

## Heritage Properties

If a home is older than 60 years, it may have character merit or be considered heritage, regardless of how well it's been preserved or how much it has been altered. Heritage isn't just about age, it's about authenticity. The real value is in a property that's retained its original character, as well as its importance in the history of a place.

### Municipal Heritage inventories and registers

Most Greater Vancouver area municipalities have an:

- **official heritage inventory** – a list of buildings, properties, and sites with characteristics or qualities contributing to the city's heritage. Being on an inventory doesn't "designate" or protect homes, properties, or sites. The inventory encourages site retention and rehabilitation. Example: [Coquitlam's heritage inventory](#); [Richmond Heritage Inventory](#).
- **official heritage register** – includes homes designated as heritage by a team of historians and city planners. The register lists buildings of special historical importance, along with homes that represent certain architectural styles. Some buildings on a heritage register are designed by a specific bylaw. In municipalities with an official heritage register, buildings may be categorized based on historical importance, such as [Vancouver's A and B designations](#) or [North Vancouver's A and B categories](#) which designate the level of protection against future alteration or demolition.
- Homes in the highest heritage category can't be altered without municipal approval, while homes in the lesser categories can be altered after the owners meet with municipal heritage planning staff to discuss ways of preserving the home's exterior character. Owners of authentically restored older homes can apply to have them placed on the municipality's Heritage Register, helping to preserve local history and, in some cases, enhancing their resale value.

### Character merit

Homes built before 1940 may have "character merit" depending on the municipality, which may include the original massing and primary roof form, an original open front porch or veranda, original cladding, or

replacement cladding consistent with pre-1940, original windows. Some municipalities, such as Vancouver, require an official [character merit assessment](#) before deciding a home has character merit.

### Heritage neighbourhoods and zones

Municipalities may also designate areas or neighbourhoods as "heritage zones". For example:

- the City of Vancouver has designated the [First Shaughnessy Conservation area](#) (West 16th to West 25th) and Arbutus Street to Oak Street;
- The City of Richmond has designated 17 heritage buildings and landscaping in the Steveston area under the [Steveston Village Conservation program](#); and
- The City of New Westminster has designated the [Queen's Park Heritage Conservation area](#).

### Heritage plan

Municipalities may have an official heritage plan which specifies future plans for heritage areas, for example, the [Maple Ridge Heritage Plan](#).

### Incentives

Municipalities may have incentives for retaining character and heritage homes. Almost 1,000 homes [are slated for demolition in Vancouver](#) alone, each year. Incentives help keep heritage homes in neighbourhoods. For example:

- Vancouver has [transferable heritage density bonuses](#) including [increased density and height](#); Vancouver permits increased density in First Shaughnessy (West 16th to West 25th and Arbutus Street to Oak Street) for homes listed on the [Vancouver Heritage Register](#). Property owners can develop multi-unit buildings with secondary suites or coach houses and infill buildings; and
- Burnaby has a range of [incentives](#), as does Delta (provides [up to 50% of the capital costs](#) of restoration up to \$15,000 max for heritage register properties), [Coquitlam](#), [New Westminster](#) and other municipalities.

## Heritage revitalization agreements

Municipalities may offer legal, written agreements negotiated between a property owner and a municipality to provide non-financial incentives to help owners to conserve a heritage property. This agreement is registered on the property title. Here is an [example from West Vancouver](#).

## Heritage alteration

Municipalities may require a heritage alteration permit to alter a heritage or character home, under the [Local Government Act, Division 6 Heritage Alteration Permits, section 617](#). [Maple Ridge](#), [New Westminster](#) and [Vancouver](#) are examples.

## Heritage demolition

Municipalities typically want to retain houses with character merit or heritage value. For example, [Delta may withhold a demolition permit](#) if the property is on the heritage register.

## Provincial Heritage Conservation

The [BC Heritage Conservation Act](#) protects archaeological sites on private land without requiring formal designation. [Bill 14: amendments to the provincial Heritage Conservation Act](#) passed on May 31, 2019, bringing greater protection for heritage, and archeological sites and objects throughout BC. property owners who find evidence of an archaeological site on their property must pay for further investigation.

An archaeological site is a location with evidence of past human activity including stone carvings, remains of ancient houses, campsites, or middens (location of aboriginal artifacts).

The province keeps inventories of properties that have heritage value in its heritage registry. The heritage designation is a form of expropriation of property rights (like a statutory right of way) and imposes certain restrictions on property owners. Once the designation is made, it appears on title.

The province has more than 21,000 records of sites and objects in its [heritage registry](#). To find out whether or not a property has a known protected archaeological site, contact the BC Archaeology Branch at 250-953-3338.

## Federal Heritage Conservation

The Government of Canada owns more than 40,000 buildings. More than 20,000 have been evaluated and over 1,300, or three per cent, have been designated. These buildings are recorded in the Register of the Government of Canada Heritage Buildings which is maintained by the [Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office](#) (FHBRO).

The FHBRO assists federal government departments with protecting federal heritage buildings in keeping with the [Treasury Board Policy on the Management of Real Property](#). The policy applies to federal government departments which administer real property but not to Crown Corporations, which means post offices and railway stations aren't covered by the policy.

The FHBRO evaluates federal buildings 40 years and older to determine heritage character. Heritage designation is assigned under the Treasury Board Heritage Buildings Policy and under Canada's Historic Sites and Monuments Act. Through [this process](#), buildings are designated as Classified, the higher level of designation, or Recognized, the second level, or not designated.

Examples of federal heritage designated buildings and sites include West Vancouver's [Point Atkinson Lighthouse](#), Vancouver's [CN Railway Station](#) and [Marpole Midden](#), and Steveston's [Gulf of Georgia Cannery](#).

## Due diligence

When performing due diligence on a property title, remember what's not registered on title is often just as important as what is registered on title. It's important to determine if a property has a heritage designation or is an archaeological site. Check with the municipality where the property is located and with the BC Archaeological Sites registry.

## Resources

- REBGV offers a course, [Listing and selling heritage and character homes](#)
- [Heritage BC](#)
- [Heritage basics](#)
- Heritage homes tours in [Vancouver](#) and [New Westminster](#). Both locations offer summer and winter heritage homes tours when owners have information about restoration
- [Heritage Vancouver](#)
- Vancouver Heritage Foundation, [heritage site finder](#).

## Heritage – bylaws, registers, fees and fines

Municipality	Bylaw / register	Fees – altering / demolishing	Fines / Penalties	Contact
<b>Anmore</b>	<a href="#">Official Community Plan</a> <a href="#">Zoning bylaw</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Martin Greig, building inspector/ bylaw enforcement  604-469-9877 <a href="mailto:martin.greig@anmore.com">martin.greig@anmore.com</a>
<b>Belcarra</b>	<a href="#">Official community plan</a> <a href="#">Zoning bylaw</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Lorna Dysart, chief administrative officer  604-937-4101 <a href="mailto:ldysart@belcarra.ca">ldysart@belcarra.ca</a>
<b>Burnaby</b>	<a href="#">Zoning bylaw</a> <a href="#">Heritage information</a> <a href="#">Heritage inventory</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Jim Wolf, heritage planner  604-294-7944
<b>Coquitlam</b>	<a href="#">Heritage management strategy</a>  <a href="#">Various bylaws</a> <a href="#">Heritage register</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Demian Rueter planning department  604-927-3000 <a href="mailto:drueter@coquitlam.ca">drueter@coquitlam.ca</a>
<b>Delta</b>	<a href="#">Heritage overview</a> <a href="#">Heritage strategy</a> <a href="#">Heritage register</a> <a href="#">Heritage conservation &amp; protection</a> <a href="#">Zoning bylaw</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Daniel Feeny, heritage planner  604-946-4141 <a href="mailto:dfeeny@delta.ca">dfeeny@delta.ca</a>
<b>Lions Bay</b>	<a href="#">Zoning &amp; Development Bylaw</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Peter DeJong, chief administrative officer  604-921-9333 <a href="mailto:cao@lionsbay.ca">cao@lionsbay.ca</a>
<b>Maple Ridge</b>	<a href="#">Heritage procedures bylaw</a> <a href="#">Heritage maintenance bylaw</a> <a href="#">Heritage register</a> <a href="#">Heritage inventory</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Lisa Zosiak, manager, community planning  604-463-5221 <a href="mailto:lzosiak@mapleridge.ca">lzosiak@mapleridge.ca</a>
<b>New Westminster</b>	<a href="#">Queen's Park heritage conservation area</a> <a href="#">Heritage inventory</a> <a href="#">Heritage register</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Britney Quail, heritage planner  604-521-3711

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<b>North Vancouver City</b>	<a href="#">Heritage register</a> <a href="#">Heritage register FAQs</a> <a href="#">Official Community Plan</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Annie Dempster, planning department 604-983-7357
<b>North Vancouver District</b>	<a href="#">Heritage information</a> <a href="#">Heritage Strategic Plan</a> <a href="#">Heritage procedure bylaw</a> <a href="#">Community heritage grants</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Nicole Foth, heritage planner 604-990-2480
<b>Pitt Meadows</b>	<a href="#">Heritage development</a> <a href="#">Official Community Plan</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Allison Dominelli, Planning department 604-465-2465
<b>Port Moody</b>	<a href="#">Heritage strategic plan and bylaws</a> <a href="#">Heritage Maintenance Standards bylaw</a> <a href="#">Heritage register</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Mary DePaoli, manager of planning 604-469-4500 <a href="mailto:mdepaoli@portmoody.ca">mdepaoli@portmoody.ca</a>
<b>Richmond</b>	<a href="#">Heritage overview</a> <a href="#">Heritage procedures bylaw</a> <a href="#">Heritage inventory</a> <a href="#">Steveston Village conservation plan</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Minhee Park, heritage planner 604-276-4000 <a href="mailto:mpark@richmond.ca">mpark@richmond.ca</a>
<b>Squamish</b>	<a href="#">Official community plan</a> <a href="#">Zoning bylaw</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Sarah McJannet, planner 604-815-5217 <a href="mailto:smcjannet@squamish.ca">smcjannet@squamish.ca</a>
<b>Vancouver</b>	<a href="#">Protecting Vancouver's heritage</a> <a href="#">Heritage bylaws</a> <a href="#">Vancouver heritage register (homes, buildings, trees sites)</a> <a href="#">First Shaughnessy Design panel</a>	No demolitions, if possible. No demolitions in Shaughnessy. Demolition permit fee	<a href="#">Vancouver has taken property owners to court for as much as \$100,000</a>	Marco D'Agostini, senior heritage planner 604-873-7172 <a href="mailto:marco.dagostini@vancouver.ca">marco.dagostini@vancouver.ca</a>
<b>West Vancouver</b>	<a href="#">Heritage conservation</a> <a href="#">Heritage Register</a> <a href="#">Various heritage designation bylaws</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Michelle McGuire, Planning department 604-925-7000 <a href="mailto:mmcguire@westvancouver.ca">mmcguire@westvancouver.ca</a>
<b>Whistler</b>	<a href="#">Whistler's heritage</a>	No demolitions if possible. Demolition permit fee	Not applicable	Planning department 1-866-932-5535