

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: October 31, 2012  
Contact: Kent Munro  
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RTS No.: 9834  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: January 15, 2013

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Planning and Development Services  
SUBJECT: 41 Alexander Street - Façade Grant - DB 441100

### *RECOMMENDATION*

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 41 Alexander Street as contemplated by Development Application Number DB 441100, the source of funding being the 2009 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.
- B. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement with the owner of 41 Alexander Street to be registered in the Land Title Office as a section 219 covenant, which agreement shall require the rehabilitation to be overseen by a qualified Heritage Consultant and will require the owner to maintain the 41 Alexander Street façade in good appearance and good repair for a minimum of fifteen years.
- C. THAT the agreement described above shall be prepared, registered and given priority to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services in consultation with the General Manager of Planning and Development Services.

### *REPORT SUMMARY*

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for a façade grant for the Vancouver Heritage Register "C" listed and municipally designated site at 41 Alexander Street, also known as The Captain French. The application proposes to replace existing non-original windows with historically appropriate, energy efficient replicas. The applicant has requested a façade grant through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

The proposal is consistent with applicable City policy, HA-2 Design Guidelines for Gastown, Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, and it is eligible for the façade grant.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square (2003).

Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square (2003).

The Vancouver Charter requires a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of all Council members for recommendation "A".

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The General Manager of Planning and Development Services RECOMMENDS approval of A, B and C.

### ***REPORT***

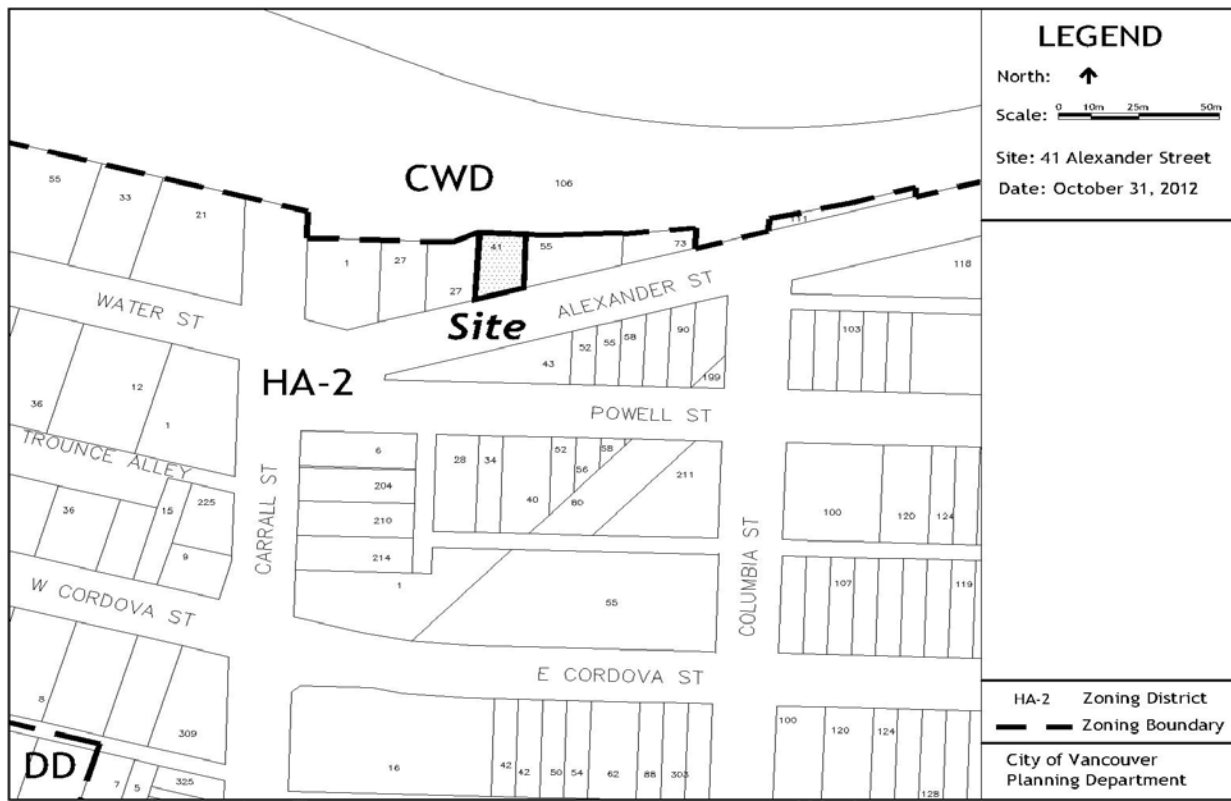
#### ***Background/Context***

In July 2003, City Council approved both the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) and the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP) to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of heritage buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square. The HFRP is available to assist owners and tenants with 50% of the cost of rehabilitating heritage building facades up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal façade. The HBRP and HFRP are consistent with current planning initiatives of the Downtown Eastside Local Area Planning Program (LAPP), including the Interim Development Management Guidelines (adopted on March 28, 2012) which allows for heritage façade grants to be considered by Council.

#### ***Strategic Analysis***

##### ***Site and Context***

The Captain French is a six-storey former warehouse building located on the north side of Alexander Street in the historic district of Gastown. Close to the Port of Vancouver, and backing onto the Canadian Pacific Railway yards, this building was originally used for wholesale and warehouse purposes. It has since been rehabilitated for use as residential lofts.



### *Heritage Value*

Gastown is the historic core of Vancouver, and is the city's earliest, most historic area of commercial buildings and warehouses. The Captain French is representative of the importance of Gastown as the trans-shipment point between the terminus of the railway and Pacific shipping routes. As Vancouver prospered, substantial warehouses were built on infilled water lots between Water and Alexander Streets and the CPR trestle. Loading bays at the lower level faced the railway tracks, which allowed goods to be off-loaded directly from trains. The massive cubic form, high density and notable height of this structure are a clear indication of the extent and prosperity of commercial trade during this period.

Additional value is derived from the association with Captain George H. French, its first owner. French was a tugboat captain, and operated the first log towing business to run out of Vancouver. This value is reinforced by the later association it had with various ship's chandlers, especially H.A. Borgeron, one of Vancouver's leading chandlers, who occupied the building from the 1950s through to the 1970s. Other occupants of the building included various wholesale businesses, including Gainers Meats. The north side of Alexander Street was a prime location for warehouses, as there was ready access to the rail lines and the port.

The building is additionally significant as an example of the commercial designs of Parr & Fee, one of Vancouver's most prolific architectural firms in the early 20th century.

Typical of the firm's work at the time, the front facade demonstrates the influence of the Classical Revival style, including tripartite articulation, regularly spaced window openings, and a projecting metal cornice. The ground floor was designed to be accessible to delivery vehicles (for the Statement of Significance see Appendix A).

This former warehouse, which has been converted for residential uses on the upper floors, contributes to the ambiance of the Gastown historic district. Its adaptive re-use within the context of the redevelopment of Gastown as a heritage district represents the changing nature of the local context and economy from warehousing and manufacturing to commercial, retail and residential uses.

The Captain French is a designated heritage building listed under category "C" on Vancouver Heritage Register, and located in the Gastown National Historic District.

### *Conservation Approach*

The current application proposes to replace 60 windows on both facades of the building. In the late 1980s, the original wood-sash double hung windows were removed and replaced with two different window types which were not historically appropriate. Since, the replaced windows deteriorated beyond repair and are severely under-performing in many aspects. The conservation approach is to replace existing non-heritage windows with historically more appropriate double-hung, wood-sash windows, as per the original appearance. The proposal includes installation of clear double-glazing with 6mm laminate glass with a high sound transmission class. Windows and sills will be painted with historically appropriate colours.

The proposed conservation plan is consistent with the HA-2 Design Guidelines and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (for conservation plan see Appendix B).

### *Estimates for Proposed Conservation Work*

The applicant has submitted four cost estimates for the eligible façade rehabilitation work ranging from \$120,248 to \$190,852. Only the cost related to replacement of the principal façade windows (30 units) is considered eligible for the façade grant.

### *Proposed Incentives*

A heritage façade grant of up to \$50,000 is proposed to financially assist the owner in conducting the principal façade window replacement project.

### *Comments of Advisory Bodies*

The application was reviewed by the Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee on October 17, 2012 and was unanimously supported.

### *Financial*

Council approved a Capital Budget of \$500,000 for funding façade grants through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program in 2009. In February 2012, Council approved a further Capital Budget of \$150,000 for façade grants. Currently, the amount remaining in the program is \$350,000, not including this request.

Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$50,000 from the 2009 Capital Budget for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 41 Alexander Street. The grant funds will be available to the applicant in accordance with the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures.

### *Legal*

The Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown, Hasting Street Corridor and Victory Square require an agreement between the City and the property owner to be registered on title to the lands to ensure the continued maintenance of the restored/rehabilitated facade. Upon Council's approval of the grant, a section 219 covenant will be prepared by Legal Services and, once it is finalized with the owner, it will be registered in the Land Title Office. The agreement will require that the rehabilitation work is to be supervised by a qualified Conservation Consultant, will contain the terms and conditions upon which the grant is to be paid to the owner once the rehabilitation work is complete and will require the owner to keep the heritage façade in good appearance and good repair for a minimum of fifteen years after completion of the rehabilitation.

The façade grant will be issued only after the agreement is registered on title to the lands, the rehabilitation of the façade has been satisfactorily completed and the conservation plan satisfactorily implemented and the owner has delivered to the City satisfactory proof of payment of the costs incurred in carrying out the façade rehabilitation work.

### *CONCLUSION*

The Captain French is listed in the "C" evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register and under the provisions of the Vancouver Charter is designated as a protected heritage property. The proposed replacement of windows will reverse some of the unsympathetic alterations of the 1980s, and will improve the appearance and functionality of this Gastown heritage building. The General Manager of Planning and Development Services recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of 41 Alexander Street.

\* \* \* \* \*

# BC Register of Historic Places

## 41 Alexander Street

**Unique FPT Identifier**

**Other names**

### LOCATION

**Jurisdiction** BC

**Street** 41 Alexander St

**Community** Vancouver

**Province** BC

**Locality** Gastown

**District**

**Sub-District**

**Economic Region**

**Cadastral Identifier**

**Coordinates** Digital Maps **Datum** NAD83 **Zone**

**Latitude** 49.28378853 **Longitude** -123.1033293

### DESCRIPTION

The historic place at 41 Alexander Street consists of a six-storey building in Vancouver's Gastown district. Close to the Port of Vancouver, and backing onto the railway yards, this building was originally used for wholesale and warehousing purposes. It is now used for housing.

#### Description of boundaries

The site is located on the north side of Alexander, east of Carrall Street.

#### Area

353.4 square metres

#### Heritage value

The heritage value of this building is derived from its association with George H. French, its first owner, and its architects, Parr and Fee. It is also of value because of its ongoing association with a number of businesses and activities typical of Vancouver's Gastown.

George H. French was a tugboat captain. He operated the first log towing business to run out of Vancouver. It is likely that this building represents an investment he made from profits made in British Columbia's booming lumber trade in the first decade of the twentieth century. The connections manifested here between the lumber trade, the port, and Gastown's development contribute to the buildings heritage value. This value is reinforced by the later association it had with various ship's chandlery including especially H. A. Borgeron, one of Vancouver's leading chandlers, which occupied the building from the 1950s through to the 1970s. Other occupants of the building included various wholesale businesses, including Gainers Meatpacking. Businesses such as Gainers located here because it backs onto the railway yards.

The design of the building by Parr and Fee adds to its heritage value. Parr and Fee were one of Vancouver's leading architectural firms in the early twentieth century. This building is a good example of the developed commercial style used by the firm. It has a simple façade with regularly spaced windows, stone sills, and a cornice (possibly added later).

The ground floor could be accessed by vehicles.

Heritage value is also found in the conversion of the building from commercial to residential use as this forms part of a pattern of change in the area in the late twentieth century. Paul Merrick Architects were responsible for the re-use of the building. They have been associated with many similar projects in Gastown and their involvement adds to the heritage value of the building.

**Character-Defining elements**

- Location backing on the railway yards
- Simple, unadorned façade with regularly placed windows on the upper storeys
- Sills below the windows
- Yellow brick on the façade
- Ground floor entries, including entries for vehicles
- Clearly defined ground floor

**Functional Type**

**Type** Shop

**Category** Commerce

**Era** Primary Historic

**Contributing Resources**

# 1

**Type** Building

**Associated event, person, organization, architect or builder**

**Person / Association**

George H. French / Person

Parr and Fee / Architect

H. A. Borgeron / Person

Gainers Meatpacking / Organization

Paul Merrick Architects / Organization

**Associated dates**

**FORMAL RECOGNITION**

**Statute / Enactment / Date**

Local Government Act, s.967 / Schedule 'A', Part 2 to Heritage / 1/14/2003

**DOCUMENTATION/ADMINISTRATION**

**Supporting docs** City of Vancouver Heritage Conservation Program

**Owner Response** Not applicable

**Registrar** Neil Wilton

Excerpt from the Conservation Plan by Donald Luxton and Associates Inc. (August 2012)



Front façade of the Captain French, June 2012



41 Alexander St. 1919 – Canadian Pacific  
Junk Co. (VPL 20677)

## 5.4 WINDOWS

The street façade features a symmetrical window arrangement on the upper five floors with six windows per floor. In the late 1980s, the original wood-sash double-hung windows were replaced with two different window types: double-casement windows with fixed upper sash and large fixed sash windows with awning swing units above, both with thermal double-paned sealed units. The window sashes and frames on the front and rear elevations are currently painted with a dark blue colour that is not historically appropriate.

On the north (rear) elevation, the window fenestration of the upper six storeys is also symmetrically arranged with six windows per floor. Similar to the front façade, all original wood-sash double hung windows were replaced with double-casement windows, equipped with rotary cam handle



mechanisms, with upper awning swing units, with thermal double-paned sealed units. The site review indicated that the later rear windows were not installed in the original locations. The windows on the rear elevation were also assessed during BC Building Science's investigation and their detailed condition report lists many concerns including:

- Decayed and rotten wood window sills with moss growth
- Decayed, rotting and splitting window frames in some locations
- Poor detailing of the weather stripping butt joint at all window vent locations, damaged weather stripping and failing sealant joints
- Damaged casement hardware at some window units

Recent repair attempts were carried out on some units on the north side. However, the overall condition and performance of the rear windows is very poor and would require extensive repair work.

The existing windows are not efficient in buffering noise levels caused by the interregional commuter railway that is running immediately north of the subject property. All these conditions impact the livability of the strata units.

### **Conservation Recommendation: Rehabilitation**

Windows are important heritage features of historic buildings and a comprehensive window rehabilitation program should be implemented for The Captain French. The recommended conservation strategy is for the replacement of the later units on both elevations with historically appropriate double-hung, wood-sash windows with 1-over-1 in configuration as per their original appearance. Modern technology should be utilized to improve the window performance. This includes the installation of clear double-glazing with 6mm laminate ½" airspace and 6mm laminate glass with a high sound transmission class of STC 42.

- Prepare mock-up for client and consultant review.
- Remove and dispose of all upper windows on the front and rear elevations, including removal of rotten wooden sills on rear elevation.
- Install new 1-over-1 double-hung, wood sash windows, clear double-glazing with 6mm laminate ½" airspace and 6mm laminate glass with a high sound transmission class of STC 42, and architectural detailing such as horns on upper sash and brick moulding. The windows should be manufactured and installed by a window company experienced in heritage conservation projects and approved by the Heritage Consultant.
- Paint windows and sills as per colour recommendation by Heritage Consultant.

- Consult with a structural engineer to investigate the condition of the embedded steel lintels and to coordinate any required work with the window trade.

## 5.6 COLOUR SCHEDULE

Part of the restoration process is to finish the building in historically appropriate paint colours. If paint cannot be removed from the brick of the ground floor pilasters, they should also be repainted. As the building was significantly rehabilitated in the past, and heritage elements were removed or original paint removed, the final colour scheme cannot be determined by sampling but derives from experience on other heritage buildings of this era. Presently the sheet metal cornice will retain its existing colour. When the cornice will be scheduled for a complete new paint finish in the future, the recommended colour is specified in the table below.

Location	Historic Paint Colour Benjamin Moore Historic True Colours	Code
Window assembly (front & rear)	Comox Green	VC-19
Precast concrete sills (front & rear)	Haddington Grey	VC-15
Architectural concrete beam (front)	Haddington Grey	VC-15
Metal cornice (when newly painted in the future)	Haddington Grey	VC-15
Ground floor assembly (storefront incl. soffit)	Comox Green	VC-19
Brick party wall return, ground floor	To match buff colour veneer brick	