



SUBJECT: 977 Unsworth Avenue Community Heritage Fund Grant application

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Community Planning Department

Report Number: PL-32-24

Wards Affected: 1

Date to Committee: May 13, 2024

Date to Council: May 21, 2024

Recommendation:

Approve the subject Community Heritage Fund application for a \$15,000 grant to restore 79 lead panel and steel sash frame windows at 977 Unsworth Ave., due to compliance with Community Heritage Fund criteria; and

Direct the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Counsel, or their delegate, to prepare the necessary Heritage Conservation Agreement (Letter of Understanding) for the owner to sign and return to the City to the satisfaction of the Director of Community Planning; and

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Heritage Conservation Agreement (Letter of Understanding) in connection with this matter.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide information, analysis and a recommendation regarding a Community Heritage Fund application for a grant to subsidize the restoration of 79 windows on the Albert Gorton & Pearl Unsworth House at 977 Unsworth Ave., a property designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Designing and delivering complete communities
 - Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
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Background and Discussion:

The subject property is located on the east side of Unsworth Avenue, between Plains Road West and Hendrie Avenue (see Appendix A Location Map). The subject property comprises the Albert Gorton & Pearl Unsworth House, a two-storey Tudor-style dwelling constructed in 1932 for businessman Albert Unsworth and designed by Hamilton architect Walter Scott. For photographs of the subject property and the restoration work taking place on site, see Appendix B Photographs.

The Albert Gorton & Pearl Unsworth House was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) in 2023 by City of Burlington By-law 42-2023.

The “multi-pane casement style windows” and the “2-storey base windows with a flat roof” are heritage attributes protected by By-law 42-2023. For the full Description of Heritage Attributes, see Appendix C to City of Burlington By-law 42-2023.

The applicant has applied for the maximum grant amount of \$15,000 from the Community Heritage Fund to subsidize the restoration of 79 windows on the Albert Gorton & Pearl Unsworth House. The application was submitted on Nov. 24, 2023. Initially, Heritage Planning staff did not require a Heritage Permit application for the proposed scope of work due to no negative visual impacts being anticipated. However, the initial assessment was reconsidered by staff, and a Heritage Permit application was ultimately required, with further information on the project included. As such, in April 2024, a corresponding Heritage Permit application was submitted for the scope of work and is currently being processed. The work began in October 2023 and is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2024.

Background on the Community Heritage Fund and Grant Application

The Burlington Community Heritage Fund (CHF) was established by Council in 1985 under By-law 128-1985 to encourage the preservation of structures designated under the OHA by providing financial assistance to property owners in the form of loans and grants. The CHF was also meant to incentivize the designation of properties of cultural heritage value or significance under the OHA. The CHF was amended in 1993 and 2014 and now provides grants of up to 25 per cent of the total eligible restoration project costs to a maximum of \$15,000, subject to specific guidelines. Per the Community Heritage Fund Info Sheet (see Appendix D), conservation of exterior heritage attributes important to the resource’s heritage value is eligible, including the conservation or restoration of windows. Loans may be provided for up to 50 per cent of total eligible restoration project costs to a maximum of \$15,000. Applicants must sign a heritage conservation agreement with the City as a condition of approval of any grant or loan application. The agreement confirms the applicant’s understanding of the terms of the grant and their acknowledgement of their obligations to maintain the heritage attributes

of their property in accordance with the designation by-law passed under the OHA and other applicable legislation.

Strategy/process/risk

Scope of work

The applicant has applied for the maximum grant amount of \$15,000 to restore 79 lead panel and steel sash frame windows at 977 Unsworth Ave. The work began in October 2023 and is anticipated to be completed by summer 2024. In accordance with grant program criteria, the applicant submitted three quotes. The applicant's preferred quote was from heritage contractor Furlan Conservation, worth approximately \$196,394:

- 1) \$347,800 (+HST) – Deer Park Restoration
- 2) \$196,394 (Approx.) – Furlan Conservation**
- 3) \$241,200 – Lower City Joinery

There are 79 heritage windows and two modern windows on the building (see Appendix E Excerpt from Proposal Prepared by Furlan Conservation), including multi-pane casement style windows and two-storey bay windows with a flat roof described as heritage attributes in By-law 42-2023. The applicant has not submitted the final invoice for the work, as the window restoration work is ongoing and anticipated to be completed by summer 2024.

Burlington Heritage Advisory Committee

The Burlington Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the scope of work at their Dec. 13, 2023 meeting and passed a motion recommending that Council support the project:

Heritage Burlington recommends that City Council approve the community heritage fund application for 977 Unsworth Avenue in the amount of \$15,000 for the restoration of the steel framed leaded glass windows.

Procedural Issue

There is one procedural issue with the application. The work was started prior to Council approval and before the applicant entered into a conservation agreement with the City. Applicants are advised to wait until after Council approval and after they enter a conservation agreement, so they can be certain of Council's support and so the City is protected from potential cost overruns and poor standards of workmanship. This order of events is implicit in the conservation agreement but not clearly stated on the Community Heritage Fund Info Sheet (see Appendix D), so staff do not consider it to be disqualifying, nor would the work beginning prior to Heritage Permit approval be disqualifying. The Community Heritage Fund grant program criteria will be reviewed soon, with recommended revisions and clarifications brought to Council for approval.

Options Considered

Option 1 – Approve the application (Recommended)

Staff and the Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee recommend this option because of the exemplary quality of the work being performed, which fits the purpose and intent of the Community Heritage Fund program. Council could choose this option if in agreement.

Option 2 – Decline the application (Not recommended)

Staff and the Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee do not support this option. As noted, the quality of the work being performed is exemplary and fits the purpose and intent of the Community Heritage Fund program. Council could choose this option if not in agreement that the subject application meets the CHF criteria.

Financial Matters:

As noted above, the CHF was established in 1985 with original contributions of \$35,000 from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture and \$25,000 from the City of Burlington. This original \$60,000 has increased over time as interest has accrued and additional infusions of cash have occurred, including from Community Benefits under Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.

The balance of the CHF was \$273,510 as of Dec. 31, 2023. However, this balance does not yet reflect the disbursement for a recently approved grant and loan application for 327 Townsend Avenue ([PL-68-23](#)), which will reduce the outstanding balance for the reserve fund by \$90,000 to \$183,510.

If the subject application is approved for a total grant amount of \$15,000 and the grant and loan total amount of \$90,000 related to [PL-68-23](#) are disbursed, the remaining balance of \$168,510 will be enough to accommodate the approval of subsequent applications for the foreseeable future.

The owner of 977 Unsworth Ave. has applied for a heritage property tax rebate for 2023. The amount of a Heritage Property Tax Rebate for residential properties is forty per cent (40%) of the taxes levied for City, region and school purposes. Receiving a heritage tax rebate does not affect the owners' eligibility for a heritage grant or loan.

Source of Funding

Community Heritage Reserve Fund.

Other Resource Impacts

Not applicable.

Climate Implications:

Historic Building Material Reuse

Research has shown that building reuse almost always offers environmental savings over demolition and new construction, and that it can take between 10 and 80 years for a new, energy-efficient building to overcome negative climate impacts created through the new construction process (see [The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse](#) report). The retention and retrofitting of built heritage resources and historic building materials (including heritage attributes such as windows), coupled with responsible material choices, will likely have positive climate implications for the City of Burlington.

Engagement Matters:

Staff presented the grant application to the Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee on Dec. 13, 2023. Staff reviewed the grant program criteria and answered questions from committee members regarding the subject Community Heritage Fund application. The committee passed the following motion:

Heritage Burlington recommends that City Council approve the community heritage fund application for 977 Unsworth Avenue in the amount of \$15,000 for the restoration of the steel framed leaded glass windows.

Conclusion:

In staff's opinion, the subject application for a \$15,000 grant from the Community Heritage Fund meets a key criterion requiring that windows which are heritage attributes (protected features) be conserved or restored. The Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee believes that the objective of the grant program is met by the application and staff recommend that Council approve the application for the reasons outlined above.

Respectfully submitted,

Chloe Richer, MCIP, RPP, CAHP
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Appendices:

- A. Location Map
- B. Photographs
- C. City of Burlington By-law 42-2023
- D. Community Heritage Fund Info Sheet
- E. Excerpt from Proposal Prepared by Furlan Conservation

Notifications:

Planner will provide contact information.

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.