



HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREAS

Heritage Conservation: A Community Guide, which was published in 1994 in response to the then new *Local Government Act*, states, “A heritage conservation area is a distinct district with special heritage value and/or heritage character, identified for heritage conservation purposes in an official community plan.” ([source](#))

The City of Victoria says, “A heritage conservation area is a distinct area with special heritage value and character identified for heritage conservation purposes in an official community plan (OCP). The conservation of these areas is integral to conserving the special sense of place these areas contribute to Victoria’s overall character for the enjoyment of future generations.” ([source](#))

Individual properties within a heritage conservation area (HCA) may exhibit heritage value, but it is the overall heritage character and value that distinguishes a heritage conservation area. In establishing an HCA, the local government is not only recognizing the significance of the collective structures, but also the total environment, landscape, streetscape, spatial elements, vistas and views, and the relationships of buildings to each other and their surroundings.

Conserving heritage resources also creates exciting community spaces and acts as a catalyst for compatible development.

Similar to heritage designation, HCAs provide long-term protections to conserve local heritage, but in this case the protections are extended to a defined area that contains more than one property (which can include buildings, other structures, land, and features) and that has definable heritage characteristics and values.

The protections, restrictions, and geographic boundaries that apply to an HCA are described in the local government’s Official Community Plan (or in an addendum to the OCP). The specific requirements for that bylaw are found in the *Local Government Act* ([source](#)):

- The affected properties will be listed and the heritage features and characteristics that justify the designation will be described;
- An area’s overall heritage significance and value will be described;
- The objectives of establishing the HCA will be listed and the ways in which the objectives will be achieved will be provided;
- The Official Community Plan may describe why certain (non-heritage) properties are not affected by the HCA;
- The land title office and the minister responsible for heritage (through the Heritage Branch) will be notified of additions and deletions to an HCA;





- Minimum standards will be established with design and maintenance guidelines;
- Requests for alterations, new construction, and land subdivision must go through a heritage alteration permit (HAP) process; this typically applies only to the properties affected by the HCA.

The design and maintenance standards could affect a variety of character-defining or planning related elements, such as:

- conservation requirements
- property maintenance
- architectural characteristics
- materials
- siting, orientation, and setbacks
- height and massing
- landscaping
- parks and public trees
- other features listed as character-defining elements

It is possible for the HAC bylaw to include exceptions to the design and maintenance standards. In this case, the property owner is not required to obtain a HAP.

Unlike heritage designation, the local government is not required to compensate the property owner in the event there is a reduction in the market property value.

Ultimately, an HCA is not a tool to prevent demolition or construction and it is not intended to discourage property owners from upgrading and improving properties, but instead it is a strong and flexible tool to encourage conservation.

For more information about Heritage Conservation Areas, Heritage Alteration Permits and other heritage conservation tools, please refer to our extensive series of [resource guides](#).

Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area All Properties by Category

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- Excluded Properties (Those zoned for commercial, institutional or multi-family residential)
- Protected Category Properties
- Non-Protected Category Properties

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