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December 5, 2017

**Sent via E-mail**

Vancouver City Council  
453 West 12th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Attention: Kristen Elkow

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

**Re: Sign By-law Amendment Application by Bonnis Properties (Robson) Inc. for Electronic Video Signs at 798 Granville Street**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposal by Bonnis Properties (Robson) Inc. ("**Bonnis Properties**"). This is the first time that we are contributing to the discussion of this proposal. When the community open house was held on February 28, 2017, we were not yet tenants at 725 Granville Street as we moved to our current location in March 2017.

We are not the intended audience of the existing sign facing west (the "**Western Sign**") or the new sign that is going to replace the Western Sign (the "**New Sign**"). Yet, we are the people who are most negatively affected by the signs.

#### **SUMMARY**

The Western Sign is right across from our office and shines bright lights at our employees 24 hours a day causing distraction.

We support the proposal to lower the New Sign subject to Bonnis Properties making best efforts to reduce or eliminate the light from the New Sign entering through the windows at 725 Granville Street. The adverse impact on our employees and other tenants of 725 Granville Street who are the unintended audience of the New Sign could be reduced by:

1. lowering the New Sign further to reduce its adverse impact;
2. using technology in the design of the New Sign to reduce its adverse impact;
3. installing a shield over the top part of the New Sign to reduce its adverse impact; or
4. reducing the proposed size of the New Sign to be smaller than 56 m<sup>2</sup> so that it could be lowered further to eliminate the adverse impact on us and our neighbours in the building.

Microsoft and Sony Pictures Imageworks who are our neighbours at 725 Granville Street with offices facing the Western Sign have expressed support for our request. Mr. Kerry Bonnis has also expressed his commitment to working with us to find a solution.

#### **WHO ARE WE?**

- Miller Thomson LLP has been a well-respected law firm in downtown Vancouver since 2000. From 1951 to 2000, we were Swinton & Company.
- There are 127 people working in our office, 37 of whom are partners each holding a business license with the City of Vancouver.
- We occupy approximately 47,700 square feet on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at 725 Granville Street, the building that is directly across the street from 798 Granville Street.
- We have been at our previous location in the downtown area for over 30 years.
- To encourage more collaboration, our office adopted an open concept floor plan. To maximize the amount of natural light coming into our office, we have floor-to-ceiling windows that are approximately 12 feet in height surrounding the space.

#### **DISCUSSION WITH OTHER TENANTS**

Our neighbours facing the Western Sign in the building are:

- Microsoft on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floor with approximately 750 employees; and
- Sony Pictures Imageworks on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor with approximately 600 employees.

These long-term tenants are in the technology business, an industry from which the City wishes to attract more businesses. This week, we met with the office managers at Sony and Microsoft. They both support our request to reduce the negative impact of the New Sign.

#### **DISCUSSION WITH BONNIS PROPERTIES**

We acknowledge and support that the proposal by Bonnis Properties is accompanied with elements that would add value to our community. We invited Mr. Kerry Bonnis from Bonnis Properties over the weekend and he kindly accepted our offer and visited our office on Monday despite the short notice. Mr. Bonnis saw the impact of the Western Sign on our employees in person. Mr. Bonnis explained to us his ideas and expressed his commitment to working with us as neighbours and addressing our concerns.

#### **WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR OUR REQUEST?**

- **Proximity**
  - The New Sign will be directly across the street from our office and only 22 meters away from our windows. The New Sign will be as close as 24 meters to our work stations. The attached photos in Appendix A show how close we are to the Western Sign.



- The 11<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> floors of 833 Seymour Street which were studied by Bonnis Properties in its view analysis, as shown on page 10 of its proposal, are, on average, 114 meters from the existing sign facing south (the "**South Sign**"), based on our estimates. We are 5 times closer to the New Sign.
- Compared to the intensity of the light from the South Sign on the residents of 833 Seymour Street, the intensity of the light from the New Sign on our employees can be 25 times greater, according to the inverse square law formula.
- **Change in the Neighbourhood**
  - When the original Western Sign was first put up in 2003, the building directly across the street was a department store. The sign faced into a blank wall.
  - 725 Granville Street has been re-developed with full approval and cooperation of the City to include on its top four floors offices whose employees are affected by the Western Sign.
- **Distraction**
  - Our work is intense and requires concentration and focus. Distraction such as the bright, constantly flashing and changing images on the Western Sign decrease our work productivity.
- **Collateral Damage**
  - As Bonnis Properties specified in its proposal on page 5, the intended audience for the New Sign is pedestrians at the busy intersection of Granville and Robson.
  - There is more pedestrian traffic on Granville Street than on Robson Street.
  - This means that the South Sign will likely have greater viewership than the New Sign.
  - A view analysis was only completed by Bonnis Properties on 833 Seymour Street, but we are also not the intended audience.
  - The New Sign is not intended as a distraction for people working in our office.

## OUR REQUEST

Our principal request is that changes be made to the proposal to reduce the adverse impact of the New Sign on our employees. This can be done by:

1. lowering the New Sign further to reduce its adverse impact;
2. using technology in the design of the New Sign to reduce its adverse impact;
3. installing a shield over the top part of the New Sign to reduce its adverse impact; or



4. reducing the proposed size of the New Sign to be smaller than 56 m<sup>2</sup> so that it could be lowered further to eliminate the adverse impact on us and our neighbours in the building.

We believe that our suggested solutions are consistent with the Intent of the City of Vancouver Sign Bylaw to encourage signs that incorporate high quality materials and minimize light pollution and regulate signs to ensure and maintain public safety.

Thank you for this opportunity to identify a problem that appears to not have been identified in the proposal and more importantly, to provide a solution. We look forward to working with Bonnis Properties and the City to eliminate or substantially reduce the adverse effect of the New Sign on our employees and our neighbours, Microsoft and Sony Pictures Imageworks.

Yours truly,

MILLER THOMSON LLP

Per:



Oleh Ilnyckyj  
Partner

OWI/

Attachment  
c. Mike Walker  
Carol Bai

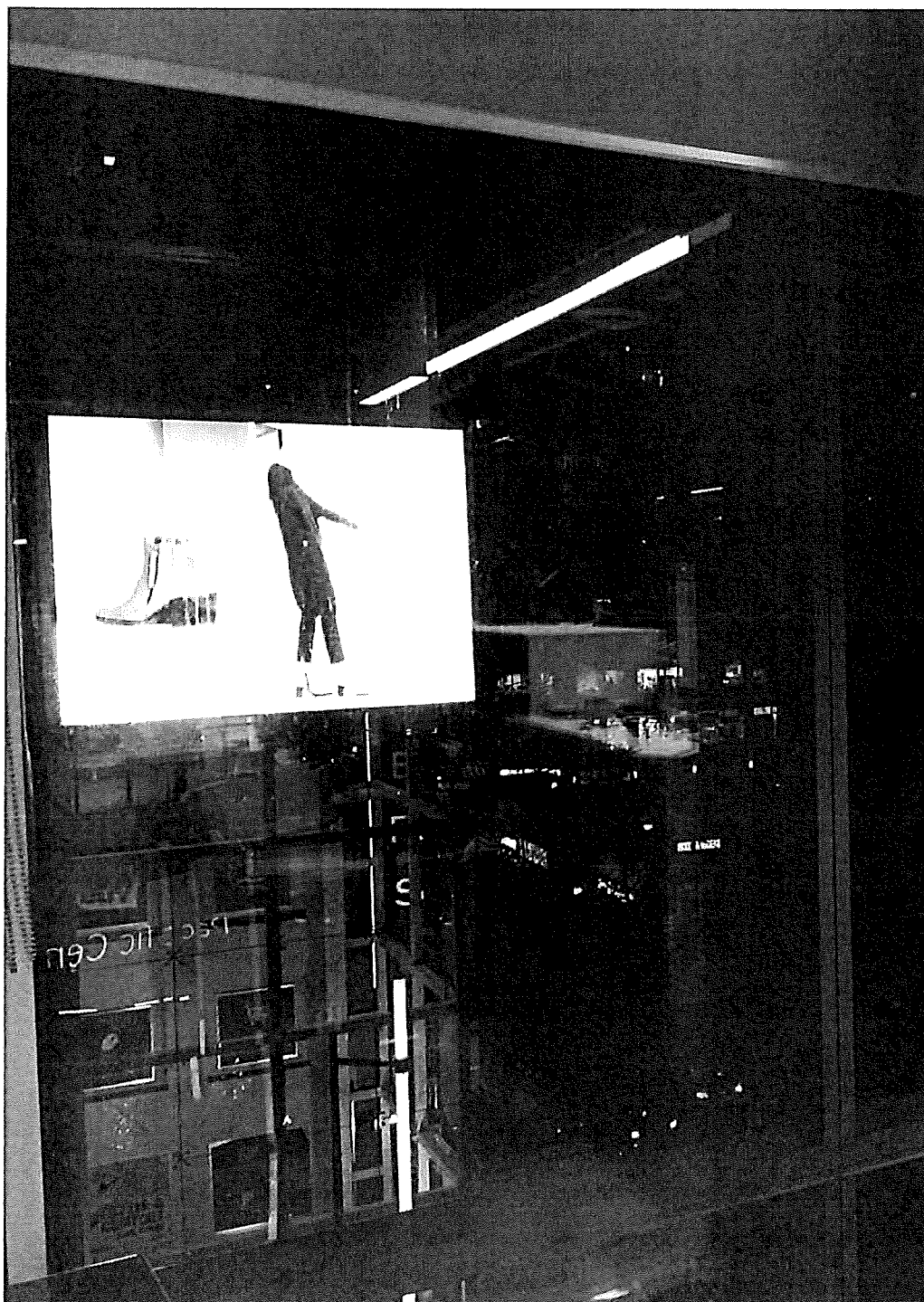


APPENDIX A



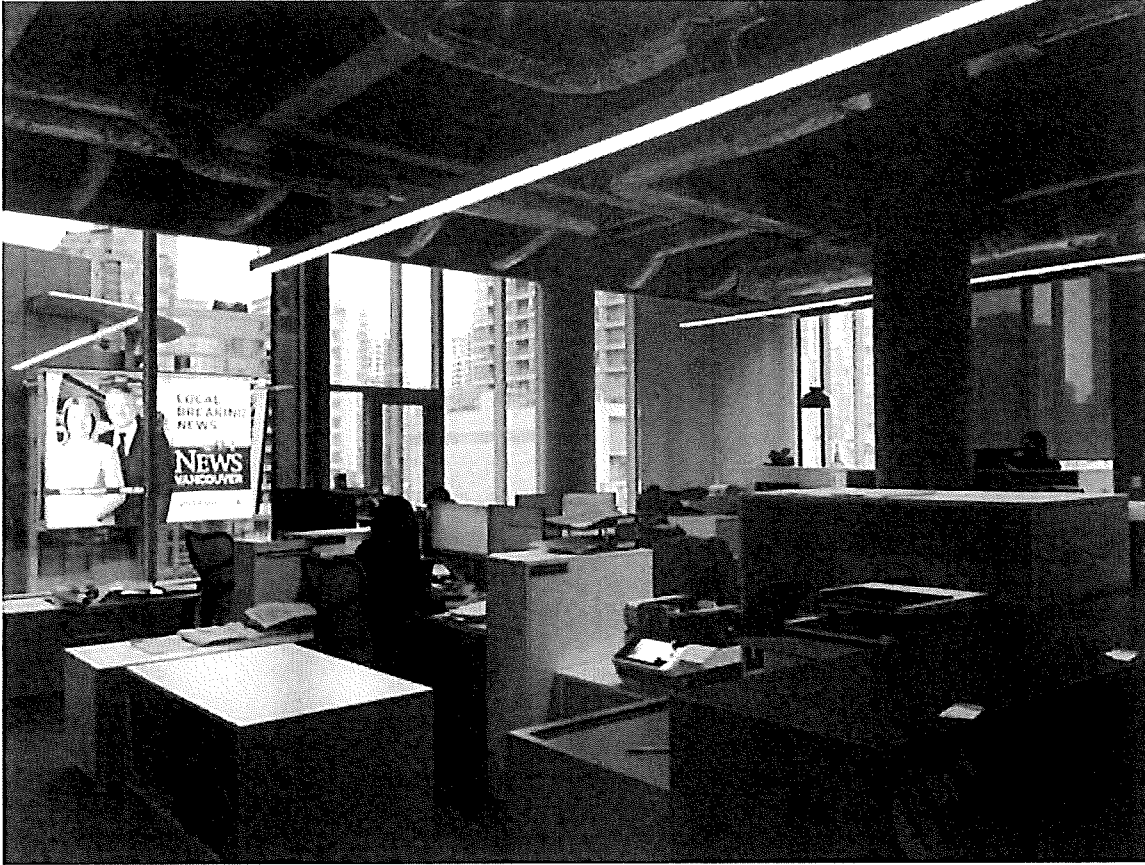
Note: This picture was taken from the southeast corner of our office.





Note: This picture was taken from the southeast corner of office at night.





Note: This picture was taken from the southeast corner of our office.

