



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 23, 2012  
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Meeting Date: April 17, 2012

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Director of Planning  
SUBJECT: 258 East Pender Street - Façade Grant - DB 437489

### *RECOMMENDATION*

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 258 East Pender Street as contemplated by Development Application Number DB 437489, 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 258 East Pender 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 258 East Pender Street façade in good appearance and good repair for a minimum of fifteen years;

FURTHER 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.

### *REPORT SUMMARY*

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for a façade grant for the Vancouver Heritage Register "B" listed and municipally designated site at 258 East Pender Street, also known as May Wah Hotel. The application proposes to conserve the principal façade, rehabilitate the storefront and introduce a new compatible canopy design. The applicant has requested a façade grant through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

The proposal is consistent with applicable City policy, HA-1 Design Guidelines, Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, and it is eligible for the façade grant.

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

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

*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 Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of A and B.

### ***REPORT***

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

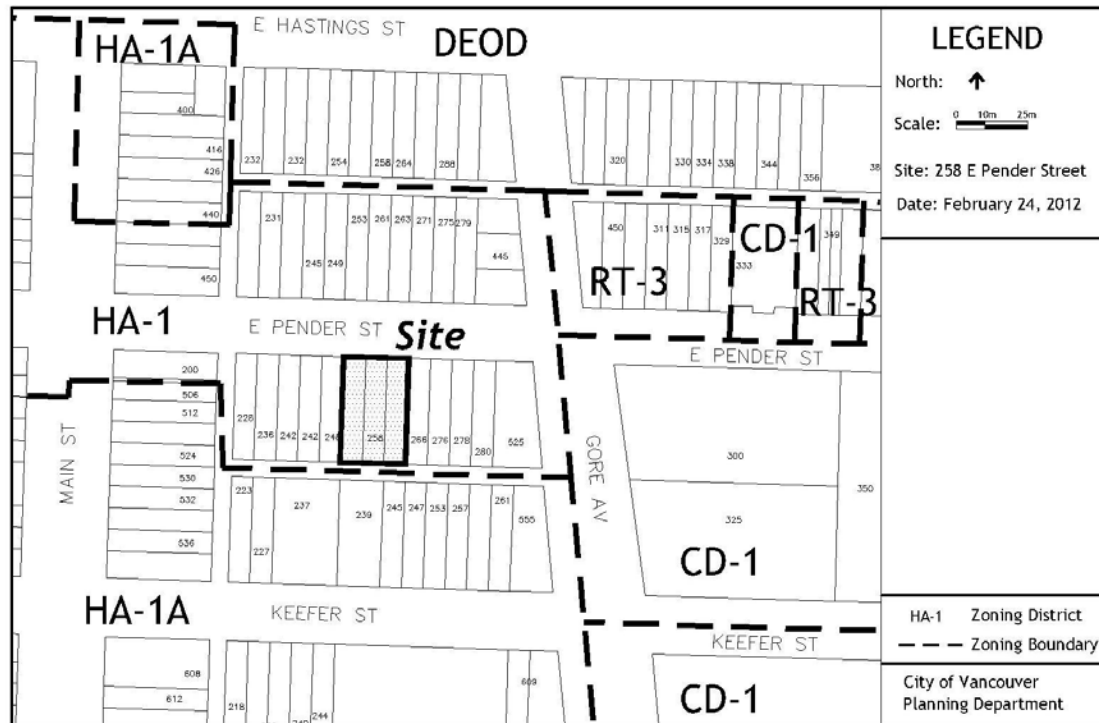
In July 2003, City Council approved both the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) and the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP) to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of heritage buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square. Both programs 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, and Council has extended these programs since. 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 (DTES) Local Area Planning Program, including the Interim Development Management Guidelines (approved on March 28, 2012) which allows for heritage façade grants to be considered by Council.

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

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

The May Wah Hotel is located at 258 East Pender Street, in Vancouver's Chinatown. This is a four-storey, mixed-use brick building with retail at the street level, hotel residential on upper floors and a fully functional basement. It has been designated under the provisions of the *Vancouver Charter* as a protected heritage property. It is designed in the Neo-Classical architectural style and is located in Vancouver's Chinatown HA-1 area, which is a nationally designated historic site. Owned by a non-profit, Shon Yee Benevolent Association of Canada, this is one of eleven buildings owned by Chinatown family associations and benevolent societies (Societies), situated within the boundaries of the National Historic Site.

The building occupies three adjacent lots and has a strong visual presence on East Pender Street, at the eastern extent of Vancouver's historic Chinatown. It was constructed in 1913 as a rooming house, and retains its residential hotel use until today. The remarkably high density of the hotel, which has 130 single occupancy rooms, is achieved by the U-shaped plan built to the property lines, and the narrow central light well which provides daylight and air to the small rooms. Since 1926, the building has been owned by the Shon Yee Benevolent Association of Canada.



### *Heritage Value*

The May Wah Hotel has heritage value as it represents work of Vancouver architect William Frederick Gardiner (1885-1951), as an example of a Vancouver hotel designed after the introduction of the City's 1910 Lodging House By-law, for its association with various Tongs (surname association), and for its association with the important entrepreneurial Chinese-Canadian Louie family.

Typical architectural features of the building in Chinatown reflect traditional Southern China building patterns influenced by European styles, mixed with local features. The building is also notable for its absence of recessed balconies and wrought-iron railings which are typically found in Chinatown buildings. The May Wah Hotel features a symmetrical façade divided into five bays by Neo-Classical elements including pilasters with Ionic capitals and a press metal cornice. These elements contribute to the imposing architecture of the May Wah Hotel and its heritage character.

The composition of the building plan, including the provision of natural light and operable windows for each room, the inclusion of fire escapes and use of concrete frame, are illustrative of the effect of the Vancouver's Lodging House By-law. Passed in 1910, the By-law aimed at improving sanitary and fire safety conditions of rooming houses in Vancouver, considered to be centres of disease and to be unsafe in the event of a fire.

The use of the hotel by various Societies, and more recently by the Shon Yee Benevolent Association, is common for such buildings in Chinatown. The long-standing presence of a printing office, the Ho Sun Hing Company, there from 1925 to 1950, is another common associated use, often related to the functions of the Societies.

The acquisition of the hotel by Le-Kiu Trading in 1950, the presence of the Le-Kiu store and the Le-Kiu Importing Company, emphasize the significance of this building by its association with Le-Kiu owners Alex and Victor Louie, grandsons of the important early Chinese-Canadian business person HY (Hok Yat) Louie.

### *Conservation Approach*

The conservation approach proposed is preservation of the brickwork, stonework and metalwork, rehabilitation of the storefront, and addition of the new canopies. The original storefront was removed and replaced with unsympathetic interventions before 1972. The proposed storefront, made of metal clad wood, whose design is based on a historical reference, is considered compatible with the historic character of the building and Chinatown. Historic mosaic tiles at the main entrance and historic painted signs on columns will be preserved, a pressed metal cornice will be cleaned and repaired, and the historic brickwork and stonework will be assessed, cleaned and repaired, as required. Existing aluminium windows will be retained and repaired, as necessary, while the historic brick moulding will be preserved and repaired. All previously painted surfaces that needed repairs will be properly prepared and painted to restore the original finish, hue and colour. The new steel-glass canopy will complement the historic configuration of five bays separated by concrete columns (for architectural drawings see APPENDIX A).

Conservation procedures proposed were developed in accordance with the HA-1 Design Guidelines and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (for the Statement of Significance and the additional details on proposed conservation plan see APPENDIX B).

The applicant submitted three cost estimates for the eligible façade rehabilitation work ranging from \$405,000 to \$538,342. A heritage façade grant of up to \$50,000 is proposed to financially assist the owner in conducting the façade rehabilitation work.

### *Comments of Advisory Bodies*

The application was reviewed by the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee on May 10, 2011 and was unanimously supported.

### *Financial*

Council approved a total of \$500,000 for funding façade grants through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program in 2009. In February 2012, Council approved a further \$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 258 E. Pender 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. Among other things, 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 May Wah Hotel is listed in the "B" category on the Vancouver Heritage Register and under the provisions of the *Vancouver Charter* is designated as a protected heritage property. The proposed preservation and rehabilitation of the principal façade of the May Wah Hotel will reverse some of the unsympathetic alterations of the 1970s, and will improve the appearance and functionality of this important Chinatown heritage building. In addition to achieving heritage conservation goals, this project will contribute to the economic revitalization of the Downtown Eastside and will improve the quality of living for its commercial and residential tenants. The Director of Planning recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of 258 East Pender Street.

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Description of Historic Place

The May Wah Hotel, located at 258 East Pender Street, is a four-storey brick hotel, with stores at street level, designed in the Neo-Classical architectural style, occupying three adjacent lots, at the eastern extent of Vancouver's historic Chinatown.

### Heritage Value

The May Wah Hotel is of value as an enduring work of Vancouver architect William Frederick Gardiner, as an example of a Vancouver hotel designed after the introduction of the City's 1910 Lodging House By-Law, for the way its subsequent use typifies Vancouver's Chinatown buildings associated with Tongs, and for its association with the important entrepreneurial Chinese-Canadian Louie family.

Despite the replacement of its original fenestration with modern units, this imposing hotel, built in 1913 to the designs of Vancouver architect William Frederick Gardiner for the business partnership of Barrett and Deane, retains much of its original character and makes a significant contribution to the Chinatown streetscape and skyline. Gardiner's adept use of Neo-Classical elements, including monumental pilasters and cornice, speaks to his versatility and confidence with many architectural styles, including Tudor Revival, and, after the First World War, with Streamline Art-Deco.

The surviving layout of the hotel plan speaks to its target clientele - immigrant single males working in the commercial district. The composition of the plan, including the provision of natural light and operable windows for each room by three lightwells running perpendicular to the street, and the inclusion of fire escapes and use of a concrete frame, are illustrative of the effect of Vancouver's Lodging House By-Law. Passed in 1910, the By-Law responded to the squalid living and sanitary conditions of rooming houses and shanties, in Chinatown and elsewhere in the commercial district, considered to be centres of disease and potential death traps in the event of a fire. The creation of hotels such as this in the district in the eight years leading up to the First World War also illustrates the shortage of accommodation, created in part by the construction boom in Vancouver and by the demolition by the Canadian Pacific Railway, at the behest of the City Health Department, of much of the existing unsuitable accommodation.

The use of the hotel by various Tongs (surname associations), first by the Chau Luen Society (representing the surnames Dan, Tan, Xu, Xie and Ruan) between its formation in 1943 and 1945, and more recently by the Shon Yee Benevolent Association, is common for such buildings in Chinatown. The long-standing presence of a printing office, the Ho Sun Hing Company, there from 1925 to 1950, is another common associated use, often initially related to the furtherance of the aims of the Tong.

The purchase of the hotel by Le-Kiu Trading in 1950, the presence of the Le Kiu store, and more recently the Le-Kiu Importing Company Ltd., amplify the significance of the May Wah Hotel by its association with Le-Kiu owners Alex and Victor Louie - the HY Louie Group, grandsons of the important early Chinese-Canadian businessman HY (Hok Yat) Louie.

### Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the May Wah Hotel include:

- Location at the eastern edge of Vancouver's historic Chinatown district
- Occupation of three lots in their entirety and construction up to the street boundary
- Monumental architectural treatment achieved by elements including the classical galvanized iron cornice, frieze and pilasters
- The brick walls and the contrasting material of the applied decoration
- Arrangement of fenestration and light-wells
- Subdivision of retail stores at street level

- Remains of original hotel internal room subdivision and communal facilities, including the entrance hall, stairs and corridors
- Displays of Chinese goods on the street in front of the stores

## **CONSERVATION RATIONALE FOR THE MAY WAH HOTEL**

The 1913 May Wah Hotel is a designated heritage building situated in Vancouver's Chinatown. The primary conservation treatment of the heritage facade is determined to be rehabilitation of the storefront, with and preservation of the upper storeys. both with additional aspects of restoration as defined above.

Significant interventions to the original storefront resulted in alterations that are not sympathetic to the historic appearance of the heritage façade. As archival photographs and historic drawings of the early storefront do not exist, it is proposed to rehabilitate the ground floor with a new storefront design that follows the *Chinatown HA-1 Guidelines for Designated Sites* (City of Vancouver, 2003). The new storefront configuration respects the five-partite division of the façade and the proposed design is sympathetic to traditional storefronts in this neighbourhood in terms of scale and rhythm.

The historic access to the upper floor survived and will be retained. Additional historic elements including mosaic tiles will be preserved. This conservation strategy will enhance the heritage character of Chinatown as encouraged in the aforementioned guidelines.

The historic fabric of the upper storeys of the May Wah Hotel is extant and character-defining elements will be preserved and repaired within the conservation program. Some restoration may be required where architectural elements are deteriorated to the extent that repair is not possible. These elements can be accurately replicated based on surviving examples on the façade.

## **OUTLINE OF CONSERVATION SPECIFICATIONS**

### **General**

The following chapter describes the materials, physical condition and recommended conservation strategies for the historic façade of the May Wah Hotel based on Parks Canada *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010).

All trades shall have a minimum of three years of experience in work of the outlined sections and successfully completed at least three projects of similar scope and complexity within the past five years.

### **Storefront**

The ground level has continuously been used for retail purposes. The original shopfronts were removed and replaced before 1972 with inappropriate interventions. The demising walls of the existing retail stores correspond with the five bays on the upper level and the configuration of the existing columns on the ground floor will be retained.

The main entrance to the hotel is centrally located. An original historic mosaic tile floor with a marble tread leads to the recessed lobby hall. The traditional mosaic tiles, made of four different colours, are in good condition and partly covered with a green outdoor carpet. Dirt and stains could be observed on the edges of the mosaic floor. A cream colour marble tread is well worn and shows damage in the form of cracks and missing pieces. The cast iron handrails on either side of the tile floor are partly damaged and one diagonal bracing is missing.

Adjacent to the main entrance, a staircase provides access to a basement area, which until recently contained a small retail store. The cream marble steps are also well worn. Marble slabs of the same colour were used for the dado. The design of the mosaic tile floor from the main entrance is repeated in a simplified pattern with two colours in the basement. The basement mosaic tiles are in good condition and show only stains on the surface area.

The slope of the street upward toward the east has an effect on the shops, as it allowed the insertion of an intermediate floor (a mezzanine level) at the westernmost bay. A double entry door on the street level leads to the entrance stairs with direct access to the mezzanine.

The intent is to preserve historic architectural elements in situ except for the handrail, which will be relocated. The historic features will be conserved and repaired where necessary. A built-in wood-frame show case at the hotel entrance is extant and will be removed. The existing storefront is not compatible with the heritage character of the façade and requires rehabilitation.

***Conservation Recommendation: Rehabilitation and Preservation***

The shopfront design should be compatible with the traditional components of typical buildings in Chinatown. The historic configuration with five bays separated by concrete columns will be respected and incorporated into the layout. Contemporary materials and technology can be used for the rehabilitation in a manner so that they are compatible with the historic appearance. This includes the installation of a steel-glass canopy at each bay. This intervention is reversible. The Chinatown design guidelines will be followed for the new storefront design:

- High percentage of glazing in display and transom windows and doors
- Recessed entries with a rectangular plan
- Transom windows above entries and display windows
- Base plates with ornamental details
- Historic mosaic tiles at the main entrance will be preserved
- Historic painted signs on concrete columns will be conserved and revealed if possible.
- Historic pressed metal cornice above storefront will be retained and repaired
- Location of the historic access to the “cheater storey” will be preserved
- Historic marble staircase to the basement will be preserved and covered with a structural timber deck with a ramp. This intervention is reversible.
- New steel-glass canopy with standing sign bands will be installed above the retail stores and hotel entrance. This intervention is reversible.

**Masonry/Brickwork**

The spandrels of the upper floors of the main façade are infilled with veneer brick of red colour, which are in good condition. Deterioration on the main façade includes organic and environmental dirt and biological growth due to backsplash, water that does not completely drain off and the lack of natural drying by the sun. Minor damage in few locations, such as loose or missing mortar joints, only occur in few locations. Several metal brackets, other insertions and holes are notable in the brickwork.

The brick parapet wall is in poor condition due to splashing rainwater and significant growth of moss and other moisture damage is evident on the north side of the parapet. The top and backside of the parapet wall are covered with a recent metal flashing. The mono-pitched flat roof slopes from north to south and the roof decking appears to be in good condition. Rainwater is collecting on the south side of the roof away from the northern parapet wall.



***Conservation Recommendation: Preservation and Repair***

- Review the condition of the historic brickwork once access is available (e.g. scaffold) and determine the exact scope of conservation work.
- Brickwork with biological growth, environmental dirt and stains will be cleaned with the gentlest method possible, preferably light water rinse. Chemical cleaning agents will only be used after review by the heritage consultant. Adjacent wood substrates and metalwork are to be protected from any damage during the cleaning process. All work is to be performed in accordance with applicable standards, regulations and manufacturers written instructions.
- Remove redundant metal brackets and inserts and fill holes with patching material to match the colour of adjacent bricks or mortar joints.
- Reset dislodged bricks and replace damaged or missing bricks with new bricks that match existing in size, colour, porosity, and absorption.
- Rake unsound mortar joints to min. 50mm and repoint with new mortar that is compatible with existing in strength, porosity and absorption. New mortar should not exceed the strength of existing. Match existing joints in profile, colour, width and texture.
- The masonry contractor shall provide mock-ups of cleaning and repair work for review by heritage consultant before work commences.
- Final cleaning of the façade should be done with mild water washing.

***Masonry/Stonework***

The heritage façade shows on the upper floors distinctive classical elements made of pre-cast stone or concrete, which comprise painted Neo-Classical pilasters with base, shaft and capital. Many of the simple rectangular bases located above the storefront cornice are in poor condition due the severe weathering and biological growth. Some of the stone substrate is missing and requires restoration.

The fluted, narrow shaft of the six pilasters articulates the vertical pronunciation of the historic façade and its Neo-Classical design. The shafts are in good condition and only accumulated dirt and stains are visible. The Ionic inspired capitals rest on the shafts and are enriched with volutes and egg-and-dart motifs. The capitals are the most ornamental feature of the heritage façade and appear to be in very good condition except for accumulated organic dirt and stains.

The original window lintels are made of pre-cast stone and are painted white. Other than weathering and dirt in few locations, they are in good to very good condition. Two pre-cast stone window sills on the other hand are missing. The sills are generally in poorer condition and show signs of cracking, missing pieces of stone and organic growth. The attachment of the lintels and sills to the façade needs to be investigated and structurally reinforced where necessary.

***Conservation Recommendation: Preservation and Restoration***

- Review the condition of the historic masonry/stonework once access is available (e.g. scaffold) and determine the exact scope of conservation work of pilasters, sills and lintels.
- Investigate current method and condition of attachment of sills and lintels and other stone elements to the façade. Consult with structural engineer.
- Biological growth, environmental dirt and stains will be cleaned with the gentlest method possible, preferably light water rinse. Chemical cleaning agents will only be used after review by the heritage consultant. Adjacent wood substrates and metalwork are to be protected from any damage during the cleaning process.
- Unsound and loose material is to be carefully removed from pilasters, sills and lintels.

- Missing or deteriorated non-structural elements will be patched with restoration mortar (e.g. Jahn Mortar) or replicated with compatible material to match existing in profile. Samples are to be provided for review by heritage consultant.
- Replace missing sills with new concrete sills or approved other material to match existing in size, surface texture and colour. Provide samples for review by heritage consultant.
- Protective coating to prevent future water damage may be applied in localized areas after consultation with the heritage consultant.
- Perform all work in accordance with applicable standards, regulations and manufacturers written instructions.
- Paint according to colour schedule by heritage consultant.

### **Metalwork**

A pressed metal cornice continuous above the storefront builds the visual foundation for the rising pilasters. It is generally in good condition with localized corroded areas and exterior light fixtures mounted on the cornice at the easternmost bay.

The large continuous cornice at the parapet featuring the typical frieze, dentil course and crown moulding completes the architectural reference to classical designs. Organic dirt and stains are notable, but the top cornice is generally in very good condition. The slope of the top flashing requires remediation as water splashes against the brick parapet. The paint of both cornices is flaking and they require repainting.

The existing parapet capping was recently installed and is in good condition.

### ***Conservation Recommendation: Preservation and Repair***

- Assess the method and condition of the structural attachment of both cornices to the façade. Consult with a structural engineer.
- Review the condition of the historic metalwork once access is available (e.g. scaffold) and determine the exact scope of repair work.
- Clean existing metalwork and remove loose paint by hand scraping until sound metal has been reached. It is not required to remove sound paint.
- Remove surface corrosion and patch any holes with two part epoxy filler. Replace larger areas with new to match existing in profile and thickness.
- Minor dents will not be repaired as long as the metal substrate is sound and not water ingress occurs.
- Causes of water damage to the connections between the metal work and the brickwork should be remediated and the joints should be caulked.
- The parapet cap appears to be in good condition but will be repaired if closer inspection shows evidence of damage.
- Prepare cornice surfaces for painting as per recommended colour schedule.

### **Windows**

The three centre bays each have a pair of windows and the two outer bays each contain a set of three windows, all in their original openings. All windows are aluminum units with single glazing and have a lower fixed sash and upper awning windows. They are in serviceable condition. The original brick moulding is extant and painted red.

The wooden brick moulding is original and will be preserved and repaired where necessary to match existing. The existing paint is deteriorated.

**Conservation Recommendation: Preservation, Retention and Repair**

- The existing aluminum windows will be retained and repaired where necessary.
- The historic brick moulding will be preserved and repaired. Paint will be removed and repainted as per recommended colour schedule.

**Bird Protection**

The new work and historic elements of the heritage façade should be protected with a bird deterrent system to prevent damage and staining.

**Conservation Recommendation: Installation**

- Install a bird control system that deters birds and prevents nesting on horizontal elements of the heritage façade.
- Bird control can be achieved by spikes, wires, electric tracks or other means. The chosen method should be reviewed by the heritage consultant.

**Historic Colours**

The heritage consultant will recommend a colour schedule based on historic paint analysis in order to restore the colours back to their historic appearance. A preliminary colour schedule was provided and is based on Benjamin Moore's *Historical True Colours for Western Canada*.

**Conservation Recommendation: Restoration**

- Restore the original finish, hue and placement of applied colour.
- Complete all basic repairs and replacements and remove surface dust and grime before preparing, priming and painting. Be sure that all surfaces to be painted are dry.
- Scrape and sand painted surfaces only as deep as necessary to reach a sound base. Do not strip all previous paint except to repair base-material decay.