

# Presentation Manor

by ROBIN BRUNET



As Canada's population steadily ages, more and more effort is being made to create senior living facilities that eschew the institutionalized approach to housing and cater to specific groups with individual needs – and such is the case with the new Presentation Manor in Scarborough, Ontario.

With backing from the Basilians, Scarboro Missions, Loretto Sisters, Our Lady's Missionaries, and 19 other not-for-profit organizations from across Canada, the 229-unit, four-storey Presentation Manor will begin its life as a home for 130 retired religious sisters, brothers, and priests, and 100 laypeople.

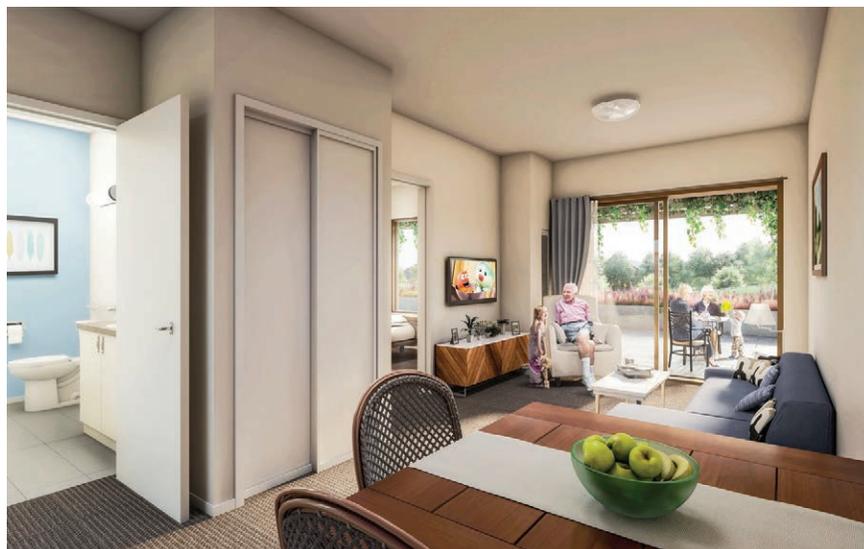
According to Presentation Manor for Seniors, the facility was designed to provide “the ultimate in comfort, safety, and security to all of its residents. In keeping with this concept, construction with built-to-last characteristics were integrated into our building features.”

Additionally, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc. ensured that the facility would use low-VOC materials on interior finishes for better indoor air quality, have full wheelchair accessibility, and a green roof with planted grasses for reduced energy consumption.

Gord Perrault, CEO at Presentation Manor for Seniors, says, “The idea was to have a facility combining assisted living with independent living homes of studios, one bedroom, one bedroom and den and two bedrooms. The project was viewed as a viable and much more desirable alternative than our various congregations having to move into the 100-year-old institutional-style seniors homes that dominate the market.”

Santiago Kunzle, principal at Montgomery Sisam Architects, says, “We were able to include a lot of elements that have simply not been seen in seniors living residences in Eastern Canada. To take one small example, traditional facilities typically offer just a tub in the suite bathrooms, but we included a shower as well as a tub. Also, the dining hall was designed to be buffet style, which is unheard of – overwhelmingly, meals are served to residents in seniors facilities.”

Much of Kunzle's design was intended to eliminate the sense of



isolation and despair that too often characterizes the seniors' group home experience. “In traditional facilities the amenities are dispersed, but we designed Presentation Manor so they are grouped together in the centre of the building,” he says. “Also, connection to the outdoors was key, and we ensured that the terraces of the assisted living suites would overlook the street action, giving residents the sense they are still part of the city.”

Kunzle designed the large facility to consist of a central spine (to align with bordering Fairfax Crescent) with three wings, which would allow for landscaped courtyards, each with its own identity, augmented by a series of walkways and small-scale raised garden spaces that residents could cultivate as desired. “The wings face a residential neighbourhood, so homeowners see a variety of structures and the landscaping instead of the massive spine,” says Kunzle. Although the green roof would be closed off, a communal landscaped terrace would be created on top of the parking facility for residents to enjoy.

The site slopes downward from Fairfax Crescent, which allowed for the creation of a lower level in which Kunzle located a chapel, the dining hall, and multi-purpose area, with the ability to open up this entire zone for events.

For the main level opening onto Fairfax Crescent, Kunzle designed a welcoming entrance with a fireplace

lounge to impart an all-important first impression of hominess. “As soon as you walk in you are greeted by a two-sided fireplace, as well as delicious smells coming from the dining area,” says Perrault. “This alone is a significant departure from the hospital-like environment of many seniors facility entrances.”

The independent and assisted living components are located on either side of the building, with the floor plan of levels two, three and four being relatively the same and augmented by common spaces, laundry facilities, and terrace access.

For the 51 assisted living studios, each approximately 325 square feet in size, Kunzle supplied two different floor plans that maximize the use of space and include touches such as a tea nook.

PCL Constructors Canada Inc. broke ground on the site in October of 2016, and by October of the following year the building was fully enclosed. The building envelope was accelerated thanks to PCL's innovative construction solution which saw 413 prefabricated exterior wall panels installed on site. Manufactured in its own agile offsite production facility, PCL is the only general contractor in Canada with its own manufacturing facility, which provides the capacity to prefabricate many different project components, with enhanced quality, safety, and schedule certainty.

In February of 2018 the suites were beginning to take shape, and rough-in of mechanical and electrical was

underway. Six months later, the chain link fencing protecting the site came down so that work crews could tie into the streetscape.

Leigh Lichtenberg, senior project co-ordinator for NAK Design Strategies, says of the landscape design, “A central walkway links to garden areas with different functions: for example, the dining area leads to an active garden with flex programming, surrounded by canopy trees. Elsewhere, a contemplative paved garden was created as an extension of the chapel, with meandering pathways and flowering plants.

“There is also a private passive garden, and finally the walkway connects to the city sidewalk in front of the pick-up drop-off entrance, which was designed to have an intricate grid pattern.”

As of October, Presentation Manor for Seniors was preparing for a grand opening, and Perrault says of the finished product, “I've toured seniors homes from one end of Canada to the other, and this one is hands down the best because Santiago Kunzle designed it with respect to what seniors want and need, right down to the indentations along the walls where one can park walkers.

“Our organization is one that welcomes all faiths, and it's exciting to have a facility that itself is a place of welcoming.” **A**

**LOCATION**  
61 Fairfax Crescent, Scarborough, Ontario

**OWNER/DEVELOPER**  
Presentation Manor for Seniors

**ARCHITECT**  
Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**  
PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

**STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT**  
RJC Engineers

**MECHANICAL/  
ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT**  
MCW Consultants Ltd.

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**  
NAK Design Strategies

**TOTAL SIZE**  
200,000 square feet

**TOTAL COST**  
\$30 million