

## What are Heritage Resources?

**Heritage Resources** (also called 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.

While all things have an associated history involving human or natural occurrences, The City of Calgary focuses its heritage initiatives on resources that have been recognized through a formal evaluation process (detailed on page 2).

The multi-disciplinary task of retaining and enhancing heritage resources is broadly referred to as **Heritage Conservation**.

## Why conserve?

Heritage resources can unlock triple-bottom-line benefits for municipalities. In addition to the aesthetic, social and educational value of heritage sites, the benefits of conservation include job growth in skilled trades, reduction in construction/demolition waste, economic resiliency during recession periods, positive contribution towards ‘sense of place’ and community identity, avoided environmental impact through reuse of structures, and 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, including:

### 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)

### Guidebook for Great Communities

*“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**  
Page 4: **Glossary of Terms**



### National Hotel

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

The City of Calgary recognizes heritage resources through one of the following two processes:

- **Heritage sites:** Buildings, landscapes and features that are at least 25 years-old, and thought to have standalone significance as a **heritage site**, may qualify for listing on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources (Inventory)*. Potential heritage sites are researched and approved by [Heritage Calgary](#) according to a Council-approved system based on specific tangible and intangible values.
- **Heritage assets:** Buildings constructed prior to 1945 that largely retain their historic appearance and features may be considered **heritage assets**. Unlike heritage sites, assets may not individually qualify for the *Inventory*, but are considered to have broader significance 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 by performing 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 (1912)**  
Example of a [heritage site](#) listed on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*

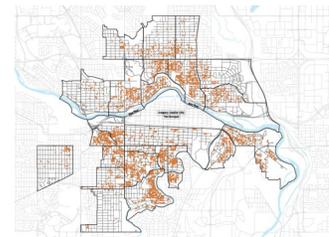


**Historic Streetscape, Ramsay**  
Examples of [heritage assets](#) identified by The City of Calgary

## Administration’s conservation strategy

To-date, The City of Calgary’s approach to heritage conservation has generally focused on [heritage sites](#). Working with Heritage Calgary, over 780 unique sites have been listed on the *Inventory*, over 100 have been granted legal protection. Despite significant progress, Administration has identified challenges with this approach, including:

- The *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources* is a growing, non-exhaustive list of heritage sites; research in 2019 indicated nearly 500 more potential sites within 26 of Calgary’s inner-city communities
- A majority of identified heritage sites on the *Inventory* (over 85%) remain unprotected, including major Calgary landmarks
- Existing incentives are often unable to match the financial value of selling and/or redeveloping a property containing a heritage resource, creating a conservation *disincentive*
- Beyond a ‘pilot program’ in Bridgeland-Riverside (Bylaw 273D2017), [heritage assets](#) are almost entirely without mechanisms to encourage conservation



**Heritage Asset Windshield Survey**  
Conducted 2019-2020 in 26 inner-city communities, revealing thousands of heritage assets

In recognition of these challenges, Administration has explored new approaches for heritage conservation, are were included in report PFC2019-0223. The recommendations of this report include a proposed heritage area policy and new financial incentive programs. If-approved, this would represent a significant shift forward in Calgary’s heritage conservation strategy.

## 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 (Calgary Heritage Authority, *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**  
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 historic fabric 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 palaeological resources. These can be managed by municipal, provincial or federal authorities.

In Calgary, The City generally classifies heritage resources as heritage sites or heritage assets, depending on their formally-evaluated significance.

**Heritage Site**— Building, landscape, or feature of standalone heritage significance, determined according to the *Historic Resource Evaluation System*. Potential heritage sites are researched by Heritage Calgary, and placed on the *Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources*.

**Heritage Asset** – Privately owned structure, typically constructed before 1945, that significantly retains its original form, scale, massing, window/door pattern and architectural details or materials. Individual heritage assets may not warrant inclusion on the *Inventory* or consideration as a heritage site.

**Heritage Area** – Concentrated grouping of related heritage assets.

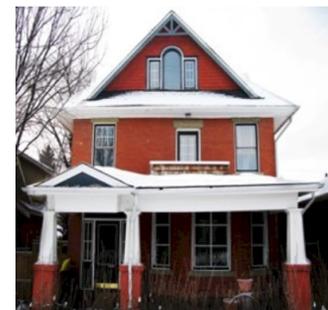
**Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources (*Inventory*)** – Growing (non-exhaustive) list of heritage sites that have been assessed by Heritage Calgary according to the Council-approved *Historic Resource Evaluation System*.

**Municipal Historic Resource**— Heritage site that has been legally protected against demolition or major alterations under the *Alberta Historical Resources Act*.

**Windshield Survey**— Visual survey of possible heritage assets in an area according to specific criteria of historic architecture and design.



**Scarboro United Church and Manse (1929)**  
Municipally-designated heritage site



**Robert and Mary Taylor Residence (1912)**  
Municipally-designated heritage site