

MAKE HISTORY.

Preserve Manitoba's Past.



MUNICIPAL DESIGNATION:
Is it right for you?



Canada's
Historic Places

Lieux patrimoniaux
du Canada

Manitoba 

Cover photos (clockwise from top): Fannystelle School, Fannystelle;
Timber Truss Bridge, Gardenton;
Arborg Unitarian Church, Arborg.

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INTRODUCTION

Historic places matter to us. They have become necessary physical elements that help define our lives, as well as providing us with a sense of identity and shared memories. Many places are significant to individuals (the place you grew up), some are significant to entire families (the place your great-grandparents lived) and still others are significant to a whole community (the place where the first settlers constructed the community's first building).

Every community in Manitoba has a few places that are valued for their historic significance. A handful are so important that they are recognized at the provincial or federal level for their association with the history of the province or nation. Others are respected locally as landmarks in their communities, and recognized as municipal heritage sites.

Did you know that there are nearly 700 designated heritage sites in Manitoba? A historic place, or heritage site, is defined as any place that is valued by a community because of its enduring relationship to those people, themes and/or events from the past that are recognized as vital in the community's history. Historic places teach us about the people and events that make up our shared past. They can reflect the original settlement and use of the land by Aboriginal people, or later developments in government, agriculture, transportation, education, science, architecture, engineering, as well as many other themes.

WHAT IS MUNICIPAL HERITAGE DESIGNATION?

Municipal heritage designation means that a site holds a special place in your community, and is legally recognized and protected. It means the place has been identified as having value to the whole community, and is a source of local pride. Ancient Aboriginal sites and vestiges of pioneer trails can be heritage sites. Certain buildings will merit distinction as heritage sites: churches, lodges, town halls, houses, schools, barns, businesses, etc. Bridges, parks and cemeteries can also qualify as municipal heritage sites.

To be a municipal heritage site, a place must meet a threshold of significance to the entire community. Once this is achieved, municipal heritage designation means three things:

recognition, protection and commitment.

Recognition

Municipal heritage designation is a legal recognition by a municipality, through a bylaw passed under the authority of *The Heritage Resources Act* (web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/h039-1e.php), that a site has significance to the community. Sites meeting this threshold of significance may have been identified through a community-wide survey or study, or by a nomination from an organization or individual. The term “significance” can include an association with an important person, event or theme in the community’s history: notable architecture or materials; recognition as a community landmark; or a connection to everyday experiences or spiritual lives of residents.

Protection

Although changes can be made to heritage sites, one of the purposes of municipal designation is to protect those qualities and features that are important to the community. Often this includes certain physical characteristics, such as the location of a building or its original materials. If these special characteristics were damaged or removed, the site’s importance would be diminished, and its meaning to the community, especially for future generations, would also be lost. Many municipalities have a requirement that owners of heritage sites obtain a heritage permit to help guide planning and conservation work before any major alterations are undertaken.

Maintaining these special elements can require specific knowledge and special materials. As a result, governments and other groups often provide assistance through grants and other funding to help stewards and owners conserve heritage sites.

Commitment

When a site is designated as a municipal heritage site, it comes with a commitment. The municipality acknowledges the importance of the site to the community and takes a stake in recognizing it and protecting it, usually through the use of heritage permits. Those who own the site, or are responsible for looking after it, agree to maintain and protect the significance of the site. Heritage designation is for the long haul – it is an ongoing commitment to steward the community’s heritage. (On rare occasions municipal heritage designation can be revoked, but this should be only considered in the most desperate situations – designation is a serious process and should not be entered into lightly.)

What kinds of places are eligible for designation?

Designation is exclusive, an honour bestowed on only the most significant sites. But it is also inclusive, and should not be limited only to the grand and ancient – a community's history includes the typical and the everyday, and that heritage is equally important for a fuller appreciation of the past. Almost any place can be, at least, considered for designation as a municipal heritage site:

- While the age of a site may be a factor, there is no minimum age for a site to be considered for designation.
- A designated site may be any physical place – building, cairn, landscape, trail, cemetery, museum, etc. – as long as it contains defined physical boundaries.
- A designated site may be owned by a non-profit organization, privately, or by the municipality. Designation without the consent of the owner is not recommended.
- Municipalities **cannot** designate as municipal heritage sites property/buildings owned by the Province of Manitoba or the Government of Canada.

Designated sites are also eligible to be nominated by the Historic Resources Branch to the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP), an online database of historic sites from across Canada. This offers a valuable opportunity to share your heritage with researchers, students, tourists and the local community. Those sites that are nominated to the CRHP must have a Statement of Significance prepared for them. For more information, contact the Historic Resources Branch or visit www.historicplaces.ca.

NOTE: The City of Winnipeg maintains its own heritage site designation policies and procedures. Please contact the City of Winnipeg directly for more information 204-986-5390 or www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/historic/historic.stm.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY SITE IS SIGNIFICANT?

There are a variety of ways that a place is deemed to have heritage significance. It may be associated with an important event or person, serve as a landmark, be a spiritual place, or be historically linked to a traditional activity. This significance is called **heritage value**. These categories will help you put into words why your place is valuable to your community:

How does this site relate to the community's past?

- Is the site associated with an important person, family or group? If so, how did they affect the community?
- Is the site associated with an important event?
- If it is a building, does it represent a specific architectural style or tradition?
- If it is a building, does it represent traditional techniques or advances in construction, design or materials?
- Is the site a unique example of a kind of place not seen elsewhere in the community?
- Is the site the best example of the kind of place that is common in the community?
- Does the site relate to an important phase or change in the history of the community?

Are there other ways the site relates to current community life?

- Does the site continue to be used in everyday life? Has the historic use been maintained, or has it attained new community status as a museum or gathering place?
- Is the site considered a landmark or beloved community feature?
- Does the site contribute to the community's cultural, spiritual or economic well-being?
- Is the site appreciated for its picturesque qualities? Other aesthetic qualities?
- Is the site part of the community's identity?
- Are there natural characteristics of the site that are appreciated?

Work with your community

Talking with your community, either one-on-one or in a community meeting, may be a useful way to determine why the community values a particular site. Some communities have found that hiring a consultant to determine the significance of a group of sites has given them a more objective view of community value. Whether you determine significance on your own, with the community, or through a consultant, it is vital to fully understand all the reasons the site is important. There may even be reasons that you, the owner, didn't think others would care about – but which, in fact, are seen as central to the community's heritage.

For more information and examples regarding these questions, please consult the Municipal Designation Nomination Form on the Historic Resources Branch website.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

What else do I need to think about before I designate?

Heritage conservation is about planning for the future – assessing the specific issues surrounding your property, such as **its condition/human resources, and its financial viability**. Designation is most appropriate for sites that are already financially viable or have a financial plan, that have public/community value and support, and that will not require radical changes for continued use.

Looking at these issues will help you determine whether designation is the right choice for you and your historic site. It's important to be aware of these issues before the designation process begins, to determine if there are any concerns about the long-term sustainability of the historic place.

Condition

- Is the historic site in good condition?
- Have there been major changes to the site or the building (additions or removals) that negatively affect its original character?

- Are there any threats to the condition / integrity of this site such as:
 - ☐ demolition?
 - ☐ vandalism?
 - ☐ deterioration?
 - ☐ alterations to structure?
 - ☐ erosion?
 - ☐ encroachment by new development?
 - ☐ other?
- Have you thought about how you will maintain this place into the future?
A seasonal/annual maintenance plan is recommended for most sites.
- Are major repairs or upgrades anticipated in the next three years?

Human Resources

- Do you have the people required to manage and maintain the historic place?
- Will your project require the support of the community and elected officials?
- Do the building's neighbours support your project?
- Does the general public support your project?

Financial

- Do you have a financial plan in place for the long-term conservation of this historic place?
- If your project requires renovations and repairs, how much will that work cost? Can you get estimates for that work?
- Can you afford the above costs, or will they be recouped in the new business venture?
- If you cannot afford these costs, have you investigated other funding sources?
- What are the approximate annual insurance costs for the site?

If you believe there are sustainability issues related to your historic place, please ask for a copy of the sustainability workbook, available from the Historic Resources Branch.

If you have maintenance issues related to your historic place, please ask for a copy of the *Maintenance Manual* available from the Historic Resources Branch.

WHAT DOES DESIGNATION MEAN FOR ME?

Every designation situation is different. Discussion among the owner, the municipality and/or the Historic Resources Branch may be needed to clarify specific details.

As an owner, heritage designation will mean:

- **A notice will be added to the title of your property identifying it as a heritage site.** This is not a caveat and will not impede the sale or use of the property. If the property is sold, the owner must advise the designating authority about the sale. Nevertheless, the legal protection of the site remains with the property.
- **Site information will be kept on a municipal and/or provincial heritage register.** This is only the basic information about the site (ex: site name, owner's name, legal description of site, etc.). No sensitive or personal information is included on these registers, which may be viewed by the public.
- **You must apply for a heritage permit from the municipality.** Obtain the permit before doing any work that significantly alters, or could otherwise affect, the heritage character of your property/building (including demolition). This is in addition to securing any necessary building permits. Having a heritage permit does not stop you from making future changes to the site – however, it does require that the heritage value and character of the site/building are considered before making changes. Check with your municipality for more information.
- **Site improvements may be eligible for municipal heritage property tax credits.** Only certain types of improvements qualify. Check with the local municipality for more information.

- **You'll be asked by the Historic Resources Branch if you wish to include your site in the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP).** This places no restrictions on your property and your consent is completely voluntary. The CRHP is an online, public database of heritage sites across Canada used to promote and learn about historic places. www.historicplaces.ca

Will the designation affect my property value?

Economic research shows that designated heritage buildings tend to appreciate in value and perform better on the real estate market. In urban areas particularly, the conservation of historic places can help revitalize commercial and residential neighbourhoods and restore their economic activity, liveability and attractiveness. Designation and conservation of heritage buildings helps safeguard property values and the municipal tax base.

Will the designation affect my insurance premiums?

Municipal designation should not cause your premiums to go up. Heritage properties can usually be insured with no greater risk for the insurance company than any other building.

Where property damage is extensive and the significant features of the building are lost, owners are not forced to reconstruct their original places. It is a fact, however, that insurers look for clients with well-maintained properties and a good claims history. For these reasons, it makes sense to update and maintain your heritage building, not only to ensure your safety, but also to help control your insurance rates.

Will I need to open my property to the public?

You are not required to open your property to the public. You might be asked if you would like to receive visitors or have your site included on a walking/driving tour, or in an annual Open House event. Participation in these types of activities is voluntary.

What financial assistance could I receive if I designate my property?

The owners or long-term leaseholders of designated heritage sites are eligible to apply for funding under the Designated Heritage Building Grants program. Grants are exclusively for the accurate

conservation of designated heritage buildings, and do not include modern upgrading such as washrooms, museum displays, heating/electrical or upgrading on non-original materials. The program does include funding for handicap access, structural/foundation work, architectural and engineering fees, and feasibility studies.

These grants are not retroactive and cannot be applied towards work completed before the grant applications were approved. Because public demand for grant assistance is higher than the available funding, eligibility does not ensure a grant will be awarded in any given year. Grant eligibility guidelines and application deadlines are subject to change each fiscal year. Contact the Historic Resources Branch for current information on the grants program.

There are several other grants you may be eligible for. Consult the Manitoba Heritage Grant List online at: www.manitoba.ca/heritage

THE PATH TO DESIGNATION

Because municipal heritage designation involves the recognition that a site is significant to the entire community, and because it frequently involves private property, a formal, transparent process is used to ensure fair decision-making.

STEP 1: Submit your nomination form to the local municipal office.

STEP 2: After a completed request for designation is received by a municipal office, the request will be considered by council (who may refer the matter to an appointed Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee).

STEP 3: If the decision to proceed with designation is made, a **designation bylaw*** will be prepared and given first reading. As well, a **Notice of Intent** will be served to the owner of the site. This Notice of Intent will also be sent to the Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, and published, either in two consecutive issues of a local newspaper, or at the same time in two different local newspapers.

STEP 4: A public hearing on the designation will take place at least three weeks after the Notice of Intent is published. After the hearing, council may give second and third reading to the by-law. If passed, council will publish a **Municipal Heritage Notice** indicating the site is now designated. This notice will be sent to both the owner and the minister, and filed in the land titles office.

STEP 5: During the bylaw process, council may decide after reviewing the request that the site is not appropriate for, or does not merit, designation. Council may also decide not to proceed with designation if: objections are raised at the public hearing; the designation is not compatible with the community's direction; or the bylaw doesn't pass.

STEP 6: Once a site is designated, it is recommended that a *Statement of Significance* (SoS) be prepared. An SoS establishes precisely why a site has been protected (heritage value), as well as identifying what physical qualities (character-defining elements) about the site need to be respected to ensure that the heritage values are conserved. An SoS is a requirement for sites nominated to the Canadian Register of Historic Places and is an important tool for owners to help make decisions to protect their site. The Historic Resources Branch will provide direction and assistance in the creation of SoS.

STEP 7: The production of an SoS will also help site owners make use of another important conservation tool, the ***Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*** (available from the Historic Resources Branch or online at www.historicplaces.ca/nor-sta/norm-stan e.aspx). Once the site is designated, the owner is expected to maintain the property, and understanding the character-defining elements will ensure that decisions about interventions are appropriate and respectful. The Historic Resources Branch has resources available to help owners develop conservation plans, cyclical maintenance schedules and/or adaptive re-use proposals.

* A template is available for preparing a designation bylaw in the *Municipal Heritage Resource Guide* available from your local municipal office, the Historic Resources Branch or online (see contact information on the last page).

Are there any additional regulations or responsibilities associated with designation?

There is an expectation that, as the caretaker of a valuable aspect of Manitoba's heritage, you will conscientiously maintain and protect your property. Although designation does not involve any rigid government restrictions or regulations on the day-to-day use or administration of a site, you will be encouraged to conduct regular maintenance and follow accepted principles of good conservation. *The Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* can help you determine what is an appropriate treatment for your property. Consult the Historic Resources Branch for more information.

SUMMARY

- Heritage designation is a serious, legal recognition on behalf of the community that a site holds historic value and significance.
- Quality is a consideration, especially in the case of visitors – if a site is selected for “official designation,” it is generally seen as a cut above the rest.
- There are promotional opportunities for a designated heritage site, such as being included on the Manitoba heritage register: www.manitoba.ca/heritage, and/or the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CHRP): www.historicplaces.ca.
- Generally, designation does not affect access to property insurance or have a negative impact on property values.
- Heritage designation is looked upon favourably by many funding agencies, giving designated properties considerable access to grants. There are some programs in which heritage designation is an eligibility requirement. One such program is the Designated Heritage Buildings Grant program offered by Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, which provides small capital grants for heritage conservation.
- Designated properties have access to technical advice for their conservation through the Historic Resources Branch, as resources allow.

CONTACTS:

For more information, please contact your local municipal office.

In Winnipeg

Department of Planning, Property and Development

Planning and Land Use Division

15 – 30 Fort Street

Winnipeg, MB R3C 4X5

Phone: 204-986-5390

Fax: 204-986-7524

Website: www.winnipeg.ca/historicalbuildings

OR

Historic Resources Branch

Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport

Main Floor, 213 Notre Dame Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R3B 1N3

Phone: 1-204-945-2118 or toll free: 1-800-282-8069, ext. 2118

Fax: 1-204-948-2384

Website: www.manitoba.ca/heritage

