



# HERITAGE CONSERVATION

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### **What is Heritage Planning?**

The built environment is evidence of our past that enriches and informs our quality of life. Heritage staff work as part of the City Wide Policy & Integration division in the planning department to identify, protect and manage Calgary's historic resources. The team is guided by the Calgary Heritage Strategy and provides heritage conservation expertise to internal and external stakeholders.

### **What is the Calgary Heritage Authority?**

The Calgary Heritage Authority (CHA) was established by the Province of Alberta Calgary Heritage Authority Act to advise City Council on heritage conservation issues. The CHA advises Council on all matters relating to heritage resources in Calgary, evaluates potential heritage sites for inclusion on the Inventory of Historic Resources and promotes public awareness of Calgary's heritage. The CHA currently operates with two committees, the Evaluation and Review Committee and the Public Awareness Committee.

The CHA comprises 12 members of the public who are appointed by Council – four of whom are appointed each year for a three year term. Heritage planning staff serve as a non-voting professional resource. The CHA membership includes citizens with experience, education and interest in heritage conservation, architecture, urban planning, local history/heritage, communications, public and stakeholder engagement, fund development, and non-profit governance.

### **What makes a property a "Historic Resource"?**

A building, structure or landscape may be considered historically valuable for a variety of reasons. Simply being "old" is not used as a measure. Historic resources are assessed based on a set of nine values ranging from architectural value, significant person, unique construction methods and even symbolic value. These values may be attributed to the resource at a community or city-wide level. Sites reviewed according to this Council-approved policy are then added to a publicly accessible on-line inventory ([www.Calgary.ca/heritageinventory](http://www.Calgary.ca/heritageinventory)). Conservation of these sites is considered to be to the greater benefit of Calgarians.

### **What is the "Inventory"?**

The "Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources" is a list of the sites that have been evaluated by the Calgary Heritage Authority according to the Council-approved policy. The Inventory includes a broad cross section of Calgary's built heritage ranging from the Calgary Tower to a simple farm house in Edworthy Park.

All inventory sites are listed online at [www.calgary.ca/heritageinventory](http://www.calgary.ca/heritageinventory) and can be searched by key word, community and event architectural style. Where applications warrant, citizen, city staff and the Heritage planning team uses the inventory to identify and understand the historic value of a site.

### **How does a property get on the Inventory?**

There are many sites in Calgary which merit inclusion on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources ("Inventory") which have not yet been evaluated. Sites that are selected for evaluation are proposed by the CHA, heritage planning staff and the public. Each year the Calgary Heritage Authority ("CHA") uses a portion of its budget to evaluate these additional sites for potential placement on the Inventory. Once research is complete, the evaluation (including a Statement of Significance) is presented to the CHA's Evaluation and Review Committee for consideration. Additions to the Inventory are approved at the monthly CHA full board meetings.

### **How is my property affected by being on the inventory?**

Inclusion on the Inventory is not a legal designation and does not extend legal protection to the property, nor does it regulate the property; placement on the Inventory does not involve a registration on title. Unless a site has been legally protected as a designated Historic Resource, by Bylaw, all the normal land use and development conditions apply.

### **What is Designation?**

A historic resource that is designated has been legally protected, by a Bylaw, passed by Council, under the *Alberta Historical Resources Act*. The Bylaw is registered on title to the property.



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This:

- Does not occur without collaboration with the owner
- Does not affect the ability to sell or purchase property
- Does not affect activities in a building or on the property
- Allows the owner to retain all rights to the individual enjoyment of their property
- Means that the historic resource cannot be altered or demolished without consent.

Any property listed on the Inventory merits designation as a Municipal Historic Resource. The legal process to statutorily designate a site as a Municipal Historic Resource is governed by the Alberta Historical Resources Act, R.S.A. 2000 c. H-9 (the Act) and requires Council to pass a designation Bylaw. The Bylaw is put in place to manage change to the resource, guided by the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

A request to designate a privately owned property must come from the owner or their legal representative of the owner. In general, the process requires close collaboration and cooperation between the owner of the historic resource and City staff.

### **How does designation affect my property?**

The designation bylaw includes the Statement of Significance where "character-defining elements" are identified. Heritage staff works with owners to draft a designation bylaw that balances conserving the historic value and integrity of the resource with the current needs and future uses of a site. While the resource may not be demolished, it can be added to or altered if done without undermining its heritage value by respecting its character defining elements. New additions are allowed but should be contextually appropriate with the site.

### **What are the benefits to being designated?**

Protecting heritage is encouraged for the benefit of the greater good and public. Maintaining historic resources in our city allows citizens, either of a specific community or the city as a whole, to experience our history through the architecture, artefacts and landscapes.

The property owner of a designated historic resource is eligible for grants and incentives. There are Municipal grants and Provincial matching grants through the Alberta Historic Resources Foundation, free professional advice re: building maintenance, rehabilitation and planning issues from Provincial and City heritage staff.

### **What are the Economic Impacts of heritage conservation?**

Historic resources add character and visual interest to the streetscape which attracts economic investment to the area. Designation will ensure these attributes are protected and the resulting security will promote high-quality investment. Tourists and residents are attracted to areas with historic resources and support local business growth and revitalization.

Studies show a positive correlation between designation, and an enhancement in the rate of increase in property values when measured against the average trend in property values within a given community. It is not suggested that this enhancement of value increase is a result of heritage designation. It is far more likely that it results from a reasonable investment in property maintenance and even upgrading. This in turn supports the development of local jobs requiring specialized expertise and trade skills.

### **What are the Environmental Impacts of heritage conservation?**

Historic resources are non-renewable resources. The preservation of historic places capitalizes on the energy investment in the original structures, preventing unnecessary resource use and reducing the pressure on landfill sites from demolition.

### **What are the Social Impacts of heritage conservation?**

Historic resources connect us to our past, our future, and to each other. They provide places of learning and places of understanding for all Canadians. Historic resources are integral to the identity of our community and help to strengthen its distinctiveness. Historic resources add to the beauty, character and visual interest of our urban environment which contributes to the city's liveability and are sources of community pride.