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EYE IN THE SKY EXPOSES UBC THREAT TO VANCOUVER'S LEGACY

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On Easter Saturday, 60 protesters gathered in the footprint of a massive 20-story UBC tower to defend Vancouver's legacy of forested cliffs by the sea. The cliffs in Pacific Spirit Regional and Stanley Parks are now all that remain of Vancouver's original viewscape and skyline from the water and air.

Our professional Eye-in-the Sky blimp floating at 187-1/2 feet (20 stories) above the site clearly established that of the four towers planned immediately adjacent to Pacific Spirit (above the Trail 6 and estuarine area of Canada's famed 7.8 km. long Wreck Beach), a minimum of 10 stories would be visible from Towers #5 and #6 high whereas five stories would be visible from Tower #1, farthest from the cliff top.

This is unacceptable to all Canadians as this is our collective heritage and legacy being threatened!

Although Wreck Beach users are upset at the prospect of students with binoculars and webcams gawking at them from the upper 10 stories of these towers, they are more concerned with the long-term impacts on wildlife and fragile cliffs of adjacent Pacific Spirit Regional Park. Wreck Beach lies in the Pacific Migratory Fly-Way and it is a proven fact that lights and glass are a deadly combination for all birds from the eagles who train their young on the proposed tower site, to the world's population of Western sandpipers who pass yearly through this corridor.

According to a UBC spokesperson, the UBC Board of Governors has only approved these student Marine Residences "in concept" for this location. This same BOG also two months ago, approved the Cliff Erosion Management Plan (CEMP) which "provides viewing opportunities from the cliff top that maintains the privacy of Wreck Beach and that don't compromise cliff integrity...(not being able to view the beach from the cliff top and vice versa)." Simon Fraser's UniCity buildings are beneath the forest canopy for the most part because SFU went to the surrounding communities for their feedback, whereas UBC considers the site its academic core and not subject to public opinion. They are so wrong!

UBC claims that their towers will not be visible from the beach, but they are only referring to visibility ABOVE the high water mark which just occurs at the winter and summer equinoxes. It is true that if beach users were to huddle against the base of the cliffs they would not see the towers, but no one sunbathes or recreates there. The real draw is the broad expanse of exposed beach at low tide where folks can socialize, play Frisbee, skim board, cool off in the shallow waters, and exercise. The farther out toward the Fraser River one goes, the more of these towers would be visible and this would be an abomination not only against nature, but against Captain Vancouver's legacy to all Canadians and international visitors!

UBC must relocate the towers and drop their heights by a minimum of 10 stories!

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