



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: 1 October 2008
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: October 28, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: 134 Abbott Street - Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program - Façade Grant - DE 412198

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a façade grant of up to \$100,000 for the rehabilitation of the principal façades at 134 Abbott Street as contemplated by Development Application Number DE 412198. The source of funding is the 2008 Capital Budget for the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program.

The Vancouver Charter requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast for this recommendation to pass.

- B. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement with the owner of 134 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 134 Abbott Street façades in good appearance and good repair for a minimum of fifteen years.
- C. AND 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 A, B and C.

COUNCIL POLICY

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

PURPOSE

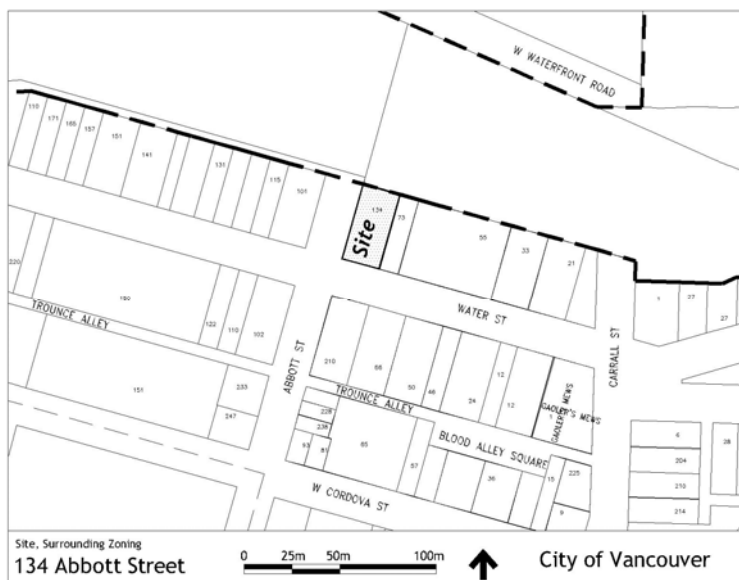
The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for a facade grant for the "B" listed, municipally designated building at 134 Abbott Street.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

In July 2003, City Council approved a program of incentives to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor & Victory Square. The program will be available for a five year period (2003 - 2008) to stimulate economic activity in these important historic areas through work on individual heritage buildings. The Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program is available to assist owners and tenants with 50% of the costs of rehabilitating heritage building façades up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal façade. The City deems buildings on corner sites to have more than one principal façade, where the owner may apply for a grant for each principal façade.

DISCUSSION

The Leeson, Dickie, Gross and Co. Warehouse is a six-storey Edwardian era masonry structure, built in 1909, and located at the northeast corner of Water and Abbott Streets in the historic area of Gastown. The building was designed by notable local architects Parr and Fee and is a good example of their commercial work as well as an early Vancouver example of a reinforced concrete structure.



The Site Plan

Heritage value:

This building is valued for its architectural significance and an innovative use of concrete as a structural and fireproof material. The Leeson, Dickie, Grass and Co. Warehouse was one of the first large-scale commercial buildings in Vancouver utilizing an innovative concrete technology. Although this building displays considerable sophistication in its palette of materials and the façade composition, the utilitarian exterior is a clear indication of its original use.

The former warehouse, which has been converted for office uses on the upper floors, contributes to the ambiance of Gastown. Its early adaptive reuse within the context of redevelopment of Gastown as a heritage district represents the changing nature of the local economy from warehousing and manufacturing to commercial, retail and residential uses.

Rehabilitation approach:

The proposed façade conservation approach is considered a respectful rehabilitation which combines elements of restoration, rehabilitation and preservation. The main conservation procedures proposed are: reconstruction of the upper sheet metal cornice; stabilization of deteriorated brick veneer; selective repointing of deteriorated masonry joints; and installation of hardware for the operation of a movable window washing rig.

The owner of the building completed some exterior rehabilitation work in 2007. The previously completed conservation work is not a part of the scope of work for this façade grant application.

The proposed conservation approach is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Estimates for proposed rehabilitation work:

This proposal is developed under the provisions of the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, and is seeking a grant of up to \$100,000 (up to \$50,000 for each of the two principal façades) to offset the cost for the restoration of the principal façades. As per procedural requirements, the provision of three competitive cost estimates for the proposed scope of work is required. Three quotes, all exceeding \$200,000 were provided by the applicant.

Staff conducted an independent cost analysis and determined that the cost of rehabilitation work as presented is realistic and reflective of the scope of work established by the Conservation Plan. In conclusion, staff determined that the applicant is eligible for the incentive of up to \$50,000 for each of the two principal façades.

After the work is completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning, the Owner must demonstrate that costs incurred are consistent with the scope of work outlined in the submitted Conservation Plan, and provide proof of payment (receipts) for each of the two façades. Once this has been confirmed, the grant of up to \$50,000 per principal façade would be paid to the owner by the City.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council approved a total of \$2.5 million for the funding of façade grants over the Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program's five year term (2003-2008). To date, \$2.135 million has been approved as grants for 29 heritage rehabilitation projects, with most projects involving full building upgrades and other incentives.

Currently, there is a total of \$365,000 available for this term of the Program. Staff recommend an allocation of up to \$100,000 from the 2008 Capital Budget for rehabilitation of the principal façades at 134 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 reviewed the proposed façade rehabilitation application on June 18th 2008 and unanimously supported it.

CONCLUSION

134 Abbott Street is a "B" listed building on the Vancouver Heritage Register and municipally designated site. The owner's proposal to rehabilitate the building façades will not only restore the historic character of the heritage building at this prominent Gastown location, but will further contribute to the revitalization of historic Gastown. The Director of Planning recommends approval of up to \$100,000 for the façade rehabilitation work.

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