

Here are some tips for preparing and submitting records that meet the data standards for the BC Register of Historic Places (BCRHP) and the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP).

UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (Part 15), local governments in British Columbia have the authority to establish Community Heritage Registers (CHRs, S.598) officially listing properties that the local government identifies as having heritage value or heritage character. Local governments may also legally protect property through Heritage Designations (HDs, S.611), Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs, S.610), or designation of Heritage Conservation Areas in Official Community Plans (HCAs, S.614). See the [Local Government Act](#) for more information on these heritage conservation tools.

Any historic place recognized or protected by the Local Government Act for its heritage value or heritage character should have a Statement of Significance (SOS) that articulates the heritage values of the place. The SOS is a permanent record of the site's heritage values and characteristics and is a useful site management tool for local governments.

Within 30 days of officially adding a historic place to a CHR or legally protecting it through heritage designation, HRA or HCA, the local government must notify the Minister responsible for the *Heritage Conservation Act* as required by the *Local Government Act* (S.595) so that the site can be added to the BC Register of Historic Places (BCRHP). Notification can be done through the BC Register Office of the Heritage Branch using the instructions below.

A Statement of Significance is required for notices to the minister regarding new CHR listings, and is highly recommended for notices regarding heritage designations, HRAs and HCAs.

Historic places that are officially recognized by a local government and that have full documentation including a SOS can be nominated to the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP) by the BC Registrar in Heritage Branch. The CRHP is an online directory of historic sites in Canada that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by a federal, provincial, territorial and/or municipal authority (www.historicplaces.ca).

PREPARING RECORDS FOR THE BC REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

BC REGISTER HISTORIC SITE FORM

The BC Register Historic Site Form is used to submit notifications of officially recognized historic places to the Province as required by the *Local Government Act* (S.595). The Historic Site Form is available as a PDF fillable form on the [Local Government Planning](#) web page.

The Historic Site Form includes fields for mandatory information as well as additional information to create a full record. The mandatory fields must be completed to submit a record to the BCRHP and CRHP. The additional fields are optional but recommended and you are encouraged to fill in as many as possible.

Note that some fields have character limits. For example, the Heritage Value and Character-defining Elements fields are each limited to 4,000 characters, including spaces.

USING THE HISTORIC SITE FORM

Open and save one blank PDF form for each historic place. Rename the document using a filename that includes your local government name and the historic place name (e.g. Yourtown—123 Main Street).

On the Historic Site Form, the mandatory fields are outlined in red and the additional fields are outlined in blue.

Begin filling in the template by typing or copying text directly into the blank text fields provided. Save often. Some fields have drop-down lists. Click on the appropriate choice and it will be added to the record.

For field-specific instructions and examples, hover your mouse for a few moments over any field in the form.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE SECTION

A well-written SOS can serve as site documentation and as a site management tool. There are many examples on the Canadian Register website at www.historicplaces.ca.

The SOS has three parts that work together: **Description**, **Heritage Values** and **Character-defining Elements**. Try not to repeat information and details in more than one part. The SOS should be no more than one or two pages in length and should use the same historic place name consistently throughout.

DESCRIPTION – THE ‘WHAT’

The Description section briefly describes the formally-recognized historic place as it exists today and answers the questions: *What is the historic place? Where is it? What is included? What are the boundaries?*

Clearly state the boundaries of the historic place and only describe elements of the place that are included in the formal recognition.

Example: The Bedwell House is a one-storey Craftsman cottage with a front verandah, located at 123 Main Street in Yourtown. The historic place includes the house, its garden and property bounded to the east by Somewhere Road and to the west by Nowhere Avenue.

The Description section should be no longer than 1,000 characters including spaces.

HERITAGE VALUES – THE ‘WHY’

The Heritage Values section briefly describes the reasons why the historic place has been formally recognized and answers the question: *Why is this place valued today?*

Heritage value is defined as the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance of a historic place for past, present or future generations (See [Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada](#).)

It's a good idea to start the Heritage Values section with an introductory sentence summarizing all the types of heritage value associated with the site.

Example: *The Bedwell House has historic value for its association with the town's first Mayor, aesthetic value for its architecture and landscaping, and cultural value for its function as the town library since 1922.*

Then use separate paragraphs to explain each of those heritage values and show how the site reflects them.

Example: *Orchard Park has social and cultural value because it has been the site of local fall fairs and other community events ever since 1910.*

Try to use language that can be understood by a wide range of people and explain any confusing terminology.

Historical facts should only be included in the Heritage Values section if they have a direct correlation to the heritage value. Facts are only relevant if they help to identify, define, or support the value of the historic place. Consider putting detailed historical information in a brochure or website instead of in the SOS.

Associated events, persons, organizations, architects and builders should only be included if they are integral to the value of the historic place.

The Heritage Values section should be no longer than 4,000 characters including spaces.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS – THE ‘HOW’

The Character-defining Elements section is a point-form list that answers the question: *Which features must be retained to protect the site's heritage values?*

Character-defining elements (CDEs) are the principal features of the historic place that embody its heritage values.

This section starts with a brief introductory phrase and continues in bulleted list form.

Example:

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Rockwell Community Hall include its:

- plate-glass windows facing Main Street*
- continuing use as a community centre*
- historic material dating to the time of construction such as the granite foundation and timber frame*
- unobstructed views towards the North Shore mountains*

The list should be limited to physical features that currently exist within the boundaries of the formally-recognized historic place. Continuing uses of the site that are critical to its heritage values may also be included.

The CDE section should not include any value statements or historical facts.

CDEs must support the heritage values of the historic place as identified in the Heritage Value section of the Statement of Significance. If a CDE is integral to the significance of a historic place but does not correspond to one of the value statements, the heritage value section should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

The Character-defining Elements section should be no longer than 4,000 characters including spaces.

SUBMITTING RECORDS TO THE BC REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

When you have finished entering all your records into BC Register Historic Site forms, please review them carefully. Record management and data quality is the responsibility of the local government, and the BC Register Office may require corrections and/or more information to complete the record.

1. Prepare the following documents in electronic formats as indicated:

- the completed Historic Site Form(s) – PDF format
- up to 3 images of each site – JPG format
 - images in other formats cannot be used
 - each image should be 500 pixels in longest dimension and 72 dpi for display on the website
- a copy of the resolution adding the site to the CHR – PDF format
- shapefiles or map(s) clearly indicating the boundaries of each formally recognized site – SHP format for shapefiles, PDF format for maps

2. Create a covering letter (PDF format) addressed to the Minister responsible for the Heritage Conservation Act. Sample wording for new CHR listings:

This letter serves as official notification, in accordance with S.595 of the Local Government Act, of Council's decision (RESOLUTION # and/or BYLAW #- if applicable) on DATE to include X number of historic places on the municipality's Community Heritage Register, as listed below:

1. Site Name, Street Address, PID
2. Site Name, Street Address, PID

For further information please contact NAME at EMAIL or TELEPHONE #.

3. Email the documents and covering letter to: BCHistoricPlacesRegister@gov.bc.ca. Please note that Heritage Branch is no longer able to accept diskettes or USB sticks. If you are submitting large numbers of files (>10) please contact Heritage Branch about using our provincial File Transfer Service.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on Statements of Significance, the BC Register of Historic Places and the Canadian Register of Historic Places, please see the [Heritage Branch website](#) or contact:

BC Register Office
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