

City of Markham Heritage Property Grant Program

Guidelines

2026



This program is administered under the provision of these Guidelines and By-law 2026-XX, being a By-law to establish a Heritage Property Grant Program

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Heritage Property Grant Program

Planning and Urban Design Department

Heritage Section

1.0 Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Heritage Property Grant Program is to offer financial assistance on a cost sharing basis to owners of:

- 1) properties of cultural heritage significance to assist in the conservation and restoration of heritage attributes, and
- 2) non-heritage properties in commercial use located in heritage conservation districts to introduce historically compatible improvements of building facades.

This type of grant program promotes joint public/private action and investment in heritage properties and areas which complements and enhances streetscape and other municipal improvements being implemented by the City.

2.0 Legislation

The Ontario Heritage Act allows a Council of a municipality to pass a by-law to provide grants to an owner of a property designated under the Act for the purpose of paying, in whole or in part, the cost of alteration of such designated property on terms and conditions as Council may prescribe.

This grant program has been created by municipal by-law. For additional details see By-law 2026-XXX, being a “By-law to establish a Heritage Property Grant Program”. The **Program Guidelines** have been prepared to offer additional clarity for both staff and users of the grant program.

3.0 Definitions

Act shall mean the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, as amended from time to time;

Applicant shall mean the owner of the property applying for a grant, or their agent, if such agent is authorized in writing by the owner to act as agent for making the application;

Contravention shall mean an offence under a municipal by-law, statute or regulation for which enforcement proceedings have been commenced that relates specifically to the building or land for which a grant is sought or given;

Designated Heritage Property shall mean real property including all buildings and structures thereon that have been designated by municipal by-law as being of cultural heritage value or interest pursuant to Parts IV and V of the Act;

Eligible Work shall mean that which is described in sections 6.1 of these Guidelines;

Eligible Property shall mean that which is described in section 4.0 of these Guidelines;

Façade shall mean the entire exterior front surface of a building which abuts the street from grade to roof ridge. Where a building abuts two streets or an alley, empty lot, parking area or open space, such building may have other faces considered facades if the City, at its sole discretion, determines they are highly visible”;

Guidelines shall mean the Markham Heritage Property Grant Program Guidelines, as may be amended from time to time;

Heritage Attributes shall mean the principal exterior features, characteristics, and appearance that contribute to the cultural heritage significance of an eligible property;

Heritage Markham shall mean the City’s municipal heritage advisory committee;

Manager shall mean the City’s Manager, Heritage Planning and includes their delegates;

Preservation and/or Conservation shall mean the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of a designated property;

Program shall mean the Markham Heritage Property Grant Program; and

Restoration shall mean the process of accurately revealing, recovering, replicating or representing the state of a heritage property at a particular period in its history, while still protecting the cultural heritage value of the property.

4.0 Grant Funding and Term of Program

4.1 Grant Funding

Amount of Grant This Program was established in 2026 with an allocation of \$120,000 in available grant funding for the fiscal year. The allocation for future years shall be determined as part of the annual capital budget process. Individual grants are approved subject to the availability of funding.

4.2 Term of Program

The City, in its sole discretion, may change or discontinue this Program at any time. The term of the Program is to the date the Program is cancelled by Council

If a grant has been approved by Council but not paid out on the day this Program ends, the grant amount shall still be provided in accordance with this by-law.

5.0 Eligible Property and Applicants

5.1 Eligible Property

For a property to be considered an **Eligible Property** for a grant, the property must be:

- (a) located within the City of Markham;
- (b) designated under the Act and subject to the following:
 - (i) for a single property, a designation by-law under Part IV of the Act must have been passed and registered; or
 - (ii) for a property located within a heritage conservation district, a designation by-law must have been passed under Part V of the Act;
 - (iii) Only properties identified in a Heritage Conservation District Plan as being of cultural heritage value or interest [being Classes A and B in Thornhill, Class A (and B at the discretion of Council on the recommendation of Heritage Staff) in Unionville, Class A in Buttonville, and Type A or Contributing Properties in Markham Village] are eligible for restoration, preservation and/or conservation grant assistance;
 - (iv) non-heritage properties in commercial use in heritage conservation districts are eligible for façade improvements (front elevation) under this Program.
- (b) in compliance with applicable zoning by-law regulations and use provisions and other relevant planning controls and requirements;
- (c) not the subject of a **contravention**, work order or outstanding municipal requirements, unless the consent of the Commissioner of Development Services is obtained. The **Eligible Property** must not be in contravention of any municipal requirements including arrears or default of municipal taxes, local improvements charges or any other monies owed to the City (fees or penalties).

Where a property contains non-heritage additions or elements, or the proposed work involves new additions, only the **Heritage Attributes** of the property will be eligible for grant assistance (other than 4.1.iv).

5.2 Eligible Applicants

Owners and tenants of an **Eligible Property** may apply for assistance. Tenants are required to provide documentation of the property owner's consent to the improvements. Written consent may be either in the form of a lease indicating the lessee's authority for property renovation and repair, or written documentation of the property owner's agreement to the proposed alterations.

Properties owned by any level of government are not eligible except in the following cases:

- (a) where the property is under long term lease to an individual and the tenant or lessee is the applicant; or
- (b) where a non-profit community group has assumed, by long-term lease or legal agreement, responsibility for the building and the non-profit community group is the applicant.

5.3 Timing of Eligible Projects

Projects undertaken between the deadline for applications of the previous year and the current year deadline will be considered eligible for grant assistance, provided that **all** other eligibility requirements of the program are met.

5.4 Markham Heritage Estates Properties

Properties in Markham Heritage Estates subdivision are ineligible as property owners already receive a financial incentive through reduced lot prices, unless the building has been on the new lot for at least 20 years from the date of the purchase and sale agreement.

6.0 Grant Information

6.1 Amount of Grant Assistance

Each grant may be awarded in the amount of up to half the cost (50%) of the **Eligible Work** up to a maximum of:

- seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) for an **Eligible Property** in residential, industrial, agricultural or institutional use;
- fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for an **Eligible Property** in commercial or place of worship use;
- ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for a non-heritage, **Eligible Property** in commercial use located in heritage conservation districts.

Applicants who undertake at least \$500 in **Eligible Work** are eligible to apply for a grant.

6.2 Owner's Financial Contribution

The owner of the property shall match the City's grant amount as part of its contribution to the **Eligible Work**.

Donated labour and materials shall not be considered part of the costs or part of the owner's matching contribution, including labour undertaken by the owner.

The costs of labour, materials and equipment related to the **Eligible Work** may be considered part of the cost of the **Eligible Work** provided proof of such costs are verified by invoices.

6.3 Requirement for Professional Quotes

Two professional quotes for the identical scope of **Eligible Work** are to be provided by independent professional/licensed contractors other than the owner. The grant will not necessarily be calculated based upon the lowest estimate but will be based on the most appropriate quote for the proposed work as determined by Heritage Section staff, taking into consideration the cost quoted, the scope of work described and the capabilities of the contractor to complete the work. The grant will not address cost increases or over runs.

6.4 Frequency of Grants

Subject to approval, an **Eligible Property** may receive one grant per calendar year. If a grant is provided, the identified work must be completed, inspected and approved by the **Manager** before another grant application may be submitted to the municipality.

First-time applicants will get priority each year and repeat applicants will be considered only if the annual funding cap is not reached by first-time applicants.

Whether a grant is awarded, and the amount of the grant, shall be subject to available funding from annual budget allocated to this Program by the City.

6.5 Completion of Work

Grant commitments are valid for one (1) year and expire if the work is not completed within that time period. This timeframe may be extended at the discretion of the **Manager**.

6.6 Heritage Easement Agreement Requirement

As a condition of any grant over \$7,500, the owner will be required to enter into a heritage easement agreement, in perpetuity, with the municipality to protect the public investment in the property.

7.0 Eligible Projects

7.1 Eligible Work

For the proposed work to qualify for a grant, it must be **Eligible Work**, which means the following:

- (a) any **conservation** work which directly and appropriately preserves, repairs, and restores specific **Heritage Attributes** and does not detract from or diminish the cultural heritage value of the property or the district including:
 - (i) **preservation or conservation** of existing exterior architectural elements or features which are significant (i.e. repair of deteriorated original elements such as doors and windows, siding and roofing materials, architectural trims, verandas, historic chimneys, and other significant features; repointing and cleaning of masonry only if the materials and methods will not cause harm to the historic masonry);
 - (ii) re-construction of significant exterior architectural elements or features which still exist, but are beyond conservation or repair (this would include accurate reconstructions of original features using materials, sizes and configurations which match the original);
 - (iii) restoration or re-introduction of significant exterior architectural elements or features which have been lost, but for which the appearance can be clearly determined from archival or documentary sources, or physical evidence that supports the existence of the missing feature (i.e. removal of modern material such as vinyl and aluminum siding and replacement with original material).
- (b) any **preservation/conservation** work necessary to restore the building to structural soundness including the correction of serious structural faults which threaten the building's survival, but not routine maintenance;
- (c) any **preservation/conservation** work which directly and appropriately preserves and restores specific **Heritage Attributes** associated with historic cemeteries and their features such as mausolea, dead houses, stone walls, wrought iron fences and gates which are part of the original design, but not specific grave markers, tombs or monuments;
- (d) **façade** improvements on heritage properties in commercial use including:
 - removal of inappropriate signage.
 - repair or restoration of authentic historic storefront treatment.
 - exterior lighting improvements.
 - installation of traditional awnings.
 - installation of new signage in accordance with the City's Sign By-law for Special Sign Districts.
 - other capital improvements which the City, in its sole discretion, determines are important to incorporate as an integral part of the total façade improvement design

- (e) **façade** improvements on non-heritage properties in commercial use in a heritage conservation district including:
 - renovation of existing commercial storefronts in accordance with standard principles of traditional storefront design (fascia board for signage above storefront, appropriate display windows, removal of incompatible alterations, etc.).
 - improvements to the principal facade of incompatible buildings being sympathetic and compatible with the historic character of the area and the policies of the heritage conservation district plan.
 - re-cladding in more traditional materials complementary to the district character.
 - installation of traditional awnings and exterior lighting improvements.
 - other capital improvements which the City, in its sole discretion, determines are important to incorporate as an integral part of the total façade improvement design.
- (f) a replacement cedar shingle roof in Markham Heritage Estates subject to the roof being installed on a system to provide proper ventilation and to prolong the lifespan of the roof and subject to section 3.4;
- (g) any architect, designer and engineering professional fees to a maximum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) as a component of the maximum grant amount for the eligible work; and
- (h) any other alterations which the **Manager**, in their sole discretion, determines are important to the cultural heritage significance of the property.

Where an **Eligible Property** contains non-heritage additions or elements, or the proposed work involves new additions, only the **Heritage Attributes** of the property will be subject to grant assistance.

The final determination of what constitutes **Eligible Work** is at the discretion of the **Manager**, in consultation with **Heritage Markham**, with reference to the Guidelines, and the final decision is made by the Council of the City of Markham.

7.2 Policies and Principles

Eligible Work will be generally guided by the following policies and principles: individual Markham heritage conservation district plans, Markham Official Plan Heritage Policies, Conservation Principles from the Ontario Government and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

7.3 Ineligible Work/Projects

Ineligible work will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) interior work, unless related to structural issues;
- (b) short term, routine maintenance, including painting;

- (c) work on modern additions or work to accommodate modern renovations to a building;
- (d) paving and landscaping;
- (e) sandblasting of brick and other inappropriate surface cleaning practices;
- (f) security systems and related features;
- (g) interior window coverings;
- (h) non-commercial lighting unless repair or restoration of a heritage attribute;
- (i) commemorative plaques;
- (j) eaves-troughs;
- (k) mechanical systems and insulation;
- (l) skylights;
- (m) artwork and murals;
- (n) poor or defective work;
- (o) non-permanent fixtures; and
- (p) projects in Markham Heritage Estates subdivision unless the building or structure has been on the lot for at least 20 years.

7.4 Eligible Costs

Eligible costs shall be the cost of materials, equipment and contracted labour to complete **Eligible Work**, documented by invoices to the satisfaction of the **Manager**. Labour provided by the applicant or tenant of the building is not an eligible cost.

The grant is paid, subject to compliance with these **Guidelines**, upon completion of the previously approved work.

7.5 Approval Considerations

The following considerations will apply when reviewing applications for grant assistance:

- a) Preference will be given to applications where the integrity of the **Eligible Property** may be threatened if the proposed work is not undertaken
- b) Preference will be given to applications proposing work visible to the general public and work on buildings of cultural heritage value or interest;
- c) Preference will be given to first time Applicants;
- d) The project should generally comply with acknowledged heritage conservation principles, policies and guidelines (section 7.2);
- e) The scope of the work is clear, logical and demonstrates the maximum retention of the historic fabric and **Heritage Attributes**;
- f) Grant assistance can only be obtained for projects which have received municipal approval prior to work being initiated.

g) The grant program should not reward poor stewardship.

8.0 Application Details

8.1 Application Deadline

Grants are awarded on an annual cycle following a request for applications within a deadline established by the **Manager**, and published from time to time on the City's website and in other media, at the discretion of the **Manager**.

8.2 Application Requirements

1. Application Form

The **Applicant** is required to complete an application form available from the Planning and Urban Design Department (Markham Civic Centre) or from the City's website (See Attachment 1). The **Applicant** is encouraged to engage a professional (architect, engineer or designer) to assist with decisions on alterations and provide the necessary drawings.

2. Information to Accompany Application

The application must include all the details necessary for a full understanding of the proposed work, and shall include:

- a) A professionally prepared and scaled drawing of the proposed work, including any specific details as may be required by the **Manager**.
Depending on the nature and extent of the work, a building permit and the required drawings may be required.
- b) Samples of proposed materials or colours, and any product information.
- c) the cost estimates as described in section 6.3.

8.3 Application Process

The Program will be administered by Markham's Planning and Urban Design Department. The Heritage Planning Section will co-ordinate the program.

Step 1. Determine if you are eligible (pre-application consultation)

Prior to submitting a formal application for financial assistance, it is recommended that the following steps be undertaken:

- a) Determine if the property is eligible to receive funding (see Section 4.0 of the Program Guidelines). Contact the Heritage Section.
- b) Discuss your restoration or rehabilitation proposal with the Building Department to determine any zoning or other building regulations.
- c) Discuss your restoration or rehabilitation proposal with a Heritage Section staff member to determine any heritage issues and requirements for a future Heritage Permit application (Minor or Major).
- d) If the application appears eligible, consider reviewing it with **Heritage Markham** for feedback purposes.
- e) Secure a grant application form from the Development Services Counter or from the City's website and complete it. Gather any necessary documentation.

This pre-application consultation stage should help to avoid ineligible proposals.

Step 2. Submit your application

Submit a completed application with all required materials before the deadline date. Required information includes two cost estimates (quotes) from licensed contractors for the same work and proper drawings of the work to be undertaken. A photograph of the building's façade(s) is also helpful.

Step 3. Staff Review

The application will be reviewed by City Staff to ensure that it meets all the eligibility requirements, including confirmation that the property is not in contravention of any municipal requirements.

Step 4. Grant Review

The review of all grant applications will be undertaken by Heritage Section staff considering the scope of the proposed work, its eligibility, Program Guidelines, compliance with various heritage policies and guidelines and the documents outlined in section 7.5. Grants will be recommended for the most deserving project(s). The focus of the Program is to encourage substantive improvements rather than short-term cosmetic "patch-ups".

All applications will be forwarded to **Heritage Markham** for its consideration and recommendation. Heritage Section staff will report on applications and provide recommendations for approval to Council, through the Development Services Committee.

Step 5. Approval by Council

All grants will require approval by Council, through the Development Services Committee.

Step 6. Notification/ Legal Agreement

Applicants who secure grant approval will be notified and required to enter a Letter of Understanding with the municipality. This document establishes a formal arrangement between the **Applicant** and the City and outlines the amount of the grant, the grant eligible work and the project completion date. The Letter of Understanding must be signed and returned to the City.

If an application is unsuccessful, a letter will be sent confirming that a grant will not be issued.

Step 7. Undertaking the Improvements – Additional Approvals

Nothing contained in the grant application procedures or approval relieves the applicant from obtaining all necessary municipal planning, heritage and building department approvals. All work must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and municipal and heritage by-laws.

The applicant is required to obtain the consent of the **Manager** for any changes to the project which are proposed during the work.

Step 8. Issuing the Grant

Grants will not be payable until such time as all work has been completed to the satisfaction of the City. Before a grant will be paid by the City, the following must occur:

- (a) the **Eligible Work** must be completed within one (1) year from the date of approval of the grant by Council, and be completed to the satisfaction of the **Manager**.

In exceptional cases, the timeframe for project completion may be extended. In such cases, a written request, stating the reasons for required for the extension, must be submitted by the applicant for review and approval at the discretion of the **Manager**;

- (b) The **Eligible Work** must be completely paid for by the owner with documentation to verify such payment (i.e. copies of paid invoices), and the work completed to the satisfaction of the **Manager**;
- (c) the **Manager** must be in receipt of all required documentation as identified in the **Guidelines** (i.e. paid invoices), and any other documentation reasonably required by the **Manager**;
- (d) the completed **Eligible Work** must reflect the **Eligible Work** that was approved by Council or as amended by the **Manager**. Heritage Section is responsible for the inspection to ensure that the work is completed as proposed.
- (e) The City reserves the right to withhold the payment of all or a portion of the grant if the work has not been substantially completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, or payment documentation, such as invoices, are incomplete, unclear or have not been submitted.
- (f) If the cost of completed work is less than the original amount upon which the grant was calculated, the grant will be revised to reflect 50% of the new cost.

If the cost of completed work is more than the original amount upon which the grant was calculate, the grant will not be increased to reflect the higher amount.
- (g) The City reserves the right to reduce the amount of the grant upon completion of the project where it is of the opinion that unapproved modifications diminish the beneficial effects of the project.

8.4 Application Form

The Heritage Property Grant Program Application Form is provided in Attachment 1.

For further information, please contact:

Heritage Section
Planning and Urban Design Department
City of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3
905-477-7000, ext. 2585
heritage@markham.ca

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Attachment 1 – Heritage Property Grant Program Application



HERITAGE PROPERTY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

The purpose of this program to encourage the preservation and restoration of heritage properties in the City of Markham including improvements to the façade of commercial properties (heritage and non-heritage) in heritage conservation districts. See the Program Guidelines for full details.

PROPERTY INFORMATION			
Municipal Address:	Street No.:	Street Name:	Unit Num.:
Commercial Name (if applicable)			
Designation By-law #:		Heritage Conservation District:	
OWNER and APPLICANT INFORMATION			
Property Owner Information (check one)		Person(s)	Company
Registered Land Owner:	Surname:	First Name:	
Name	(if Company)	Company Officer:	
Address:			Unit Num.:
City:	Province:	Postal Code:	
Telephone:	No. ()	E- Mail:	
Applicant Information (if different than Owner):			
Application Contact:	Surname:	First Name:	
Name	(if Company)	Company Officer:	
Address:			Unit Num.:
City:	Province:	Postal Code:	
Telephone:	No. ()	E- Mail:	
<p>I hereby make the above application for a Heritage Property Grant, declaring all the information contained herein is true and correct, and acknowledging the City of Markham will process the application based on the information provided.</p> <p>The personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the Section 39 and 45 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended and the City of Markham Designated Heritage Property Grant Program By-law, as amended. The information collected will be used by the City of Markham to administer and enforce the Designated Heritage Property Grant Program. Questions about the collection can be directed to the Development Services-Heritage Section, City of Markham, 101 Town Centre Blvd., Markham, ON, L3R 9W3, Telephone: 905 475 4861, email: developmentsservices@markham.ca.</p>			
Signature:		Title:	
Printed Name of Signatory:		Date:	

HERITAGE PROPERTY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Additional Information to Accompany Application		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A professionally prepared and scaled drawing of the proposed work to fully illustrate the proposed eligible project, if applicable. ➤ Samples of proposed materials or paint colours, if applicable. ➤ Please consult with Heritage Staff prior to submission to determine what type of additional information should be submitted to best support your application 		
Cost Estimates		
Please attach two (2) independent contractor estimates for the Eligible Work.		
Name of Preferred Contractor		
Amount	\$	
Name of Second Contractor		
Amount	\$	
Grant Request		
Cost of Eligible Work (material, equipment, labour)	\$	
Professional Fees	\$	
Other	\$	
Total Estimate	\$	
For Further Information:		
Planning and Urban Design Department- Heritage Section DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION 101 TOWN CENTRE BOULEVARD MARKHAM, ONTARIO, L3R 9W3 Telephone 905-477-7000, ext. 2585 heritage@markham.ca		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Rec'd :		
Application Information Rec'd	YES	NO
Application Rec'd By:		
Entered into AMANDA by:	Date:	
Application Number:		