



Heritage Designation of Historic Churches



Why are historic churches important?

Churches are important physical symbols of the values, beliefs and aspirations of generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. They are an important component of the **province's built heritage** and are part of the foundation on which many towns were built. Often constructed through voluntary labour and community-based fundraising, they stand as testaments to the faith of community pioneers and are solid reminders of the power of community cooperation.

Who is responsible for designating churches as Registered Heritage Structures 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 Structures, including churches.



Designation as a Registered Heritage Structure

Legal owners of historic churches within Newfoundland and Labrador are eligible to apply for designation of the church as a Registered Heritage Structure. The benefits of designation include provincial recognition of the structure, eligibility for grants and installation of a 5"x10" bronze plaque on the outside of the church to indicate its heritage significance. The property owner would agree to maintain the exterior of the church in an original state and ensure that no inappropriate material (i.e. vinyl siding, historically inaccurate windows, etc.) would be used in doing normal routine maintenance.



How to apply for designation

- Complete a Registered Heritage Structure Designation application, available online at www.heritagefoundation.ca under “Programs” or by calling the offices of the Heritage Foundation at 1-888-739-1892.
- Provide supporting historical documentation, proof of legal ownership and photographs of the exterior and interior.
- Completed applications will be reviewed initially by a Preservation Committee and then by the Board of Directors of the Heritage Foundation.
- Deadlines for submitting applications are March 1 and August 15 each year.



Evaluation of applications

The heritage value of a building is determined in several ways.

- Aesthetic value refers to the style, design, construction technique, materials, environmental setting, landmark value and craftsmanship of a structure.
- Historical value refers to the age of a building as well as associations with events, people, themes and activities in **the province's historical development**. A building must have a **proven connection to the province's political, economic, social and/or cultural development**.
- Integrity refers to the originality of the building fabric. Because the Foundation is concerned with the preservation/conservation of our built heritage, this is a critical factor in the assessment of a structure. If a great deal of the building has been altered it has no real heritage value. The building must also occupy its original site.



Designation contract

If recommended for designation, the legal owner must sign a designation contract. This states that the owner accepts the designation and agrees to protect the heritage characteristics of the church. It also serves as consent to listing the church on the Provincial Register of Historic Places and the Canadian Register of Historic Places. Once designation has been accepted, it is legally attached to the church and will be in effect for the lifetime of the church.



Registered Heritage Structure grants

Once designated as a Registered Heritage Structure a church can apply for a Registered Heritage Structure Restoration Grant. The grant can cover up to 30% of the cost of preservation measures and/or restoration of exterior features only. Grants can also be used to obtain professional services from architects and/or engineers in the planning stage of a project. The maximum amount that may be allocated per grant is \$50,000 on a total cost of \$166,667. Churches can apply for a maximum of three grants for a total of \$150,000 on a total project cost of \$500,000.



How to apply for a grant

- Complete a Registered Heritage Structure Restoration Grant application, available online at www.heritagefoundation.ca under “Programs” or by calling the offices of the Heritage Foundation at 1-888-739-1892.
- Provide a detailed list of restoration work to be undertaken, proof of legal ownership, a legal survey of the property and photographs of the exterior and interior.
- Provide two estimates from a qualified contractor, journeyman carpenter, architect and/or engineer.
- Deadlines for submitting applications are March 1 and August 15 each year.



Grant contract

If recommended for a grant, the legal owner must sign a grant contract in order to activate the grant. This contract states that the owner accepts the grant and agrees to protect the heritage characteristics of the church, including the use of heritage materials on the exterior. The contract also specifies that the restoration must be completed within two years from the time the grant was approved.



Easement Agreement or Grant Conditions Contract

In order to receive monies upon the completion of an approved restoration project, owners must agree to enter into a legal easement agreement or a grant conditions contract with the Heritage Foundation.

The easement and the contract are both a means to protect the historical and architectural integrity of the building, especially those features of the structure that are pertinent to the grant.

Easement agreements are registered with the Registry of Deeds, and must be signed and notarized before a grant payment is made.

A grant conditions contract is registered with the Registry of Deeds and must be signed and notarized before a grant payment is made. It has provisions for the return of grant monies if terms are broken.



Adaptive reuse of churches

The ideal use of churches is by an active faith community. Yet many churches have closed due to smaller congregations and high maintenance costs. The loss of a church can be a blow to communities, especially in smaller towns where the church has played a vital role in the **community's development and is often a treasured part of the built landscape**. Newfoundland and Labrador has many examples of churches that have been reused for new purposes while maintaining their architectural integrity. These uses have breathed new life into these buildings, have ensured the longevity of these buildings on the landscape and in many cases have allowed for continued access to buildings valued by community residents. If altering the exterior of a designated church is proposed, approval must first be obtained from HFNL.



Examples of adaptive reuse of churches

Adaptive Reuse for Public Use (pictured above)

- former St. George's Anglican Church, Brigus now the home of St. George's Heritage Committee Incorporated
- former St. Andrew's Anglican Church, L'Anse au Clair now the Gateway to Labrador Visitor Centre
- former All Saints Anglican Church, English Harbour now the home of English Harbour Arts Association

Adaptive Reuse for Commercial/Private Use (pictured below)

- former Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Admiral's Cove now a private home
- former St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, St. John's now an office building
- former St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Cupids now Cupid's Haven B&B



Partners for Sacred Places

Based in the United States, Partners for Sacred Places (see www.sacredplaces.org) is a national, non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active **community use of America's older religious properties.**

Partners for Sacred Places provides fee-based training programs that explore how religious buildings are used and perceived by the community. Congregations must find and nurture opportunities that make these buildings vibrant parts of the **community, while encouraging the community's role in maintenance and active use.**

Visitor promotion in partnership with tourism operators is one strategy for connecting historic religious buildings to the wider community, particularly in the case of redundant churches. New uses can tie into heritage tourism while honouring the memories of past parishioners.



Greening churches

Implementing environmentally friendly practices can improve a **building's energy efficiency and result in lower heating and maintenance costs.** The following websites offer valuable suggestions and solutions.

www.greeningsacredspaces.net – an initiative of Faith and the Common Good, a Canadian interfaith/intercultural organization. **Check out the “Tools and Resources” section.**

www.takechergenl.ca - a program offered by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power to help raise awareness of the importance of using energy wisely. Check out the energy savings tips and rebate programs.

Please note that Registered Heritage Structure grants do not cover greening/energy efficiency initiatives.



Additional funding sources



- Special events held at churches, such as choral performances, are proven revenue generators and help create greater public awareness of the value of churches.
- Long-term rental arrangements with community and/or private groups can be a source of additional revenue.
- Special fundraising appeals to present and past parishioners and community members have proven successful for many churches.
- Community Enhancement Employment Program, administered by the Department of Municipal Affairs, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- JobsNL Wage Subsidy Programs, administered by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.



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