



HERITAGE BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR TEMPORARY MOVIE SETS

*Authority - Director of Planning
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The purpose of this bulletin is to outline the current procedures in dealing with Development Applications for filming affecting protected heritage buildings. Filming often takes place in the historic districts of Gastown and Chinatown, and sometimes involves protected heritage buildings elsewhere in the City. A Development Permit is required for any alterations to Protected Heritage Property even if they are temporary. Since film productions are often fast-tracked, the purpose of this bulletin to simplify and expedite the permit process for temporary alterations to Protected Heritage Property.

Which Buildings are Protected?

For reference, a map showing the location of protected buildings in Gastown and Chinatown is attached. There are over 280 other protected heritage buildings elsewhere in the city, which are often marked with a bronze plaque. To confirm the heritage status of a building, you can call Heritage Conservation Program staff at 604.873.7141, or you can also look up the address on the Heritage Register, which is on the City website:

<http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/heritage/default.htm>

How are Alterations to Protected Heritage Buildings Administered?

A Development Permit along with a Heritage Alteration Permit is required from the City to alter the exterior of a protected heritage building or a protected interior feature. This applies even if the changes are temporary, and the failure to do so can result in significant penalties. The main interest of the City is to ensure that protected heritage buildings are not damaged or altered inappropriately during the installation and removal of temporary alterations.

Permit Application Steps

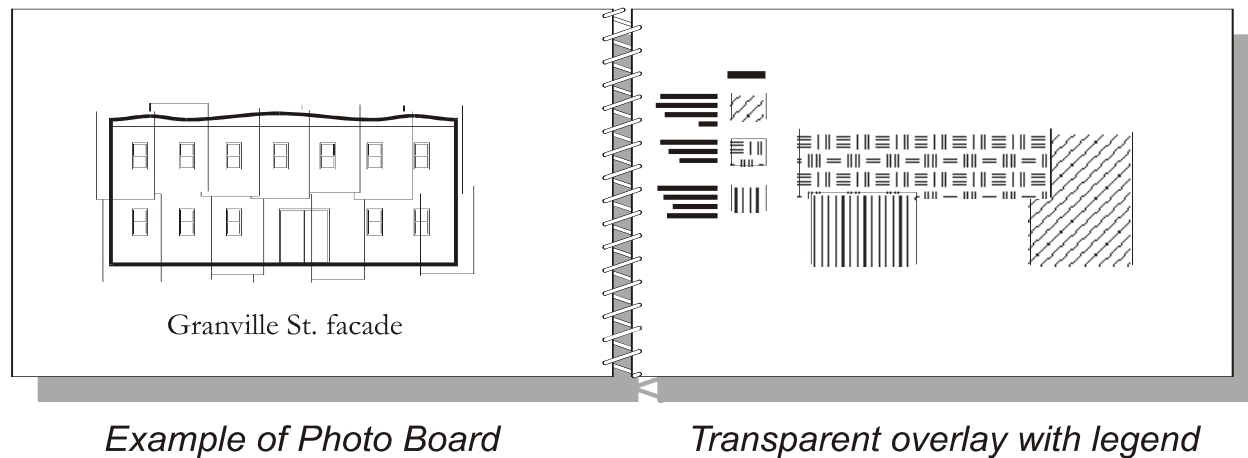
Allow at least one week for City to process application. Complex projects may require more processing time.

1(a) Document Building Before Work Begins

Multiple, close-up photos need to be compiled as a collage mounted on hardboard to document the existing exterior elevation of the building or buildings (see illustration). Sufficient detail should be provided so staff can determine if the heritage fabric has been damaged after installations and other changes have been removed. If exterior painting is proposed, the photos must provide good colour accuracy.

1(b) Document Proposed Changes

Proposed changes and temporary alterations are to be described and/or illustrated on transparent overlays to the photo-boards. Notes can be written as applicable on the overlays or the changes can be codified in a legend and the overlay indicates where each code applies (see illustration).



A sample of photo board with overlay can be viewed at:

Film and Special Events Office (604.873.7337)
Heritage Conservation Program (604.873.7056)

Detailed descriptions and drawings are required for any proposed fasteners that would attach something to the heritage building. Exterior surfaces that are already painted may be repainted. The colour and type of paint is to be specified. In most cases, it is expected that the buildings will be returned to their pre-filming appearance by the film company. Occasionally, a film company will require some changes to a building that would restore some heritage fabric to a building that had been previously lost. In those cases, the City would not object to those changes remaining after the filming. Full documentation of those changes will be necessary.

2. Letter of Assurance

A Letter of Assurance from a Certified Professional (Registered Architect or Engineer) will be required if fasteners are being attached to the building, or if original building materials, such as windows, are temporarily removed. The letter must state that the proposed interventions to the heritage fabric are all reversible and they will inspect the site before and after the film shoot.

3. Submit Development Application

The Development Application is made at the Enquiry Centre Counter, 2nd Floor of the East Wing of City Hall, 2675 Yukon Street. Submission requirements include:

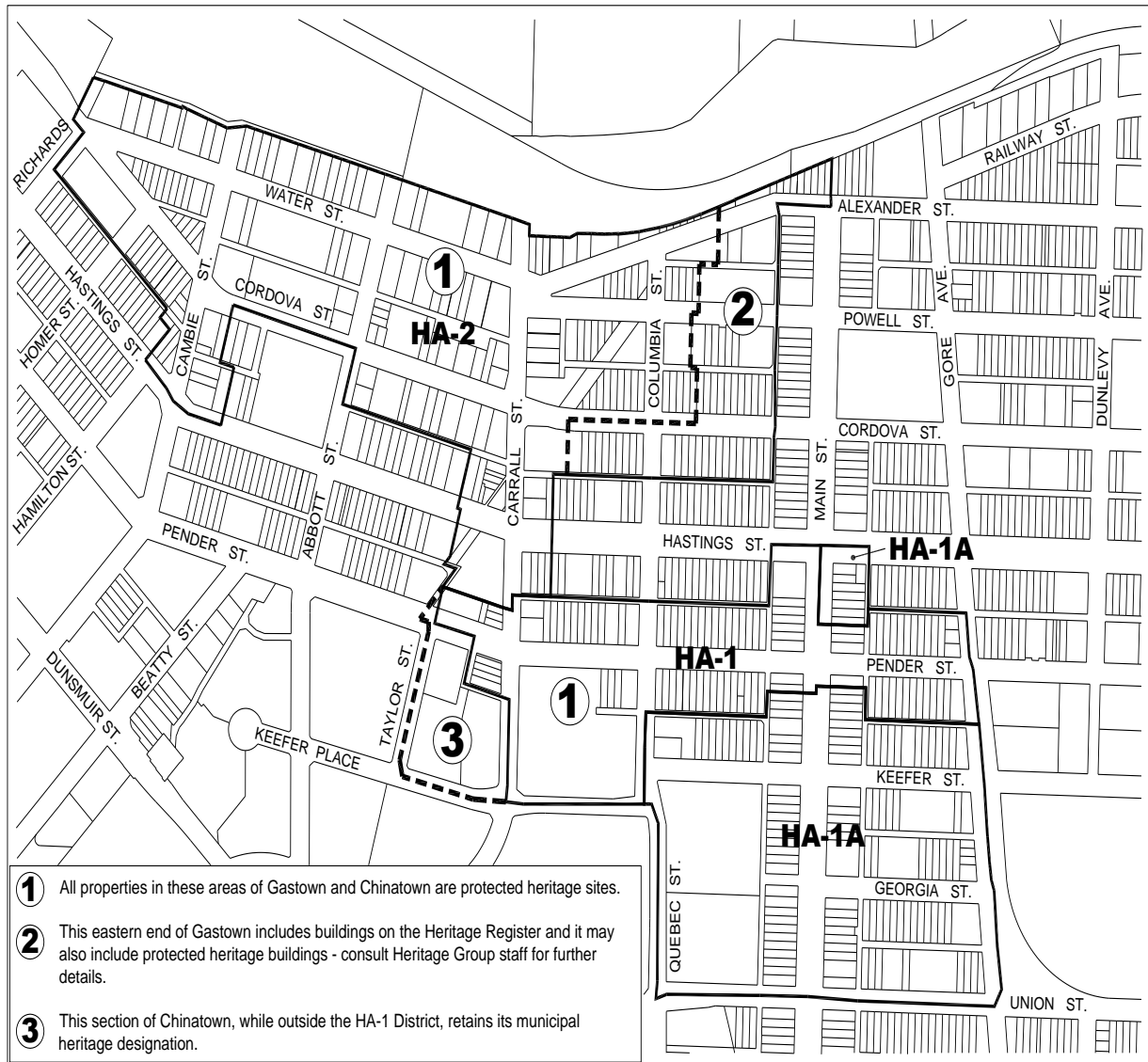
- (3) complete colour sets of documentation material [see steps 1(a) and 1(b)];
- completed Development Application form obtained at the DIAC counter;
- fee payment (payable by credit card, cash or cheque made out to the "City of Vancouver");
- Letter of Assurance, if applicable (see Step 2).

4. Provide Letter of Credit

Prior to issuing the Development Permit, the City requires a letter of credit as security in the unlikely event that the film company does not return the heritage building to its pre-filming condition. The amount of security depends on the nature and scope of work proposed and is set by the City's Film and Special Events Office in consultation with Heritage staff. It is generally an amount sufficient to hire someone to do the work plus 25% for management. The Letter of Credit is to be submitted to the Film and Special Events Office.

5. Release of Letter of Credit

After the film company completes its filming and “restoration” work, the Certified Professional is to inspect the site and submit a letter or report confirming that all changes to the heritage fabric have been restored to the pre-filming state. If the heritage building is returned to a satisfactory condition, Heritage staff will arrange for the release the Letter of Credit.



Boundaries of Gastown and Chinatown

Date: May 2006 

