



HERITAGE DEFINITIONS AND FAQs

What is Heritage?

There are no hard and fast rules, that determine what is, and what is not heritage. Many people think of heritage as old buildings, however, heritage is whatever a community, past or present, values and would like to pass on to the future, regardless of age or vintage. It can be a place, a landscape, a cultural practice or a language, to name a few. It does not have to be associated with a famous historical figure or event, or in the case of buildings and structures, architecturally significant or aesthetically pleasing, to be considered heritage.

What is Cultural Heritage?

Cultural heritage is often used interchangeably with heritage in Canada. The term cultural heritage is more common in other parts of the world, as a means to distinguish from natural heritage. For more information see the Cultural Heritage Factsheet ([download](#)).

What is Intangible Heritage?

According to [UNESCO](#), intangible heritage is “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.”

What is a Historic Place?

According to [Canada's Historic Places](#) “a historic place is a structure, building, group of buildings, district, landscape, archaeological site or other place in Canada that has been formally recognized for its heritage value by an appropriate authority within a jurisdiction”. This definition is broad and encompasses many different types of places, going beyond the old view that heritage is limited to buildings and structures. It also incorporates the concept of heritage value, which is the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or

spiritual importance or significance associated with or expressed by a historic place for past, present and future generations. This idea of a historic place as a representation of heritage values informs current heritage conservation best practice in Canada.

What is a Cultural Landscape?

A cultural landscape is, as [UNESCO](#) puts it, “ [the] manifestation of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment.” This can include traditional agricultural landscapes, gardens, parklands, and religious or spiritual landscapes, to name a few examples.

What is the Difference Between Conservation, Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration?

Conservation is the overarching term for all actions relating to the safeguarding of a historic place. Preservation, rehabilitation and restoration are all types of conservation, and a combination of these methods can be used for the same historic place. According to the [Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada](#) the distinction between the three is as follows:

Preservation is “protecting, maintaining and stabilizing the existing form, material and integrity of an historic place or individual component, while protecting its heritage value.”

Rehabilitation is “the sensitive adaptation of an historic place or individual component for a continuing or compatible contemporary use, while protecting its heritage value.”

Restoration is “accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of an historic place or individual component as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.”

Please [visit our website](#) for additional heritage terms and definitions.