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School for the Contemporary Arts joins Woodward's development

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The City of Vancouver and Simon Fraser University announced today that the university's School for the Contemporary Arts will relocate to the historic Woodward's site as part of the redevelopment project.

"It's been 25 years since SFU first opened a storefront office on Howe Street to offer access to university education in downtown Vancouver," said SFU President Michael Stevenson. "We have grown a lot since then with Harbour Centre, the Wosk Centre for Dialogue, and the new Segal Graduate School of Business. We are delighted to be part of the redevelopment of the landmark Woodward's site. It will offer wonderful learning facilities for our students and vastly improved research space for our faculty, while contributing enormously to the cultural and economic revitalization of Vancouver." The School for the Contemporary Arts will occupy approximately 150,000 square feet in the new development, and the space will allow the school to house all of its degree programs that are currently based in Burnaby. The new home at the Woodward's development will let the school expand its current annual enrolment of 1,200 students. "When the City purchased Woodward's in 2003, our goal was to bring this historic building and neighbourhood back to life," said Mayor Larry Campbell. "The addition of the School for the Contemporary Arts plays an important role in reaching this goal." SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts offers undergraduate interdisciplinary degree programs in art and culture studies, dance, film, music, theatre, and visual art as well as a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies. All programs combine practical experience with theoretical and critical study, and include opportunities for production, exhibition and public performance. "The creative energy the school will bring is going to help make this area a vital and vibrant part of Vancouver again," said Councillor Jim Green, co-chair of the Woodward's Steering Committee.

The SFU project budget will be about \$45 million, while the total development budget is now about \$250 million. Construction is expected to begin on the Woodward's redevelopment in the fall of 2005. The School for the Contemporary Arts hopes to move into its new space by 2008. The Woodward's site has been closed since 1993. The City of Vancouver purchased the Woodward's building from the Province of BC in March 2003. In September 2004, City Council chose Westbank Projects/Peterson Investment Group (Henriquez Partners, architects) as the developer for the project after a comprehensive consultation process involving the community. In January 2005, City Council selected the PHS Community Services Society to sponsor the development of 125 units of housing for low-income singles, and the Affordable Housing Society to sponsor the development of 75 units of housing for low and modest income families at Woodward's.

The new Woodward's development will be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, and include market and non-market housing, and community, commercial and retail elements.