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A Corporate Partnership

Dear Ms. King,

**RE: Development Permit Application – 575 Drake Street
Project Description, Development Proposal, and Design Rationale**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Covenant House was established in New York City more than 35 years ago to address the issue of homeless youth. The organization has developed an international reputation for its successful approach to supporting at-risk youth. Covenant House Vancouver opened in 1997 in response to an overwhelming community need. It has become the main provider of residential and outreach services for homeless and at-risk youth in Vancouver. It currently operates out of two buildings in Downtown Vancouver: 575 Drake Street and 326 West Pender Street.

Covenant House Vancouver is a vital organization supported by 150 employees, over 100 volunteers, and 50,000 donors. It provides a full continuum of services for youth with its three core programs:

Street Outreach engages with at-risk youth on the street. A team of outreach workers offers food, counselling and minor medical attention as well as referring youth to the Drop In Program and the Crisis Program. The Drop In Program connects youth with immediate services (meals, clothing) as well as support services (health, housing).

Crisis Program provides shelter and support services to youth 16 to 24 years old. Trained staff and volunteers provide youth with the help they need without judgement; and

Rights of Passage provides longer term housing, support and life skill training for youth while they transition away from life on the street.

In recent years, an average of 1500 youth each year have been assisted by Covenant House Vancouver but their needs are changing. There has been a significant increase in the number of youth with mental health and addiction issues. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of females being seen by staff, and in the number of youth who have aged out of foster care. To meet these emerging needs, Covenant House requires additional program and shelter space.

Covenant House Vancouver is proposing to develop two sites in the Downtown South on Drake Street. Their plan is to develop the sites in sequence so that the current services are not compromised or disrupted during the renewal process. The first site under consideration is the location of the current Immigrant Services Society at 30 Drake Street. The second property is the current Covenant House site at 575 Drake with they have occupied since 1997.

Covenant House's approach to assisting youth makes use of an Integrated Service Plan that incorporates short-term and long-term goals, continuity of care, and referrals aiming to enable youth to live independent lives. This Integrated Service Plan aligns with the City of Vancouver goals by preventing adult homelessness and supports youth in securing long-term housing and education. Covenant House Vancouver has developed relationships with private sector housing providers and strong ties with post-secondary institutions. The majority of the youth in the Rights of Passage (ROP) program obtain places in these institutions.

To meet the evolving needs of homeless youth, Covenant House Vancouver requires additional space as it has 'micro-managed' the space at their existing two facilities to the maximum extent possible. Covenant House Vancouver Crisis Programs are currently split between 575 Drake Street (owned by CHV) and 326 West Pender Street (leased from the City of Vancouver). The ROP Program located at Pender Street has been reduced to accommodate additional beds for the Crisis Program, and the temporary use of the space involves many compromises. Administration staff is located at Pender Street. The Drake Street location houses the Crisis Program as well as the Drop In Program which requires schedule compromises for spaces needed for both programs but that cannot be used at the same time. The organization's fundraising staff is located at Drake Street.

There is no room for the required space needed for youth with more serious issues, nor is there capacity for appropriate health, education or fitness support. By redeveloping 575 Drake Street and introducing new program space at 530 Drake, Covenant House Vancouver will be able to meet the demand for the increase in services.

In addition, the revised program for the three building would return space currently used for the Crisis Program back to the Rights of Passage Program at 326 West Pender. This will provide space for 20 additional self-contained apartments which aligns with the City of Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

Covenant House Vancouver selected the two Drake Street properties because:

- Consultation with youth and front line staff confirmed that the downtown is a magnet for youth. This location and the adjacency to downtown works very well to meet the needs of homeless youth. The youth stressed that the location is very accessible, close to transit, and away from the Downtown Eastside;
- Consultations with the development and real estate industry confirmed the difficulties of securing suitable and affordable sites in the downtown area; and
- Covenant House Vancouver has operated successfully from its Drake and Seymour location for nearly 20 years and has an established presence in the community.

Two new buildings will enable Covenant House Vancouver to provide even more to Vancouver's youth:

- Eliminate turn-aways of male, female and transgendered youth
- Provide specialized assistance to girls and young women
- Increase educational programming

- Support transitional and after-care programs
- Deliver mental health support and health services
- Enhance substance misuse services
- Allow for badly needed recreational areas
- Provide new apartments for the ROP transitional living program on Pender Street

DESIGN RATIONALE

Description of Program

Beyond providing shelter for at-risk youth, a major focus of the Covenant House Program is to provide needed support services once completed. The proposed building will allow the Crisis Programs, currently split between two sites, to be consolidated.

The lower four floors will house support programs. The main floor will house reception services and some staff support areas. The second and third floors will contain a variety of program spaces: classrooms, library, recreation spaces, lounges, meeting rooms and staff support spaces. The fourth floor will house the dining area, commercial kitchen, and outdoor patio space for youth and staff.

Floors five to nine will be used of the Crisis Program and will include sleeping rooms (seven double rooms, one single room), common lounge space, meeting and quiet rooms, and staff support spaces. There will be a south facing balcony facing Drake Street on each floor.

The tenth floor will provide office space for the organization, and the roof level will provide an outdoor area. The basement will be used for parking, bike parking (staff), storage, and mechanical and electrical spaces. Vehicle parking is proposed to be limited to four spaces that will be used by program vehicles. There will be no staff or visitor parking on the site.

Site Context

The site is located at the intersection of Seymour and Drake, at the north end of the Seymour off-ramp of the Granville Street Bridge in the New Yaletown area of the Downtown South District. The site has an existing two storey wood frame building that Covenant House Vancouver has owned and used to provide their programs since 1997. During that time, the area surrounding the site has transitioned from a low scale commercial/warehouse area to a high-density residential/mixed use area.

Directly to the north of 575 Drake is a 25' lot with a one storey commercial building currently used as a car wash / detailing operation. Next to that is a 30 storey residential tower with six storey shoulders. Across the lane is a 32 storey residential tower and across Seymour Street is a 34 storey residential tower.

Pedestrian Realm

Redevelopment of the site will allow for the provision of a streetscape design in keeping with the New Yaletown requirements of the Downtown South Goals and Policies. Currently there is no setback and no trees along the Drake Street side of the site. When completed, the site will have a 12' setback along Drake Street that will include a double row of trees, paving features and planting.

Setbacks

The setbacks along Drake and Seymour meet the 12' setback requirements of the Downtown South Guidelines. An interior sideyard setback of 0' is allowed along the north property line to a height of 70'. At the fifth floor (53'-4" high) the proposed building steps back from a central stairwell. The stairwell wall projects 2.359m (7'-11") into the suggested 80' separation from the neighbouring building at 1238 Seymour, resulting in a 22.025m (72'-1") separation. On either side of the stairwell, the building will step back to provide increased separation. Windows will be minimized along this side of the building. The stepping back of the building from the stairwell results in a small increase in angle of view for the units on floors 5 to 8 at 1238 Seymour Street.

For corner conditions, a lane setback of 30' is required between 30' and 70' in height and between 40' and 110' in length. This project proposes a 30' setback across the width of the site (75') at 13.22m (43'- 8 1/2") high. Required setbacks result in 203sm (2196sf) of undevelopable footprint.

Density

The proposed new building area of 4368,16sm (47,018.48sf) resulting in an FSR of 4.58 which is above the allowable 3.0 FSR prior to rezoning, but below the allowable 5.15 (from rezoning). The program will be 100% Institutional-Social Services with is above the allowable 1.0 FSR for Institutional Use.

Height

The building is proposed to be ten storeys high with a height of 35.521 (116'-6 1/2") to the top of the main roof parapet. Above this level will be an elevator vestibule and stairwell to provide access to a roof top patio and to mechanical equipment. The top of the elevator over run will be at 40.421m (132'-7").

Form and Character

Although separate buildings with different programs, Covenant House Vancouver wants the two buildings (530 Drake and 575 Drake) to have a common design language so that they are easily identifiable as part of a whole. There will be materials and elements in common to both buildings, but the size of footprint, height and setback conditions will differentiate the buildings.

For the building at 575 Drake, a rich palette of durable materials is proposed. These include metal and HPL composite panels, modular cementitious cladding, curtain wall framing and window walls. Scale is mitigated by the extension of a frame on the second floor which acts as a canopy on the west and south facades. Above the fourth floor, the building floor plate is reduced to provide distance from the adjacent buildings.

Regards,



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