



***FAÇADE & STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
DESIGN & PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES***

*COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION
Revised APRIL 1, 2009*



PART 1 - GENERAL

1.1 Purpose:

This document describes the criteria used by Council to select eligible projects for incentives under the Façade & Structural Improvement Program in the eligible area included under the Community Improvement Plan.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
Applications must be approved by Council before any proposed work begins or they will be ineligible for funding under this program.

The Façade & Structural Improvement Program is designed to encourage restoration and rehabilitation of Program Area buildings in a fashion consistent with the original design and the requirements of the Ontario Building Code.

1.2 Eligible Projects:

The program provides for incentives to property owners and tenants who will:

- improve the façade of a building, and/or
- complete structural improvements necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of a structure, and
- undertake a project with a minimum overall estimated project cost of \$3,000.

Specific examples of eligible works include:

- repainting or cleaning of the façade,
- restoration or repointing of façade masonry and brickwork, or wood and metal cladding,
- repair or replacement of original cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features visible from the adjacent street or public areas,
- repair or replacement of façade windows and street level exterior doors,
- restoration of the original façade appearance,
- repair or replacement of retractable awnings on the façade, where consistent with the original building design,
- repair or installation of façade exterior lighting,
- new or replacement façade signage, especially projecting wood signs with wrought iron detailing and supports, signs consisting of individual decorative letters on the façade that enhance architectural characteristics of the building, and fascia signs that do not detract from the architectural appearance of the façade, which meet the provisions of the City's Sign By-law, and
- other similar improvements to the building's exterior façade as may be approved by the Community Planning & Heritage Advisory Committee.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
The City at its sole discretion will select eligible projects based on the criteria in this document, including budget availability, and other applicable policy.

- Examples of ineligible works include, but are not limited to:
- painting brick,
- stucco over original brick treatments,
- fixed awnings, canopies or fascia signs which obscure architectural features,
- backlit or neon signs,
- asphalt or flat roof treatments,
- metal or other material roof treatments, unless original, etc.

The City at its sole discretion will select eligible projects based on the criteria in this document, including budget availability, and other applicable policy. The City is not obligated to fund any project. Precedent will not influence the City's decision. Notwithstanding the Program criteria, at their sole discretion, the City may consider other projects which have heritage merit and meet the overall intent of the program.

1.3 Location of Eligible Properties:

Properties located in the Program Area (see Figure 1) are eligible for incentives under this program. These boundaries are set by the Community Improvement Plan, which establishes a framework for the City's support and implementation of programs to encourage development in the downtown and harbour areas. The Program Area is comprised of the City's Downtown Improvement Area and Central Business District.



Figure 1: Program Area outlined in yellow & red.

1.4 Eligible Applicants:

Applicants in the Program Area described above may apply for the incentives under this program. If a tenant is applying, the authorization of the owner is required.

To receive payment under this program, a Commitment Agreement must be signed with the City. This Agreement is registered on title and therefore must be signed by the Property Owner even if the Applicant is a tenant. Municipal taxes for the subject property must not be in arrears.

The number of front façades eligible for grant purposes is based on the number of "distinct façades" (see Figure 2). If this number is in question, the final decision will be made by the Committee with approval by Council.

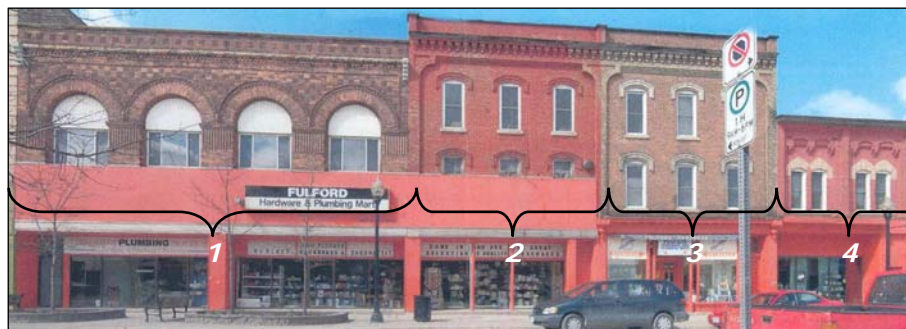


Figure 2: Fulford Hardware & Plumbing Mart has four "distinct façades".

PART 2 - DESIGN & STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA

2.1 Program Area Design Character:

The Program Area consists of a variety of architectural styles reflective of mid to late 19th century and early 20th century design preferences. Many buildings constructed of local stone and ornate brickwork are unique structures worthy of preservation.

Other buildings more typical of 19th century small town Ontario throughout the Program Area present finely detailed façades that should also be secured and maintained.

The intention of this program is to encourage the strong architectural tradition upon which the original character of the Program Area was built. The City believes that the whole Program Area can benefit from a program that confirms and maintains consistency in design. Projects that result in façade or structural improvements that build upon this tradition are encouraged under this Program.

Many buildings in the Program Area are over 100 years old. It is important to ensure buildings are properly maintained and all life safety and structural issues are addressed. Proper maintenance encourages preservation of the building inventory in the Program Area and provides opportunity for preservation and restoration.

2.2 General:

All applications will be assessed under three main considerations:

1. consistency with the City's design guidelines and the original architectural design of the building;
2. the extent to which a project addresses life safety and major structural deficiencies, and/or improves the overall appearance of the property; and
3. overall benefit to the Program Area and consistency with the City's Official Plan and other applicable policies.

Projects will not be eligible for incentives under this program to improve façades where major structural problems with the building are not addressed.

Projects addressing problems with structural integrity of a building that result in façade improvements will generally be given priority over projects that address only structural matters.

Projects that correct serious structural and life safety problems to avoid demolition of a building may also be given priority even though the façade is not improved.

2.3 Traditional Commercial Façades:

The traditional commercial storefront façade (see Figure 3) has a variety of sizes, shapes and styles but essentially consists of the storefront, upper façade and cor-

nice. The storefront is the lower part of the building around the main commercial entrance at street level. The upper façade is the middle part of the building constructed of stone, brick or wood with regularly spaced windows. The building cornice at the top of the structure acts to protect the brick or stone work below and decoratively caps the building.

Projects that maintain and enhance, or authentically replicate the traditional commercial façade will be given prime consideration and are encouraged.

2.4 Residential Façades:

Residential façades in the Program Area are more variable than traditional commercial façades. The façade of a residential building is that side of the structure which faces the adjacent street or public areas, usually containing the front entrance. The facade of a building is often the most important from a design standpoint, as it sets the tone for the rest of the building.

Applications under this Program for residential projects will, generally, be based on “authenticity” – the conservation or restoration of original architectural design elements of the façade of the building.

2.5 Heritage Properties:

Structural or façade improvement projects undertaken on properties listed on the Heritage Register or designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (consistent with the designation and in accordance with the recommendations of the Heritage Coordinator) will be given highest priority under this program.

If other sources of public funding for the same project have already been secured, the City may decide to apply funds to another eligible project. The pooling of funds or matching of grants is one consideration of this program.

2.6 Façade Design:

The program encourages the restoration of façades to their original state using authentic or original materials.

This program encourages removal of materials such as vinyl or aluminum siding and the restoration of original brick, block or wood façades. Where it is not possible to restore the original materials of a façade, the use of siding of natural materials



Figure 3: traditional commercial storefront façade.

(real or replicated wood) is encouraged where the form and scale of the original façade is maintained.

Products used in the restoration of a façade should contain materials that match the texture, colour, size, shape and detail of the original material where possible.

Unless prohibited by a heritage designation, replacement vinyl and/or other low maintenance windows and doors may be used in façade improvements provided the replacement element fits the shape of the opening and architectural detailing around the opening is not covered. Preferred projects are those that most closely replicate the original window and door design including the number of glass panes and the profiles of the sash rails and muntins.

2.7 Signs & Retractable Awnings on Commercial Buildings:

Commercial projects that employ natural materials in signs with external lighting are preferred. Projecting wood signs with wrought iron detailing and supports are encouraged where located at the storefront level, so as to avoid disrupting the window rhythm of the upper façade, and are subject to the requirements of the City's Sign By-law.

Signs consisting of individual decorative letters on the façade that enhance architectural characteristics of the building are encouraged. Fascia signs that do not detract from the architectural appearance of the façade may also be permitted.

Retractable awnings are encouraged where consistent with the original building design. Where an awning is to contain signage, it is preferable that signage consist primarily of individual block letters.

Generally, projects that incorporate backlit or neon signs will not be eligible for incentives under this program.

Sign colours should be restricted to original and authentic colors. Otherwise colours such as brown, green, blue, red, white or black are preferred.

2.8 Second or Double Façades:

The program provides additional incentives for projects that result in improvements to a second façade for an existing building. Second façades opening towards municipal parking lots, the inner harbour, public lanes or streets, or other areas accessible to the public may qualify for the added incentives. This enhanced incentive is provided where the front façade, containing the main entrance, and a second façade, usually at the rear or side of a building, are both improved. This enhancement is different from the number of "distinct" façades eligible for grant purposes

The criteria for assessing the eligibility of the second façade shall be the same as that applying to the original façade in terms of architectural design, materials, signage and colours.

2.9 New Construction:

Additions to buildings are not eligible for incentives under this program.

2.10 Structural and Life Safety Improvements:

All projects to be considered for structural improvements shall comply with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and applicable By-laws of the City.

It is intended that funds be directed towards significant structural improvements necessary to ensure the long-term viability of a building and address life safety concerns. Structural and life safety improvements shall not include internal facilities such as fire doors, sprinkler systems, fire alarms or similar necessary improvements, nor exterior improvements such as fire escapes, shingles or roofs.

2.11 Projects with Heritage Merit:

Notwithstanding the Program criteria, at their sole discretion, the City may consider other projects which have heritage merit and meet the overall intent of the program.

PART 3 - ADMINISTRATION & APPLICATIONS

3.1 Available Incentives:

The following incentives may be offered to approved projects under this program:

- a) waiving Building and Sign Permit fees for façade and structural improvements;
- b) capital grant up to 33% of the cost of façade and structural improvements that satisfy design guidelines (max. \$5,000 per project per year);
- c) capital grant up to 50% of the cost of façade and structural improvements that satisfy design guidelines and result in second or double façades (see Section 2.8) (max. \$7,500 per project per year); and
- d) phasing in tax increases resulting from façade and structural improvements over a five-year period.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
Grant approval does not constitute a building permit or a guarantee that a permit will be issued for the work proposed. Be sure to discuss your project with Building Division staff before you begin.

Applications for work totalling less than \$3,000 will not be considered.

3.2 The Grant Program (Parts C & D of the Community Improvement Plan):

Where a proposed project satisfies the City's design guidelines, a grant to cover up to 33% of the capital cost of the façade and/or structural improvement to a maximum of \$5,000 per façade may be available on approved applications. Capital costs may include professional design fees, material, labour and taxes necessary to complete eligible work.

If the project involves second or double façades (see Section 2.8), a grant of up to 50% of the capital cost of the façade improvement to a maximum of \$7,500 per property may be approved.

Where an application has been approved, the grant would be payable after the Applicant executes a Commitment Agreement with the City, construction is complete and has been inspected by the Chief Building Official and the Heritage Coordinator, and upon presentation of proof of accounts paid for the completed project. A maximum of one year (12 months) is allowed for completion. The Commitment Agreement would specify eligible works and require no changes to work on the approved façade for five years without City approval.

3.3 The Tax Incentive Program (Part E of the Community Improvement Plan):

Under this component, Applicants would indicate their interest in the tax incentive program at the application stage. If approved by Council, a Commitment Agreement would be executed confirming participation in the program.

The difference between the Municipal portion of the taxes prior to the work being completed, and the Municipal portion of the taxes after completion of the works would be calculated. The amount of increase would be pro-rated over five years such that only 20% of the increase is paid in year one, 40% in year two and so on up to year five. For larger projects where the tax increase is more substantial, Council may provide for a 10-year phase-in of the increase. Municipal taxes for the subject property must not be in arrears during the phase-in period or this incentive is forfeited.

The project is technically self-financing in that building improvements may result in increased assessment and this translates into more tax. Accounting practices have been established by the Financial Services Department to monitor, report and reconcile these on-going incentives and include the appropriate figures in the annual budgeting.

3.4 How to apply:

At the time City Council establishes its annual budget, Council will determine the maximum contribution to be allocated to the program for the current year.

Application deadlines are:

- March 20,
- May 20, and
- August 20.

Applications must be submitted by those dates to be eligible for review. Applications received after those dates may be held for the next review. The City will decide on eligibility within two months of these deadlines, at the latest. For large projects requiring a full building season, the City may consider earlier applications, at the discretion of the Director of Community Services.

Prior to making a formal application, interested parties are encouraged to consult with the City's Community Services Department for input, including the Planning and Building Divisions, in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, etc. Once an application is received, Staff may request clarification or additional supporting documentation.

Note: a project shall not commence prior to application consideration by the Community Planning & Heritage Advisory Committee (CPHAC) and approval by City Council.

1. Before any work begins on the proposed project, Applicants will make written application (see attached Application Form) for façade or structural improvement through the Planning Division. Where an Applicant does not own the land subject of an application, the Owner's written authorization is required.
2. Staff prepares a report to CPHAC for review and recommendation, based on design criteria, with comments from the Heritage Co-ordinator. This may require an on-site inspection with the Applicant to review the condition of the

façade and discuss proposed improvements. Subsequent and final inspections may be carried out during the work.

3. If acceptable, CPHAC approves the application with conditions, or approves a modified application. CPHAC minutes are forwarded to City Council for approval.
4. All works must be completed within 12 months of this approval, as outlined in the Commitment Agreement, or the funding approval will lapse.
5. Property Owner executes standard Commitment Agreement with the City.
6. Financial Services Department sets up an account number and/or tax deferment schedule. The City registers the Commitment Agreement on title for the property and forwards a copy to the Applicant.
7. Applicant applies for a Building Permit, complies with any conditions set by the Chief Building Official, calls for all required and final inspections and completes work within 12 months as required by the Commitment Agreement. If there are any changes of substance during the project, the Applicant is responsible for securing approval of the change from the Chief Building Official and CPHAC. Failure to receive such approval could result in the project being deemed ineligible for incentives under this program and non-payment of the grant.
8. Upon completion, the Applicant will advise the Planning Division. The Planning Division will inspect the completed project to ensure compliance with the Commitment Agreement and approved plans or drawings, and request a tax certificate from the Financial Services Department to confirm there are no taxes owing on the property subject of the application. Upon receipt of a statement, proof of expenditures for the project and a statutory declaration of accounts paid, the Applicant will then be reimbursed up to the grant amount and the tax deferment plan will be implemented, if applicable. Requests for reimbursement are to be made within 12 months of approval, as outlined in the Commitment Agreement.
9. The City's Building and By-law Divisions will periodically inspect projects to ensure works approved under Commitment Agreements are maintained.
10. Council will conduct periodic reviews of the programs being implemented under this Community Improvement Plan to assess effectiveness, establish funding levels, and consider modifications to the program. The availability of funds may change at any time.

FAÇADE & STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - Application Form

(this application will not be considered if there are tax arrears for the property)



Owen Sound

APPLICANT: *(written authorization from owner is required if applicant is a tenant)*

NAME:	
BUSINESS NAME:	
ADDRESS:	POSTAL CODE:
HOME PHONE #:	WORK PHONE #:
EMAIL ADDRESS:	FAX #:

REGISTERED OWNER: *(if different from applicant)*

NAME:	
BUSINESS NAME:	
ADDRESS:	POSTAL CODE:
HOME PHONE #:	WORK PHONE #:
EMAIL ADDRESS:	FAX #:

DECLARATION BY OWNER: I, _____, registered owner of _____,
signature of owner *municipal address*

hereby approve _____ to apply for approval under the Façade & Structural
name of applicant

Improvement Program. I acknowledge that I will be required to sign a Commitment Agreement to be registered on title as part of the approval process.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: *(must be located in the Program Area – see Figure 1 of Guidelines)*

ADDRESS:	
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:	
TAX ROLL NUMBER:	POSTAL CODE:

PURPOSE OF APPLICATION:

I wish to be eligible for the following programs *(check all applicable boxes)*

- Grant program regular (one-third total project cost to maximum \$5,000)
- Grant program double fronting façade (one-third total project cost to maximum \$7,500)
- Tax deferral program (five-year phase in of any tax increase from improvements)
- Waiver of Building and/or Sign Permit Fees

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: *(attach separate drawings, photographs and complete descriptions)*

The more detailed information you provide at this stage, the better staff will be at describing and supporting the project in reports to Committee and Council. Use this checklist as a reminder:

- I've attached a current photo of the building.
- I've provided of sketch and/or architectural drawing showing the proposed work.
- I've attached a cost estimate for the project f.
- I've discussed the project with Community Services staff. Name: _____

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$ _____

(include design, materials, labour and taxes – attach separate estimate – projects with an estimated cost of less than \$3,000 are not eligible under this program)

Applicant Signature

Date