

CITY OF VANCOUVER



POLICY REPORT  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: March 10, 2006  
Author: G. McGeough/  
R. Jenkins  
Phone No.: 604.873.7091/7082  
RTS No.: 5307  
VanRIMS No.: 05-1000-20  
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TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets  
FROM: Director of Current Planning  
SUBJECT: Vancouver Heritage Register Upgrade Program

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council receive for INFORMATION this report and recommendations on the Vancouver Heritage Register Upgrade Program. Approval and funding to be deferred to the 2006 Interim Operating Budget;
- B. THAT Council receive for INFORMATION the request for funding of the Heritage Register Upgrade Program for the amounts of \$100,000 in 2007, \$100,000 in 2008 and \$50,000 in 2009. Approval and funding to be deferred to the 2006 Interim Operating Budget;
- C. THAT Council direct staff to report back in 2006 with the detailed terms of reference, on the success of obtaining external funding and as a result, the operational and cost impacts to the proposed Vancouver Heritage Register Upgrade Program.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

The Register Upgrade Program was first put forward for consideration in the 2006 Operating Budget. However, in the prioritizing of the various requests, the conclusion was to refer the report to the 2006 Operating Budget review and to recommend Council pre-approve 2007 funding, permitting the program to begin as early as possible in 2007.

## COUNCIL POLICY

In September 1986, Council adopted the Vancouver Heritage Inventory.

In December 1994, in response to new Provincial legislation, Council renamed the Heritage Inventory as the Vancouver Heritage Register.

On March 31, 2005 Council instructed staff report back on measures required to upgrade the Heritage Register.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present a proposed Heritage Register Upgrade Program together with a staffing, budget and funding outline.

## SUMMARY

An up-to-date Heritage Register, which better represents city and community heritage values, will significantly reduce the number of circumstances where buildings which are not on the Register but, after a process to redevelop begins, are found to have heritage merit. Recent specific examples of these difficult circumstances are numerous and include the Joy Kagawa House, the Evergreen Building, Firehall #15, the Black Swan Records building and Charles Dickens School.

For land owners and developers, an up-to-date Register will increase predictability and certainty, and reduce processing times and carrying costs. For communities and the general public an up-to-date Register will better reflect community values, better represent the increasingly diverse and multi-cultural nature of Vancouver, and represent meaning beyond architectural significance. For Council, staff, Council advisory bodies, and heritage interest groups an up-to-date Register will provide a comprehensive approach to identifying and prioritizing resources that merit incentives, and take advantage of the newly recognized national approach to identifying heritage values and character-defining elements in a Statement of Significance.

Statements of Significance (SOS), as defined through the national Historic Places Initiative, that will be produced for new additions to the Register will specifically list building components that must, should, or need not be conserved, and aid immensely in reaching agreements to determine where change may be permitted. In an SOS, the building components are linked to the heritage values that have been articulated by the community.

The proposed Heritage Register Upgrade Program presented in this report (see Appendix A) will consist of three phases completed over a three-year period. The first phase (2007) will include:

- developing an overarching Vancouver Historic Context Statement;
- creating a Heritage Thematic Framework for groupings of heritage values/resources (which could include for example, industrial/working buildings, cultural/ethnic resources, places of worship, etc., landscape resources as well as the more familiar themes of a variety of residential and commercial buildings);

- Gap Analysis which is the identification of resources that, to date, have not been represented or have been under-represented; and
- Prioritizing of new additions/subtractions from the Register.

Statements of Significance will be produced for first priority additions of those resources which, through this initial phase, have been confirmed as suitable additions.

Phase 2 (2008), will include Specific Theme Context Statements (detailed statements based on the themes identified in Phase 1), continued identification of priority resources which will then be added (or removed) from the Register. Phase 3 (2009) will consist primarily of the writing, review and approval of Statements of Significance for these priority resources.

It is envisioned that the process be managed by City staff through the City's Heritage Conservation Program, with a Heritage Planner II (full-time) and Planning Analyst (half time) assigned, with staffing scaled back in Phase 3. Additional heritage expertise required would be delivered through consultancies. Public consultation will occur in a variety of ways - a Heritage Register Task Force is proposed which would advise the City and be composed of representatives from, for example, heritage organizations, including the City's Heritage Advisory Committee, community and cultural groups, development and building industry groups, and the general public. Augmenting the key role of the Task Force will be consultation by way of open houses, focus group meetings (i.e., consulting with those interested in specific heritage themes), as well as wider advertising and soliciting of input from the general public.

A total program budget of \$750,000 is proposed, with the City's contribution being \$250,000 spread over the three years. Applications will be made for the remaining \$500,000 to the national/provincial Historic Places Initiatives program as well as other granting agencies including the Real Estate Foundation, the Land Conservancy and the Heritage Society of British Columbia's Legacy Fund and similar granting agencies. While the cost of the Program is significant, the Program will address several important issues including the fact that there has been no comprehensive review or updating of the Register since its inception 20 years ago and the significant costs being incurred by the City and the public because the Register, with accompanying SOSs, is not complete. The proposed Program is supported by stakeholders and potential funding partners consulted to date.

The proposed City contribution of \$100,000 in first two years and \$50,000 in the third year is only a portion of the total cost and is essential to the leveraging of funding from the other sources. Finally, it is noted that this funding approach is consistent with and builds on successful past practice - over the last three years, a total of \$80,000 of City funds plus a contribution of Heritage staff and volunteer time has leveraged a total of \$306,000 from all levels of government, with the most substantial contribution from the Historic Places Initiative program. While staff are optimistic the full Program can be funded, if the required funding from other sources is not obtained, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year work program would be scaled back to ensure the most at-risk heritage resources continue to be addressed and the Program redefined to ensure it's completion over a longer period of time. Proposed staffing, budget and funding are presented in Appendix B.

Staff will report back in 2006 with the detailed terms of reference, on the success of obtaining external funding, and as a result, the operational and cost impacts to the proposed Vancouver Heritage Register Update Program.

Through 2006 it is anticipated there will continue to be short-term crises resulting from redevelopment proposals on sites which are not properly identified as Heritage resources. This will be exacerbated by the delay until 2007 to begin the Program. For this reason staff have developed an interim strategy to manage at-risk Heritage resources which includes:

- early flagging of at-risk buildings;
- preparation of heritage evaluations for these buildings;
- reporting to the Vancouver Heritage Commission for advice and City Council for direction when required.

## BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR) is an official list of historic places, specific to Vancouver - the places have been identified by Council as having heritage value or heritage character. There are currently 2,147 buildings listed on the Register. Before being adopted, the Register existed as the Vancouver Heritage Inventory, completed in 1986.

The aim, in compiling the Inventory, was to gather the best examples of heritage resources in the city. Visual identification was stressed in the selection of inventory resources; resources selected for evaluation were buildings that retained original architectural characteristic, materials and detailing. As a result the inventory is heavily weighted towards structures with 'primarily' architectural and stylistic merit.

Among other things, the Register enables the City to understand and identify the significance of the heritage resource, to manage proposed changes, and to integrate heritage conservation activities into other land use planning processes. The Heritage Register is the basis by which buildings may be considered for incentives to encourage retention and restoration and protection through heritage designation or a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA).

The Vancouver Heritage Register and Heritage Conservation Program were established by Council two decades ago. The Conservation Program has been highly successful and is a key part of the City's development review processes. Special attention is paid to reviewing proposed changes to Heritage Register buildings. Staff make extensive use of conditional zoning and additional heritage relaxations and encourage a proactive, interest-based planning approach to collaborating with heritage property owners for "win-win" solutions that maximize and balance the various civic, community and owners' interests. Where required, projects are reported to Council with a Heritage Revitalization Agreement and designation in order to provide necessary additional heritage incentives.

Over the last three years, the Federal Government has led the development and initial implementation of a new Canada-wide approach to heritage conservation called the Historic Places Initiative (HPI). The approach is consistent with contemporary international practices. The Vancouver Heritage Register needs to catch up with this nationally recognized approach to the management of local government heritage registers.

One key component of HPI is the Canadian Register of Historic Places criteria that shift Vancouver's Register criteria (developed in 1986) from a materials-based focus to a values-based approach that includes aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual significance for past, present or future generations. When the Register was created it

focused mainly on buildings having a cross section of the various architectural styles and evolution of the city's development.

A second key component is the shift from the heritage expert to the community (with expert guidance) identification of heritage values. This shift in approach is very consistent with what we are witnessing in Vancouver at the grass roots level. In recent years, community groups and the general public have increasingly lamented the loss or potential loss of non-Register sites that they deem to have heritage value. In response to witnessing these outcomes on a number of non-register sites, Council requested on March 2005 a report back on measures to upgrade the Heritage Register.

## DISCUSSION

**Objectives of the Heritage Register Upgrade Program:** The following is an outline of the proposed Program. If approved in principle, staff will report back with a detailed terms of reference, after consultation with key heritage stakeholders.

Key aspects of the current Heritage Register approach which need addressing:

1. Changing attitudes towards heritage;
2. Costly "late hits" in development and rezoning processes;
3. Current Register does not reflect community priorities; and
4. Material based bias of the Register does not reflect a broader range of heritage values.

**1. Changing attitudes toward heritage:** The Register listings were developed in 1986 in a cautious climate that did not embrace Heritage to the degree it is today. While Council agreed to adopt the heritage incentives, isolated 'C' listed properties were dropped from the list and the research component of the project was cut.

The Heritage Conservation Program has evolved into a highly successful program with 20 years of substantial accomplishments. Two hundred buildings have been saved, rehabilitated and legally protected on a voluntary basis since 1978. Vancouver now has an inventive and progressive incentive program including: a bonus and transferable density system; subdivision and zoning variances; tax relief; façade grants; and the Heritage Foundation's "True Colours" and "Restore It" granting programs. Land owners' and developers' perceptions have shifted from heritage as a liability to heritage as an asset - heritage is seen as increasing development options rather than limiting them; as adding cache to projects and used in marketing developments. Much of staff's role has shifted from persuading owners to preserve buildings to guiding and facilitating retention proposals. There are regular applications from owners and developers to have buildings added to the Register in order to gain access to incentives.

Vancouver is maturing as a city and so is its understanding of heritage. Now 20 years since Expo '86, our sense of place has solidified and we have a greater self-awareness, pride in our accomplishments and respect for our heritage.

Given this increased understanding and support for heritage, it is critical at this point of time in our rapidly developing City, to take careful stock of our heritage resources to ensure they have a place in Vancouver's future.

**2. Costly “late hits” in development applications and rezoning processes:** Having a Register that is out of touch with current community heritage values is causing significant disruption in the City’s regulatory and political processes. When a community “identifies” a site, which is not on the register, as having heritage value in the middle of a development or rezoning process it is a “late hit” for the owner and staff. It severely limits the opportunity to identify and development retention solutions. It pits residents, property owners and staff against each other, resulting in negative, confrontational and unproductive processes and a breakdown in trust. Significant time and money is spent by property owners, developers, staff and community members trying to resolve conflicts that arise. Having an outdated Register reduces certainty for property owners making asset management and planning very difficult. It also forfeits opportunities for incorporating conservation interests in the City’s long range planning polices and by-laws.

An upgraded Register for all stakeholders will provide:

- Clarity in the selection of additions to the Register;
- A link between conservation goals and community heritage values;
- Cost-effective early flagging and integration of heritage resources into planning process;
- Cost savings by avoiding late hits for staff, developers, local and the general public thereby significantly reducing or removing conflicts, delays and costs to all parties; and
- Effective decision making in community planning and site-specific development applications.

**3. Current Register Does Not Reflect Community Priorities:** The evaluation criteria for additions to the Register have not changed since it was created in 1986. Although evaluation criteria were established by the best heritage experts of the time and have been used to create heritage registers across North America, contemporary thinking and methodologies have significantly evolved from the earlier approach.

Parts of our Heritage Register do not reflect our identity as a city; our identity of who we were and who we are today. We should not continue with criteria that do not reflect what our past and present citizens deem most meaningful and important. A substantial cost saving in staff time can be gained by a program that works with the community to prioritize significant buildings.

The recommended methodology for the Program follows that of Parks Canada’s *System Plan* for adding resources to the National Historic Sites of Canada list. The public consultation approach recommended to develop the strategic Thematic Framework in Phase 1, is best exemplified by the City of Montreal’s process used for developing its new *Heritage Policy* and New York City’s process for developing its heritage listing program *History Happened Here - a plan for saving New York City’s historically and culturally significant sites*.

The recommended methodology is to engage a representative public resource group (identified here as the Heritage Register Task Force and which will include representation from the City’s heritage advisory committees) that is led by a City staff team who, together, provide Council with decision-making advice. The Task Force is convened to act as the forum for soliciting, digesting and distilling community input. The group would include a range of heritage experts, but equally important, a healthy cross-section of representatives from

various City organizations, industries, diverse cultural groups, and geographic communities of the City. The Task Force would be charged with advising on whether the proposed Register changes match what is considered to be the most important aspects of the City's heritage worth preserving.

**4. Need to reflect a broader range of heritage values:** The key part of the approach used to create the Inventory (now called the Register) was a consultant's "windshield" survey of every street in the city identifying "representative buildings of the city's history and patterns of development". Resources selected for evaluation were generally buildings that retained original architectural characteristic, materials and detailing. Research was only done on a very limited number of buildings to uncover historic and cultural values associated with the buildings; however, the core focus was aesthetic/architectural heritage values.

An upgrade to the Heritage Register needs to add breadth to the heritage values, beyond architectural and historic. The range of heritage value establish by the new Canadian Register of Historic Places encourages a wider range of heritage values: aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations. Recent examples non-Register sites under these categories:

- aesthetic (e.g. heritage interiors, heritage signs);
- historic (e.g. Black Swan Record Store, Post 1940s era buildings);
- scientific (e.g. the Cube/former Westcoast Energy Building);
- cultural (e.g. Joy Kogawa House, Plaza of Nations, Urban Native Indian Educational Centre);
- social (e.g. Firehall #15, industrial and working class heritage sites,); or
- spiritual (e.g. native sites).

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The purpose of the Program is to produce a complete and up-to-date Heritage Register that represents the themes in Vancouver's history that are most important to the past and present citizens of Vancouver. To do so, buildings need to be added to the Register systematically and efficiently by undertaking a program of strategic public consultation and information gathering.

Appendix A provides a detailed description of the Implementation Plan. In summary:

- Phase 1 (2007) will include, through public consultation development of a thematic framework and a gap analysis of the key areas of the Register which are under, over and un-represented. If there is support from the public process, then logical priorities such as the Heritage Interiors list, the post-1940s list and selected City-owned sites could be put forward for addition to the Register at the end of this phase.
- Phase 2 (2008) will entail prioritizing the remaining gaps (i.e., pursuing the themes that are under-represented) defining these themes, and prioritizing proposed additions to the register.
- Phase 3 (2009) will include completing Statements of Significance for the priority resources identified in Phase 2.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council is being asked to approve the Heritage Register Program, in principle, with a report back to include confirmation of external funding. In consideration of the current prioritizing of 2006 funding requests, it is recommended the City component of funding begin in 2007.

The proposed three-year program budget is \$750,000 including a City funding contribution of \$250,000 from three years of City operating budgets. This is a temporary one-time program with the source of funds for the remaining \$500,000 coming from external sources, including funds from the Historic Places Initiative. The proposed staffing, budget and funding estimate is presented in Appendix B and summarized below.

	2007	2008	2009
Project Management (City Staff)	\$117,000	\$119,000	\$77,000
Other Costs (Consultants, Public Consultation, etc.)	\$83,000	\$181,000	\$173,000
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$250,000
City Funding	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$50,000

To undertake similar work over the past three years a total of \$80,000 of City funds plus the contribution of existing resources and staff time, has leveraged a total of \$306,000 from all levels of government, with the most substantial contribution from the Historic Places Initiative to write Statements of Significance for bringing the Register in line with national standards for Registers. The City will seek a similar level of HPI funding over the course of the three years. External matching funds for the remaining portions of the work will be sought from: the BC Heritage Branch's "Community Heritage Planning" Funding Program (maximum of \$15,000 and \$30,000 annually); the Real Estate Foundation which has funded similar projects in other municipalities; the Land Conservancy and the Heritage Society of British Columbia's Legacy Fund; and other similar granting agencies.

While staff are optimistic the full program can be funded, if funding from other sources is not confirmed, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year work would be scaled back, while ensuring the most at-risk heritage resources identified at that time are addressed first, and the Program adjusted to ensure it's completion over a longer period of time.

## CONCLUSION

This report proposes a 3-year Heritage Register Upgrade Program to begin in 2007, with a report back on a detailed term of reference after consulting with key stakeholders, potential senior government and other agency funding partners.

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## HERITAGE REGISTER UPGRADE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Phase 1 (2007)

**Creating the Heritage Register Task Force:** The Task Force will include local heritage experts, but equally important, a healthy cross-section of community leaders from the various industries, cultural groups and geographic communities of the City.

**Historic Context Statement:** Facilitated by staff, the consultants and the Task Force will produce a historic description of the development of Vancouver - the historic context statement.

**Thematic Framework:** Using the historic context statement as a starting point, the Task Force will discuss the most important themes and values from the past and present community/communities of Vancouver. A thematic framework will be produced, and it is these themes that will be used as the criteria to systematically guide additions to the Register. The Register is to represent the most important heritage themes - architectural, historical, spiritual, social, and archaeological - that are most important to the past and present citizens of Vancouver.

**Gap Analysis:** Using the thematic framework that is specific to Vancouver, the staff and the Task Force will undertake a systematic review of the existing Register, identify the resources that are under or un-represented - the *gaps* - and prioritize these resources for additions to the register.

**Addressing the First Priority Additions:** Statements of Significance will be developed for those buildings which are recognized as priority additions to the register (e.g. post 1940s buildings, and heritage interiors).

### Phase 2 (2008)

**The Heritage Register Task Force:** The Task Force will maintain its role as the advisory group for the key products of the program, with subcommittees struck for the development of each Register theme (i.e., Gap) identified.

Register additions for each theme identified by Council in Phase 1 as being under-represented, will be pursued through the following steps:

**Theme Specific Context Statements:** A consultant, guided by staff and the theme's subcommittee, will undertake targeted research and expert consultation to develop a context statement specific to the particular theme.

**Criteria for Additions:** Using the theme specific context statement as the point of departure, staff will engage the public in discussions/forums, to identify the heritage values/criteria of greatest importance to the subject theme. The program will reach out to targeted

stakeholders and communities. Staff, with the guidance of the subcommittee, will synthesize the public feedback and develop criteria for additions to the Register particular to the theme.

**Identification of Buildings/Resources:** Under the guidance of the subcommittee and supported by consultant research, staff will solicit, identify and shortlist buildings/sites that best meet the criteria established for the particular theme.

### Phase 3 (2009)

**Write Statements of Significance for Each Resource Identified:** Under current policy, the prerequisite for the addition of a building to the Register is the delivery of a Statement of Significance (SOS). This work consists of: undertaking historical research, field surveys, and documentation; writing a SOS for each building; consulting with the Committee to discuss and review each SOS to ensure it accurately reflects the heritage values identified in the Historic Context Statement; compiling a Register record in accordance with the new documentation standards for the British Columbia Register of Historic Places (BCRHP) and the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP); and integrating the record with Van Map and other City of Vancouver systems.

A consultant will research and write a Statement of Significance for each buildings/site short-listed as required by the Province for all Register additions. Staff will report the recommended buildings/site to Council for addition to the Register.

Appendix B Heritage Register Upgrade - Staffing/Budget/Funding Proposal

	2007	2008	2009
<b>STAFFING (salary and benefits)</b>			
<b>New Temporary Staff</b>			
Heritage Planner 2 (full time in 2007 and 2008, half time in 2009)	84,000	85,000	43,000
Planning Analyst (half time)	33,000	34,000	34,000
<b>Total Staffing</b>	<b>\$117,000</b>	<b>\$119,000</b>	<b>\$77,000</b>
<b>OTHER PROGRAM COSTS</b>			
Staff overtime (Saturday open houses)	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$2,000
<b>One-Time Set up Costs</b>			
Computer @ \$1500	3,000		
Software @ \$500	1,000		
Furniture @ \$1000	2,000		
Office Space @ 10,000/person x 1.5	5,000	5,000	3,000
Annual Office Rental	10,000	10,000	5,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>
<b>Consultants</b>			
Research, consultation and writing of city wide historic context statement and thematic framework writing	48,000		
Research, consultation and writing context statements for 8 - 10 themes		152,000	
Identification of targeted buildings/sites; research, consultation and writing of Statements of Significance.			158,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>	<b>\$152,000</b>	<b>\$158,000</b>
<b>Public involvement (materials costs)</b>			
Open Houses: Easels/Boards/Refreshment	1,000	1,000	500
Graphic Design	2,000	4,000	2,000
Print Advertising @\$500	3,000	3,000	1,500
Newsletters/Printing/Flyer	2,000	2,000	1,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Total Other Program Costs</b>	<b>\$83,000</b>	<b>\$181,000</b>	<b>\$173,000</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>
<b>Less Senior Gov't/External Funds (Est)</b>	<b>(\$100,000)</b>	<b>(\$200,000)</b>	<b>(\$200,000)</b>
<b>TOTAL CITY FUNDING PROPOSED</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>