

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Jocelyn Wainwright, Junior Planner
Meeting Date: October 18, 2023
Report Code: CS-23-099
Subject: Façade and Structural Improvement Grant – 263 10th St E
(Barry’s Construction and Insulation Ltd.)

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of a Staff Report CS-23-099 respecting an application to the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program under the City’s Community Improvement Plan, for a double façade grant (50% of the costs, up to a maximum of \$7,500) for work to be completed at 263 10th St E, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Approve the application for work on the front (north) and rear (south) façades, subject to the conditions outlined in Schedule ‘E’; and
2. Direct staff to bring forward a by-law to authorize the execution of a Financial Incentive Program Agreement between the City and the property owner for the completion of the works.

Highlights:

- A Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Application has been submitted by Barry’s Construction and Insulation Ltd. for work to be completed at 263 10th St E.
- The applicant proposed to undertake exterior improvements to the front (north) and rear (south) façades.

- The application was submitted prior to the work commencing; however, due to staff absence in planning and workload dedicated to development approvals, the grant application could not be processed in a timely manner, and the improvement work has been completed.
- Staff are requesting that Council approve the application retroactively in recognition that staff delegated approval could not be achieved due to staffing.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Prosperous City - KR3 - Commit 90% of the community improvement program grant funding allocation to the façade, business start-up, landscape and accessibility programs each fiscal year

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by considering climate adaptation in the development of the City's strategies, plans, and policies.

The application proposes the adaptive reuse of an existing building. Adaptive reuse helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change by conserving embodied carbon that has already been generated in the production of existing buildings, including the extraction, manufacturing, and transportation of construction materials and the construction process. Adaptive reuse further reduces emissions and solid waste that would otherwise be generated if demolition were to occur.

Previous Report/Authority:

[City of Owen Sound Community Improvement Plan, 2020](#)

Background:

Applicable Policies

The City's CIP was updated and approved in 2020. The Plan includes a number of incentives to support revitalization and other projects aligned with the City's Strategic Plan and Official Plan. The Plan provides several financial

incentives, which include grant programs as well as other programs that are financial incentives through tax rebates.

The CIP is intended to be read and interpreted in its entirety. Interpretation of the Plan will be at the sole discretion of the Plan Administrator and City Council or its designated approval authority. Section 7 of the Plan speaks to the administration and notes that the CIP may be further refined through program-specific guidelines. Generally, for Façade and Structural Improvement Grants and Accessibility Improvement Grants, approval is delegated to the Directory of Community Services where applications are consistent with the Plan and Guidelines. Section 7.2.3 Application Prior to Commencement of Work states:

An application must be submitted to the City prior to commencing any community improvement works. If an application is submitted following the commencement of community improvement works the application will be rejected upon receipt.

Further, the application for the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant has applicants declare that work has not started. This declaration was acknowledged on the application.

In summary, the application was submitted prior to the work commencing (May 2023); however, due to a staff absence in the Planning & Heritage Division, the grant application could not be processed in a timely manner, and the improvement work was started and is now complete.

Proposal

A Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Application was submitted by Barry's Construction and Insulation Ltd. for work at 263 10th St E. The applicant proposed exterior improvements to the front (north) and rear (south) façades.

The subject property is located on the south side of 10th St E, mid-block between 2nd Ave E and 3rd Ave E. The property is within the boundaries of the Façade and Structural Improvement Program Area (as shown on page 5 of the Program Guidelines) and is within the Downtown River Precinct and Central Downtown Precinct of the City's Harbour and Downtown Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy ("the Master Plan").

Eligible work on the **front (north)** façade includes:

- Recladding of the ground floor siding façade in red brick.
- Installation of new display windows.
- Installation of two (2) doors on the ground floor.
- Installation of three (3) second-storey windows.
- Installation of flashing on the second storey.
- Installation of new pot lights.
- Installation of a new fascia sign.

Eligible work on the **rear (south)** façade includes:

- Recladding of ground floor siding in red brick.
- Installation of new pot lights.

Elevations illustrating the improvements to the building are provided in Schedule 'C'.

The Master Plan classifies the Downtown River Precinct as the heart of the City's downtown. Buildings within the Program Area continue to be representative of the original architectural styles reflective of mid-to late-19th century and early-20th-century design preferences. Many buildings are constructed of local stone and ornate brickwork, making them unique and worthy of preservation. The Program Area can benefit from an incentive program that confirms and maintains consistency in design, honours and enhances the City's unique heritage and contributes to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the River District and Harbour Area. The subject property is consistent with the guidelines in that the building has a traditional commercial façade on the ground level of the building and features ornate brickwork on the upper storey.

Additional incentives are available under the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program for projects that result in improvements to a second or double façade of an existing building. A double façade must have frontage along a municipal road or laneway, or abut a municipally owned parking lot, the Sydenham River, or the inner harbour, and be in full view to the public. The building fronts on 10th St E, and the rear (south) façade faces

Municipal Parking Lot No. 4 and is in full view to the public, therefore satisfying the definition of a second/double façade.

Analysis:

The [Façade and Structural Improvement Program Guidelines](#) ("the Guidelines") provide the criteria for evaluating applications and specify eligible and ineligible works, including the following.

In accordance with the Guidelines, double façade improvements must have a minimum project cost of \$4,500. The cost of the works is estimated at \$50,000, based on a combination of ineligible and eligible works on the front (north) and rear (south) façades. Staff anticipate that the cost of approved works exceeds the minimum project cost criteria and have included a condition of approval that requires that a revised cost estimate be provided by the applicant. The cost estimate of the works is provided in Schedule 'D'.

The program guidelines require that the proposed improvement works cannot commence prior to application approval. The improvement works on the front (north) and rear (south) façade have been completed. The application was submitted prior to the work commencing; however, due to understaffing, the grant application could not be processed in a timely manner, and the improvement work has been completed. The subject application met the criteria for staff delegated approval at the time of application. However, as the work has been completed prior to receiving approval, staff are requesting that Council approve the application retroactively in recognition that the reason that this criterion could not be met was due to a staffing shortage. Before and after photos of the front and rear façades are attached as Schedule 'B'.

In evaluating a façade application, the Guidelines direct that the application be assessed against three main criteria:

1. Consistency with the Guidelines and the original architectural design of the building.
2. The extent to which a project addresses life safety and major structural deficiencies, where applicable; and,
3. Overall benefits to the Downtown and Harbour Area and consistency with the City's Official Plan and other applicable policies.

Improvement Type - Redesign

The proposed façade improvement fits within the criteria for “redesign” as outlined in the eligible projects section of the Guidelines (pg. 15). Redesign refers to the complete reconstruction of the façade with the intention of acquiring a different or more modern design. While restoration and/or renovation are generally more preferred approaches to façade improvement, the Guidelines recognize that there are instances in the Program Area where redesign may be appropriate due to significant disrepair or alteration.

In the case of the subject property, both the front (north) and rear (south) façades have experienced significant alteration. As the improvement work has been completed, staff anticipate that a restoration of the ground floor on the front (north) façade of the original building and the ground and upper storeys of the rear (south) facade would be difficult and costly.

In all cases, redesign must respect the heritage attributes of the surrounding/adjacent façades and the streetscape and materials selected shall be appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines. As noted above, the application proposed to reclad the front (north) ground floor façade and both the ground and upper storeys of the rear (south) facades with red brick, which is encouraged by the Guidelines (pg. 25). The original brickwork and appearance of the upper storey of the front (north) façade has largely been maintained, which is consistent with the intent of the guidelines to maintain historic redbrick facades within the River District streetscapes.

Front (north) Façade

The application proposed the installation of two (2) new doors on the front façade, each within an alcove (recessed entryway), as well as a new display and second-storey façade windows with ‘black’ frames. One (1) of the proposed doors is accessible. Installation of new doors is among the eligible works under the Façade and Structural Improvement Program Guidelines. However, the accessible door opener is considered an accessibility improvement, which is ineligible under the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program. Furthermore, the door installed at the front (north) entrance is fully glazed, which does not conform to the general requirements of the Accessibility Improvement Grant Program Guidelines (section 6.1.7).

In support of the Guidelines, the display windows are as large as possible, and the heights and sizes are unified to create a consistent look for the entire storefront (pg. 26). Similarly, the new upper-storey windows maintain

the existing window openings and support the repetitive upper-storey window pattern existing along the neighbouring buildings across the south side of 10th St E.

The application proposed the installation of pot lights within an alcove located at both of the entrances on the front (north) façade. Improvements to exterior lighting are encouraged to illuminate the business, attract attention to signs, store information and building details, and to discourage crime (pg.33).

The Guidelines encourage new or replacement signage that improves the appearance of the façade, in combination with other improvements (pg. 35). The installation of mounted/individual lettering signage that employs natural material such as wood or metal is highly encouraged (pg. 37). The application indicated that a new fascia sign above the front entrance is proposed. A fascia sign displaying the "OSHARE" logo has been installed on the front (north) façade above the main entrance. The guidelines provide that several types of signage are eligible under the program, including fascia signs. Staff recommend that the fascia sign be included as eligible work provided that the sign conforms to the Sign By-law. A condition of approval requires that the applicant obtain a Sign Permit.

Rear (south) Façade

Prior to the improvement works, the rear (south) façade featured an unoriginal two-storey addition. The application proposed to reclad the rear façade in red brick, which contributes towards the heritage look of the River District and is highly encouraged by the guidelines. The application proposed the installation of new pot lights. Exterior lighting improvements are encouraged to illuminate the business, attract attention to signs, store information and building details, and to discourage crime (pg.33).

The form of the rear (south) portion of the building has been significantly altered, and it does not appear that any of the unoriginal addition at the rear of the building has been retained. The application proposed the installation of new windows and doors to the rear (south) façade, which were installed in new openings. The program guidelines are intended to provide grant funding for new low-maintenance windows and doors on rear and side facades, provided the original openings are maintained (pg. 13). As the rear portion of the building is a new addition, the windows and doors do not meet the

program criteria within the guidelines and are considered ineligible for funding.

The cost estimate for the proposed work attached as Schedule 'D' estimates the cost of the work per façade rather than for individual works or unit prices. The application proposed to reclad the exterior rear (south) façade in red brick and proposed the installation of new person doors, a garage door, pot lights, and windows at an estimated cost of \$23,000. As noted above, the installation of new doors and windows is ineligible for funding. Staff anticipate that the cost to clad the rear (south) façade in brick and the installation of the pot light will exceed the minimum project cost criteria of \$1,500 for a second or double façade grant. Conditions of approval require that a revised cost estimate be provided to ensure that the cost of the approved work on the rear (south) facing façade was at least \$1,500.

Ineligible Works

The Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program is intended to improve the appearance and encourage the restoration and rehabilitation of street-facing exteriors of buildings within the City's River District & Harbour Area (pg. 3). As the program is intended to provide funding for exterior improvements, the proposed works on the interior of the building are ineligible under the program guidelines.

The demolition and removal of façade elements are not among the eligible works per the program guidelines.

Financial Implications:

The total estimated Façade and Structural Improvement Grant is \$7,500 based on the \$50,000 (pre-HST) in ineligible and eligible works on the front (north) and rear (south) façades and subject to the condition of approval that requires that a revised cost estimate be provided by the applicant.

The available budget for Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grant programs in 2022 is \$80,000, including a capital grant of \$20,000 from the County of Grey. Sufficient funds are available in the 2023 CIP budget to fund the project at the recommended maximum grant rate.

Communication Strategy:

Staff continue to promote the program and provide assistance as needed.

Consultation:

Communication with the applicant.

Attachments:

Schedule 'A': Application
Schedule 'B': Before and After Photos
Schedule 'C': Elevations
Schedule 'D': Cost Estimate
Schedule 'E': List of Approved Works
Schedule 'F': Conditions of Approval

Recommended by:

Sabine Robart, M.SC. (PL), MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning & Heritage
Pam Coulter, BA, RPP, Director of Community Service

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Jocelyn Wainwright at jwainwright@owensound.ca or 519 376-4440 ext. 1250.