

## Canadians and Heritage Places: New Study Confirms Canadian’s Commitment to Preserving Heritage Places, Historic Sites and Traditional Neighbourhoods

*Nine in 10 Canadians feel it’s important to preserve heritage sites and historic places*

OTTAWA, JULY 4, 2020: A new study reveals widespread support from Canadians for the preservation and celebration of the country’s many heritage places, historic sites and traditional neighbourhoods. The study, commissioned by the National Trust for Canada, finds that support for preservation is powered by Canadians’ esteem for the role these places have in telling the story of our country’s people and its unique history.

### KEY FINDINGS

- 90% of Canadians feel it is important to preserve heritage sites and historic places.
- 86% of Canadians agree preserving a historic building is more environmentally-friendly than demolishing it and building something new.
- 64% believe heritage sites and historic places help tell our country’s collective story.
- 63% of Canadians have by-name awareness of the country’s heritage sites and historic places.
- 60% of Canadians believe historic sites and historic places are important for tourism as they represent places of interest for people to visit.
- 52% of Canadians are interested in visiting a heritage site and historic place as a way to get more involved in the movement.

### KEY INSIGHTS

People feel the overall purpose of preservation (the “why”) is to ensure Canada’s story continues to be told, experienced and learned.

They find this a more emotionally engaging, reason-to-believe versus some of the more rational arguments about the benefits of preserving and adapting historic places which serve as support, but aren’t the overarching most important reason to preserve and adapt.

People don’t want to see sites disappear quickly because that could accelerate the fading of Canadian history, and a loss of things that everyone can take part in sharing and experiencing.

And they believe this story is a compelling reason to visit sites for fellow Canadians as well as international tourists when they visit Canada.

Relatedly, the majority of people would be most likely to support heritage movements by experiencing the sites and places themselves first-hand – as something to do and see; as an attraction and source of interest.

- The fact that preservation is good for the environment is recognized as a positive benefit, especially with younger generations. While environmental-friendliness isn't the main reason people feel sites should be preserved (ensuring the country's story continues to be told ranks even higher), it does serve as a strong supporting argument.
- The fact that people regionally find different kinds of historic places interesting reflects the rich fabric of the country. People celebrate their localized places of interest as badges of pride, and they serve as important attractions and attributes of where they live for others to see.

### Engaging with Canadian Heritage

Across all generations, provinces and territories, Canadians are most interested in experiencing historic places first-hand. More than half (52 per cent) are interested in visiting a place as a way to get involved with preservation, while 36 per cent would show their support by going to a restaurant or shopping in a historic area.

### Regional Findings

*Canadians and Heritage Places* suggests some regional differences in how Canadians view, support and engage with historic places:

- ***Atlantic Canadians are most likely to visit a heritage place or area, and are more likely to recognize the employment opportunities and benefits that accompany preservation***
  - Most likely to feel it is important to preserve Canadian heritage sites, historic buildings, and older neighbourhoods (95 per cent vs 90 per cent average)
  - 72 per cent believe heritage sites are landmarks that tell our country's collective story, when asked why it is important to preserve historic sites (compared to 64 per cent national average)
  - More likely to recognize the employment opportunities and benefits that accompany the conservation and preservation of historic sites (38 per cent vs 29 per cent national average)
  - Most likely to support a heritage site by planning a visit there (62 per cent vs 52 per cent national average)
  - Most likely to support heritage by choosing restaurants, hotels and shops located in heritage areas (51 per cent vs 36 per cent national average)

- ***Quebecers are most interested in sites that tell the stories of people, including historic homes and neighbourhoods, and places that offer inspiration for design, lifestyle and culture, and believe most strongly in the value of historic sites for tourism***
  - 65 per cent feel historic sites represent many different stories about people, when asked why it is important to preserve historic sites (vs 43 per cent overall average)
  - Most likely to recognize the benefit historic sites bring to the tourism industry (67 per cent vs 60 per cent)
  - 41 per cent are interested in finding out more about Canadian heritage sites as a source of vintage design, lifestyle and culture (41 per cent vs 27 per cent overall average)
  - More than half are interested in learning more about historic sites that are older homes in traditional neighbourhoods (51 per cent vs 36 per cent overall average)
  
- ***Ontarians are also among the staunchest supporters for the environmental benefits of preservation and are the most interested in historic places in urban areas***
  - More likely to strongly believe preserving historic places is more environmentally friendly than demolishing them and constructing a new building (61 per cent vs 53 per cent overall average)
  - More likely to be interested in heritage sites & historic buildings in urban areas / cities (49 per cent vs 45 per cent average)
  - 28 per cent are interested in Indigenous cultural sites and landscapes
  
- ***Canadians in the Prairies and Alberta have a more practical perspective of historic places (vs. emotional or sentimental), are the strongest supporters of traditional downtown districts that benefit small businesses, have a keener interest in learning more about industrial sites, and the generations of people linked to a historic place***
  - **(SK & MB)** More interested in learning more about historic sites that are examples of industrial heritage such as factories, bridges, railway complexes, etc. (30 per cent vs 26 per cent)
  - **(SK & MB)** Most likely to support preservation of historic sites because traditional downtown districts are important for small businesses and provide them with affordable rental space (30 per cent vs 26 per cent average)
  - **(AB)** More interested in learning more about historic sites that are thousands of years old (42 per cent vs 38 per cent overall average)
  - **(AB)** More interested in learning more about historic sites that are Industrial heritage such as factories, bridges, railway complexes, etc. (33per cent vs 26 per cent)
  - **(AB)** Most likely to volunteer personal time and expertise in efforts to save heritage sites and places (21 per cent vs 14 per cent average)

- ***Canadians in B.C. are most interested in historic sites linked to the country’s earliest history, Indigenous sites and areas, and places that reflect the cultural diversity of Canada***
  - 48 per cent feel historic sites reflect the cultural diversity of Canada, when asked why it is important to preserve historic sites (37 per cent overall average)
  - More likely to recognize the loss rate that threatens historic sites (48 per cent vs 43 per cent national average)
  - More than half are interested in learning more about historic sites that are associated with Canada’s early history (52 per cent vs 41 per cent average)
  - Most likely to be interested in Indigenous cultural sites and landscapes (35 per cent vs 26 per cent)

### **About the Study**

These are some of the findings of ***Canadians and Heritage Places*** – an online survey of 1,072 Canadians aged 18 and older that was completed between May 7 to 11, 2020 using Environics Research Group’s online panel. The sampling frame for the online survey was designed to replicate the distribution of the adult population from the 2016 Canadian census based on age and gender within region. A poll of comparable sample size conducted with a probability sample would yield a margin of error of +/-2.99per cent, 19 times out of 20. Data analysis was conducted by Aperture1.

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### **About the National Trust for Canada [www.nationaltrustcanada.ca](http://www.nationaltrustcanada.ca)**

The National Trust for Canada is a national charity that inspires and leads action to save places that matter, whether they are historic lighthouses or schools, places of faith, industrial complexes, Indigenous cultural landscapes or traditional downtowns and neighbourhoods. With the support of donors and partners and through programs like Regeneration Works and Launch Pad, the National Trust raises awareness for historic places at risk and offers support and tools to passionate volunteers, community organizations and the next generation of heritage leaders.

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