

# REGISTERED HERITAGE DISTRICTS



## What is a heritage district?

A heritage district is a geographically defined area that conveys a special sense of time and place. A district is made up of buildings, structures, and spaces modified by human use. A district will have a sense of connectedness through past events or use, and/or have an appearance of visual cohesion through architecture or plan. Any aspect of province-wide importance relating to Newfoundland and Labrador's built heritage may be assessed in the designation of a Registered Heritage District. Above all, the district must have a sense of history, and ideally it should have few elements that take away from the historical character and integrity of the area, and its historic characteristics must predominate and set it apart from the area that immediately surrounds it.

## Who is responsible for designating Registered Heritage Districts in Newfoundland and Labrador?

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) was established in 1984 to stimulate an understanding of and an appreciation for the architectural heritage of the province. It is the mission of HFNL to preserve, support and celebrate Newfoundland and Labrador's historic places for the benefit of residents of the province and visitors, and to encourage best practices in heritage conservation. One of the ways HFNL does this is by designating and commemorating Registered Heritage Districts.



## *What could be included in a heritage district?*

In a heritage district, the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. Heritage districts reflect some level of human occupation or use, and so are recognizable for their concentration of buildings and structures. However, other aspects of cultural landscapes such as archaeological sites, streetscapes, gardens, fences, natural landscape features, ruins, and their spatial relationships may be included when they contribute to a district's heritage value.



## *How big is a heritage district?*

Heritage districts vary in size, depending upon the extent of the resources within them. Examples of heritage districts could include: a small grouping of buildings or structures at one site; a portion of an urban setting, such as a city block, neighbourhood, or downtown core; an entire community; or scattered groups of buildings and their settings, linked by common heritage.



## *How are the boundaries of a heritage district defined?*

One of the challenges in recognizing heritage districts is the definition of its boundaries. These will be determined by the location of the significant heritage resources associated with the area, such that all those resources will be included. Historic factors such as the boundaries of an original settlement or a planned community can define the area. Perimeters can also be drawn around groupings of resources of a particular type as, for example, 19th century houses, or buildings common in architectural style. Other features like roads, railways, paths, fences and walls may determine the boundaries of the district. Sometimes, topographic features or existing legal markers like property lines or local government boundaries may mark the heritage district.



## *What does Registered Heritage District designation mean for our town?*

Registered Heritage District designation is commemorative only. It implies no additional restrictions other than what the town may make on its own under the Municipalities Act. The designation does not impose any legal obligation on the owner or owners of structures and properties in the Registered Heritage District.

Registered Heritage Districts are usually commemorated by means of a bronze plaque. All Registered Heritage Districts will be placed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places at [www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca).



## *How does our town apply for Registered Heritage District designation?*



The application process is an open, public process in which interested parties are invited to suggest districts for consideration by the HFNL Board. The process begins by submitting a written application to HFNL, using the Registered Heritage Districts Application Form available from the HFNL office.

HFNL will not proceed with the evaluation and/or designation process without demonstration of public commitment to the process. This could take the form of community mail outs, public meetings, open forums, etc.

The staff of the HFNL will confirm receipt of the application in writing and then proceed to research and prepare an agenda paper for the Board. The applicant will also be informed of any additional information requirements, or if the application does not meet HFNL criteria and guidelines.

The length of time from initial application to designation will depend upon the ability of the applicant to provide sufficient information and on the resources of the HFNL. Normally, this will not exceed 18 months. HFNL staff will keep applicants apprised of the progress of their application in writing. Because of the advisory role of the Board, its meetings are held in camera and its recommendations are confidential. Applicants are advised of the outcome of the Board's deliberations only after the Chair has approved the Minutes.



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