



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 11, 2015
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: September 15, 2015

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: 5 West Hastings Street - Heritage Façade Grant - DE 418981

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$50,000 to Five West Hastings Holdings Ltd. (the "Applicant") for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of a building (the "Building") on lands having a civic address of 5 West Hastings Street (PID: 014-235-234, the East 26 feet of Lot 16 Block 3 Old Granville Townsite Plan 168) (the "Property") as contemplated by Development Application Number DE 418981 (the "Application"); source of funds is the 2015 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.
- B. THAT as a condition of approval of the façade grant, the Applicant be required to enter into an agreement with the City of Vancouver, to be registered against title to the Property as a covenant under Section 219 of the Land Title Act, which agreement will require the rehabilitation to be overseen by a qualified Heritage Consultant and will require the owner of the Property to maintain the principal façade of the Building 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 General Manager of Planning and Development Services.

Approval of Recommendation A requires an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the votes cast.

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 Property at 5 West Hastings Street (the Canadian North Star). The Application proposes to preserve and rehabilitate the principal façade of the Building, in addition to other improvements to its interior and exterior. When completed, the rehabilitation of the principal façade will significantly contribute to the restoration of the Building's 31 SRA units that were vacant since 1999 when the Building was closed as unsafe for occupancy. The Applicant has requested a façade grant through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program. The proposal is consistent with applicable City policy, HA-2 Design Guidelines for Gastown, Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, and it is eligible for the façade grant.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Relevant Council policies for this matter include:

- Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP), Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square (2003)
- The Heritage Action Plan approved by Council on December 4, 2013 included an extension of the existing heritage incentive programs in the DTES (HBRP and HFRP) to the end of 2015
- The Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan (2014)
- SRA Conversion Permit and a Housing Agreement approved by Council on December 16, 2014 (RTS No. 10722)

Section 206(2) of the Vancouver Charter provides that Council may, by a vote of at least two thirds of the votes cast, and subject to any terms and conditions it considers appropriate, provide financial assistance for the conservation of protected heritage property or property subject to a covenant under Section 219 of the Land Title Act that relates to the conservation of heritage property.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Planning and Development Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background

In July 2003, City Council approved both the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) and the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP) to facilitate conservation and economic revitalization of heritage buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street corridor and Victory Square. The HFRP is available to assist owners and tenants with 50% of the cost to rehabilitate heritage building façades up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal façade. In 2013, the Heritage Action Plan included

its extension to the end of 2015. The Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan which was adopted in 2014 reconfirmed the program's importance for both, heritage conservation as well as economic revitalization of DTES.

Strategic Analysis

Site and Context

The historic place at 5 West Hastings Street (also known as the Drexel Rooms Hotel until the 1990's and then the Canadian North Star) is a four-storey red brick Victorian Italianate structure with commercial use on the ground floor and 31 SRA-designated rooms on upper floors. The rooms were closed since 1999, and the Building is currently dilapidated. The rear wall of the Building, from second to fourth floors, has been completely removed, and the structure has been deemed unsafe for occupancy. The Property is located on the north side of West Hastings immediately west of Carrall Street. It is bounded to the north by a lane (see Figure 1). The Applicant proposes to repair the Building, upgrade rooms and bring back into use a building that has been vacant for over 15 years. The scope of work includes the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the principal façade.

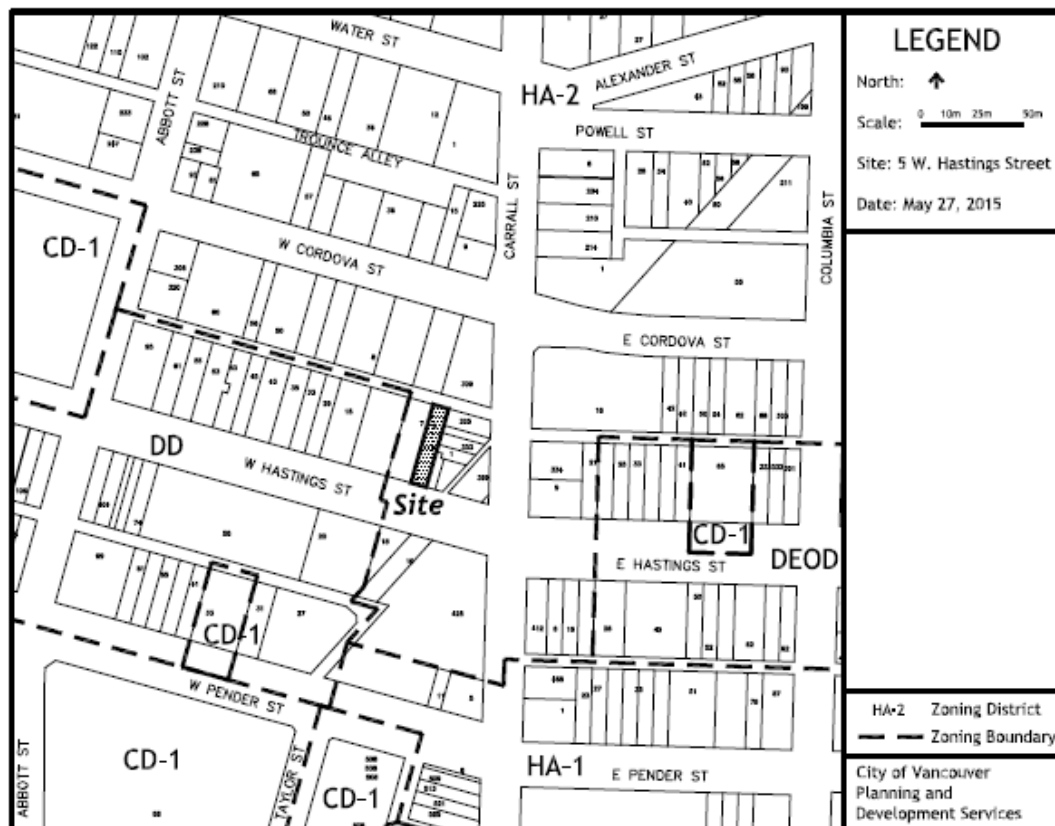


Figure 1. 5 West Hastings Street - Site Plan showing location and surrounding zoning

Heritage Value

The Building at 5 West Hastings is located in the historic neighbourhood of Gastown and was built during the late 1890's. Its primary heritage value lies in its historic relationship between this area and the economy of early Vancouver. Built to accommodate mixed uses, it typifies scores of residential/commercial buildings built in the late nineteenth century. Over the years the ground floor has housed a number of diverse businesses and the upper storey hotel was primarily populated by single males of working age employed in seasonal resource industries.

The heritage value also lies in the building's architecture as it represents the last of the Victorian-era styles before the transition to more restrained and functional Edwardian style, and to masonry and steel construction. The ornamental brickwork, arched double-hung windows, rusticated stone stringcourse and sills and a stepped brick dentil below cornice level are some of the character-defining elements of the principal façade that still exist. However, some of the character-defining elements like the storefront and the main cornice elements have been lost over time. These will be restored (for the Statement of Significance see Appendix A).



Figure 2. 5 West Hastings Street, in between the Beacon Hotel and Merchant's Bank (2012)

Conservation Approach

The conservation approach for the principal façade of 5 West Hastings Street is a combination of preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The historic storefront which has been severely altered in the past will be reconstructed.

The metal front fire escape will be replaced with a new stairwell at the back of the building. The rear wall of the residential floors of the building has collapsed and it is proposed to be reconstructed. The lower portion of the lane wall will be preserved and restored. The basement will be upgraded and converted to active, retail use, and the roof deck at the rear of the second floor will be revitalized and functionally integrated.

The conservation plan for the principal façade comprises of the following conservation procedures:

- rehabilitation of the storefront including restoration and reconstruction of the lost features (storefront configuration will be modified to accommodate functional requirements, it will be generally consistent with the historic character and based on historical photo evidence, it will be made of wood, single glazed with a solid transom),
- reconstruction of the intermediate cornice based on historic photos,
- preservation and restoration of the original double-hung windows on the second and third storeys with component replacement as required,
- replacement of the four windows on the fourth floor and one on the third floor with double glazed wood replicas,
- historic glazing will be retained where possible,
- reconstruction of the missing component of the main cornice, based on historical photo evidence,
- cleaning and preservation of the ornamental brickwork.

The proposed conservation procedures are generally consistent with the Gastown Design Guidelines and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Estimates for Proposed Conservation Work

The applicant has submitted three competitive cost estimates for the eligible façade rehabilitation work ranging from \$94,330 to \$253,200 excluding GST. Only the cost related to the heritage conservation of the principal façade (West Hastings Street) is considered eligible for the façade grant.

Proposed Incentive

The heritage façade grant of up to \$50,000 per principal façade is proposed to financially assist the owner in conducting the conservation work. Since this building has one principal façade, a single façade grant has been requested.

Comments of Advisory Bodies

The application was reviewed and supported by the Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee on May 20, 2015 (for meeting minutes see Appendix B).

Financial

Council approved a Capital Budget of \$150,000 for funding façade grants through the HFRP in 2012. In 2014, Council approved a further Capital Budget of \$350,000 for

façade grants. Currently, the amount remaining in the program is \$500,000, prior to this request.

Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$50,000 from the 2015 Capital Budget for the HFRP for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 5 West Hastings Street. The grant funds will be available to the applicant in accordance with the HFRP Policies and Procedures.

Legal

Should Council approve Recommendation A, the Applicant will be required to enter into an agreement with the City to ensure the continued maintenance of the restored/rehabilitated façade. This agreement will be prepared by Legal Services and once finalized with the Applicant, will be registered against title to the Property as a covenant under Section 219 of the Land Title Act. The agreement will require that the rehabilitation work be supervised by a qualified Heritage Consultant, will contain the terms and conditions upon which the façade grant is to be paid to the Applicant once the rehabilitation work is complete and will require the owner of the Property 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 Property, 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 Building at 5 West Hastings Street is listed in the "B" evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register and has been designated as a protected heritage property. The proposed heritage façade rehabilitation will improve the overall condition of the Building, preserve its character-defining elements, contribute to the economic revitalization of Gastown and support the reopening of 31 SRA rooms. The General Manager of Planning and Development Services recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of 5 West Hastings Street.

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5 West Hastings Street - Statement of Significance - Excerpt

Subject Property: 5 West Hastings

Heritage Status: Heritage Designated

Recognition Authority: City of Vancouver

Recognition Statute: Vancouver Charter, s.593

The following is an excerpt from the BC Register of Historic Places:

Description of Place

The historic place at 5 West Hastings Street is a four-storey red brick Victorian Italianate commercial structure located in the 00 block of West Hastings, on the southern fringe of Vancouver's historic Gastown district.

Heritage Value

The value of 5 West Hastings Street lies in its historic relationship between this area and the economy of early Vancouver. Built for mixed usage, it typifies scores of residential/commercial buildings built in the late nineteenth century, when this area of Vancouver was the center of commerce and industry. It was primarily populated by unattached males of working age, most of whom were employed in seasonal resource industries. This type of hotel was in high demand not only to house workers between jobs but also to accommodate travelers and business men.

The value also lies in the function and the architecture; the building was built both to provide housing for and to retail goods to a largely male population of resource industry workers and commercial travelers. Its design and construction are significant as they reflect the last of the Victorian-era styles before the transition to the more restrained and functional Edwardian style, and to masonry and steel construction.

Character- Defining Elements

The heritage character of this building is defined by the following elements:

- form, scale and massing
- its relationship with other historic structures on the block and within the Gastown Historic District
- external details typical of late Victorian buildings including, ornamental brickwork, four arched, vertically coupled recessed double-hung windows, rusticated stone stringcourse and sills, front elevation with unique decorative brickwork, including: stepped brick dentil below cornice level, semi-circular arches over fourth storey double-hung sash windows across façade with rusticated stone sills and trim details
- built to property line with no setbacks
- main floor storefront

Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee - Minutes - May 20, 2015 - Excerpt

“THAT Gastown Heritage Area Planning Committee generally supports the application, including the related variance requests, conservation plan, and building façade grant for the retention of the Victorian building at 5 West Hastings Street, and ask that consideration be given for the following:

- a) The engagement of an Heritage Architectural Consultant to further develop the conservation plan, with particular attention paid to the masonry on the primary façade, and
- b) The use of historic and sturdy materials on the rear of the building, including brick masonry and wood, steel or aluminum windows.