

VICTORIA'S HERITAGE BUILDINGS FAQ

What is the difference between heritage-registered and heritage-designated?

Heritage properties within the City of Victoria are listed on an inventory called the Heritage Register. There are three main types:

Heritage-Designated

- property is legally protected through a bylaw
- designation is generally limited to the building exterior
- visual changes to the appearance of the house require approval through a Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit¹ (DHAP) from the City

Heritage-Registered

- property is not legally protected, but recognized as having heritage value
- in the event of a redevelopment or demolition application, the City will make best efforts to encourage the owner to conserve the resource
- approval through a DHAP is not required, unless located within a Heritage Conservation Area

Heritage Conservation Area (HCA)

- property does not need to be heritage-registered or heritage-designated to be included
- in most cases, changes to a property in Heritage Conservation Areas require approval through a DHAP

How do I find out if my house is designated?

- designation is registered on the title
- the list of properties can be found on the [City of Victoria's heritage page](#)
- the Victoria Heritage Foundation's website has detailed descriptions of houses on the [Heritage Register](#) listed by neighbourhood and can also be viewed on a [GIS map](#)

Does routine maintenance require permissions?

- routine maintenance and repairs on buildings that are heritage-designated or within a Heritage Conservation Area can be carried out at the owner's sole discretion

Do I have to apply for a Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit for interior renovations?

- for most heritage buildings, interiors are not specially protected and do not require a Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit, unless interior changes affect the exterior
- to verify if any interior features are designated, contact the City's Heritage Planners

How does a building qualify as heritage?

- heritage properties have value to the community related to their architectural, historical, or cultural characteristics
- age is only one criterion that determines whether a building has heritage value
- a historic property's Statement of Significance (SOS) identifies the heritage value and explains the context and relevance
- if a building is not listed on the Heritage Register, this does not necessarily mean that it does not have heritage value

How does a property become designated?

- designation is almost always at the request of the homeowner
- the BC Local Government Act empowers municipal councils to designate properties through a bylaw registered on the title held with the provincial Land Titles Office

Can I get insurance for a heritage house?

- designation itself does not place additional requirements on the insurer

How does heritage conservation contribute to sustainable development?

- retention is the sustainable choice over demolition and replacement
- it takes at least 30 years before energy savings will be realized by building a new house rather than rehabilitating an old one
- the greenest building is the one already built

May I replace the original windows?

- historic windows are often an important character-defining element specifically identified in the property's SOS and in such cases, their replacement should be a last resort
- traditional wood windows can be repaired and if maintained, have a lifespan of 200 years
- if replacement of any part of the window is deemed necessary, a DHAP is required

What are the benefits of owning a heritage property?

- heritage buildings have a character and charm derived from a combination of design features and architectural elements of the period which are difficult to replicate
- protected heritage properties are identified by a bronze plaque
- heritage-designated properties in the City of Victoria may be eligible for grants towards the costs of rehabilitation

Is there financial assistance for owners of heritage properties?

The City of Victoria has several grant programs for heritage-designated properties.

- the Victoria Heritage Foundation administers the grant program for houses that were originally detached single-family or duplex
- the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust has incentive programs for commercial, industrial, institutional, and apartment buildings

What is the role of the Victoria Heritage Foundation?

- the Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF) was established in 1983 as a City-funded, arm's-length not-for-profit society
- VHF administers the grant program for heritage-designated houses that were originally detached single-family or duplex

What type of projects can be funded by VHF?

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- structural work, foundation repair and seismic upgrading
- repair or restoration of original features including windows, doors, siding
- re-roofing
- exterior painting in approved historic colours
- masonry repointing and repair
- wood storm windows

Do exterior paint colours require approval?

- visual changes to the appearance of the house, including paint schemes, require approval through a Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit (DHAP) from the City
- paint schemes must be appropriate to the design, age, style, and locale of the building
- refer to [Your Old House - True Colours](#) brochure for guidance

What is the average percentage of funding provided by VHF?

- grants are a percentage of a maximum \$25,000² project cost per year
- VHF aims to fund up to 50% of the project cost

How often can I apply for a grant?

- homeowners can apply multiple years
- grants for any one house are generally limited to \$30,000² every 10 years

How do I apply for a VHF grant?

- the annual deadline for submitting applications is March 31st
- qualifying applications are conditionally approved by the Board following inspections by the House Grants Committee
- grants will not be given for work undertaken prior to approval of grant application

Where can I get more information?

For questions regarding designation, Heritage Conservation Areas, or alterations to heritage properties, contact the Heritage Planners at:

City of Victoria

☎ 250 361-0382

✉ developmentsservices@victoria.ca

www.victoria.ca/heritage



For questions about incentives for heritage-designated commercial, industrial, institutional or apartment buildings, contact:

Victoria Civic Heritage Trust

☎ 250 727-8482

✉ vcht@shaw.ca

For information about the grant program for heritage-designated houses, contact:

Victoria Heritage Foundation

☎ 250 383-4546

✉ vhf@victoriaheritagefoundation.ca

www.victoriaheritagefoundation.ca



¹ [Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit \(DHAP\)](#) is an expedited process and there is no fee

² reviewed annually

This FAQ provides a brief overview only.

For more information, contact the City of Victoria or the Victoria Heritage Foundation