

Picton Heritage Conservation District

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was this implemented?

Prince Edward County is rich in cultural heritage and that's something in which our community takes great pride. The buildings and landscapes that embody that heritage serve not only to remind us of our own history, but are also helping us to create our new future. Our cultural heritage plays an important role in creating a "sense of place" in Picton and surrounding areas; this sense of place is helping to attract tourism and new investments to our little corner of the world. The designation of Picton Main Street as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) was intended to formally recognize and protect the area as a jewel in the heart of our community.

There are different components to the HCD Plan, but its primary role is to ensure that heritage buildings, structures and landscapes are not destroyed or majorly altered in a way that diminish their value to the community. The HCD Plan also introduced measures aimed at creating a visually appealing area that will, in turn, help to enhance that distinctive "sense of place." Given its ability to stimulate commercial activity and economic development, the cultural heritage of Picton Main Street is an asset to our entire community and it is, truly, in the interest of The County as a whole to preserve and enhance the area's character.

How does it affect my property?

Under the HCD Plan, owners of property that fall within the boundaries of the district must get a heritage permit for certain renovation projects that they plan to undertake. However, there have been some misconceptions about this requirement. For the most part, projects that require a heritage permit also require a building permit under the *Ontario Building Code*, so the HCD did not create a new obligation for property owners it simply added a step in the pre-existing permitting process. It should be noted that applications for heritage permits are free of charge.

There are two types of heritage permits, major & minor; some projects do not require a permit. Examples include:

Major Heritage Permits

- Relocating an existing building
- Demolishing an existing building
- Constructing a new building
- Replacing storefronts
- Extensive restoration work to the exterior of a building
- Exterior additions that are visible from Main Street, side streets or laneways

Minor Heritage Permits

- Alterations to or replacement of exterior building elements such as windows, doors, decorative trim, window hoods, and roof finish
- New signage, whether affixed or freestanding
- Alterations to storefronts
- Exterior additions that are not visible from Main Street, side streets or side laneways
- Alterations to or replacement of exterior building elements such as windows, doors, decorative trim, window hoods, and roof finish

No Permit Required

- Minor repairs to the exterior of buildings in the same style, materials, size, shape and detailing
- Weather-stripping and caulking of windows & doors
- Installation of eaves troughs and downpipes
- Interior renovation work
- Installation of utilities
- Re-painting of wood, stucco, brick or metal finishes in traditional or compatible colours
- Gardening or soft landscaping

Why do I now need a permit for new signage?

Property owners have always been obligated to get a Building Permit when putting up a new sign. The only change under the HCD, in addition to the Building Permit, applications for new signage will also be assessed for conformity with the heritage elements of the district.

When assessing signage, staff reviews the materiality of the sign. Where traditional materials exist the plan looks to conserved and repaired. When proposing new materials, they should be visually compatible with the materials of the existing building and with the materials of the surrounding contributing buildings. New signage should complement the proportions, size, design and colour of the building it is being placed on or near. Large and inappropriately proportioned signs can obscure architectural features and visually dominate a building. Exterior illumination is preferred over interior illumination.

Is this going to make my project more expensive?

No, your project should not be any more expensive because of your building's heritage designation. Heritage Permits do not cost you anything, and as long as the materials you choose conform to the guidelines of the HCD Plan, then there is absolutely no requirement for you to buy costly building materials. With that being said, if you neglect to get a building permit or heritage permit, you may be obligated to make changes to your project after its completion which could be quite costly.

The HCD Plan does not specify materials that you can and cannot use; it sets out building guidelines and style elements that need to be maintained, looking to use more traditional materials such as brick, stone, wood and metal over contemporary materials such as plastics, vinyl, concrete blocks.

Will I be forced to make changes to my property?

No. This by-law only ensures that new alterations made after the date the by-law came into effect comply with the terms of the HCD Plan; you will not be forced to make changes to pre-existing structures or elements thereof. Property owners will **NOT** be obligated to maintain buildings beyond the requirements of the *Property Standards By-law* or restore buildings to a former appearance.

Does the HCD designation make the permitting process much longer?

For Minor Heritage Permits, applicants should expect an assessment time of approximately 15 days; for Major Heritage Permits, applicants should expect an additional 30 days.

It should be noted that the review process for Building Permits does not commence until the Heritage Permit has been approved.

Will owning a property in the Heritage Conservation District impact my property taxes?

The mere fact of owning in the Heritage Conservation District does not affect your assessed property value. Your property value determines your property taxes. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), a provincial crown corporation, assesses property values based on a variety of factors. Small commercial properties are assessed based on factors including: location; lot dimensions; building area; age of the property, adjusted for any major renovations or additions; and, quality of construction. If you would like more information on how properties are assessed, please visit www.MPAC.ca or call 1-866-296-6722.

Is there any financial assistance available to restore a heritage building or renovate a property in the Heritage Conservation District?

At this time, the municipality does not have a grant program for heritage conservation or renovation projects of this nature. However, The County is currently working to create such a program to promote heritage conservation in the HCD and throughout The County as a whole.



I want to start a project. How do I get a Heritage Permit or verify that I need one?

The best way to verify if you need a Heritage Permit is to call or email The County's Planning Division. Our planners are available to answer any questions you might have. You can contact the Planning Division by calling The County at (613) 476-2148.

If you have consulted the chart above and see that your project falls under the "No Permit Required" header, it is reasonable to proceed with your project without getting a Permit. If you are planning on painting the outside of your property, you should contact one of our Planners to review your chosen paint colour(s); paint needs to be either traditional or compatible with your building's surroundings. If you are unsure if your project requires a heritage permit, please contact a planning staff member. If your project falls under either of the other headers, you should contact The County to get a copy of the Heritage Permit Application. Planning Services would be happy to walk you through the application process.