



Heritage Vancouver

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January 24, 2022
Mayor Stewart and Vancouver City Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5V 1V4

Re: Heritage Incentive Program Update

Dear Mayor and Council,

With the update on the implementation of the Heritage Incentive Program (HIP), we would like to take this opportunity to comment on the ongoing renewal of heritage policies and procedures at the City of Vancouver.

A historic building preservation granting program such as the HIP is an important part of the City of Vancouver's overall heritage strategy. Originally made available from 2019-2022, this program for physical upgrades to and rehabilitations of historic unreinforced masonry buildings provides an important way for the public to have a physical and aesthetic connection to the past.

As several years have elapsed since the program was adopted by City Council, this may be a good opportunity to look at how the HIP can relate to the updated version of the Vancouver Heritage Program approved by City Council in March of 2020. As the HIP concludes this year, some program for historic building preservation will be necessary in the near future as part of a holistic heritage approach.

The surrounding context for how the City approaches heritage has changed significantly in recent years, particularly as identified in the 2020 Heritage Program's six drivers of change that include reconciliation with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and Urban Indigenous People, cultural redress, and a landscape approach to heritage that focuses on what makes a place. These changes make us believe that programs like HIP will need to iterate in order to support complex landscapes like Mount Pleasant and others.

In addition to adapting the program to the evolving heritage context, programs such as HIP will have to address where and how resources are allocated. The Heritage Register has always been a guiding document for programs that promote preservation in Vancouver. Its update and the work on documentation that tells the histories of the lands that Vancouver is on (Appendix C in the March 2, 2020 Vancouver Heritage Program indicates that such a document will be developed by Indigenous consultants) will become key components of the Vancouver Heritage Program. We are not aware of a completion date, but once that work is complete, it seems likely that this new document and the update of the register will necessitate the realignment of any program that supports the preservation of physical buildings.

We look forward to continued dialogue and consultation with city staff and Council on the ongoing development and implementation of the Vancouver Heritage Program and initiatives such as the Heritage Incentive Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Yuen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bill Yuen
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society