

A New Space for the Homeless

BUFFALO CITY MISSION
JERICO ROAD COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
SPECTRUM HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES



HOW CAN I FRONT THE
KIDNEY SCALPILL
WAT YOUR SOUL
HAVE EVERLASTING
PEACE AND LOVE



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Executive Summary

Buffalo City Mission (“BCM”) has been serving Western New York’s homeless population since 1917. The City Mission Society purchased its first location, a former nightclub on Buffalo’s East Side, in 1922. In 1984, BCM moved into a brand new facility at 100 East Tupper Street – on land donated by the City of Buffalo – in a facility built to standards of that era. This building became the men’s shelter, providing shelter, free meals, and religious support to men in need. Overtime, BCM enhanced its service offerings to provide social work, mental health care, financial literacy, domestic skills, GED and college coursework, and general support for individuals lacking the fundamental stability to escape homelessness.

By 2012, Stuart Harper, the CEO of BCM, realized that the sophistication of services offered by the mission outpaced the physical conditions of the 1984 facility. Furthermore, with the growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus on the property’s northern border, it was assumed that 100 East Tupper Street might be more appropriately utilized for expansion opportunities within the medical science community growing there. McGuire Development Company (“MDC”) was engaged by BCM to facilitate a site selection process followed by ownership representation services to develop a new, state of the art men’s shelter facility encompassing all of the wrap-around services now offered by the mission and preparing for future innovation.

The vision was to provide a facility that not only acknowledged and accommodated the various service offerings provided by the mission, but to provide residential units to facilitate those individuals seeking longer term care to permanently end homelessness.

Given that most visitors to BCM originated from or near the NFTA Downtown Buffalo Bus Station, MDC sourced not less than 50 separate parcels within a 2 mile radius of the bus station for a potential new location. Yet, after several months of significant due diligence on a narrowed list of 5 viable parcels, by October 2012, the City of Buffalo’s leadership determined that the Men’s Shelter should remain right where it was at 100 East Tupper. MDC’s engagement with the mission transitioned to full service Ownership Representation.

Located at one of the most visible intersections in the City of Buffalo, this site sits at the foot of Route 33 and Oak Street and touches the southern border of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. MDC immediately assisted in the retention of Carmina Wood Morris DPC as project architect and RP Oak Hill Building Company as construction manager. MDC’s standard weekly meeting process commenced immediately on November 1, 2013. This kickoff meeting set several fundamental elements to guide the project team, including BCM’s vision for the project, its timeline, and the budgetary constraints in building a brand new facility. At that time, the timeline revolved around BCM’s then upcoming 100th anniversary in 2017. The vision was to provide

a facility that not only acknowledged and accommodated the various service offerings provided by the mission, but to provide residential units to facilitate those individuals seeking longer term care to permanently end homelessness.

BCM's objective in 2013, as it stands today, was to create a holistic solution to permanently end homelessness. The project team was augmented by George M. Hezel, Esq., director of the Affordable Housing Clinic at the University at Buffalo Law School, Steven Karnath, an affordable housing and low-income tax credit consultant, and Rachel H. Rzayev, Esq., an attorney specializing in affordable housing and low-income tax credit financing.

Working together over the next 13 months, a plan was developed to construct a new Men's Shelter in the current facility's parking lot, while allowing the existing shelter to operate until residents could be moved over. BCM sought funding from sources such as NYS Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Housing Trust Funds, Better Buffalo Fund, and City of Buffalo HOME funds among others. Given the design requirements of the various funding sources and the elements needed to fulfill the mission's programming, the initial budget for this project was \$31M. After going through two rounds of competitive application submissions for the various public funding sources without luck, and seeing the increasing need for its services in Western New York, in 2016 the team switched gears with BCM and concluded to privately self-fund the project.

The project was re-designed to be more cost effective, while continuing to adhere to the November 1, 2013 mission vision and, now that it was free of the public funding design constraints, a new project was conceived of with a far more reasonable budget of \$13M. While the architects and construction manager worked collaboratively and weekly to refine the designs, create bid packages, and devise a complex phasing plan to ensure safety for ongoing services while building a new facility abutting the old, BCM embarked on a capital campaign and within 18 months raised the funds necessary to begin construction. With MDC's guidance, Evans Bank stepped in as a funding partner to bridge the gap between pledges and collections to facilitate construction starting.



Section 01

Ownership & Project Team

Project Details

Ownership

Buffalo City Mission Society

Lead Team Members

McGuire Development Co. (MDC) | Owner's Representative

Carmina Wood Morris Architects ("CWM") | Architects

RP Oak Hill Building Company ("RPOH") | Construction Manager.

Secondary Team Members

Intertek PSI | Special Inspection Services, Geotechnical, and Construction Materials testing

LaBella Associates | Environmental testing

Evans Bank | Interim construction lending

Stephen Karnath | NYS low income housing tax credit consultant

George Hezel, Esq. | UB Law School Affordable Housing Clinic

Rachel Rzayev, Esq. | NYS low income housing tax credit consultant

Mower Agency | Public Relations and Strategy

Project Team

BCM sought the ideal team of architects, engineers, and construction management to move the development process forward while remaining mindful of the mission's budgetary and timeline constraints. The project team led by MDC as the owner's representative, joined forces with Carmina Wood Morris Architects ("CWM"), and RP Oak Hill Building Company ("RPOH") as the Construction Manager.

Project Vision

Vision, Budget & Timeline (VBT) Process TM

Vision, Budget & Timeline: "VBT" Process" TM is the collaborative approach MDC offers, supported by a skilled and strategically-oriented team. MDC's transparency and fiduciary dedication to BCM was instrumental in creating consensus and continuously maintaining project alignment.

As BCM surpassed its 30th year operating out of 100 East Tupper Street, the mission realized the model for supporting Western New York's homeless population had evolved significantly. Individuals seeking help from BCM approached from a place of need – having experienced personal barriers to stability such as violence, addiction, illiteracy, legal challenges, mental health burdens, financial literacy, etc. BCM's goal is to give these individuals a chance to make change in their lives and get back on track to making better decisions every day. Most of the clients of the mission lacked positive modeling from parents and relatives during their childhood years, instead experiencing a childhood without rules and boundaries. BCM seeks to establish an environment with effective modeling that can be emulated through positive influence and guidance. The individual can face and eliminate these barriers and move forward into educational and personal growth programs so they can prepare themselves for a living wage job to support themselves and their family.



With this philosophy as the backbone of its vision, BCM sought to create a facility that not only welcomed homeless individuals who desired a simple meal, some temporary shelter, and perhaps short term guidance, but also those individuals who were ready to engage fully with the mission to make permanent and transformational change in their lives to emerge from homeless. Thus the facility had to accommodate not only an emergency shelter, refuge for code blue/cold nights, a full service kitchen and dining facility for drop ins, but also longer term supportive housing, medical and mental health care, educational facilities, and life skills training. The idea was to create congregative spaces for all, while also allowing those invested in the longer-term programming to have access to facilities geared solely for them. The mission likewise receives and processes a tremendous amount of donated food, clothing, and furniture, and having a safe, easily accessible location to receive and categorize these items was critical to the operations team.

As mentioned above, during pre-construction, a weekly Friday morning team meeting was established and became habitual for its participants as these meetings lasted nearly a decade when all was said and done. During the construction phase, the team held a series of weekly meetings throughout the project's design and construction:

- Weekly Design Meeting
- Bi-Weekly Owner Architect Construction Manager (OACM) Meeting
- Weekly Owners Meeting

These meetings were instrumental in creating consensus and continuously maintaining the alignment of BCM's vision, budget, and timeline from start to finish.

The project team worked tirelessly on the project resulting in successful completion of the facility to the mission's satisfaction under the project budget of \$13M and on schedule.

Section 2

Highlights

Remaining Operational

This project included several unique obstacles, one of which was the requirement of BCM remaining open and operational through all stages of construction. While a challenge, through careful logistics planning this obstacle was overcome and the BCM was able to serve its clients with the same level of care throughout the construction phase.

Branding & Signage

Equally important to the quality and function of the new facility was the opportunity to convey the BCM's messaging to the Buffalo community throughout the project. From inception of the project, the team focused efforts on procuring a strategically located, highly visible and effective signage package for both the interior and exterior of the building. First, the modern high tech digital monument sign shares various timely messages to the high traffic traveling on Ellicott and East Tupper. Second, the robust exterior signage on the building skin is viewable from miles in every direction, and particularly from vantage points such as the Kensington Expressway. BCM employees have absolute and immediate control over the messaging and lighting. And third, the interior signage package provides for wayfinding throughout the facility for clients, guests, and staff, while also communicating the vision, history, and mission of BCM and highlighting donors that contributed to the project.

Complex Project Funding Sources and Uses

The project was structured with equity resulting from a capital campaign, conventional financing, a bridge loan, and a number of small grants and donations sought both prior to the project and throughout construction. The capital campaign was dynamic and vital to the project's funding. While the internal team at BCM led the campaign, the external team played a crucial role in its success.

Throughout pre-development and construction, the project team provided updates, renderings, and various communications to the community highlighting progress and importance of the project. These efforts increased community buy in and contributions to the capital campaign.

Procurement of FFE and Security

The project demanded a unique and wide-ranging Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment (FFE) package. MDC led procurement efforts with the assistance of the design team. The FFE package needed to address residential furnishings for the clients housed in the facility, equipment for a fully functioning kitchen and dining room serving hundreds of people daily (at times thousands), a robust security package ensuring client and staff safety, and finally, all items selected needed to be durable enough to withstand substantial use. This unique dynamic required significant due diligence and planning up front in both product specification as well as procurement. Constant communication throughout the bidding and procurement process ultimately resulted in successful implementation and furnishing of the facility.

This project was full of variables and challenges, from logistics and financing elements, to complex design, budget constraints, and scheduling needs of the various parties. Pressures were exerted on the project team from all angles from inception to completion requiring teamwork, agility, and creativity as well as enhanced communication and documentation, critical problem solving, and, at times, sophisticated legal and financial assistance.

Section 03

Overcoming Challenges With Communication

PROJECT CHALLENGES

Site Location and Logistics

These photographs illustrate the challenge presented with respect to the site's location in a tight urban setting. Additionally it reflects the unique challenge of building the new facility in the parking lot of the existing building, and locating parking for the new facility where the existing building was once located, all while remaining operational. Site access, materials storage, and construction safety were all critical elements in bidding and phasing the project to ensure that BCM's ongoing operations and client and staff safety were not impacted by the construction.

The first aerial reflects the facility as it existed before redevelopment, while the second aerial reflects the new facility's exterior façade awaiting completion of site work.

In addition to this unique logistical challenge, the urban infill site is tightly located between Ellicott Street, East Tupper Street, North Oak Street, and the University at Buffalo facility shown directly to the North. These are all heavily trafficked roadways with significant through-traffic and parking needs. Site coordination was a critical element to avoid costly disruptions to traffic as well as the proximity with neighbors north of our site required negotiation of a parking agreement to accommodate development needs.

Addressing Unique Client and Project Goals

In contrast to a typical development project - with an objective to earn investors a return via cash flow and appreciation - this not-for-profit's projects goal was specifically to realize their mission, serve their clients, and add overall value to the community. The client had very limited development experience and deep emotional ties to the mission and vision, which contrasts significantly with a typical real estate development having an experienced team, economic motivation, and an overall systematic approach. This resulted in the increased need to carefully manage the client's expectations and effectively communicate on a daily basis. Maintaining client alignment and ensuring that realistic expectations relating to cost, design, and scheduling were constantly addressed was key in effectively managing and successfully delivering the project. As the owner's rep, MDC deftly established clear and open communications with all members of the project team and the client, making sure that everyone remained on the same page, and aligned with the project vision throughout the 8 year project timeline.

Construction Specific Overview and Challenges

The project's challenges were addressed on a weekly basis to facilitate resolution as quickly as possible - with a goal of 7 days or less. As with any complex construction project, some challenges were not solvable within this timeframe - typically due to the time required to properly assess the situation, work with the owner to determine and define a direction, review the associated cost, and finally to formally approve the work through proper communication to the CM or third party vendor.

Some specific examples of this arose within the following scopes of work:

- **Security**

While the security scope was certainly not overlooked, it was an item that became significantly more complex and filled with unexpected intricacies than initially expected. As the new facility's operational realities became apparent, and the evolving challenges within the homeless community became more pressing during the project timeline, security design and implementation required significant discussion and additional design hours to make sure BCM would have a safe and effective facility.

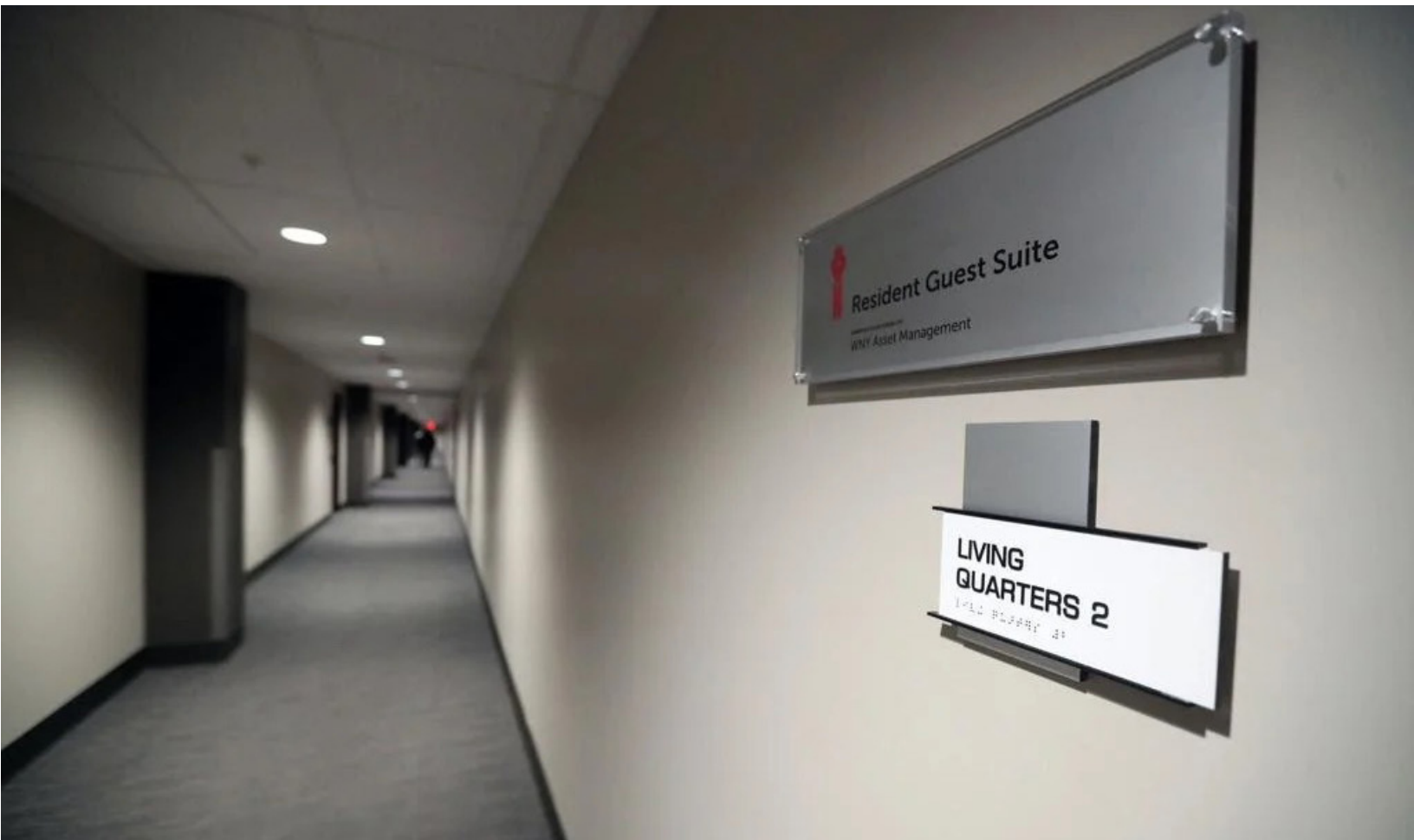
- **Donor Related Signage and Items**

As the financial source to fund this project evolved into a donor-led capital campaign, the issue of designing appropriate donor acknowledgements within the facility became a critical element of the project. Challenges associated with completing a timely and efficient design included ascertaining all the donors' information/identities as the capital campaign waged on. Our project team was able to put our heads together through constant communication and creativity in design to prepare for flexible, meaningful, and ever-evolving donor acknowledgement signage throughout the facility.

- **Dumpster Enclosure and Trash Compactor**

In a project of this magnitude, where the facility being designed is neither cookie cutter nor comparable to existing completed projects in the region, the project team occasionally encountered a new technology that appeared to be the perfect solution to an anticipated facility concern. Many times this "perfect solution" was not beneficial to the project at all. For example, the trash compactor and dumpster enclosure originally designed for the facility wound up being problematic for the owner once operational. The enclosure and dumpster (design and equipment) was initially designed for a small-mid size multifamily/hospitality project – which initially appeared to be sensible given the emphasis on long term stable housing for homeless men.

When put into action, though, it quickly became evident that BCM's multitude of uses generated far more substantial waste on a daily basis, paired with the unique nature of the types of waste (recyclables, food, office related, etc.), the originally designed facilities fall far short of the project's needs. MDC immediately convened the project team to trouble shoot and solve the dilemma. Ultimately the compactor was replaced and operational changes were needed in order to resolve this concern.



- **Utility Easements, Street Lights and Transformer**

Complex site work required for this project ultimately called for a NYSDOT transformer (powering the nearby traffic light on E Tupper) and some street lights to be relocated off of the site. While this sounds simple written down, this challenge involved a state agency, a city government, private utilities, and our not-for-profit client. MDC led the way in driving consensus, cooperation, and resolution among these challenging groups. Several onsite meetings, plan discussions, and strategies were implemented to bring the group of decision makers together to resolve the issue. During the course of these negotiations, MDC worked with Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes' office to identify New York State funding sources to cover the cost of this unforeseen work so that BCM did not have to foot the bill.

- **Demolition**

The tight location of the project (previously detailed in "Site Location and Logistics") and unique fixtures that were meant to be carried over from the former facility, including stained glass artwork and equipment led to logistic issues throughout the demolition and asbestos monitoring phases, MDC maintained constant and often direct communication between the demo contractor and owner to make sure that the owner's wishes were fulfilled.

- **Closeout and Project Handoff**

Because the unique phasing of this project demanded a fluid transition of clients, staff, and belongings from the old facility to the newly constructed building, the project did not have a firm completion date by which a punch list could be completed. Proper advanced planning beginning in the pre-construction phase allowed every team member to stay on the same page when it came to typical punch list and start up items requiring adjustment in the new building. The team was prepared and addressed items through the constant communication, immediate repair, and some operational changes.

The new space
will help to make
permanent and
transformational
change in the
residents lives
to emerge from
homeless.

Section 4

Conclusion

This project, although lengthy in duration, was successful for all parties and most importantly was completed within the schedule and under the established budget (including owner-accepted change orders). Overall it is important to note that many of the project's challenges, and the cost differential from pre-construction budgeting to final project closeout resulted from the significant amount of time that passed between initial design and the actual project completion date. Volatile commodities and owner requests associated with an evolving clientele created ongoing challenges that required near constant monitoring and attention.

This was a model project that owes its success to the development team selected to carry out the BCM's vision. MDC's approach streamlines the project lifecycle from conception to completion. We create adaptable strategies for clients of all sizes and types by maintaining critical tension between the three pillars of development: Vision, Budget and Timeline: VBT Process TM. At MDC, our process from start to finish insures our clients and community feel supported, respected, and set up for success.

THE ALFIERO FAMILY CENTER