



P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y3, (604) 254-9411

July 16, 2010

Mayor Gregor Robertson and Council
c/o Vancouver City Hall
453 W. 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1V4

RE: 15 and 97 East 2nd Avenue, Opsal Steel, Rezoning/Heritage Designation/Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA)

The Opsal Steel Building at 97 East 2nd Avenue was constructed in 1918 for the Columbia Block & Tool Company. It is a prominent feature of Southeast False Creek's industrial heritage and was noted as such within the Official Development Plan. The site was also listed in the "A" category on the Vancouver Heritage Register. Opsal Steel is one of five remaining heritage sites that will be retained and incorporated into the new Southeast False Creek neighbourhood. It is comprised of two massive heavy timber structures with a connecting link, as well as a gantry crane and additional industrial artifacts.

On behalf of Heritage Vancouver, I would like to express strong support for:

- The Rezoning, Heritage Designation, and Heritage Revitalization Agreement proposed to ensure the conservation of the important False Creek, Opsal Steel site. This Agreement allows for Opsal Steel to be conserved and designated as a municipally protected Heritage Building.
- The retention of original machinery, such as the gantry crane in the north barn, as a feature at the base of the East Tower.
- The onsite transfer of 55,100 square feet of density to compensate for the loss in market value associated with the designation of the building.
- The addition of 6 storeys to the East Tower, bringing it from 18 to 24 to allow for design changes to the building recommended by staff and the city's advisory committees.
- The conservation plan proposed for the site.

Opsal Steel appeared on Heritage Vancouver's "Top Ten Endangered Sites" in both 2001 and 2002. The site was A-listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register but the previous owner successfully applied to de-list it, saying development on the site was uneconomical. When the new owner, Bastion Development Corporation announced that they would be seeking approval to redevelop the site, Heritage Vancouver removed the site from its "Top Ten Endangered Sites."

This is one of the last surviving remnants of a once-thriving industrial area clustered around False Creek, and one of the most significant industrial buildings that remains in Vancouver. Its heavy timber construction, pitched roof, and rooftop lantern vents are features typical of this historic form of architecture, and provide a legacy of the economic forces that drove Vancouver's early development. It is a very worthy candidate for long-term preservation.

We would like to congratulate the building owners, Bastion Development Corporation, for the resolve they have demonstrated in pursuing a solution over the years to retain this important industrial heritage site. We urge City Council to approve the current proposal as presented. This proposal, which has been a long time in the making, has the support of city staff, advisory committees and the owner. Any further delays in the process will lead to additional deterioration of the buildings to the point where there will be nothing left to conserve.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "don luxton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donald Luxton, President
Heritage Vancouver

Cc.

Penny Ballem, City Manager
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning
City of Vancouver Heritage Commission