

1. What is a Municipally Registered Heritage Property?

A municipal heritage property is a property that has heritage value for the local community. Heritage value is considered in terms of architecture, historical associations, and significance to the community as well as age. When a property meets criteria for heritage designation, it is eligible to be included in the Mahone Bay Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties and will receive a heritage plaque. A property can be registered provincially and municipally if it has both local and provincial heritage value.

More information about registered heritage properties is available on the website of the NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage. Click [here](#).

2. Why should I consider registering my property?

Registering your property is a formalized way of recognizing and protecting our town's collective past and heritage. It signifies that you will play a stewardship role in conserving the community's built heritage and historic ambiance.

3. I am interested in registering my property. Where do I start?

Heritage registration is a voluntary cost-free process that is initiated by the property owner or by invitation of the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC). The first step is to complete a nomination form available at Town Hall or on the Town website. Members of the HAC are available to assist with completing the form if desired. Once completed, the form is submitted to Town Hall and is forwarded to the HAC.

4. What happens after the nomination form is submitted?

- The HAC reviews the nomination, views the exterior of the building, and evaluates the property using the Town's heritage criteria.
- If the heritage criteria are met, the HAC prepares a Statement of Significance, which includes specific Character Defining Elements, and sends its recommendation for heritage registration to Town Council.
- If Council approves the recommendation, the property owner is notified and informed that the heritage designation will be registered with the Access Nova Scotia (land registry).
- Finally, the Town provides a Heritage plaque, to be attached to the front façade of the property.

5. I am purchasing a registered heritage property. How can I find information about the history of the property?

You may ask at Town Hall to see the heritage property file. Information about most, but not necessarily all, registered properties is also available on the [Town of Mahone Bay website](#) and at the Mahone Bay Museum.

6. Is financial assistance available to owners of registered heritage properties to help maintain and conserve the property?

Limited financial support is available through the Town. Eligible applicants may apply for a matching grant of 50% of costs up to a total cost of \$2000, exclusive of HST, for a maximum grant of \$1,000.

The Province also offers some financial assistance for conservation work, advice and/or materials. Details are available [here](#).

7. Do Registered Heritage Properties require special insurance?

No. Special insurance is not needed but prospective buyers of registered properties or owners interested in registration should check with their insurers. Heritage registration should not have any effect on your policy. A registered heritage property is insured just like any other older building. Notably, building insurance typically covers an entire building whereas heritage registration is concerned only with what is visible from the street.

Some insurers have quoted higher rates for registered heritage properties or have even denied coverage. When this has happened, Town staff have assisted property owners by enlisting intervention by the provincial Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage to provide accurate information to the insurer. The final decision is up to the insurer.

A pamphlet with information about insurance issues is available on request Town Hall and also online [here](#).

8. What if I want to make changes to my registered heritage property?

Registration documentation may focus on architectural features of the street view of your property. Permission may be required from the HAC if the proposed change affects the "character defining elements" listed at the time of registration. Application for change should be made to the HAC which reviews the proposed change(s) at its next regular monthly meeting, or at a specially scheduled meeting if a deadline must be met. Applicants are welcome to attend the HAC meeting. The committee submits its recommendation to Council and Council's decision is communicated to the applicant. Approved normal building permits may be required as with any property.

9. Does registration affect property assessment?

Heritage properties are assessed and taxed in the same way as all other properties.

10. Might a property owner encounter problems when selling a registered heritage property?

Real estate agents, insurers and mortgagors may be cautious. All parties to a property transfer should be aware that the main focus of heritage registration is to protect the street view of the property. In general, an attractive property in a neighbourhood with forms of heritage protection should be attractive to potential purchasers.

11. Can I deregister my heritage property?

There is a process that would need to be followed. More details are available on request.