

# MONEY



## Building in Beijing

With its Canadian president Annette Verschuren in charge, Home Depot is making its first foray into the Chinese market.

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# 21st century grande dame

**HOSPITALITY:** New Year's Eve send-off planned for Hotel Georgia

BY ASHLEY FORD  
BUSINESS REPORTER

A "grande dame" of Vancouver hotels will dim its lights early in the new year.

But fear not, within three years or so, the elegant, 80-year-old Hotel Georgia will be reborn as a luxury boutique hotel with approximately 247 rooms, plus a 48-storey, 146-metre tower with 156 condos and 60,000 square feet of office space.

Bruce Langereis, president of Delta Land Development Ltd., said the \$275-million renovation will make it "the hotel of the city" once again.

Delta, a subsidiary of the Singapore-based Delta group, is developing the property with partner Goodman Real Estate Inc. of Seattle, a private company.

Langereis is planning a gala send-off for the heritage hotel on New Year's Eve and it will officially close on Jan. 2.

It is hoped the Howe and Georgia hotel portion of the project will be open in time for the Winter Olympics, he said.

The tower site next to the hotel is small and is a difficult one to develop. And that portion of the project may not be completed by the time the Games roll around.

Redevelopment of the site has long been on the drawing boards. Bing Thom, a well-known Vancouver architect, designed a spectacular crystal tower for previous owners that did not proceed.

"We have completely redesigned it to enable us to put in underground parking and join the tower to the hotel in a much better way," Langereis said.

"A critical part of the new design is increasing our heritage commitment. We want to be respectful of the history here."

That will include tearing down the old ballroom to integrate the hotel to the tower, but ultimate-



Imagining the future, an architect's photo illustration shows the Hotel Georgia's proposed 48-storey tower, a building that includes environmentally friendly solar panels installed on its southern side.

ly remaking it much as it was in the hotel's glory days, albeit with a modern touch.

"The ballroom will be carefully taken apart to be later reconstructed the way it was originally," he said.

In addition, the hotel, a heritage building, will get a \$16-million seismic upgrade that will mean it will be around for another 80 or so years, Langereis said.

Other touches will include a huge, new state-of-the-art

kitchen; an upgraded pub, long a central element of the hotel; a swimming pool; port cochere — a porch large enough for a carriage to pass through — and a restaurant. No rezoning will be required, he said.

The project will be made as environmentally-friendly as possible, Langereis said.

Bores drilled into the earth will provide geothermal energy for heating and cooling and solar panels will be installed on the

southern side of the new tower to use clean, free energy.

The project is being designed by IBI/HB Architects and Endall/Elliott Associates of Vancouver.

Built in 1927, the 312-room, 12-storey hotel was the second largest in the city and the darling of many international celebrities, including Frank Sinatra and the swashbuckling actor Errol Flynn.

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## Report rethinks exporting logs

**FORESTRY:** Coast harvest in need of new approach

BY PAUL LUKE  
BUSINESS REPORTER

Log exports are a symptom of the poor health of B.C.'s coastal forest industry — not the spark, a study released yesterday says.

The 106-page report urges B.C. to create a new, flexible model of exports that reflects economic conditions — a recommendation sure to enrage opponents of any log exports.

Authors Don Wright and Bill Dumont say overhauling B.C.'s approach to log exports should strengthen the economic viability of logging coastal hemlock and balsam and trigger investment in the coastal industry.

But the authors, both industry veterans, warn that even if the province adopts their recommendations, harvesting on the coast can't return to former levels.

"If the timber that is harvested on the British Columbia coast is to be processed here, international competitive realities mean that processing will have to be done with significantly higher levels of productivity and fewer workers than was the case in the past," they say.

"If the rationalization and productivity improvement necessary to make the coast industry competitive is not allowed to happen, the ultimate level of pain for workers and communities will be even higher in the long run."

Still, the processing sector would be more efficient and competitive if there were no log export restrictions. "In the absence of foreign protectionism, the vast majority of logs will be processed within British Columbia with or without log export restrictions," the report says.

The report advocates making logs from private B.C. lands freely exportable to the U.S. in exchange for freer trade in lumber from private B.C. lands. B.C. should continue to bar the export of high-grade red and yellow cedar logs, the report says.

But it should replace the ban on the export of lower-grade cedar and high grades of other species with steeper fees for exporters.

The so-called "surplus test" — which requires export logs be surplus to the needs of domestic mills — should be phased out after five years, it says.

The government wants industry stakeholders to respond to the recommendations by Jan. 31.

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