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Landmark residence residents at risk

17 rental units on Victoria Drive under threat

by Joseph Jones

EAST VAN - Redevelopment magicians from Ankenman Marchand International displayed storyboards in the lobby of the Vancouver East Cultural Centre recently. Taped to the front door of the Cultch was: Welcome to the Jeff's Residence First Community Workshop!!!"

The Jeffs residence (situated four blocks from the workshop venue) is a 1907 residential dwelling with 17 rental suites on the northeast corner of Salsbury and Charles, classed as Heritage B and described as "one of the few remaining landmark estate homes in the neighbourhood."

Photographs of the site (late summer brown grass, for example) were selected to make the property look bad in comparison to the pleasant sketches of developer visions. Setting up contrast between images of what-is with what-we-could-build is a standard developer ploy.

A lengthy questionnaire asked skewed ranking questions crammed with positive-spinning terms (such as 'like'). The quantification of this straw voting will do its best to prove that the neighbourhood likes what it was shown.

After showing 17 existing residential suites on the site, one placard laid out the agenda in a nutshell: "Additional density is required on the site over what exists today in order for the project to perform economically."

Why there has to be a project that goes beyond the current zoning was not made clear, other than to indicate that concessions will be sought through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement.



How today's 17 suites might compare in density and cost with 15 rowhouses and a stratified Jeffs house renovation was not addressed.

Escalating rents squeezing most vulnerable – CCAP report

VMC News Services

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE - A new study says seniors on basic pensions and those on welfare can't afford to live in 88 per cent of the privately-owned SRO hotel rooms in the DTES (a jump from 71 per cent last year).

Pushed Out: Escalating Rents in the Downtown Eastside is the Carnegie Community Action Project's third annual hotel report. It says high rents are pushing out low-income people and could be responsible for an increase in homelessness and survival so-called "crimes."

The report calls on federal and provincial governments to build social housing and for the City of Vancouver to buy land for social housing.

The report is based on a survey of 90 privately-



Press conference announcing findings of CCAP's latest hotel study PUSHED OUT: Escalating Rents in the Downtown Eastside. photo: murray bush - flux

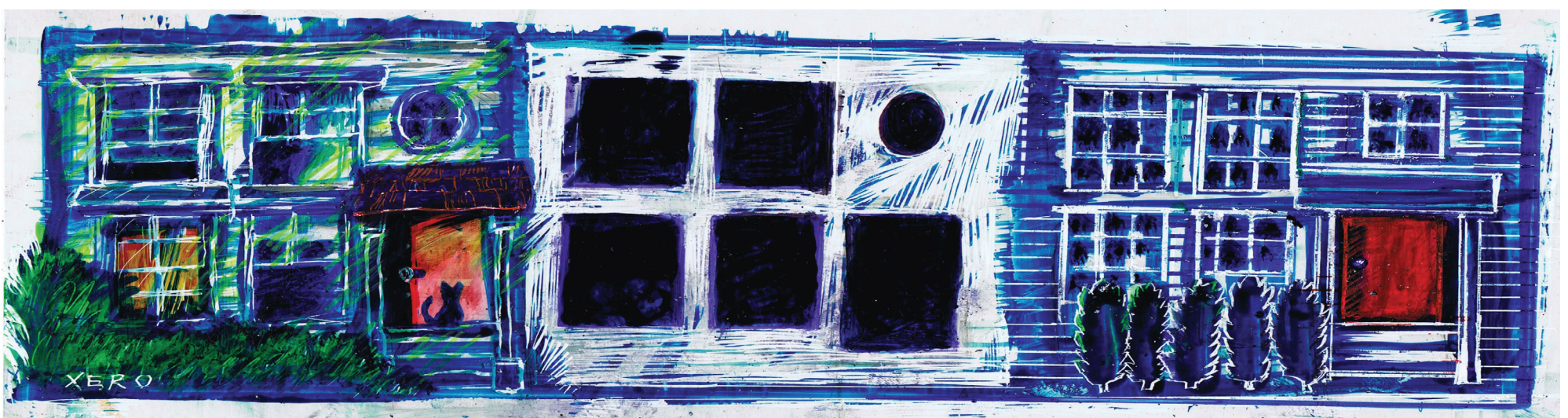
owned and run hotels by CCAP staff and volunteers who got information from hotels with 93 per cent of the privately-owned rooms in the Downtown Eastside.

"Gentrification is pushing up rents in the

cheapest accommodation in Vancouver," said CCAP organizer and report co-author Wendy Pedersen. "The number of hotel rooms where the lowest rent is \$500 a month or more shot up over 200 per cent from 272 rooms last year to 634 rooms this year. More than half of all the privately-owned rooms rent for over \$425 a month, \$50 more than a person on welfare, disability, or senior can afford."

CCAP is calling on the City to buy and set aside five lots a year in the DTES. In response, Vision Councillor Kerry Jang claimed that buying land in the DTES is a drain on City resources, senior governments are hard to sign on and "there are limited opportunities to buy land in the DTES."

Pedersen counters the Vision council's position saying: "Buying land and setting it aside for social housing means it is easier to have a campaign for the housing money from senior governments and the land can be used for other community purposes in the meantime. Land is an asset the City can't lose on. And there are lots of properties to buy in the DTES."



Slick approach on crude pipeline

WHISTLER - Activists were on hand outside an Enbridge PR cocktail party designed to woo Union of BC Municipalities delegates. The company's proposed pipeline would carry tar sands oil from Alberta to Kitimat - over fragile land and to waters belonging to First Nations that do not support it.

SOLIDARITY WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CHILE

by Dawn Paley

VANCOUVER - A small group of demonstrators gathered in front of the Chilean Consulate in Vancouver on Sept. 24 to show their solidarity with Mapuche and anarchist political prisoners in Chile.

More than 30 Mapuche prisoners have been on hunger strike since July 12, and dozens more have joined the strike in solidarity since then. In August, 14 anarchists were arrested and imprisoned, accused under anti-terrorist legislation of being connected to a series of explosions in Chile. Supporters say the charges are a total fabrication.

"Today the strong connection in Chile is that the anarchists and the Mapuche Indigenous radical movement are the only two political movements in Chile that are really defying the status quo of capitalism, of neo-liberalism in Chile," said Claudio Escobar, a Chilean living in Canada who helped to organize the protest at the consulate.

"They are the only two real non-reformist movements in Chile, and they see that connection."

The organizers of demonstration have been in the streets many times over the past months to raise awareness about the criminalization of dissent in Chile.

"We'll continue to stand here in front of the Chilean Consulate, and we encourage people to take their own initiatives as well, as was done by some group of courageous young people that apparently showed up and did a direct action in front of the entrance of the Chilean Consulate," said Escobar.

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photo: Caelie Frampton

Notorious Goldcorp buys its way into Woodward's

By Dawn Paley

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE - Vancouver-based Goldcorp is donating \$10 million to Simon Fraser University to fund the school's arts centre in the already controversial Woodward's development. The school will be known as the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts.

Goldcorp officials worked hard to spin the donation into proof of their generosity and benevolence towards marginalized communities. After all, what could possibly be wrong with charity?

"Goldcorp is committed to making a positive difference here in Vancouver as well as those communities where we operate our mines," said Goldcorp President and CEO Chuck Jeannes, in a Sept. 23 press release.

For anyone who knows Goldcorp's operations, this statement smacks of the arrogance and impunity with which it builds and operates mines, and leaves behind toxic sites, displaced villages, and poisoned and impoverished communities.

In Honduras, Goldcorp's San Martin mine poisoned community members in the Siria Valley, displaced an entire village from their lands, and affected the water supply to the extent that farming and ranching families were forced to migrate out of the area, either to Tegucigalpa or to the U.S.

In Guatemala, the company's Marlin mine is located on what was communally-held Indigenous Mayan Mam and Mayan Sipakapense lands. The project began amid bloody repression, as one person was killed by police at a roadblock preventing mine construction. Recently, the Inter American Human Rights Commission ruled the Marlin mine be shut down, but the company has refused. Nearby villagers have lived through deep and sometimes violent mine-related conflict, which flared up recently when a company employee shot mine opponent Antonia Hernandez Cinto in the face. All around the mine site, people are reporting

illnesses contracted from suspected toxins in the water and air.

In Mexico, the company just opened the Peñasquito mine, the country's largest. Already, conflict around the mine is starting in the state of Zacatecas, as neighbors and communal land holders begin to understand the size of the project in a semi-arid area.

In Argentina, people have been organizing against the Bajo de la Alumbrera mine for years. They say the contamination of the mine, combined with electricity and water use, have made life in their villages unbearable.

In California, the company recently lost a Chapter 11 dispute under NAFTA. It claimed it had every right to bulldoze Quechen Indigenous sites, and that the U.S. government should reimburse the company for forcing it to mitigate the damage done in sacred areas.

Goldcorp isn't a company that cares about human or social sustainability. It is, like every other transnational corporation out there - an organization that cares about its' bottom line.

SFU should be ashamed of taking money from Goldcorp, a company that values human life, communities and ecosystems far less than gold.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday Oct. 2

4th Annual Women's Housing March 2pm
DTES Women's Centre, 302 Columbia

Sunday Oct. 3 and Saturday Oct. 9 1:30pm

Release Detained Tamil Refugees!

Burnaby Youth Prison, 7900 Fraser Park Dr

Sunday, Oct. 10 2pm

Dig In For Climate Justice!

Meet at Scott Road Skytrain by the taxi stand

Saturday, Oct. 16 7pm

Film: The Women of Brukman

Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway

Tuesday, Oct. 19 7pm

Conference: Militarization, War against Drug

Trafficking and Human Rights in Mexico

SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings