

**Chamberlain, Lisa**

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**From:** SW  
**Sent:** May 30, 2019 12:53 AM  
**To:** Chamberlain, Lisa  
**Subject:** some notes in support of the JvN/d home:front project at 468-476 James St S  
**Attachments:** JvNd condo collective hf 3.html

Hi, Lisa Chamberlain:

Attached please find an .html document which delves into several aspects related to the project, as well as some of the broader topic of affordable housing and homelessness.

I have submitted this as I am unable to attend the June 4 public meeting (I am in China until June 5.)

I hope you don't find the document overwhelming. I have tried to keep the extra perhaps helpful info in a Supplemental section. By the sheer numbers of references and articles on the internet that pertain to housing issues, it is clear that it is a concern that is quite here for the long term.

I am interested in many aspects related to housing, and so some of the information may be insufficiently relevant to Hamilton City's Design Panel concerns for the home:front project. I apologize for being long-winded and for digressing.

I look forward to your approval of the project proposal set out by architect JvN/d and his team. It could be a model that many cities and towns elsewhere could adapt.

Sincerely,

Stephen Watson

# JvN/d condo collective h:f

(start of feedback already submitted to the City of Hamilton Design Review Panel around July 28, 2018)

SW >  
 To  
 Jul. 28, 2018 at 3:51 a.m.  
 Hi, Emily:  
 I filled in the feedback form.  
 Did it arrive okay?  
 I paste it below for backup.  
 It's written in my open and inclusive style, with quotes and references that go beyond local boundaries but intrinsically help establish new proximities and spur new dialogues.  
 Regards,  
 steve watson  
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## JvN/d condo collective 468 James St. N. home:front

List of emails from JvN/d since 2017.11.13

<https://us16.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=dace53f330dcd94dbc1c95a29&id=a2c1396113>

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### Thoughts in support of the JvN/d home:front project

1) Yes, certainly. For those who are serious about lifting themselves out of poverty or near poverty, the JvN/f financial arrangement offered by architect van Nostrand gives a chance to those to whom established banks and credit unions do not cater. A unit in **home:front** will likely increase in value and increase in equity and thus give the owner a good credit rating, confidence in the future, and more favourable standing in today's money-conscious society.

2) I love the idea of rooftop gardens. Apart from having a cooling effect for the residents on the top floor, the gardens could provide some fresh veggies, nuts, fruit. In addition, under the recommendations of some permaculture experts, along with the input from h:f residents, rooftop raised beds would give both young and old the opportunity to see Nature in her full potential and beauty, as well as save some money.

Tailored to a small environment, the rooftop could have a bonsai section, as well as power-generating cycling machines for residents to put back into the grid while at the same time keeping fit. Areas with solar ovens would allow for rooftop picnics or parties in the daytime or evening, and star and city skyline gazing at night.

The widening of the sidewalk on the Ferrie Street side allows for the inclusion of some carefully chosen shade trees and park benches. Moreover, those with western, southern, or eastern facing units, have some latitude and freedom of expression in decorating their balcony with plants or solar devices. Not quite to the extent of architect Luciano Pia's \*25 Verde\*, but perhaps similar to his design but on a smaller scale!

The building design is functional and modern and allows for a higher populated density with a smaller ecological footprint. Solar light wells could help sunlight penetrate those units facing more to the north or not on the periphery. This minimal space living and close proximity of fellow dwellers facilitates more human interaction, and allows one to get to know one's neighbours. We are not talking tiny houses here, but tiny condos in an open-concept DIY interior, giving free-range and income possibilities for unit owners. Removing load bearing walls while still allowing for sound-proof, lightweight, movable partitions between units gives the owner flexibility to alter, remove, add interior elements with relative ease.

*The use of different building materials and textures will give an attractive and varied appearance to the facade.*

3) Streetscape was covered in the previous section. Hardy tree species along the more south-facing sides of the building will help oxygenate and de-carbonize the air. Extra-width of the sidewalks accommodates those in quad-scooters or with walkers. The tradition of including the street names using metal panels in the sidewalk will help

remind the occupants of Hamilton's legacy of steel and iron.

Bicycle and tricycle storage and re-charge and maintenance facilities certainly will encourage residents to give up or reduce usage of the a family car. Small footprint ironworks — such as the “Heaven's Door” panels (gates) made using abandoned farming equipment and rural amenities by Bob Dylan in his Black Buffalo Ironworks foundry \*\* — could be used at the entrances to the building, paying tribute in a small way to the iron ore tradition which Dylan grew up with.

The parking area will be underground, and require a lot of excavation. As a former construction volunteer at the arcology prototype Arcosanti\*\*\* in Arizona, I am in favour of slowing down and supporting the return of walking as the main mode of personal transport. We now have apps such as Uber and carshare apps (rent a car by the hour). Greener transport (bikes, ebikes, scooters, e-scooters) with apps and hardware within easy reach (such as Sobi, Bolt, Lime, Bird, Jump, Lyft, Spin, Skip) gives us a wide range of choices other than the default fossil fuel burning car, truck, bus.

If excavation is to be done, it might be worthwhile to consider putting in some geothermal wells, giving almost free heat or cool air to warm and cool the building in winter and summer. I will not explore the geothermal route in this paper.

\* <https://www.archdaily.com/609260/25-green-luciano-pia>

\*\* <https://www.heavensdoor.com/irongallery>

\*\*\* [arcosanti.org](http://arcosanti.org) (<http://arcosanti.org/>)

4)

“The so-called housing shortage, so much talked about in the press these days, cannot be simply dismissed by admitting that the working class is generally living in bad, overcrowded, and unhealthy apartments... The term “housing crisis”, as it is currently understood, essentially stands for nothing other than the worsening of the already miserable housing conditions, caused by the influx of people into the cities...” Engels, “The housing Question”, 1872

Further reading (the housing question has been with us since at least 1872) <http://hct.aaschool.ac.uk/the-quasi-nomadic-cell-at-the-threshold-of-the-collective-dwelling/>

I hope the architect's plan and vision dovetails with the minds of Hamilton's urban designers. If the population of the city is to increase by at least 50% in the next ten to fifteen years, we must favour housing solutions that do not require additional land currently owned by struggling farmers; in other words, it needs add a moderate vertical dimension to the landscape without widening the perimeter.

----end of first feedback sent to Hamilton City Council in 2018 July----

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----start of 2019 05 25 new feedback to Hamilton City Design Review Panel---

## Introduction

Name: Stephen Watson

Originally from Toronto, I spent most of my life living and teaching in Africa, India, South Korea, and China. Projects I have volunteered on include Arcosanti (carless urban laboratory of the future) and tree-planting and erosion control in Auroville, India. I am recently retired, but still keep strong interests in permaculture/agroforestry, micro-habitats, design, and art.

## How to reference the project

Perhaps the project needs a better name than **home:front**.

We already have *harbourfront*, *waterfront*, *lakefront*, *bayfront*, We need something that refers to Hamilton's steel mill background. Something like *Anvil Associates*, *Anvil Village*, *Anvil Collective*, *Anvil Abodes*, *Anvil Hive*, *Hamilton Hive Initiative*, *Hamilton Hive Housing and Retail*, *Anvil Anchor*, *Anchor Estates*, *Co-operate*, *BayAreaCollective*, *Ancilla\*\**, *Ancilla Housing Collective*, *Ancilla Housing Coop*, *BayAreaHousing*, *BayAreaServices*, *PierNear*, *condomondo*,...

\*\**ancilla* plural *ancillae*: an aid to achieving or mastering something difficult (from the Latin where it meant *female servant*)

But, since the architect has given it the name **home:front**, I will stick to that for now.

===== SUPPLEMENTAL STARTS =====  
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### Quick look at some housing developments in cities worldwide

What follows below is news about various housing projects. They are not all similar to **home:front**, but often look at smaller projects such as pocket suites. Some links point to tiny house projects which (when taken collectively) indicate the changing perspective of millennials and others who choose to live as urban nomads: that less is more and we must reduce our carbon footprint and harmful housing habits.

Let's (as warm-up) have a look at what other cities are doing in the area of housing, then we will look at Hamilton's forum on the topic. What follows is supplemental to our discussion. It can be bypassed if you wish.

### Small collection of websites wherein various cities try to resolve the problems and challenges of city homelessness and affordable housing

But first we should look at some newly minted (or revived) terminology that has become part and parcel with this urban housing r)evolution.:

### Some relevant terms and interesting websites

- *tiny house movement* — A movement where people design and build small cottages with floor area from less than 100sf (23sm) to 200 or 300sf (not sure of upper limit). They are often built on a trailer, allowing the owner to easily re-locate. Many are off-grid, but still manage to design in overhead showers, hot tubs, radiant floor heat, cooling vents, repurposing grey and black water,
- *pocket housing* — occupies usually a single building lot from which its previous building has been demolished and replaced by a specially designed compact building of mini-suites, often with common shared spaces.
- *row housing co-living co-housing* <https://philly.curbed.com/2019/5/23/18637205/san-francisco-startup-philly-rowhomes-coliving-rental> Vivahouse prefab modular housing system <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/11/16/vivahouse-prefabricated-co-living-modular-london/> co-housing movement of the 1960s (see pdf IMAGINE)
- IKEA's miniaturized wooden block village *Space10* <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/03/08/solarville-space10-village-solar-energy-blockchain/> co-living and shared spaces (2 slide) <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/10/16/brave-new-world-shared-living-shared-housing-space10/> \*\*\*\*IMAGINE pdf magazine (download pdf) (superb!) <https://s10.io/imagine-report>
- A-frame <https://philly.curbed.com/2017/10/5/16402546/a-frame-cabin-rentals-pennsylvania> floating A-frame school ... floor plans for 10 offices <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/05/25/office-floor-plans-interesting/>
- 10 office designs <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/05/25/office-floor-plans-interesting/>
- *arcology* (architecture + ecology) — a 3d urban megastructure that incorporates green house, solar advantage, and no cars. See sample sketches by Paolo Soleri. It is a set of architectural design principles aimed toward the design of enormous habitats (hyperstructures) of extremely high human population density. ||| seaside arcology for southern China <http://www.cityfarmer.org/frick.html#frick> ||| <http://www.essential-architecture.com/STYLE/STY-073.htm> ||| <http://arcology.com/> <https://www.pinterest.ca/RedHenColorado/post-arcology/> ||| A prototype (called Arcosanti Urban Laboratory) is under construction near Mayer, Arizona [www.arcosanti.org](http://www.arcosanti.org) >> **living closely in a dynamic environment increases interactions and bonds, creating abundant stimulus and opportunity.**<< ||| Soleri's book <https://www.amazon.com/Arcology-City-Image-Paolo-Soleri/dp/0262690411>

pdf pocket housing

[https://www.hastingshousing.com/docs/wysiwyg/Pocket\\_Housing\\_Presentation.Nov2013.pdf](https://www.hastingshousing.com/docs/wysiwyg/Pocket_Housing_Presentation.Nov2013.pdf)

pocket 'hoods (different definition)

<http://pocket-neighborhoods.net/whatisaPN.html>

Next, still — as part of our preparation to look at Hamilton's improved housing options -- we will now look first at some projects underway in other cities. Although not identical to **home:front**, the sheer magnitude of the scope of links and projects indeed shows that the city is a magnet and that young people are often becoming their own developers and builders, opting for smaller living quarters for short stays. There is also the added task of cleaning and maintaining the several thousand square feet of interior space in a monster suburban villa (which still seems to be the preferred choice for many couples and families).

#### WINNIPEG

pocket suites, pocket housing

<https://tinyhouseblog.com/apartment-living/pocket-suites-in-winnipeg/>

pocket houses

[www.sam.mb.ca/pockethouses/index.html](http://www.sam.mb.ca/pockethouses/index.html)

<https://www.pocketliving.com>

mb pockethousing realtor

<https://www.sam.mb.ca/find-a-home/single-persons-housing>

#### VANCOUVER (UBC)

2016 03 14 Vancouver UBC Nano Studio micro-apartment student housing solution (Van is 3rd least affordable housing behind HK and Sydney)

<https://www.treehugger.com/tiny-houses/nano-student-micro-apartments-university-british-columbia-ubc.html>

shrt video <https://vimeo.com/156141434>

#### LUND SWEDEN

Lund, Sweden student housing, the BoKompakt

\*\*\*<https://www.treehugger.com/tiny-houses/compact-student-housing-sweden-fair-companies.html>\*\*\*

- [https://housing.justlanded.com/en/Finland\\_Southern-Finland\\_Helsinki/For-Rent\\_Apartments/Laurinniityntie-Helsinki-1435967](https://housing.justlanded.com/en/Finland_Southern-Finland_Helsinki/For-Rent_Apartments/Laurinniityntie-Helsinki-1435967)
- <https://www.vuokraovi.com/vuokra-asunto/vaasa/keskusta/kerrostalo/yksio/845972>
- <https://www.laurea.fi/en/international/exchange-students-and-trainees/housing/>

#### VERMONT

Green Mtn towable tiny house

Vermont's Green Mountain College [Renewable Energy and Ecological Design students' build: OTIS (which stands for Optimal Traveling Independent Space) and is an aerodynamic, pod-shaped design, made to be towed on a standard 5 by 8 foot trailer and a four-cylinder vehicle.

<https://www.treehugger.com/green-architecture/otis-optimal-travel-independent-space-green-mountain-college.html>

>> It has its own rainwater collection system that feeds into the indoor plumbing, in addition to the 120-watt solar panel system to provide electricity. To handle human waste, the OTIS uses a composting toilet<<

[www.greenmtn.edu/reed/reed-projects.aspx](http://www.greenmtn.edu/reed/reed-projects.aspx)

<http://www.greenmtn.edu/>

college is closing

<https://www.greenmtn.edu/message-from-the-president/>

#### NEW YORK

micro-apartments

<https://ny.curbed.com/micro-apartments-nyc>

razed 6-storey gives way to 8-story (13 micro-units of 500sf topped by 2 full-floor apartments)

<https://ny.curbed.com/2019/1/22/18192678/lower-east-side-micro-apartment-seward-park>

New York building with options

<https://www.theassemblage.com>

nyc affordable housing

<https://ny.curbed.com/affordable-housing-nyc>

#### LOS ANGELES

UCLA CityLab <https://www.treehugger.com/tiny-houses/bihome-ucla-students-design-tiny-home-affordable-housing-crisis.html>

#### HONG KONG

40 sf cubicle

<https://www.treehugger.com/urban-design/hong-kong-cubicle-public-housing-crisis.html>

>> HK has a 320,000-person-long waiting list for public housing<<

## PHILADELPHIA

\*modular building in Philly (similar to Home:Front?)

<https://philly.curbed.com/2019/5/14/18623453/lvl-modular-prefab-building-west-philly-rent-chestnut>

## other cities

<https://www.curbed.com/cities-directory>

car design meets minimal living

## 2017 Dezeen x MINI (Cooper) Living

<https://www.dezeen.com/miniliving/>

>> MINI's co-living destination in Shanghai "brings know-how from vehicles into places where we live"

>> Car brand MINI is diversifying into urban development with the MINI Living building in Shanghai, which will see a disused industrial complex transform into apartments, offices and leisure spaces.<<

Carlo Ratti Livingboard prefab housing for India

<https://www.dezeen.com/2018/12/30/carlo-ratti-livingboard-prefab-housing-rural-india/>

security, lighting, fire prevention, ventilation

Foster + Parters integrated building services system [https://www.dezeen.com/2018/04/04/foster-partners-launches-integrated-building-services-system/?li\\_source=LI&li\\_medium=rhs\\_block\\_1](https://www.dezeen.com/2018/04/04/foster-partners-launches-integrated-building-services-system/?li_source=LI&li_medium=rhs_block_1)

<https://www.fosterandpartners.com>

===== SUPPLEMENTAL ENDS =====  
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## HAMILTON

It has been reported that Hamilton city council is having a serious look at laneway housing as a solution to homelessness in the city. This concern has been raised in 2012, 2016, 2017, and now 2019. What were the outcomes? Time may be spent looking at a topic, but following up with practical action is the real test of success. Let's hope that the home:front project will infuse a new ethic and vision, and the surrounding community be uplifted.

We all know that laneway housing requires lanes and the built roadway grid. One benefit is that it *does* add to urban density and it could be a solution for homelessness.

## PARTIAL DOCUMENTATION OF HAMILTON CITY'S INTEREST IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2012.09.22

<https://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/2256907-affordable-homes-pocket-housing-gradually-emerging-in-hamilton/>

<http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/2012/09/affordable-housing-pocket-housing/>

2015.03.19

<https://raisethehammer.org/article/2545/is-affordable-housing-a-priority-for-the-broader-hamilton-community-one-year-later>

2017 hamilton laneway homeless

<http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2017/03/04/tiny-houses-a-solution-to-homelessness-in-hamilton-ontario/>  
designer emma cubits

<http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/2017/02/tiny-house-wave-comes-to-hamilton-with-new-affordable-housing-project/>

indigenous youth homeless housing

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/indigenous-homeless-youth-program-ready-for-clients-friday-1.4988383>

affordable housing workshop

<https://www.raisethehammer.org/article/1337/>

2019 hamilton tiny laneway homes

[https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/tiny-houses-1.4320161?\\_\\_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR3UGdPuuYyRgpxYsWMy2mb4teORHUI-GOyTAwLBfVSuEwflmMB30eJ0ME](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/tiny-houses-1.4320161?__vfz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR3UGdPuuYyRgpxYsWMy2mb4teORHUI-GOyTAwLBfVSuEwflmMB30eJ0ME)

emma lea cubitt's master thesis on laneway housing

<https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/3603>

**home:front** breaks new ground. Its minimalist approach, its flexibility of interior design and use, its innovative financial model, its inclusion of shared spaces — all offer considerable advantage and quick appeal to anyone informed of the trends and alternatives that bypass the mainstream realtors with their sky-high rental rates and astronomical selling prices.

Let's do more with less and all get behind the 8-ball for the JvN/d **home:front** project!

---- end of feedback for JvN/d composed on 2019 05 27 ----

**Chamberlain, Lisa**

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**From:** SW  
**Sent:** May 30, 2019 1:40 AM  
**To:** Chamberlain, Lisa  
**Subject:** link to free zine -- IMAGINE: Exploring the brave new world of shared living

Hi, Lisa Chamberlain:

I tried to attach a very interesting e-zine, IMAGINE issue 2. But the file was over the limit for attachments to hamilton.ca.

This issue is called **IMAGINE: Exploring the brave new world of shared living**.

The link below should open up the pdf file, and hopefully the City Design Panel members can enjoy its many articles and insights.

<https://space10.io/collection/imagine-exploring-the-brave-new-world-of-shared-living/>

Kind regards,

Steve Watson

Hamilton, ON