



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: August 7, 2009
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Meeting Date: September 22, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: 228 Abbott Street - Façade Grant

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 228 Abbott Street as contemplated by Development Application Number DE412957. The source of funding is the 2008 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.
- B. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement with the owner of 228 Abbott 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 228 Abbott 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 Director of Planning.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

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

The Vancouver Charter requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast for Recommendation A above to pass.

PURPOSE

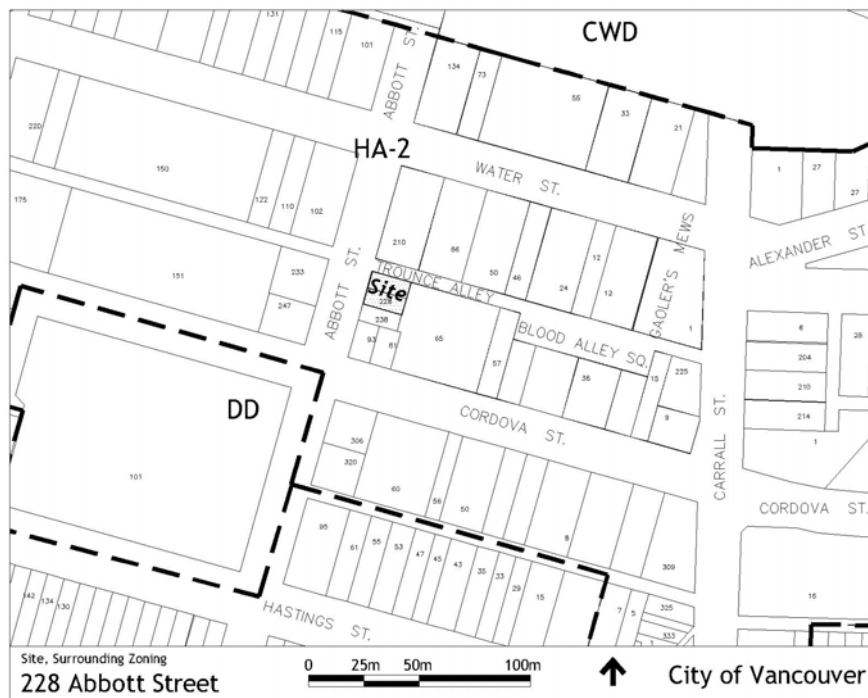
The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for a façade grant for the Vancouver Heritage Register "C" listed and municipally designated building at 228 Abbott Street.

BACKGROUND

In July 2003, City Council approved both the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program and the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of heritage buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square. Both programs were initially established for a five year period (2003-2008) to stimulate economic activity in these important historic areas through work on individual heritage buildings. In July 2009, City Council approved continuation of the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program for a period of 3 years (2009-2011). This program 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.

DISCUSSION

The Hickey Block is a two-storey commercial masonry structure located at 228 Abbott Street. Originally built in 1889 as two structures, but now consolidated, this building is one of the earliest brick hotels built after the Great Fire in 1886. Like many other period heritage buildings, the Hickey Block exemplifies multiple uses of early Gastown buildings and the evolution of the area.



Site Plan

Heritage Value

The heritage value of this building is in its historic relationship to the changing nature of the economy of early Vancouver. Hotel use on upper floors combined with the commercial use on the ground floor were generally maintained historically and contributed to the lively street life in Gastown. Hotels such as this provided both short and long-term lodging for those who worked in seasonal resource trades.

The Hickey Block is also valued for its architecture as a fine example of the Victorian Italianate style of the late nineteenth century. The building demonstrates the importance of fireproof construction and the application of an attractive architectural style, both used as a marketing tool to project a progressive image.

Conservation Plan

The conservation strategy for this building comprises elements of preservation, restoration and rehabilitation. The Conservation Plan is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and the Gastown HA-2 Guidelines and includes the following conservation procedures:

- cleaning, repairing and re-painting of the principal and lane facades;
- restoring the upper cornice and re-instituting the pediment (in simplified form);
- restoring the string-course, window heads and storefront cornice;
- replacing current second-floor windows with single glazed, double-hung wood sash windows, based on archival information;
- restoring and rehabilitating storefronts and fenestration while preserving the original cast iron columns.

In addition to the outlined exterior work, the applicant has proposed some structural changes to convert the second floor into a mezzanine level, integrating this change with the introduction of an enlarged skylight. The mechanical, electrical and fire building systems, including its sprinkler system, will be upgraded too. New mechanical equipment, proposed to be placed on the roof, will not be visible from the street level.

The applicant has requested a facade grant of up to \$50,000 through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program to offset the cost of proposed rehabilitation work.

Estimates for proposed rehabilitation work

The applicant submitted three quotes from qualified contractors. All three exceeded \$100,000 of construction cost for the relevant conservation work as per approved scope of work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council approved a total of \$2.5 million for funding façade grants through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program for the period 2003-2008. Currently, there is \$315,000 of funding available from the 2008 Capital Budget, not including this application.

Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$50,000 from the 2008 Capital Budget for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 228 Abbott Street. The grant funds will be available to the applicant in accordance with the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee (GHAPC) reviewed this application on July 15, 2009 and supported it, including the following recommendations:

- provisions for garbage and recycling;
- more traditional storefront window treatment;
- noise attenuation measures for new mechanical equipment on the roof;
- removal of stucco from the principal façade (for consideration).

The applicant has revised the application to accommodate these recommendations.

CONCLUSION

228 Abbott Street is a "C" listed building on the Vancouver Heritage Register and it is a municipally-designated building, located in the National Historic Site of Gastown. The proposed façade rehabilitation will restore the historic character of the building, further improve the streetscape of this block of Abbott Street, and will also re-introduce this recently vacant building to the economy of the area. The Director of Planning recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of 228 Abbott Street.

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