

What are heritage resources?

Heritage resources (also known as historic resources) may take many forms, but in Calgary are typically buildings, landscapes or features that are valued for their role in telling the story of our place and culture.

Although all things have a history involving human or natural occurrences, City Heritage Planning focuses on managing resources that have been recognized through a formal evaluation process (detailed on page 2).

The multi-disciplinary task of retaining, enhancing and commemorating heritage resources is broadly referred to as **heritage conservation**.

Why conserve?

Heritage resources can unlock triple-bottom-line (social, financial and environmental) benefits for municipalities. In addition to the aesthetic, social and educational value of heritage sites, the benefits of conservation include:

- job growth in the skilled trades
- reduction in construction & demolition waste
- increased economic resiliency during periods of recession
- positive contribution towards ‘sense of place’ and community identity
- avoided environmental impact through reuse of structures
- promotion of a compact urban form.

The importance of heritage conservation is recognized Provincially (Alberta Culture and Tourism), Nationally (Parks Canada), and Internationally (International Council on Monuments and Sites). Thousands of municipalities worldwide have policies or programs designed to help conserve their historic resources.

Calgary City Council has acknowledged the value of heritage conservation through approval of the *Calgary Heritage Strategy* and other city-wide policies such as:

Municipal Development Plan

“Historic preservation is part of good city building and community identity. Heritage buildings and historic districts serve to enhance our perspective, understanding and awareness of our past and help to build a sense of identity and pride in our local communities...Historic preservation also provides tremendous economic and environmental benefits.”

(2.3.3 Heritage and public art)

Guide for Local Area Planning

“Heritage resources are defining characteristics of communities and should be retained or protected while balancing the need for redevelopment.”

(2.1.1 Heritage Resources)

Cultural Plan for Calgary

“Calgarians support the conservation of built heritage which brings character and a sense of place to streets and public spaces.”

(6.0 A Collective Vision for the Future)

One Calgary 2019-2022 Service Plans and Budgets

“Culture, identity and heritage are key aspects of inspiring neighbourhoods”

(Plan Highlights: A City of Safe and Inspiring Neighbourhoods)

Contents

Page 1: **Overview**
 Page 2: **Calgary's Approach**
 Page 3: **Conservation Benefits**



National Hotel (built 1910)
 Circa. 1910 [Glenbow NA-1075-9]
 2012—Before restoration
 2019—After restoration

“Canada's historic places are a living legacy for all Canadians.

Ensuring a future for these treasures will allow the next generations to use these exceptional places in ways both old and new.”

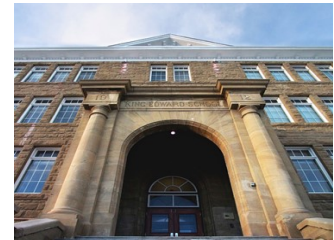
The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

Alan Latourelle
 Former CEO, Parks Canada
 Appointed to the Order of Canada

Identifying heritage resources

City Heritage Planning concentrates on the management of two types of **heritage resources**, which have been subject to formal identification processes:

- Inventory sites:** Buildings, landscapes and features that are at least 25 years-old, and thought to have standalone significance may qualify for listing on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*. Potential Inventory sites are researched and approved by [Heritage Calgary](#) according to a Council-approved system based on specific tangible and intangible values. Sites listed on the Inventory are eligible for designation (legally protection) as **Municipal** or **Provincial Historic Resources**. You can learn more about this process in the *Heritage Designation: Existing Procedures and Incentives* document available at calgary.ca/heritage.
- Heritage assets:** Privately-owned buildings constructed prior to 1945 which largely retain their historic appearance and features may be considered **heritage assets**. These buildings may not individually qualify for listing on the *Inventory*, but are considered to have broader significance especially where they are part of a concentrated group of similar assets—described collectively as a **heritage area**. The City of Calgary identifies possible heritage assets using a visual assessment of a community known as a ‘windshield survey’. Potential heritage assets must meet survey criteria that considers historic architectural, stylistic, and design elements.



King Edward School (built 1912)
Example of a site listed on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*



Historic Streetscape (ca. 1910) in Ramsay
Examples of [heritage assets](#) identified by The City of Calgary

Administration’s conservation strategy

Prior to 2019, The City’s approach to heritage conservation has primarily focused on **Inventory sites**. Heritage Calgary has listed approximately 800 unique sites on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*, and over 120 have been legally protected by designation or agreement. This represents significant conservation progress, as designation is voluntary and property-owner driven.

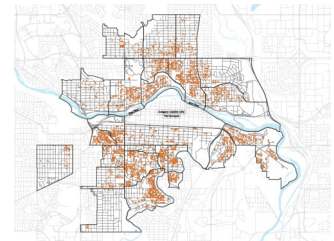
Despite this success, a majority of the Inventory (approximately 85%) remains unprotected. Additionally, the nearly 4000 **heritage assets** identified through the 2019-2020 *Heritage Asset Windshield Survey* are generally without any tools to encourage retention or conservation.

Recognizing these challenges, Council has directed Administration to explore and implement new tools and incentives to support the conservation of heritage resources. On July 28, 2020, Council approved the recommendations of Administration’s [Heritage Conservation Tools and Incentives report](#) (PUD2020-0758).

As a result, The City:

- is implementing Calgary first comprehensive [heritage area policy](#)
- received a two-year increase to the [Historic Resource Conservation Grant Program](#)
- commissioned a multi-phase heritage value analysis, focused on commercial areas (read the phase 1 report [here](#))
- will be presenting a proposed residential tax credit program for consideration in the 2023-2026 budget

Further information and progress updates on the Conservation Tools and Incentives work is available at calgary.ca/heritagetools.



Heritage Asset Windshield Survey
Conducted 2019-2020 in 26 inner-city communities, documenting thousands



Select benefits of conservation: **economic**

- Jobs**

The restoration or rehabilitation of historic resources requires the labour-intensive involvement of skilled trades. A PlaceEconomics study (*Good News in Tough Times: Historic Preservation and the Georgia Economy*) found 21% more jobs were created for the same economic activity (cost) in conservation projects vs. new construction.
- Tourism**

Statistics Canada reports that 24% of overnight visitors to the Calgary area participate in a cultural activity, with a majority visiting a historic site. Since 2012, spending by 'culture' visitors in Calgary has increased by \$51.9 million (Heritage Calgary, *Economics of Heritage Preservation for Calgary*).
- Competitive Advantage**

Calgary Economic Development's *Calgary in the New Economy* strategy identifies 'Place' as a focus area, including a challenge with migration: "Many Canadians do not believe Calgary offers arts and culture comparable to their current home city." All of Calgary's identified 'peer cities' (including Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver) have significant heritage conservation strategies.
- Adaptive Re-use**

The size, design, and lower rents typical to historic buildings makes them highly flexible for entrepreneurs and start-up business. "Neighborhoods that include older, smaller buildings house significantly greater concentrations of jobs in the 'innovation economy' than do areas with only larger, newer construction." (Stephanie Meeks, National Trust for Historic Preservation)



McHugh House (built 1896)
 Circa. 1903 [Glenbow LIB-10-114]
 1999—Before relocation
 2019—After relocation

Select benefits: **environmental**

- Avoided Impact**

The re-use of existing buildings presents significant carbon savings over the total cost of replacing a city's entire building stock. Historic buildings are said to have "Inherent Sustainability" through their long life-cycle, reparability, and traditional building design (*Building Resilience: Practical Guidelines for the Sustainable Rehabilitation of Buildings in Canada*).
- Diverted Waste**

Demolition of buildings in Canada generates approximately 25% of all landfill waste (Canada Green Building Council). Conserving and rehabilitating heritage resources presents a significant opportunity to reduce unnecessary landfill usage and material loss.

Select benefits: **social & cultural**

- Appreciation & Enjoyment**

In a telephone survey of 600 Calgarians during development of the *Cultural Plan for Calgary*, respondents rated preserving heritage buildings and spaces as their second highest priority for cultural investment in the next 10 years. The plan concludes: "It is now recognized that historic resources are integral to the cultural viability of a city as an affordable and desirable place to live/work."
- Education & Identity**

Historic resources are places of learning and understanding, and are integral to community identity. "Historic places are a source of pride for Canadians. They are part of our collective history and a legacy that we pass on from generation to generation" (*Preserving Canada's Heritage*, Report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development).

"The 'greenest' building is the one that is already built."

Carl Elefante
 President
 American Institute of Architects

Glossary

The following terms are used throughout this report, and in related City of Calgary documents:

heritage resource – Includes historic buildings, bridges, engineering works and other structures; cultural landscapes such as historic parks, gardens or streetscapes, culturally significant areas, indigenous traditional use areas and sites with archaeological or palaeontological resources. These can be managed by municipal, provincial or federal authorities.

City Heritage Planning concentrates on the management of two types of heritage resources, which have been subject to formal identification processes: sites listed on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*, and heritage assets.

Inventory site — Building, landscape, or feature of standalone heritage significance, determined according to the Council-approved *Historic Resource Evaluation System*. Potential candidates are researched by Heritage Calgary and placed on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*. Inventory sites are not protected against alteration or demolition unless subsequently designated by Council as a Municipal Historic Resource. Listing on the Inventory is a pre-requisite to designation.

heritage asset – Privately owned structure, typically constructed before 1945, which significantly retains its original form, scale, massing, window/door pattern and architectural details or materials. Heritage assets are considered most significant where they are part of a concentrated group of similar assets in a community, and individual assets may not necessarily warrant inclusion on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*. Heritage assets are identified through a visual assessment by The City of Calgary.

heritage area – A geographically-concentrated group of related heritage assets, identified through a Local Area Planning process.

Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources (*Inventory*) – Growing (non-exhaustive) list of properties that have been identified and approved by Heritage Calgary according to the Council-approved Historic Resource Evaluation System.

Municipal Historic Resource— An *Inventory* site that has been legally protected by Council under the authority of the *Alberta Historical Resources Act*.

windshield survey— Visual survey of potential heritage assets in an area according to specific criteria of historic architecture and design.



Scarboro United Church and Manse (built 1929)
Designated Municipal Historic Resource



Robert and Mary Taylor Residence (built 1912)
Designated Municipal Historic Resource