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Multi-unit Project
Tapestry by Concert

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Concert - Tapestry

An interweaving of past and present
into a visionary outlook for the future.

Artist Renderings & Photos courtesy of Concert



Okay, so change is good, right? Sure. They say change is the only constant in life. But sometimes, to be most effective, change needs to encompass heritage, history, and the subtle strength that comes from being a trend setter.

Such a change is happening in Vancouver's Fairview Slopes neighbourhood. Its name is Tapestry, and it represents an interweaving of past and present into a visionary outlook for the future. Comprised of two buildings, Heather and Avenue, Tapestry will retain and enhance the 1940s Art Moderne facade of the historic VGH Nurses' Residence at 12th Avenue and Heather Street. A second, more intimate, six-storey building designed to echo the surrounding neighbourhood's classic architecture will visually blend with its "elder sister."

Celebrating a Proud Heritage

For David Podmore, President and CEO of Concert watching these two buildings evolve is the culmination of almost a decade and a half of waiting, negotiating, planning, and meeting the provincial governments need to acknowledge the value of architectural artistry. "This is a wonderful example of adaptive reuse of a building with historical significance," he says with pride.

According to Susan Lum, Concert's Project Manager, this project brought with it a number of unusual challenges. "How do you take down two thirds of a U-shaped, nine-storey

building and retain the rest?" she asks. "Normally you could implode the existing structure, but because of this site's sensitivity – including the high pressure steam lines and hospital tunnels below – that option simply wasn't practical. So we made the decision to excavate floor by floor."

Rather than employ the usual wrecking ball method, Concert hired Pacific Blasting & Demolition who in turn purchased what is believed to be the largest excavator in BC and a first of its kind for the province. The Komatsu High Reach Demolition Excavator reached an astonishing 85 vertical feet, and its pow-

erful jaw could rotate 360 degrees as it ate through concrete and steel – pulverizing the material rather like an oversized PacMan. A side benefit was the fact almost 95 per cent of all construction site waste material was able to be recycled.

A Work In Progress

"Development projects continually evolve. They're in flux, pushing and pulling as design and approvals proceed," says Ken Bogress, Senior Development Manager. "On the surface, Tapestry could be seen as just another 230 suite development project. But acquisition of this property came with a considerable number of constraints that needed to be worked through during design development, municipal approval process, and construction. The property had been vacant for a number of years, was owned by Vancouver Coast-





al Heath Authority, and had been zoned as part of a master plan for entire VGH precinct prior to offering for sale. Concert needed to provide maximum land value by maximizing the amount of approvable density on the site."

Constraints included add-

ing a fitness centre, 69-child day care facility, community meeting rooms for Vancouver Parks, plus a commitment to keep the Surgical Daycare Centre – including an underground tunnel linking the SDC to the main hospital – operational throughout the

first phases of construction to July 2006.

Concert met every one of the criteria.

Communities with Heart

Now with holding assets in excess of \$1.0 billion and shareholders' equity of some \$500 million, Concert's journey began in 1989 with a straightforward mandate: build attractive and affordable rental housing. The development was named 600 Drake and it clearly still holds a special place in Podmore's heart.

"The objective was to create a fully self-contained suite that would rent for less than \$500 but would be the kind of home where you would feel comfortable inviting someone over for dinner," Podmore explains. To make the numbers work, suites had to be small – between 265 and 285 square feet. Pundits and nay-sayers



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said it couldn't be done. Concert proved them wrong.

Rather than go it alone, Concert looked to the surrounding community for input and recommendations. They held focus groups, they asked questions and they built mock-up suites that were trailored around the city so potential tenants could critique layout and design. But mostly they listened, and gradually a strategy evolved.

Murphy beds and French balconies expanded usable space. Floor-to-ceiling windows, virtually unheard of at that time especially in low income housing, gave an expansive, airy ambience to the compact units. A full kitchen allowed tenants the option of conserving funds without sacrificing the ability to have a hot meal. "We also pioneered the concept of combining the TV room and laundry so it became a place where people gather to socialize," Podmore says. The project was such a success that today some of the original tenants still call 600 Drake home.

With Tapestry Concert continues to meet the needs of the community and its various development stakeholders as it has done from day one.

V.K.B. Masonry Ltd.

"Proud to work with Concert as masonry contractor on Tapestry"

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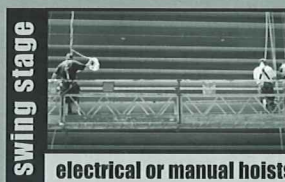
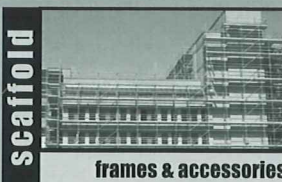
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