

Establishing Community Heritage Registers



A Guide for Local Governments and Heritage Organizations



BRITISH
COLUMBIA
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Ministry of Tourism, Sport
and the Arts



Canada's
Historic Places

Lieux patrimoniaux
du Canada

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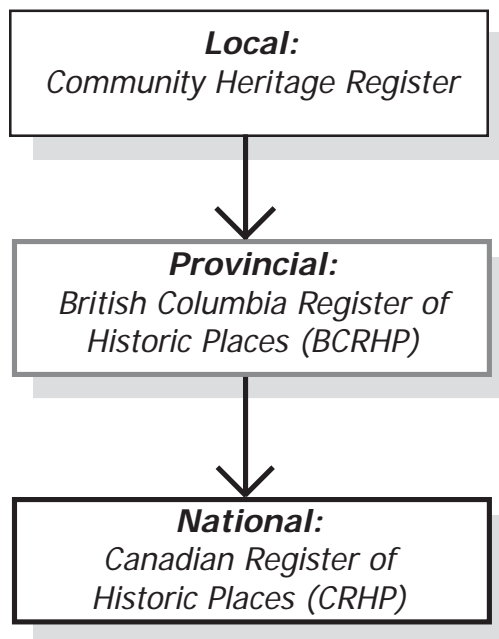
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INTRODUCTION

A *Community Heritage Register (CHR)* is an official list of *historic places*, specific to a community, which have been identified by the local government as having *heritage value* or *heritage character*. Among other things, a CHR enables a local government to understand and identify the significance of a community's historic places, to monitor heritage properties for proposed changes, and to integrate heritage conservation activities into other local government land use planning processes. This document outlines the benefits of Community Heritage Registers and provides guidelines for the creation and maintenance of a CHR by local governments.

The creation of a Community Heritage Register, in accordance with section 954 of the *Local Government Act (LGA)* or section 582 of the *Vancouver Charter (VC)*, ensures the inclusion of a community's historic places on the *British Columbia Register of Historic Places (BCRHP)*, the official provincial listing of historic places that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by the provincial or local governments. Listings on the BCRHP may also be included on the *Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP)*, a register of registers which will become the most important Internet-based heritage tool for planners, policymakers, developers, industry, community organizations, teachers and students across Canada. When fully realized, the CRHP will include a listing of approximately 20,000 formally recognized Canadian historic places and will be the keystone of the *Historic Places Initiative (HPI)* - the most significant and ambitious heritage conservation program in Canada's history.



ABOUT COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTERS

A Community Heritage Register:

- is a planning tool, utilized by communities interested in integrating heritage conservation activities into other local government land use planning processes.
- provides formal recognition for historic places.
- must be adopted by a local government resolution.
- has legal status.
- provides access to powerful tools within the Local Government Act and Community Charter.
- may be created from a new list of historic places, or from an existing inventory.

A Community Heritage Register **does not**:

- put a limit on the changes a heritage property owner may make to his or her historic place.
- require agreement from a heritage property owner to include a historic place as a register listing.
- constitute designation or any other type of formal protection of an historic place.
- create financial liability for the local government.

THE BENEFITS OF A COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTER

- It can enhance the public's appreciation of the identity and character of the community.
- It can facilitate public access to heritage information.
- It provides a means of informing property owners and prospective buyers of a property's heritage value.
- It can facilitate the integration of heritage conservation into community planning and play a role in enhancing community sustainability.
- It provides a tool for determining eligibility for heritage programs and incentives.
- It provides eligibility for special provisions within the BC Building Code Heritage Building Supplement for heritage properties.
- It allows a local government to consider and, if necessary, undertake protective action such as temporarily withholding demolition permits and building and development approvals, ordering heritage inspections, or monitoring changes in properties through a licensing and permit application process for historic places listed on a Community Heritage Register.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTERS

When a local government places a property on its Community Heritage Register, legislation requires that notice of this listing be sent to the provincial government. With the development of new technologies and the implementation of new documentation standards, the province is undertaking a major upgrade of its records, including those submitted by local governments. These updated records will meet the statutory requirement under the *Heritage Conservation Act (HCA)* to maintain records of enactments made under the HCA, the Local Government Act, and the Vancouver Charter, and will serve as a tool to identify, recognize and assist in the protection of BC's historic places. It is intended that the BCRHP documentation standards will meet or exceed the national documentation standards to ensure that the most up-to-date and informative records are accessible to government authorities, land-use planners, developers, owners, educators, researchers, heritage professionals and the public.

ELIGIBILITY FOR LISTING ON A COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTER

In order for a historic place to be listed on a Community Heritage Register, it should meet the criteria established by the British Columbia Register of Historic Places documentation standards in accordance with the Canadian Register of Historic Places documentation standards. Such a listing will:

1. Meet the definition of “heritage property”: In relation Community Heritage Registers, heritage property is any historic place which is legally protected, or, in the opinion of a municipal council, has sufficient heritage value or heritage character to justify its conservation.

2. Indicate the reasons why the historic place is considered to have heritage value or heritage character. This is a ‘must’ under the Local Government Act, and the BCRHP Documentation Standards indicates that each historic place record on a CHR must include a *Statement of Significance*, a three-part statement which includes the description, the heritage value, and the character-defining elements of the historic place.

3. Meet the required documentation standards. A register record must meet the minimum documentation requirements identified in the BCRHP Documentation Standards Handbook. These requirements include information on the identification, formal recognition, location, description, documentation, and administration, as well as images of the historic place.

STEPS TO CREATING A COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTER

1. Determine the reason(s) for creating a Community Heritage Register. A Community Heritage Register is the first step in implementing a community heritage program. It should be implemented as part of a carefully planned heritage program to achieve clearly stated community goals.

2. Identify community heritage values (i.e. aesthetic, historical, social, scientific, spiritual etc.) and the types of places – such as buildings, structures, districts, landscapes and/or archaeological sites – which embody those values. Develop Community Heritage Register criteria that meet the heritage management and commemoration needs of the community.

3. Review existing information, and undertake historical research, historical context studies, field surveys and other necessary activities to select historic places to be included on the register. A community's historic places should reflect the community's heritage values. Include all protected heritage property as part of the register. Also, include historic places which may be under threat, or which may be in need of rehabilitation; these places will benefit most from properly completed Register records.

4. Compile and organize required documentation information for each historic place. Follow the documentation standards for the British Columbia Register of Historic Places.

5. Write a *Statement of Significance* for each historic place. Refer to the Statement of Significance guidelines within the *Canadian Register of Historic Places: Documentation Standards Handbook*.

6. Undertake review, discussion and quality control of documentation and Statements of Significance to ensure that CHR records reflect the community's heritage values. Consider review within the local government or Community Heritage Commission. Refer to the *Guidelines for Updating Community Heritage Registers and Writing Statements of Significance* for step-by-step processes for the Community Heritage Register documentation process.

7. Compile the completed Register records into a manageable electronic database. Utilize a database system which is compatible with IT systems already in place within your local government in order to manage your Register in the most effective way.

8. Make the Community Heritage Register official by having Council adopt it through a resolution. Make a presentation and/or submit a report to your local government Council about the Community Heritage Register.

9. Notify property owners and the Minister Responsible for the Heritage Conservation Act within 30 days of Council's resolution. Notify property owners and the Minister responsible for the Heritage Conservation Act each time a property is added or deleted from the CHR.

10. Maintain and regulate the Community Heritage Register. Conduct periodic reviews of the content of the Community Heritage Register. Add or remove historic places to or from the list as necessary, following the required documentation standards and the legislation found in the Local Government Act.

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to section 954 of the Local Government Act, a Community Heritage Register “must indicate the reasons why property included in a community heritage register is considered to have heritage value or heritage character”. For this reason, the Statement of Significance will be the most important component of the mandatory documentation for every historic place included on a register. The Statement of Significance will explain to a broad audience what the formal recognition applies to, why the place is important or significant, and which principal features of the place must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value.

A properly written Statement of Significance will ensure that the formal recognition for each historic place listed on a register is based on heritage value. The three parts of a Statement of Significance are:

1. The Description of the Historic Place: This provides a general description of what the formal recognition applies to, and paints a picture of the historic place in two or three sentences.

2. The Heritage Value of the Historic Place: This explains why a historic place has aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social, or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations. The statement of heritage value is generally one or two paragraphs long.

3. The Character-Defining Elements of the Historic Place: This is a point-form list of how the heritage value is manifested in such elements as the materials, physical layout, uses, or cultural associations of the historic place.

For detailed information on writing Statements of Significance, refer to the Statement of Significance guidelines within the Canadian Register of Historic Places: Documentation Standards Handbook.

ELECTRONIC MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTERS

The new provincial and national heritage documentation standards are conducive to the establishment of electronic Community Heritage Register databases, which will provide for simpler records management, and allow for easy access and dissemination of heritage information.

Because the levels of information technology development vary widely from community to community, recommending a specific software product would be counterproductive. It is most important, however, to choose a management tool – preferably some type of relational database software – which is compatible with electronic systems already in place within your local government.

Once an electronic database is established, it is beneficial to incorporate other forms of electronic documentation, such as GIS (geographic information systems), into the register. Among other reasons, putting heritage resource information on a GIS is useful because it provides for the accurate display of spatial data, provides a basis for integration with other land-use management processes, and literally puts historic places ‘on the map’.

THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, HERITAGE BRANCH COMMUNITY HERITAGE REGISTER PROGRAM

The Heritage Branch will invest up to 100% of the total eligible costs, to a maximum of **\$20,000** per project, to support the development of Community Heritage Registers by local governments, consistent with the documentation standards of the B.C. Register of Historic Places (BCRHP). Each applicant to this program must demonstrate how the Community Heritage Register has assisted community heritage planning and management.

Projects may include:

- converting an existing Community Heritage Inventory to a Community Heritage Register to the BCRHP documentation standards;
- updating an existing Community Heritage Register to the BCRHP documentation standards;
- adding to an existing Community Heritage Register; or
- creating a new Community Heritage Register to the BCRHP documentation standards.

For further information on the Community Heritage Registers Program, please visit:

http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/heritage/loc_govt/comherregister.htm

APPENDIX 1: THE LEGISLATION

Local Government Act: Community Heritage Register

- 954 (1)** A local government may, by resolution, establish a community heritage register that identifies real property that is considered by the local government to be heritage property.
- (2)** The community heritage register
- (a) must indicate the reasons why property included in a community heritage register is considered to have heritage value or heritage character, and
 - (b) may distinguish between heritage properties of differing degrees and kinds of heritage value or heritage character.
- (3)** Within 30 days after including a property in a community heritage register or deleting property from a community heritage register, the local government must give notice of this
- (a) to the owner of the heritage property in accordance with section 974, and
 - (b) to the minister responsible for the *Heritage Conservation Act* in accordance with section 977.
- (4)** The protection of heritage property is not affected by an error or omission in a community heritage register.

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY

British Columbia Register of Historic Places (BCRHP): The British Columbia Register of Historic Places is the official provincial listing of historic places that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by the provincial or a local government.

Canadian Register of Historic Places: The Canadian Register of Historic Places is a national listing of historic places across Canada. The CRHP is essentially a register of registers and includes nominations from local, provincial, territorial, and federal government heritage registers.

Canadian Register of Historic Places: Documentation Standards Handbook: This handbook sets out the *Canadian Register Documentation Standards*. It describes the procedures for nominating historic places to the Canadian Register, and the procedures for listing, updating, and de-listing. It also describes the roles and responsibilities of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Registrars.

Community Heritage Register: A community heritage register identifies real property that is considered by the local government to be heritage property. It must indicate the reasons why the property included is considered to have heritage value or character. It may distinguish between heritage properties of differing degrees and kinds of heritage value or character.

Heritage Character: The overall effect produced by traits or features which give property or an area a distinctive quality or appearance.

Heritage Conservation Act (HCA): The HCA is an official provincial act with the purpose of encouraging and facilitating the protection and conservation of heritage property in British Columbia.

Heritage Inventory: An informal list of properties that are deemed to possess architectural, historical, or cultural value. A heritage inventory has no legal status.

Heritage Property: property that, in the opinion of a body or person authorized to exercise a power under the Local Government Act in relation to the property, has sufficient heritage value or heritage character to justify its conservation, or is protected heritage property.

Heritage Value: The historical, cultural, aesthetic, scientific or educational worth or usefulness of property or an area.

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APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY (continued)

Historic Place: a structure, building, group of buildings, district, landscape, archaeological site or other place that has been formally recognized for its heritage value by an appropriate authority.

Historic Places Initiative (HPI): HPI is a national initiative developed by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Parks Canada Agency in collaboration with provinces and territories to identify and conserve historic places in Canada.

Local Government Act (LGA): The LGA is an official act with the following purposes: to provide a legal framework and foundation for the establishment and continuation of local governments to represent the interests and respond to the needs of their communities; to provide local governments with the powers, duties and functions necessary for fulfilling their purposes; and to provide local governments with the flexibility to respond to the different needs and changing circumstances of their communities.

Statement of Significance: The portion of each Community Heritage Register record that identifies the *description, heritage value, and character-defining elements* of a historic place.

Vancouver Charter (VC): The VC is the equivalent to the Local Government Act, but responds specifically to the requirements of the City of Vancouver.



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<http://www.historicplaces.ca>