

# The Benefits of Heritage Designation



Heritage designation helps protect the unique character and value of historic buildings. Owners benefit from increased property stability and may access grants for repairs. Sensitive renovations are allowed, provided they respect the building's heritage features. By conserving these places, communities support local economies, foster tourism, and preserve their shared identity and history for future generations.

- 1. Getting a historic designation usually increases property value.** Studies show that properties with historic designation, as well as historic districts or main streets, tend to increase in value and are more stable during economic downturns.
- 2. Conservation of our historic places is for all kinds of buildings.** Significant historic buildings are not just large architectural gems. Any heritage building, regardless of size simplicity, is valued for its cultural and social significance.
- 3. Heritage designation is good for the economy.** Heritage conservation is the foundation of many vibrant and economically sound tourist destinations in North America and around the world. Protecting and rehabilitating historic buildings has revitalized many historic main streets and residential districts in the province and across North America.
- 4. Conserving your building uses fewer new materials.** Using fewer new materials benefits the local economy by encouraging the use of local trades, supplies and equipment. This keeps the cost of these items within the local economy.
- 5. Historic buildings need to be safe.** Many historic buildings were built more soundly than some contemporary buildings. However, some may need retrofits to increase structural stability or safety, but the building codes provide provisions for "grandfathering" to meet existing codes.
- 6. Designation as a "Municipal Historic Resource" protects your building forever.** This designation does not support demolition and requires the building to be maintained in at least fair condition. The only exception is if the Municipality withdraws the designation bylaw or if the building is completely destroyed.
- 7. You can still make sensitive changes to your historic building.** Owners cannot destroy the building, but they can make sensitive alterations or additions as long as they respect the heritage value and do not impact the character-defining elements listed in the Statement of Significance. Owners also have access to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which provide guidance on appropriate changes.
- 8. Historic buildings must follow development regulations too.** All development must comply with zoning and development regulations and standards to protect public interest, your interest, and the building's interest by preventing inappropriate development.
- 9. Purchasing a heritage building is a great investment because there may be government grants to help with repair or rehabilitation costs.** Owners of heritage buildings may access government grants to reduce repair and maintenance costs. After designation, applications can be made to Alberta's Preservation Partnership Program for potential funding.
- 10. Conserving our heritage grounds us.** It is not about saving everything old. It is about saving what defines us, what makes us a better community, what sustains us, and what contributes to our unique quality and vibrancy. It is our community, our home, our history, and our future for many generations to experience.

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