CSV ARCHITECTS

OCHC 214 Somerset

Design Brief

214 Somerset St. E., Ottawa, ON, K1N 6V4
CSV project # 2022-2471

December 24, 2024

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1.0 SECTION 1

1.1 Application Submission

Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC) is proposing a three-storey, 23-unit housing development at 214 Somerset St. E. (the site). The vision is for a high-quality, sustainable, affordable and supportive rental apartment building targeting tenants who enjoy a neighbourhood with easy access to amenities on foot, bicycle, and public transit. A ground floor rear yard amenity space and accessory shed with refuse and bicycle storage is proposed for residents. Additional bicycle parking for residents is offered in the front yard and side yard at the entrances. This Design Brief is intended to demonstrate the objectives and vision for the site.

1.2 Response to City Documents:

1.2.1 City of Ottawa Official Plan

Section 5 Transects

The property is designated as a Minor Corridor in Schedule B1 Downtown Core Transect in the Official Plan. "The Downtown Core is the historic, geographical, physical, cultural and employment hub of the National Capital Region". The Downtown Core is a mature built environment whose urban characteristics of high-density, mixed uses and sustainable transportation orientation are to be maintained and enhanced. The tallest buildings and greatest densities are intended to be in the Downtown Core while prioritizing transit and maintaining and enhancing an urban pattern of built form.

Policy Section 5 indicates that the Downtown Core is planned for higher-density, urban development forms where either no on-site parking is provided, or where parking is arranged on a common parking area, lot or parking garage accessed by a common driveway. This new building increases density on the site. It also features a design with no on-site parking.

The proposed development supports all seven (7) of the urban design objectives and principles set out in Section 5, as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: General Characteristics of Urban Built Form and Suburban Built Form and Site Design

Urban Design Objectives and Principles	
Characteristic	**Response**
1. Shallow front yard setbacks and in some contexts zero front yards with an emphasis on built-form relationship with the public realm	The proposed building is designed to be as close to the property lines as possible. The proximity to Somerset Street is reduced by the existing power lines.
2. Principal entrances at grade with direct relationship to public realm	There are two proposed entrances. The main entrance is located on Nelson Street. This side was selected because the sidewalk slope is lower on this side and therefore more universally accessible. The secondary entrance is located on Somerset St.

3. Range of lot sizes that will include smaller lots, and higher lot coverage and floor area ratios	The proposed building increases density on the existing property.

Characteristic	Response
4. Minimum of two functional storeys	The proposed building includes 5 levels including those below or partially below grade.
5. Buildings attached or with minimal functional side yard setbacks	The proposed building has minimal side yard setbacks.
6. Small areas of formal landscape that should include space for soft landscape, trees and hard surfacing	The proposed building has formal landscaping in the front and corner side yard setbacks. There is also formal landscaping in the rear yard. These areas include hard surfacing, soft landscaping, and a tree.
7. No automobile parking, or limited parking that is concealed from the street and not forming and integral part of a building such as in a front facing garage.	There is no automobile parking proposed. Bicycle parking spaces proposed are 174% of required with 20 spaces total. 12 spaces are provided in the rear yard (Figure 7), 3 at the Somerset St. entrance (Figure 8), and 5 at the Nelson St. entrance (Figure 7).

Minimum and Maximum Height

Official Plan Policy 5.1.4(4) Minor Corridors identifies a minimum 2 storeys and maximum 9 storeys. The proposed building is 3 storeys.

Section 5.1 Downtown Core Transect

Table 2: Goals of Downtown Core Transect

Downtown Core Transect	
Goal	**Response**
1. Maintain and enhance an urban pattern of built form, and site design and mix of uses	The proposed supportive housing building will include offices for staff providing supports to the residents and these will be located on the ground floor along with resident amenity spaces. The proposal includes soft landscaping to maintain a pervious groundcover. It also includes a white roof for reduced heat island effect. There are no curb cuts for vehicle access proposed.
2. Prioritize walking, cycling and transit within, and to and from, the Downtown Core	The proposed building does not provide parking. It provides 174% the required bicycle parking spaces to encourage cycling. It is located on a bus route, providing transit options, and is less than a 15-minute walk to grocery store, bank, parks, restaurants, community health centre, and community centre.

3. Locate the tallest buildings and greatest densities in the Downtown Core Transect	The proposed building provides a good height transition from the minor corridor to abutting residential properties.
4. Provide direction to the Hubs and Corridors located within the Downtown Core Transect	The proposed building is 3-storeys, providing transition to abutting properties. There are active entrances on both Somerset (the Minor Corridor) and Nelson streets.
5. Provide direction to the Neighbourhoods located within the Downtown Core Transect	The proposed development increases density on the site.

1.2.2 Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines (2007)

The site falls within a 400 m walking distance of the uOttawa Rapid Transit Station on the Confederation Line. As such, enhanced cycling facilities and cycling infrastructure should be considered when applying the City's Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines (2007). The applicable guideline numbers are noted below along with the development's response.

Guideline 1: The site will be developed into a low-rise apartment, increasing the residential density of the streetscape.

Guideline 2: No automobile-oriented land uses will be developed on the site. No automobile parking is proposed (or required) for the development.

Guideline 3: The proposed development will complement the existing local services, such as those provided along the mainstreet: Somerset Street East. The proposed low-rise housing will expand the range and mix of housing options in the area.

Guideline 7: The building is proposed to abut the property lines as closely as possible and the distance to each abutting building is minimal.

Guideline 9: The building will be 3-storeys, which is a good transition in scale to the adjacent residential buildings.

Guideline 14: All three storeys consist of windows on the front façade. The proposed material of the building façade is high-density concrete board in three colours, and is both highly durable and visually interesting.

Guideline 15: The pedestrian level façade facing Somerset Street has punched windows at the residential units. The entrance door will have a brightly coloured canopy for visual interest and easy identification.

Guideline 26: Building entrances have walkways sloped max. 1:20 to provide good universal accessibility.

Guideline 29: The twenty (20) bicycle parking provided for residents and visitors easily exceeds the zoning requirement of twelve (12) spots. Three are located at each of the main entrances (Somerset and Nelson Streets). The other half are covered and located at the rear of the development, which connects to Nelson Street. via a fenced and paved pathway.

Guideline 30: A change room with lockers and a shower is provided for employees. This may help encourage cycling.

Guideline 32: There are no vehicle parking spaces required by the zoning by-law and none are proposed.

1.2.3 Site-specific Urban Design Objectives

Safety of community members and residents and compact development are driving factors in the design. Connection between the interior of the building and exterior is intentional to reinforce the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

The accessory structure for bicycle storage and refuse is proposed to the rear of the site to limit public access. Its primary connection to Nelson Street is via a pathway that wraps around the South façade of the building and comes out near the lobby.

The proposed low-rise development increases the housing density of the existing streetscape, helping to discourage urban sprawl. It prioritizes cycling by providing extensive bicycle parking and no motor vehicle parking. Located close to a community centre, a main street with a variety of services and several transit stops, it encourages walking, transit use, and bicycle use.

1.2.4 Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan

The property is located within the Sandy Hill character area. The building generally complies with the objectives of the secondary plan. Many of the objectives reflect those of the official plan. In addition this proposed development seeks to fulfil number 99, and 101 by providing a stock of good housing for low-income people including those with accessibility needs.

1.2.5 Pre-application Meeting with the City of Ottawa

A Pre-application Consultation Meeting with the City of Ottawa was held on April 6, 2023. The comments received are addressed below:

General Comments:

1. City Staff were concerned about the deep wells proposed for the ground floor and what type of barrier would be used to protect people without becoming a visual barrier.

Response: The window wells are minimized but provide basement units with natural light as well as mechanical rooms with intake and exhaust louvres. The wells will be protected with guards to meet OBC requirements. They will be constructed of metal with glass infill panels to ensure visibility through.

2. City Staff wanted to ensure that waste management was considered. They requested details of the garbage storage area as well as the path and staging area for the containers.

Response: The garbage bins will be stored in the accessory structure located in the rear yard.
This structure is located in the rear yard. It provides space for the following:

- 5 x 360L waste bins
- 2 x 360L fibre bins
- 2 x 57L organic bins
- 1 x 360L GMP bin

3. City Staff asked the team to consider a completely fenced rear yard with controlled access for safety purposes.

Response: This is provided in the design.

4. City Staff asked the team to show light fixtures on the initial plan.

Response: These are indicated on the Site Plan provided.

Urban Design Comments:

1. Ensure there is sufficient light access for units. Windows appear to be very small and narrow.

Response: There is a large window (1.37 m x 1.4 m) provided in each suite.

2. Explore the potential for active entrances along public streets.

Response: There is an active entrance along both Somerset and Nelson streets.

3. Explore the potential for additional tree planting.

Response: There is limited area that will support tree planting. The frontage along Somerset is limited by existing hydro lines. Also, due to soil conditions, trees within 10 m of the foundation must meet the 2.1 m embedment requirement set out by the City of Ottawa. The foundation-to-tree setback is considered 4.5 for small to medium trees due to the presence of the clay soils and the City guidelines. There is one small tree planned for planting in the rear yard amenity space.

4. Ensure there is sufficient bike parking for the development

Response: 20 bicycle parking spaces are planned including 12 covered, 3 at the Somerset street entrance, and 5 at the Nelson street entrance.

5. Explore the use of materials that are prevalent within the area

Response: The neighbourhood has a varied mix of claddings including brick, angel stone, vinyl, wood, and metal siding, and EIFS or stucco. The oldest buildings appear to have mainly red brick cladding but there appears to be more prevalence of metal and vinyl siding in the newer infill developments. The subject building is proposed to be clad in high density fibre concrete panels. These panels will provide the following:

- High level of durability in a rainscreen assembly
- Bright and cheerful appearance with mix of neutral and bold colours
- Thinner profile than brick masonry veneer, allowing more space for insulation in wall assembly

6. Provide additional details of how the building will excel relative to modern day sustainability practices.

Response: Refer to section 2.1.4 in this brief for details on sustainability measure employed.

7. Indoor and outdoor amenity needed to support the number of small units within the building.

Response: Indoor amenity spaces provided include an interior multipurpose room (51.3 sq.m) with shared kitchen, an interior 'quiet' multipurpose room (12.2 sq.m), and an exterior amenity space (82.45 sq.m).

Zoning Comments:

1. 30% of the lot area must be provided as landscaped area.

Response: 42 % of the lot area is landscaped.

2. Any part of the rear yard not occupied by drive aisles, pathways, or accessory structures must be softscaped. 50% of rear yard must be softscaped.

Response: 51% of the rear yard is softscaped.

3. Based on the size of the building, 25% of units must be two-bedroom.

Response: A zoning amendment was approved to remove this requirement, as the proposed housing model specifically requires single rooms with on-site supportive staffing for residents. It is not the intent of this affordable housing model to provide larger units for families.

4. Front and corner yards shall include permanent fixtures that prevent illegal parking – such as: planters, benches, bollards, trees, ornamental fencing, raised planters, etc.

Response: 53% (14.6 m) of the Somerset frontage will be outfitted with a contemporary guardrail befitting of the building design which will be set 850 mm from the property line. Additionally, plantings (no higher than 750 mm) run along its length to prevent illegal parking.

1.3 Context Plan

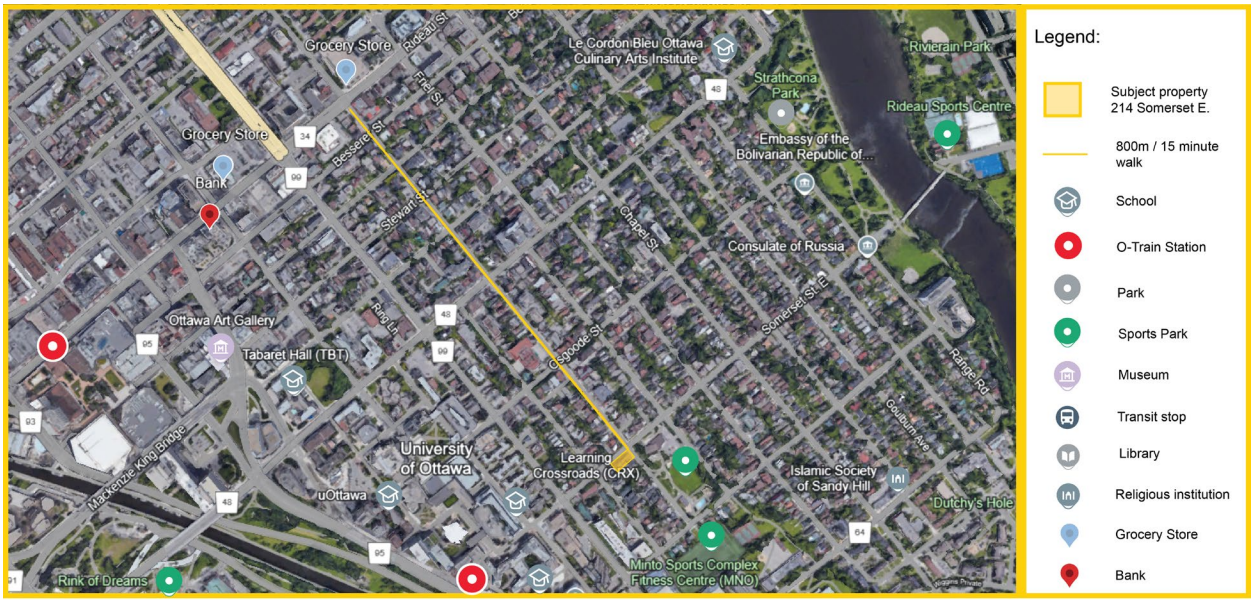

Figure 1: Context Plan showing relationship to local amenities

2.0 SECTION 2

2.1 Design Proposal

2.1.1 Massing and Scale

Figure 2: Bird's Eye View of Proposed Building

Figure 3: Perspective View of Proposed Building

2.1.2 Building Design

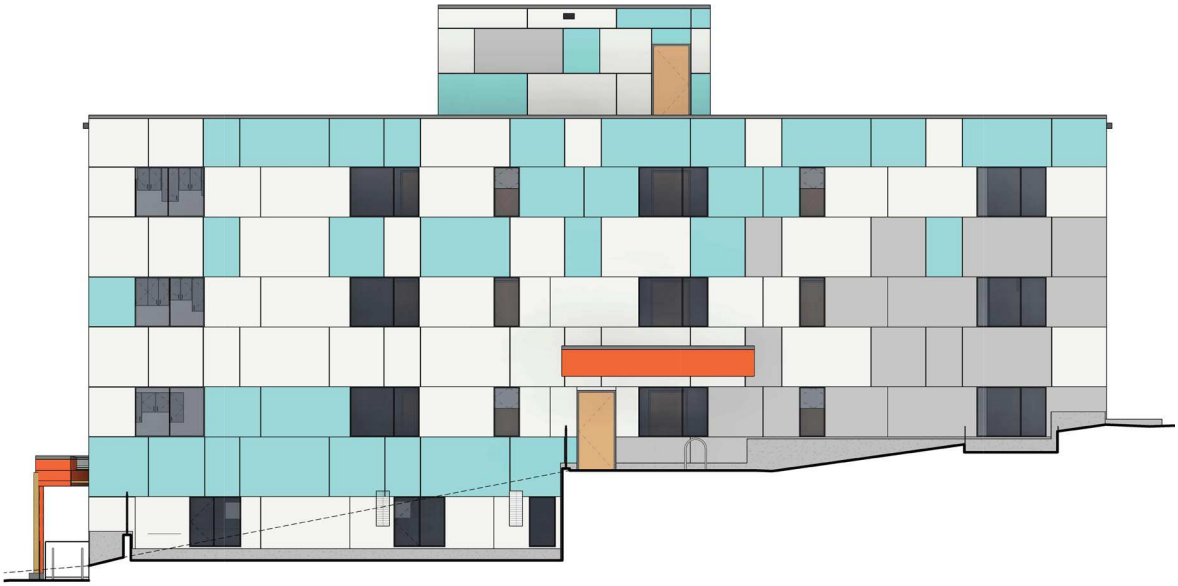

Figure 4: Somerset Street (North) Elevation

Figure 5: Nelson Street (East) Elevation

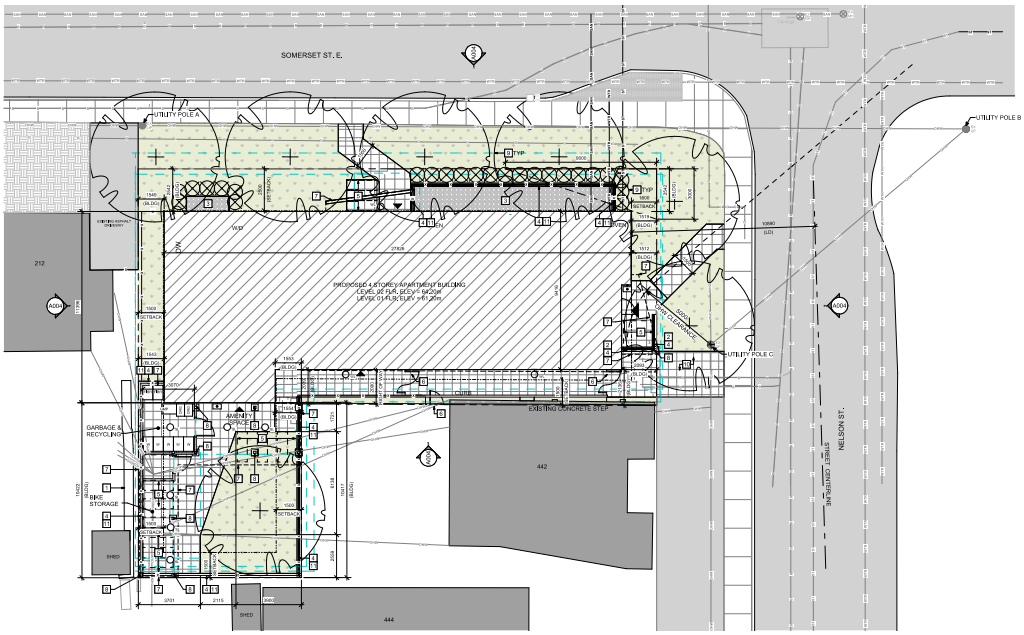

Figure 6: Proposed Site Layout

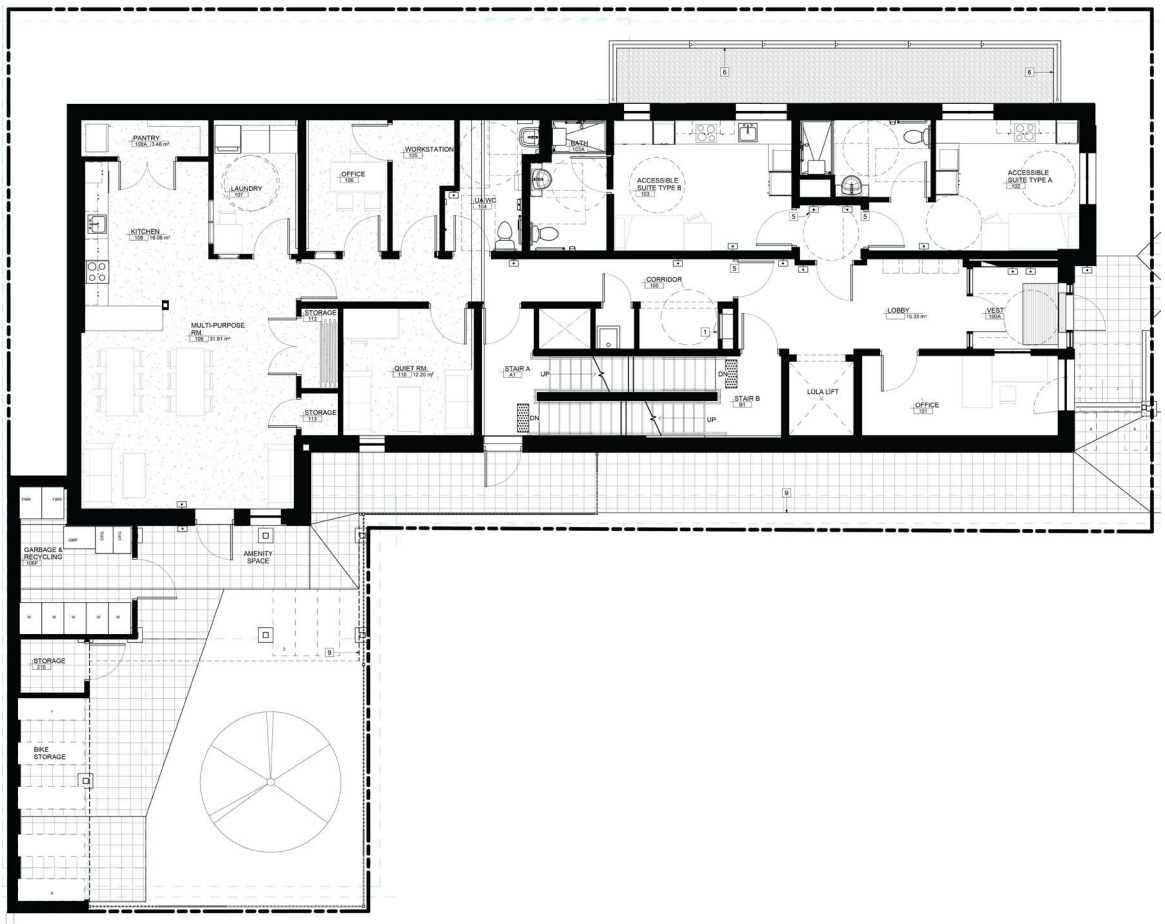

Figure 7: Level 01 Floor Plan

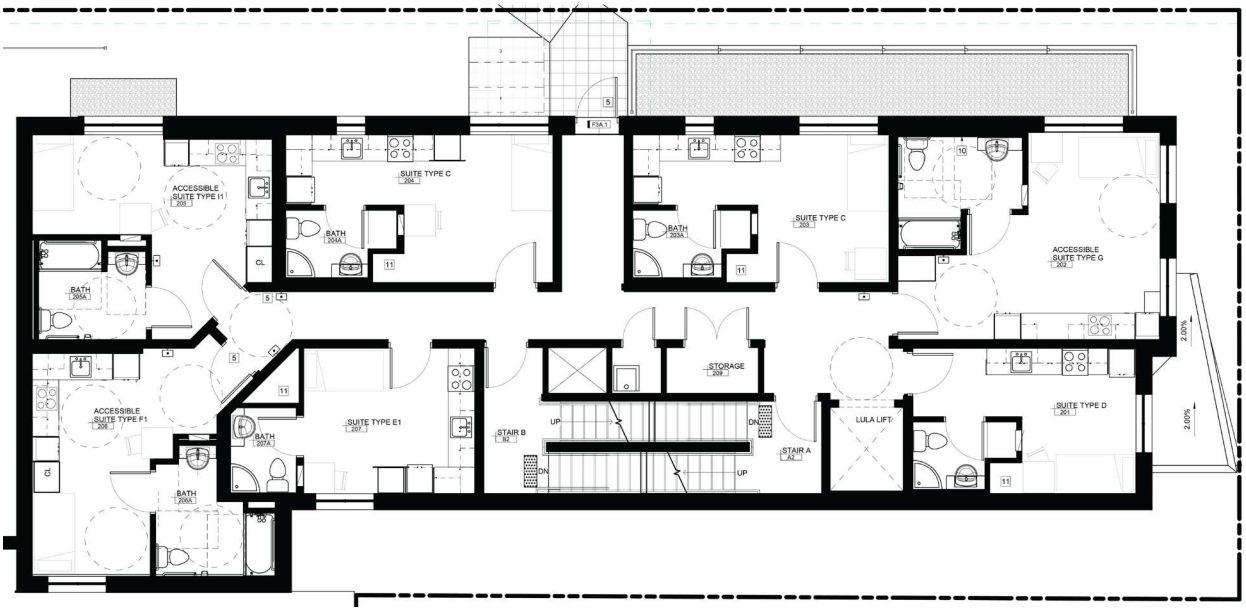

Figure 8: Level 02 Floor Plan

Figure 9: Level 03 Floor Plan

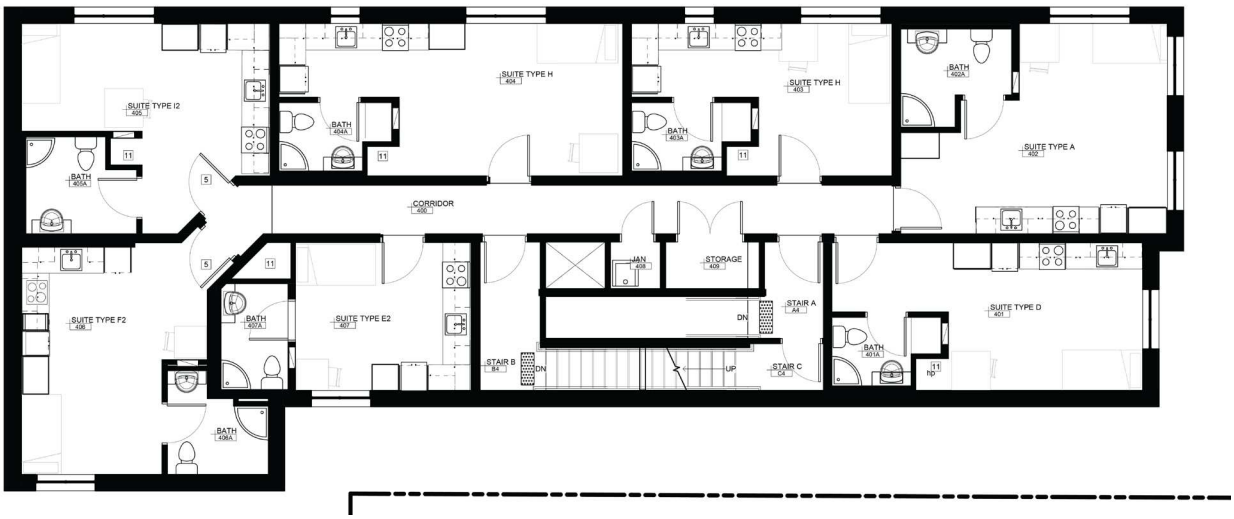

Figure 10: Level 04 Floor Plan

2.1.3 Sustainability

Below are details of the sustainability of the site:

Building Energy Efficiency

The building is designed to have an increased quality building envelope. Wall assemblies and windows will be of high quality to reduce energy consumption. The building will have at least a 36% reduction in energy consumption and at least a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions relative to the 2015 National Energy Code for Buildings (NECB).

Site Plan Accessibility

The public entrance of the building is at grade and serves all users equally.

Tree Planting and Plant Species

A tree will be planted in the rear yard. Plant species will be native, drought-resistant species. There will be no invasive species planted.

Exterior Lighting

All exterior lighting will be full cut-off with no up lighting.

Sustainable Roofing

The roof will have a high solar reflectance value to reduce heat island effect. An electrical connection will be provided to make the building ready for future solar panel installation.

Cool Landscape and Paving

Paving materials selected will have a high solar reflectance value and will be constructed out of permeable pavers where possible.

Common Area Waste Storage

The solid waste collection guidelines will be followed. There is sufficient space in the waste collection area for separate bins for compost, blue bin recycling, black bin recycling, and garbage.

Bicycle Access and Storage

Bicycle parking infrastructure exceeds the zoning bylaw requirements by 174%.