

# Vancouver Heritage Register Upgrade

October 8, 2024





**Acknowledging the unceded and traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy'əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation**

## Background

**Established in 1986 as an Inventory, became a Register in 1994**

**The Vancouver Heritage Register or VHR is a Council-approved listing of historic places which have heritage value.**

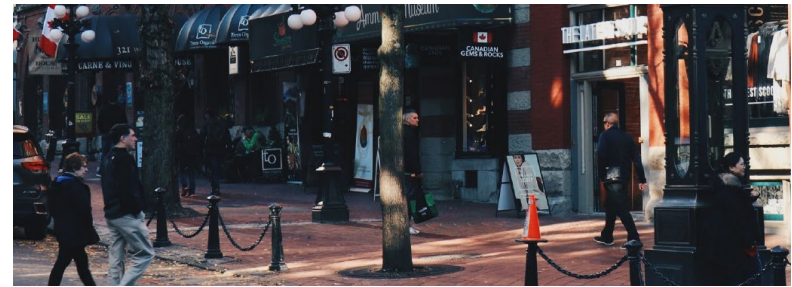
**The Heritage Register is a land planning tool which provides a record of Vancouver's built heritage.**

**In 2020 Council approved the Vancouver Heritage Program including direction for staff to update and modernize the Register.**

## Summary

### Align with the Council-approved direction in Vancouver Heritage Program (2020)

- Refocus the VHR policy to relate to built-heritage
- Update and modernize evaluation methodology
- Align with Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada



### Truth & Reconciliation

- Inform need to develop tool for intangible cultural values
- Respond to UNDRIP and Truth-telling statement
- Remove Euro-centric bias and embrace diverse, inclusive and equity approaches to heritage



### Simplify Process

- New integrated data management plan
- Content updates with clear and consistent **formatting**
- Better meet COV accessibility standards



## Previous Council decisions

**No VHR policy update since inception in 1986**

### **Council decisions:**

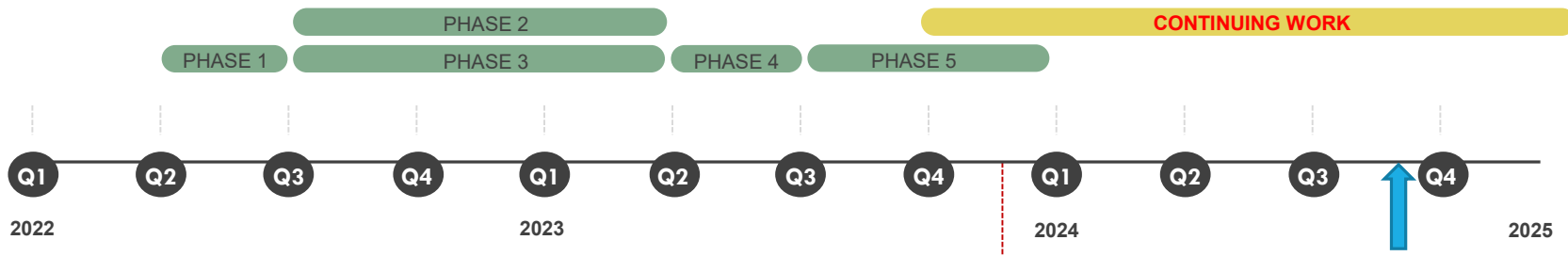
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| 2013 | Heritage Action Plan with 14 action items  |
| 2020 | Vancouver Heritage Program; its vision, goals and directions,<br>and reconfirmed VHR Upgrade mandate |
| 2022 | Vancouver Plan (reference to VHR Upgrade)  |
| 2022 | Vancouver UNDRIP Strategy (Call to Action 4.7a)  |

## Consultation and engagement

### Comprehensive process over two years

#### Summary:

- Over 35 virtual and in-person meetings with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations
- 12 civic advisory bodies
- External stakeholder groups: VHF and HVC
- Heritage professional consultants
- Internal teams
- Open houses (at the VHP stage)
- Surveys



## Identified shortcomings

### **VHR inconsistent with:**

- Vancouver Heritage Program ( set priorities for inclusion and cultural redress)
- Truth & Reconciliation (City of Reconciliation)
- Vancouver Charter (focusing on real property)
- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada
- COV Accessibility Standards (legibility and access)
- COV Data Management framework (integration and efficiency)
- Permit Improvement Process (improved heritage review time)

**The VHR Upgrade aims to modernize the register by incorporating Indigenous land acknowledgements and reflecting Vancouver's diverse communities by including associated intangible cultural and social values**

## Emerging directions

**VHR - primarily a land-planning tool for built heritage**

**VHR - not a tool for Intangible Cultural Heritage**

**Need for development of planning tools for Intangible Cultural Heritage**

### **Emerging directions:**

- Re-focus VHR policy to relate to built-heritage resources
- Receive feedback from Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Nations
- Modernize VHR to embrace principles of cultural diversity and equity
- Improve heritage evaluation methodology to reflect tangible and intangible values
- Update the VHR policy to meet COV accessibility standards
- Integrate new data base management plan
- Improve permit processing and heritage review time



## VHR policies

**A place that is 20 years or older**

**Heritage value identified in one of the three categories**

**Property owner's written consent**

**Vancouver Heritage Commission endorsement**

**Council approves addition to the VHR**

### **Heritage value categories:**

1. Cultural Traditions, Ways of Life, Memories
2. Association with Person, Community or Organization
3. Design, Materials, and Technology

### **Application streams:**

- Self-initiated / Online
- Permit application process

## VHR Heritage Evaluation Methodology

**Old VHR methodology: Euro-centric values bias**

**New VHR methodology: embracing diversity, inclusivity, equity**

### Findings:

- Architectural bias, focused on tangible
- Age bias of original survey
- Bias against use
- Marginal socio-cultural values
- Lack of cultural diversity
- Lack of community input



### Improvements:

- **New Heritage Evaluation Methodology and Criteria**
- **New Heritage Evaluation Form**
- **New online application option (outside of permit application process)**

**New VHR Policy and evaluation methodology acknowledge intangible culture alongside physical attributes of a historic place**



VHR Evaluation Methodology supports diverse community values of a place.

May Wah Hotel, 254-262 East Pender Street

## VHR Format

VHR – Schedule, and Appendix for reference purpose

### Findings:

- Outdated ranked evaluation system (A,B,C)
- Categories outside of the VHR primary mandate (Trees, Parks, Streetscapes, Archeology, Monuments) – **128 items**
- Non-evaluated and non-classified (currently listed but not counted as heritage) – **92 items**



### Improvements:

- **No-grade heritage evaluation**
- **Removed Five Categories (placed in Appendix – 220 items)**

**New** integrated VHR Data Management

**Updated** VHR web page

### Findings:

- Outdated data management
- Outdated VHR public interface



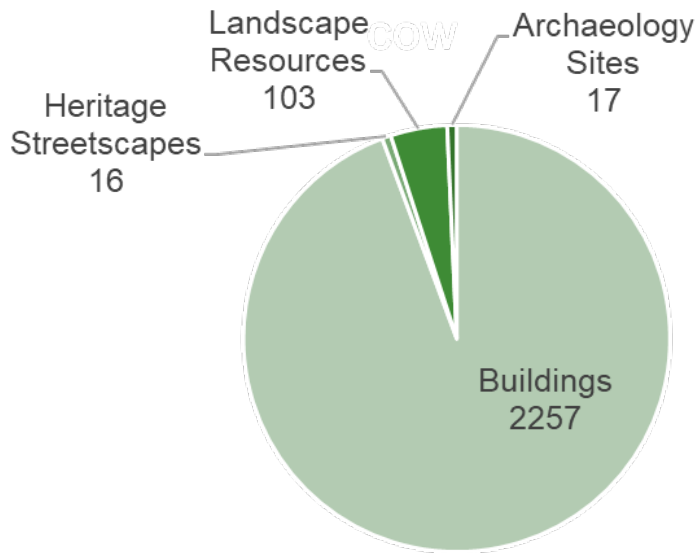
### Improvements:

- Streamlined data entry, simplified analysis and reporting
- Integrated with other City systems: Posse, GIS, VanMap, Vancouver Open Data
- Enhanced public interface
- Online VHR searchability
- Online VHR application form
- Updated COV Heritage web page
- Permitting system (Posse) notes

## VHR content

**VHR Upgrade is about policy and process improvements and not about new additions. Addition or removal of properties to the VHR will continue to be managed through regular annual VHR Update reports to Council.**

### Vancouver Heritage Register: Jan 2022



### Vancouver Heritage Register: Oct 2024

- VHR listed: **2272**  
(Buildings & Structures)
- Appendix: **220**  
Streetscapes, Landscape Resources, Archeology Sites, non-classified sites

## Truth & Reconciliation

### Feedback from Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Nations:



- Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Nations identified cultural heritage as top priority during consultation
- VHR inherently colonial, reflecting Euro-centric values, and continues to cause harm to Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Nations
- Nations not interested in engaging on VHR in current format, but interested in co-developing new tools that better recognize Indigenous Cultural Heritage

## Truth & Reconciliation

### UNDRIP Strategy

#### UNDRIP Strategy:

- Incorporate direction received through strategy into VHR deliverables (such as CTA 4.7a)



#### MST Feedback:

- Support self-expressed priorities of the Nations regarding their cultural heritage and how they wish to be reflected in VHR



- **Now:** Truth-Telling Statement in VHR policy document; land acknowledgements

- **On-going:** Co-development of new heritage management tools that better recognize Indigenous Cultural Heritage with MIB, SN & TWN – 2024

Note: Co-development of new tools to commence after Council approval of the VHR Upgrade and in collaboration with other COV departments



## Timelines and Implementation

**Council Approval:**

**October 8, 2024**

**VHR web page activation:**

**October 2024**

**Data Management Plan implementation:**

**Q4 2024 / Q1 2025**

### **VHR Policy**

- VHR – online access & search
- VanMap search integration
- VHR Heritage Evaluation Methodology – online content
- VHR online application
- VHR – web page update



### **Teams Implementing:**

PDS – Heritage Planning  
PDS – Research and Data  
PDS – Regulation Redesign

### **VHR Data Management Plan**

- Systems integration



PDS – Heritage Planning  
PDS – Research and Data  
PDS – Regulation Redesign

### **Implementation Requirements:**

- Staff: no additional requirements
- Financial: no additional requirements

**Thank you**

