year, she has not been without a safe place to stay, because she has lived at Mavis/McMullen for that time. She has come to deeply appreciate the basic amenities which are available to her now, such as a fridge and a stove, which were not always available to her in the past, and she enjoys having control over her own space. In sharp contrast with her counterparts living in area hotels and rooming houses, this woman characterizes the feeling at Mavis/McMullen as relatively quiet and calm, warm and safe, and she is very glad to have access to the adequate space, the reasonable rent, and the security of tenure at her home.

Although this woman is well-protected and safe in her present place, it has not always been so in her life. She has experienced battering, rape, harassment, and eviction in the past; and is well able to empathise with women who are currently dealing with such crises. She believes that a safe house for women should be located in the Downtown Eastside, because that is where the need is. She believes that "most women in this area experience or face the threat of violence". She imagines a "quiet retreat" where women might go to make contact with supportive people and build something of a community - even if it is temporary - together. She is convinced, possibly by her successful communal experience in her housing project and in other support settings that she has found along the way, that women can help one another by sharing experiences and support. She makes the very practical suggestion that some women whose problems are beyond the scope of the safe house be referred to suitable other resources, at least until they are able to care for themselves. She believes that
the feeling of safety at a place of refuge comes from having enough people around to handle any situation, and a trustworthy security system to keep undesirables out.

This woman sees a big need in the Downtown Eastside for safe housing for women based on both temporary and permanent arrangements. She would like to see the Women’s Centre expand its hours for evening drop-in, and become more "homey", as it was in the past. She would want a women’s social centre to be like a more female oriented Carnegie Centre or Club 44. She also suggests that more facilities such as laundry, shower/bath and hairdryers be provided for women who do not have easy access to such amenities.
ACTION/RESPONSES WHICH EMERGE AS A RESULT OF AN EXAMINATION OF THE PROFILES

From the survey designed to explore the needs and preferences of women in the Downtown Eastside, some understanding has been gleaned of the reality of daily life from that specific perspective. It is based upon that understanding that a response can be shaped. It is possibly helpful to categorize those needs and prioritize them according to a clear and accessible system in order to facilitate the making of a well tailored and comprehensive response.

The Hierarchy of Needs

An American psychologist, F.J.Bruno, has summarized Abraham Maslowe’s very useful theory which articulates the hierarchy of human needs. (Bruno 1983) Maslowe suggests that we imagine a ladder with basic physiological needs on the bottom rung and the motive for self-actualization at the top of the ladder. He defines self-actualization as an inborn tendency to make the most of one’s possibilities as a person. According to Maslowe’s theory, self-actualization does not become a pressing need until the “lower” needs are satisfied. The six rungs on the imaginary "ladder" are:

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

ESTEEM

LOVE AND BELONGINGNESS

SAFETY

STIMULATION

PHYSIOLOGICAL

This "ladder" provides a useful framework for a subjective analysis of the needs and responses to those needs of the women of the Downtown Eastside. Use of this framework is intended to guide the discussion towards a general definition of action/responses which might be appropriate in the Downtown Eastside. This is a foundation for the more finely articulated outline of responses which will appear in the final two chapters of this document.
The Needs

From the results of the survey, we can see that for many of the women of the Downtown Eastside, even the physiological needs at the bottom of Maslowe's hierarchy are not being adequately met. Certainly those who live in the street often lack access to the most fundamental requirements. Those women who subsist in inadequate situations in tiny hotel rooms and the like, often have their primary needs unmet as well. When one must pay such a high percentage of monthly income for shelter, there are obviously going to be times when the necessary purchasing power to obtain a proper diet will be lacking, especially if money management skills are not very finely honed. Only the women who are fortunate enough to live in situations where their rent is geared to their income have even a fair chance of being able to readily meet their financial requirements. If one is mentally confused or depressed, or mired in an addiction, proper nutrition may not be a priority. On a purely practical level, many living situations do not include access to private cooking facilities; some include no cooking facilities whatsoever. Those who must share facilities run the risk of having to deal with difficult neighbours at close range whose standards of cleanliness may be low. They also run the risk of having food supplies stolen or contaminated by pests.

Often women mentioned that the heating system in their dwelling place functions poorly. It is difficult to manage even the most elemental of tasks when one is wrapped, for warmth, in coats or bedclothes.

The reported high incidence of violence, harassment, fear of intrusion in the dwelling places demonstrates that the basic physiological needs for rest and pain avoidance are not always predictably met. Use or abuse of alcohol and other drugs may help to achieve at least the illusion of rest and ease in intolerable situations. Perhaps this accounts for the high incidence of alcohol and other drug problems, especially among some of the long term residents of market housing in the area. Only the women of Mavis McMullen reported limited or no problems related to the abuse of substances. The need is painfully apparent for adequate shelter and sustained support for women who battle against such difficulties daily.
Maslowe calls the second fundamental requirement in his hierarchy "stimulation". In order to satisfy the need for stimulation, a woman who lives by herself in a tiny room would probably feel the need to venture out. One woman described her daily enjoyment of the street life through her window, but many situations do not have this prized feature. It is difficult to imagine how the need for stimulation could be adequately met in such a limited space by any but the most resourceful and self-contained of individuals. The street life of the community as a whole, however, is vital and active and interesting, if sometimes dangerous. Perhaps it is this vitality which attracts residents to this area, apart from the fact that it is for many the only affordable option.

"Safety", the third rung of the ladder, is as the profiles show, an elusive quality in the residential hotel environment and the other more precarious situations. Only the women of Mavis/McMullen expressed unqualified and unreserved feelings of safety and security with respect to their present lodgings. The others had mixed feelings, particularly the unattached women. The women over 40 tended to enjoy stronger feelings of security in their situations than the younger women, particularly the new-comers. Some of the residential hotels have a security/desk clerk and quite dependable security systems and devices. Few of the long-time residents over 40 had moved within the last year and few had been stuck for a place to stay for the night. Most of these older women live alone, which may suggest that they have more independent control over their living situations and conditions within their own territory. Because these older women have in general lived in the area for a longer time, they are perhaps in a better position to locate the most desirable situations. The survey revealed that some situations in the hotels are clearly more favourable than others. Many women of this age group have heard of Mavis/McMullen and are interested in knowing more about it or getting such a place for themselves in a social housing project. A strong case can be made for setting more of such housing in place for these women, but emergency type temporary housing is less likely to be needed by this group of older women.
Based on many of the comments, it is clear that many women live in the Downtown Eastside to satisfy what Maslowe terms the need for "love and belongingness". The community is known for its high tolerance of eccentricity and its general vitality and interactiveness amongst its members. It is a place that many people proudly identify themselves with. This is particularly apparent in the Mavis Mc/Mullen project, but many others commented favourably about the neighbourly feeling in the community as well. The women at Mavis/McMullen identify very strongly with the project as well as the community. They are clear that at home and in their neighbourhood are places where they belong. Few comments were received from residents of hotels which demonstrated this same positive identification, but some of the women clearly enjoy the social setting in the SRO arrangement. At the larger community level, it becomes apparent that if present fears are realized and land values in the Downtown Eastside rise sharply due to development in nearby locations, many members of the community will face the threat of dislocation. This would clearly deny these people the satisfaction of this fundamental need. Measures can be taken, such as the speedy development of secure housing for those to whom it is important to stay in the neighbourhood, to minimize this negative and damaging impact.

The need for "esteem" is difficult to meet in a situation which is delapidated, shabby and substandard in quality. There is a strong need in the Downtown Eastside for more housing which reinforces feelings of dignity and self-esteem. The various social housing projects and the Mavis Mc/Mullen project in particular are positive models in this regard. Perhaps this consideration is not as critical to those who are struggling for survival on a very elemental level; but any interventions - from entry level to permanent long term housing arrangements - can be created and/or adapted with this requirement in mind.

Maslowe's theory would suggest that if the above requirements are met, energy is released from the relentless quest for survival which then can be spent in the pursuit of "self-actualization". Perhaps more time and energy might be freed for education, employment, healing and personal growth amongst the women of the Downtown Eastside if they had a
safe, secure, adequate, and affordable place to live. Many people take this for granted. But these women, by necessity, spend much of their time worrying about their housing situation. They face eviction. They fear intruders and attackers, especially in the male dominated residential hotels. Many of the women mentioned the fear of having their door kicked in. They worry about catching diseases in the unclean environment, and they are bothered by pests. They see fires and robberies and violence. They are very much constrained by their settings. It is the rarest of individuals who is able to flourish in squalid, insecure, often frightening conditions. Many circumstances in the Downtown Eastside can be so characterized.

For women who are lacking satisfaction of even the most basic needs - the hungry, roofless, abused or at risk women who have no safe place to go - a first level or entry emergency place is clearly required to function as a first step in the path towards home. For those women who are, albeit somewhat precariously, housed, it does not naturally follow that they have a home. For many women, such a home may need a strong support component. Others may be capable of more independent living. For each woman of the Downtown Eastside, whatever her capacities, a home is needed - a place where all the needs that Maslowe so elegantly articulated can potentially be met.
CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH THEMES WHICH INFORM A POSITIVE MODEL OF INTERVENTION

In this chapter, a range of themes is presented which have been discovered in the course of this study. These themes have been selected for inclusion here because they have guided and influenced the conception of the final result of the study - a program for a facility - which appears in Chapter 7.

The first three themes have been derived from documents of and conversations with members of the Single Displaced Persons Project in Toronto. The first theme, the role of emergency hostels, is considered to be important background for the development of first stage housing. The difference between "enlightened" shelter and the traditional model of emergency shelter is not often as clear as it might be, especially in the heat and urgency of a functioning emergency setting. The theme thus serves as a clarification of what goals and processes first stage housing should seek to avoid, and why.

Themes two and three, the supportive community, and facilitative management, provide valued insights derived through intense front line experience of the SDPP in providing housing for/with the disadvantaged. These insights are adaptable to many different settings, and provide a framework for development of an "enlightened" response to the needs of homeless people.

Theme four, the examination of an idea of the architect/programmer Murray Silverstein, is a demonstration of how a shift in thinking made at an early stage in the conception of a project can have profound and continuing effects upon the result. This idea, which is especially assessible because it is in diagrammatic form, is meant to serve as a potential application of the preceding themes.
The final theme shows the potential for tying the earlier ideas to a specific context: the informal system of health care in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.
While few would argue that having a place in an emergency shelter or hostel is tantamount to having a home, it is less widely understood how hostels can actually contribute to the perpetuation of the homeless state.

The term "hostel" or "emergency shelter" refers to that form of accommodation established to give shelter to those who are in transition or crisis who have no means to pay for another form of accommodation. Ideally, two principal functions are carried out by an emergency shelter. First, the person in crisis is not obliged to remain unsheltered. Secondly, the emergency shelter can be used as a "point of transition to more stable and appropriate accommodation." (Becker et al 1983, 2) It has been found, however, that instead of enabling such a transition, shelters may indeed function to make it yet more difficult to find a home.

The Single Displaced Persons Project (SDPP) of Toronto have observed that some characteristics of shelters reinforce the homelessness of their residents. Overcrowded conditions preclude the possibility of rest and lead to situations of vulnerability and risk of theft, disease, and other logical outcomes of such proximity. Very short term stays are often inadequate to reorganize a life that has fallen into disarray, thus transience is reinforced. The practice of forcing residents out of shelter during the day "to look for work" can further exacerbate disarray. Rest and recuperation in one's own territory are thereby precluded. It is common for shelters to be understaffed which can easily lead to conditions of stress. Workers are forced to deal with too many people, too many events, and in their struggle to maintain order, can easily slip into controlling or punitive modes of behaviour. Residents are thus denied any control over their own situation and an adversarial relationship results. The development of key linkages to the community support network is easy to overlook in the bustle of daily survival.

The actual physical setting of a shelter is often injurious to the wellbeing of the residents. On a very practical level, the lack of secure storage space can be critical to whether a person loses all possessions or is able to maintain his/her personal artifacts. The lack of privacy and
even very minimal standards of comfort can exacerbate the stress upon a battered person and lead to displays of difficult behaviour. At a more symbolic level, the lack of a dignified setting can further injure an already fragile sense of self esteem. These characteristics of hostels or emergency shelters clearly contribute less toward ameliorating the homeless state than is optimally possible.

In the document titled "Hostels and Homelessness", the SDPP have listed some key recommendations to counter what are considered to be the damaging characteristics of shelters as outlined above. They suggest that effective shelters have the following characteristics:

1. **Humane living arrangements** - a maximum of two residents per room and a total of not more than twenty people per project. They advocate for a variety of types of accommodation which can be tailored to the unique needs of individuals: as an example, single rooms for those who need privacy, for those with health problems, and for a parent with children.

2. **Flexible limits to stay** - which are appropriate to each individual in the process of securing a home. These limits should take into account the facilitation of links to the supportive network as well.

3. **Full access to the residents** - "turfing out" for the day is a policy which the SDPP feels reflects the needs of staff rather than residents. (It follows, however, that sensitivity to staff needs should be reflected in facility programming as well).

4. **Reasonable staff/resident ratio** - allowing for small group or individual support as appropriate.

5. **Skilled staff** - who are able to offer support and facilitate opportunities for empowerment in a setting which traditionally might strip one of a sense of power and self worth. This includes an ability to facilitate processes and structures which enable residents to maximize their influence on and control of the living situation, even in the recognition that it is over the short term.
6. Effective connection to and coordination with appropriate services - including direct referrals to services in a broad spectrum of areas relevant to the achievement of individual goals. Since there are often notable gaps in the network of existing services, an activist/advocacy role is assumed for staff, particularly in matters relating to housing for the long term. (Becker et al. 1983, 3, 4, 18-20)

If these principles are built into the concept of facilities, emergency shelters then may function as "an essential part of a social and welfare system and play an important social and economic role in our society". Then a hostel may be better able to fulfill its role as "a point of transition" rather than functioning as a dead-end.

A Word Regarding Gender

Jim Ward, an organizer of the homeless who has worked at times with the SDPP, has observed that a very different atmosphere prevails in women's hostels as opposed to those serving men. He has concluded after some thought as to why this is so, that "women's shelters operate within an ideological framework that sees the conditions of homelessness as a structural problem." (Ward 1989, 10)

Ward notes:

"In exploring the similarities and differences between men's and women's hostels we discovered that women's hostels, like Nellie's, began with a commitment to develop the services as a right, a clear perception that women using the services are victims of larger social forces and an understanding of the kind of nurturing and support needed in such a crisis. Traditionally, men's hostels have functioned on different assumptions - that the service is a charity to losers and failures who deserve only minimal support and amenities." (ibid.)

Recognizing the structural nature of homelessness, in Jim Ward's view, has led to the provision by women of services that "do battle with these structural forces". (ibid.) The result, as he sees it, is that women are able to understand that their problems are not only rising from themselves. This insight promotes great possibilities for effective group action.
Doing Battle With the Structural Forces

It has sometimes been suggested that in order to eradicate homelessness, the logical approach is to read back through the circumstances leading to the state and reverse those circumstances, so the rightful place in society can be achieved or regained. The first chapter of this document contains an analysis of homelessness, citing the five factors which tend to contribute to the phenomenon. Poverty and unemployment, health problems, social problems, and the shortage of affordable accommodation are the critical issues with respect to homelessness now. It is then logical to conclude that each of these issues must be addressed at the acute stage of homelessness, through the facilities where those thus affected turn for assistance. Thus the shelter facility's mandate is much more than simple provision of a place to stay. The shelter becomes one of the important battlefields where the fight to eradicate homeless is conducted.

The implications are sobering. How can poor people fight poverty and the system in which "disadvantaged groups have always been an essential ingredient" - a system in which "the logic of capitalism produces disadvantage for some just as surely as it produces advantage for others"? (Farge 1987, 2) What can a group of homeless people do, especially in crisis, to gain a dignified place in their society? How can the often multiple and complex health problems of the homeless be effectively addressed? How can people become equipped to cope with social problems in these rapidly changing and confusing times? And how ever can people without adequate means find homes in a society where adequate homes are not available for everyone who needs them? The shortage of non-profit and social housing stock is abundantly demonstrated by the length of the waiting lists for such stock, and by the numbers of people that we know are without safe, adequate, and secure homes - the homeless. It is a staggering mandate to address these factors, but the degree to which this is done is the measure of the efficacy of a sheltering facility.
THEME 2 - The "Supportive Community"

The SDPP have found through a wide range of experience in working with displaced people that

"men or women who have come to be homeless are most likely to be able to improve their situation in ways they choose if they are able to live in a "supportive community"... - a long term residence that is small enough to encourage mutual support among residents and has staff that are enablers of the residents' goals." (Bosworth et al 1983, 22)

In a working paper, the SDPP has identified some factors which they believe are critical to the success of the development of supportive communities for long term housing. These factors form the basis for a system of operating principles for supportive housing which can be adapted to make an operating framework for a range of models, tailored to respond to a wide range of needs.

Following is a summary of the key principles.

1. Regarding the individual residents - the housing should maximize residents' security of tenure, power to exercise control over the life space, opportunity to develop human relationships and choose the level of involvement with others, and access to necessary support services.

The SDPP recognize that homeless people want homes which are theirs for "as long as they want to stay". (ibid., 29) They suggest, therefore, that it is important to enable residents to have this option as long as they fulfill their part of a properly negotiated agreement entered into with respect to the housing arrangement. In this way security can be maximized.

Having control over space implies that the resident is able to make it his/her own through modification to personal taste, and is able to ensure the desired degree of privacy. It means as well that one might be able to take the initiative to invite others into the space while retaining the right to exclude as well.

With respect to involvement with others, mutually negotiated agreements related to responsibilities such as payment of rent and the like are, in the experience of the SDPP, usually successful. An adept facilitator can help to forge guidelines for such matters as
frequency of house meetings and staff visits; and even the degree of involvement in relations with others can be determined by agreement as well.

The SDPP has found that most residents want information about and access to services that "enable them to exercise their rights and responsibilities as residents", and that are necessary for the maintenance of the life they have chosen. They are clear that secure housing must not be contingent upon acceptance of such help, but that awareness of these options is critical.(ibid., 30)

2. Regarding the community of residents - The housing should maximize the residents' ability to live together cooperatively, and maximize their corporate power to shape their living situation with respect to choice of family structure, mutual protection, selection of neighbours, setting behaviour norms, and resolving conflict. This is aided by a small size of project, and by avoidance of grouping residents by problem areas.

It is recognized that homeless people have often lost their personal support networks, and that a group of peers who have some experience with similar problems can be found to replace this loss. The experience of the SDPP suggeats that groups of five or less are the preferred size for the development of cooperative relationships. Facilitation of the individual's ability to share responsibility for the administration and maintenance of the living space, and decisions as to how the living situation might be managed, help to stabilize the housing situation and create a home.

The composition of groupings within the supportive community deserves special attention. The SDPP believes it is desirable to form groupings "by some other way than problem labels such as alcoholic". This may be difficult, in light of the funding criteria that often require a labelling of residents.(ibid., 23, 30)

3. Regarding staff - Staff should provide organization, administration, and interpersonal supports to residents through the development of self-help, and in an empowering manner rather than seeking to control behaviour. The staff role should be essentially that of a
facilitator to respond to the residents' interests and needs. This role would include advocacy, organization, and linking with other agencies. (ibid., 23)

It is not sufficient to keep staff involvement to the level of impersonal property management roles or even strictly problem focused programming. An extended view of staffing includes the roles of facilitator and resource person, "working with the residents as individuals or groups to help them make key decisions that affect their life together, assisting the links outside the house that help them sustain their 'homefulness'". Although staff might not make problem intervention, they would help to build useful links to resources that are needed. The secure home is thus seen as a solid base for developing all aspects of the lives of the residents. (ibid., 23, 31)

4. Regarding the managing organizations - Organizational decision making should be rooted in the needs and interests of the residents as they articulate them, and should be based on an interactive process involving residents, staff, and other decision-makers. There should be cooperation as well among all organizations providing housing.

It is recognized that the development of policies and practices that reinforce this joint decision making approach is a difficult task. It has been found that the management of the housing "must be transparent enough to the residents so that they can exercise their rights and competent enough so that they can put much of their energy into activities outside the housing". (ibid., 32)

5. Regarding the neighbourhood - The residents' immediate personal preferences should be stressed when locating housing - in communities familiar to the residents and with easy access to the generic and social services customarily used. This will necessitate negotiations with the larger community to address negative societal reactions.

It is common for people to want to live in a familiar neighbourhood because of established connections there. The SDPP cautions that problem oriented housing projects should not be located too closely to each other so that a ghetto does not form. (In Vancouver, the ghetto of SRO hotels is already confined to a particular part of the city, the
Downtown Eastside. Creation of a ghetto of social housing projects - homes - would be a vast improvement over the present situation. The SDPP suggestion that having a variety of agency sponsors involved in projects helps to avoid labelling is also relevant here.)

6. Regarding the physical design - The living units should be small groupings of rooms with accompanying common and meeting spaces, basic in design but adaptable through furnishings and minor modifications to accommodate individual preferences, needs for security, and group activities.(ibid., 23)

   The SDPP has found that the desires of homeless people do not seem to differ much from the general population with respect to housing. Social housing units must obviously be basic to stay within the realm of economic, and perhaps ideological possibility; but it nonetheless can satisfy all the requirements of a home.

   Thoughtful and careful design of the housing can lay the groundwork for the resident's creation of the qualities of "comfort", "at-easeness", and "warmth", which are important experiential aspects of home. When one is able to personalize and thus claim an appropriate territory for oneself, a home is in the making. Thus some degree of alteration in the physical design should be provided for.

   The physical building should meet all building code standards and be - and be perceivable as - safe and secure. In the inner core of the city, it might be especially important to see that space is defensible - for example, that dangerous blind spots in the building and at the outer edge are avoided, and that overlook of semi-private and semi-public territory is possible.

   The building can be arranged to reinforce the programmatic principles upon which the project is based. This includes creating a range of settings and thus choices with respect to the formation of social groupings within the project, and providing options in settings to support social interaction of both a formal and a casual nature.
THEME 3 - The Concept of Facilitative Management

In a paper dated May, 1987, the Housing Document Group of the SDPP propose an approach to the design, development, and operation of facilities intended to respond to homelessness. This approach they have termed "facilitative management". The group presents this evolving concept as a way of approaching housing management that takes into account the needs and interests, as the group perceives them, of low-income people who have experienced homelessness.

The values and assumptions underlying the facilitative management approach are clearly indicated in the document and are the foundation upon which the approach is based. The right to a home - a secure stable environment - is the cornerstone. The right to self-management of the home is a critical component of the concept. The SDPP maintain that a range of options must be available to people of low income which includes some choice in the physical type of the housing, and in the types of associations that may be formed between groups and individuals sharing the housing. They believe that housing for low income people should encourage self-management, based on the assumption that "people are not disabled in all aspects of their lives and that mixing people in a community will result in sufficient resources, through combination and exchange of differing abilities and strengths, for the community to manage itself". The operative principle in decision making, in the context of the participation of all the relevant actors, is that: "people have decision making power to the extent that they are affected by the decision; and that individual decisions must take into account the needs and interests of others within and beyond the housing community." The decision makers must be able to foresee and to manage the consequences of their decisions - an ability that the SDPP believe can be both acquired and strengthened with the increased experience of responsibility.

A further assumption on which the facilitative management approach is based is that housing should not be linked to a mandatory participation in any program of service. If this happens, the SDPP believe that supportive housing becomes institutional housing -
"supported housing" rather than a "supportive human community". Housing management must be separate from the delivery of support services in order to create a real choice with respect to programs. Involuntary participation in programs reduces the effectiveness of the action and can put program operators in an exploitative power position. Thus it is recommended that residents be encouraged and assisted to find needed support from the network of services existing outside the actual housing, but of which network the housing is a part.

Facilitative management is for the SDPP a "metaphor or image that indicates a complexity of values, goals, structures, and processes - not a closely defined theoretical concept". It is a management strategy which enables residents to participate as they choose in decisions that affect their living situation. It is meant to enable the ongoing development of relationships which may not have previously existed or which may have been lost in the process of becoming homeless. The idea is to create a context of choice that is sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of the participants. Facilitative management is seen as an ongoing commitment, not just a set of management practices premised on the understanding that the individual's participation in the development and management of housing gives them "a stake in making it pleasant, safe, and secure". (ibid., 19-21) The strategy attempts to create the conditions for individual taking of responsibility for actions. It requires the building of trust between all actors who contribute to or are affected by the housing community. The consensus-building process is seen as a key component of the management style.

"Problems" are viewed as opportunities for development of personal abilities.

The Goals of Facilitative Management and the Process of Realization

The goals for the facilitative management process as articulated by the SDPP are twofold: "to foster a social and physical housing (home) environment in which people are ensured a power base from which they can make choices and decisions to improve the quality of their lives"
and

"to foster the development of communities of people with limited income who choose to act together to improve their material conditions" (ibid., 20)

These goals seem ambitious, broad, and idealistic perhaps, but a look at the specific processes evolved to achieve these goals demonstrates that strategies can indeed be formed which work towards these ends.

**Negotiating contracts**

The development of "social contracts" in an interactive process between all actors in a housing situation has led to a feeling of partnership in the process of building a stable living community. In this process, relationships among key groups and individuals in the housing are negotiated in mutually accountable contracts. Thus everyone involved must make adjustments in expectations and behaviour and actors in all roles will have the opportunity to learn new patterns for relating to one another. The contracts are not legally binding but meant to enable an ongoing process for making and changing agreements.

The outcome of the "social contract" process is an increased sense of ownership on the part of residents which translates directly into management that is based on peer accountability. Thus the facilitative role replaces a controlling, caretaking role.

**Peer discipline**

A basic principle of this management style is that the community sets its own standards for acceptable conduct and that the collective is responsible for upholding these standards. It is recognized that people are entitled to "due process" and emphasis is laid on accountability for one's actions. Logical consequences of actions are considered rather than arbitrary punishment.

**Negotiating intervention**

In the instance of abuse or violence, the goal is to lay the onus upon the community itself to recognize and monitor circumstances that may lead to crisis, and to deal with such a crisis, if it should arise, within the resident community. The aim is to reduce the need for staff
intervention and to enable residents to grow in confidence, interactive skills, and conciliatory procedures.

**Developing community**

The SDPP believe that the process of creating an environment to facilitate the formation of interpersonal relationships among all related players is the key to developing community. The staff role is thus to attempt to facilitate the context in which relationships of equality can thrive.

**The support services**

It is not intended that staff enter into a "single purpose, specialized relationship with housing residents". Rather the aim is to generate and facilitate mechanisms for mutual interaction in the residential community. A further aim is to reduce residents' dependency on staff and to gear towards appropriate use of outside available services if necessary.

**Planning/evaluation**

Evaluation is done as an action-reflection exercise according to people's intentions as well as their behaviour. The approach is used that an agreement has been made - and what steps must be taken to reach the agreed upon goal.

**A contextual factor - funding**

Funding is a critical factor in the development of any project. The connection between funding and criteria or "special needs" or labels applied to residents is made clear by the SDPP. Of this connection they state:

"Existing public policy is based on a notion of 'merit' which assumes that people have to be identified by personal characteristics other than inadequate income in order to have their basic needs met. As this assumption is replaced by a recognition that people are entitled to be housed and to choose the supports they need, policy and practices will have to change accordingly."(ibid., 28)

This is a long term goal that a strong community can work towards.
Staffing

The SDPP prefer a "generalist" rather than a "professionalist" orientation, with a readiness
to develop expertise in whatever areas are required in the context of a specific situation. They
think that a key quality for staff
"is their respect for a community's capacity to develop itself,
based on their willingness to learn from the people who make
up the community".(ibid.)

It is thus believed that a key aspect of facilitative management is the introduction of staff to
these alternative concepts for management.

The SDPP perspective on responding to homelessness

The goal of facilitative management is to give people housing over which they have
control, so that they can enjoy as well a range of other options that contribute to the quality
of living. The SDPP believe that the range of options, which most of our society takes for
granted,

are unattainable without the base of a stable living community
- setting personal goals, being nurtured by friends and family,
raising children in a secure environment, offering hospitality,
furthering one's education, pursuing work and leisure activities
for satisfaction and refreshment.(ibid., 35)

Thus the approach of the SDPP is to create living conditions for homeless people to build a
home that is comfortable, safe, and familiar, - "the most basic requirements for living on a
human scale".

Borrowing the Insights

A first stage, emergency refuge housing project in the Downtown Eastside or anywhere,
could be managed with the same goals in mind, and with facilitative management processes
such as those outlined above, adapted where necessary to suit the needs of a short term
residence. But the SDPP support the creation of homes - not temporary solutions to
homelessness. The lesson seems to be that any short term solution must be truly intended to
as a step along the way to the achievement of a real home. It must be constantly
acknowledged that such a refuge is ineffective if no steps beyond the initial one can be taken - if there is no place available for people to create for themselves a home once the crisis needs of homelessness have been met. First stage housing is a necessary part of a broad range of housing options, but without a continuum of choices, its efficacy is limited to simple provision of shelter, leaving unmet the most basic requirement for living on a human scale - a home.

Chapter 7 of this document, the facility program for a particular project - first stage housing for homeless women of the Downtown Eastside - is much guided in its conception by these principles formulated by the SDPP. This project is meant to be a short term housing measure, but it is intended to be a key part of the continuum of resources which would enable one eventually to find the way home.
Murray Silverstein has observed:

"It is not easy for an architect to go to the roots of a building type, unravel the myths contained there, and still remain employable." (Silverstein 1985, 151)

Silverstein acknowledges that it is indeed a challenge to balance practical considerations and to find the time as well to analyse the fundamental propositions that we often assume without much consideration. His belief is, however, that this analysis must be done. To approach that analysis, Silverstein has proposed that one examine the core or "hidden programs" that define the building types we design. If, he challenges, architects choose to define themselves as "environmentalists concerned with users", making "buildings that play a powerful role in the social ecology of a culture"(ibid.), then we must develop certain strengths which go well beyond design skills. Silverstein's belief is that the strengths which are required are

"a kind of sustained social insight with historical-political dimensions and a strong ear to the ground - that is, the ability to understand people and what they feel but can hardly say".

Silverstein has diagrammed what he calls patterns, suggesting that at most, eight or nine patterns define the core of a building type. The pattern is defined by Silverstein as a system of social forces; social, political, economic and others, which all reinforce one another. This system of forces results in a recurring spatial relationship.

Silverstein's diagram, which follows on the next page, serves to clarify this approach to problem solving. It demonstrates how a building type can be defined as a cluster of patterns, or basic relationships which constitute its program. The name we give to a building type is, in Silverstein's terminology, "shorthand" for the cluster of patterns which give the building its identity.

The patterns are the key to whether or not the form makes human sense. In Silverstein's words, if the patterns are "well-formed and true to the problem, the building will be fine and in the human grain".
If the building type is not satisfying human needs in an optimal way, Silverstein proposes that we start by clarifying the structure and the ramifications for human experience. His method of analyzing the patterns of the building type is meant to be construed as "a discipline for thinking clearly about the nature of a building type and the behavior it reinforces" (Silverstein 1985, 152).

![Diagram](Image)

Figure 3 - Contextual and internal patterns of a building (Source: Silverstein 1985, 152.)

The contextual patterns connect the building to its antecedent conditions in the society at large.

The core pattern gives the building its basic definition.

The internal patterns describe the fundamental organization of the building.

Silverstein suggests that we can use this system of diagramming as a discipline for thinking clearly about the nature of a building type and the behaviour it reinforces. Thus we can develop new core patterns as a means for organizing change at the boundary of the system - "the way a tree acts gradually to change the soil around it" (ibid.)
An example used by Silverstein to clarify his approach is shown in the following diagrams in which he attempts to solve the problems built into the supermarket building type by defining an alternate set of patterns and consequently a different building type - the community market.

Figure 4 - Cluster of patterns for a supermarket. (Source: Silverstein 1985, 153).
Figure 5 - Cluster of patterns for a community market. (Ibid., 156)

Silverstein believes that the only way to develop new programs such as the community market is by gradual piecemeal effort. Furthermore, he believes that we can find at least fragments of the new system already existing in latent form within the community. It is clear that much time and effort is needed simply to lay the groundwork for such a change. Strategies for political organization and experience with social change are needed as well as careful programming and design. But, Silverstein concludes, "only through such coordinated efforts will a new kind of architecture appear in our society". (Silverstein 1985, 158)

These pattern transformations related to the marketing of food can be used as a model for the generation of a new way of analysing and restructuring the patterns of traditional responses to the phenomenon of homelessness. A number of potential new models could
thus be generated and explored in this way. Following is a pattern transformation which is particularly germane here.

An analysis of the existing patterns inherent in traditional emergency housing facilities might produce the following patterns:

![Diagram of emergency shelter patterns](image)

Figure 6 - Cluster of patterns for a hostel

On the following page is a cluster of patterns which suggests an alternative to this traditional model of emergency shelter, and another way of responding to the phenomenon of homelessness.
Silverstein argues that the analysis of hidden programs which generate architectural concepts gives us diagrams of how people might live. Thus these new images might be used as political tools to press for social and political change. In the manifestation of new programs, people can be shown "the potential of new social-physical forms to support healthier ways of life". Project by project, piece by piece, ideas can thus evolve towards the achievement of what Silverstein calls an architecture of social change.

Shifts in the contextual patterns are shown in the above diagram - a cluster of patterns for a "safe hotel". These shifts represent a concentrated emphasis on the searching out of the positive fragments of the new system already existing in latent form within the community, which, Silverstein has suggested, we are likely to find. This alternate conceptual model incorporates the ideas which were discussed in the three themes which begin this chapter.

Figure 7 - Cluster of patterns for a safe hotel
With respect to the contextual patterns in this instance, there are resources in place which may be more extensively tapped to improve the conditions of the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside. The potential exists for closer linkages between emergency housing and the existing network to provide a strong supportive system to respond to the range of health and social needs of those who are without homes. The principles of Community Economic Development (CED) can be brought alive in a meaningful way in depressed communities. And the framework does already exist for the creation of a range of housing options. A range of energies needs to be mobilized, including the power base of the homeless people themselves, to activate the possibilities within this framework.

In this context, which to some degree already exists, a new core pattern for first stage housing, which forces no one to surrender her dignity in return for shelter, can be achieved.
In a paper titled "Health Promotion Philosophy: From Victim Blaming to Social Responsibility", Ronald Labonte makes the argument that "disease or wellness is more concomitant to the sociopolitical context of Canadian society than to the problematic of irresponsible personal choice." (Labonte 1981, 1)

Labonte believes that the interwoven structures of inequality and oppression are the factors which principally affect the quality of life in our society. "Social pathogenesis", he argues, depends more on socioeconomic and environmental conditions than on personal lifestyle choices, and it thus follows that the social context of poor health must be the focus of health promotion schemes.

Regarding the inequality of access to and use of the health care system, Labonte notes it has been observed that "under-utilizers are more likely to sustain a crisis existence, experiencing a lack of permanent accommodation, overcrowding, marital instability, financial difficulties, and frequent sickness in the family." (ibid., 30)

Labonte further claims that poverty and poor health are directly related. "Poverty", he notes, "leads to inadequate nutrition and poor housing...which in turn correlate with increased incidences of infections, illness, and disability due to illness and accidents." (ibid., 32)

A comprehensive response to structural pathogenesis, according to Labonte, is a process which would entail:

- reflecting upon aspects of reality, (eg. problems of poor health, housing etc.)
- looking behind these immediate problems to their root causes
- examining the implications and consequences of these issues
- developing a plan of action...

(ibid., 40)

(This is not unlike the process advocated by Silverstein in delineating the role of the architect/programmer. Hulchanski too has discussed a similar process in his observations regarding the steps taken in addressing a social problem, as has been earlier discussed.)

Underlying the role of the health promoter is the concept that health promotion is empowering, that it gives people an ability to re-assume control over their lives. If health
promotion is truly to be seen as the critical process of redressing social inequality, Labonte believes that there must be
"visible and financial commitment on the part of governments, corporations, medical and other professionals, and other large social institutions to redress the social inequalities and policy contradictions leading to poor health. (ibid., 50)

A New Initiative

It is not clear whether the above argument has been a factor in a recent initiative of the provincial government in British Columbia devised to further decentralize the delivery of health care. Perhaps the motive is less relevant than the potential good that may come of the scheme. Whatever the conceptual foundation, it has recently been announced that .5% of the acute care hospital budget, which is in fact a substantial amount of money, is to be redirected for outreach care involving the community development system of delivery. This sharing of funds is meant to lessen the need for costly treatment of those requiring care. If it can be demonstrated that a proposed, more economical, intercession will provide an alternative to acute care hospitalization, it will be considered for funding.

Norman Barr, director of the North Unit of the Vancouver Health Department, recently discussed some of the potential ways that this scheme might become a reality. In the integrated scheme that he envisions, public health care workers would maintain more intense contact with people in the community who are at risk of developing serious health problems, and ensure that the health conditions of those people do not deteriorate to the degree that they require hospitalization. Moreover, he recognizes that a strong and integrated follow up care system in the community can lead to a break in the common cycle of episodic acute breakdown of health, hospitalization, and repeated deterioration leading again to a breakdown of health.(Norman Barr, personal interview, 17 July, 1988)

Norman Barr has noted that in the Downtown Eastside, many health problems appear which may be addressed on a less formal basis than acute care hospitalization. He cites the many health problems which are known to result from inadequate shelter, isolation, and poor
nutrition. In his mind, much could be done to counter the conditions which prevail in a situation of disadvantage.

Perhaps this new initiative could be put to great advantage in the Downtown Eastside community. Such funds could be very well placed there, especially if the monies were applied to a scheme in which people were given the opportunity to assume some control themselves over their health and wellbeing.
CHAPTER 6

THE EXISTING NETWORK FOR HOMELESS WOMEN OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE - AND SOME MODELS SUGGESTED TO FILL THE GAPS IN THE RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

In 1987, after careful consideration of their experience in housing the homeless, the Single Displaced Persons Project organizers of Toronto have concluded:

"We now believe that a system of private and municipal non-profit housing, representing a range of options, is the central component of an appropriate response to homelessness."

(Housing Document Group 1987, 1)

This conclusion is fully supported by two workers at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre who have in separate conversations both stated the same belief: the biggest issue for women of the area is housing. (personal interviews: Kate Van Dusen, 2 August, 1989; Elizabeth Bell, 15 August, 1989) It is also clearly understood that the range of housing options must clearly be an integral part of a strong supportive and well coordinated network or interconnected system of care. Secure housing is seen as the central core of response to the needs of the homeless, but using the metaphorical concept of facilitative management as the guiding philosophy, many more elements are critical components of the response as well. People must be able to choose and use other services as they require to support them in locating and maintaining a stable home. The linkages between housing and allied services are critical in moving from homelessness to a state of being securely at home. Conceptually, we might view the functioning of a strong supportive network as those services and facilities set in place to support the key aspects of one's life.

The conceptual diagram on the following page is one possible arrangement of the five key factors which contribute to the state of homelessness, which have been identified and discussed in earlier pages of this document. Housing, especially affordable housing which consumes a maximum of 30% of one's income - whatever that figure might be, serves as a base for wellbeing, the hub of all other interconnected areas of one's life.
Figure 8 - Conceptual diagram of a supportive network

In this chapter, the range of services which respond to those five factors, as the services exist in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver now, will be briefly sketched. This section relies heavily on the generosity of a number of informants - workers, users of the services, and organizers and others who function in the network. The perceptions and insights which these people shared enabled a richer understanding of the facilities operating in the area and the effectiveness of the range of services offered. Following the review of services related to health, income, work and education, and social needs, is a sketch inventory of the range of existing housing options available in the area. A brief description of some outstanding models which could well be borrowed and/or adapted to fill existing gaps in the range of housing opportunities in the Downtown Eastside concludes the chapter.

This existing and supplemented network is presented, for discussion, as a practical assessment of what is and what might be possible in a city such as Vancouver, and an area such as the Downtown Eastside, were an appropriate response to the needs of the homeless chosen as a political and social and economic priority. This understanding of the existing and
potential strength of the network forms an important foundation for the development of a facility program for a project meant to respond to the needs of women in this context.
"Not long after I moved in I was walking up Gore Street and something hit me. I realized I'd never seen so many crippled people in my life. Crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, canes. You can't walk a block without seeing someone seriously disabled. Thet's something you don't notice when you zip through in a car." (Armstrong 1989, 11 August, A10)

Figure 9 - Map of the central Downtown Eastside showing location of the principal existing health services

1. Pender Detox
2. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
3. DEYAS
4. Needle Exchange
5. to Triage (2 blocks)
6. St. James Social Services
7. Downtown Community Health Clinic
8. Strathcona Mental Health
An Overview - the Vancouver City Health Department

Norman Barr, director of the Vancouver City Health Department, North Unit, estimates that perhaps 300 or more agencies and groups are "doing something for somebody in the Downtown Eastside" - making it the most intensely covered area for social services in Vancouver. He describes an interlocked network composed of voluntary, civic, and provincial organizations and agencies which work closely together in many ways. The basic issue in Norman Barr's mind is to ascertain "what's best to be done" for this area of the city, and "how best to accomplish it". His observation regarding the existing system is that although there is cooperation, often mandates of the different organizations overlap and the helping agencies must compete for money from the various funding sources. (Norman Barr, personal communication, 16 August, 1989) Clearly, a coordinated plan would be of benefit to both the service agencies and the people whom they hope to help.

To extend the longterm health care program and the home care health programs in the Downtown Eastside, the city funds a "family support service" program out of the Downtown Community Health Clinic which "straddles" the existing programs and reaches into hotels and rooming houses. The city also supplies a nurse who works with the two street nurses of the Downtown Community Health Clinic part time at the present. These nurses, however overbooked, offer an invaluable service to the residents of the area. The street nurses have been acknowledged by a front line worker at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre to be the most involved of all services in the health issues of the women who frequent the centre. They give workshops on topical subjects, and readily respond to the needs of women as those needs arise. It is hoped that in future this service will be increased. The City Health Department works closely with the street workers who operate out of DEYAS (the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society) which provides street level services such as crisis intervention and appropriate referrals to youth and children of the area. The City provides as well a nurse to do follow up coverage for TB testing as part of the preventive health program.
The focal point for the provision of health services in the Downtown Eastside is the Downtown Community Health Clinic which is funded by the Vancouver City Health Department. The clinic serves about 25,000 patients per year. The medical staff consists of three physicians, one nurse/practitioner, and one licensed practical nurse. Service is delivered to the people of the Downtown Eastside on a no fee for service, first come first served basis, which suits the requirements of people who may be unable to pay or to keep slated appointments. A dental clinic, a pharmacy, a low-cost food store, TB outreach, and a homemaker service are additional components of the clinic.

Jeff Brooks, the director of the clinic, acknowledges that space and financial constraints limit the services which could be put in place to respond to the needs of the people of the area. His vision of an expanded service includes integration of the health clinic in a preventive-recreational community centre model. Additional programs designed to respond to present needs as he sees them would include more outreach workers to assist clients in daily tasks, increased pre-natal and post-natal care, and services more sensitively tailored to the needs of native people. Jeff Brooks would like to see integration of services for mental illness and substance abuse within the clinic and also more provision of social services such as advocacy, liaison and counselling, which are currently outside his mandate, but which he views as integral to the health of clients. (Jeff Brooks, personal interview, 5 May, 1989)

The clinic is recognized as a valuable resource by the residents and by other caregivers in the network. One reservation held by a local worker is that the clinic operates on a "do for" basis rather than being guided by a philosophical commitment to empowerment of the people. The other criticism of the clinic is that front line reception workers have a reputation for brisk and sometimes insensitive behaviors, which colour many peoples' perceptions of their experience there. This aspect of an organization is important to the quality of contact that is made with the user group, and possibly inhibits the potential of the resource to some degree.
The Greater Vancouver Mental Health Service

This service provides treatment and community care services to seriously mentally ill adults and specialized treatment services to severely disturbed children in Vancouver and Richmond, with a particular focus on those whose level of dysfunction requires a broad range of coordinated services. Eight mental health teams, formerly called Community Care teams, provide residents of defined catchment areas with psychiatric assessment and comprehensive treatment. Treatment may include diagnosis, medication, therapy for groups, families or individual, and occupational and recreational programs.

The team which provides such services to the people of the Downtown Eastside is the Strathcona Mental Health Team, located at 330 Heatley Street. If a woman in crisis is already a client of this service, she can go to this clinic for help. If she is not a known client, she may have to be referred to the Psychiatric Unit of the Vancouver General Hospital in an emergency.

The Kettle Friendship Society, on Commercial Drive, has been described as "the mainstay of support for Vancouver's ex-psychiatric community." (Cole 1988, 91-91) The society runs a drop in centre, cooking and nutrition classes, "lifeskills training", and offers meals. Ex-psychiatric patients can go there to enjoy some social exchange, but few women use the facility. Reports an ex-worker: "I worked at the Kettle and it's open to both male and female psychiatric patients, but it's a completely male-dominated atmosphere, sort of like a pool hall, and the men's behaviour is often not very appropriate. Every time we had a woman come to the centre, she would be harrassed sexually." (ibid.)

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

This Centre functions as an important resource for linking women who need help with the existing health care system. Strong ties are maintained with all relevant agencies and referrals are frequently made. Health care professionals, especially the street nurses, are called for
support when necessary. Some typical interventions might include treatment and advice for women experiencing sexually transmitted diseases, heavy infestations of lice, or infections due to accidents with intravenous drug equipment. Close ties are maintained with the Downtown Community Health Clinic, and women from the Centre are often referred there for medical assistance. The workers at the Centre call the Strathcona Mental Health Team when a psychiatric crisis requiring support arises and have found the team to be very responsive in an emergency and for ongoing contact.

Attempts to refer women to the local detox centres are often fraught with frustration because the detox facilities are so often full when a woman is ready to make a commitment to withdrawal. The nearby detox centres are Pender Detox, run by the Salvation Army which reserves two beds for women, and Great Northern Way, which is the resource preferred by many female substance abusers. Triage, a hostel which receives male and female substance abusers, is largely avoided by women of the area because it is a very much male dominated situation, and because residents are forced to leave the premises during the day. The Homestead, a residential treatment service for women with chemical dependencies, is sometimes used as a resource, though it is not in the immediate area. Occasionally women suffering from acute dependencies are referred out to the longer term programs at Aurora House, in Vancouver, or Maple Cottage, in New Westminster, by the Women's Centre. It has been found that these referrals are largely unsuccessful. A worker reports that many women have tried, but few stay for the duration of the program. (Elizabeth Bell, personal interview, 15 August, 1989) Perhaps such a facility in the Downtown Eastside would achieve more success, if women attempting to alter life patterns were not obliged to leave their own community for extended treatment. As a last resort, St. Paul's Hospital is sometimes contacted to assist withdrawal. The Substance Abuse Team at St. Paul's may help a patient within the confines of the hospital, with assessment, counselling and referral, but follow up care is not part of the team's mandate. Members of this new team acknowledge that one-third of the patients in acute care hospitals are suffering from an alcohol or other drug related problem. They
recognize as well that a much closer liaison between acute care hospital teams and services in the community is necessary to realistically address this problem.

It is believed by the front line workers at the Women’ Centre that a detox geared to the needs of female substance abusers would fill an obvious gap in the existing network of care. These workers further observe that any programs geared to helping upgrade education or to support an effort to rejoin the work force are not meaningful for women struggling with addictions unless the substance abuse problems or any other health problems which preclude achievement of a satisfactory lifestyle are addressed first. Thus, the resolution of health issues is seen to be a critical factor in the work that is attempted by the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre.

A sampling of the programs offered by the Women’s Centre Health Project in one month of this year includes the following events: A film about a centre where native people break the bonds of alcohol and other drug addictions called "Pound Makers Lodge", a talk about midlife changes and menopause, a sharing of experiences of narcotic dependency including recovery and maintenance of freedom, TB skin tests, a film about the Alkali Lake native village which journeyed from alcoholic dependence to sobriety as a community, a demonstration of Reflexology, and a video called "The Recovering Alcoholic". Other very popular programs include women’s self defense, support groups concerned with abuse and subsequent anger, and workshops concerned with nutrition, food management, and communicable diseases.

Members of the Women’s Health Collective give additional workshops at the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, but this service is currently quite limited because of a lack of funding. The present focus of the collective is the Everywoman’s Health Centre, a clinic where a woman may obtain an abortion and support in a setting that is less rushed and clinical than the day surgery facility at the General Hospital. A front line worker at the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre claims that the homeless women of the area are less inclined towards terminating an unplanned pregnancy at the present time possibly because of the
activities of a group called Birthright, an anti-choice organization which offers free clothing and anti-abortion counselling to women of the area. Birthright does not offer ongoing support after birth.

Where appropriate, women of the Downtown Eastside are encouraged to participate in the Needle Exchange program run by DEYAS - the Downtown Eastside Youth Project. This program is widely credited with being the major factor in the surprisingly low incidence of AIDS in the area. AIDS Vancouver, an information, support, and counselling resource, offers HIV antibody testing and practical advice regarding risk behaviour as well. Women who use the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre who might benefit from this information are encouraged to approach this resource.

St. James Social Service is a religious based service which offers a wide range of emergency help to those in need. They have initiated a project called the St. James Home Help which provides for homemakers to visit people confined to their rooms because of health problems. Some women who are part of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre community have benefitted from this service, particularly those needing support post-partum, or those recovering from injuries which may have immobilized them.
"It's not in the Criminal Code, but being poor is the most common crime in the Downtown Eastside. For most, it's a life sentence." (Armstrong 1989, 11 August, 1)

Figure 10 - Services which respond to poverty

1. Crosswalk
2. DERA
3. Women's Centre
4. The Dugout
5. Crabtree Corner
6. Carnegie Centre
7. Dockside
8. Waterfront
9. Alex Centre
10. missions
11. New Hope
12. Door is Open
13. Sisters
14. First United
15. Union Gospel Mission
Most of the residents of the Downtown Eastside receive their income through government income assistance programs. The offices of the provincial Ministry of Social Services and Housing which are located in the Downtown Eastside are Dockside, Waterfront, and Strathcona.

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has no funds available to give to women who are penniless, but workers are skilled at advocating on behalf of or with women in this situation. The advocates attempt to open lines of communication with Income Assistance workers of the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, and try to demystify the system for the women. In dealing with the intricacies of ministry bureaucracies the advocates are very concerned that both sides of the story be heard and that the women who are capable of negotiating with the ministry learn to act as independently as possible on their own behalf.

Now that the Emergency Services office on Drake Street has been reorganized, workers at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre play a more active role in finding free shelter and the necessities for survival for homeless and penniless women. A "Bed Index" has been distributed and workers help women to locate and settle in the most appropriate facility available. Networking with other agency workers on a personal basis is thought to be the best way now of ensuring a reasonable referral. The women's Centre posts a list of all resources in the area which offer free food and shelter or drop in facilities for the unsheltered.

Free Food and Clothing

An urban core worker recently stated her feelings very clearly of the subject of free handouts. She said, "women don't need more free food, the need more money!" (Kate Van Dusen, personal interview, 2 August, 1989) The free food resources in the Downtown Eastside are used mainly by men. Women are often more reticent about standing in the inevitable lineups to wait for food and are therefore less likely to partake. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre serves soup and bannock twice a week, but budgetary constraints and problems with City Health regulations prevent this from becoming a daily service.
Corner sometimes has food to give to hungry women. The following list indicates the other sources of free food in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Meals Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Dugout</td>
<td>soup and coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First United Church</td>
<td>soup, sandwiches, coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door is Open</td>
<td>tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Centre</td>
<td>sandwiches, hotdogs, coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hope Centre</td>
<td>soup, sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Light</td>
<td>lunch, supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franciscan Sisters</td>
<td>sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Mission</td>
<td>Sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Gospel Mission</td>
<td>supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosswalk</td>
<td>coffee and muffins drop in and overnight on couches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low cost meals can be obtained at the Carnegie Centre and the Alex Centre.

Free clothing can be obtained from the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, the First United Church and Crabtree Corner. The St.James Social Service has a second hand store on Powell Street where clothes may be bought for minimal charges.

**Support Organizations for the Poor**

Other organizations which assist people of the Downtown Eastside in matters related to their income:

**The Downtown Deposit Project** is a service recently set in place by DERA through funding from MSSH. This project has helped Downtown Eastside residents sidestep some of the obstacles that prevent them from getting bank accounts. These obstacles might include such problems as lack of acceptable identification, high service charges, and minimum deposit levels at the local banks. Using the Downtown Deposit Service, welfare recipients can now
open bank accounts and pay their rent by cheque. Previously, people had only the option of
cashing their cheques at expensive cashing services, and then were forced to carry their
money around or hide it somewhere. This is obviously a dangerous practice in an area where
poverty is so widespread.

People on Welfare is an informal community group of people on income assistance which
meets weekly at the Carnegie Centre to discuss issues related to their poverty, to advocate for
people who need help, and to organize for action. There is no president or leader of the
group, no minutes are taken, and no rules or regulations constrain the weekly gatherings.

First United Church offers advocacy services for people in poverty.

DERA (Downtown Eastside Residents Association) assists residents of the area with matters
related to their poverty; offers financial advice particularly on banking, advocates in disputes
involving welfare, pensions, UIC, income tax, criminal compensation, and legal matters.

End Legislated Poverty is a coalition of 19 B.C. groups working to reduce and end poverty in
the province by providing advocacy, referral, public education, campaigns and forums around
the issues of poverty.

Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of B.C. offers advocacy and referral services for low income
people.
"...one of the principal occupations is waiting - for a cheque, until it's time to eat again or for another day to go by." (Armstrong 1989, 11 August, A10)

Although most of the residents of the Downtown Eastside are not employed on a full time basis in traditional work, there are many who hold the dream of upgrading education and finding a meaningful job. There are a number of resources which attempt to support women if they are able to articulate this goal and are ready to make such a commitment.

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has in the past linked women to the UIC Women's Counselling Unit for upgrading of education and job retraining, or to a MSSH Rehabilitation Officer if appropriate. They have also made referrals to the Carnegie Learning
Centre's Literacy Program where volunteer tutors provide basic education for adults of the area on a one-to-one basis. This program is highly valued in the area and has been used to some satisfaction by women from the Centre. The Learning Front is sometimes used by women for upgrading preparatory to job training as well. A resource which has been satisfactory in the past is the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Employment Support Program, which is unfortunately going to relocate soon on a site even further away from the Downtown Eastside. The workers at the Women's Centre refer women of native origin who may benefit from the program to the Native Education Centre which offers upgrading and a variety of educational programs. The Native Homemakers and Urban Images for Native Women also offer programs of relevance to women choosing to improve their lives. An outreach worker from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre believes that an upgrading/pre-employment program for women should be located in the Downtown Eastside so that women would have better access to such a resource. (Kate Van Dusen, personal interview, 2 August, 1989) This is only one example of a number of very good reasons why the Women's Centre space should be expanded to be able to accommodate much needed programs.

Opportunities are available at the Women's Centre for women to engage in activities that may be termed "work" on a daily basis if this is desired, but these jobs are voluntary and the workers are either unpaid or a small incentive honorarium is given to them. These jobs include reception duties, regular kitchen duties, and organization and maintenance of the clothing trade room.

When a woman runs afoul of the Income Assistance bureaucracy, advocacy workers at the Women's Centre are there to assist. These advocacy workers are currently helping welfare recipients to understand and wade through the red tape created by the recent provincial initiative to cut "employables" off the welfare rolls unless they can prove that they have been actively seeking work. This initiative has had a very strong effect upon many women of the Downtown Eastside, especially those who are unable to work because of unresolved health problems.
An outreach worker from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre noted her admiration for Project Parents - Halifax, where the poor women's community for the last fifteen to twenty years has been heavily involved in grassroots Community Economic Development (CED). In this way, much work for the residents of the Halifax area has been generated. The worker feels that a similar program could be developed among Vancouver women, but knows that the outlay of energy would tax an already strained volunteer energy pool. She further observed that the women who live at Mavis/McMullen, whose main issue - housing - has been successfully resolved, are able to work, not necessarily at full time employment in the traditional sense, but to contribute to the community in a meaningful and satisfactory way. (Kate Van Dusen, personal interview, 2 August, 1989)

D.E.E.D.S. (Downtown Eastside Economic Development Society)

There is a strong history of resentment in the Downtown Eastside community towards this organization. A number of informants have reinforced the observation that it is difficult for the community to see satisfactory and tangible results of the rather generous funding that has been given to DEEDS by the City. A bicycle shop on Dunlevy street is cited by some as the only apparent outcome of the organization. Additionally, it is felt that the program is geared almost exclusively to the needs of men and that women's needs are left unattended.
"I think this is the most dynamic community in Vancouver just in terms of community spirit. People care about the place, they're involved and they're really knowledgeable about the issues in the community." (Armstrong 1989, 11 August, A11)

"I've talked to a lot of men on the street and guys in the buildings I've lived in and they say the worst thing is the utter loneliness, not having a TV or a radio. So they go to the bar to hear some music and talk to people and they end up sitting there all day and spending all their money."

Jack Chalmers (ibid.)

Figure 12 - Social centres and services

1. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
2. DERA
3. Crabtree Corner
4. Legal Services Society
5. DEYAS
6. Native Courtworkers
7. Carnegie Centre
8. Adult Probation Services
9. Alex Centre
10. First United Church
11. Oppenheimer Park
A key organization in the social structure of the Downtown Eastside is DERA (the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association), which is the organization of residents working towards improving the living conditions in general in the area. This association organizes around issues of concern to the community and almost half of the people in the Downtown Eastside are members. They have monthly meetings at Carnegie which are very well attended and lively.

The advocacy worker who receives area residents daily in the DERA office sees her function as "moving information around" so that is is beneficial to those who need it. (Freda, personal interview, 15 August, 1989) Her tasks might include ensuring that fair dealings are extended to someone who has just been evicted, which might include legal and logistical dimensions; referrals to any number of social or other agencies, and basic emotional support where required.

From a DERA brochure titled "Walking Tours", of 1989, it is noted that from the time of its inception in 1973 until now, the organization has been committed to the following goals: keeping ourselves informed about the life of our community, educating ourselves in ways of improving our community, and working together to bring about changes which will improve our community.

The Carnegie Centre is the busiest community centre in Vancouver, and plans for expansion are being considered. Carnegie is widely recognized as an important social "heart" of the area, and is the site of many activities including daily casual socialization, monthly community meetings of DERA, and town meetings with elected representatives to the legislature, and many special events.

A letter to the editor published in the Carnegie Newsletter of February 1, 1989 describes the importance of the Carnegie Centre to the Downtown Eastside. "Over the past decade, many people have focused their attention on Andrew Carnegie's Carnegie Hall. There is always a rainbow over this place. A decade ago, anyone who wanted to share the spirit of light contributed their labour and dedication to the Carnegie Centre. All were working so
happily and we became what you might call the Carnegie family.

A lot of volunteers were so soaked into the place that they became staff...Alicia brings a new light into Carnegie dedication and lightens up my day...In my opinion everyone who has shared the experience of hanging ten in Carnegie will always have a special love for this place."

Miki

Many women of the Downtown Eastside still avoid Carnegie because they see it as typically a male preserve, but some actions are being taken to counter this perception. A growing feminist component is noticeable now, and a healthy appreciation is growing in the women's community with respect to Carnegie’s potential, especially in the areas of community education and information sharing.

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre is an important social centre for women in the area as an option to, but in much the same way, that the Carnegie Centre serves predominantly the male population. The Women's Centre provides a needed option to the local bar scene as well, and is frequented by women whose common bond is poverty and who want a safe place to visit and to socialize in during the day.

The current daytime population of the Women's Centre is about one hundred women per day. On a typical day, the group might be composed of perhaps twenty-five women who have psychiatric difficulties who are unable to work, women who are battling with substance abuse problems, a few street women who need a place to rest, and a large number of women who live in nearby rooms who want to get out for some stimulation and camaraderie. Many single women and their children spend some time there during the day. About one half of the visitors to the centre are native women, which is perhaps the result of the recent hiring of an excellent native outreach worker. For many of these women of the area, especially those who avoid the local bars, the Women's Centre is the only setting for their social contacts, leading to and maintaining friendships and important bonds with the supportive social network. The safe atmosphere of the Centre is a place where personal enjoyment and growth can be nurtured.
Women get involved through the Centre in a variety of out trips and visits to places outside the area that they would often not choose to venture to on their own. Programs within the Centre are varied and have the goal of encouraging personal growth and strength. Women are given the opportunity to learn whatever skills they might need to function independently in society. Popular education programs are geared to women's requirements and are expanding the horizons of many women whose options have traditionally been viewed as limited. Successful informal "forums" at the Centre have recently been initiated as a way of encouraging women to speak out on matters which concern them.

Through the Women's Centre, contacts are made with other social and legal services wherever appropriate. Advocacy workers liaise with or on behalf of women with the provincial ministries, the Legal Services Society and the Legal Advice Program, Family Court Services, Adult Probation Services, the Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association, the Vancouver Indian Centre and any other agencies having to do with a woman's social wellbeing. The Centre introduces women to the various agencies geared to the needs of immigrant and refugee women and makes contact where appropriate with other social/political support groups such as the Vancouver Lesbian Connection or DEYAS. Contacts are also facilitated between native women and the various native social groups in the area.

Although the Women's Centre is small, much that is worthwhile takes place in this often crowded setting. More space for programs, ideally in a location near to the existing Women's Centre, would be very beneficial to this important resource in the Downtown Eastside community.

Crabtree Corner Community Services provides another centre of socializing for women but it is very constrained by its small size and, for some, by the prohibition of smoking on the premises. Many women who frequent the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre have enlarged their network to include Crabtree and many move back and forth between these two centres as the day progresses. Crabtree provides emergency and short term child care by a
professional staff for children aged six weeks to six years. Other programs include a drop in
centre for women, single mothers groups, a camping program for women with children, free
soup and bannock, workshops on a range of topics, general support and advocacy; and
referral and resource information for concerns such as sexual abuse, battering, alcohol and
other drug dependency, and parenting.

Other Social Centres and Supports

The RAYCAM Family Drop-in is a drop in for parents and children. Home visits by staff will
be made in an emergency of crisis situation to people of the area.

The Alex Centre provides a low cost cafeteria offering three full meals a day at minimal
cost to serve residents of the Downtown Eastside. There is also an open TV lounge where the
majority rules with respect to deciding programs, a games area, showers and baths and
treatment for pests, laundry facilities, a recreation area, and a staff which is aware of the needs
of visitors and able to make appropriate referrals where necessary. Women of the area who
have male companions and some access to money are the ones most likely to use this centre.
Those women who are on their own and perhaps anxious to avoid males, and those without
discretionary money are likelier to gravitate towards the Women's Centre.

First United Church is an important social centre in the community, both for those who
get involved in events as members of the congregation and for those who use the advocacy
services or the Handicapped Drop-in program.

WISH Drop-in is a safe "haven" available to prostitutes every evening between the hours
of 8pm and midnight at the First United Church. It is an important setting for the building of
social networks between working women of the street and with the support services which
are available to them. A related group is POWER, a political action group which advocates for
equal rights for prostitutes.
The Battered Women’s Support Services provides counselling and support groups for battered women, as well as information and referrals. Actual shelter is not a component of this service.
HOUSING - Advocacy

"...there was no way I could afford the apartment we'd been staying in. So I looked for a cheaper place to live and the only cheaper place I knew was down in the East Side.

I'll tell you about the place where I used to live up until almost a year ago.

I lived down on Carrall Street in the Glory Hotel on the third floor. I had a room that was 10' x 10' and in that room was a fridge, a dresser, table, a bed, one of those things you can put your clothes in, but it's not a closet, and a sink. My view was the back alley off Powell - it's a parking lot.

Twice I was attacked in that building. One time these two fellows banged on my door and wanted a cigarette. I wouldn't open the door and they started knocking the panels in. They were pretty big fellows, all doped up and drunked up. So I took my butcher knife and put it through one guy's hand. I had another knife and I said if you open that door, you're waiting for the other knife.

So that's where DERA found me. They sent two fellows to interview me for subsidized housing and they sent me to Tellier Towers across the street on Hastings and I lived there for a year. I just moved out. Now I live in the Four Sisters Co-op on Alexander."

Jack Chalmers (Armstrong, 1989, 11 August, A11)

Figure 13 - Principal housing advocacy services

1. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
2. DERA (Downtown Eastside Residents' Association)
3. First United Church
Locating affordable and appropriate housing has been identified as the most prominent issue facing the women of the Downtown Eastside. An outreach worker at the Women's Centre believes that "everything revolves around the housing issue" in the lives of these women. (Kate Van Dusen, personal interview, 2 August, 1989) Thus the housing advocacy worker who helps to locate a place to live participates in a key role in the formation of a woman's personal support network. Workers acknowledge the connection between the poverty of the women they daily meet and the resultant lack of housing options, and the need is seen for organizing to develop such options. When a woman of the Downtown Eastside is fortunate enough to locate affordable housing outside the area, the pattern is fairly predictable: outside the area, the woman finds herself alone and without her social supports, and oftentimes she moves back to the Downtown Eastside where her support network exists. From observation of this pattern, workers have concluded that the great need is for more affordable and appropriate housing options within the area. Workers have some faith that the Residential Tenancy Act is a key factor in the securing of permanent and relatively safe housing - that the situations in the SROs will at least be somewhat improved with the legislated support for security of tenure in the rooms - but this is seen clearly in the context of a critical shortage of housing stock in the area and the limited range of options.

The Women's Centre keeps a large, up to date noticeboard, one side of which is dedicated to housing. On the board are posted notices from the Tenants Rights Coalition, the Single Mothers' Housing Network, and the Housing Registry. A close contact is maintained at the Centre with the Mavis/McMullen housing project and applications for the lengthy waiting list for Mavis/McMullen may be filled out at the Centre. The DERA newsletter is prominently displayed. The "Social Services Bed Index" is posted for women and their advocates to use in times of crisis. The entries on the Bed Index are: Lookout, Triage, Homestead, Powell Place, and Owl House. The sheet appears to have been well-used.
The Women's Centre offers free bus tickets to women who are searching for accommodation and outreach workers to assist in locating, obtaining and maintaining housing if it is possible. The outreach worker feels that this is an area where much more energy might be focused - in the organization of housing assistance and the mobilization of women around the housing issue. She has noticed that many women in the Downtown Eastside are unable to envision other options from the ones they presently know in lives which are tightly circumscribed by their poverty.

Other Advocacy Resources

The Vancouver Housing Registry provides information on affordable housing in the city, with referrals available by phone or on a drop in basis. As perceived by workers at the Women's Centre, the Housing Registry is not a very effective service. They offer a modern computerized system of listings, and "how-to-find-housing" workshops, but the critical flaw is that affordable, suitable housing is generally not available and the organization's efforts are thus not very fruitful.

The Single Mother's Housing Network is a service for single mothers who want to share a home with another single mother. The service provides screening and counselling to aid in matching families.

The Tenants Rights Coalition was formed in response to threatened changes in the Residential Tenancy act in 1983. The Coalition represents all of the major tenant organizations in the Lower Mainland and has been fighting since its inception for full rights for tenants. This service includes support for any tenant who feels his/her rights are being abused, and an information hotline for questions and advice.

The Downtown Eastside Resident's Association (DERA) provides housing and advocacy workers who receive a wide range of residents of the Downtown Eastside and try to respond to their equally wide range of needs. For example, waves of evictions tend to hit the Downtown Eastside when a building gets a new owner or manager. Advocates help where possible and encourage an informed and strong response on the part of the tenants in such
instances. They encourage displaced and homeless residents to envision secure situations for themselves and supply applications for appropriate and (after a wait) available housing. It is estimated that possible one quarter of the people who approach DERA for housing assistance are women. The connection between the women of the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre and DERA is currently being "worked on" with the result that DERA is now beginning to be perceived as a potential ally to those women.

The "active" waiting list for DERA social housing projects now contains upwards of 2,500 names. In spite of impressive successes in the developing of such housing, there is much yet to be done. In 1988 the many DERA "victories" included the opening of the 90 unit Tellier Towers, the takeover of Marie Gomez - a 76 unit non-profit housing project, the awarding of a $7.5 million seniors housing project - the 113 unit Pendera. The social housing stock is increasing in the Downtown Eastside, but not yet at a pace that satisfies this organization.

A DERA advocacy worker who struggles in the course of her daily work to find suitable accommodation for women in need suggests that more housing is needed to respond to the needs of homeless women and children. Although the articulated target group of DERA is disabled residents and those over 45, this worker sees a critical need too for housing for other groups. She believes that a safe place should be available to a woman in crisis for as long as she might need refuge, and states that no woman would ever hear from her that "your steps (to recovery) are too slow". (Freda, personal interview, 15 August, 1989)

The DERA organizers recognize that the housing crisis is indeed worsening and the old dream of conversion of rundown hotels and rooming houses to transitional non-profit housing projects remains alive in addition to the initiatives for new housing. Such refurbishment would contribute much to the available stock of decent housing in the Downtown Eastside.

The British Columbia Housing Corporation is sometimes called by women of the Downtown Eastside who require a home. The Women's Centre reports that occasionally a women in crisis who possibly possesses quite highly developed social skills may meet with
some satisfaction of her housing needs via this route. Disappointment because of the very
lengthy waiting lists is the usual outcome of this investigation, however.

Advocacy workers at the First United Church try to assist the people of the Downtown
Eastside to locate adequate housing but find this to be a task fraught with frustration because
of the shortage of appropriate stock. They advocates are aware of conditions in the various
hotels and rooming houses, and often all they can do is to try to steer prospective residents
towards the higher quality situations. The turnover in the best rooms is very low and chances
are slim of obtaining such accommodation quickly.

First United Church Social Housing Society runs two buildings which are open to all and
for which the waiting periods are typically 8-10 months - shorter than most waits for social
housing. The priority is given to handicapped and older residents, and a younger woman on
her own would be unlikely to be accepted in either building. (Karen Howe, personal
communication, 21 August, 1989)
Figure 14 - The existing supply of low cost housing in the central Downtown Eastside

1. first stage or emergency shelters
2. supported or semi-independent housing
3. social housing
4. SROs - single room occupancy hotels

In this section, the actual housing facilities of the Downtown Eastside are inventoried to clarify the situation with respect to housing stock. The facilities have been sorted into four categories which are not meant to be rigid classifications, but rather a system of organizing the examples.
In the first category are the emergency housing facilities, which typically serve those in crisis for a temporary length of stay. The second group of facilities is the "supported" or "semi-independent" housing, which provides a place to stay and support/assistance on a range of levels, according to need. The third category is social housing, which for present purposes includes any kind of independent housing in the area that is provided by government rather than the open market.

The term "independent", when applied to social housing, has a different connotation than when applied to the fourth category, the "independent" market housing of the SRO hotels and rooming houses. Social housing projects, although not formally mandated to provide services, do tend to be settings where a supportive community can be nurtured to some degree on an informal basis. This tempers the "unsupported" aspect of "independence" to a degree. In the SROs, however, the terms "unsupported" and "independent" assume a new intensity. The SRO resident is, by comparison to the resident of social housing, essentially on his/her own as far as cultivating a supportive community is concerned.

I. First Stage or Emergency Housing

The mandate of the Lookout is to assist men and women who have multiple problems - the distressed, disoriented and disabled people who need help in the Downtown Eastside. Lookout delivers this assistance through two programs - emergency accommodation and long term tenancy.

The emergency centre has 42 beds. Stays in this area are kept as short as possible, the length of stay being determined by each individual's circumstances. The average stay is 5-6 days, but, quoting from a staff report of 30 May, 1983, "being responsive to the needs of the community - the housing crisis - and being aware of service gaps", the length of stay is increasing". Effort is made to vacate a minimum of 15 beds per day to ensure that crisis needs may be met. In addition to accommodation, the services which are offered to residents
include: meals, laundry facilities, counselling, liaison with community resources. The occupancy rate of the Lookout varies between 70-100%.

The tenancy area accommodates 39 residents. Stays in the tenancy area vary from one month to years, depending on the individual. Again quoting from the staff report, "Since special needs housing is at a premium, an application must be made to a selection committee, acceptance being based upon the individual's needs, background, and existing tenants".

Service is provided at Lookout to all people who require it, on a non-judgemental basis. The staff states: "Society may make a judgement on individuals and their acts; the job of Lookout and its staff is to provide a service". Thus all but those who have been violent on the premises are welcomed. The staff "give support, assistance, and often, with the guest's permission, make referrals to and liaise with appropriate community resources to help residents get back some stability into their lives...Advocacy is a daily role for all staff. Lookout maintains that only by such networking can an individual receive the most appropriate aid possible."

Many women who have used this service have commented that it is very difficult for some women to be there because the facility also serves men. In fact, the the majority of the people served there are male. The ratio is about 3:1, male to female. The rate of use by women is high because few options exist, but it is acknowledged that many women who require this type of shelter are reluctant to go or actually refuse to go to Lookout.

The "Report on Hard to House Women Served by Lookout" dated November 1988 observes that in addition to the physical and emotional problems, personal care problems, dependencies, and handicaps largely experienced by the clientele of the Lookout of both sexes, the issue of "victimization" is an important one for women. In a six month period of 1988, Lookout staff records show that 46% of the women served by the facility were considered hard to house. The working definition of this term at Lookout is "someone who has difficulty obtaining or maintaining stability in their living situation". The staff believe that the high number of women they meet who are thus classified indicates the need for a
specialized accommodation for women, perhaps based upon the hotel model. Such a facility, or facilities if need be, capable of providing hard to house women with secure accommodation, meals, and help with housekeeping and daily maintenance, would fill an existing gap in the services available to such women in the Downtown Eastside.

The mandate of Triage is to provide accommodation and food for the homeless including anyone in crisis who is over 19 years of age. Twenty-eight beds are available, with a maximum stay of one year. The fact that two thirds of the residents of Triage are male is part of the reason that this service is largely avoided by the women who need shelter. Moreover, residents of the shelter are required to vacate the premises during the day. The facility has been characterized as a "hovel" by a front line worker who is familiar with it, and it is understood that plans are underway for the much needed improvement of the facility.

The Powell Place Sanctuary for Women or Powell House serves women and their children who are in crisis; offering safe accommodation, food and cooking facilities, job placement, and referrals for permanent accommodation. Thirty-two beds are available. The length of stay in the emergency accommodation is somewhat flexible, with an average stay of 14-30 days. Females with a history of substance abuse are welcomed, but those with psychiatric difficulties are restricted. On the top floor of the three storey building is longer term accommodation for families in post-crisis transition. The next phase, now under construction, includes apartments for longer term residency.

According to a number of agencies who have used this resource, and to women who have been residents at Powell House, the facility does not take women who are addicted, drunk or abused. Generally only women with children are accepted, and often women are fearful that they are being evaluated as to whether they are fit parents. The fear of having children apprehended by the ministry is very strong. The facility's philosophy is often characterized as rigid, and does not seem to be based upon principles of empowerment.
Following are photographs and drawings of the St. James Social Services complex, which includes Powell Place Sanctuary for Women.

In the St. James Social Service Center, new construction echoes the neighborhood’s storefront architecture while also reflecting phased construction (above). A small internal courtyard provides a quiet, protected space for residents of the emergency shelter and transitional housing (left). Interior offices and workrooms borrow light from a sunny lounge adjoining the court.

Figure 15 - The St. James Social Service Centre
(Source: Progressive Architecture 10:88, 78)
Figure 16 - Plans of the St. James Social Service Centre
(Source: Progressive Architecture 10:88, 78)
Owl House Emergency Shelter is a 24 hour service providing emergency accommodation for native Indian families, recipients of income assistance, and those awaiting UIC benefits. People other than natives are also accepted when space permits. Referrals to the facility may be made through any Ministry of Social Services and Housing office. Though this residence is located outside the Downtown Eastside, it is sometimes used by area residents.

Crosswalk provides drop in services weekday afternoons and evenings, and counselling and recreational services to street men and women of the downtown area. The crisis night program offers drop in services from 12:15am to 6:00am seven nights a week. People without homes may be able to "flop" on a couch if there is room, but the Centre is not officially licenced for sleepovers.

A social worker previously employed by the now reorganized Emergency Services on Drake Street reported that when she was unable to locate a place in any of the above facilities for a woman in need, especially after hours, her last resort intervention was commonly to give the woman two dollars so that she could spend the rest of the night drinking coffee in a local cafe. (personal interview, 10 May, 1988)
Shelters for Battered Women

A front line worker at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre often has cause to refer battered women to emergency facilities, and her choice of shelter is largely based on the availability of space. She observed that especially in the summer, these shelters and transition houses are often full and unable to accept newcomers. (Elizabeth Bell, personal interview, 15 August, 1989) The locations of the shelters are undisclosed for security reasons. They are located outside the immediate area of the Downtown Eastside but are heavily used by women of the area. Many women who have been beaten are quite relieved to leave the area as they are fearful of further violence, but again, the logistical difficulties of getting to North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, or even Kitsilano in an emergency point to the critical need for an instant response refuge of this nature in the immediate area.

The Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter operates a 24 hour crisis line and emergency shelter offering refuge from violent situations to women and their children. This resource is used a great deal by women of the Downtown Eastside.

Kate Booth House, Nova, and Emily Murphy Transition House are first stage emergency facilities in nearby municipalities which are also used by women of the Downtown Eastside when space is available.

Munroe House, and the Act II Safe Choice Program provide second stage longer term housing and support to women who have been battered.
II. Supported or Semi-Independent Housing

The distinction between supported or semi-independent housing is probably not an important one for the purposes of this brief survey. The models in this section are set apart from those in the next section - social housing - simply because they provide some form of additional social services to residents that goes beyond the mandate of the typical social housing project in the area of the Downtown Eastside. These models are not classified with respect to the length of stay possible. Some allow only temporary stays, and some offer permanent housing. All of these examples should be thought of as part of a continuum of options for people who are seeking a home.

The St. James Social Service Society, which provides the emergency stage Powell Place Sanctuary for Women and Triage, mentioned in the preceding section, also provides a wide variety of supported longer term accommodation to meet the needs of residents of the Downtown Eastside. Victory House is a long term residential facility which is used by ex-psychiatric patients. A member of the staff comments that although Victory House is almost unique in the area, the need is great for more such facilities. Only 47 beds are available, and the waiting list of prospective residents referred by psychiatric services is long. (Marie-Claude, personal communication, 21 August, 1989) Residents of Victory House who are able to maintain stability in their lives can sometimes move on to Victory Annex, a 20 bed residence for ex-psychiatric patients who have become more integrated into society than those in Victory House. Another possibility for those who are able to maintain their stability without much outside support is Cecelia House, which consists of 8 self-contained apartments that provide occupants with an independent living environment.
III. Social Housing

DERA publishes and widely distributes a list of all the social housing projects which are available in the Downtown Eastside and facilitates applications to appropriate projects. The list must be viewed with the realization that for the four DERA projects alone the active waiting list contains in excess of 2,500 names of prospective residents.

Another fact to be kept in mind is that, in general - the handicapped, those over 45 years old, and families, take the priority for such housing. Thus a younger women who lives alone may have very little chance of obtaining a place. In light of the fact that the average age of death for women in the Downtown Eastside is so much earlier than in other parts of the city, safe housing for younger live-alone women becomes a critical consideration.

A further consideration with respect to the needs of people who are unable to live independently is that social housing in the main assumes the capacity to live on one’s own without a strong built-in network of services for support. Although most social housing schemes have a building manager or housing co-ordinator, the extent of this job is not typically understood to encompass the facilitation of a supportive community environment for people who need it. The manager is there to manage and maintain the building for residents who are assumed to be capable of managing their own affairs.

A front line worker at the First United Church has observed that although some innovative programs and services are offered in some of the housing projects, and recognizing that building managers often do more than their job description might suggest, “we could triple the existing services (in the projects) and still not have enough”.(Karen Howe, personal communication, 21 August, 1989) The funds are simply not available to provide sufficient staffing and energy to nurture the evolution of a supportive community.

Following is a graphic description of the Four Sisters Housing Cooperative, an example, perhaps the flagship, of social housing in the Downtown Eastside.
The 153 units of the Four Sisters Housing Cooperative are contained in two renovated buildings (below) and one new structure (left), which has been designed to emulate industrial buildings in the neighborhood. A through-block park (below left) is secured at either end by "false" facades, which preserve the street wall. The common courtyard is divided by screens into active play space and a passive circular sitting area for the elderly, which enjoys sun in all seasons. Units in the renovated buildings suit their irregular footprint (plan, below).

Architects: Davidson/Yuen Partners, Vancouver (Ronald Yuen, partner in charge; David Simpson, head of design).
Client: Dera Housing Society.
Site: block in Gastown heritage district.
Program: rehabilitation and new construction for total of 153 studios and 1-to-3-bedroom units (400–1100 sq ft).
Major materials: (see Building Materials, p. 126).
Consultants: Vagelatos, landscape; Sayers Engineering, structural; J. Poon, mechanical and electrical; Terra Consulting, housing resource.
General contractor: Buron Construction.
Costs: $5,994,000 ($53 per sq ft).

Figure 17 - Four Sisters Housing Co-op
(Source: Progressive Architecture 10:88)
The list of social housing projects in the Downtown Eastside contains the following entries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Owner/Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DERA Housing Co-op</td>
<td>DERA Housing Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Sisters Housing Co-op</td>
<td>DERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tellier Tower</td>
<td>DERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Gomez</td>
<td>DERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ Memorial</td>
<td>Veterans only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mavis/McMullen</td>
<td>D.E. Women’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Residence</td>
<td>City Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppenheimer Lodge</td>
<td>55 years or H.P.I.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Bird Residence</td>
<td>55 years or H.P.I.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Place</td>
<td>partially subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Building</td>
<td>partially subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe Hotel</td>
<td>partially subsidized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Hennessey Place</td>
<td>First United Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Pentland Place</td>
<td>First United Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roddan Lodge</td>
<td>55 years or H.P.I.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoinette Lodge</td>
<td>55 years or H.P.I.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Garden Co-op</td>
<td>open to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean Park</td>
<td>B.C. Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Social Housing Projects in the Downtown Eastside
IV. The SROs - Single Room Occupancy Hotels

In her discussion of SRO housing, Mopel observes that such housing is an important element of the housing sector in Vancouver. She concludes:

"SROs currently house very low income tenants who would otherwise not be able to find accommodation. The loss of SRO units has been frequently linked to the rapid increase in homelessness in North American cities." (Mopel 1989, 155)

People seeking housing in the Downtown Eastside rooms can obtain a list of the hotels and rooming houses from several of the helping agencies in the area. Most of the rooms rent for about $75 per week or about $250 per month, a figure very close to the shelter portion of the CAIN benefits as has been earlier noted. The quality of the rooms varies, and ‘no vacancy’ signs are often posted on the ‘best’ establishments.

DERA has long nurtured the dream of purchasing and operating some of the existing hotels which could then become a transition point between market hotels and self-contained social housing for able bodies singles under 50. DERA envisions a scheme in which hotel pubs could be properly operated by the non-profit group to generate profits that could be turned toward the development of more non-profit units. This arrangement would also force market hotels to be more conscious of the directions of the Liquor Distribution Branch, and perhaps fewer violations of these regulations would then result. (DERA 1988, v)

DERA sees this as a very inexpensive way to develop future social housing, because the non-profit hotels thus created would hold valuable land and improvements would be made that would increase the value.

Thus far provincial and municipal housing funds have not been directed towards the renovation of units in the existing SRO stock. Some funding is clearly necessary to create the arguably very modest but at least minimally acceptable housing envisioned in the DERA scheme, or to realize some other rehabilitative plan.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, and a city as blessed as Vancouver, it may be hard to justify any option other than the creation of adequate homes for those people who are without a home.
HOUSING MODELS WHICH WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

In the previous section of this chapter, the existing housing supply in the Downtown Eastside has been briefly classified and inventoried. Much could be done to improve and supplement the supply of housing in the community, which would, in turn, greatly strengthen the support network for the homeless women there.

On the following pages, a number of models which have been selected as being potentially beneficial for the Downtown Eastside are presented. Each of the somewhat arbitrarily chosen four categories of housing earlier discussed - emergency stage, supported or semi-independent housing, social housing, and SROs - could well be enriched by the inclusion of these models which are similarly categorized. The models have been selected from cities as far afield as Toronto, New York, and Seattle. Valuable ideas actually existing in Vancouver at present which merit adaptation to suit the needs of women, or which would be of benefit simply if repeated again and again, in new projects, are included here as well.

The proliferation of sensitive responses which have been developed to meet the needs of the homeless people of North America is truly encouraging. These specific models have been selected for inclusion because they seem to be particularly well-suited to supplement and inform the development of responses to the urgent needs of the women of the Downtown Eastside.
I. Two Models for First Stage or Emergency Housing

Nellie's of Toronto

The information brochure supplied by Nellie’s begins with the statement: "Nellie’s is not just an emergency shelter - for many of the women who have walked through its doors, it is home and family in Toronto."

The actual setting of Nellie’s is a large urban house which was renovated in 1974 to become a hostel for women. It is licensed to accommodate thirty beds.

Nellie’s responds to the needs of a wide range of women: transients, battered women, women released from hospitals or jail, tenants who have been evicted, street women - any woman who needs a refuge, and children of the women.

A worker at Nellie’s commented that the broad range of women who use the hostel form a "pretty interesting mix" which in her mind works "surprisingly well". She has observed that women at Nellie’s support and encourage one another and has concluded that the continually changing composite of residents feels family like because of that very broad range of characters. (Joyce Brown, personal interview, 11 May, 1989) Nellie’ also serves as a gathering place. Many women, usually about sixty of them, drop in to Nellie’s on Sundays to visit with staff, residents, and board members, to share a meal and their experiences. Many others telephone for support in crisis, or for suggestions regarding medical, legal, or social problems.

The hostel offers short term shelter, but the length of stay is very flexible to allow for individual needs. In general, a single woman may stay three weeks and a woman with children is allowed four weeks. This limit is often extended if, for example, a woman is waiting for a spot in provincial housing - she has priority if she is in a hostel, and might stay for two to four
months if that will help her to secure a permanent home. Some women with particular problems to solve might be allowed to stay even longer.

According to the staff, Nellie's is always full and about ten to fifteen women are turned away daily. Joyce Brown echoed the familiar lament - more decent low cost housing is badly needed in Toronto, and if women had somewhere to go after leaving Nellie's "then we could be what we are supposed to be" - a first stage housing facility - rather than trying to fulfill an assortment of housing mandates.

About one third of the women who use Nellie's use it very frequently. Joyce characterizes these women as "hostelized" and believes that their rate of recidivism in the hostel is so high because they are unable to cope with the regulated existence in other options such as group homes and supportive housing, when and if such opportunities arise for them. In the hostels, as compared to the more structured group homes of Toronto, women have more freedom, less demands upon their time, and little pressure to make commitments to change life patterns or to relate to other people if contact is not desired.

When Nellie's opened as a hostel fifteen years ago, the need for second stage housing and permanent accommodation quickly became apparent. Those associated with Nellie's soon began to direct their energy to developing further stage housing. The group now rents Havelock House from the city, and five women and two children can be accommodated there. This group also owns Trerise which accommodates a similar population. In 1985, the Nellie's group took over the management of a house in the Constance Hamilton Cooperative, which accommodates six single women. The length of stay in these places is one year. Each house is staffed with on housing worker whose job it is to facilitate communal and cooperative living, and to encourage participation in the further development of long term housing options.

The Nellie's group also supports two units of permanent housing, which together accommodate nine women, at Homes First in Toronto. Homes First is a subsidized high rise housing project for single men and women where the length of stay is as long as the resident
chooses to remain. Housing workers provide support in this project on an informal basis, as
required.

The Nellie's group has also leased a property in the downtown core of Toronto where five
women who previously resided in second stage housing are now living in their own self-
contained units.

Joyce Brown believes it is critical that women who use the hostel must have access to
such supported housing as those projects outlined above, because these women often cannot
or will not "jump through the hoops" necessary to participate in the competition to obtain
housing on the open market. Thus Nellie's perception of itself as a starting point on a
continuing range of options developed by the group itself is of key importance. The very
active board of directors numbering twenty members is dedicated to extending the options
for the disadvantaged women of Toronto. They have to date achieved some impressive
success which could well inspire such action in Vancouver.
For Women with Children

A model which is of interest to women with children who are unable to obtain daycare and are thus hamstrung in the scope of their daily lives is included here because of its obvious relevance to such women in the Downtown Eastside. This new infill housing project, shown in the following plan, is built on vacant lots owned by the City of New York. The project very cleverly addresses the three intimately related issues of housing, childcare, and work.

The four storey building is composed of four small, fully independent apartments on each floor which are clustered around a generous (almost 600 square feet) common space. The organizational concept is that children’s rooms are located between their parents’ quarters and a semi-private childcare play space so that:

"Children may expand their living space either by opening their ‘front door’ into their parents quarters (if she is at home) or by opening their ‘back door’ into the childcare space (if she is at work)." (Bevington 1987, 16-17)

On each floor 10 children can therefore be supervised by a licensed caregiver chosen or approved by the parents. Although the parents’ area may be locked while she is away at work, the children’s bedrooms and toilet facilities remain accessible to the child. This precludes the need for additional separate childcare facilities to support the common play area.

In this example shown on the next page, an emergency housing situation, the scale of the project is very modest. The basic concept can, however, be applied to more permanent housing as well - in fact, to any multi-unit situation where a family’s ability to function at the highest level is predicated on access to childcare.
Figure 18 - Plan for emergency housing for women with children
(Source: Bevington 1987, 16-17)

1. Children's bedrooms - doors kept open when childcare is in session
2. Washroom is kept unlocked during the day
3. Mother's bedroom and kitchen/living area kept locked during the day
4. Common/daycare space
A Proposal for First Stage/Emergency Housing for Women in the Downtown Eastside.

It is painfully clear that a first stage, non-criteria, emergency shelter for women only is much needed in the area of the Downtown Eastside. Especially if a woman is in crisis because she has experienced a gender-related trauma, she needs a secure and safe refuge where further such danger is precluded. Ultimately, whatever the emergency, this woman requires a home. This proposed first stage housing then is meant to be a first step on the way to an eventual home that is appropriately tailored to the individual woman's needs.

The need for such shelter fluctuates. At the present time, it is high. As noted in chapter 4 of this document, the informal survey on women in the Downtown Eastside showed that of 60 women residents in the area, 24 had needed such a refuge in the past year, some more times than once. A worker at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre estimates that easily 200 or more women have come to her alone for help in locating emergency or longterm accommodation. (Elizabeth Bell, personal interview, 15 August, 1989) Perhaps one-third of these women were totally without shelter at the time. Such unsheltered women will often agree to go to Lookout if they are completely desperate, but it is acknowledged by both the homeless women and the referral advocate that this is not an appropriate solution because women do not feel safe there.

It is widely believed that although first stage housing is not by any means the only urgently required housing stock in the Downtown Eastside for women, it is nevertheless the most acutely felt need at this time. Women die in this area, on average, 22 years earlier than their counterparts in other areas of the city, as we have seen. Chapter 7 of this thesis is therefore a full facility program for a first stage, open criteria housing project to respond to the needs of those women.
II. Three Models for Supported or Semi-independent Housing

The El Rey

Many excellent examples of supported or semi-independent housing exist in cities throughout North America. A model located in Seattle, Washington which responds in a very comprehensive way to the needs of the growing population of homeless mentally ill in the urban core of that city, and which would be particularly valuable in the Downtown Eastside setting is included here.

The El Rey Apartments project is an adaptive re-use of an old derelict hotel in the inner city of Seattle. The comprehensive treatment program delivered by the El Rey is designed "to interrupt the cycle of hospitalization, unsupervised housing, evictions, the jail, and re-hospitalization" so common to the homeless mentally ill. (Information brochure from The El Rey, dated 1-21-88)

The El Rey uses a combination of program elements that have proven successful for this population in other cities of the U.S. and Canada. A strong influence has been the Fountain House in New York City where people of differing levels of function work together at a variety of pursuits. The program elements include combined residential and treatment services. A therapeutic environment is the goal - including opportunities for work, leisure and maintenance of well-being.

The "clubhouse" model of care is an important aspect of the program. Structured daily activities are scheduled which include evening and weekend programming. Ex-residents as well as current residents are encouraged to participate. A strong aftercare and neighbourhood outreach program for ex-residents helps to ensure that connections with the centre are maintained after departure from the residential aspect of the program. The clubhouse represents a departure from traditional day treatment, with its practical focus on skills training to the highest possible level of function and empowerment of the self. Residents operate a thriving thrift shop in the building, for example, and it is up to themselves to decide how the profits will be used. A multi-faceted vocational training program is available for those who are
ready to participate. Further evidence that the El Rey is based solidly on a foundation of empowerment is the fact that residents elect a president of the members' council who attends all staff meetings and whose vote counts as one. (Mike Neilsen, personal interview, 11 August, 1988)

The El Rey offers a graduated or tiered continuum of care which helps its residents to avoid unnecessary hospitalization or incarceration when a relapse occurs. The four levels of residential care are: intensive residential care, short term crisis intervention, congregate care, and transitional care. This continuum of care allows for a flexibility that is of key importance for a person "who may experience several setbacks on the road from homelessness to independence and self-sufficiency, or even to a semi-independent life". (Greer 1986, 87)

The following pages of this document contain a comprehensive graphic information package provided by the manager at the El Rey. It is selected for inclusion here because it gives a clear presentation of the formal details of this remarkable place. There are numerous buildings of a similar ilk in the Downtown Eastside which could be converted in the same way this rundown hotel has been transformed. Moreover, the El Rey program is possibly one of the first facilities responding to the needs of the homeless mentally ill which combines such a complex array of elements into one program. It thus merits special attention as a model which would be very beneficial in filling a critical gap in the existing range of housing/services in the Downtown Eastside.
THE EL REY
A RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY FOR THE HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL

ARC ARCHITECTS 1201 EAST HOWELL SEATTLE, WA 98122
OWNER: CITY OF SEATTLE - DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OPERATOR: COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC

Figure 19 - Cover of the information brochure
EL REY CYCLE

- TRANSITIONAL
- CONGREGATE
- INTENSIVE
- INDEPENDENT LIVING
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT TREATMENT PROGRAM
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT TREATMENT PROGRAM

TYPICAL STREET CYCLE

INSTEAD OF MOVING TO A NEW INSTITUTION OR ONTO THE STREET AT EACH CHANGE OF MENTAL STATUS, MEMBERS OF THE EL REY CLUBHOUSE RETAIN THEIR SUPPORT NETWORK. MEMBERS DON'T LOSE HOUSE AND HOME IF THEY HAVE A BAD DAY

Figure 20 - "Cycles" compared - the homeless mentally ill on the street and in the El Rey
PROJECT TYPE: ADAPTIVE REUSE
LOCATION: 2119 SECOND AVENUE, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
BUILDING TYPE: 1909 UNREINFORCED MASONRY HOTEL
5 FLOORS
80,000 SQ FT. AVAILABLE AREA.

PROJECT COST: $2.6 MILLION

PROGRAM:

THE EL REY ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF THE ADULT MENTALLY ILL IN DOWNTOWN SEATTLE, WHO ARE HABITUALLY HOMELESS AND HAVE A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE TO TREATMENT. THE PROGRAM IS A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF GRADUATED SUPERVISED HOUSING AND A "CLUBHOUSE" REHABILITATION PROGRAM. THE THREE LEVELS OF HOUSING PROMOTE INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING WHILE PROVIDING INTENSIVE CARE AS NEEDED WITHIN ONE COMMUNITY.

THE CLUBHOUSE PROVIDES ALL MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL AND WORK ORIENTED ACTIVITIES, AND REMAINS A RESOURCE AND SUPPORT FACILITY FOR THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE "GRADUATED" TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING
16 Beds 5550 sq. ft.

- SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING IN APARTMENT LIKE UNITS WITH KITCHENETTE AND PRIVATE BATH
- DECREASED STAFF PRESENCE.

Figure 21 - Project details and the transitional living level
CONGREGATE CARE
24 Beds 5650 sq. ft.

- Community living
- Semi-private bathrooms
- Scheduled staff available
- Equal mix of single and double rooms

INTENSIVE CARE
20 Beds 5650 sq. ft.

- Stabilization and crisis intervention
- Continuous staff supervision
- Larger proportion of single rooms
- Short term, single rooms for initial program entry

Figure 22 - Congregate and intensive care levels
STREET LEVEL
Clubhouse 6300 sq. ft.
- Entrance "lobby"
- Retail frontage - interaction with public
- Open, administrative core
- Community dining and activities for clubhouse

ALLEY LEVEL
Clubhouse 6300 sq. ft.
- Program support space
- Work unit areas
- Delivery access
- Recreation

Figure 23 - The street and alley levels of the El Rey
The Veterans' Memorial Manor on Alexander Street in the Downtown Eastside is another very notable model which could be used to guide planning to respond to the needs of the hard to house homeless women of the area. In the words of Oberlander and Fallick, "The project exemplifies the stewardship underlying the process whereby experienced public and private organizations can work with the homeless where they choose to live. It is possible to humanize the life-space of marginalized people without precluding previous community ties and associations." (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 34)

The 134 unit building is designed for World War II Veterans with the intention that when veterans no longer require such housing, other hard to house people may be accommodated there. The project is based on the concept that in providing housing and services for the hard to house, it is best "to put the paths where the people walk" - by providing a safe and supportive environment that engenders self-respect in the place where people choose to congregate. (ibid, 37) The effort in the project is not to enforce any preconceived notions of rehabilitation, but to facilitate and to support whatever developments in lifestyle that can occur in this setting.

In the project, physical shelter is combined with aided social self-help and immediate access to a range of social and personal services which are used as required.

The fundamental organizing principle of the building and the program is "progressive adaptation" in which provision is available for varying levels of independence all under one roof. Lower level units in the five storey building are designed for residents who are dependent to a large degree on staff for the satisfaction of their daily needs. The remaining floors contain larger units with more amenities which are available to residents who have demonstrated progress in their capacity to live more independently. In this model, individuals who are able to achieve a degree of healthy independence in their lifestyle are not obliged to leave their immediate environment as a result of this achievement, as is the usual procedure in transitional supportive housing. Thus in this instance, progress is rewarded, not with eviction or referral, but with a unit designed to support the regained or newfound enjoyment of independence.
Figure 24 - Veterans' Memorial Manor: elevation and site location map
(Source: Hulchanski 1987, Paper 7, p.4)
Figure 25 - Veterans' Memorial Manor
Plans - Level 1 and 2
(Source: Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 38)
Figure 26 - Veteran's Memorial Manor
Plans - Levels 3-5, Unit plans
(Source: Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 39)
The Coast Foundation

A model relevant here, but not presently existing in the Downtown Eastside, is The Coast Foundation Society program of housing for ex-mental patients. Coast has two different strategies for making housing available to its clients. In one program, whole buildings are rented to ex-patients who are able to cope fairly independently in their lives. A caretaker and a p.i.c. or "person in charge" who works during the day at the apartment is available to offer support to residents where required. In the other program, termed satellite housing, one or more apartments may be secured in various buildings scattered about the city. A support person visits residents thus housed to maintain regular contact and to intervene if a crisis should occur. (Jenny, personal communication, 21 August, 1989)

A walk in the street is sufficient to convince one that such housing would be very beneficial to many residents of the Downtown Eastside. It is readily apparent that many are not easily coping with the pressures of their everyday existence. Many of those who have been treated for psychiatric problems in the past and are presently without sufficient supports are unable to maintain stability in unsupported living situations, especially in rundown rooms of the area.
III. An Existing Model for Social Housing in the Downtown Eastside

The Mavis/McMullen Housing Project - The Process and the Product

Figure 27 - Mavis/McMullen Housing Project
Cordova St. elevation
(Source: Herizons 1987, 5:2)

The Process and the Product

In the course of this research the comment has repeatedly been heard, from front line workers, from advocacy workers, and from women in search of permanent homes in the Downtown Eastside: "We need more places like Mavis/McMullen". The Mavis/McMullen project is unique in the area in that it is a non-profit social housing project designed to respond principally to the needs of homeless women. It is, additionally, a good example of a social housing project which straddles the bounds between independent and supported housing. Although not formally included in the mandate of the project, a supportive community has developed at Mavis Mc/Mullen in spite of the lack of funding for support services. Moreover, the development of the project included much more than a usual level of
participation of prospective residents themselves. The story of how this project came to fruition is inspiring as well as informative, and it is included here because the "process" in this instance is a very meaningful dimension of the "product".

Relevant to this point is John F.C. Turner's theory that housing is a verb. He states: "Questions about the consequences of housing in people's lives can only be asked in words that describe processes and relationships. Housing must, therefore, be used as a verb rather than as a noun - as a process that subsumes products. Real values are those that lie in the relationships between the elements of housing action - between the actors, their activities and their achievements." (Turner 1976, 62)

In the spring of 1986, Laurel Kimbley, then co-ordinator of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and self-described dreamer and catalyst, decided it was time to go for a housing project for women in the area. She saw a critical need for housing for the women who were trying to make it on their own in the area SROs, but who had few options and opportunities available. As she was at that time the only paid employee of the Women's Centre, but was supported by a very dedicated board of directors, her first action was to contact a wide range of women to enlist additional support and expertise. The idea quickly became a group dream and a core group of five women was formed, who were deeply committed to the idea of creating a women's housing project.

It was understood that although women's housing needs were clearly and painfully apparent to those close to the situation, hard data would be necessary to support any proposal. "Housing Application" forms were filled out by interested prospective residents, and statistics were collected from various sources including the City Health Department, Social Planning, the Vancouver City Police, the Native Advocacy and Referral Centre, and the Women's Centre surveys.

Armed with a very well documented and coherent rationale, members of the group lobbied all sectors: political groups of every stripe, rich supporters, poor supporters, religious associations "and pagans"; and held to their strategy of concentrating on the need, not politics of any description. The project received unanimous support and, this backing
combined with the complete commitment of the board, became the foundation for the project.

The Mandate and the Development Process  Once the commitment was secured, and the goal was recognized as clearly as possible by all concerned parties - to provide housing for the high-risk women of the Downtown Eastside based on the self-empowering model - the development of the project became essentially a reactive process in many ways, typical of any housing development project.

In order to participate in the Vancouver City Land Acquisition and Leaseback Program, there are three essential elements which must be given:

1. a target population in need of adequate and affordable housing
2. a development opportunity - a building or a vacant site
3. a potential project sponsor - for example, a non-profit community organization under whose auspices the project would be built and operated. (Campbell 1987, 64)

Once a site was selected by the group, the three elements were in place, and the site acquisition request was made. The City, in partnership with the women's group, then approached BCHMC with their proposal.

The architect of the project is Linda Baker, who was assisted by Niki Kozakiewicz, a graduate architect and deeply committed member of the Mavis/McMullen board. The project coordinator became Jim O'Day of Terra, whose job it was to keep the board on track and working to a series of realistic deadlines as the typical "hoops" were encountered and jumped through in the project development. The contractor, Buron, was hired, and construction was completed in time for occupancy by January, 1988.

Processes and Relationships  The basic philosophical commitment of the board of the housing group is to empowerment. Laurel, the person inside whose head the dream originated, calls this philosophy governing the process "a combination of practical feminism,
facilitative management, and common sense". (Laurel Kimbley, personal interview, 22 March, 1988) She describes the process of working in concert with the other women on the board as circular, which she believes is a typically female approach to the process. Niki describes the same process as a dance in which the energy of the individual participants would sometimes wax and sometimes wane, but in which the collective energy never faltered. (ibid.)

It was Laurel who named the project after two women of the Downtown Eastside, an action which tells a great deal about the relationship amongst the women involved. In Laurel's words:

"I named the building after Mavis, who was a friend of mine. She was incidentally black. It has been said that she was a prostitute, and she died as a result of violence in the Downtown Eastside. It was also named after Helen McMullen. She is a 73 year old woman who is radiantly white, who believes that her Christian mission is to work with the people in the Downtown Eastside. She has worked on the board with the Mavis/McMullen Housing Society three years. It was out of respect for these two women; who both, from my own point of view, are equal and equally important. (from the transcript of an interview between Hinda Avery and Laurel Kimbley)

When information meetings were held regarding the project, Laurel's message to prospective tenants was clear: the Mavis/McMullen Place is meant to be a community of women living together, as distinct from just "co-op housing". A safe and secure home is the primary goal, and the spirit of sisterhood the means by which this could be achieved. (from the minutes of a meeting between the Mavis/McMullen Housing Society board and future potential tenants, 10 August, 1987)

Niki believes that a very important aspect of the project was that the occupants were a part of it long before the building was completed and they could actually move in. From an architectural point of view, community participation was strong with respect to programming to needs which were articulated in the very comprehensive preliminary application and in dialogue between architects - board - prospective occupants/community, along the way. In the design stage it was found that much of the prospective user input was reactive rather than proactive. Niki concludes that it is easier for people to articulate what they reject rather than
to conceive of what they might like in a home. (Niki Kozakiewicz, personal interview, 19 March, 1988)

Laurel recognizes that certain skills and rather sophisticated concepts are required to live in such a community, and she has worked with others to help transmit those skills to the people who will be needing them on a daily basis - the residents. A philosophical split on the board is being similarly addressed. Those who are more inclined to "do for" and thus hold the power are being encouraged to let it go and leave the opportunity open for self help and self empowerment amongst the residents of Mavis/McMullen.

The Single Displaced Persons Project of Toronto has been a guiding force for the project. Laurel was delighted when she discovered that the residents of the project had decided to ignore certain suggestions for safety and security measures that had been written by the board to guide policy. The residents have developed a security system which relies on natural accountability, a procedure in which guests are escorted by residents to their destinations within the building, and scheduled patrols at night.

Men are welcome in the community both as visitors and as occupants - no attempt is made to limit the social mix by excluding males. But it must be a woman who signs the lease and is the official tenant. In this way, security of tenure is assured for the woman which is independent from a relationship with a man. If a man abuses a woman, he is not automatically evicted because experience has shown that women often leave as well if their partner is expelled. Men are expected to acknowledge and tackle their problem if such behaviour is displayed.

The SDPP have learned that a stable living community develops when relationships among key groups are negotiated in mutually accountable contracts. Each member of the Mavis/McMullen community has a contract with the group, the board, and themselves, that if personal trouble arises, they will seek support - from the Women's Centre or any other appropriate resource. This "trouble" includes any involvement in physical or psychological abuse, slipping back into negative patterns such as substance abuse, or anything else that
endangers the physical or psychological safety and security of the community. Of the 250 women who initially applied for housing in the community, only those who seemed likely to display strongly violent behaviour were screened out in the selection.

Although the community has not had a long time to coalesce, a "supportive community" does seem to be forming as opposed to "supported housing", where non-residents might be more likely to provide support, and residents to receive it. The project is greatly constrained by lack of funding for support services, but the people of Mavis/McMullen have to quite a large degree bridged the gap between a supportive community and unsupported independent housing. A board member explained that the building coordinator in the project is expected by BCHMC to be responsible for matters related to business and maintenance. It happens that the building coordinator in this instance is a woman who sees the need for a much expanded description of this job, and who is willing and able to facilitate the growth of a supportive community.

Niki observes that the women of Mavis/McMullen have "claimed the building and are asking for more responsibility already". (Niki Kozakiewicz, personal interview, 19 March, 1988) She believes that dwelling there is giving the women strength and that they are responding very positively to the opportunity to take over their own lives. Niki sees a need for a variety of programs, for which no money is currently available. The group is applying for grants so that jobs can be created and lifeskills taught and practised.

There are about fifteen children in the Mavis/McMullen community, some in families where the threat of apprehension by childcare authorities has loomed large in the past. Parenting support and skill training may be useful in some instances.

One-third of the women in the building receive "top-up" earnings in return for accepting certain of the internal day to day responsibilities. Janitorial and security tasks have been contracted in this way. Niki believes that in the context of a history of underpayment for women's energy, this is a far from optimal solution, but she views it as temporary. The coordinator is vastly underpaid, the "top-up" funds are clearly token, and the women of the
board have volunteered countless hours over the past two years; but all the women involved are gaining from the experience, if not monetarily as yet.

The board of the housing society has an operating agreement with BCHMC containing some conditions which demonstrate possibly a lack of experience or a lack of faith on the part of the province. The women of the board are expected to assume all liability for the land and the building - they of course have investigated insurance very thoroughly - but all expenditures over $100 must be approved by the province. The BCHMC reserves the right to step in and take over the operation at any point, which naturally creates a climate of some uncertainty.

Mavis/McMullen is the first social housing project for families and singles taken on by the BCHMC since the recent government reorganization of housing. Priority in the project is given to women over 35, and to women of any age who have children. Knowing that almost all the women in the building receive income assistance is important background to understanding what a significant change living at Mavis/McMullen has been in their lives. Formerly, all the women were pressed with financial problems. In Mavis/McMullen, where rent is geared to income, no one pays more than 30% of her income for accommodation. This is a marked departure from the percentage of income paid for rent in market housing as the informal survey showed. A number of women report now that even living on welfare, which provides roughly one half of the sum of money that is commonly recognized to be the poverty line figure, they are able to manage their budgets. And now, because an even greater percentage of their time is no longer absorbed by the fundamental issues of survival, many women have begun to contribute energy to their community in ways in which they were previously unable to do.

Niki says the Mavis/McMullen Place feels like home. The goal was to create a home with - not for - the residents, and that is what has taken place.

Nobody, least of all the residents themselves, knew initially how much of the responsibility they would be able to take on, and how strong and competent they might become. The place, so far, is flourishing on its own internal energy, and is becoming a true home for many
women who were without-a-home before. That is the achievement, and a measure of the real values, as John Turner puts it, that lie in the relationship between the people, their roles and responsibilities, and the product - a home.

The Mavis/McMullen project has proven to be a richly rewarding model and it is hoped that more such projects will be initiated as the need is demonstrably great. Perhaps the indicator of when that need is met will be when the wait for social housing is no longer long and frustrating, or indeed hopeless. Only when that condition has been achieved will we be sure that no one is forced through lack of choice to live without a place that can be called home.
IV. SROs - Single Room Occupancy Hotels and Rooming Houses

Homes First

Homes First, at 90 Shuter Street in Toronto, is an example of a model which could well be of interest in Vancouver. 90 Shuter Street is a specially designed eleven storey apartment building set in the downtown area. The project is "based on the building form, management and social features of good rooming houses," and meant "to reverse the effects of inner city displacement" in the face of deterioration and demolition of that stock in Toronto. (Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 43)

A wide assortment of formerly homeless people live at 90 Shuter Street - ranging from ex-homeowners whose fortunes have changed, to longtime street people; and from those who present an array of problems, to those who have few difficulties in coping with their daily lives. (Ellen Wexler, personal interview, 11 May, 1989)

The large apartment building is divided into clusters. Each of the 17 apartment units has 4 or 5 single rooms which are large enough to be furnished as bed-sitters. In each cluster is a shared kitchen and dining area, with an adjacent living room and sun room. According to a worker at the project, the shared living situation at 90 Shuter sometimes generates some stress because of the high degree of cooperation that is needed in such an arrangement. Younger women who have plenty of outside support, and older men whose backgrounds include shared living at logging camps and other such settings seem to function best in this circumstance. (ibid.)

90 Shuter Street is based on the concept of facilitative management which has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Housing, in the concept, is "for sure" and not tied to any commitment to participate in programs, according to Ellen Wexler. Agencies and services are intimately connected to the housing but only to provide support where required and desired by the resident.

Each apartment cluster at 90 Shuter Street evolves its own set of rules and expectations for behaviour, and the rules for the building in general were developed with and by the residents.
The bottom line principle for dealing with residents, according to Ellen, is that nobody changes until one chooses to do so. Others can encourage change, and promote awareness of possibilities, but ultimately each resident must choose his/her own ways in which to operate. (Ibid.) 90 Shuter Street provides a secure home base for making such decisions.

Figure 28 - Homes First, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto
(South elevation)
(Source: Hulchanski 1987, Paper7, p.7)
Figure 29- Homes First, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto
(Floor plans)
(Source: Oberlander and Fallick 1988, 44)
CHAPTER 7

A PROGRAM FOR A FACILITY

The Downtown Eastside, formerly known as "skid road", has traditionally been a neighbourhood of middle-aged to senior men, particularly those who worked at seasonal jobs in the primary industries. Often these men returned to the Downtown Eastside when their working days were done - almost half with disabilities. They mostly live in the area because it is affordable and friends are easily accessible. They tend to live in the community for a long time, and to consider it their home.

About 80% of the resident population of the Downtown Eastside, roughly 10,000 people in all, are male. The women of the Downtown Eastside, who live there for a variety of reasons, make up the balance of the population. The needs of this relatively small percentage of the population are sometimes overlooked in a community that is predominately male, and their lives are often more difficult as a result.

The director of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA), Jim Green, has often expressed his view that there are 10,000 homeless people in the area. When one considers the situation in the cheap abut inadequate SRO hotels and rooming houses, it is clear that these settings can hardly be called homes in the full sense of the term. By inference then, if someone lives in a place that is not a home, they are without a home, homeless.

The homeless women of the Downtown Eastside are the subject of this proposal. Even in the best of times in hotel rooms they are not truly at home. They lack security of tenure, they are vulnerable to the vagaries of the rather unpredictable lifestyles of their neighbours, and often are subject to their own personal challenges as well. These women tend to live in the Downtown Eastside because they are poor, unable to work for health or for other reasons, and in the vast majority of instances, dependent upon the social welfare system. The shelter portion of income assistance is very meagre, especially for women who live alone, and thus
the housing options are very limited. They likely live in an SRO hotel, along with the very low income men of the neighbourhood, if they aren't fortunate enough to secure a place in non-profit or social housing. These people are unlikely winners in the competition for adequate housing elsewhere.

On the positive side, the community is perceived by many to be a vital, caring place, and many women who have lived in the area for long periods express their appreciation of the strong community spirit that prevails.

A fairly strong network of community and social services is concentrated in the Downtown Eastside, as that is where many such services are needed. Some perceive this helping network to be overconcentrated in the area however, drawing troubled people to the neighbourhood and further complicating an already complex dynamic. Some of the services offered tend to be geared to the needs of the male majority. In an emergency, such as a surprise eviction or a hasty escape from violence, women are sometimes forced to seek shelter in facilities which are used mainly by men. This is particularly awkward if a woman's emergency situation has been precipitated by a gender related conflict, which is a common occurrence.

The housing situation in the Downtown Eastside comprises much of Vancouver's homeless problem. Although the phenomenon of homelessness is not nearly as dramatic in Vancouver as in some of the larger urban centres in North America, the problem still warrants concerted attention from all levels of government, related services and practitioners, and the homeless themselves.

This proposal specifically addresses the housing needs of the women without homes in the Downtown Eastside. The specific action here is directed at the first stage of intervention in the housing crisis - a response to the emergency situation of being not only homeless in the broadest sense of the term, but actually "roofless" - lacking shelter of any kind. Intervention at this stage is meant to be understood as only the initial part of a response that this growing phenomenon calls for. The project is conceived to be a first step along the way to finding a home.
As noted by a consulting firm which has worked on another project for the "hard to house" in the same area,
"the need for permanent housing of a type not presently found in the area is...immediate, urgent, and will exist over the long term." (apra 1985 (January), 1)

This proposal is meant to be a part of the multi-faceted response necessary to address this urgent and longterm problem in the Downtown Eastside.
A Project Which Responds to the Phenomenon of Homelessness

The five principal factors which contribute to the state of homelessness should be addressed as vigorously as possible in this project. The aim is to provide opportunity for the homeless woman to start on the path which will lead her, eventually, to a secure home tailored to her unique needs. Thus the mandate of the project is much more than simple provision of safe, temporary shelter. Strong connections are meant to be facilitated through associations within the project with critical services in the community. Where such supports are unavailable or inadequate, organizing for social action may be appropriate.

Health - Close links can be immediately established with the existing network of health care services. In this instance, this connection would include ties with the Downtown Community Health Clinic, the mental health community care teams, the visiting nurses, programs developed by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and any other available resources. Within the project, the development of a healing environment and the nurturing of informal support systems for the promotion of good health would be encouraged.

Social - The existing Downtown Eastside Women's Centre is the setting where many nurturing, mutually beneficial bonds between women are already presently forged. The Centre, however is limited in size and more space for additional programs is an articulated need. Siting the project in close proximity to the existing centre would be beneficial to both operations.

Through the Women's Centre, many contacts are made with visiting professionals, particularly in the field of health care and social services, and with a positive commitment to further collaboration, the range of these contacts could both deepen and widen. On an informal basis, the mutual support that tends to prevail in a safe, secure atmosphere can be further cultivated in both the proposed project and the Women's Centre. Both sites can benefit very positively from this cross-fertilization of energy and skill, focused whenever required on helping the homeless woman to build a network of social ties and to address her unique problems in the social exchange.
Family breakdown affects a large segment of the population of our society, and family violence currently affects at least an estimated one in ten women today. (Freedman 1985, 41-42) Strong links with such services as the Battered Women’s Support Services, the various transition houses for battered women, appropriate therapists and practitioners in the community; and a willingness to address the range of social problems directly and positively within the supportive community, will contribute a great deal towards the solution of many of these problems.

Income/Work - Most of the residents of the project are likely to be recipients of welfare. This means that poverty is a fundamental fact of their existence. Often, relations with the income assistance agencies are less than optimal, and advocacy on behalf of the residents may be appropriate in order to obtain full benefits. Often misinformation can be corrected and misunderstanding can be set right by means of skillful communication. The whimsical nature of provincial income assistance policy can be addressed on all appropriate levels by a community committed to working together. This might be especially important at times of acute crisis generated by the changing policies adopted by the government. Connections with community groups such as the Downtown Deposit Project, People on Welfare, or End Legislated Poverty could be helpful to those women struggling to survive financially.

Although the welfare program appears to have some built-in disincentives to work for recipients of income assistance, much can be done by a group of women who are similarly hamstrung by inability to find or maintain a job. Self-generated, facilitated programs to address this critical issue would vary with the changing resident population within the project, and appropriate links can be made to relevant resources where they exist. The principles of Community Economic Development (CED) may be exposed and discussed at whatever level is appropriate in the resident community and with allied others at any time. Access to a wide range of education programs both within and without the immediate area are often a critical factor in securing appropriate and meaningful work.
Housing - The housing crisis in Vancouver is a fundamental reality, the battle against which women associated with the project may turn their energies. Within the actual project some few first and second stage housing needs will be addressed. Skills employed in generating and maintaining this project may well be expertly applied in other places in due time. Skills learned and shared in other projects, notably the development of Mavis/McMullen, can be borrowed and shared now. In this way, step by step, a strong network can emerge to confront the terrible hopelessness and powerlessness of women trapped in a housing nightmare.
Summary of the Proposal

It is believed that provision should be made in the project to respond to the needs of 20 women at the first stage of housing/support.

This element of the scheme would be composed of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>net area sq.ft</th>
<th>gross area sq.ft*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>residential spaces</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td>4240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shared amenity spaces</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>2560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service/support space</td>
<td>1380</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5630 sq.ft.</strong></td>
<td><strong>9008 sq.ft. @ factor 1.6</strong></td>
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</table>

An additional residential/shared amenity space sufficient to meet the needs of 10 more women requiring second stage or transitional accommodation should be provided in the project as well. This component would be ideally located in a separate part of the same building as the first stage accommodation, so that strong links between the components, where desired, could be enabled. Where possible, amenity space and service/support space could be shared among the components to prevent duplication of services.

This element of the scheme would require approximately:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>net area sq.ft</th>
<th>gross area sq.ft*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>residential space</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shared amenity space</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service/support space</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2500 sq.ft.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4000 sq.ft. @ factor 1.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the approximate net area required for the project would be 8000 square feet. The gross area required for the project would be approximately 13,000 sq.ft. @ factor 1.6.
THE RESIDENTS

Most of the women for whom this accommodation would be required can be called homeless because their present living situation, mostly the cheap SROs of the Downtown Eastside, cannot be construed to be a home. Profiles of a sample of 60 such women, having a wide range of characteristics, have been supplied in an earlier part of this document.

Problems Which May Precipitate the Need for this Resource

It appears that in the female population of the Downtown Eastside the need often arises for emergency accommodation for reasons which can be connected to the five factors identified as contributing to the phenomenon of homelessness in general.

Income - Almost all of the female residents of the Downtown Eastside are poor. A graphic representation of the sample of women informally interviewed to support this proposal shows that the income of all groups falls well below the poverty line figure. It is notable as well that in all instances the percentage of income paid per month for rent is considerably higher than 30%, except for those women in social housing - Profile 7.

Figure 30 - Income of "typical" Downtown Eastside residents surveyed - related to Poverty Line figure and rent paid per month.
Obviously, with so little access to money, any unexpected financial difficulty or any even temporary lapse in fiscal responsibility can precipitate a serious crisis which could lead to a loss of shelter.

**Work** - 87.5% of the residents of the Downtown Eastside questioned in the extensive DERA survey classify themselves as unemployed. (DREA 1988, Appendix C) The reasons for this high rate of unemployment are as varied as is the population. It follows that when a secure means of production of income is absent, means to pay the rent may be absent at times too. Any work that is done to supplement income assistance is likely to constitute "fraud" and is therefore informal and undependable. Many women of the area who are unskilled in dealing with the financial assistance system are likely to experience great insecurity as a result of the vagaries of a system on which they must depend, but against which they feel powerless if their connection with it is disrupted. They are likely to experience loss of shelter if their source of money is interrupted.

**Health** - It is noted in the DERA report that 46.5% of the surveyed residents of the area report some degree of limitation of physical ability. (ibid.) Over 60% of the women interviewed in the informal survey of women reported current physical or mental problems. Crises precipitated by acute health problems, compounded by malnourishment, which is prevalent, can easily lead to loss of shelter or of the ability to live independently. Although less than half of the women met claimed current difficulties in this regard, alcohol or other drug abuse can, and often does, similarly lead to loss of shelter.

**Social** - About one-third of the women responding to the informal survey reported experiencing abuse in the form of violence, harrassment. Thirty one percent of the women said they had been raped at some time in their lives. Clearly such crises often involve the need to relocate immediately. Moreover, many women whose social difficulties have led to incarceration gravitate towards the Downtown Eastside when released from prison. These women are often lacking resources and supports upon release and can benefit greatly from a caring supportive network in a time of such a difficult transition. Street women, whose lives
are routinely very vulnerable to great risk, would require emergency shelter in times of crisis as well.

Housing - Thirty per cent of the women interviewed in the informal survey reported evictions at some time from hotels and rooming houses for a variety of reasons. Some told of the failure of managers to return rent paid in advance, leaving them without funds. Some women spoke of difficulties in managing their meagre sums of money and, when this difficulty is combined with the costly alcohol or other drug addictions many women struggle against, the problem of paying for shelter becomes even more complex.

Events leading to Expo 86 in Vancouver amply demonstrated the fragility of tenure of residents in area accommodation. Many such hotels and rooming houses were renovated in hopes of attracting tourist dollars - many longtime residents were evicted. Now many of the hotels are in receivership, further contributing to the uncertainty of accommodation in the area. As development pressures mount, it is painfully apparent that many residents are at risk of losing altogether their already tenuous grip on shelter.
THE ARRAY OF NEEDS

The women who are likely to use this project have the same needs as the general population, but the degree of need may be more intense. Response to the needs must be made in view of the fact that many of the women may have been doing without some of the fundamental requirements such as shelter, adequate rest and food, for some time before seeking admission to this place.

Mayer Spivak, Director of the Environmental Analysis and Design Unit at the Harvard Medical School, has developed a concept of archetypal places which he proposes to counter what he calls "setting deprivation". Many of his insights were suggested by his work in mental hospital settings. Spivak believes that in limited or deprived settings, people lose their personal competence, and he has seen ample evidence to convince him that the converse is also true. He has noted: "Narrow, invariant environments may develop grotesque societies and stunted lives." (Spivak 1973, 45)

Spivak has listed a total set of tasks which people must perform in the course of daily life, and which he believes must be supported by appropriate, behaviorally defined archetypal spaces. The list is reproduced on the following page. On it are the tasks and the generally related life cycle stages when those tasks are optimally accomplished.

A range of women finding themselves at a range of life cycle stages would be the likely users of this proposed project. Without going into the more refined ramifications of the life stages here, it is useful instead to simply list the tasks which Spivak has outlined, and to note in a very rudimentary way how these tasks can be supported by the project - how these needs can be met. The accompanying list can serve as a guide to further evolution of the setting as it grows richer and more refined over time.

Tasks and Responses

SHELTER - Many women will have been without secure shelter or shelter of any kind, and will require a clear perception of safety in the project. Shelter as "retreat" as noted by Spivak will likely be of principal importance to these women initially.
## GENERALLY RELATED LIFE CYCLE STAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>INFANCY</th>
<th>CHILDHOOD</th>
<th>ADOLESCENCE</th>
<th>COURTING/MATING</th>
<th>REPRODUCTION</th>
<th>CHILD CARE</th>
<th>MIDDLE LIFE</th>
<th>AGING MATURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refex</td>
<td>motor, social, verbal, intellectual, emotional competence</td>
<td>Forge identity, establish peer group regulations, social/sexual exploration</td>
<td>Group with peers, pair-bonding, obtain sexual privacy</td>
<td>Nesting/nurturing, symbiosis, socialization</td>
<td>Group with Dees, parent, obtain sexual privacy</td>
<td>Care of aging parents, re-emphasis on worldly affairs, redefine identity, contact, health, accent care by others, mortality</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SHELTER**
Elemental protection; protection for nesting activities; retreat from stimulation, aggression, threat; social contact; emotional recuperation.

**SLEEP**
Neurophysiological processes; recuperation, rest; reduced stimulation; labor and birth, postnatal care of mother and child, death.

**MATE**
Courting rituals; pair-bonding; copulation; affectionate behavior; communication.

**GROOM**
Washing; mutual grooming.

**FEED**
Eating, slaking thirst; communication; social gathering; feeding others.

**EXCRETE**
Excreting; territorial marking.

**STORE**
Hiding of food and other property; storage; hoarding.

**TERRITORY**
Spying; contemplation; meditating; planning; waiting; territorial sentry; defending; observing.

**PLAY**
Motor satisfactions; role testing; rule breaking; fantasy, exercise; creation; discovery; dominance testing; synthesis.

**ROUTE**
Perimeter checking; territorial confirmation; motor satisfactions; social and community control.

**MEET**
Communication; dominance testing; governing; education, worship; socialization; meditation; cosmic awe; moral concerns.

**COMPETE**
Agonistic ritual; dominance testing; ecological competition; inter-species defense; intra-species defense and aggression; mating; chauvinistic conflict.

**WORK**
Hunting; gathering; earning; building; making.

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Figure 31 - Spivak's Life Cycle Stages and related tasks.
SLEEP - Many women will likely be suffering from sleep deprivation and associated difficulties if they are coming from a disrupted existence. The opportunity for peaceful, regenerative sleep and recuperation must be carefully created in the project.

MATE - Women who use the project may have partners or may wish to have partners. Adequate provision must be made within the project for communication with visitors who may be of principal importance in a woman's life.

GROOM - Adequate provision for grooming in the form of private washrooms, and perhaps a centre containing hair dryers and hairdressing equipment and the like is necessary. Access to laundry and ironing facilities is also required.

FEED - Many women of the Downtown Eastside suffer from malnourishment. Some women may be unable to satisfy their own personal nutritional needs. It is proposed therefore that at least two nutritional meals be prepared and served communally in the project per day, and that one meal, perhaps lunch, be the responsibility of the individual. A dining room capable of serving the entire resident population and staff is thus required. Kitchenettes in each cluster of 4 or 5 women would be very beneficial in nurturing self-responsibility for healthy feeding.

STORE - Personal effects are often very difficult to keep track of in a transitory lifestyle. The importance of personal property to a homeless person cannot be underestimated. Thus adequate storage of goods must be provided. If this is not possible in the actual residence, the securing of an adjacent space for this purpose is strongly recommended.

TERRITORY - The marking of territory occurs at several scales. Women in residence should be able to fully control their own private space and have some say in the control of their semi-private cluster and the semi-public more communally shared areas. It is suggested that the residents, when possible, take the responsibility for the security of the total project as well.

PLAY/MEET - Ample space must be provided for women to socialize and to form a supportive community. This is the principal formal difference between this project and an ordinary SRO hotel, which often lacks any such amenity. Strong programming, generated by the residents
where possible, is also considered to be a key factor. A range of opportunities must be available which nurture growth and healing.

ROUTE/COMPETE - Location in the familiar community of the Downtown Eastside is an important aspect of this project. Many women have reported that efforts to relocate in other areas have failed because the immediate community is so important to their lives. A stay in the project may help one to become more capable of taking social control and acting as a positive force in the community, and to compete in the larger world from a position of increased strength.

WORK - Within the project, opportunities for work in the traditional sense of fulltime paid employment will not be readily available. Chances for healing and strengthening through positive action can be created, however, in the day to day operation of the project and in further related developments in the network. A woman may find that, having a secure home base for awhile, she is able to venture out into the community to see what needs to be done and to offer her energies.
PROBLEM STATEMENT

The principal GOAL of the project is to respond to the needs of the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside, and to assist women to achieve an autonomous life. This goal is based on the understanding that a shift in thinking is required to move beyond "crisis" and "emergency" shelter, to provide a supportive living environment that will be a step towards the achievement of a secure home.

The action-oriented OBJECTIVES relating specifically to this project are as follows:

1. To provide first stage temporary accommodation and the necessary supports for those women of the Downtown Eastside who are in the most acute need: the homeless women in crisis.

2. To provide a supportive community environment so that lifestyle alternatives may be created which are safer and healthier than currently established patterns.

3. To complement and to provide liaison with agencies already existing in the community.

4. To begin to fill the gaps in the existing range of accommodation and services with a project that will be considered as a positive addition to the community.

5. To implement a continuing program to assist women in locating, establishing, and maintaining their own homes. In effect, this means that the establishment of homes must be facilitated based on the understanding that the function of the project is futile without an available range of long term options to choose from upon leaving the first stage setting.

6. To provide a focus for involvement of the women's community to alter societal attitudes towards the disadvantaged women of the Downtown Eastside, and to help influence public opinion and policy favourably to meet the needs of those women.

7. To develop a viable, affordable project based on available programs of the three levels of government and other funding sources.

(Some of these objectives have been adapted from those of the Vancouver Women's Shelter Society. The relevant objectives were articulated first in 1983, and adopted by the current committee working to achieve this project.)
THE PROGRAMMATIC CONCEPTS AND GUIDELINES

It has been observed by housing advocates that if the homeless are able to make homes in a supportive community, their chances for the achievement of an improved lifestyle are increased. In Chapter 5 of this document, the factors identified by the Single Displaced Persons Project of Toronto as critical in developing the supportive community were noted. These factors, though intended for use in the development of long term settings, can well be adapted to suit a more temporary situation. The use of these adapted principles have served as guidelines for the development of programmatic concepts for a supportive community in this project.

Regarding the Individual Resident:

Although the housing is not intended to be a long term home, but a potential bridge to a long term home, the setting must reinforce the feelings of safety and security which are likely to be urgently required by the individual resident. Therefore:

1. It must be apparent that public access to the building is completely controlled so that any actual or perceived dangers from the outside are minimized.

   Visitors to the project must be monitored and spaces to which visitors are allowed must be easily supervised. The residents themselves might be encouraged to take an active though unobtrusive role in this supervision. It must be understood however that ties to persons not within the centre will need to be nurtured, and appropriate settings must be provided for this to occur.

2. A range of spaces must be provided to respond to the needs of the residents.

   The residents will require privacy at times and opportunity for social exchange at other times. The spaces should be designed with these requirements in mind. A hierarchy of spaces including public, controlled or semi-public, semi-private, and private or shared intimate space should be available. These spaces should be easily read as being in the private or semi-public domain, and should be easily controlled by whomever assumes that responsibility where necessary.
Some residents will prefer to have their own room, and others might prefer to share with a roommate. A flexible partitioning system would be a practical way to accommodate the wishes of each individual.

Bathroom space should be private space. If bathrooms are provided in sufficient numbers to serve the needs of all residents - probably one per each four residents - there should be no disruption of this privacy. At least one of the bathrooms would need to be of sufficient size to accommodate a handicapped resident.

The living units will, because of obvious budgetary constraints, be small and basic in nature, though several may need to be somewhat more generous in size to accommodate residents with special needs. All such spaces can however be claimed as a temporary home by the residents if opportunities for personalization are provided such as adaptable furniture arrangements, and if a variety of appointments for the rooms are available.

Regarding the Community of Residents

It has been found in the experience of the housing facilitators in Toronto that groups of four or five are the preferred size for the development of cooperative relationships. Therefore:

3. "Clusters" of individual or shared living units related to small semi-private shared spaces equipped with some rudimentary kitchen appliances would encourage the formation of groups of this optimal size. Although grouping by problem label has not been found to be helpful to residents, natural groupings based on criteria generated by the residents themselves would potentially evolve in this setting.

4. Larger communal space should be provided for gatherings of the entire household as well. It is important that the residents of the place be given the opportunity to feel part of the larger community, and to build and nurture a strong personal network of both residents and people outside the immediate environment. There should be an array of options which
support the opportunity for casual informal contact among the residents. A variety of types and sizes of space should be available for a broad range of potential groupings.

It is an aid to the encouragement of informal interaction if small informal spaces for casual contact are created at opportune points along the circulation route. For those who are anxious about social contact, it is important that the individual be given the opportunity to preview a group social situation before deciding whether or not to join.

Regarding the Staff

Staff needs for privacy - a place to unwind, or to be "offstage", or to perform tasks requiring quiet concentration, must be acknowledged. Provision must be made for staff and resident interaction on a range of levels of intensity as well. Therefore:

5. A range of spaces for staff to function effectively at private and interactive levels must be available.

Some interactions will require complete visual and auditory privacy, and in other instances at least visual contact with other areas will be necessary. A range of flexibility with respect to connections between spaces is thus needed.

6. With respect to the management of the project, it is highly recommended that decision making be based on an interactive process involving residents, staff, and other decision makers such as board members. The building therefore should provide settings for a variety of opportunities for interaction ranging from informal, in-passing contact to more formalized meeting spaces for groups of varying size. One space should be able to accommodate the entire resident community and staff at a time.

Regarding the Neighbourhood

The project should be located in the area where the need is most apparent and where those people most likely to use the facility have chosen for it to be. In this instance, the Downtown Eastside is the preferred choice for the location of the project. The existing
network of services in the Downtown Eastside, though containing some gaps, is critical to the success of the project. Proximity to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre would be especially beneficial. It is critical that linkages be formed and reinforced between residents and the network. Some of these contacts will take place within the project. Therefore:

7. Interaction spaces for itinerant visiting professionals and others important to the residents' well-being must be provided within the project.

Perhaps at a later stage of evolution of the project and outreach sub-project connected with the housing might be evolved. A drop-in facility or a cafe or snackery for women and/or the larger community might be another valuable link with the surrounding neighbourhood both for those within and on the outside.

Regarding the Form of the Project

In light of the current situation in the Downtown Eastside, a likely and viable development possibility for this project might be the adaptation and renovation of an existing SRO hotel. If this were the case, any proposed building would need to be carefully scrutinized to ascertain whether its characteristics would be suitable to accommodate the functions of the program. This would involve consideration of the following elements:

- **Size:** to provide accommodation for a maximum of twenty residents in first stage accommodation. This is the figure which is recommended by the Single Displaced Persons Project as being conducive to creating a homelike rather than an institutional quality setting. Second stage, longer term housing for a further ten women could be adjacent, but not fully integrated with the first stage component.

- **Immediate Context:** proximity to undesirable elements in the area must be considered, and if possible, undue dangers must be avoided.

- **Site amenities:** potential for development of amenities such as private open space (perhaps a yard or a roof garden) and an outreach facility should be considered. Any amenities which strengthen the perceived value to the supportive community within and the community of
context should be investigated. Additionally, it should be noted that residents in transition
may very likely have personal effects which are very important to them. Ample storage space,
at least allied to the site if not actually a part of it, is a critical consideration.

- **Services:** any potential building must be carefully scrutinized with respect to existing
conditions of the structure and services, and the scope of the refurbishment kept to a viable
range.
Qualities of the Project

The basic characteristics of the project should be easily recognized as homelike rather than institutional. The place is meant to serve as first stage housing, an interval or bridge along the way to a permanent home; but it is not meant to be used as a permanent dwelling place. The emphasis is on healthy transition.

The concept of a "safe hotel" or "hotel for women" model is especially appropriate to this project for several reasons. The "hotel" model is very much a familiar one in the Downtown Eastside. A hotel which offers amenities such as common spaces to support a wide range of social interactions, and semi-private washroom facilities instead of enforced sharing, would be a vast improvement over the typical examples in existence, but still a setting with which residents are comfortably familiar. If the decision eventually were made to adapt and reuse an existing SRO building, the aim might be to transform an example of that very important housing type in the Downtown Eastside to its best and most gracious potential - something which has not typically been done in the area.

Another advantage of the safe hotel model is that a hotel is often understood to be a place for people in transit; a place to stay for a temporary period. Moreover, it is not necessary to surrender one's autonomy upon entry into a hotel, though such a setting supplies opportunities for rich social exchange if it is desired. This aspect of hotels supports the premise that in a supportive community one should be free to develop relationships with whomever one chooses in the community, and to the level of involvement that is mutually desired.

It should be noted that the "hotel" concept could cause a problem in this instance with respect to the operating processes if the idea were to be interpreted too literally. Hotels traditionally employ staff to serve guests. In this project the goal is to provide every possible opportunity to form a supportive community in which the individual finds, and operates from, one's own power base. No one should carry the expectation to this "hotel" that they will be waited upon or relieved of responsibility to oneself or the community, as one might expect in
a holiday hotel setting. The degree of formality or informality of the operating process within the "hotel" concept may vary with the changing community, but the principal goal of formation of a supportive community should not be lost or confused in the interpretation of the metaphor.

The project should express a friendly quality, but be clearly respectful of the privacy of those within. While a welcoming entry lacking any trace of meanness or overzealous guarding of the budget is important, it must be kept in mind that the place is not meant to be read as one where anyone might enter at will. The place should project a calm and perhaps oasis-like quality, but should not appear oppressive.

The interior should be composed of durable and easy to maintain materials, but not so much so that it appears too institutional or expectant of misbehaviour or abuse. Common spaces, particularly those which are open to visitors, may well be appointed in the manner of a comfortable and quite informal hotel lounge; or perhaps a friendly bed and breakfast establishment. Private spaces, such as the bedroom clusters, should be able to become as personalized and homelike as each individual and small group chooses to make them.
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The Operation Model

The cost of the project must be kept within the constraints, as yet unknown, set by funding bodies. DERA maintains that since Expo, many hotels are in receivership and thus available for sale at reasonable prices. Innovative funding approaches involving non-government agencies and the three levels of government, especially the Ministry of Health scheme to fund services which take the place of acute care hospitalization, may broaden the budgetary range. Fundraising should be based upon the notion that this project is critically needed and that homeless women have a right to a home.

It is not expected that the project would be financially self-supporting, but it must be kept in mind that this would be optimal. Certainly the implications with respect to staffing and range of services offered by the project are intimately connected to available funding. The actual operating policies will need to be developed at a later phase, when program funding and operating costs can be accurately identified. It is recommended that the group taking responsibility for the project make a commitment not to proceed on the project until funding for all components is secured. Unless this commitment is made in the development stages, the project may simply become yet another hostel, providing shelter for those without a roof, but ineffective as a response to the phenomenon of homelessness.

A Metaphor for Management

Chapter 5 of the thesis contains a detailed examination of the complex concept of "facilitative management" which is well-grounded in the experience of the Single Displaced Persons Project. Some of the implications of this innovative and progressive attitude towards management can be translated into principles designed to guide the processes in this project.

The principal goal of the management process is to create an environment which enables residents to discover and use their own powers to improve the quality of their lives both individually and collectively.
The implication in practical terms can be summarized in a few principles adapted from the management "metaphor" formed by the SDPP. The group has chosen to call their concept a metaphor rather than a set of policies so that each group developing an individual situation will adapt the ideas to the needs of the specific situation rather than slavishly following what is not meant to be a rigid structure.

The implications in practical terms for this project can be summarized in a few principles adapted from the metaphor of facilitative management.

1. Staff are seen to be enablers - they do not "do for" the residents, but when necessary, they facilitate the doing, or "do with".

2. At the initial stages of the project, staff capabilities will determine who may be resident in the project. Once the pool of resident strength is tapped as a resource, and the linkages to community services outside the project are established, the capacity to absorb more "problem energy" into the residence will theoretically grow.

3. A study of the facilitative management metaphor suggests an alternative to the traditional categorizing of types of staff. It is less important that staff tasks and responsibilities be differentiated according to job description than that staff are capable of functioning in a flexible way, responding to what emerging circumstance demands. Staff must be capable of understanding and acknowledging that the empowerment of the individual is critical to the success of the facilitative management metaphor. They must accept that ability to operate in an enabling environment requires the discovery and use of personal skills on an ongoing basis. Staff would need to be committed to the philosophy of empowerment and willing to operate in a facilitative rather than a controlling or caretaking role.

4. If staff are perceived to be facilitators or coordinators of energy rather than "doers for", the ongoing maintenance and structural tasks may well be taken out of the hands of the staff and gradually adopted by the residents. Security patrols, cooking and cleaning chores, light and even heavy maintenance, keeping the reception desk, and offering informal contact and support are samples of roles that could well be adopted by capable residents.
The ongoing roles of staff might then lean more towards consistent administration of the operation on a day to day basis, establishing and maintaining critical linkages with other services, and coordinating the energy required to continue the development of a full range of options for disadvantaged women.

5. With respect to who can be admitted to the supportive community, criteria for entry may need to be connected to the capacity of the community to handle the situation. If a woman presents problems or behaviours that are beyond the scope of the community, careful referral may need to be made to other appropriate services.

6. The criteria for admission should be strictly based on need and the ability of the place to handle the need effectively. The criteria for entry should not include any assumptions regarding participation in programs and entry should not be contingent upon an agreement to participate in programs.

7. Mutually negotiated social contracts are an effective vehicle for management and interaction that is predicated on the basis of resident or peer accountability and empowerment.

8. The informal survey of potential users has already revealed a definite bias towards a somewhat strict structure of expectations for behaviour while on the premises. Many women spoke in favour of regulations barring violence, alcohol and drugs, and men, from the project. These community generated regulations may be an appropriate starting point for discussion in the development of a set of standards for behavior within the project.
Staffing

The facility will require full time staffing, 24 hours per day, though in time it is expected that residents will assume increased responsibility. When this occurs, staff can be freed to facilitate further development and refinement of the operation and perhaps work towards expansion of the facility and development of further stage housing. It is believed that understaffing would be a dangerous and self-defeating policy for the project and that it should not be considered. Funds can be found if the critical nature of the requirement is fully understood and expressed to funding sources.

The "collective" model of staffing, as practiced by Nellie's in Toronto, seems a worthy model, well suited to reinforce the non-hierarchical, empowering philosophical position. Staff at Nellie's all earn similar, generous (about $32,000 per annum) salaries. It is written into the job description that outside networking in chosen aspects of the supportive care system, such as participation in committee work, is mandatory. Staff must balance the outside work that is taken on to suit their own needs and capabilities.

Staff tend to stay on the job at Nellie's an average of six years. This consistency in staffing is seen as a particularly necessary component of the success of the facility. It appears that all efforts to ensure high morale on the staff pay dividends that cannot easily be measured.

The important role of the large, twenty member, high profile board of the Nellie's society cannot be underestimated. It is this resource pool of deeply committed energy that has enabled the organization to become a guiding and dynamic force in the generation of much needed accommodation for the homeless women of Toronto. (Joyce Brown, personal interview, 11 May, 1989)

It is believed that, as at Nellie's, a staff of 10 workers would be adequate to respond to the needs of 30 residents. This would allow each of three shifts per day to be staffed by two workers. The management and administrative and community linkage tasks could be pursued, where possible, by people working on any of the shifts; but the day shift would perhaps need to be expanded if it were discovered that the workload was unevenly distributed.
ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The program will, as far as resources allow, be individually tailored to the unique needs of the residents. If a crisis has led to disarray, a resting period in which the resident is allowed to compose herself may be required. When appropriate, an active involvement in transition to a desired lifestyle would be encouraged.

Following are the elements of the program which may be included:

- emotional and any other support required for initial stabilization - leading to gradual entry into the community

- mutually negotiated contracts regarding day to day responsibilities within the supportive community which can be renegotiated whenever capabilities change

- mutually negotiated contracts regarding transition - staff and involved others may identify and apprise the residents of options available, and then facilitate appropriate links

(These contracts might include commitments to contact professionals such as a physician, a psychologist, a social worker, a mental health worker, a public health nurse, an addiction counsellor, a physiotherapist, a nutrition counsellor, or the like. Community resources such as the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, the Downtown Community Health Clinic, DERA, the churches, recreational options, voluntary agencies, educational/employment services, and supportive networks developed within the community would be similarly approached.)

- in-house participation in day to day tasks including maintenance, improvement of the physical setting, contribution to group events

- growing contribution to the supportive community - stabilized residents may be encouraged to voluntarily assist newcomers in familiarization with the setting, assist in the development of living patterns that reflect their unique contribution and respond to the needs of the changing community

- personal development of appropriate goals and gradual achievement of such goals - each resident will develop a personally tailored plan with the help of appropriate others, and work towards the accomplishment of whatever is selected for the focus of attention.
(Staff and able others would facilitate any required links within the supportive community and in the larger community as well. The range of possibilities is a broad here as the personal needs and desires may generate, and might include such diverse activities as:

- assistance in personal hygiene
- obtaining clothing form appropriate community resources and assuming the responsibility for its care
- development of personal skills as required in any area such as emotional, financial, social, academic, and the like: wherever there is a perceived need
- planning and maintaining a personalized program of health promotion which would include diet and exercise factors and regular visits to professional helpers of all sorts
- obtaining legal assistance - with as much direct help as required
- forging links with housing advocates
- participating in action for the development of housing options in the community
- participating as a contributing and valued member of a nurturing supportive community through contribution to the day to day running of the place and participation in chores and tasks
- planning and contributing to economic, social, and recreational activities both inside the project and in the larger community.)
THE PROGRAM PROCESSES

The bulk of the operational aspects of the program cannot be clearly predetermined, but will instead be the logical outcome of the changing needs of the residents. A sample framework can be suggested at this stage however, which gives shape and focus to the program, and which can be a point of departure if more suitable alternative processes are evolved.

Admissions

Admission should be by self-referral, but other relevant agencies should be aware of the facility and able to inform potential residents of its existence. The target group is the homeless women of the Downtown Eastside.

Criteria for Entry

The ideal is that need be the sole criteria for admission to the project. This ideal may need to be modified to screen out women whose needs are beyond the capacity of the community to meet and who could better be served by other facilities in the network of care. If there is a high demand for entry, a system of prioritization may be required. Suggested guidelines at the initial stages might include:

- degree of need and availability of other options - the priority would be given to women in high risk situations or in instances of absolute lack of shelter with no options.

- willingness to participate in and the capacity to benefit from the supportive community

- willingness to adhere to a basic, community set, code of behaviour

- composition of the group

- commitment to "go forward" rather than a demonstrated attempt to use the facility as permanent housing.

Length of Stay

The vast majority of the women surveyed recommended that a time frame of 3-6 months is preferable to shorter stays, though some suggested that short term stays are sometimes
appropriate as well. The experience of the SDPP has shown that stays of less than a month are often inadequate to change patterns and to successfully negotiate a transition from homelessness to home. It should not be necessary to "evict" a woman at a fixed time if a reasonable housing option is not located out of sincere and concerted effort.

Living Arrangements

It is suggested that clusters of rooms accommodating 4 or 5 residents be formed - wherever possible based on the desires of the residents themselves to live/work together, and focusing on whatever goals they have identified. One such cluster might be reserved for incoming residents whose period of adjustment to the facility might include special requirements. This cluster would logically be located close to staff support.

Daily Function

Incoming, not yet stabilized residents may require help with daily tasks which would ideally be provided by other resident members of the supportive community, but may be especially facilitated by the staff. Whenever possible, residents would be encouraged to assume responsibility for daily routines which would be largely self-determined but within mutually agreed upon reasonable bounds. Such aspects of the day might include:

- waking/rising times
- regular meal times
- action times - participation in programs and daily tasks
- reflection times
- retiring times.

Follow up

It is reasoned that this facility would provide a focus for women where they could form a supportive network for themselves which would be available whether or not they are actually in residence at any given time. Maximum provision should be made for contact with the supportive community before, during, and after a stay there. Women should feel free and
welcome to return to receive help as needed and to offer help to those others who are requiring healthy peer support.
THE FACILITY

The primary role of the facility is to provide "bridge" or first stage housing to homeless women in the Downtown Eastside. This focus necessitates the provision of residential space meant to be used as temporary housing for periods of between 3-6 months or as required. This function could well be fulfilled by the adaptive re-use of an existing SRO hotel. In that instance, the "hotel" model would clearly prevail rather than "house" or "hostel" or facility of an institutional nature. Equally important to the actual sleeping areas are the amenity spaces designed to facilitate the growth of a strong supportive community. Without shared amenity space, the project would be simply a shelter or hostel, unlikely to fulfill its role as an entry stage setting on the journey towards the establishment of a permanent home for homeless women.

Spatial Needs of the Project

The spatial requirements are described in terms of the abovementioned three principal functions - residential space, amenity space, and service or support space.

1. Residential Space

   bedrooms - approximately 100 square feet per person = 2000 sq. ft.

   The residential space must be able to accommodate 20 women at a time. It is believed that small clusters or groupings of residents may enable the building of stronger bonds of friendship and support in a way that larger groupings might inhibit. Women in crisis may well prefer to negotiate relationships with a smaller, more manageable group. Therefore it is proposed that provision be made for 5 clusters of bedrooms each to house 4 women. Each cluster would thus be composed of 2 bedrooms - each bedroom having a flexible partition to allow for an adaptable degree of privacy. A low wall and moveable screen, or moveable large pieces for furniture such as shelving, a closet or wardrobe/bureau combination might be used in the double bedroom space in various configurations to suit the needs of the residents.
Each bedroom should be of a minimum of 200 square feet to ensure sufficient room to enable alternate configurations of furnishings. (In a renovated SRO hotel, this would be a simple matter to achieve as each typical bedroom is about 100 square feet as found. Perhaps for variety several single rooms could be retained for use by those having a high need for privacy.)

The furniture required would be: beds, bureau/wardrobe or shelving unit, tables, chairs, tackboard, choice of appointments - bedspreads, curtains, etc., side chairs, bedside tables.

**washrooms - 5 @ 50 square feet**

Each cluster of 4 residents should have access to a shared washroom facility containing shower/tub, washbasin and toilet. Fittings which would be required are: mirror, towel racks, hooks and shelves for clothing, private lock with exterior override capacity. The services required are: 110V AC, tempered water, drain, venting.

**kitchenettes - 5 @ 80 square feet**

Each cluster of 4 women should have access as well to a small kitchenette. A small table and seating area would encourage informal cameraderie over snacks or whatever amongst the residents. Furniture and fittings required in the space are: efficiency unit with a sink and small counter, a hotplate or a toaster oven, cupboards, a table, and 4 or 5 chairs. Services required are: duplex outlets, water, drain, ventilation.

**transitional space (not included in net square area)**

The area between the semi-private cluster space - including the bedrooms, kitchenette, and washroom - and the general circulation system of the project should be provided with some sort of landing or antespace which would serve to remove the more private cluster from direct involvement in the general circulation paths. This area could well be appointed with some seating furniture which would form a setting for casual social exchanges.
Residential space for the Second Stage Component - 1500 square feet

It is recommended that a variety of configurations be made available to the women who are in the second stage, more independent component of the project. Perhaps a good division might be 4 very basic self-contained rooms containing cooking facilities but sharing a washroom amongst the 4, and 3 double rooms sharing outside kitchenette facilities as well as washrooms. It is to be kept in mind that this area serves as a transition setting, and is not to be confused with a permanent home. Such a setting in a supportive community may provide the necessary supports and contacts to take up or return to independent living armed with new skills, renewed health, and an ongoing membership in a supportive network of care.

II. Shared Amenity Spaces

Shared social space should be developed at the rate of approximately 80 square feet per resident.(apra 1985 (September), 32) This space can be distributed in a variety of ways but it should be designed to provide a good range of large and small settings in which residents' needs can be met.

Dining Room/Multi-purpose Room - 400 square feet

This room would be the setting for two or three meals a day and any incidental informal gathering that might take place at other times. It may be the setting for meetings and parties as well. It is recommended that the room be large enough to accommodate all residents, including those in the second stage component, and staff, comfortably at one time, though not necessarily for a meal. Furniture required would include small (4 or 5 person) dining tables, preferably round; 25 chairs, and suitable appointments for storage and serving.

In-house Program Spaces - approximately 600 square feet

Included in this type of setting might be a games room, a music room, a spot for viewing TV, a living room, a smoking room, and the like. The program space could take the form of a multi-purpose room or more ideally, a series of rooms or spaces furnished according to functions which might change according to the needs and interests of the residents over time.
The space(s) should be furnished with comfortable yet durable furniture of a homelike, not institutional quality, and provided with appropriate lighting and acoustic control. Provision should be made for the comfort of non-smokers, but respect for existing patterns should be demonstrated as well. Equipment and furniture required might include: sofas, armchairs, tables and chairs, a TV, a stereo and radio, shelving, tackable surfaces.

**Semi-public lounges - 200 square feet**

This space or series of spaces would be used by residents or residents and their visitors as decided by the community. The space would require flexible provision for privacy but should be located for easy supervision by the supportive community. If it is opened to visitors, it should be located away from spaces deemed private by the residential community. These areas may also carry the potential for emergency stay spaces, for use in times of emergency overflow conditions which may from time to time occur. Equipment and furniture which may be required includes: bed-sofas, tables and chairs, a coffee machine, shelving, and tackable surfaces.

**Common Kitchen/Pantry - 400 square feet**

This space could house the parallel functions of cooking and chores as well as visiting and conversation in the course of day to day tasks. It would be as well the setting for incidental and more formal transfers of skills and knowledge related to cooking, good nutrition and good health practices. There should be ample provision for at least 7-8 women to move about freely in the room at one time, working together to prepare meals, clean up, or learn together. Ample allocation should be made as well for pantry space, located as nearby as possible to the service entrance. Furniture and equipment of a domestic rather than commercial grade would be preferable, to foster a sense of home, and to provide practice with such appliances. This equipment and the appliances would include: 2 large domestic cookstoves, adequate counter space, a large refrigerator and a freezer, double sinks, a range and adequate quantity of portable appliances. Open shelving is recommended for the pantry.
Open Space - 400-500 square feet

A yard or roof garden, well shielded from the elements and from the gaze of onlookers is an amenity which would satisfy the requirements for a pleasant outdoor space. This might possibly become the setting as well for such activities as vegetable and flower growing, and passive relaxation. The decision regarding whether this would be a private or semi-public space should be made by the residential community.

Shared Amenity Space for the Second Stage Component - 500 square feet

It is recommended that women in the second stage component of the project, though having access to the amenities of the first stage, be self-contained to the degree that if they choose to stay in their own area, they can. Thus a kitchen and dining room/multi-purpose space, adequate to serve the needs of the entire group if necessary, should be provided. Programming of this area should remain as flexible as possible, and be determined by the residents themselves. It should be equipped with an adequate range and quantity of standard domestic kitchen appliances - a stove, refrigerator, sink, counter and storage space, and tables and chairs to accommodate 10 people, at the very least.

Service and Support Space

Entry Vestibule - 50 square feet

A welcoming entry should be provided where visitors, newcomers, and residents have the opportunity to compose themselves before entering the project. This may be a good place to post notices of interest to the outside community, to wait for a friend, or to visit with someone who is not ready or able to enter the building.

Entry control-point - 40 square feet, Office - 100 square feet, Special Needs - 150 square feet, Intake - 50 square feet

There should be an entrance area clearly within the building proper, from which all entries and exits to the supportive community can be supervised and controlled. This may take the
configuration of a hotel clerk's desk or some form of transaction counter, having a telephone, post or message boxes, and at least one person representing "security" present at all times. This would be the appropriate place for the annunciator panel to be located as well.

Adjacent the entry desk should be a small office or work station which would function as the administrative centre for the project.

The "special needs room" could be used as a multi-purpose office/interview/quiet room which would be an appropriate setting for dealing with whatever needs are presented by incoming residents if they are unable to move into a regular bedroom right away. The space could also be used for quiet exchanges, private visits, and overflow guests in an emergency. Furniture needed would include: 2 sofa-beds, table and chairs and shelving units which might function as screens if desired.

The intake/assist facility would be large enough to accommodate a shower/bath for a resident and a helper. It should also include racks for towels and pegs or hooks for clothing. A half-bathroom of approximately 40 square feet might be located adjacent the entry point for use by the community and visitors. It would need a toilet, basin, and a mirror.

Utility/Laundry Room and Maintenance Closet - 150 square feet

For residents use, this space should be made to be as attractive and comfortable as possible as it will likely function as an informal social space as well as a work area. It would need 2 washers, 2 dryers (stacked), ironing boards, a large table, some chairs, sink, cupboard with shelves for janitorial supplies and equipment.

Linen Storage - 60 square feet

This would be a shelved area for storage of linen supplies which may be easily viewed when residents come in to choose from a variety of options - spreads, curtains, towels, sheets, and the like.

Maintenance/Workshop - 180 square feet

This space should be zoned so that a number of activities can occur there simultaneously. Individual or group projects requiring space and generating mess might be worked on in this
space, and it would also be a logical storage place for tools and equipment required for minor repairs and maintenance.

Community and Individual Residents Storage - 600 square feet

In times of transience, residents either lose all possessions or locate a safe place to store them. Some residents will avoid losing what they own if ample storage is provided in or adjacent the project. Seasonal equipment and unused furniture of the supportive community might be stored in this space as well. It would require deep lockers with locks, and clear floor area for storage of large pieces.

Service and Support Space for the Second Stage Area - 500 square feet

Utility, maintenance and storage functions for women in the second stage component should be provided adjacent their residential space. Some of these functions may well be shared with the first stage component, while others may best remain discrete.
### Detailed Summary of Spatial Requirements of the Project

#### First Stage Residential Project

**Residential Spaces**

- 20 private sleeping spaces @ 100 sq.ft. per person  
  - Total: 2000 sq.ft.
- 5 adjacent washrooms @ 50 sq.ft.  
  - Total: 250 sq.ft.
- 5 adjacent kitchenettes/lounges @ 80 sq.ft.  
  - Total: 400 sq.ft.
  - **Subtotal**: 2650 sq.ft.

**Shared Amenity Spaces** (calculated at approximately 80 sq.ft. per resident)

- dining/multi-purpose  
  - Total: 400 sq.ft.
- in-house program spaces (total)  
  - Total: 600 sq.ft.
- semi-private lounge/emergency stay  
  - Total: 200 sq.ft.
- common kitchen and pantry  
  - Total: 400 sq.ft.
  - **Subtotal**: 1600 sq.ft.

**Service and Support Space**

- entry vestibule/entry control  
  - Total: 90 sq.ft.
- office  
  - Total: 100 sq.ft.
- special needs  
  - Total: 150 sq.ft.
- intake/assistance area  
  - Total: 50 sq.ft.
- utility/laundry/maintenance  
  - Total: 150 sq.ft.
- linen storage  
  - Total: 60 sq.ft.
- maintenance workshop  
  - Total: 180 sq.ft.
- community/individual storage  
  - Total: 600 sq.ft.
  - **Subtotal**: 1380 sq.ft.

**Total Area for First Stage Project - 5630 sq.ft. (net) or 9008 sq.ft. (gross)**
SECOND STAGE RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

Residential Space

10 private sleeping areas @ 100 sq.ft. per person 1000 sq.ft.
washrooms and kitchenettes in various configurations 500 sq.ft

Shared Amenity Space

kitchen/dining/multi-purpose space 500 sq.ft.

Service/Support Space

Utility, maintenance and storage space 500 sq.ft.

TOTAL AREA FOR SECOND STAGE PROJECT - 2500 sq.ft.(net) or 4000 sq.ft.(gross)*

APPROXIMATE TOTAL AREA REQUIRED FOR ENTIRE PROJECT - 8000 sq.ft.(net).

approximately 13,000 sq.ft. (gross)*

*the factor used for conversion from net square area to gross square area is 1.6 in this instance.
Figure 32 - Zoning, Connections, and Adjacency Requirements
Figure 32 - Functions of the Project
(Adapted from Palmer 1981, 96)
The preceding pages of this chapter of the thesis contain the basic facility program for a first stage housing project. The facility program is meant to be the "skeleton" for the project rather than the fully developed "body". An element of restraint has been employed in the outlining of the qualitative aspects of the spaces included in this program. This reflects the belief that not only the design product should be a reflection of the operating philosophy of the project, but that further steps in the design process should reflect that philosophy as well.

The foundation of the philosophy of the project is the facilitation of empowerment of the individual. A key principle of this philosophy is that staff are meant to function as enablers of the personal empowerment of the residents - "doers with" not "doers for". The enabling role of the architect/programmer in the process of generating this project is equally important.

Already a broad range of representatives of the prospective supportive community has been involved in the programming process. Potential board members, allied practitioners in the support network, and potential staffpersons and residents have contributed a great deal to the definition of the concept and the development of the facility program to this stage. Creation of the opportunity for continued involvement of interested and able participants is highly recommended.

Although it has been observed by an architect involved in the development of the Mavis/McMullen housing project that it is easier for people to articulate what they reject rather than to conceive of what they might like, involved people can be encouraged to a point where they can make a genuine contribution to the working out of the overall "feel" of the environment. Potential users can make valuable recommendations concerning the formal arrangements, general characteristics, and specific details of spaces to be used by themselves or by others whose needs they clearly understand. Potential users may have valuable insights with respect to flexibility in arrangements that may be desired and the options that should be provided. The ideas and supporting rationale thus generated may be useful in the planning process and have continuing effects after occupancy if the process is skilfully handled by the
design coordinator. The role of architect-as-coordinator rather than arbitrary decision-maker is a challenging one, but the dividends for all, including the architect, can be greatly increased in the process.

If this project were to become a reality, the architect who receives the mandate to continue the process beyond this point should be one who is able to make the commitment to work in concert with representatives of all players who will be part of this envisioned supportive community. Such an architect would then function as an enabler to help in the creation of a setting which is a manifestation of the enabling philosophy. And, returning to the words of John F.C. Turner, "housing" would then be "used as a verb rather than as a noun - as a process that subsumes products". (Turner 1976, 62) When the opportunity for this involvement is offered and taken up, the personal power base of those concerned is strengthened and the participants are, to an extended measure, finding their way home.
REFERENCE LIST


Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD). 1987. Overview 4:3 (spring/summer)


APPENDIX A - The Questionnaire

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE given by at
TO EXPLORE THE NEED FOR AN EMERGENCY SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN
These are questions to guide a conversation about developing some sort of an emergency shelter for women in the city. We want to know what conditions women are currently experiencing and what women think is needed in the city for times of emergency.

PRESENT LIVING CONDITIONS

1. What form of housing do you live in now?
   - hotel
   - rooming house
   - non-profit or co-op housing
   - apartment
   - shelter
   - other

2. How much does it cost to live there per month?

3. Do you have access to these facilities either in or outside of your unit?
   IN       OUT (if out, how many do you share with?)
   - stove
   - hotplate
   - fridge
   - toilet
   - washbasin
   - shower/bath

4. Can you reach these facilities without threat of danger?
   Please comment if you have fears.

5. Generally do you feel safe where you live? Why or why not?

6. Do you worry that you might be evicted from your present place? If yes, what might be the reasons for eviction?

7. In your place, how often do you see violence intrusion fire the police.

8. Have you personally experienced physical violence or harassment at your place in the last six months? If yes, please describe an incident.

9. Do you feel that your present place is a secure, adequate home? Why or why not?

10. What is the main reason why you have chosen to live in your present place?
AREA SURVEY

1. What area of Vancouver do you live in? ____________________________
   How long have you lived in your area? ____________________________
   Where did you live before? ____________________________

2. Why do you live in your area?

3. How many times have you moved in the last year? ________________
   Why did you move out of your last place?

4. What usually are your main reasons for moving?

5. What is the longest time you have ever lived in one place? ______

6. Have you been without a safe place to stay any time in the past year? ______
   If so, how often?
   For what reasons?

7. Who, or what services, would you approach if you were stuck for a safe place to stay tonight? ____________________________
   Why would you choose them?

8. What nearby services would you avoid, and why?

9. Have you ever stayed in: (if yes, please give the name of the facility)
   detox ____________________________ or treatment centre ____________________________
   prison ____________________________ or halfway house ____________________________
   mental hospital ____________________________ or psychiatric support home ____________________________
   emergency shelter ____________________________ or transition house ____________________________
   Could you briefly describe the experience?

10. Have you ever been turned away when you asked a shelter or a hostel for a bed in the last three years? ________ If yes, what was the reason?

11. Which would be of most use to you (choose one)
   _____ an emergency/safe house where you could stay a few nights when needed
   _____ a safe house where you could stay up to six months while looking for a good
   place to live
   _____ an affordable rental accommodation
   _____ permanent affordable housing - non-profit or co-op
   _____ other (for example...)
   Please explain the reasons for your choice.
PERSONAL SURVEY (each question is optional)

1. Birthdate
2. Ethnic background
3. Education
4. Marital status
5. Approximate monthly income? Source?
   Approximate monthly expenses?
6. What jobs have you held in the past?
7. What is the current condition of your health?
   physical
   mental emotional
   alcohol/drugs
8. Have you been treated for any major health problems in the past?
   physical
   mental/emotional
   alcohol/drugs
9. Have you had any experience with social services in the Downtown Eastside? ______
   Which ones?
   Any comments?
10. Do you currently live alone? ______ If not, who do you live with?
11. Are you supporting anyone other than yourself? ______ What is the relationship between you and that person?
12. Do you need childcare at the present time? ______ If yes, are you getting it? ______ Why or why not?
13. Have you ever had a need for shelter and/or support when:
   battered ______, raped ______, harassed ______, evicted ______
   Who helped you?
   Would you go there again for help if necessary? ______ Why or why not?
14. If you need help for any trouble you have now, are you getting what you need? ______ Who is helping you?

SUGGESTIONS if an emergency/safe house for women got going:
   Where do you think it should be located? ______
   Why?
   Should it be for short stays (3-4 days), or for longer periods (3-6 months)?
   Why?
   What type of emergencies/problems should it be for?
   What supports/services should be included?
   What rules should it have?
   What makes a shelter feel really safe?
   What other supports or services do you think are needed for the women of the Downtown Eastside?
APPENDIX B - Results of the Questionnaire

REPLIES FROM 60 FEMALE RESIDENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE given by ______________ at ______________
TO EXPLORE THE NEED FOR AN EMERGENCY SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN
These are questions to guide a conversation about developing some sort of an emergency shelter for women in the city. We want to know what conditions women are currently experiencing and what women think is needed in the city for times of emergency.

PRESENT LIVING CONDITIONS

1. What form of housing do you live in now?
   (27) hotel
   (7) rooming house
   (8) non-profit or co-op housing
   (4) apartment
   (2) shelter
   (8) other

         (4) doubling up
         (1) street
         (1) motor home
         (2) shared house

2. How much does it cost to live there per month?
   (3) @ $0 - "crashing", "helping out"
   (4) - Emergency Services paying
         3 - at a shelter
         1 - at a hotel
   (1) @ $35/month "motor home on an unrestricted parking lot"
   (7) @ $99-$160 - Mavis/McMullen (non-profit housing)
   (2) @ $165-$199
   (10) @ $200-$229
   (16) @ $230-$259
   (8) @ $260-$300 (one sharing)
   (6) @ $301-$400 (two sharing)
   (1) @ $425
   (1) @ $525

3. Do you have access to these facilities either in or outside of your unit?

   IN       OUT (if out, how many do you share with?)
   stove
   hotplate
   fridge
   toilet
   washbasin
   shower/bath

Those who counted the number of people with whom they share replied: share with 7, 8, 10, 10-12, 15, 16, 20, 30.
4. Can you reach these facilities without threat of danger?
Please comment if you have fears.
(26) replied "yes" - (without threat of danger)
(10) replied "no"
(8) replied "sometimes"
Comments:
(yes) - "you get used to it"
(no) - "running into men worries me"
(no) - "no privacy - you have to put a knife in the door when you go to the can"
(no) - "scared of disease"
(yes) - "I have my boyfriend with me"

5. Generally do you feel safe where you live? __________ Why or why not?
(28) - yes
"the hotel has security"
"security patrol" (at Mavis/McMullen)
"I live with my boyfriend"
"I can protect myself"
(12) - no
"too much drinking going on around"
"would you feel safe living in the street?"
"somebody tried already to kick the door in"
"no place for a woman alone"
(8) - sometimes

6. Do you worry that you might be evicted from your present place? __________ If yes, what might be the reasons for eviction?
(21) - yes
"the landlord can do whatever he wants"
"the landlord is pretty crooked"
"because of my profession"
"he wouldn't let my grandchild visit"
"if the owners sell the property"
"I have stayed out my welcome"
"for complaining"
(27) - no
(1) - sometimes

7. In your place, how often do you see violence __________ intrusion __________ fire __________ the police __________
violence:
(16) - frequently
(7) - some
intrusion:
(10) - frequently
(23) - some
fire:
(5) - frequently
(2) - some
the police:
(15) - frequently
(7) - some
8. Have you personally experienced physical violence or harassment at your place in the last six months? ________ If yes, please describe an incident.
   (23) - yes
   (31) - no
   violence involving men - (13)
   domestic violence - (3)
   robbery - (1)
   drugs - (1)
   landlord problems - (3)

9. Do you feel that your present place is a secure, adequate home? ____________
   (18) - yes
   (4) - so-so
   (27) - no
Why or why not?
   "management is always snooping around"
   "roaches and mice"
   "no security at night"
   "threat of eviction"
   "it's secure, but I don't call it a home because it's just a little room to sleep in"
   "I know everyone, everyone takes care of everyone"
   "friends are there"
   (at Mavis/McMullen) "I have all conveniences, ample space, I feel safe, there is no threat to tenure"

10. What is the main reason why you have chosen to live in your present place?
    (10 plus) - affordable
    (8 plus) - only place available at the time
    (3 plus) - nowhere else to go
    (5) - location - close to stores, services
    "this is where I've ended up"
    "I'm tired of moving around"
    "I know people here, the caretaker is a friend"
    in Mavis/McMullen:
    "I got tired of hotels, lonely"
    "there's more room, better rent, and it is safer"
    "there's sisterhood, community feeling, common political threads"
AREA SURVEY

1. What area of Vancouver do you live in?
   (60) DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

   How long have you lived in your area?
   (9) under 3 months
   (9) 6 months - 1 year
   (6) 1-2 years
   (17) 2-5 years
   (11) 6-10 years
   (8) over 10 years
   (4) off and on (over a long period)

   Where did you live before?
   (11) in the Downtown Eastside
   (18) in another area of Vancouver
   (8) within British Columbia but outside Vancouver
   (12) out of province

2. Why do you live in your area?
   "no choice"
   "cheap rent and food"
   "convenient location"
   "access to services, work"
   "don't want to share"
   "I like it"

3. How many times have you moved in the last year?
   (12) no moves
   (21) 1-3 times
   (13) 4-7 times
   (4) 8 or more times

   Why did you move out of your last place?
   (see response to #4)

4. What usually are your main reasons for moving?
   (22) violence, safety
   (16) want a better quality building
   (15) money
   (12) unsafe building, repairs needed
   (10) size etc. inadequate
   (9) dirty, cockroaches
   (9) landlord sold, evicted
   (9) harrassment
   (6) want privacy, cooking and bath facilities
   (6) boredom, time for a change
   (6) relationship problems
   (6) noise
   (5) alcohol and drugs
   (2) illness, handicap
   (2) break-in
   (2) want a better area
(1) job change
(1) left the province
(1) pit bull

5. What is the longest time you have ever lived in one place? ________________
   (20) under 1 year
   (22) 1-5 years
   (8) 6-14 years
   (7) 15 or more years

6. Have you been without a safe place to stay any time in the past year? _______
   (24) yes
   (24) no

If so, how often?
   (3) always
   (8) once
   (3) twice
   (2) 3 times
   (1) 4 times
   (1) 10 times
   (2) 2 times a month
   (1) once a week
   (5) "frequently"

For what reasons?
   (5) harassment or assault
   (4) relationship problems
   (3) evicted
   (3) mental illness
   (3) couldn't afford
   (2) couldn't find a place
   (2) "I'm homeless", "always moving on"
   (1) fire
   "hazards of profession and place"
   "no place is safe"
   "there's no safe place to stay"

7. Who, or what services, would you approach if you were stuck for a safe place to stay tonight?
   ________________________________
   Why would you choose them?
   (16) friends
   (11) Emergency Services (now unavailable)
   (5) Crosswalk
   (4) Lookout
   (4) Women's Centre
   (2) St. James
   (2) Triage
   (2) trick
   (and others)

8. What nearby services would you avoid, and why?
   (10) Lookout
   (10) Emergency Services, MSSH
9. Have you ever stayed in: (if yes, please give the name of the facility)
   - detox (21)
   - treatment centre (9)
   - prison (16)
   - halfway house (8)
   - mental hospital (12)
   - psychiatric support home (2)
   - emergency shelter (32)
   - transition house (7)

Could you briefly describe the experience?

The emergency shelter:
- "felt out of place"
- "too rigid"
- "enjoyed being with women who had the same problems"
- "better than a hostel"
- "compassionate staff"
- "good staff"
- "temporary - stressful - insecure"
- "it was not what I am used to"
- "unsafe"
- "theft"
- "frustrating"
- "scarey"
- "didn't mind it - three meals a day"
- "non-communicative"
- "no acknowledgement of individual needs"
- "gave me time"
- "made to feel ‘thankful’"
- "stressful in large groups"
- "learned to share, supportive"

10. Have you ever been turned away when you asked a shelter or a hostel for a bed in the last three years?
   - (30) no
   - (15) yes

If yes, what was the reason?
   - (6) full house
   - (4) couldn't get money or referral from welfare
   - (3) high
   - (1) knew I was already staying at Triage

11. Which would be of most use to you (choose one)
   - an emergency/safe house where you could stay a few nights when needed (5)
   - a safe house where you could stay up to six months while looking for a good place to live (23)
   - an affordable rental accommodation (19)
   - permanent affordable housing - non-profit or co-op (22)
   - other (for example...) (0)
Please explain the reasons for your choice.

**Longer term safe house:**
- "give me time to look for a safe place"
- "overtired, need a rest"
- "has to have other services or it’s not much help"
- "sound base to get myself together and look for secure housing"
- "better than sleeping in the streets"
- "still need help when the crisis is over"
- "I am lonely, I need people to talk to and someone to handle my money"

**Affordable Rental Accommodation**
- "I’d like to be able to afford a nice place, a private place for me."
- "then I don’t have to worry about where to stay"
- "I want a place of my own."
- "I need an apartment."
- "I like privacy."
- "I’m tired of living with other people."

**Non-profit or Co-op**
- "then housing wouldn’t be a worry"
- "so I can live in one place forever"
- "wouldn’t have to use shelters if I had safe, permanent housing"
- "then I wouldn’t be drifting"
- "don’t need to share"
- "wouldn’t have to move all the time"
- "safe, good environment"
- "security"
- "wouldn’t have to put up with drunks and street people"

Comments from Mavis/McMullen residents:
- "wouldn’t change this type of living for the world"
- "here you are somebody, even if you’re nobody"
- "this is the best - you are the boss"
- "this is heaven"

**All of the Above**
- "we need all of them - everybody hopes for permanency but will probably have an emergency at some point"
PERSONAL SURVEY (each question is optional)

1. Birthdate
   (1) - 18 years old
   (6) - 22-25
   (6) - 26-30
   (12) - 31-35
   (6) - 36-40
   (3) - 41-45
   (8) - 46-50
   (8) - 50-60
   (2) - 61 or over

2. Ethnic background
   (23) caucasian
   (23) native Canadian
   (2) other

3. Education
   (12) under grade 8
   (14) grade 9-10
   (18) grade 11-12
   (6) some college/university

4. Marital status
   (23) single
   (11) divorced
   (9) common law
   (3) widowed
   (2) separated
   (1) married

5. Approximate monthly income?
   (5) under $300
   (7) $301-$400
   (20) $401-$500
   (12) $501-$600
   (2) $601-$700
   (2) $701-$800
   (2) $801-$900
   (0) $901-$1000
   (0) $1000 or over

Source?
   (31) Ministry of Social Services and Housing - Income Assistance
   (12) HPIA - Handicapped
   (1) Old Age Pension, Canada Pension
   (1) DVA - Veterans'
   (1) part time jobs
   (1) self-employed

Approximate monthly expenses?
   (unclear - unable to tabulate)
6. What jobs have you held in the past?
   (33) service sector or community service
   (10) clerical
   (2) manufacturing
   (2) construction
   (4) managerial/professional

7. What is the current condition of your health?
   physical- (26) OK (16) not OK
   mental/emotional- (27) OK (15) not OK
   alcohol/drugs- (22) OK (24) not OK

8. Have you been treated for any major health problems in the past?
   physical- (22) yes (20) no
   mental/emotional- (8) yes (27) no
   alcohol/drugs- (19) yes (23) no

9. Have you had any experience with social services in the Downtown Eastside? _________
   Which ones?
   Any comments?
   Most used:
   Ministry of Social Services and Housing
   Women's Centre
   Powell Place
   First United
   Lookout
   ...and others

10. Do you currently live alone? _________ (37) yes
    If not, who do you live with?
    (typically unanswered)

11. Are you supporting anyone other than yourself? _________
    (6) yes
    What is the relationship between you and that person?
    (children)

12. Do you need childcare at the present time? _________
    If yes, are you getting it? _________ (4) yes
    Why or why not?
    (typically unanswered)

13. Have you ever had a need for shelter and/or support when:
    battered (17), raped (19), harassed (19), evicted (18)
    Who helped you?
    (13) no outside help
    (6) Women's Centre
    (5) friends
    (4) police
    (4) hospital
    (4) MSSH
    (3) Powell Place
    (3) Lookout
    and:
    rape crisis - Rape Relief
Would you go there again for help if necessary? ____________ Why or why not? (unable to tabulate)

14. If you need help for any trouble you have now, are you getting what you need? ____________ Who is helping you?
   (22) yes
   (16) no

SUGGESTIONS if an emergency/safe house for women got going:

   (See Appendix D for full replies)

   Where do you think it should be located? ________________
   Why?

   Should it be for short stays (3-4 days), or for longer periods (3-6 months)?
   Why?

   What type of emergencies/problems should it be for?

   What supports/services should be included?

   What rules should it have?

   What makes a shelter feel really safe?

   What other supports or services do you think are needed for the women of the Downtown Eastside?
APPENDIX C - Results of the Questionnaire, and a brief comparison of the replies to the survey from the women of the Downtown Eastside as compared with women from outside the area.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES FROM 40 WOMEN WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE AREA OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE (MOSTLY FROM THE EAST END OF VANCOUVER)

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE given by _________ at _________
TO EXPLORE THE NEED FOR AN EMERGENCY SAFE HOUSE FOR WOMEN

These are questions to guide a conversation about developing some sort of an emergency shelter for women in the city. We want to know what conditions women are currently experiencing and what women think is needed in the city for times of emergency.

PRESENT LIVING CONDITIONS

1. What form of housing do you live in now?
   (3) hotel
   (3) rooming house
   (2) non-profit or co-op housing
   (18) apartment
   (2) shelter
   (2) other
   (2) "illegal" basement suites

2. How much does it cost to live there per month?

3. Do you have access to these facilities either in or outside of your unit?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN</th>
<th>OUT (if out, how many do you share with?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stove</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hotplate</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fridge</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toilet</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>washbasin</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shower/bath</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Can you reach these facilities without threat of danger?
   Please comment if you have fears.
   (31) yes
   (29) no

5. Generally do you feel safe where you live? _________ Why or why not?
   (25) yes
   (12) no
   (3) sometimes

6. Do you worry that you might be evicted from your present place? _________ If yes, what might be the reasons for eviction?
   (18) yes
   (20) no

7. In your place, how often do you see violence _________ intrusion _________
   fire _________ the police _________:
   violence:
   (7) - frequently
   (4) - some
intrusion:
   (4) - frequently
   (4) - some
fire:
   (2) - frequently
   (5) - some
the police:
   (9) - frequently
   (9) - some

8. Have you personally experienced physical violence or harrassment at your place in the last six months? ______________ If yes, please describe an incident.
   (8) - yes
   (20) - no

9. Do you feel that your present place is a secure, adequate home? ______________ Why or why not?
   (22) - yes
   (16) - no

10. What is the main reason why you have chosen to live in your present place?
    (17) - good location
    (14) - familiar with area
    (14) - reasonable rent, economics
    (12) - no choice
    (7) - better living conditions
    (3) - accepts kids
    (3) - availability
    (2) - accepts pets
    (2) - good landlord
AREA SURVEY

1. What area of Vancouver do you live in?

MOSTLY EAST END, VANCOUVER

How long have you lived in your area?

(13) under 1 year
(15) under 5 years
(3) 5-10 years
(9) over 10 years

Where did you live before?

(1) in the Downtown Eastside
(22) in Vancouver
(5) within British Columbia but outside Vancouver
(5) out of province

2. Why do you live in your area?

(see #10, PRESENT LIVING CONDITIONS)

3. How many times have you moved in the last year?

(7) no moves
(19) 1-3 times
(3) 4-7 times
(10) 8 or more times

Why did you move out of your last place?

(see response to #4)

4. What usually are your main reasons for moving?

(10) cost, conditions etc.
(10) want a change, lack of privacy
(10) violence or threats
(4) relocation necessary

5. What is the longest time you have ever lived in one place?

6. Have you been without a safe place to stay any time in the past year?

(12) yes
(24) no

If so, how often?

For what reasons?

7. Who, or what services, would you approach if you were stuck for a safe place to stay tonight?

(13) friends
(11) Emergency Services
(4) family
(4) Salvation Army
(4) Powell Place

Why would you choose them?

8. What nearby services would you avoid, and why?

(6) Lookout
(4) Emergency Services
9. Have you ever stayed in: (if yes, please give the name of the facility)
   detox (11) or treatment centre (7) 
   prison (13) or halfway house (7) 
   mental hospital (5) or psychiatric support home (3) 
   emergency shelter (17) or transition house (7) 
   Could you briefly describe the experience?

10. Have you ever been turned away when you asked a shelter or a hostel for a bed in the last three years? If yes, what was the reason?
   (6) yes 
   (28) no

11. Which would be of most use to you (choose one)
    ____ an emergency/safe house where you could stay a few nights when needed (5)
    ____ a safe house where you could stay up to six months while looking for a good place to live (10)
    ____ an affordable rental accommodation (14)
    ____ permanent affordable housing - non-profit or co-op (21)
    ____ other (for example...) (2) _____________
   Please explain the reasons for your choice.
PERSONAL SURVEY (each question is optional)

1. Birthdate _______________________
   (1) - under 19
   (5) - under 25
   (14) - under 35
   (9) - under 45
   (8) - over 45

2. Ethnic background _______________________
   (20) caucasian
   (16) native Canadian
   (1) other

3. Education _______________________
   (11) grade 10-11
   (21) grade 12 or over
   (7) some college or university

4. Marital status _______________________
   (19) single
   (8) divorced
   (4) common law
   (7) separated
   (1) widowed
   (1) married

5. Approximate monthly income? __________
   (1) under $300
   (2) $301-$400
   (12) $401-$500
   (3) $501-$600
   (3) $601-$700
   (8) $701-$800
   (0) $801-$900
   (1) $901-$1000
   (1) over $1000

Source?
   (25) Ministry of Social Services and Housing - Income Assistance
   (4) employed
   (3) UIC
   (1) DVA - Veterans'

Approximate monthly expenses? __________

6. What jobs have you held in the past?
   (44) service sector or community service
   (11) clerical
   (2) manufacturing
   (1) managerial/professional
   (3) self-employed

7. What is the current condition of your health?
   physical- (26) OK (8) not OK
8. Have you been treated for any major health problems in the past?
   - physical: (11) yes (22) no
   - mental/emotional: (8) yes (22) no
   - alcohol/drugs: (11) yes (20) no

9. Have you had any experience with social services in the Downtown Eastside? _______
   Which ones?
   Any comments?
   Most used:
   - Ministry of Social Services and Housing
   - Women's Centre
   - Powell Place
   ...and others

10. Do you currently live alone? _______ (14) yes
    If not, who do you live with?
    (typically unanswered)

11. Are you supporting anyone other than yourself? _________
    (11) yes
    What is the relationship between you and that person?

12. Do you need childcare at the present time? _____________
    (7) yes
    If yes, are you getting it? __________ Why or why not?

13. Have you ever had a need for shelter and/or support when:
    - battered: (18), raped: (3), harassed: (12), evicted: (12)
Who helped you?
   - Battered Women's Support Services
   - transition homes
   - Women's Centre
   - friends
   - self
   - doctor
   - Ministry of Social Services and Housing
   - psychologist

Would you go there again for help if necessary? ___________ Why or why not?

14. If you need help for any trouble you have now, are you getting what you need? ____________ Who is helping you?
    (17) yes
    (5) no

SUGGESTIONS if an emergency/safe house for women got going:
   Where do you think it should be located? _________________
   (11) in the Downtown Eastside
   (22) outside the Downtown Eastside

Why?
   in the Downtown Eastside:
   close to services
   need is greatest there
outside the Downtown Eastside:
  lots of women need help
  away from temptation

Should it be for short stays (3-4 days), or for longer periods (3-6 months)?
Why?
  (21) long term
  (6) short term
  (5) both

What type of emergencies/problems should it be for?
complete range

What supports/services should be included?
  (23) counselling
  (8) liaison
  (4) health

What rules should it have?
  (24) no alcohol/drugs
  (8) no men
  (8) curfew
  (3) no violence

What makes a shelter feel really safe?
  (9) security
  (9) good supports
  (6) caring staff
  (5) no drugs/alcohol/men
  (3) 24 hour service
  (2) undisclosed location

What other supports or services do you think are needed for the women of the Downtown Eastside?
  (13) support groups
  (7) daycare
  (7) drop ins
  (6) follow-up services
  (4) affordable housing
  (3) job training
  (2) shelters
  (2) alcohol/drug support
  (2) native resources
A Brief Comparison of the Replies to the Survey

Sixty female residents of the Downtown Eastside were interviewed. Forty others, most of whom live in the East End of Vancouver and who are somewhat familiar with the Downtown Eastside community were interviewed as well. Following is a brief comparison of the two groups of women.

All but two of the one hundred women surveyed have a monthly income of less than $900. The average income of the Downtown Eastside women surveyed is $481 per month.

The average income of the women surveyed from outside the Downtown Eastside is $572 per month.

The majority of the Downtown Eastside women surveyed live in hotel rooms or rooming houses.

The majority of women surveyed from outside the Downtown Eastside community live in apartments or suites.

The vast majority of Downtown Eastside residents surveyed share shower/bath and toilet facilities with at least eight other people. Sixty per cent of these women live alone.

The vast majority of those surveyed who live outside the Downtown Eastside have self-contained units and do not need to share facilities with strangers. Thirty-five per cent of these women live alone.

About 40% of the women of the Downtown Eastside claimed that they do not always feel safe where they live.

About 37% of the women outside the area claimed that they do not always feel safe where they live.
Of the Downtown Eastside women, 38% reported seeing some or frequent violence, and 55% have had to deal with intruders at their place of residence.

Of women outside the area, 27% reported seeing some or frequent violence, and 20% have had to deal with intruders at their residence.

In the last six months, 43% of the Downtown Eastside women had personally experienced physical violence or harassment at their place of residence.

In the same time period, 22% of the other women surveyed had experienced physical violence or harassment at their residence.

The majority of the Downtown Eastside women surveyed said they live in the area because it is affordable and a place was available when they needed it.

The majority of women from outside the Downtown Eastside said they live in their area because it is well-located and they are familiar with the area.

Half of the women of the Downtown Eastside who responded to the survey stated they had been without a safe place to stay for the night at least once in the past year.

One-third of the women from outside the area replied that they had been without a safe place to stay in the last year.

Over half of the women of the Downtown Eastside had at some time stayed in an emergency shelter.

About 40% of the women from outside the area have stayed in an emergency shelter.

Women from the Downtown Eastside selected a long stay safe house or non-profit housing as the most preferred housing options.
Women from outside the Downtown Eastside selected non-profit housing and affordable rental accommodation as the most preferred housing options.
APPENDIX D - SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE PROJECT FROM THE SIXTY WOMEN OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

1. WHERE DO YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE LOCATED?
   (39) in the Downtown Eastside
   (13) outside the Downtown Eastside

   REASONS FOR IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE:
   "transportation/access"
   "people care here"
   "the need is in the area"
   "feeling of belonging"
   "less intimidating than the suburbs"

   SPECIFIC LOCATION
   "close to resources"
   "corner Powell/Columbia"
   "beside MSSH"
   "away from the action, but close enough to get there easily"
   "close to a church"

   REASONS FOR OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE:
   "you can't change down here - it's all around"
   "for rehabilitation - get exposure to good surroundings"
   "too tempting to get in trouble"
   "far enough away to be safe"
   "too many people get beaten up in this area"

2. SHOULD THE PROJECT BE FOR SHORT STAYS (3-4 DAYS) OR FOR LONGER PERIODS (3-6 MONTHS)?
   (38) 3-6 months
   (14) both
   (3) short term

   REASONS FOR 3-6 MONTHS:
   (24) it takes time to "sort out", "get life together", "stabilize"
   (11) it takes time to find permanent housing or more appropriate housing and supports
   (4) it takes time to find alternatives - jobs etc.
   "need time to network"
   "I wouldn't feel pressured to jump from the frying pan into the fire."
   "most problems cannot be solved in four days"
   "so it won't be a flophouse"
   "no shorter than six months"
   "we have short term places already"

   REASONS FOR BOTH:
   "as long as you need it"
   "depends on need"

   REASONS FOR SHORT TERM:
   "people won't try to find a place for six months"
   "can go back when needed"
3. WHAT TYPE OF EMERGENCIES SHOULD THE PROJECT BE FOR?

(22) all emergencies
(13) battered/abused
(8) women with children
(8) homeless/penniless
and:

emotional problems
"get my head together"
"for women who need time to think"
rape
alcohol and drugs
evicted
harrassed/threatened
handicaps
lonely
having a baby

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE SPACE OR THE PROGRAM:
"different types should be kept in different spaces"
"be specific - don't mix extremes"
"decide on top priorities - choose carefully"
"send freakouts, badly abused people to an appropriate agency first"
"separate normal from abnormal"
"exclude alcohol and drug abusers"
"...for those who need it - can't force people"

4. WHAT SUPPORTS/SERVICES SHOULD BE INCLUDED?
counselling (40 mentions)
"support groups"
"self-esteem"
"self-help"
"peer counselling"
"lifskills"
"open communication"
"share experiences"
"group counselling"
"love"
"alcohol and drug counselling"
"qualified therapist"
"psychiatric assessment"
"as needed, like the Women's Centre"

health (5 mentions)
"access to supportive health facility"
"medical/dental"
"nurse, medical services"
"nutritionist"

advocacy/liaison (10 mentions)
"liaison with welfare"
"liaison officer"
"referrals, support, follow-up"
"make people aware of services available"
"go with them to use the services"
"lawyer"
"job training"
"education"
"help to find affordable housing"

basics (14 mentions)
"food"
"clean bed"

recreation(6 mentions)
"out trips"
"lots of activities"

sharing/community (5 mentions)
"women helping women"
"cooking, chores"
"build a community"
"babysit, daycare"
"loans"

5. WHAT RULES SHOULD THE PROJECT HAVE?
(24) no alcohol and drugs
(12) no men
(6) no violence, fighting
(3) curfew

RULES
"women take responsibility for rules"
"co-op living environment"
"house committee to air grievances"
"get involved in helping operate"
"scheduled chores"
"not too rigid"
"respect self and others"
"natural rules" - "treat them as you read them"
"trust"
"reasonable, sensible rules"
"use manners"
"friendly, not too harsh"
"strict"
"up to the office"
"evict people who steal"
"pleasant and strict rules"
"have a time frame to prevent using the place"
"pay so it's not a flophouse"
"must be looking for a home"
"resident must be functional"

SPACES
"special area for visits"
"respect way of living - have a smoking area"
"lock it at night"
"private rooms or no more than 2 people per room"
6. WHAT MAKES A SHELTER FEEL REALLY SAFE?

(25) people
(11) systems

PEOPLE
"enough people around to handle any situation"
"women around"
"caring people"
"good strong women"
"good environment - like a family home"
"family atmosphere"
"women supporting one another"
"everyone gets along"
"friendly people, no harassment or fighting"
"caring"
"support group, helping each other sort through confusion"
"good counselling"
"no talking behind backs by staff"
"no heavy staffing"
"24 hour staff"
"same staff" (consistency)
"staff not nosey"
"support"
"confidentiality"
"bodyguard"
"concierge"

SYSTEMS
"good locks"
"screen visitors"
"no hidden cameras"
"undisclosed location"

7. WHAT OTHER SUPPORTS OR SERVICES DO YOU THINK ARE NEEDED FOR WOMEN OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE?

(28) social supports
(7) basics
(2) health care

SOCIAL SUPPORTS
"sympathetic professionals"
"Women's Centre expanded - longer hours, more staff"
"women's 44"
"women's Carnegie"
"24 hour drop-in"
"underage shelter that doesn't report to MSSH"
"place for ex-prisoners"
"support counselling"
"women only detox and programs"
"shelter for drunk men so they won't bother women"
"child supports, babysitting"
"emergency drop-in"
"employment opportunities - upgrading, jobs, education"
"drugs only detox"
"alternative health programs"
"there's lots already, but you have to be willing to look and help yourself"

BASICS
"money"
"food" - "food exchange, food outreach"
"clothes"
"cleanup facilities - laundry, hair dryers etc."