



City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

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HERITAGE FACADE REHABILITATION PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR GASTOWN, CHINATOWN, HASTINGS STREET CORRIDOR AND VICTORY SQUARE

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1 Introduction

City Council has approved a program of incentives to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of buildings in Gastown, Chinatown, the Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square (refer to map for area of eligibility). The program will be available for a 5-year period (2003-2008) to kick start economic activity in these important historic areas through work on individual heritage buildings. This document outlines policies and procedures for the Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program.

For information on the other incentives available, refer to the document Building Rehabilitation Program Policies and Procedures for Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings Street Corridor and Victory Square. Applications for Facade Grants must be independent from applications seeking other incentives. However, applicants may apply for more than one program on a coordinated basis. Owners who apply for the facade incentive are eligible to apply for the building rehabilitation incentives at a later date.

The City strongly recommends that applicants consult with City staff, to review the proposal and submission requirements, before applying for incentives. The City also notes that it anticipates federal heritage incentives in the near future. When the federal incentives are in place, they will be applied before the municipal incentive programs and the funding available from the City of Vancouver will be decreased accordingly.

2 Principles

In preparing the methodology to determine heritage incentives, staff applied the following guiding principles:

- **Balance between objectivity and accuracy** – The methodology and assumptions used for calculating heritage incentives are designed to best approximate actual costs and values, while at the same time have, as much as possible, been selected to be objective and consistent over time and across projects, as well as readily accessible to all participants.
- **Equal treatment of equals** – All applicants and applications will be treated in the same manner in terms of the application process and incentive calculations.
- **Negotiated process with City having ultimate approval** – The scope of the project being submitted for a heritage incentive and all relevant figures submitted by the applicant as part of the application process will be reviewed by City staff, and may have to be revised so that City staff ultimately agrees with them in terms of accuracy, reasonableness and economic and program viability.

3 Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program Policies and Procedures

A total of \$2.5 million will be available for façade grants over the five-year life of this program (2003 - 2008). City Council has approved \$1.5 million of this in the City's current Capital Plan. The additional \$1.0 million will be sought in the next Capital Plan, and will be contingent on the Council of the day approving these funds for this purpose.

This program is available to assist owners and tenants with the costs of rehabilitating heritage building facades. The program covers 50% of costs up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal facade. A principal facade faces onto a primary street. The City deems buildings on corner sites to have more than one principal facade, and owners and tenants may apply for a grant for each principal facade. Tenants may apply for funding with written consent of the owner. The objective is to enhance the exterior appearance of buildings in a manner that is sympathetic to the heritage character of the area and to encourage economic revitalization opportunities. A priority for this program is the rehabilitation of ground floor spaces for active uses such as retail and restaurants.

4 Eligible Work

Eligible heritage conservation work includes the cleaning, repair and maintenance of a building exterior and appropriate new design. The work may include ground floor shopfronts, facade materials (e.g. brick, stone), windows, doors, cornices and other architectural features, stabilization of parapets, signs and awnings, and lighting on principal facades.

The Chief Building Official (CBO) considers the restoration and repair of existing exteriors to restore them to their original condition, including safety or building envelope issues, are voluntary improvements and would not trigger additional upgrading requirements. Typically, the replication of a heritage facade and new storefronts, designed in a manner consistent with design guidelines, does not trigger upgrades either. However, the CBO will assess each application on a case by case basis to check that they do not create accessibility or water leakage problems and that any unsafe conditions are met. Applicants should review proposals with the CBO at an early stage.

5 Eligibility Criteria

- The site must be within the HA-1 or HA-1A (Chinatown), HA-2 (Gastown) Zoning District or on Hastings Street between Cambie Street and Heatley Avenue or in the Victory Square area (refer to map on last page).
- Buildings listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register are automatically eligible. Council may add buildings to the Register if they meet the City's evaluation criteria.
- To receive grants, properties must be subject to a covenant under section 219 of the *Land Title Act* that relates to the conservation of heritage property as specified by sec 206(2) of the *Vancouver Charter*.
- The property owner must not be in arrears in payment of property taxes.
- The applicant must complete the work in accordance with the approved permit, and must comply with all heritage conservation standards, design guidelines, policies, bylaws or complementary standards and provisions that apply before the City disburses any grant to the applicant.
- The City will not consider retroactive funding for work completed prior to submission of the grant application.

6 Application Requirements

Applications must include:

- a completed application form
- a cover letter describing the proposed work (including how it complies with program objectives)
- architectural drawings and coloured renderings accurately describing the existing condition and proposed work
- an outline conservation specification
- a minimum of 3 competitive estimates for the proposed work
- current colour photographs of the building
- archival photographs and historical documentation.

In addition to these criteria, the City may require additional historic research, engineering, or other studies in support of the application. Applicants are also responsible for providing any further information the City requires to determine the incentive amount.

7 Application costs

The costs of preparing and submitting an application, including any consultant fees, are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The applicant may apply to recover such costs as part of the incentives, however the City will only approve such recovery for successful applications

8 Application consideration and evaluation criteria

The City will use the following criteria to evaluate applications:

- level and quality of heritage conservation work proposed
- heritage quality of building (based on Heritage Register evaluation)
- rehabilitation of ground floor for active uses
- relationship of building to groupings of heritage buildings
- relationship to other heritage conservation projects being undertaken
- compliance with design guidelines, conservation standards and principles, and by-laws
- amount of incentive being sought as a proportion of capital investment (the City will consider more favourably those projects proposing a higher level of private investment).

The City will complete its review of the application, and determine the value of any heritage incentives it decides to provide concurrently with its review of a development permit application. All applications will be carefully considered, but will not necessarily receive incentives at all, or to the level being requested.

City Council must approve all grants by a 2/3 majority.

The City will also require registration against title of a covenant, easement, statutory right of way, and/or heritage revitalization agreement to ensure continued maintenance of the restored/rehabilitated facade. Such covenant, easement, statutory right of way, and/or heritage revitalization agreement must be in form and substance, and with registered priority that is, satisfactory to the City.

Process Chart for Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program for Gastown and Chinatown

	MILESTONE\ ACTION	PARTICIPANTS	INPUTS	OUTPUTS
1	Inquiry - meeting to discuss concept	- heritage staff - applicant	- concept - approach to heritage conservation - research and evaluation	- feedback & issue identification - advice on process
2	Applications for grant and development permit submitted	- applicant	- development permit (architectural drawings) - supporting documentation/reports as required - request for facade grant including 3 cost estimates	- application
3	Review & Assessment of Development Application	- staff - community advisory committee	- review\evaluate for compliance with policies, by-laws, regulations and incentive program criteria	- comments from advisory committee & staff
4	Preliminary decision on development and incentive applications	- staff	- receive feedback	- staff recommendation (incorporating input from public and neighbourhood advisory body) on development and incentives application - “draft” prior-to letter
5	approval of facade grant by City Council	- staff - City Council	- report to Council	- Council decision on facade grant (requires 2/3 majority)
6	staff decision on development permit application	- Director of Planning	- input from review	- development application approved with conditions or not approved
7	revisions as required	- applicant	- revisions responding to conditions	- revised application

Process Chart for Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program for Gastown and Chinatown (Continued)

	MILESTONE\ ACTION	PARTICIPANTS	INPUTS	OUTPUTS
8	Development and Heritage Alteration permits issued and Legal agreements completed	- staff		- development permit (including heritage alteration permit) issued - legal agreements registered on title
9	obtain other permits (building etc.) as required	- applicant - staff	- application and supporting documentation as required	- permits issued
10	construction begins	- applicant		
11	project completed and heritage work certified	- applicant - staff	- review for compliance with approved scheme	- work inspected and certified
12	grant disbursed	- staff	- authorize release of funds	- cheque to owner

