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BACKGROUNDER: SFU Woodward's – The Facility

About the project: In late 2007, the BC government announced funding of \$50.3-million to enable Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts to move into a new home on the former Woodward's department store site at 149 West Hastings St. in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The project is now approaching completion and the stage is set for a stunning new Contemporary Arts complex. In January 2010, SFU Woodward's will open as a state-of-the-art performance, exhibition, teaching and research space while SFU School for the Contemporary Arts will take up residence in the facility in September 2010.

The overall SFU Woodward's complex will engage a diverse mix of partners and performers and will work to be a transforming agent in the larger arts community. SFU is committed to being a good neighbour in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and will offer cultural partnerships, non-credit educational initiatives and facility rentals to foster community engagement.

The 125,000-sq-ft (11,000-sq-m) facility includes:

- The Fei & Milton Wong Experimental Theatre, which can accommodate staging configurations ranging from proscenium to arena and can seat up to 450. This space can be subdivided to create a separate 125-seat performance space or to allow rehearsals without interfering with the main-stage space. The full area of the floor will be sprung for dance or physical theatre.
- Two 125-seat studio theatres, one for dance, the other for theatre performances.
- A World Art Studio will house the school's Indonesian Gamelan orchestra.
- A 350-seat cinema/lecture hall equipped to screen feature films, and accommodate large lectures, panel discussions and dialogues.
- The Audain Gallery on the ground floor will present contemporary visual arts exhibitions. Six moving wall panels can be arranged as display walls or used to partition the gallery into three parts.

The facility will house most of the teaching and administrative functions of the School for the Contemporary Arts. Other teaching and research facilities include:

- A professional-calibre film soundstage with acoustic isolation for the shooting of interior sequences, a film classroom and two 25-seat screening rooms.
- Three additional dance studios, each slightly different in character to suit different dance forms.
- Two additional theatre studios with sprung floors for movement training.
- A principal music teaching studio to complement the World Art Studio as well as smaller studios and practice rooms for teaching and studio work in acoustic and electronic music.
- Two visual art and interdisciplinary studios.
- A two-level multidisciplinary area incorporating two computer teaching labs and numerous smaller computer-based editing and composing suites for film, video, graphics and design, electro-acoustic music as well as several traditional film editing suites.

This sustainable building has high environmental standards including:

- Extensive "green roofs" throughout the site.
- Significant recycled content and local sourcing for material selection.
- Using the existing Beatty Steam plant to convert steam to hot water radiant heating.
- A 100-year life expectancy (most buildings now have a 30-50 year life expectancy).

Simon Fraser University – Ranked as one of Canada’s top three comprehensive universities for almost 20 years, Simon Fraser University has three campuses, Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver. SFU offers its 32,000 students more than 150 undergraduate and graduate programs within eight faculties. The Vancouver campus has five sites: Harbour Centre, the Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Segal Graduate School of Business, SFU Contemporary Arts’ Alexander Street studio space and the spectacular teaching and performance facility currently under construction at the heritage Woodward’s location. The downtown campus welcomes more than 70,000 people annually. Approximately 10,000 are credit and non-credit students. Thousands of others attend SFU public programs or community events. www.vancouver.sfu.ca.

Visit www.sfuwoodwards.ca for more information on SFU Woodward’s and Inaugural Program events and exhibitions.

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Digital images available – contact Heather Kennedy at 604.723.2562 or heatherkennedy.vcr@gmail.com