

HERITAGE PROTECTION INITIATIVES

Overview

The protection of heritage buildings is a key component of HRMbyDesign's Downtown Plan. The heritage strategy has several components:



- a. Using the legislative authority of both the HRM Charter, for planning policy, zoning and development control, and the Heritage Property Act, for heritage property registration, heritage district designation, demolition control and financial incentives.
- b. Establishing heritage conservation districts with strong demolition controls, design guidelines, and financial incentives to encourage enhancement of district assets and character.
- c. Protecting registered heritage resources outside heritage districts by means of: new built form guidelines for new development next to, or integrated with the heritage resource; by making the *Regional Heritage Functional Plan* a Council priority for the provision of improved heritage incentives; and, by working with the province to strengthen demolition controls as part of the Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia.
- d. Updating the inventory of potential heritage resources in the downtown and encouraging new individual heritage registrations and heritage district designations.
- e. Implementing a height bonus system that will generate funds for, or encourage actions in support of heritage protection.
- f. Enhancing heritage districts with complementary public realm improvements.

Heritage Conservation Districts

Heritage conservation district (HCD) designation has a high priority in the Downtown Plan as it is the most effective means to protect registered heritage buildings and non-registered buildings that contribute to district character.

When an HCD is established, HRM is able to implement firm, ongoing demolition controls and provide financial incentives for the restoration of all properties in the district. These tools, combined with public realm improvements and design guidelines for alterations and new development, will ensure that the district evolves in a manner that reinforces its key heritage attributes. Heritage district designation is also recognized as a powerful tool for tourism development and economic revitalization. Approximately 70% of registered heritage buildings are captured within the boundaries of the following three proposed HCDs:



Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District

The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District has been under consideration for many years and is now integrated into HRMbyDesign's Downtown Plan. The district will be officially established in parallel with the new Downtown Plan, through formal adoption of a heritage conservation district plan and by-law. The Barrington Plan includes a restoration grant and tax credit program worth \$3 million over five years, which is expected to generate in excess of \$15 million in private investment. Public realm improvements to enhance pedestrian amenity, street furnishings, and transit facilities will also be undertaken.

Historic Properties and Granville Mall Area & Barrington Street South Area

Upon completion of the required background studies and public consultations, other heritage districts may be established in the Historic Properties and Granville Mall area (between Granville St. and the waterfront), and in the southern Barrington and Hollis Street area (between Bishop St. and Cornwallis Park).

Heritage Protection Outside of Heritage Districts

Strengthened Demolition Control

In addition to the buildings included in the three proposed heritage districts, there are roughly 38 stand-alone registered heritage buildings in the Downtown Plan area, accounting for 30% of all registered heritage buildings in the plan area. Currently, these have only limited protection through the one-year demolition delay provision of the *Heritage Property Act*. However, the new Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy contains a provision to work with the Province in the development of its Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia, which includes a review of the Heritage Property Act. HRM will seek to achieve stronger demolition controls and improved funding for financial incentive programs.

Design of Heritage-related New Development

Alterations to registered heritage properties are governed by HRM's *Heritage Building Conservation Standards* and the *Design in Heritage Contexts* section of the Design Manual to be adopted under the Downtown Plan and Land Use By-law. The Manual also includes requirements respecting design of development on properties abutting registered heritage properties. This ensures greater compatibility of development near registered heritage properties.

Inventory of Potential Heritage Properties

All existing heritage property registrations are supported by historical research, much of which was compiled in heritage inventories undertaken in the 1970s and 80s. However, within the Downtown Plan area there are numerous other buildings with potential to be registered as heritage properties. HRMbyDesign calls for a

formal inventory of potential heritage properties to be established, which will include historical research and information on heritage value and character defining elements.

Heritage Registration Campaign

As the inventory of potential heritage properties is developed, HRM will proactively encourage new heritage property registrations by means of publications, workshops, and direct contact with property owners.

Heritage Registration Incentives

Financial Incentives

Through the existing Heritage Property Program, HRM has a grant program available to all residential or commercial heritage properties in the Municipality funded at \$150,000 per year. Through its Community Grants program, HRM also provides grants to registered heritage properties owned by non-profit organizations. It is anticipated that the ongoing availability of these programs will continue to encourage new heritage property registrations.

Bonus Zoning Incentives

The new Downtown Plan and Land Use By-law include provisions that enable developers to receive a height bonus in exchange for protection or enhancement of heritage buildings. This will provide an incentive for developers to register and retain heritage buildings, and to incorporate them into redevelopment plans, rather than demolishing them. For sites containing heritage resources, no bonus will be granted unless the heritage resource is preserved. There is no bonus zoning allowed within heritage conservation districts, wherein 70% of registered heritage properties reside.

Contact:

HRMbyDesign

PO Box 1749

Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Phone: 902-490-8479

Fax: 902-490-3976

Email: capdistrict@halifax.ca

www.hrmbymdesign.ca