

HERITAGE MATTERS IN SURREY

The recognition of heritage sites in Surrey

How are heritage sites recognized?

Heritage sites in Surrey are recognized in the following ways:

- Selected heritage places such as churches, houses, roads and landscapes, are identified by markers, plaques, signs or storyboards;
- Sites that are potentially significant but require more analysis before their heritage value can be established are listed on Surrey's Heritage Inventory; and
- Sites that Council considers to have heritage value are listed on the Surrey's Community Heritage Register.



How and when are sites on the Heritage Inventory assessed?

The process of adding sites to the Community Heritage Register may occur:

- Through the periodic review of the Heritage Inventory undertaken by the Heritage Advisory Commission;
- Heritage assessments undertaken at the time of redevelopment if a site involves a property on the heritage inventory or a building or feature that may have heritage significance is identified while processing a development application; and
- Where immediate consideration is required because a heritage building is at risk of being altered, moved, or demolished resulting in a loss in heritage character.

The evaluation is done using values-based evaluation worksheets and/or Statements of Significance (SOS). Each building or feature is carefully evaluated to determine its heritage value, character defining elements, history, cultural significance, site context, architectural integrity, structural condition and potential for continued use or adaptive re-use.

What is the Heritage Inventory?

Surrey's Heritage Inventory is a working database that lists properties that potentially have heritage significance. Further evaluation of these sites is necessary before they can be considered by Council for addition to Surrey's Community Heritage Register. Sites are identified and added to the Inventory by:

- The Heritage Advisory Commission and/or Council;
- The public; and
- Staff or consultants through the development process, neighbourhood concept plans and/or site inspections.

What happens to sites on the Heritage Inventory?

Sites listed on Surrey's Heritage Inventory are subject to review and evaluation to determine whether they are sufficiently significant to be considered for addition to the Surrey's Community Heritage Register. The Heritage Advisory Commission has a mandate to advise Council on which sites merit addition to the Community Heritage Register.

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. Placement on Surrey's Community Heritage Register requires a thorough evaluation of the building or site, as well as a review of photographs, documentation, and other archival materials. The addition of any building, structure or feature to the Community Heritage Register, as well as its removal, requires Council approval.

What are the implications of owning a site on the community heritage register?

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 the recognition of heritage sites in Surrey?

Please contact us at heritage@surrey.ca