

To: City of Vancouver, Public Hearing June 26, 2018

From: Karen Diamond, residential property owner

Re: Re-zoning and proposed development of 118-150 Robson

I am OPPOSED to the development of this property as proposed, on these points;

- historical and cultural value of historical Yaletown low-rise block
- preservation of 'neighbourhood' and property values
- protection of 'light, air and views'
- magnitude of project and construction impact on Entertainment District and the residential experience

1) This is a remaining, intact block of historic low-rise Yaletown buildings. It is significant to the culture and character of this area of Vancouver and is the outside border of Yaletown, a unique neighbourhood which contributes to tourism, work and lifestyle in such a way as to define the attractiveness of the city. It is a bridge to the continuation of the city's history – and the same tourism, work and lifestyle attributes -- in the Gastown area. To develop it in the manner proposed would be an insult to what makes this part of downtown Vancouver so compelling. It should be restored in the same respectful style as the greater Yaletown area, with Homer Street as a perfect example of how attractively this can be done, incorporating both living and working spaces and keeping it a low-rise 'neighbourhood,' with plenty of retail and restaurant development.

2) City planners and developers cannot lose sight of the fact that this area is already a neighbourhood for the many residents in the existing buildings – and those residents have paid a great deal of money for their properties. The current open skies and the views are essential components of that neighbourhood, contributing to the quiet enjoyment of our homes and providing a type of park space for those who live here. We do not have the open parks that residents on e.g. Richards enjoy. In spite of enduring more than two years of construction noise and torn up streets due to ongoing projects here, there is a high level of peace and serenity at this end of Robson due to the open space. Even so, we have lost a lot of open space and views already with the development which has gone up around BC Place – the Parq and condo buildings nearby. We can no longer see False Creek or see across the Cambie Bridge because of that development. All of us who love Vancouver have lost that breathtaking view of iconic BC Place as we enter downtown from the Cambie Bridge. It used to be a symbol of the excitement of downtown.

3) The City of Vancouver Urban Planning dictum is: "Vancouverism means tall, slim towers for density, widely separated by low-rise buildings, for light, air and views." If this proposed development goes ahead, there will be a high-rise building on each of the 4 corners of Cambie and Robson. As mentioned in the previous point, a lot of high-rise

buildings have already gone up in this area and another one is under construction at Cambie and Smithe – the 24-story Smithe by Boffo. The Northern Electric block needs to be preserved as the ‘low-rise’ relief from all the high-rises!

4) The magnitude of the proposed redevelopment will mean at least two years of construction, and substantial disruption to pedestrian and vehicle traffic in one of the most well-travelled walks in the city. The fact that Robson has been renamed ‘Whitecaps Way’ on this end testifies to the importance of this block as a pedestrian conduit to the entertainment facilities of BC Place and Rogers Arena. Thousands of people funnel into and out of the area using this walkway. Terry Fox Plaza is an important gathering place for pre-game festivities and serves as the playground for the Westside School located there. The construction would be a major disruption to the enjoyment of this space leading to BC Place for a long time!

5) Last, but certainly not least, is the view impact for the current residents. **This is an emotional one for those of us who have considered the view to be one of the most valued attributes of our homes.**

This is how the developer addresses view impediments in their letter of intent:

“Reaching a maximum height of 290.2 ft. above the adjacent grade, the residential tower floor plate is restricted to 6,500 sq.ft. Its simple and uniform profile, with limited architectural elements, is mindful of the heritage character of the building it stands on. The tower is set back 19.5 ft. from the face of the Northern Electric building along the north and 22 ft. from the western face. The purpose of this last setback is to pull the western edge of the tower away from corner bay of the Northern Electric building.

The proportions of the tower have been manipulated to decrease, within reason, the view impact of the corner unit of the 30 storey tower located on the north-east corner of Robson and Cambie (TV Tower 2), blocking less than one third of its views.”

The letter of intent, however, makes no mention of the view impairments that the proposed development will bring to the residents of 821 Cambie (Raffles) or the Hotel Blu Residences. In both cases, the development will be directly blocking the current views of these two residential buildings. In the case of Raffles, the value of the Cambie-facing owners’ homes – many of which were recently purchased at top dollar -- will be negatively impacted by the view impairment. Where they currently enjoy light, open air, and the sunrise over BC Place, they will have no view and a loss of privacy. In the case of The Hotel Blu Residences, this development will directly block the late-day sun (enjoyed by many out on their balconies) and the view of False Creek, as well as the privacy of these units, which have floor to ceiling windows in the out-facing bedrooms.

PERFECT 1 - VIEW ANALYSIS

Analysis of views from building
Area of view: 123°

Current projected view at 00°: 100°
Current projected view at 00°: 100°
Current projected view at 10°: 100°

Proposed projected view at 00°: 120°
Proposed projected view at 10°: 120°
Proposed projected view at 20°: 140°

The image contains two side-by-side architectural drawings, labeled 'PERFECT 1 - VIEW ANALYSIS'. Each drawing shows a plan view of a building and its surrounding environment, including streets and other buildings. A large circular sector is drawn from a point on the building, representing the field of view. The left drawing shows the current view, and the right drawing shows the proposed view after a change. Text labels on the left of each drawing specify view angles and projected view areas.

From
The Hotel Blu
Residences

Development

Karen Diamond