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The HAVN design concept is rooted in contrast as a primary driver: hot and cold, enclosed and open, light and dark, stillness and movement, city and ocean, historic and contemporary. These pairings shape how guests move through and experience the vessel.

Rooted in long-established wellness traditions, hydrotherapy uses heat, cold, and water immersion to support physical restoration, mental well-being, and social connection. The experience is intentionally quiet and contemplative, with no medical treatments, massage services, amplified music, alcohol service, or cell phone use. Guests move freely through a sequence of saunas, hot baths, cold pools, and rest areas at their own pace, creating a low-impact, restorative use of the waterfront.

Rather than constructing a new building, HAVN preserves and reactivates a significant piece of maritime infrastructure through sustainable adaptive reuse. The HAVN concept is inherently maritime in nature, reinforces the working-harbour character of the area, and is compatible as an extension of VMM's harbour-based activities.

The project has been designed with environmental stewardship as a core consideration. The facility incorporates measures consistent with the City of Vancouver's Bird Friendly Design Guidelines, including the protection of existing bird habitat and the avoidance of habitat removal or disruption. Environmental consultants will assess potential habitat impacts associated with infrastructure works and recommend mitigation measures where required. Green roofs will be incorporated on sauna buildings and pergola structures to enhance habitat value, support biodiversity, and contribute to the ecological performance of the project.

The floating-barge design also minimizes impacts on aquatic species by avoiding dredging, limiting seabed disturbance, and preserving existing marine habitat conditions. The project's adaptive reuse approach further reduces environmental impacts by extending the life of existing maritime infrastructure rather than requiring new construction.

HAVN exists to foster presence, meaningful connection, and a strong relationship between people, water, and maritime heritage, while demonstrating a progressive model of sustainable business. By refitting an existing vessel, the project avoids approximately 900,000 pounds of virgin steel, saving an estimated 1,600 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. All cedar used in the saunas and interior finishes is sourced from salvaged ocean driftwood, with approximately 33,000 board feet incorporated into the facility.