

CITY OF GREENVILLE

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Last update August 2011

INTRODUCTION:

The architectural quality of Greenville's center city area is important to the entire city, its history, image, and economy. Proper improvements to the exterior appearances of individual buildings will help develop the appropriate image and foster revitalization. Therefore, it is important that an organized and coordinated approach to exterior improvements be followed.

The City of Greenville has developed the following guidelines to provide a coordinated approach to property owners, tenants, architects, and contractors involved in exterior improvements or rehabilitations of buildings in the center city area. The guidelines will be used by staff of the Community Development Department in evaluating applications for grants. Applicants who follow the guidelines can ensure that their projects are eligible to utilize available center city rehabilitation incentives and enhance the image of Greenville's center city as a special place to work, shop and socialize. This grant program is available to eligible property owners and tenants within the bounds of the target areas highlighted in the map on the following page.

The Facade Improvement Grant Program (FIG) is an opportunity to obtain grant funds. Applications will be considered on the basis of available funds and compliance with the Design Guidelines. Both commercial and non-profit entities are eligible to participate in this program.

FIG applications are considered under an "open cycle" program, meaning that interested parties may submit applications at any time during the year provided that funds are available. All applications for the FIG Program are due in the City of Greenville Community Development Department Office (Phone 252-329-4486), located at 201 W. Fifth Street, twenty (20) work-days prior to the next regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission at which the application is to be considered.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Facade Improvement Grant Program is to provide an economic incentive to:

- 1) Complete substantial renovations to building facades within the core of the City's central business district ("facade" is defined as "the face of a building; that is, the front, side or rear elevation of a building"; first priority will be given to the street and or public parking area fronts of buildings) and;
- 2) Encourage good design projects that capitalize on rehabilitation of the original fabric or design of existing properties; and
- 3) Preserve the unique character of Greenville's historic central business district.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT: ELIGIBLE AREAS



ELIGIBILITY:

- 1) Any owner or tenant of a building within the described target area is eligible for the facade grant. Buildings that are solely used as a private dwelling are not eligible unless originally functioning as a commercial building and later converted to residential use.
- 2) Owners and tenants may request incentive grants separately; however, any tenant must have the owner's written permission attached to the application, and only one application per facade is eligible for approval (subdivided buildings will be reviewed according to building code specifications).
- 3) If a building or qualified unit is occupied by one tenant occupant, the maximum number of applications is one per facade. If a building has multiple independent units, each unit, with a separate entrance, which has a wall that qualifies as an exterior facade, may make separate application on the basis of one application per facade. Where a single tenant occupies multiple qualified units, each unit shall qualify to apply for grant funds. See attached examples. For buildings with multiple tenant spaces and one tenant has applied for FIG funds for a portion of the building, the proposed work should be consistent with the historic fabric of the building. If a portion of a building has been improved with FIG funds, subsequent applications for the remaining portions of the building should be consistent with the prior grant work.
- 4) All rehabilitation design proposals will: meet code requirements of the City of Greenville; meet construction and material guidelines established by the Community Development Department and adhere to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see below for eligible and ineligible activities; the design guidelines and standards can be found at the end of this program description).
- 5) Any exterior renovation proposal--from an entire facade rehabilitation to maintenance items, such as repainting or the replacement of building parts--is eligible for funding, but top priority will be given to projects that would make a highly visible contribution to the enhancement of downtown Greenville. Simple sign changes are not eligible.

Examples of projects eligible for funding include:

- a) Cleaning of brick store fronts (chemical stripping, water wash, scraping);
- b) Painting;
- c) Repair/replacement of non-historic doors and/or windows;
- d) Installation of approved awnings (required encroachment agreement with City);
- e) Repointing of brick;
- f) Structural repairs;
- g) Installation of appropriate signs as part of an overall project;
- h) Authentic reconstruction and replacement of original architectural details; and
- i) Removal of false fronts.

Examples of projects that cannot be funded, either in whole or part by the grant program:

- a) Sandblasting of exterior bricks, which causes them to deteriorate;
 - b) Removal of historic features; and
 - c) Roof repairs.
- 6) City/county taxes for a building where grant funds are requested cannot be delinquent. For any building with delinquent city/county taxes for years prior to the grant cycle year, the owner(s) must attach a receipt to show ad valorem taxes are current or must attach a copy of the work-out agreement with the Pitt County Tax Collector's Office.¹
- 7) Commercial and non-profit entities are eligible to participate in this program.

FUNDING:

Based on the availability of funds, recipients of a facade grant will receive a maximum \$1 matching grant for each \$2 expended by the owner/tenant on approved facade improvements consistent with the goals of the facade grant program. Depending on the availability of funds, the maximum grant that may be awarded per facade is \$5,000 on a minimum of \$10,000 of expended facade improvements/repairs by the owner/tenant.²

PROCESS FOR RECEIVING GRANT:

- 1) Applicant must attend a Grant Workshop sponsored by the Community Development Department, or have attended a past workshop. Attendance at a previous workshop must be capable of being verified.
- 2) Applicant completes application with owner's signature (consent of mortgage holder or lien holder may be required) and returns it to the Facade Grant Coordinator. Applicant must also complete and sign the IRS W-9 and other financial forms attached to the application. The applicant is encouraged to seek the services of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), including restoration consultations, before an application is completed and designs are formulated. The office is located at 117 West Fifth Street, Greenville, North Carolina. Appointments are recommended and can be arranged by calling (252) 830-6580.
- 3) Two professional estimates on cost, picture of the façade, a diagram and a paragraph illustrating the proposed work are to be included with the application.
- 4) Applications will be reviewed by staff of the Community Development Department to ensure completeness. The Design Review Committee of the Historic Preservation

¹ Amended as of 1/25/05 (approved by City Manager & City Council)

² Amended as of 8/11/08, 8/08/11 (approved by City Manager & City Council)

Commission (HPC) will review all FIG applications and make recommendations to the HPC. The entire HPC will make recommendations for the applications. Those applications will be forwarded to the City Manager's Office for final approval or denial. The City Manager reserves the right to determine the number of applications per structure. The improvements must adhere to the Design Guidelines noted above and the Secretary of Interior Standards. This review may include a credit check on the applicant.

If a member of the HPC has or may have a personal or financial interest in a FIG application, the member will recuse him or herself from participating or voting on any application.

- 5) A notification letter will be sent to applicants concerning the approval or denial of the application. A contract form will be included with the approval letter. Applicants have 30 days from the date of the contract to apply for a building permit or have a plan in the Site Plan Review process, if required, for the approved work. Applicants must provide a copy of their building permit to the Community Development Department. Grant applications for Locally Designated Landmarks should include an application(s) for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) or a Minor Work Certificate of Appropriateness (MWCOA). COA's and MWCOA's are required for any type of exterior work on Locally Designated Landmarks. The Design Guidelines provide a list of exterior work that qualifies as a MWCOA. If the proposed grant work is not listed as a MWCOA, a COA is required.
- 6) Contracts must be signed **BEFORE** any work begins.
- 7) All approved work must be completed within nine (9) months of the date on the contract. Failure to meet this date may result in the loss of the grant.
- 8) Upon project completion, copies of paid statements and canceled checks along with photos of the completed work must be submitted to the City of Greenville to claim reimbursement. Failure to submit a reimbursement request along with paid statements and canceled checks, etc., within 6-months of the date of project completion may result in forfeiture of potential reimbursement funds.
- 9) The Facade Grant Coordinator (Community Development Department employee or consultant) and the SHPO staff (upon request) will inspect work completed and request checks to be issued for the amount of the grant or one-half the actual cost of the project, whichever is less, provided the work is accomplished in accordance with the agreement.
- 10) A building or qualified unit may receive no more than two (2) grant awards for the same façade within two consecutive fiscal years, thereafter, applicants may apply for grant funds for the same façade after two years. For example, the front façade of a building receives a grant award for removal of a false front in January 2000, and in September 2000 the same façade of the same building receives a grant award to paint and install a canvas awning. This façade of the building is not eligible for additional grant funds until the expiration of a 2-year period from the date of the last award.

REQUESTING AN EXTENSION:

- 1) Applicants may be granted an extension, upon written request, if they have a compelling reason(s) based on extenuating circumstances for why they were unable to complete the work within the contracted period.
- 2) Upon transfer of a property or business from one party to another, the new property or business owner is eligible to assume an *active* façade grant award attached to that property, upon written request indicating that said property or business owner understands the terms of the FIG contract and will assume any responsibilities pertaining therein. Transfer of ownership of a property or business is not sufficient grounds, by itself, for an extension to be granted; if the previous owner failed to complete the work within the contracted period and the new property or business owner cannot provide a compelling reason(s) based on extenuating circumstances for why the work was not completed, an extension will not be granted. However, the new property or business owner would be encouraged to resubmit a grant proposal for the facade.
- 3) In the event that an application is granted an extension, the façade associated with that application will be considered to have received a grant award in the same year in which the extension was granted for purposes of determining whether a façade is eligible for additional future grants. For example, if an application was originally awarded funding in January of 2010 and then was granted an extension through May of 2011, the façade associated with that award would be considered to have effectively received its Façade Improvement Grant award during 2011. During the following Fiscal Year (which would begin July 1, 2012), the applicant who had received the extension would then be eligible to apply for another façade grant for the same façade, but it would be considered his second grant within two consecutive fiscal years (see above: Process for Receiving Grant, Item 10).

FACADE IMPROVEMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES:

The following standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

- 1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- 2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

- 3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
- 4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
- 6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- 7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
- 8) Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
- 9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Construction Methods and Materials of the Community Development Department

- 1) New construction, additions, and remodeling of existing buildings should maintain established proportion and spacing of window openings.
- 2) The quality of building materials varies widely, and it is the quality of the finish materials and their application that determines compatibility. Use the highest quality facing materials possible. Materials that are compatible in quality, color, texture, finish, and dimension to those existing in the project area are encouraged.
- 3) Color should coordinate with neighboring buildings. The more intense hues of a color are discouraged. The use of more than one vivid color per building is discouraged. The use of colors that are disharmonious with other colors used on the building or found on

the adjacent buildings is discouraged. Contrasting colors that accent architectural details and entrances are encouraged.

- 4) The retention and repair of existing cornices is strongly encouraged whenever possible. The re-creation of missing cornices should be done with care, using historic photographs as a guide.
- 5) Sign guidelines for the central business district have been developed to prevent visual clutter and to improve general visual quality. Within these guidelines, individuality and creativity are encouraged. Signs should relate to each other through quality, not necessarily through the use of uniform materials, lettering, or size. All signs are controlled by the City of Greenville's sign ordinance. Good signs have the following characteristics: legibility, clarity, attractiveness, durability, and good placement. Most buildings are designed with a defined sign space. The location of signs of appropriate size in these spaces is strongly encouraged. Plastic, illuminated signs are strongly discouraged. Consider attached, flat, or hanging signs lit with outside direct lighting. All signs should meet code requirements for materials, size, projection, etc. Hanging or projecting signs or hand-painted window signs of good quality are encouraged. (Sign permit may be required – check with City zoning official).
- 6) Awnings should be related to the shape and color of the building. First floor awnings should terminate no higher than one (1) foot below the second floor windows. Metal canopies are strongly discouraged, and their removal and replacement with fabric awnings are strongly encouraged. If installed or retained, they should be designed or treated in a manner that adds to the visual quality of the building. All awnings must meet code requirements for size, materials, projection, etc.

GRANT FUND AVAILABILITY NOTIFICATION:

An advertisement will be placed in the City Page of The Daily Reflector, and fliers or postcards will be distributed to businesses within the grant area and Uptown Greenville to notify potential recipients that grant funds are available as provided for in the adopted city budget.