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A Corporate Partnership

April 2, 2020

Derek Robinson, Development Planner
Urban Design Planning Department
City of Vancouver
515 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
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Dear Derek,

Re: Development Permit Design Rationale
Lookout Society Affordable Rental Housing
524-528 Powell Street

Lookout Housing + Health Society
Lookout Housing and Health Society (Lookout) is a well-established housing society with 46 years of housing, health and support services experience. Our vision is to provide a complete service to our tenants to empower them to improve their quality of life. Lookout provides supports to the most vulnerable people in our society and recognizes that affordability challenges are affecting a wide population placing them at high risk of homelessness.

Recently Lookout opened 70 units of mixed income, affordable housing in the Strathcona Village development, broadening our range of affordable housing options in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES).

Currently Lookout operates 42 sites that include: LEED Gold residential buildings, purpose built shelters and supportive housing residences, 100+ year-old renovated SROs, duplexes in residential communities, and buildings repurposed for community drop-in and resources centres, medical and dental offices, shelters and residential development. Lookout is also a major employer in the Lower Mainland, employing over 900 staff.

Lookout welcomes this opportunity to provide mixed income social housing at 524-528 Powell Street to help existing tenants ready to move to greater independence as well as creating new affordable housing for the ever-growing need in Vancouver. This proposed housing will support singles, couples and families on low to moderate incomes who are unable to afford market housing. The housing will also address diverse needs such as urban indigenous people, women fleeing domestic violence, newcomers and seniors (45+). Lookout provides a safe and inclusive environment for all people.

Lookout has undertaken a strategic assessment of its property portfolio across the region and, with the new funding opportunities available, is seeking to work with BC Housing, the municipalities and CMHC to maximize the redevelopment potential of its existing housing stock as well as acquire new sites. Our aim is to build 500 new affordable homes over the next five years. We will reach this goal by working with provincial, federal and municipal funders as well as service providers, housing agencies and foundations.

524-528 Powell is located in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD), Sub-Area 2. The DEOD Plan has emphasized the need to maintain affordability while increasing density of social housing. The affordability requirement in this sub-area requires one third of the units to be rented to persons eligible for either Income Assistance or a combination of Old Age Security Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement , one third of the units being rented to people

earning at or below the BC Housing Income Limits and one third at affordable market rents. This level of affordability requires substantial government subsidy which was envisaged in the Downtown Eastside Plan but is not guaranteed. Lookout will meet this requirement by contributing over $8.2m of its own resources as a capital contribution and seeking funding from municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Site | Neighbourhood Context

The site is located approximately ½ block east of the corner of Powell Street and Jackson Avenue in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD) Zone. It is currently occupied by a group of existing two storey buildings utilized by the Powell Street Getaway Resource Centre on the ground floor and Vancouver Coastal Health on the 2nd floor. The east-west site dimensions are 45.72m (150') and 37.185m (122') in north-south direction. The site slopes downward approximately 1.43m (4.7ft) down from the south-west corner to the north-east corner of the site and around 0.46m (1.5) down from west to east. This puts the lane approximately 1.2m (4ft) higher in elevation than Powell Street.

Immediately to the west of the proposed site is the 4.5-storey existing Vancouver Buddhist Temple. Further west next to that is Oppenheimer Park. To the east of the site is collection of 1 to 3 storey older buildings with retail at grade and residential apartments above.

Across the street to the north are 1 to 2 storey older buildings occupied by retail uses and a Community Health Clinic. On the west side of this same block is a newly built 3-storey modular affordable housing facility. Across the lane to the south are 2 to 4-storey retail and apartments/condominium buildings. There is a cluster of colourful 2 storey heritage houses at the west end of this block. This area is characterized by older block shaped buildings in need of updates and repair.

The City of Vancouver Downtown Eastside Plan writes "The community has considerable diversity; there are working poor and middle income families and couples and singles of all ages living in a range of housing. Residents are proud and value the sense of belonging and feelings of acceptance experienced in the area, and many struggle with complex challenges, including homelessness and affordable housing, unemployment, physical disabilities, addictions, and mental health issues. The area has many non-profit organizations service agencies and community groups offering critical support to these communities."

Traffic | Transit

The development is well served by transit with four bus stops located less than 400m away on Powell Street, East Cordova Street, and East Hastings Street. The Powell Street and East Cordova bus stops serve two frequent bus routes and one night-time bus route to/from Lynn Valley in North Vancouver. Hasting Street bus stops serve three frequent bus routes throughout the day.

Expo Line SkyTrain Stations: Main Street-Science World, Stadium Chinatown, and Waterfront, are all within 1.6km, or 20-minute walking distance from the site. The existing routes origin/destination points and frequency are summarized in below **Table**.

Table x: Transit Route Frequency

REFERENCE	NAME	WEEKDAY AM PEAK	WEEKDAY MID-DAY	WEEKDAY PM PEAK	WEEKDAY EVENING	WEEKENDMID-DAY
004	Powell/Downtown/UBC	15 min	15 min	12 min	20 min	15 min
007	Nanaimo Stn/Dunbar	12 min	15 min	12 min	20 min	15 min
209	Lynn Valley/Vancouver	-	-	-	30 min	30 min
014	Hastings/Downtown	10 min	12 min	12 min	15 min	10 min
016	29th Avenue Stn/Arbutus	8 min	10 min	10 min	20 min	10 min
020	Victoria/Downtown North	8 min	8 min	8 min	15 min	8 min
N35	SFU/Downtown	-	-	-	30 min	-
Expo Line	Stadium Chinatown Stn	3 min	6 min	4 min	8 min	6 min

Sidewalk is provided on both sides of the streets in the neighbourhood connecting to nearby amenities, parks, library, schools, shops, and restaurants. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided at the adjacent intersections and controlled by pedestrian activated signals.

Alexander Street, one block to the north of the site, is a designated east-west bike route which connects to Powell Street to the east and Carrall Street to the west.

Overall, the site has a high score of 90 on the walkability, rideability and transit service. It is also well served by carshare vehicles, Modo, Zipcar, and Evo. All these will support residents living in the site without the need to own a car, and staff working in the office, retail and community space not to rely on private car to get to work.

Form and Expression

The redevelopment objective is to provide purpose built affordable rental housing for a diverse range of people that will enrich the lives of the resident community by providing a safe, secure, respectful, inclusive and person-centered environment. 114 affordable homes are currently being proposed.

Site Incorporation of R.O.W.

Lookout Society are the owners of the subject property at 524-528 Powell Street. It is their intention to purchase a small 15.229m (50') by 2.134m (7') 32.5sm (350.9sf) area City of Vancouver R.O.W. along Powell Street and incorporate it into their property to bring the total site area to 1699.0sm (18,287.88sf). The Lookout Society is proposing to demolish the existing building which is coming to the end of its useful lifespan.

Site Planning

The building's primary Plan shape is an upside down "U" with arms extending south to maximize east, south and west facing sunlight to as many units as possible. Large south facing courtyards

are placed in the middle of the "U" to encourage exterior gatherings. Because the Buddhist Temple along the west property line presents a 4-storey blank wall, the proposed west arm sets back with a 1.33m wide light well that accommodates a single loaded corridor to units facing the middle of the site. The east arm along the east property line is setback wider at 4.05m setback to accommodate a double loaded residential corridor which allows units to view east and west. We are proposing no setback along the north property maximize use of space on the Site. Units facing north will have a view of the mountains.

Planning

The project is a mix-use project with 4 uses that will have independent entrances to activate the street. Starting from the west is the main residential entrance to a lobby and elevators to residential Floors 3 to 7. Next is doors for potentially 3 CRUs which most likely will be retail/office/community type services. Moving east is the proposed entrance to the Community Benefit Centre with programs and services for the neighbourhood. Furthest east will be the entrance to the 2nd floor office space. We will have glazed canopies to mark the the Residential, Community Centre and Office entrances. We have not extended the canopy along the face of the CRUs as this presents challenges with encampments under the canopies in the DTES.

The U-shaped plan allows elevators and building services to be located in the inside corners where there are no requirements for windows. Larger 2 and 3 bedrooms units are located at the extremities of the arms with smaller 1 bedroom and studios grouped in between to maximize exterior wall frontage. We are proposing clear 2900mm (9'-6") ceiling heights within the units. There is a large 139.22sm interior amenity room on the 3rd floor that connects out to a 156.8sm south facing roof deck designed for families and children activities. There is also some urban agriculture planters at this level for communal activities. At the 7th Floor there is a 149.2sm adult orientated exterior roof deck which will have fantastic views to the North Shore Mountains. We are proposing no balconies for individual units as these private balconies generally become exterior storage areas which become unsightly to the neighbourhood. Concrete balconies also create heat losing thermal conductors that are detrimental to energy models that are required to comply to Step Code 3 energy limits. As discussed above we have provided common open spaces for residents. We feel communal open spaces improve the sense of community over private balconies. Adult residents also have the a 3rd option of using the Community patio at grade.

The Community Benefit Centre floor level is located approximately between the Powell Street Entrance and the 1.2m higher lane elevation. This achieved through ramps and stairs and is fully accessible. The Centre will have programs, classrooms and services for the community which include laundry, showers, a commercial kitchen to produce meals throughout the day and a safe consumption site. There will be large interior areas for eating, gathering and watching TV. These communal spaces will spill out to a large 149.2sm exterior south facing patio. It is Lookout's intention for the patio to connect periodically and interact with activity in the lane via use of a large welcoming pivoting metal wall. The high security wall between the patio and the lane will be constructed of solid panels incorporating custom Indigenous art and design. The vehicular ramp to the underground parking is located at the lowest end of the lane property line to the east. Loading Bays are located at the west end of the lane. The Community Benefit patio and pivoting wall is located in between.

The 2nd Floor Office Level will have building services in the middle with continuous windows to the north, east and south for maximum layout flexibility. This level will also have access to two exterior spaces. One is a wide south facing 28.7sm exterior balcony that overlooks the Community patio below. The other exterior space is an east facing 106.2sm roof deck over the parking access ramp.

Due to the stepping back of the various balconies and roof decks, three different uses in the building achieve abundant southern exposure.

Massing
Massing is simple along Powell Street with taller narrow massing at the east and west ends of the elevation and lower massing by setting back a portion of the 7th floor in the middle to promote a saw-tooth roof line which is a fundamental character to roofs in the DEOD District. The office function area pushes out slightly to the street to indicate there is a different use at the 2nd floor which also aids in breaking down the overall massing to a pedestrian scale.
Along the lane, the residential massing of Floors 3 to 7 will appear to float above the continuous ribbon windows of the 2nd floor office level. Stairways are presented as solid strong elements in the massing.

Materials
A rich palette of durable materials is proposed. Masonry brick is utilized to reflect the buildings of previous heritage generations in the area. Metal wall panel siding of varying colours are proposed to compliment and accentuate the general residential massing. There will also be some cementitious panels to provide a tough durable material close to grade along the lane.

The Pedestrian Realm
We have not extended the canopy along the face of the CRUs along Powell Street as the challenge with encampments below weather protection canopies is a growing problem in the DTES. A canopy particularly one of such considerable length would be certain to encourage "tenting". This would occur particularly in the evening overnight hours and in inclement weather. This would have a negative impact on our residents, office staff, building security, pedestrian traffic and our neighbours. Providing full height window glazing for the CRUs would reinforce "eyes on the street" promote a greater sense of safety along the sidewalk.
As mention earlier, it is Lookout's intention for the patio to connect periodically and interact with activity in the lane via use of a large welcoming pivoting metal Wall. The new development will positively engage through active use, durable construction and appropriate ambient lighting to improve lane vitality and safety.

Sustainable Strategies
The project will comply with Step Code 3 to City of Vancouver Building Bylaw Standards with 25% decrease in energy consumption and GHG emissions of the 2015 NECB. This goal resonates with the society who are actively engaged with ensuring this commitment is met or exceeded.

Energy
Energy use will be reduced by the design of a highly efficient envelope with insulation and low glazing percentages. Heat recovery from the suite exhaust and ducted air-supply to the suites will add to energy savings and provide a quiet ventilation option to all suites. Tall windows will assist with the reducing artificial lighting demands. High efficient lighting systems will be utilized.

Water
Low flush toilets and low flow plumbing fixtures will be used.

Material and Resources
A comprehensive Waste Management Plan will be incorporated during construction. After construction an extensive recycling/composting protocol will be established by the society. In addition, there will be a focus on using both regional materials and materials with highly recycled content.

Building Operations
The lifestyle adopted by residents will be sustainable with attention paid to the use environmentally responsible cleaning and gardening chemicals. Building systems will be designed to be interactive and easy to maintain.

Landscape
The overall landscape concept incorporates social spaces and open flex use spaces paired with planted green spaces and small trees in areas to soften the hardscape, provide a sense of place, spaces of relaxation and ensure the inclusion of habitat. Planters with shrubs and small trees are located along perimeters of spaces and along guardrails (on upper floors) to maximize the use of space. Social spaces are intended to allow small to medium sized gatherings and comfortable semi-private spaces covered areas to allow year-round use on each level.

The ground floor retains existing street trees and provides new bicycle racks along Powell St to support retail use. The back entrance of the building provides programmable community space that is alongside and securely accessible to the back alley. This space includes a larger area with moveable furniture to allow event/gathering flexibility and some permanent seating along the perimeter and terraces. The terracing and planter beds soften and break up the space into different sized areas to ensure comfortable spaces at any time. Trees and seating in smaller areas are adjacent to and at the grade of the lane. Altogether this space allows for internal activation of the space and would complement any laneway activation initiatives.

The second floor of the building provides softscape planting and small seating areas. On the Eastside of the office building, nooks are created to allow smaller groups to utilize the balcony at the same time. The space can also be utilized for a larger office gathering with different types of seating provided (some moveable, some not and with tables, and side tables along benches). The third floor of the building is an open-space family area with a child's play area and tables for picnic-like gatherings. There are opportunities for urban agriculture along the perimeter of the space, alternated by screening planters adjacent to resident's windows. The seventh floor provides cozy corner searing areas adjacent to planters and moveable tables and chairs for smaller gatherings. A long table that can be disassembled is provided to allow for a larger gathering.

We envision there be opportunity for indigenous community members to create custom designs that can be incorporated into elements such as the entry gate on the ground floor alley social space, doors handles for the architecture or above entries into the building to promote a sense of inclusion and celebration of indigenous culture.

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Proposed Relaxations
The following are the proposed relaxations based on DEOD Area 2 Cordova Street Zoning:

Building Height Allowable: 22.86m (75ft)
Building Height Proposed: 25.76m (84.5ft") to accommodate the 7-storey concrete structure with clear 2900mm (9'-6") ceiling height in residential units.

Front Yard Setback Required: 3.0m
Front Yard Setback Proposed: 0.0m to reflect other existing building setbacks along the block.

Residential Parking Requirement: 30 regular/small cars + 5 Accessible Stalls
Residential Parking Proposed: 0 regular/small cars + 5 Accessible Stalls (total 10 spaces)

Retail/Office Parking Requirement: 23 regular/small cars + 1 Accessible Stall
Retail/Office Parking Proposed: 8 regular/small cars + 1 Accessible Stall (total 10 spaces)

Residential Bicycle Requirement: 153
Residential Bicycle Proposed: 128

Retail/Office Loading Bay Requirements: 1 Class B Loading Bays + 1 Class A Loading Bay
Retail/Office Loading Bay Proposed: 1 Class B Loading Bays + 0 Class A Loading Bay

We are excited to be part of this redevelopment and look forward to working with City staff to develop this desperately needed initiative to address affordable rental apartments for the community. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Regards,

NSDA Architects

REGISTERED ARCHITECT
KENNETH IKE WONG
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kenneth Ike Wong, Architect AIBC, AAA
Principal

Encl.

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