

Historic Organs

PIPE ORGANS OF HISTORIC VALUE DESIGNATED BY THE RCCO



photo by KJR

The Historic Organ Committee was formed out of a concern that many of our old and valuable instruments are being lost. Either churches close and the organ is disposed of without anyone understanding its value or the instrument itself may be totally rebuilt without regard for its essential character. The committee is totally volunteer and operates with only a few meetings a year. Therefore, designation may take some time following a presentation.

Our guidelines for designation (revised November 2011) are:

Classification A:

To be considered historic, the organ should be at least 100 years old. (Under special circumstances, and for a significant instrument in the history of organ building in Canada, a later date may be considered.) The wind supply may be powered electrically but the original blowing system is still intact. There have been no changes made to the chests, tonal work, console, wind system, or organ case.

Classification B:

In addition to Classification A, the console may have been electrified and possibly moved, but the console retains its original case and drawknobs, and the tonal work remains original.

Classification C:

Over 80% of the pipe work is original and the chests are still original; a restoration to the original state of the organ may be planned. (NOTE: this would not be a rebuild, but a true restoration to the original mechanics and tonal specification)

Citation:

Instruments presented to the HOC that fit into any of the above three categories, will be considered for a citation as an historic instrument. In the case of organs receiving a citation, all material (photos, specifications, contracts, letters, etc.), that have been sent to the HOC become the property of the national RCCO and will be housed in the College Archives. NOTE: Once a citation has been awarded, no further changes to the organ should be considered without consulting the Historic Organ Committee, National Office, Royal Canadian College of Organists and obtaining its approval. A citation, which may be framed and affixed to the organ case, will be sent to the successful applicant along with an accompanying document and a few details about the award.

Instruments which have been radically altered so that they no longer represent the work of the original builder will not be considered for a citation.

Application:

In order to apply for a citation, complete documentation of the instrument must be sent to the Historic Organ Committee c/o RCCO National Office. Included will be the builder's name, the date of installation, the location of the instrument, purchase contract if available, relevant correspondence, a contact name with telephone number and address, and a set of good quality photographs of the instrument - console, façade, and interior of the instrument showing the pipe work.

A preliminary draft may be sent to: wpwright@sympatico.ca, who will express an opinion on whether or not to proceed with the application. However, the committee itself will make all decisions regarding the worthiness of the citation. The formal application must be made by an official of the church who, on behalf of the church, agrees to the designation and the displaying of the award in a public place near the organ.

If an application is rejected, all material submitted will be returned to the applicant. Please note that all assessments are made on the historicity of the instrument and are not a reflection of the quality of the instrument. You may have a beautiful instrument with a few old pipes, but if it does not achieve the designation "historic" it will still remain a beautiful instrument!

Please use the provided [application form](#) to ensure that your application is complete.