

# HERITAGE MATTERS IN SURREY

## What is a Community Heritage Register?

A **Community Heritage Register** is a list of properties, buildings, and features identified as having heritage character or heritage value. The placement of a property, building, or feature on Surrey's Community Heritage Register requires a thorough evaluation of a property or feature along with photographs, documentation, and archival research. Site evaluation may take into consideration factors such as:

- architectural details,
- historical connotation,
- association with persons or events,
- cultural significance,
- architectural integrity,
- overall context,
- landmark value,
- structural condition, and
- potential for continued use or adaptive re-use.

A Community Heritage Register:

- facilitates integration of heritage considerations with community planning;
- enables monitoring of properties through permit application processes;
- informs property owners and prospective buyers of property's heritage value;
- in itself does not provide heritage protection;
- enables local government to temporarily withhold approvals and demolition permits for listed properties; and
- enables a local government to require an impact assessment if changes are proposed.

### ***How was Surrey's Community Heritage Register established?***

In 1994, the Province of British Columbia passed legislation in the Local Government Act that enabled local governments to better integrate heritage conservation activities into the mainstream of development and community planning. This legislation gave municipalities new planning tools and more powerful incentives to encourage conservation. One of the key planning tools was the Community Heritage Register. The idea behind the register was that if a community identified its most significant heritage properties it could then better target its conservation efforts.

Surrey's Community Heritage Register has evolved over time. It was initially established by a resolution of Council in May 1997.

At that time, it consisted of 26 buildings, structures and features, which were already protected by heritage designation by-law. Since then it has grown to include over 200 sites. Most of these sites date back to the early 20th century. The oldest building on Surrey's Community Heritage Register is circa 1875, while the most modern was built in 1959.

Each building, structure or feature was carefully evaluated to determine its architectural, historical, cultural or natural significance. A Heritage Evaluation Worksheet was prepared which summarized the various components that contributed to the heritage value or heritage significance of the site.

The addition of a property or feature to the City's Community Heritage Register, as well as its removal, requires Council approval.

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## ***How does a Community Heritage Register assist with planning communities?***

A Community Heritage Register encourages an organized approach to planning, which takes into account a community's heritage resources. This can include the updating of Town Centre Plans (TCPs) and the development of new Neighbourhood Concept Plans (NCPs), the creation of Heritage Conservation Areas, the recognition or protection of individual sites, and/or the development of Urban Design Guidelines.

## ***My property is listed on Surrey's Community Heritage Register. What does that mean?***

The inclusion of a property on a Community Heritage Register is not the same as heritage protection. A building or structure that is listed on a Community Heritage Register can only be protected by other means, such as a heritage designation by-law, heritage revitalization agreement, or heritage conservation covenant.

If a property is listed on a Community Heritage Register, the owner may redevelop the site or make alterations to the building, provided that these changes are within the limitations of other by-laws and regulations (e.g., Surrey Zoning By-law 12000). If a demolition or alteration is proposed for a building or structure on Surrey's Community Heritage Register, the City can place an order for temporary protection for up to 60 days and/or withhold the demolition permit until all other approvals (e.g., a building permit for a new building) are in order. During this time, the site can be evaluated and documented, and discussions can take place with the owner regarding possible alternatives to demolition.

The listing of a property on a Community Heritage Register cannot prevent its demolition. A local government can only prohibit demolition if the property is legally protected.

## ***What are the benefits of owning a property on the Community Heritage Register?***

Buildings on a Community Heritage Register can take advantage of special "equivalency" provisions contained in the BC Building Code Heritage Building Supplement and can be eligible for heritage protection. Heritage protection can be achieved through heritage designation by-law, heritage revitalization agreement, or heritage conservation covenant.

Financial support for privately owned *protected* heritage properties is available in the form of property tax exemption and grants for approved restoration work. Protected heritage properties may also be eligible for non-financial support including:

- regulatory adjustments such as variances and relaxations to zoning requirements to allow a heritage building to be retained;
- technical assistance from City staff; and
- commemoration with plaques or other information guides.



## ***Do you have additional questions about Surrey's Community Heritage Register?***

Please contact us at [heritage@surrey.ca](mailto:heritage@surrey.ca)