

Frequently Asked Questions: The Built Heritage Inventory

Q. What is the "BHI"?

A. The "BHI" is the Built Heritage Inventory of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. It is a Municipal Heritage Register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest, and is mandated under the Ontario Heritage Act. This document contains a list of properties designated by by-law and under the Ontario Heritage Act, as well as listed properties having the principle building constructed in 1925 or earlier or public (landmark) buildings constructed before 1940 with potential cultural heritage interest.

Q. How long has the BHI been around?

A. The BHI has been in effect since 2002. Since 2002, extensive archival research and property surveys have been undertaken to create the records we have today. This work has been a collaboration between local historians, residents, volunteers, Town staff and members of the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee.

Q. What is the difference between a "listed property" and a "designated property"?

A. A "designated property" is a property that has been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act for its historical, design or contextual importance to the Town. Currently, there are 6 designated properties in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville including the Old Town Hall and Clock Tower site, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and other private properties.

A "listed property" is a property that contains structure(s) built in or before 1925 and public landmark buildings built before 1940. The property is listed on the BHI register to recognize its potential cultural heritage value.

Q. How does being on the BHI affect me?

A. Having a listed (but undesignated) property on the Built Heritage Inventory only means that in the event that you want to demolish your house, you are required to provide a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) and 60 days' notice period to the Town before it must issue a decision the demolition application.

Q. Why do I have to wait 60 days for a demolition permit? What happens during this time?

A. The Ontario Heritage Act provides 60 days to allow Town Staff enough time to review and circulate the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, consult the Heritage Advisory Committee for their own assessment and comments, and consult Council on the matter prior to making a decision on the demolition.

Q. Will my property taxes increase?

A. Being on the Built Heritage Inventory will not increase your taxes.

- Q. Am I obligated to renovate my heritage home?
- A. No. Having a “listed” property on the BHI does not obligate you to do anything to your home. It has been rated, based on its visual, historical, and contextual value to the Town, and its development and history have been recorded at the time of the survey.
- Q. Can my home’s rating change over time?
- A. Yes. Renovations which are true to style can raise your home’s rating, or new information relative to your property’s history could contribute to a higher rating. Similarly, a currently misinformed historical review may have resulted in an inappropriately low rating, which may be corrected in the future.
- Q. The information on my property’s record is incorrect. Who do I speak to?
- A. The Town’s Planning Staff are more than happy to speak with you regarding your property. If you have corrections or additional information regarding your property’s history, please let us know! The BHI is a “working” as document as it is always growing and evolving with new information. Corrections, and new sources or leads are always welcome.
- Q. Do I have to disclose this when I sell my house?
- A. Designated properties will be disclosed at point of sale because a by-law has been registered on title on the property. Listed properties are included in the Town’s municipal register which may be conducted at the time of sale.
- Q. Why is this information public?
- A. This information is a resource. It will help Staff process demolition permits, and it is used by the Heritage Advisory Committee, and by the W-S Museum in their research. The rich cultural heritage of Whitchurch-Stouffville is a civic amenity, and one that we encourage residents and tourists alike to explore.