



HARRIETT FULLER RUST FAÇADE PROGRAM

The City of Bloomington has committed itself to the continued revitalization of its central business district. This commitment manifests itself in implementation of the Downtown Bloomington Vision and Strategic Plan, the intent of which is to define specific strategies and initiatives that would promote and sustain the recent investment and revitalization activity that has already turned the downtown around. A vital component to the success of this redevelopment effort is the involvement of private property owners. The City hopes to encourage private investment in commercial buildings through a program which offers financial incentives to businesses to improve the appearance, safety, structural integrity, and the quality of their storefronts and buildings as a whole.

BACKGROUND

This grant program is named after Harriett Fuller Rust in recognition of her many contributions to the community. Many Bloomington area organizations have benefited from Mrs. Rust's time and energy over the years. She served with many community service organizations including 37 years on the United Way of McLean County board of directors, as a board member and president of Victory Hall Home for Boys, the Advisory Council to the Bloomington Board of Education, Illinois Shakespeare Society Vice President, Illinois Wesleyan University President's Club, president, and the McLean County Historical Society board of directors. Mrs. Rust's can-do spirit was seen in the aftermath of a fire that damaged the McLean County Historical Society in 1972 and participated in raising \$320,000 to develop a new museum facility. As board president, she accomplished the library material preservation program, led the museum into national accreditation and supported the project to convert the Old Courthouse building to house the museum. Mrs. Rust is the recipient of many awards, including: the city of Bloomington's "Preservationist of the Year Award" (1995) and "Illinois Museum Trustee of the Year" (1998).

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The City of Bloomington allocates money in the General Fund each fiscal year, which is May 1 to April 30, for the Harriett Fuller Rust Façade Program. ***These grants are provided to property or business owners in the target area in recognition of the positive impact that individual façade renovations can have on the overall appearance and quality of their storefronts.*** In addition, the City recognizes that the structural integrity of the façade and base structure that affects the façade can greatly impact the long- term sustainability of the Central Business District.

TARGET AREA

A map indicating the program's target area is presented as **Exhibit "A"**. The building for which assistance through the façade program is sought must be located in the target area.

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Property owners or business owners can receive grants up to 50% of the total cost of qualified façade rehabilitation, repair or restoration, and/or structural work, with a **maximum grant** amount of **\$25,000** per project or **\$50,000** per project for a building the Historic Preservation Commission determines is in an extreme and dangerous state of disrepair.

- Only one (1) grant per fiscal year is allowed per building regardless of the number of property or business owners for such building.
- Any one Applicant may request up to two (2) grants per year but the grants must be for separate buildings.

The total grant amount as limited above may be increased up to an additional \$20,000 to pay for documented costs associated with a structural inspection(s), analysis and reporting of a building to determine its safety and structural integrity. This additional funding shall be used only to pay for such inspection(s), analysis and reporting and not for improvements or changes to the building or site, however such costs will be funded at 100% and are not limited to the 50% rule described above.

Projects to improve ADA Compliance may be eligible for up to 75% coverage of the project cost, up to a maximum grant amount of \$50,000. Grants to enhance the accessible means of building ingress or egress shall not count towards other maximum grant amounts and shall be given as a one-time incentive.

It is not the purpose of the program to finance ongoing improvements which may be considered part of the building's regular maintenance. Each eligible improvement will be funded by the program only once every 15 years. However, the Applicant may present a project in phases, with completion scheduled within two years. Each phase shall involve improvements not included in any other phase of the project and reimbursement may be approved for each phase. Each phase requires a separate application and funding approval.

CRITERIA USED FOR GRANT APPROVAL

The grant program is administered by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission (Commission). Preference will be given to structures of architectural or historic significance, as determined by the Commission and guided by standards used to judge eligibility for the National Register of Historic Properties. Properties lacking architectural or historic significance may be deemed eligible for the program if proposed changes will create a façade typical of the time period in which the building was constructed.

Approval is contingent upon the Commission's finding that the grant application is in substantial compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Commission reserves the right to deny any grant application, based upon the applicant failing to demonstrate the proposed project will be in accordance with the City of Bloomington Preservation Plan and the City of Bloomington Zoning Ordinance.

In reviewing the grant applications, the Historic Preservation Commission will prioritize the following criteria:

1. Preserving a historic element.
2. Maintenance of a historic element.
3. Projects that improve ADA Compliance for a historic or non-historic property.
4. Maintenance of a non-historic element.
5. Restoring a historic element.
6. Restoring a non-historic element.

OWNERSHIP

Eligible applicants may be the owner of a building or a business in the target area. Business owners who are tenants of a building for which improvements are planned must provide written consent from the building owner for all proposed improvements. The tenant applicant must have a least a five-year lease at the location in order to apply under the program.

Commercial buildings are those with commercial or office uses, at least on part of the first floor. Residential, commercial and office uses are allowed above the main floor. Properties whose partial or entire use was residential on all of the first floor on the date this program came into existence, shall be eligible for the grants as determined on a case-by-case basis.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The Harriett Fuller Rust Façade Program is geared to façade improvements ranging from minor repairs and painting to complete façade renovation and structural improvements needed to prevent the façade from safety failures.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior improvements: brick cleaning and tuck pointing, window restoration, painting, signs, window display area remodeling, exterior lighting, window and/or door replacement, awnings, restoration or original architectural features and other improvements visible from the street and have a positive appearance of the building.
- Grants may also be used for non-façade work where the façade, and the building as a whole, are in a dangerous or severe state of disrepair. Examples of the non-façade work include but are not limited to repairs or replacements of roofs, elimination of sidewalk vaults, chimney, foundations and other structural components, drainage systems, and tuck pointing.
- Detailed architectural design work.
- Structural inspection, analysis and reporting of a building to determine its safety and structural integrity by a licensed Architect and/or structural engineer.
- Asbestos and lead paint removal.
- Permanent exterior accommodations as needed to enhance the accessible means of egress of the building.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements (exterior only). These projects must be reviewed by a Licensed Structural Engineer or Architect prior to submission.

INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements are ineligible under the Harriett Fuller Rust Façade Program:

- Substantial reconstruction unless the work is needed to maintain the integrity of the building as determined by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Building expansion.
- Interior remodeling (except window display areas).
- Sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting of brick will not be funded because of the destructive nature of such blasting, nor will the program participate in any project which includes sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting.
- Purchase of furnishings, equipment, or other personal property which does not become a part of the real estate.
- Incomplete projects from previous fiscal year grants.
- Improvements completed or in progress prior to application for the grant.
- “Sweat equity” labor provided by the applicant, the owner, or any other non-skilled laborer cannot be charged against this grant.
- Projects to improve ADA compliance if alterations to a qualified historic building or facility to achieve program accessibility would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- The Harriett Fuller Rust Façade Grant application must be filed in the Economic & Community Development Department on the form provided by the Department. The Commission will attempt to act upon a grant request within the published timeline for that year’s application process. However, the Commission may request additional information from the applicant or delay final action on the grant request for other reasons including the need for more detailed drawings or specifications. If more applications are received than current funding levels will allow, the Commission reserves the right to prioritize the applications on the basis of the historical significance of the building and site, the, the extent of the work, the level of private funding and the relative impact of the proposed improvements on the area.
- All funded projects must be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- All applications shall include a scope of work specifying the methods and materials to be used for the project(s), historic images of the property (if applicable) and, and at least two (2) estimates for the project. If the Applicant or a related business is one of the bidding contractors then three (3) estimates are required. **All contractors and subcontractors retained shall pay laborers, workers and mechanics no less than the current prevailing rate of wagers (consisting of hourly cash wages plus fringe benefits) for work of similar character in McLean County as covered under the Prevailing Wage Act.** Any Architect selected by the applicant shall prepare a design plan and an outline work specification after on-site inspections and personal interviews with the applicant have been conducted by the architect.

- Recipients of any historic preservation program funds must agree to observe all applicable federal, state and local laws pertaining to the use of grant funds, including the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, and all subject definitions, restrictions, and exemptions.
- All grant recipients will be required to register as a vendor with the City of Bloomington through the City Vendor Self Service (VSS) website. Registration in advance is recommended.
- After the design and outline specifications are completed and submitted, the Applicant may meet with the City Planner, and the City Building Inspector, to discuss the proposed improvements, cost estimates, and any recommended adjustment to the scope, or the methods and materials to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- The Applicant may then choose one of the following courses of action: 1) the Applicant may elect to revise the design plan and possibly delay the application review, or 2) proceed without revisions for the review by the Historic Preservation Commission, or 3) withdraw the application for funding.
- The Commission will review the grant request according to the attached "Annual Funding Timeline." However, the Commission may request additional information from the applicant or delay final action on the grant request for other reasons.
- The applicant shall notify the City Planner as to the contractor selected, and the anticipated date(s) of construction. The Applicant may not serve as his/her own contractor except in those instances where the applicant is an owner or partner in a company regularly doing business as a building contractor and in the opinion of the Commission such company has the capacity and skill to perform the proposed improvements. In such instances, the owner/contractor shall be required to obtain a third project estimate.
- Required building permits must be obtained before work begins. Questions regarding permit requirements should be directed to the City's Economic and Community Development Department (Building Safety Division).
- After all necessary permits have been issued, work may proceed. All change orders must be approved by the City Planner in writing and may be referred to the Commission for additional review. **NOTE: project approval through this funding program and provisions of a City Building Permit(s) does not preclude the requirement of approvals from other agencies, including, but not limited, to the Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District.**
- All funded projects must be completed within one (1) year from the date of the Commission meeting in which the grant is awarded, or the grant will automatically be revoked. The Commission reserves the right to allow a reasonable extension of this time limit upon receiving a written request from the Applicant.
- After project completion, documentation including copies of all bills, receipts, prevailing wage statements, and proof of payment associated with the funded project(s) shall be submitted by the applicant to the City Planner to process the release of funds. In addition,

documentation is required that such project(s) have received a final inspection and approval from the City's Economic and Community Development Department, if required.

- If all of the requirements listed above are satisfied, payment will be issued by the City for the amount approved by the Historic Preservation Commission or for a lesser amount if the actual costs are documented to be less than the original estimate.
- Payment will be issued only upon completion of all work items as originally approved. Major changes or elimination of certain items in the approved design plan must be approved by the Commission.

DEFINITIONS

- **FAÇADE:** The front or main face of a building or other exterior wall which is visible from a public street.
- **DESIGN PLAN:** Documentation required to describe the physical dimensions of the property, the materials and standards to be used during construction or repair, and the ways in which the materials and standards meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. A design plan may include 'as constructed' drawings.
- **MAINTENANCE:** Housekeeping and **routine and cyclic work scheduled to mitigate wear and deterioration** without altering the appearance of the resource, repair or replacement-in-kind of broken or worn-out elements, parts, or surfaces so as to keep the existing appearance and function of the site of structure.
- **PRESERVATION:** The act or process of applying **measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property**. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.
- **RESTORATION:** The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the **removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period**. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.
- **STOREFRONT:** The front side of a store or store building abutting a public right-of-way.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Greg Koos, HPC Chair



Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison

ANNUAL FUNDING TIMELINE (MODEL)

January 1

- Application window opens for upcoming Fiscal Year (FYxx = 5/1/xx - 4/30/xx).

March 31

- Application window closes for upcoming FY.

April 15

- Grant recipients should have submitted all financial records related to the project, or have requested an extension in writing, so that they can be funded in accordance with the grant agreement.
- All applications must be complete, including any additional information requested upon submission of the original application.

April 30

- Funding period ends for previously approved grants.
- All projects must be completed by this point, with exceptions for those that were granted extensions in accordance with the Rust Program Procedures.

May 1

- New FY begins.
- Previous FY PO and grant awards expire.
- Review of complete applications at first Regular Meeting of the HPC in the new FY.
- Projects can begin as soon as the grant has been awarded. Applicants will have one year from that date to complete the project.

June 1

- Last day to submit expenses for payment from the previous FY POs/grant awards.

June 15

- Grant applicants notified of status / Grant Agreements sent.

A final schedule, adjusted for business days, holidays, and other relevant restrictions will be published at least 15 days prior to the annual deadline for funding applications.

A second window of applications and reviews may be opened in the fall, subject to the availability of remaining funds. Public Notice and the duration of each step in the timeline will follow the same general structure as the outline above.

CORRESPONDENCE

Economic & Community Development Department
115 E. Washington Street, Suite 201, Bloomington, 61701
planning@cityblm.org
Phone: 309-434-2226 x 5

Exhibit A

