



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 10, 2006
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Meeting Date: May 2, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Current Planning

SUBJECT: Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program - Façade Grant
1 Alexander Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$150,000 for the three (3) principal facades at 1 Alexander Street in association with the Development Application Number DE409796, the source of funding to be the 2005 Capital for Façade Grants.

Approval of this recommendation requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

- B. That prior to issuance of the building permit, the Owner shall grant to the City a section 219 covenant by which professional oversight of the rehabilitation is required and by which the Owner is required to maintain the 1 Alexander Street façades in good appearance and good repair for the life of the building. The covenant shall be to the satisfaction of the Directors of Current Planning and Legal Services and registered in the Land Title Office in priority over all financial charges.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown and Hastings Street Corridor.

PURPOSE

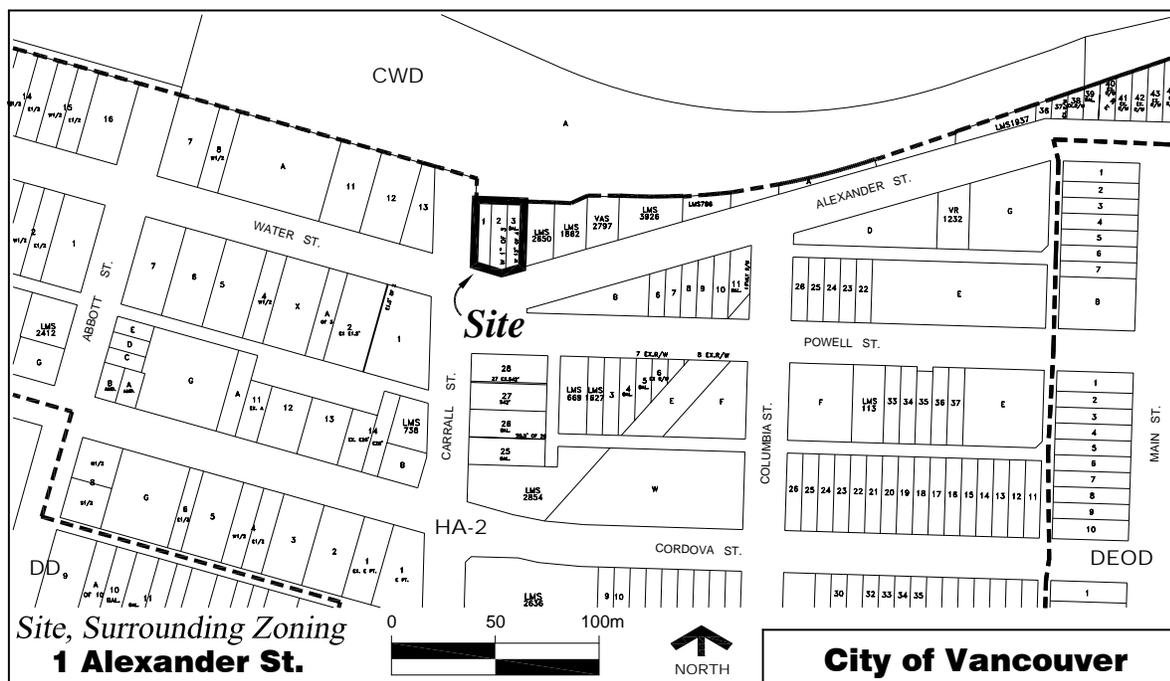
The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s approval for a facade grant for the “A” listed building at 1 Alexander Street.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

In July 2003, City Council approved a program of incentives to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, and Hastings Street Corridor . The program will be available for a five year period (2003 - 2008) to stimulate economic activity in these important historic areas through work on individual heritage buildings. The Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program is available to assist owners and tenants with 50% of the costs of rehabilitating heritage building façades up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal façade.

DISCUSSION

1 Alexander Street is a four-storey, plus lower level, masonry commercial building at the intersection of Alexander, Carrall, Water and Powell Streets in the historic district of Gastown. It is located on the northeast corner of Maple Tree Square, Vancouver’s first, historic public space. This historic site is comprised of two heritage buildings, functionally connected and listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. The 110 Carrall Street building, also known as the Dunn Block, is listed “A” , the 7 Alexander Street building is listed “C” .



Heritage Value:

Built in 1899-1900, the Dunn Block is valued for its association with the original owner, Thomas Dunn, a city councillor on the first Vancouver City Council and a leading pioneer businessman. It was built as a hardware and ship chandlery warehouse, and housed the offices of the Union Steamship Company for several decades.

The Dunn Block is also valued for its Romanesque Revival facade, designed by Noble Stonestreet Hoffar (1843-1907). One of Vancouver's first architects, Hoffar made a considerable contribution to the evolution of the city between 1886 and the mid 1890s with his design and construction of many of the city's largest and most substantial structures. In 1907-08, a four-storey addition was constructed to the east of the building, designed by architects Parr and Fee. The addition displays a simplified but sympathetic response to the older building, and is characterized by the innovative use of continuous ribbon windows.

At the basement level both structures are connected to two separate historic areaways. On the Carrall Street the areaway is used for a stairwell access to the street.

Rehabilitation Approach:

The proposed conservation work includes brick restoration and repointing, wood sash heritage windows restoration and replication, stone building elements cleaning and restoration, cast steel decorative building elements cleaning and repainting, cornice restoration, concrete plaster rendered wall surfaces repair and repainting, storefront restoration. All proposed conservation work will be done in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

In addition, the structural stabilization of the existing areaways is proposed as well as the removal of the existing brick clad planters encroaching onto City property. The historically referenced steel picket guards are proposed around the "open" areaway on Carrall Street.

Design development of the Carrall Street entrances, landing, disable access ramp, locations of Gastown style ball light standards, and placement of bollards and off-site parking spaces have been coordinated with City Planning staff in charge of the Carrall Street Greenway concept design.

Estimates for Proposed Rehabilitation Work:

This proposal is developed under the provisions of Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, and is seeking financial incentive of \$150,000 (three façade grants of \$50,000 each) to offset the cost for the restoration of three principal façades.

The lowest of three quotes provided by qualified professional parties (The Dom Group Ltd., Fontana Construction Ltd., and Pacific Rim Services) indicated that the cost to complete the façade rehabilitation work is \$508,484. The other two quotes were substantially higher (\$632,172 and \$735,000).

Staff conducted an independent cost analysis and determined that the cost of rehabilitation work as presented is realistic and related to the scope established by the Conservation Plan. In conclusion staff determined that the applicant is eligible for the incentive of up to \$50,000 per principal façade.

The City contribution of \$150,000 would be paid to the owner after the work is completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Current Planning. The owner must demonstrate that all related costs are consistent with the façade rehabilitation as outlined in the Conservation Plan scope of work.

Financial Implications:

The 2003-2005 Capital Plan provides \$1.5 million for the façade grants program. Over the last two years, \$785,000 (which includes the application at 40 Powell Street seeking approval at the public hearing in April 2006) in grants were approved for façade rehabilitation projects. Staff recommend approval of the total grant of up to \$150,000 with funding to be provided from the 2005 Capital Budget for Façade Grants.

Public Consultation:

The Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed this project on November 28, 2005 and offered its support for the project, noting that proposed canopies above entryways may not be necessary. The Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee reviewed this application on November 16, 2005 and supported it, suggesting that applicant reconsider the canopy design and further explore configuration of the entrance to 7 Alexander Street. Staff have since discussed the canopy design with the applicant, and the above concerns raised by the Vancouver Heritage Commission and Gastown Historic Area Planning Committees have been resolved.

CONCLUSION

1 Alexander Street is an "A" listed building on the Vancouver Heritage Register and the owner's proposal to rehabilitate building façades will assist in the revitalization of historic Gastown. The Director of Current Planning recommends approval of up to \$150,000 for the façade rehabilitation work.

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