

PG Heritage Sign/Plaque Criteria

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Heritage signs or plaques are designed to mark sites that tell a story about a historical or cultural event, as well as people or places associated with those locations. The city of Prince George has two types of heritage markers: signs that are mounted on posts that display pictures and text about a heritage site; or smaller plaques that are mounted on the wall of a heritage building.

Across Canada, governments or agencies that oversee heritage signs are in the process of updating or reimagining signs because of antiquated language, historical controversies and colonial assumptions. Among the calls to action by the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the recommendation to “develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.” In addition to reflecting Indigenous history, signage should reflect the diversity of Canadian society and our environmental history.

The Heritage Commission oversees the development of signs, either from their own work or suggestions/nominations from the public. Once an idea is accepted, research is needed to provide the background and text needed for the sign. Information can be found in city records, local archives, libraries and newspapers; interviews may be used to supplement written records. In the case of indigenous history, work must be done with the Lheidli T'ennah First Nation.

Once a draft is completed, it goes to the Heritage Commission, which makes suggestions for edits. The draft then goes back to the nominator for approval, after which the Commission orders the sign and hands it over to the Parks & Recreation department for construction and installation.

Signs/plaques must be reviewed periodically for maintenance purposes, and a budget set aside for renewing lexan covers every 5 years. The physical condition of the sign, accessibility, and visibility may impact its relative priority. Damaged or inaccessible signs may receive priority for updates.

The following guidance is intended to provide transparency related to decision-making and priorities for updating heritage signage in Prince George. It may also be used for decision-making about erecting new signs or retiring old ones.

GUIDELINES AND PROCESS

Applications may be submitted at any time.

- Applications will be reviewed for approval at the next meeting of the Heritage Commission which meets four times a year.
- Applications must include a proposed location for the sign/plaque and the name and contact information of the property owner. The property owner will be contacted by staff and asked to provide consent prior to an application moving forward.
- Proposed topics must lend themselves to presentation in the ‘picture & story’ format of an interpretive plaque.
- Applications which propose commemoration of unusual, forgotten, ignored or poorly known subject matter are most welcome.

- Applications which broaden geographic, socio-economic, ethno-cultural or demographic under-representation in heritage marker distribution in the City of Prince George may be given special priority.
- A plaque may be approved if the topic and location is associated with one or more of these characteristics:
 - **Historical Importance**
 - close association of storied events with a specific location
 - close association of a location with the story of a noteworthy person
 - effective illustration of a significant pattern in the cultural, social, political, military, economic or industrial development of Prince George in either pre-, or post-European contact eras
 - close association with a historical turning point or a critical moment for Prince George.
 - **Architectural Importance**
 - association of a building or structure with an event or person of great significance
 - an outstanding example of an architectural style
 - an exceptionally early or unusual structure
 - the first or last of a kind
 - a visual landmark of significant cultural importance
 - a storied relationship between building and site
 - association with a major architect or company
 - part of a group of buildings which form an important streetscape

Applicants will be notified of application status after the relevant meeting of the adjudication committee. Payment for approved plaques is required prior to staff moving forward.

Nominations for plaques/signs must complete an application form, and separately,

- A precis of the subject matter of the proposed plaque (about 500 words).
- A statement of the historical significance of the topic to the cultural, social, political, military, economic or industrial development of Prince George in either Historic or Pre-colonial periods
- An outline of what the plaque text might look like, in either point form or complete sentences (250 words).
- References or works consulted. Provide sources and page numbers for facts presented which are not commonly known, or which are or represent the words and/or opinions of others.
- Relevant artwork or photographs