HARRIETT FULLER RUST FACADE PROGRAM

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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 of the area through a program which offers financial incentives to businesses to improve the appearance, safety, structural integrity and quality of their storefronts and buildings as a whole.

BACKGROUND

This grant program is named after Harriet 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 get the museum back on its feet. As board president, she accomplished the library material restoration program, expanded the museum's size, and acquired a 30-year lease on 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).

The City of Bloomington has budgeted $100,000 for the fiscal year, which is May 1 to April 30, for the Harriet Fuller Rust Facade Program. These grants are provided to property or business owners in the target area in recognition of the positive impact that individual facade renovations can have on the overall appearance and quality of their storefronts. In addition, the City recognizes that the structural integrity of the facade and base structure that affects the facade 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 facade 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 $20,000 is to be used only to pay for such inspection(s), analysis and reporting and not for any improvements or changes to the building or site, however such costs will be funded at 100 percent and are not limited to the 50 percent rule described above.

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 fifteen (15) years. However, the applicant may present the project in phases with completion scheduled within two years. Each phase shall involve improvements not included in any other phase of the project. Reimbursement may then be approved for each phase. Each phase requires a separate application and funding in each fiscal year.

CRITERIA USED FOR GRANT APPROVAL

The grant program is administered by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission. Preference will be given to structures of architectural or historic significance as determined by the Commission. Properties lacking architectural or historic significance may be deemed eligible for the program if proposed changes will create a facade typical of the time period in which the building was constructed.

Approval is contingent upon the Historic Preservation Commission finding that the grant application is in substantial compliance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

The Historic Preservation 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 grants The Historic Preservation Commission will prioritize the following criteria:

1. Preserving a historic property.
2. Restoring a historic property.
3. Preserving a non-historic property.
4. Restoring a non-historic property.
5. Maintenance of a historic property.
6. Maintenance of a non-historic property.
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 prevailing wage. See the State of Illinois’s web site at http://www.state.il.us/agency/idol/RATES/RATES.HTM

**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 Harriet Fuller Rust Facade Program is geared to facade improvements ranging from minor repairs and painting to complete facade renovation and structural improvements needed to prevent the facade from safety failures.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- 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. One or any number of these improvements may be included in one grant application. Although these grants will have a primary emphasis on facade and storefronts, the grants may also be used for non-facade work where the facade, and the building as a whole, are in a dangerous or severe state of disrepair. Examples of the non-facade 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 is an eligible cost under the program.
- 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.

**INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS**

The following improvements are ineligible under the Harriet 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).
- Nonstructural interior work.
• Sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting of brick will not be funded under the program nor will the program participate in any project which includes sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting. Sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting will not be funded because of the destructive nature of such 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.

Note the applicant and his or her contractors must pay prevailing wages and are required to submit documentation substantiating such.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

A. The property or business owner may meet with the Downtown Bloomington Association (DBA), the City Building Inspector and the City Planner to review conceptual plans for a building.

B. The Harriet Fuller Rust Façade Grant application must be filed in the Community Development Department on the form provided by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission will attempt to act upon a grant request within forty-five (45) days from the date that it is received by the City Planner. 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 Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission reserves the right to prioritize the applications on the basis of the historical significance of the building and site, the extent of the work, the level of private funding and the relative impact of the proposed improvements on the area.

C. The restoration or historic rehabilitation project must be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

D. All application materials shall include a design plan, an outline work specification prepared by an architect selected by the applicant, and at least two (2) estimates for the project. 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. The architect selected by the applicant will 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.

E. After the design and outline specifications are completed and submitted, the applicant may meet with the Downtown Bloomington Association, the City Planner, and the City Building Inspector to discuss the proposed improvements and cost estimates.
F. 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 3) withdraw from the program at this time.

G. The Historic Preservation Commission meets on the third Thursday of each month. The application must be
submitted at least three (3) weeks ahead a regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation
Commission. Only complete applications will proceed with a grant review. The City Planner will forward
complete applications to the DBA. The DBA will review grant applications and determine compliance with
the Association’s philosophy and goals. The DBA shall provide to the Historic Preservation Commission, a
recommendation approving or denying, in whole or in part, the application as presented. The Downtown
Bloomington Association Director or their representative may present to the Historic Preservation
Commission their review of the grant in person or in writing.

H. Then the City Planner will forward the application along with any review comments from the DBA to the
Historic Preservation Commission.

I. The Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission will review the grant request at its next regularly
scheduled meeting after the application is received by the City of Bloomington Department of Planning and
Code Enforcement. However, the Commission may request additional information from the applicant or
delay final action on the grant request for other reasons. If more detailed drawings or specifications are
required, the applicant has the following options: 1) the applicant may retain the services of the architect
who prepared the design plan, or 2) the applicant may choose to hire a different architect of his or her own
choice.

J. The applicant shall notify the DBA and the City Planner as to the contractor selected, and the anticipate
date 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 Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission such company has the capacity
and skill to perform the proposed improvements.

K. **Required building permits must be obtained before work begins.** Questions regarding permit
requirements should be directed to the City’s Community Development Department (Building Safety
Division).

L. After all necessary permits have been issued, work may proceed. All change orders must be approved by
the Downtown Bloomington Association and the City Planner in writing.

M. **The restoration or historic rehabilitation project must be completed within one (1) year from the date of
the Bloomington Historic Preservation 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 to do so.

N. After project completion documents, including copies of all bills, receipts, prevailing wage statements and
cancelled checks associated with restoration or historic rehabilitation project shall be submitted by the
applicant to the City Planner for approval by the City Council prior to the release of any funds. In addition,
such documents shall include evidence that such project has received a final inspection and approval from
the City’s Community Development Department. The project must be 100% complete and the Building Inspector shall make a final on-site inspection of such completed project prior to the release of any grant funds for such project.

O. If all of the requirements listed above are satisfied, a check will be issued by the City of Bloomington, Illinois only for the amount approved by the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission or for a lesser amount if the actual costs are documented to be less than the original estimate.

P. **NOTE**: 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 Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission. Rust grant recipients have one year to complete their projects. After receiving an award the recipient should register as a vendor with the City of Bloomington on our [Vendor Self Service website](#) to get set up for reimbursement. Click here to view our [Registration Guide](#) to assist you in the registering process.

**DEFINITIONS**

**FACADE**
The front or main face of a building or other exterior wall which is visible from a public street.

**STOREFRONT**
The front side of a store or store building abutting a public right-of-way.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

City of Bloomington  
City Planner  
Planning and Code Enforcement Department  
P.O. Box 3157  
Bloomington, IL 61702-3157

Phone: 309-434-2341
## Appendix A: Meeting Dates and Submission Deadlines

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