



JUNE 2022

A HOME FOR THE HEART

CASE FOR SUPPORT FOR A RENEWED GUESTHOUSE



Guests walking the Labyrinth

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, who said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25: 35). Once guests arrive they are treated with all the courtesy of love. - Rule of St. Benedict

OUR VISION - MISSION - VALUES



The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine is a prayer-and gospel-centered monastic community. Nurtured by our founding vision of prayer, community, and service, we are open and responsive to the needs of the church and the contemporary world, continually seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our life and ministry.

Called to be a sign of Christ, the Sisterhood witnesses to the power of reconciling and forgiving love through our prayer and spirituality, outreach to others, pastoral and spiritual care, community life and stewardship. We seek to live the gospel imperatives of:

- prayer
- spiritual guidance
- ministering to those in need
- working for justice and peace
- reverence and care for creation
- hospitality
- promoting unity, healing, and wholeness



Reception desk of our Guest House



Path to the Guest House

A HERITAGE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sisterhood of St. John the Divine sprang to life in September 1884, when Hannah Grier Coome made her life vows. This vibrant religious community over its long history has ministered across Canada in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

In 1885, just a year after our founding, the first five sisters had opened a hospital, a home for the aged, and a mission house, all in support of urban Toronto's most vulnerable people. These expressions of hospitality expanded over the next 138 years to include schools, an orphanage, two homes for those with intellectual disabilities, and always opportunities for guests and groups to come to the Guest House for times of retreat and quiet.

In order for this work to flourish, we have faithfully and deliberately focused on our life of prayer in the context of community and in finding new ways to reach people. Our life and work continue to draw the engaged interest of many women and men across Canada and beyond. We have been blessed with new members, retreatants, and affiliates on a regular basis, and see our mission and vision renewed as we engage fully, connecting in new ways.

Today, we continue to reach out in teaching, healing, caring, and loving all the people whom God brings before us. We provide active hospitality, retreats, spiritual direction, and outreach into the community. We also continue to provide spiritual care to patients, staff and students at St John's Rehab, part of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Prior to the global pandemic we welcomed over 2,500 guests annually and we are now delighted to have our Guest House open again.



Part of a confirmation retreat group

“This place is an absolute sanctuary for me. It is perfection – in what it intends, and what it offers.” – Retreat guest

A HOME FOR THE HEART



Retreat coffee break in the Refectory



Part of a retreat group in the conference room

The Guest House was constructed in 1956 and partially updated in 2004 when the new Convent was built. The residence is situated on our 8-acre property adjacent to St. John's Rehab

Our Guest House is not an ordinary building. It represents a spiritual home for so many Oblates, Companions, Associates, and people of all faiths and none, as well as members of the Anglican Communion from across Canada and beyond. Many have found peace and solace within these walls. It is simply a loving place for personal growth and inner light.

We have a life to share, and this is a place to share that life with others. A warm, spiritual home awaits the visitor, and they are immediately immersed in a peaceful and prayerful atmosphere.

Our Guest House provides the place for guests to explore and deepen their spirituality in a society that is increasingly isolating. There is a constant coming and going of people attending workshops, planning sessions and education meetings. Our Guest House has become known to many as the 'Home for the Heart'. We are ever grateful to God for the sacredness of this place.

Our continuing commitment to hospitality requires the Sisterhood to give immediate attention to the Guest House building. It requires space designed to enable us to carry on this work now and for future generations.



Taizé Retreat one evening

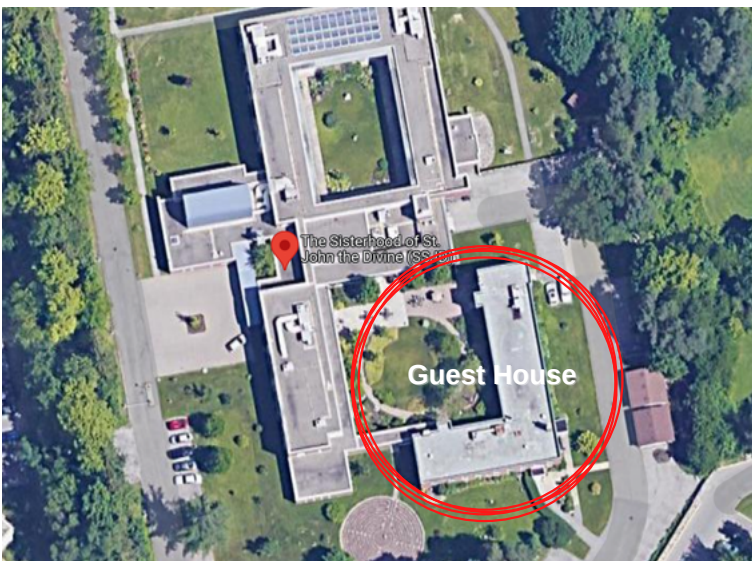


Guests in Associate Library



Link between Convent & Guest House

A RE-VISIONED GUEST HOUSE



Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.
- Hebrews 13.2

The Guest House requires significant and urgent repairs and renovations. An assessment done by CDW Engineering showed that, the roofing system and parts of the HVAC system (heating and air conditioning units and associated energy recovery ventilation) are nearing the end of their life expectancies. Additionally, the doors and windows are at the end of their serviceable life. Sealant replacement around the windows is recommended. The roof itself has blistering of the membrane, and water is ponding along the north end, increasing the risk of damage and leakage.

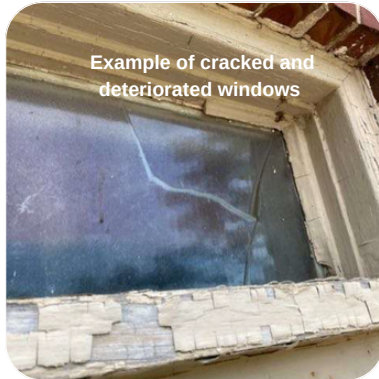


Rendering of the Exterior Canopy

The interior of the Guest House is also showing signs of its age. Vertical cracking has been noted in the wall finishes of the south entrance vestibule and the laundry storage room, where these structures are tied into the masonry wall of the building. This cracking appears to be due to these smaller structures being built on slabs of grade and the seasonal movement associated with that type of structure. These cracks will likely reoccur. Furthermore, there is evidence of dampness and leakage in the basement. While the boiler is 14 years old, the radiators and the lines feeding them are original from 1956.



Mortar deterioration at east and south parapets.



Example of cracked and deteriorated windows



Leakage below grade in basement boiler room



Example of blistering and patchwork repairs in various locations in the main roof.

OUR OPTIONS

We are considering two options of similar estimated cost. One option would be to renovate substantially our current building, involving a major renovation of the interior. The second option is to replace the current building with a new and greener building on the same site. Both options support the continued legacy of past generations by providing the relevant programs for today's community. With your input, we will discern our next steps.

“Thank you for such a wonderful place. I was able to gather what I needed and find peace within me.”

- Member of a visiting youth group

1 OPTION 1: RENOVATE THE CURRENT BUILDING

ESTIMATED COST \$5.2 MILLION

Guest House renovations would enhance our ministry to guests through facility upgrades and repairs and would address some serious issues around building systems.



Rendering of the Guest Library



Rendering of a Guest Suite



Rendering of the Entrance Lobby

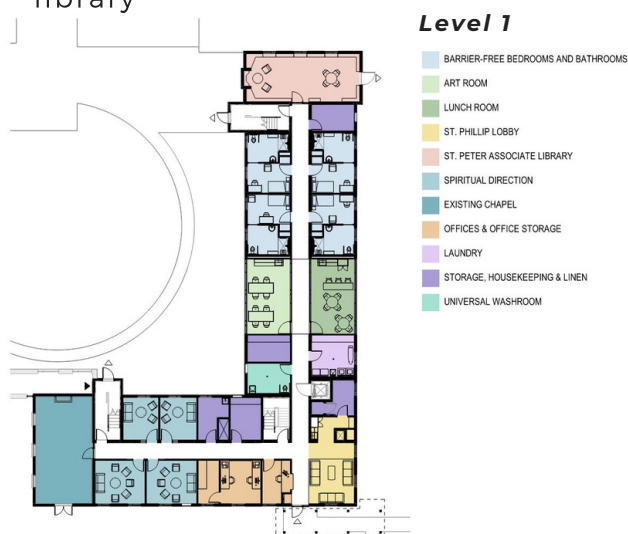
The current building is over 70 years old and will require ongoing repairs. The renovation of this building would provide many benefits, primarily the preservation and stewardship of resources. The building was built with quality materials and continuing to use this building would reduce ecological waste. The current building footprint is 12,684 ft², which supplies ample space for various meeting rooms, storage, guest suites and reception area. Also, renovating the Guest House retains the historical significance of the building, preserves the gardens and the project timeline is shorter, so guests would be able to use the new space sooner.

FEATURES OF A RENOVATED BUILDING WOULD INCLUDE:

- Private bathrooms for all bedrooms (includes reducing the total number of bedrooms from 37 to 25)
- Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning throughout (including individual room controls)
- Roof replacement
- Elevator upgrade
- Accessible bedrooms
- Reception area improvements for easier check-in access.
- Relocation of rooms to allow for sleeping areas away from common areas
- Window replacement
- A new lunchroom and art room, and a redesigned guest library



Rendering of the Art Room

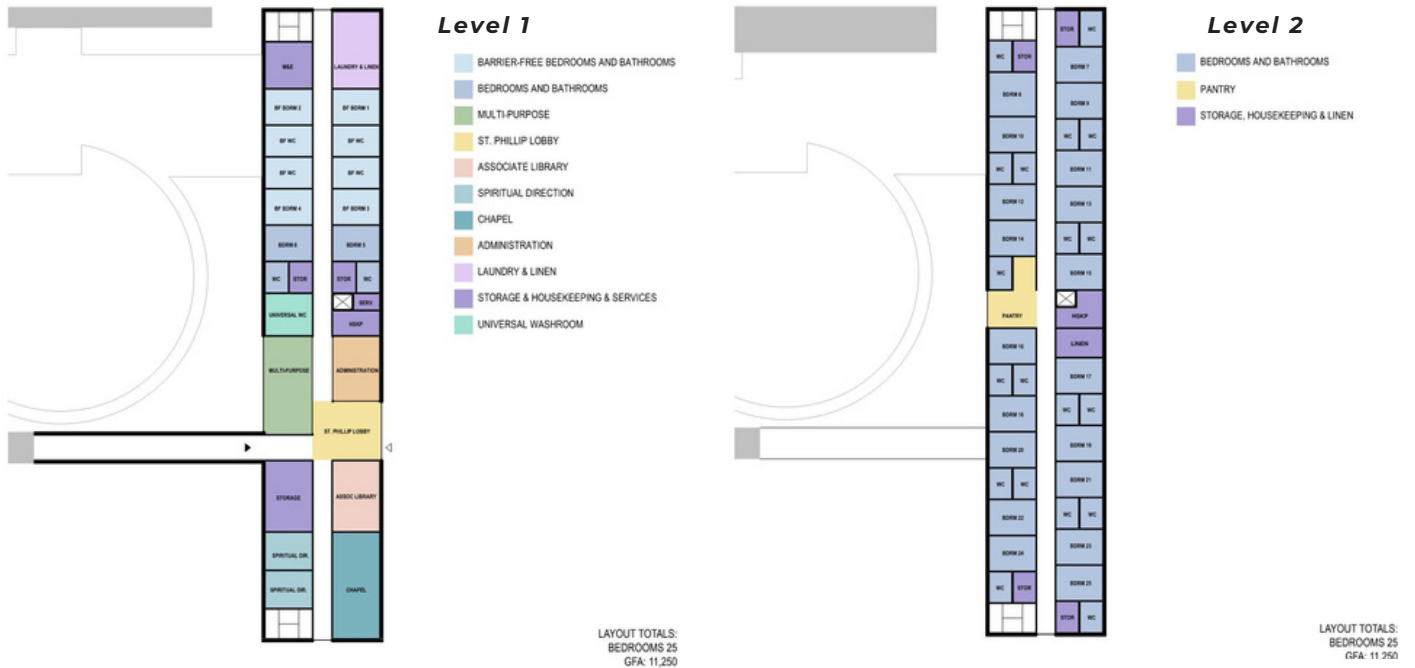


*See larger floorplans in appendix

2 OPTION 2: CONSTRUCT A NEW BUILDING

ESTIMATED COST \$5.5 MILLION

New construction would provide the opportunity to custom-design a building to meet current and future needs. In keeping with our monastic values of simplicity and hospitality, our intention is to provide a smaller more functional use of space for both individual retreatants and groups. For this option, the building would be more compact, at 11,250 ft², environmentally friendly and energy efficient, making it more economical to run. This option offers the ability to have solar panels on the roof and terracing the stories, with a longer building on floor 1 and a second floor (or third story) roof garden to reduce carbon emissions. Finally, the building would be designed to integrate well with the existing Convent and its beautiful gardens, would be better insulated, and would have more natural light.



**See larger floorplans in appendix*

FEATURES OF A NEW BUILD WOULD INCLUDE:

- Private bathrooms for all bedrooms
- Accessibility features throughout: Elevator
- Accessible bedrooms
- Reception area improvements for easier check-in access.
- Slightly smaller footprint with 25-26 bedrooms
- More direct access from the Convent to Guest House reception area
- More environmental HVAC systems, windows, doors, roofing and insulation
- Rooms separate from common areas
- Guest Library and a multi-purpose lunch-art-meeting room

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, who said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25: 35). Once guests arrive they are treated with all the courtesy of love.

- Rule of St. Benedict

Whether renovated or rebuilt, the Guest House will honour the legacy of past generations and continue to enable our ministry of hospitality for years to come. As the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine nears its 140th year, we pray that we may continue to respond to the needs of the Church and the world as God's will is made known to us.

YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Thank you for taking the time to read and thoughtfully consider this Preliminary Case for Support. Your feedback will help us determine how we might honour the sure foundation Christ has made in our place, faithfully respond to our abundant blessings from God and continue to uphold a joyful witness to the Gospel. We look forward to meeting with you and we welcome your advice on how best to proceed with this venture that the Sisterhood is embracing in the spirit of one of its foundational principles, the ministry of hospitality.

"I cannot find enough superlatives to describe the excellence of this retreat environment. Grateful for all the care and sensitivity that has gone into the creation of all this!" - retreat guest

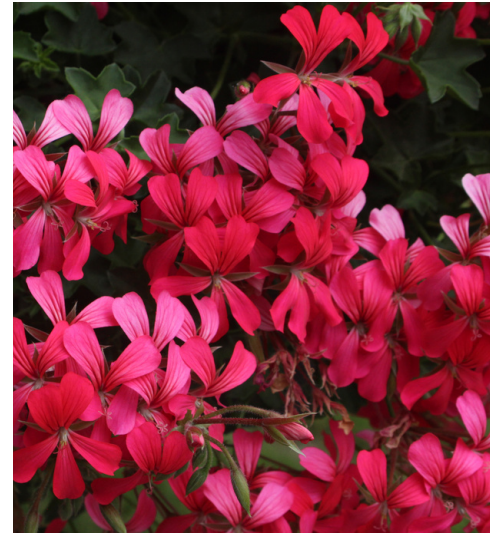




Angel in the lobby garden



The shrine garden



Flowers at the Convent

FINANCIAL PLANS:

CHOICES	ESTIMATED COST
GUEST HOUSE RENOVATION (12,684 FT²):	
PROFESSIONAL FEES	\$500,000
DEMOLITION	\$200,000
CONSTRUCTION COST	\$4,500,000
TOTAL COST	\$5,200,000
GUEST HOUSE NEW BUILD (11,250 FT²)	
PROFESSIONAL FEES	\$500,000
DEMOLITION	\$200,000
CONSTRUCTION COST	\$4,800,000
TOTAL COST	\$5,500,000
ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES:	
FOUNDERS FUND	\$1,000,000
OTHER SOURCES	\$150,000
CAMPAIGN GOAL	\$4,150,000 - \$4,350,000

APPENDICES

OPTION 1: RENOVATION - FLOOR PLAN

LEVEL 1



SSJD CONVENT GUEST HOUSE

RENOVATION - FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 1

OPTION 1: RENOVATION - FLOOR PLAN

LEVEL 2



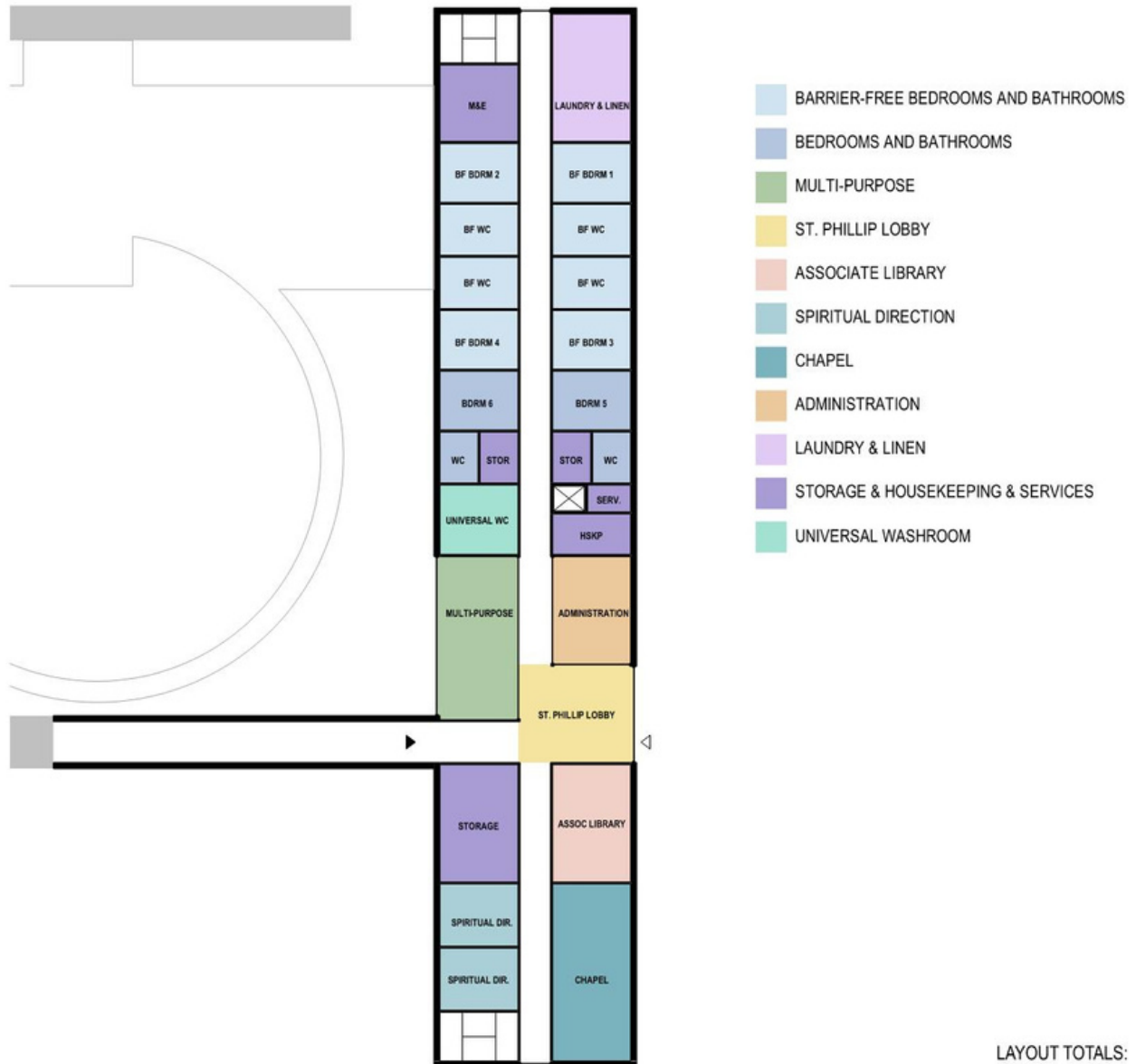
LAYOUT TOTALS:
BEDROOMS 25
GFA: 12500

SSJD CONVENT GUEST HOUSE

RENOVATION - FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 2

OPTION 2: NEW BUILDING - FLOOR PLAN

LEVEL 1



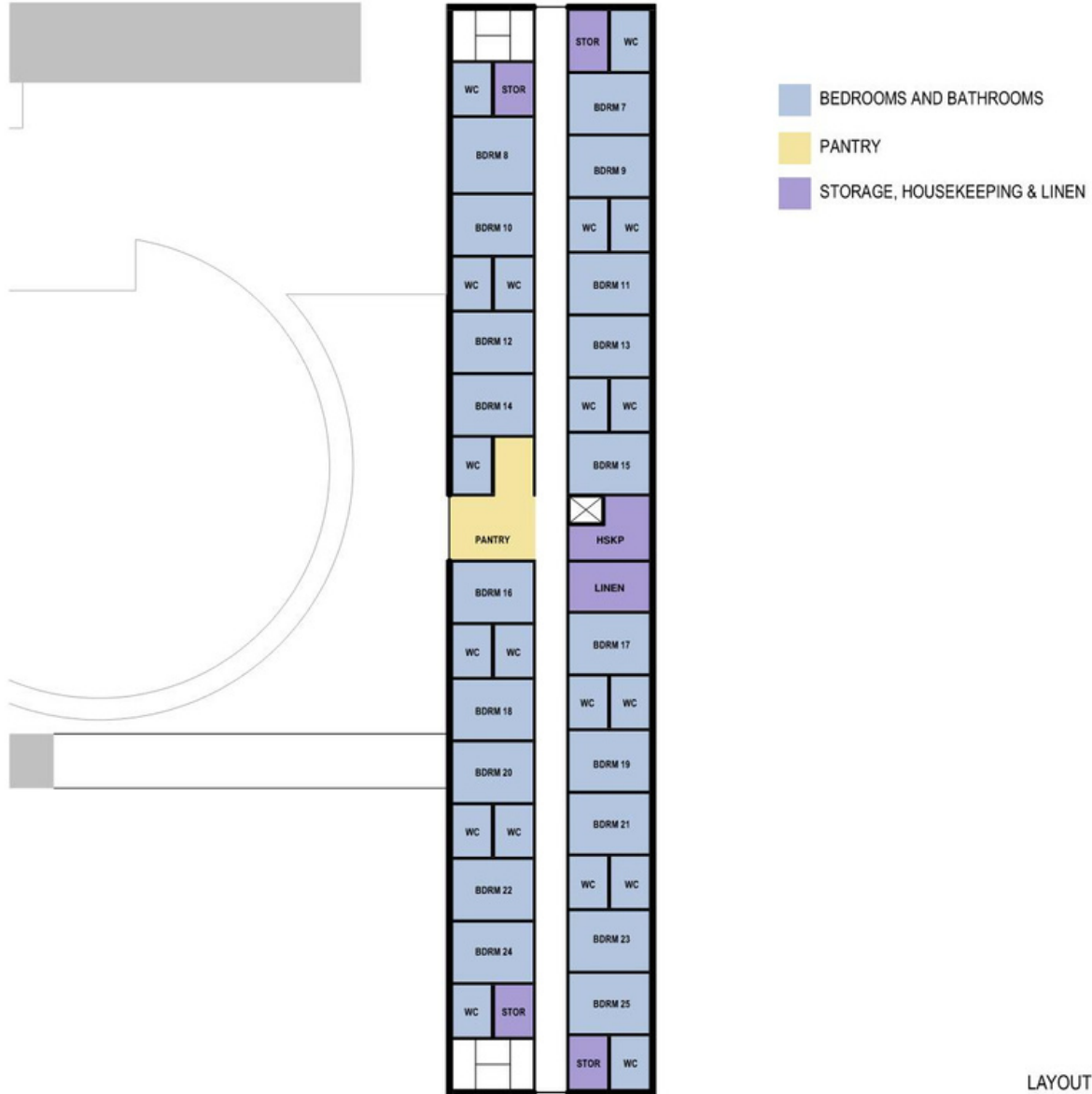
LAYOUT TOTALS:
 BEDROOMS 25
 GFA: 11,250

SSJD CONVENT GUEST HOUSE

NEW BUILD - FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 1

OPTION 2: NEW BUILDING - FLOOR PLAN

LEVEL 2



LAYOUT TOTALS:
BEDROOMS 25
GFA: 11,250

SSJD CONVENT GUEST HOUSE

NEW BUILD - FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 2