



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 11, 2019
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Meeting Date: July 9, 2019

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
SUBJECT: 402 West Pender Street – Heritage Façade Grant – DP-2018-01012

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$100,000 to Reliance Properties Ltd. (the “Applicant”) for the rehabilitation of the two principal facades of a building (the “Building”) on lands having a civic address of 402 West Pender Street (PIDs: 012-169-561 and 012-169-595, Lots 9 and 10 Block 35 District Lot 541 Plan 210) (the “Property”) as contemplated by Development Permit Application Number DP-2018-01012 (the “Application”); source of funds is the 2019 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, 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 façades 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, Urban Design and Sustainability.

Approval of the grant is Recommendation A, which 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 Building at 402 West Pender Street, known as the "British Canadian Securities Building". The Application proposes to restore the terra cotta comprising a balustrade and cornice, restore windows and paint windows (storefronts are not included) and re-point and clean the masonry on the West Pender and Homer Street building elevations. The Applicant has applied for a façade grant through the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, for the heritage conservation work on the two principal facades. The proposal is consistent with applicable City policy and *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 Policies and Procedures* (July 2003; Amended March 2019)

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

On March 13, 2019, Council approved three new grant programs to support citywide heritage conservation, one of which was to extend and expand the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP). The HFRP provides grants of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation and seismic stabilization of each primary façade of registered heritage buildings. The funding comes from existing reserves and is earmarked for heritage. This is the first façade grant application to come to Council since the new grant programs were approved by Council.

Eligible work includes ground floor storefront conservation and seismic stabilization of major architectural components, as well as conservation of building envelope materials, windows, doors, historic signs and awnings, and architectural lighting.

Strategic Analysis

Site and Context

The Building on the Property is a nine storey Chicago School style building, located on the south side of West Pender Street, at Homer Street (see Figure 1), in the eastern end of the downtown area known as the city's early financial district. The Building has a commanding presence in the historic streetscape, built to the property lines on all sides except for the west side which has a recessed lightwell for the upper floors. It has served as an office building since its opening in 1912. There is a 20-foot wide lane at the rear.

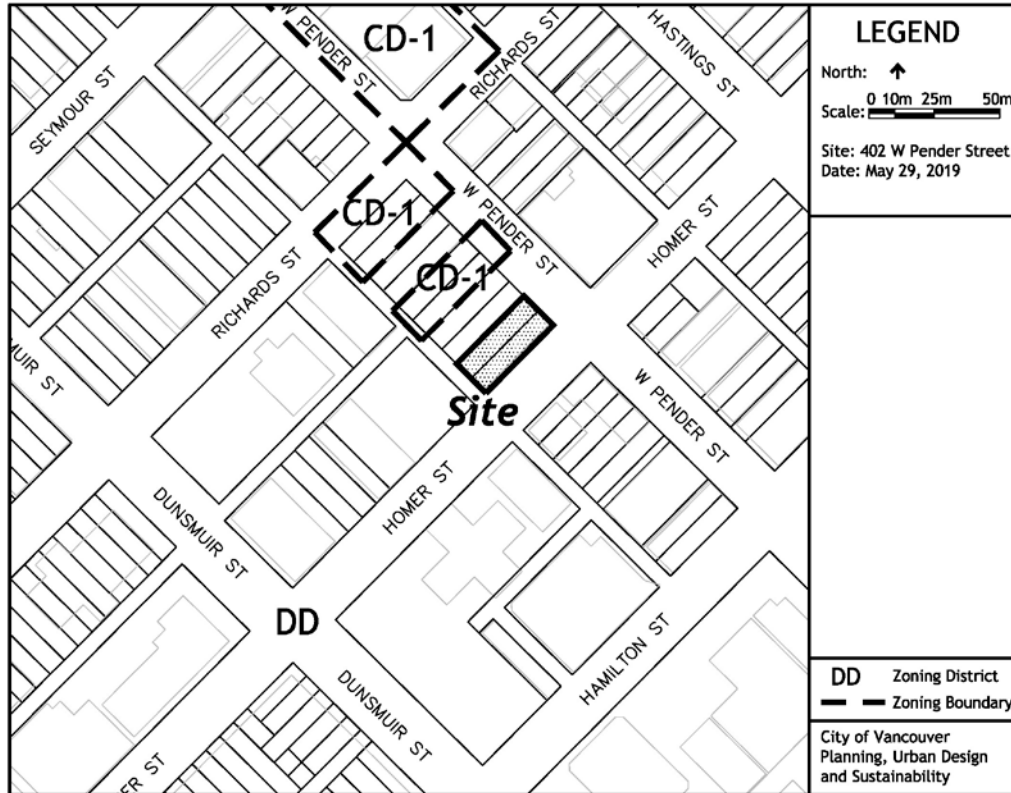


Figure 1: 402 West Pender Street

Heritage Value

The Building, constructed in 1911-1912, is valued as a commercial structure that characterized the dramatic economic upswing in Vancouver immediately preceding the First World War. It reflects the westward move of financial institutions such as banks and lending companies in the first two decades of the 20th century. It is additionally valued as an excellent example of the Chicago School style which incorporates elements of Beaux-arts and Classical Revival ornamentation (Appendix A). As such, it is listed in the “B” evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

It was built for the joint use of British Canadian Securities Limited and the Dominion Trust Company and, typical of this style, it is articulated into three horizontal sections. It is a striking example of the work by Henry Sandham Griffith, a prominent architect known for designing a wide variety of buildings across western Canada beginning in 1907. The Building is the most prominent example of Griffith’s work in Vancouver. (See the Statement of Significance in Appendix B.)

Conservation Approach

The conservation plan has identified the following major areas of the conservation scope of work:

- Stabilization and reconstruction of the balustrade and parapet wall along the roofline;
- Preservation of the terra cotta cornice;

- Terra cotta cladding repointing, top two floors;
- Brick and terra cotta masonry repointing;
- Window restoration, top two floors;
- Rear wall repointing and window painting (phase 2); and
- Light well wall repointing and window painting (phase 2).

The proposed conservation plan is consistent with 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 clearly identifying costs that apply to the two principal facades, ranging from \$802,160 to \$897,300. Only the cost related to heritage conservation of the principal façades (West Pender Street and Homer Street) is considered eligible for the façade grant under the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

Proposed Incentives

A heritage façade matching grant of up to \$50,000 per principal façade is proposed to financially assist the Applicant with conducting the heritage conservation work. Since the Building has two principal facades, a double façade grant has been requested, which in this case is a total of \$100,000.

Public/Civic Agency Input

The application was reviewed by the Vancouver Heritage Commission on February 25, 2019. The Heritage Commission supported the proposed conservation plan and associated façade grant application.

Implications

Financial

Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$100,000 for the rehabilitation of the two principal facades of the Building; source of funds is the 2019 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

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 in 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 facades 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 402 West Pender Street is listed in the “B” evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register. The proposed heritage façade rehabilitation will improve the overall condition of the Building, preserve its character-defining elements, and contribute to the economic revitalization and stewardship of the local area known as the early Financial District of the downtown. The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability recommends approval of up to \$100,000 for the rehabilitation of the two principal facades of the Building.

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British Canadian Securities Building, 402 West Pender Street
Homer Street façade (left), Pender Street façade (right)

British Canadian Securities Building, 402 West Pender Street
Statement of Significance

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The British Columbia Securities Building is a nine-storey brick, stone and glazed terra cotta commercial building, designed in the Chicago School style with tripartite facade articulation of a base, shaft and capital. The exterior and interior details reflect the Edwardian era use of Classical Revival ornamentation. Located at a prominent corner at the intersection of West Pender and Homer Streets within the context of other commercial buildings of similar age and scale, this building dominates its surroundings and is a landmark in the area.

HERITAGE VALUE

Built in 1911-12, the British Columbia Securities Building is valued as a commercial structure that characterized the drastic economic upswing in British Columbia immediately preceding the First World War. With the arrival of the Great Northern Railway, followed by the Canadian Northern Pacific and the extension of the British Columbia Electric Railway interurban line into the Fraser Valley, the city witnessed an unprecedented wave of land speculation and commercial development. Vancouver was touted as the 'Metropolis of Western Canada' as financial investment poured in. The boom lasted until 1913, when local, national, and international disasters precipitated an economic downturn, followed by the First World War, which saw ten percent of the province's population serve overseas.

The building is an excellent example of Chicago School exterior articulation, Beaux-Arts Planning, and Edwardian-era Classical Revival ornamentation. Jointly erected at the height of the western Canadian building boom for the use of British Canadian Securities Limited, agents for investments in natural resources, and the Dominion Trust Company, it epitomized the restrained and sophisticated Edwardian response to the Classical Revival styles. Typical of the buildings influenced by the Chicago School, it is articulated into three horizontal sections. Anchored with a stone base, the brick-clad shaft soars to a two-storey cap of terra cotta and overarching cornice. The interior is also of exceptional value, and retains almost all of its original plan, materials and decoration. The elaborate two-storey foyer and the banking hall with its highly ornamented cast plaster vaulting is an impressive reminder of the importance of these large financial institutions that drew investment into the booming local economy. The eighth and ninth floors were particularly well-appointed, and offered spectacular views to the north over Gastown to the North Shore. This opulence is an indication of wealth and success at a time when investment capital was pouring into the province.

This building is a striking example of the work of Henry Sandham Griffith (1865-1943), a prominent architect known for his varied practice designing a variety of buildings. Born in England, Griffith moved to British Columbia in 1907 and established successful offices in both Vancouver and Victoria during the western boom years. An early example of the use of reinforced concrete for high-rise construction, this landmark building was built by the Norton-Griffiths Steel Construction Company.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Key elements that define the heritage character of the British Columbia Securities Building include its:

- location at the southwest corner of West Pender and Homer Streets, in an early commercial area of Vancouver among other commercial buildings
- contribution to the streetscape as part of an unbroken streetwall with continuous retail storefronts
- commercial form, scale, and massing, as exemplified by its nine-storey height (with lower level) and rectangular plan, with light well
- flat roof with horizontal raised parapet - masonry construction, as expressed by the granite foundation, Bedford Indiana stone trim, pressed brick cladding, tan terra cotta on the upper storeys and common red brick rear and side walls
- Edwardian era commercial design incorporating tripartite exterior articulation, regular symmetrical window grid and Chicago windows at the base and capital levels
- high quality and craftsmanship of its Classically-inspired detailing, including its recurring running fret details, egg-and-dart mouldings, engaged columns framing the front entrance, pilasters and splayed keystone lintels on the base and terra cotta medallions at the capital
- additional exterior features, such as iron fire escapes and the side wall airshaft
- original windows disposed in a regular and symmetrical manner, such as such as double-hung one-over-one wooden-sash windows with terra cotta sills in the shaft, double-height metal clad wooden-sash Chicago windows with cast iron spandrels on the base and capital levels, and double-hung one-over-one wooden-sash windows in the light well, and double-hung three-over-three wooden-sash windows on the rear elevation
- interior elements, such as the banking hall with mezzanine offices, elaborate cast plaster vaulted ceiling, marble wainscot and original double-height Remington and Sherman Co. vault with original file boxes, upper level corridor walls incorporating frosted glass office partitions, and terrazzo floors, entrance foyer with coffered ceiling, terrazzo, tile and marble flooring and brass Cutler Mail chute, double return main foyer staircase with marble treads, and other interior features, including original radiators, oak window and door surrounds, bathrooms with porcelain tile floors and walls, slab marble stalls, and original sinks and toilets