



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 29, 2008
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Meeting Date: May 27, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Planning

SUBJECT: Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program - Façade Grant
108 East Pender Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 108 East Pender Street in association with Development Application Number DB 427341. The source of funding is the 2006 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

The Vancouver Charter requires that a minimum of two-third of votes cast be affirmative for resolution to pass.

- B. THAT 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 108 East Pender Street façade in good appearance and good repair for a minimum period of fifteen years. The covenant shall be to the satisfaction of the Director of 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 the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

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

PURPOSE

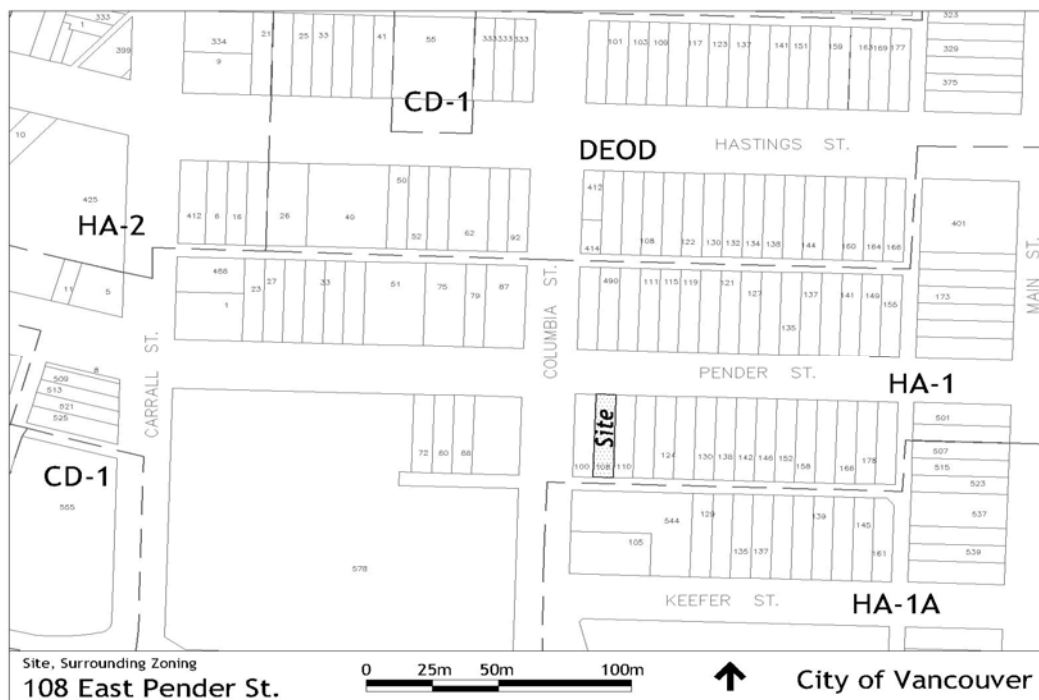
The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s approval for a facade grant for the VHR “A” listed, municipally designated building at 108 East Pender Street.

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

The Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) building at 108 East Pender Street is a four-storey structure comprising a store on the ground floor with public assembly space above. It is located on the south side of Pender Street, the “main street” of Vancouver’s historic Chinatown. The CBA building has historically maintained a significant cultural, social, architectural presence in the Chinatown community.



Heritage Value: Much of the heritage value of this building is found in the significance of Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA), the owner and principal occupant since 1889. Organized by leading Chinatown businessmen this association was recognized for its importance in identifying and representing interests of Chinese-Canadians Canada-wide, especially to government. Historically, the CBA was recognized within the community as speaking for it, regardless of surnames, birthplaces, or political orientation, and acting as an arbitrator in resolving conflicts among Chinatown organizations. In addition, the CBA also supported the development of health and education services. In 1910 a hospital was established in the building, and in 1917, the Chinese Public School became a tenant. This illustrates an important aspect of how the Chinese community organized itself in Vancouver, in part, responding to discrimination. In 1921, the CBA formed a Self-Improvement Committee, to try to improve the public image of Chinatown. This initiative contributed to the building boom that occurred along Pender Street in 1920s, where many other community societies erected buildings to resemble the architecture of the CBA. The architecture of the building is also of heritage value. The building is an expression of the distinctive Chinatown style, including features like recessed balconies, an inscribed parapet, a meeting hall on the top floor, access by a staircase along one side and the vertical proportions.

Rehabilitation Approach: The proposal is to preserve the principal façade and to rehabilitate the storefront which was severely altered in the past. The Conservation Plan proposes to: preserve the metal roof elements and cornices, preserve and repair the fenestration where required, preserve and retain the balcony handrail, preserve and repair the external pendant globe lighting and exposed ends of the stone party walls, preserve the sign on the third floor balcony, reinstate a similar sign on the fourth floor, and preserve the Chinese “Pharmacy” sign on the ground level. The ground floor storefront which was altered in the 1960s or early 1970s, will be rehabilitated. Since no evidence of a historic storefront exists, it is proposed to be rehabilitated in a manner that is respectful of the overall design of the building and its contemporaries along Pender Street. The entry to the upper floors will be preserved and repaired.

Estimates for Proposed Rehabilitation Work: This proposal is developed under the provisions of the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, and is seeking a financial incentive of up to \$50,000 to offset the cost for the preservation and rehabilitation of the principal façade. The project budget, supported by construction quotes for major line items, was received indicating the total cost of work in excess of \$105,000.

The applicant has requested the release of incentives in two phases, based on completion of two major scope components - the upper façade work (Phase 1) and the lower façade work - the storefront (Phase 2). Staff have reviewed the proposal and concluded that given the nature of work proposed the partial release of incentives can be accommodated. After the completion of work for each of the two phases, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning, the Owner must demonstrate that costs incurred are consistent with the scope of work as outlined in the submitted Conservation Plan, and provide proof of payment (receipts). Once this has been confirmed, the phased grant payments would be made. The total of each of two phased payments may not exceed \$25,000 and the total amount of the grant may not exceed \$50,000. Staff conducted an independent cost analysis and determined that the cost of the façade rehabilitation work as presented is realistic and related to the scope established by the Conservation Plan.

Financial Implications:

Council approved a total of \$2.5 million for the funding of façade grants over the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program's five year term (2003-2008). To date, \$1.835 million has been approved as grants for 24 heritage rehabilitation projects, with most projects involving full building upgrades and other incentives.

Currently, there is a total of \$665,000 available for this term of the Program (\$315,000 from previously approved capital budgets and \$350,000 from 2008 Capital Budget). Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$50,000 from the 2006 Capital Budget for rehabilitation of the principle façade at 108 East Pender Street. The grant funds will be available to the applicant in accordance with the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures.

Public Consultation:

The Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee reviewed the proposed façade rehabilitation application on December 11, 2007 and supported it.

CONCLUSION

108 East Pender Street is an "A" listed building on the Vancouver Heritage Register, municipally designated and the owner's proposal to preserve and rehabilitate building façade, not only that will preserve the historic character of the facade, but also will assist in the revitalization of historic Chinatown. The Director of Planning recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the façade rehabilitation work.

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