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June 27, 2011

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

Dear Mayor Robertson and Council Members;

**RE: 7101-7201 Granville Street – Shannon Estate Proposed Rezoning**

The Shannon Estate is a very historic site with great heritage significance. As an indication of the importance of this site and the potential for the proposed development to impact the integrity of the site, Heritage Vancouver placed the Shannon Estate on our 2011 Top Ten Endangered Sites. Since Heritage Vancouver submitted a letter on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 regarding our position on the redevelopment of Shannon, the options have been revised mainly in response to the public's demands for lesser height and density of the new-built portion of the Shannon Estate. Heritage Vancouver is supportive of the neighbourhood's concerns, and we urge the City "to see this project through heritage eyes" rather than as just another development project. This site presents a very unique and sensitive heritage context.

Overall, Heritage Vancouver supports the heritage aspects of the proposal, as follows:

- The existing designation of the Mansion and the perimeter wall would be maintained. These aspects of the site would be upgraded as per heritage conservation Standards and Guidelines.
- The Gate House and Coach House would be upgraded and designated as heritage structures.
- Many aspects of the original garden design and landscaping would be rehabilitated to provide a more appropriate setting for the main estate house, including axial views.
- The Mansion's fine formal reception rooms would be retained as a shared amenity space for the residents. These significant features are listed on the City Heritage Interiors Inventory.
- We would like to address and update the following concerns and propose alternate solutions.
- It is recognized that Designation of the Mansion and of perimeter wall operates as a significant and important regulator of future development, a status that should be maintained.

- It is of central importance that the massing of any new buildings should not overwhelm the site, with consequent adverse impact on the surviving heritage elements, notably the Mansion as the centerpiece. There are no street level elevations in the latest proposal (bird's-eye envelope drawings do not necessarily indicate the potential level of impact) and the final massing of the new buildings could be disproportionately out of scale.
- As proposed, the current heights, massing and densities compromise the historic context of the site. The Mansion would predominantly be seen only between much higher structures. From Adera Street the section/elevation AA shows how difficult it is to find the west side of the Mansion amongst the massive new-built 8 to 10 storey edifices.
- Although the retention of the formal gardens, the Gate House and the Coach House mitigate this impact on the context, the complete replacement of the Erickson townhouses does impact the overall setting. This is especially notable in the area between the Gate House and the Coach House, where a large structure is proposed for insertion.

We urge the retention and rehabilitation of a small portion of the 1970s development to illustrate the evolution of the site over time. The **block of townhouses** designed by Arthur Erickson inserted between the **Gate House** and the **Coach House** appear to be in comparatively good condition, and they are sited where they contribute positively to the village-like setting of that portion of the site in its relationship to the Mansion and former rose garden. Retaining this townhouse block is essential as a record of Erickson's personal involvement with the design and detailing of the current infill. This townhouse block is the most prominent example of his respect for the heritage character of this Estate. The proposed Block A which replaces this set of townhouses is out of scale, and isolates the Coach House behind 4 to 5 storey walls. Blocks A, B and the north wing of the C building, should be removed from the proposal (as also requested by the City's Heritage Commission) to retain the visual approach to the Mansion and front gardens and mature trees. Potentially, the retention of this row of Erickson Massey townhouses between the two retained historic structures would help to maintain the overall atmosphere of the setting in which the Mansion sits, a setting which must properly be respected.

Heritage Vancouver appreciates the concerted efforts of the developer and the consultant team to protect the heritage character and values of this very significant site. We hope that with input from neighbourhood and heritage groups, a revised rezoning proposal will be able to provide an even better response to heritage considerations.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Heritage Vancouver Board of Directors

Cc. Penny Ballem, City Manager  
 Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group  
 Brent Toderian, Director of Planning  
 Members of the Heritage Commission