

heritage

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INTRODUCTION

Heritage conservation is about retaining places that matter to the community for physical qualities, and in relation to both collective memory and contemporary uses. Its purpose is to retain, protect and improve real property with aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual value, and heritage character, as a public benefit.

This Plan seeks to continue to strike a balance between heritage conservation and new development as the Downtown Core Area grows significantly over the next thirty years. Its heritage policies seek to provide guidance that builds on Victoria's achievements in heritage protection, sensitive infill and new additions. The Plan guides changes to the historic environment as a consideration in placemaking at varying scales, from Heritage Conservation Areas, to streetscapes and open spaces, to buildings and sites. Policies also identify incentives and community engagement to help conserve the heritage value of Downtown Core Area Districts.

HERITAGE – DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

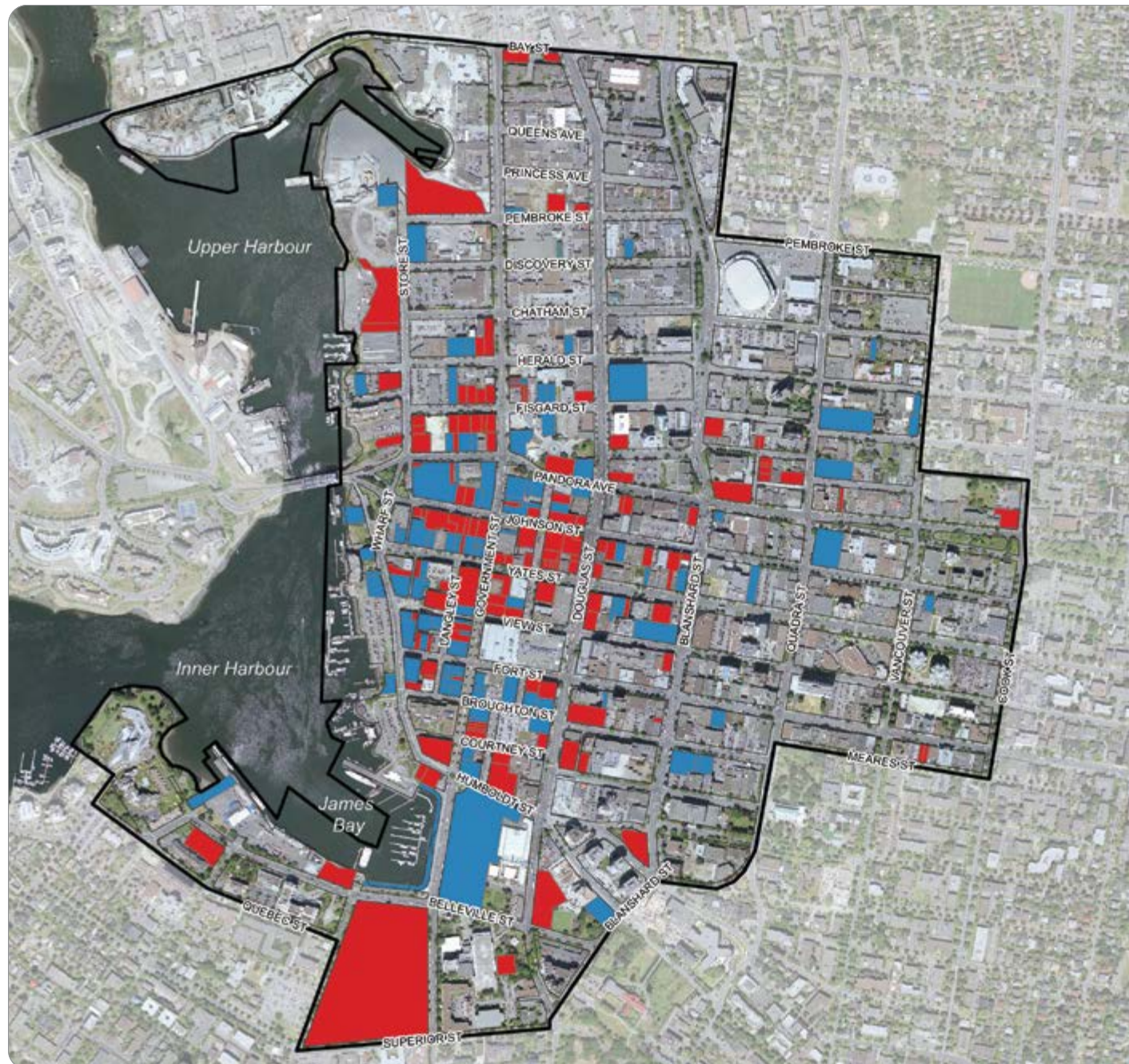
Much of the picturesque quality of Victoria is associated with its conservation areas and landmarks, some of which date from early colonial settlement. Since the 1970s, policies have encouraged new development in the Downtown Core Area through sensitive infill and new additions, while retaining and enhancing the heritage value and unique character of special places, such as Bastion Square, Centennial Square and Chinatown National Historic District.

The Downtown Core Area contains more than 200 heritage properties, including those identified as landmarks in this Plan such as the Provincial Parliament Buildings, Empress Hotel and Canadian Pacific Railway Steamship Terminal (SEE MAP 33). The Historic Commercial District is generally characterized by a “saw tooth” one-to-five storey skyline of Victorian and Edwardian architecture, which partially extends into the Inner Harbour District. Heritage is also a significant element of the character of the Central Business District and Residential Mixed-Use District, where there is a cluster of church spires on and near Quadra Street. The Rock Bay District contains the majority of the last remaining early industrial buildings.

HERITAGE – OBJECTIVES

The heritage policies that are contained in this Plan seek to retain and enhance the presence and heritage value, character of areas, districts, streetscapes, open spaces, buildings, sites and features in the Downtown Core Area. Collectively these policies address the following objectives:

1. Retain, protect and improve real property with aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual value and heritage character as a benefit to the public.
2. Development and heritage conservation are balanced through sensitive new infill and property additions that respond to the heritage value and character of Downtown Core Area Districts.
3. Heritage conservation and urban design are integrated in streetscaping and open spaces in beautification, arts and cultural programming and public history initiatives.



MAP 30

Downtown Core Area Properties Listed on the City of Victoria Heritage Register

(Properties identified as of October 3, 2013. Map is subject to change)

-  Downtown Core Area
-  Registered Heritage Property
-  Designated Heritage Property

Disclaimer: This map is intended for illustrative purposes only and is subject to change. Please contact the City of Victoria for up-to-date information related to the status and location of heritage property.



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4. Properties with heritage value are identified and selected for retention and protection through community engagement.
5. City of Victoria support for the conservation and celebration of properties with heritage value is maintained and enhanced.

AREAS AND DISTRICTS – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 7.1. Refer to the applicable design guidelines in rezoning and permit review processes in Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas, where these are regulated and controlled within the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.2. Continue to balance the demand for new development and heritage conservation in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.3. Conserve heritage values of the Downtown Core Area and its character-defining elements, such as individual buildings, collections of buildings, streetscapes, structures and features.
- 7.4. Maintain, develop and enhance urban design guidelines for exterior alterations, new additions and infill development within Heritage Conservation Areas and, where relevant, Development Permit Areas, in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.5. Produce and update, as required, Statements of Significance for Heritage Conservation Areas within the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.6. Continue to support zoning in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District that contributes to conservation of heritage values in these areas.
- 7.7. Continue to support the conversion of the upper storeys of heritage-designated property from non-residential uses to residential uses in strategic locations within the Downtown Core Area that serve to support the policies of this Plan.
- 7.8. Continue to support the rehabilitation of heritage-designated property that is non-residential such as office and hotel, in strategic locations within the Downtown Core Area that serve to support the policies of this Plan.
- 7.9. Retain some capacity for small-scale office use in the upper storeys of properties in the Historic Commercial District.
- 7.10. Continue to identify, protect and conserve heritage property and areas in the Residential Mixed-Use District, particularly the landmarks on and near Quadra Street, as identified in this Plan.
- 7.11. Identify, protect and conserve industrial heritage property in the Rock Bay District.

STREETSCAPES AND OPEN SPACE – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 7.12. Maintain lower scale building forms along the waterfront adjacent to Store Street, Wharf Street, Government Street and Belleville Street, and in these locations support new development with form and character that enhances the heritage value of the Historic Commercial District.
- 7.13. Maintain and enhance the existing network of through-block walkways in the Historic Commercial District, with special consideration of the heritage value of public and public-private open spaces in the Chinatown National Historic District.
- 7.14. Enhance the place character of Downtown Core Area Districts by celebrating heritage through urban design features such as art, banners, street furniture, lighting and plantings.
- 7.15. Seek opportunities to acknowledge and integrate the culture, values and heritage of First Peoples in design and celebration of public space, particularly in the Historic Commercial District and the Inner Harbour District.
- 7.16. Work with diverse partners on public history projects through improvements on public lands, and private lands, such as plaques, banners, installations and interpretative displays.
- 7.17. Continue to support festivals, celebrations and special events at major open spaces in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District including Bastion Square, Centennial Square (Spirit Square) and along the waterfront.

BUILDINGS AND SITES – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 7.18. Support new development that conserves and enhances the form, character and features of heritage property and areas, where controlled and regulated in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.19. Give consideration to tools available under legislation to conserve heritage property in the Downtown Core Area, including, but not limited to heritage designation bylaws, heritage register listings, temporary protection, heritage alteration permits, heritage revitalization agreements, design guidelines and protection of views of heritage landmarks from public vantage points as identified in this Plan.
- 7.20. Continue to work with the private sector to identify, protect and conserve property and areas with heritage value in the Downtown Core Area.

- 7.21. Require a Heritage Conservation Plan, as appropriate, and heritage impact assessment, if relevant, where heritage alteration permits, heritage revitalization agreements or rezonings that involve a protected heritage property in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.22. Encourage new development to avoid the demolition of a protected heritage property, or one or more of its facades, where the exterior alterations are assessed to significantly damage the heritage value of the property or an area, and where facade retention is feasible in conjunction with other policies for Downtown Core Area Districts in this Plan.
- 7.23. Increases to density either through a rezoning application or through the provisions of the density bonus system described in this Plan should not be supported for any parcel or site where a heritage property has been demolished.
- 7.24. Real property that is, or was, subject to a heritage designation bylaw or that is listed on the City of Victoria Heritage Register is ineligible for the density bonus provisions in this Plan.
- 7.25. Accumulate information about seismic conditions of all property with heritage value or character in the Downtown Core Area, particularly the landmarks identified in this Plan, and property in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District.
- 7.26. Encourage owners of property with heritage value or character in the Downtown Core Area, particularly landmarks or those in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District, to upgrade the seismic conditions of buildings and structures.
- 7.27. Evaluate the heritage value of public and private property in the Downtown Core Area, and propose new additions to the Heritage Register based on their significance.
- 7.28. Produce and update, as required, Statements of Significance for properties listed on the Heritage Register in the Downtown Core Area.

HERITAGE INCENTIVES – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 7.29. Continue and enhance incentives for heritage conservation such as, tax incentives, parking variances and other zoning variances, where broadly consistent with the policies for each District of the Downtown Core Area that are provided in this Plan.
- 7.30. Maintain and develop financial incentives for building rehabilitation, particularly seismic upgrading, for eligible heritage-designated commercial, institutional, industrial and residential property in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.31. Consider expanding the northern boundary of the eligibility area for heritage tax incentives to include the Rock Bay District, where the building rehabilitation does not involve the conversion of an existing use to a residential use.
- 7.32. Explore the financial impacts and overall feasibility of extending the duration of heritage tax incentives from a maximum of 10 years to a maximum of 15 years.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 7.33. Engage the public and private sectors including property owners, businesses, organizations, groups and citizens in the Downtown Core Area in local area plan studies to identify locations, buildings, structures and features with heritage value, and ways to conserve and celebrate them.
- 7.34. Continue to work with the public and private sectors, organizations, groups and citizens to celebrate Victoria's culture and heritage in public realm improvements and festivals and special events, particularly in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District.
- 7.35. Partner with the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations to acknowledge and integrate the culture, values and heritage of First Peoples in the Downtown Core Area, particularly in the Historic Commercial District and Inner Harbour District.