



## REPORT

Report Date: November 1, 2022  
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Meeting Date: December 7, 2022  
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: 102 East Pender Street – Sun Ah Hotel - Heritage Façade Grant – SI-2021-00526 – SI-2021-00527 – SI-2021-00528

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve a facade grant of up to \$50,000 to the owners, Lung Kong Kung Shaw Limited (the “Applicant”) for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of the building known as the Sun Ah Hotel (the “Heritage Building”), which is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register in the ‘C’ evaluation category and has been designated by the City as protected heritage property, on lands having a civic address of 102 East Pender Street (PID: 015-666-603; Lot 24 Block 15 District Lot 196 Plan 184 (the “Property”)) as contemplated by Sign Permit Application Numbers SI-2021-00526, SI-2021-00527, and SI-2021-00528 (the “Applications”); source of funds is the 2022 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 façade of the Heritage 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 over all existing financial charges, 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 in Recommendation A requires an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the votes cast pursuant to section 206(2) of the Vancouver Charter.*

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The purpose of the report is to seek Council's approval for a façade grant for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of the Sun Ah Hotel at 102 East Pender Street, which building is listed in the 'C' evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR) and has been designated by the City as protected heritage property pursuant to section 593 of the Vancouver Charter. The Applications propose to repair and repoint masonry and other details, and to install a new projecting sign which replicates an historic sign (the 'Ho Ho Restaurant Sign') on the south principal facade. The Applicant has applied for a façade grant through the *Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP)*, as last amended by Council in 2019, for the heritage conservation work on the south principal façade. The proposal is consistent with applicable City policy, including the *Chinatown HA-1 Design Guidelines* and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, and the work is eligible for the façade grant of up to \$50,000 under the *Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies (HFRP) and Procedures*. Approval of grant funding program by Council is described under Background/Context below.

## **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

Relevant Council policies for this matter include:

- *Vancouver Chinatown Cultural Heritage Asset Management Plan – Strategic Framework (2022)*
- *Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies (HFRP) and Procedures (2003, last amended 2019)*
- *Vancouver Heritage Program (2020)*
- *Heritage Policies (2020)*
- *Chinatown HA-1 Design Policies (2011, last amended 2020)*
- *Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (2014)*
- *Sign By-law (By-law No. 11879) (2017)*

Section 206(2) of the *Vancouver Charter* provides that Council may, by 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* which relates to the conservation of heritage property.

## **CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

## **REPORT**

## ***Background/Context***

In July 2003, City Council approved the HFRP to facilitate heritage conservation and economic revitalization of heritage buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, the Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square. In 2019, Council extended the HFRP into a further four-year term. The Vancouver Heritage Program and accompanying Heritage Policies were approved in 2020, and reconfirmed support for the HFRP. Council approved the 2022 Capital Budget for the DTES with funding for heritage façade grants through the HFRP.

## ***Strategic Analysis***

### **Site and Context**

The Sun Ah Hotel, located at 102 East Pender Street, is a prominent five-storey Edwardian era Arts and Crafts Style building constructed in 1911 at the corner of Columbia and East Pender Streets. The site is one block east of the Sun Yat-sen Gardens and Park.

### **Heritage Value**

The Sun Ah Hotel at 102 East Pender Street is listed in the ‘C’ evaluation category on the VHR and was designated (protected) by City by-law pursuant to section 593 of the Vancouver Charter. It is a good example of a “Society Building” and part of a streetscape featuring similar Society Buildings including The Chinese Benevolent Association Building at 104 East Pender, the Chin Wing Chun Building at 158 East Pender, the Mah Society Building at 137 East Pender, and the Chinese School at 121 East Pender Street. Many of the properties in Chinatown were owned by the Societies as an investment for members, and are still under original or legacy ownership, much like the Sun Ah Hotel.

Besides its Arts and Crafts character, the heritage building is also known for its association with Loo Gee Wing, a prominent local businessman, and its long term association with the Lung Kong Tien Yee Association, who have owned the building since 1926 and provide housing for members of the community.

In 1954 the Quon family opened the Ho Ho Restaurant on the ground floor and mezzanine level. It remained in operation until the 1990s after which, despite some local efforts to save the existing Ho-Ho Restaurant Sign, it was removed (see photographs in Appendix A).

### **Applications and Conservation Approach**

The Applications propose to replicate the Ho Ho Restaurant Sign in neon tubing and to repair and restore the front façade (see Appendix A).

Currently, the upper floors above the storefront are set in unpainted orange and red brick laid in a six course common bond, while the brick on the ground floor level has been plastered and painted over. The original windows have been replaced by metal ones over the years and the current storefront dates to a renovation from the 1960s, including an aluminum band of windows above a stuccoed panel at the mezzanine level.

A Conservation Plan submitted with the applications covers the proposed work on the north facade which includes the installation of the new vertical and fascia signs for the restaurant which will require two new supports for the vertical sign to be attached to the existing structure.

There is some damage to the bricks from spalling and many of these have been repaired with cement. The spalling and some discolouration of the brick work due to water run off from the window sills, and moss-damage to some mortar joints, are to be repaired.

The work will require minor masonry repairs on the western edge of the Pender Street facade. For the mezzanine level, the long window will be closed off to the interior and an insert will be designed to create the appearance of a bank of windows from the street. Some remedial masonry work is required to repair mortar and sills, and remove moss and other organic material along with some persistent graffiti.

The Ho Ho Restaurant Sign is a vertically oriented feature incorporating a number of Chinese figures, characters, and iconography, as well as several colours of neon tube lighting such as orange and green. The proposed sign replicates most of the features of the original sign except for a projecting marquee and some minor details which would interfere with Hydro and street usage requirements.

The Conservation Plan submitted with the Applications, the proposed façade grant application, and the design of the sign were reviewed by the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee (CHAPC) and unanimously supported (see Public/Civic Agency Input). The Vancouver Heritage Commission also reviewed and unanimously supported the foregoing.

The *Sign By-law* supports real neon tubing for illuminated signs in most historic areas. The new Ho Ho Restaurant Sign will be constructed with true neon and therefore complies with the requirements of the *Sign By-law* and related policies in this regard. The proposed Conservation Plan is consistent with the design guidelines for the HA-1 / Chinatown area, and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, and is supportable.

Should Council approve the recommendations of this report, the Applications will be approved by the Director of Planning upon completion of all associated requirements and conditions. A Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) is required as part of the sign approvals as the Sun Ah Hotel is a designated heritage building (protected by a Heritage Designation By-law).

### **Estimates for Proposed Conservation Work and Limitations**

The applicant has submitted detailed cost estimates for the signage and applicable façade rehabilitation work clearly identifying costs which apply to the principal façade. The estimate for the signage including mounting hardware and installation, as well as associated repairs, is approximately \$103,000 and the related façade rehabilitation and repairs are estimated at approximately \$30,000. Only the cost related to the heritage conservation of the principal façade will be considered eligible for the façade grant under the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program (see the Legal section).

### **Proposed Incentives**

A heritage façade matching grant of up to \$50,000 per principal facade is proposed to financially assist the owner with conducting the heritage conservation work. Although the building at 102 E

Pender Street has two principal facades, as it is located on a street corner, the work only involves the Pender Street façade at this time and therefore only a single façade grant has been requested.

### **Previous Grants**

Council approved two DTES Plan Matching grants to the Lung Kong Tin Yee Association that are relevant for this report:

- RTS 10776 (2014) - \$50,000 matching grant approved for the creation of the Ho Ho Restaurant Sign to reflect the neon sign history and contribute to making Chinatown an exciting place at night. No disbursement of funds have been issued yet as the process is contingent on the approval of the Ho Ho Restaurant neon sign application and the advancement of the Ho Ho Restaurant renovations. A grant agreement will be completed and first payment will be disbursed upon the approval of the recommendations of this report.
- RTS 11003 (2015) - \$50,000 matching grant approved for the renovations to the ground floor and mezzanine to optimise the space within the heritage building and enable the creation of the Ho Ho Restaurant, a unique restaurant which fits the heritage character and contributes to the revitalisation of Chinatown. A grant agreement was completed and an initial disbursement of \$45,000 was issued on July 30, 2015, to the Association. Completion of the work is on hold pending approval of the neon sign application and the façade grant.

The first grant noted above is for the replication of the Ho Ho Restaurant Sign itself. The second grant noted above is for renovations to the heritage building for the re-establishment of the Ho Ho Restaurant within the building. The façade grant, which is the subject of this report, is for repairs and rehabilitation of the north facing façade only, for which the scope of work does not overlap with the above noted grants (see Proposed Incentives and Estimates for Proposed Conservation Work and Limitations).

This project supports the recently adopted *Vancouver Chinatown Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan (CHAMP) Strategic Framework*, and is aligned with Theme 2 of the framework, “Cultural Heritage as the Foundation and Future.” The CHAMP Strategic Framework includes key goals that includes celebrating and supporting Chinatown’s cultural heritage, including its tangible and intangible heritage, and making Chinatown’s cultural heritage visible in the public realm. The façade grant for the Sun Ah Hotel together with the installation of a new projecting sign that replicates a historic sign recognizes the significance of a current Society Building and is a nod to both Chinatown’s past and future. This grant also supports a project that is in line with Council’s decision to explore a UNESCO World Heritage Site application for Vancouver Chinatown, which is currently underway during Phase Two of Chinatown Transformation work.

### ***Public/Civic Agency Input***

The application was reviewed by the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee (CHAPC) on September 8, 2022. CHAPC supported the proposed conservation plan and associated façade grant application. The minutes for CHAPC meetings can be found here:

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/chinatown-historic-area-planning-committee.aspx>

The Vancouver Heritage Commission (VHC) reviewed the application on June 20, 2022, and supported the proposed conservation plan and the associated façade grant application, as well as the design of the new signage. Minutes of the VHC meeting can be found here:

<https://vancouver.ca/docs/council/vher20220620min.pdf>

### ***Financial***

Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade of 102 East Pender Street. The source of funds is the 2022 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 façade 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 Sun Ah Hotel at 102 East Pender Street is listed in the 'C' evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register and is designated by by-law as protected heritage property. The proposed heritage façade rehabilitation will improve the overall condition of the building, and preserve its historic character, and facilitate the installation of a replica of the historic Ho Ho Restaurant Sign, and contribute to the economic revitalization and stewardship of Chinatown.

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability recommends approval of up to \$50,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façade at 102 East Pender Street, subject to

compliance with the *Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program Policies* and conditions of the Applications.

\* \* \* \* \*

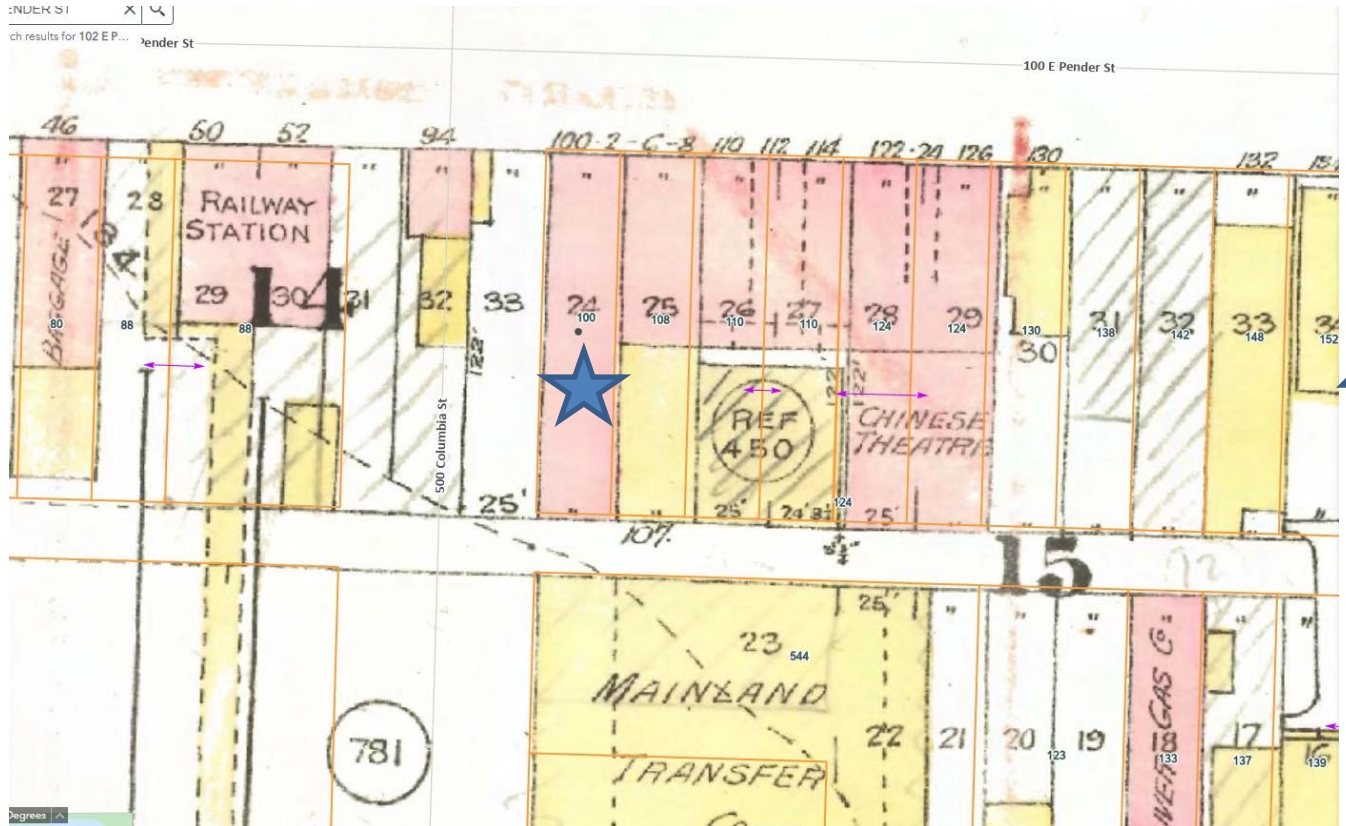


102 East Pender Street – Sun Ah Hotel (far right) circa 1960s



102 East Pender Street – Sun Ah Hotel –circa 1990s – After Sign Removal

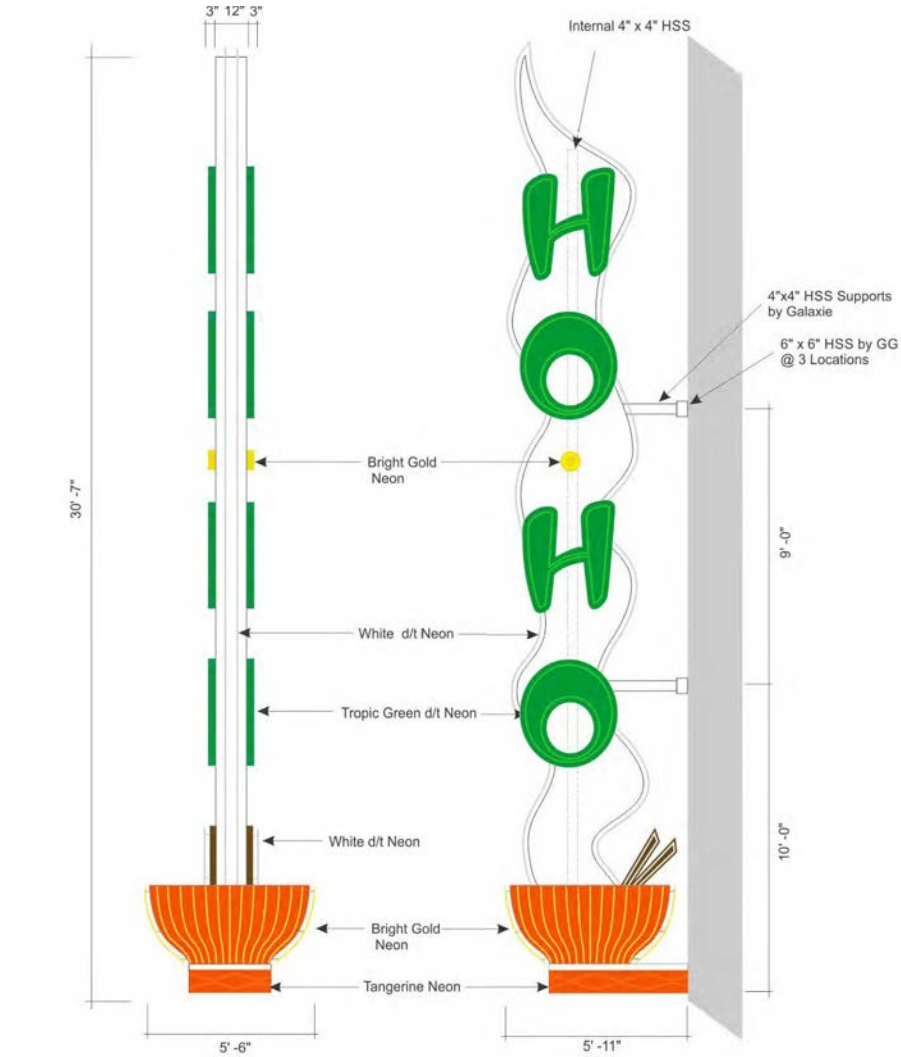




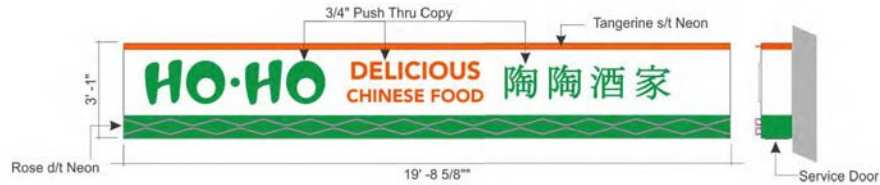
**Fire Insurance Map circa 1912**

The Sun Ah Hotel is shown by the star. Note the original shoreline shown as a dotted line.

Columbia Street did not formally exist at the time and was just a dirt track connected to the shoreline (Lot 38). Even today, during periods of very high tides, flooding can still occur in the basements of buildings in this area.



- Orange  
PMS 1655C / 3M 3630-44
- Vivid Green  
PMS 355C / 3M 3630-156
- Yellow  
PMS 109C / 3630-015
- Brown  
PMS 483C



<b>Galaxie Signs</b> <small>Neon and more since 1982</small> galaxiesigns.com	5205 Argyle St. Burnaby, BC V5C 4H4	604 291 6011 604 291 7138	5000 <b>Ho Ho Restaurant</b> Pender St. Vancouver Sony Basrah July 18, 2016	1/4" = 1' - 1"	HoHoRestaurant-16041-R2	NOTE: * The colours used in this presentation may vary slightly from those of the actual finished product. † Depiction of display on artwork is conceptual and may not necessarily be in scale. ‡ It is the responsibility of the customer to provide GALAXIE SIGNS LAM with production ready artwork files prior to production.	C US NF 3
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Proposed Replica Ho Ho Restaurant Signage



Elevation of Replica Signage (Looking East)



Proposed Storefront

## **Statement of Significance**

### **Description of Historic Place**

The Sun Ah Hotel at 102 East Pender Street is a four-storey, plus mezzanine, Arts and Crafts style building situated on the southeast corner of East Pender and Columbia Streets in Vancouver's historic Chinatown.

### **Heritage Value**

Constructed in 1912, the Sun Ah Hotel (originally the Queen Anne Rooms) has heritage value for its association with Loo Gee Wing, a prominent local businessman and developer who commissioned the building, as well as its representation of the pattern of immigration and development in Chinatown, its architecture, and its long association with the Lung Kong Tien Yee Association and the former Ho Ho Restaurant.

The Sun Ah Hotel was built during a period of expansion in Vancouver's Chinatown. Originally from San Francisco, Wing arrived in BC in the late 1880s and soon assembled extensive property and business interests in Victoria and Vancouver. In Vancouver, he developed a number of buildings including a Chinese theatre. He was often before the courts because of property or business disputes.

Constructed during a period of growth and expansion in Chinatown paralleling the city's own boom, the Sun Ah Hotel's accommodation responded to a pattern of immigration of mostly single men arriving from China prior to the 1923 Exclusion Act. The arrangement of small rooms along a central hallway with facilities at the rear of the building was typical for rooming houses and commercial hotels throughout the city in this period.

The Sun AH Hotel was designed by Richard T. Perry in partnership with Raphael A. Nicolais, and is distinctive for the coarse texture of the brickwork and relief decoration which epitomizes the hand-built values of the Arts and Crafts style where stressed bricks with cracks, warps and splits were prized, and reflects Perry's own aesthetic as an architect. The building's design anticipated the opening of southern portion of Columbia Street which was only a dirt track when the building was constructed. Heritage value also resides in the building's long association with the Lung Kong Tien Yee Association, a branch of the original San Francisco organization established in Vancouver in 1923, which has owned the property since 1926.

Many of the properties in Chinatown were owned by the Societies as an investment for members. Additional heritage value is found in the long association of the building with the Ho Ho Restaurant (ground floor and mezzanine) which was opened in 1954 by the Quon family. The original restaurant closed in the 1990s. It was representative of the numerous restaurants and curio shops that opened after World War II in Chinatown. Here visitors could experience the westernized yet still exotic Chinese dishes which sat side by side on the menu with traditional Cantonese village-style cuisine enjoyed by the locals

### **Character Defining Elements**

The elements which define the Sun Ah Hotel include the following:

- continuous use of the upper floors as a rooming house

- the use of the lower floor and mezzanine as commercial space
- exterior of coarse texture brickwork with relief ornamentation including
- a band of vertical bricks set between rows of horizontal bricks at the second storey, third, and fifth storey windows, framed by vertical brick details recalling a column capital and base
- building features of raised brick details which resemble a cornice
- arched tops and raised bricks outlining panels above the windows
- original window openings and double hung sash windows on the upper three floors of the Pender and Columbia Street facades
- horizontal window arrangement on Pender Street indicating the mezzanine floor
- plastered brick on the rear facade facing the lane
- residual metal work and fastenings from old building signage.

### **Conservation Plan (excerpt)**

The building is on the City of Vancouver Heritage Register and within the Chinatown National Historic District boundary. The purpose of this report is to provide a conservation plan for the Pender Street facade of the Sun Ah Hotel/ HoHo Restaurant and to guide the installation of a new neon sign based on the 1950s original.

### **Current Condition**

The upper floors above the storefront are set in unpainted brick laid in a six course common bond. Two colours of brick are used on the facade with the body of the building set with an orange brick and decorative details highlighted with red brick. The parapet shows some patch work repair to the mortar. There is some damage to the bricks from spalling and many of these have been repaired with cement. There is some discolouration of the brick work due to water run off from the window sills and many of the mortar joints show moss growth. There are a number of earlier repairs to the brick work evident on the facade where a darker brick has been inserted into the face interrupting the courses and in contrast with the lighter colour brick.

The north facade windows have been replaced with metal windows which closely match the profile of the originals. Many of the window sills are exposed concrete while others are covered by sheet-metal. Metal work including bolts, angle iron and other fittings from various sign installations are still attached to the building on the corner and the second and third floors. On the lower floor, the current storefront dates from a 1960s renovation and is one of many storefront renovations over the years. The brick on the ground floor is painted and plastered, obscuring the decorative brickwork. There is a band of aluminum windows above a stuccoed panel on the mezzanine level, a tiled pony wall with aluminum windows at ground level, along with aluminum and glass doors. The west side of the storefront is taken up with the entry and stair to the rooming house above. A 'Roman brick' wall at the rooming house entrance remains from the 1960s renovations.

### **Proposed Work**

The proposed work on the north facade is primarily focussed on the installation of the new vertical and fascia signs for the restaurant which will require new supports for the vertical sign. The work will require some minor masonry work on the western edge of the Pender Street facade. For the mezzanine level the long window will be closed off to the interior and an insert will be designed to create the appearance of a bank of windows from the street. Some remedial masonry work will need to be completed to repair mortar and sills, remove

moss and other organic material along with some persistent graffiti. The Plan details the masonry work that should be done over the next couple of years.