

01_ _ *Live Aware.*

Acknowledge, honour and understand.

We will acknowledge, honour and understand the diversity of the heritage sector and the diversity of meaning, stories, histories of the people and communities who we want to engage with, including the stories that have been previously undervalued or misrepresented, that belonging means different things to different people, that truth and understanding take work, because interpretation is not permanent, and understandings evolve over time.

This will be our ever-evolving mindset, striving always to be thoughtful and open to both heritage as accepted wisdom and heritage as agent for change:

— Heritage places tell our stories and speak to the rich history and heritage of this place we now call Canada. Saving and renewing these places combats climate change, promotes equity and inclusion, truth and reconciliation and fuels our economy. This includes places of significance to Indigenous peoples, as well as to Black Canadians and Canadians from many other cultural and ethnic backgrounds, that have been destroyed or long overlooked by heritage advocates themselves.

— The heritage conservation movement includes people who care about places — sites, landscapes and buildings that are culturally meaningful and connected to shared memory, but also all older buildings that represent past investments of skill, materials, carbon and embodied energy, and merit wise use.

— Heritage conservation is about meeting the needs of communities today — not just preserving something that existed in the past for its own sake. It recognizes the right of every community to maintain, control, protect and develop places that are gateways to stories and ideas, diversity and inclusion, identity, and connection.

Because we recognize heritage is living all around us, as a powerful force, exerting influence and potential, we also recognize that we are, in some form or another, inescapably, living heritage. heritage can help us celebrate what it means to live *aware*, with *care*, and with *purpose*.

— Heritage places, or historic places, can mean any place valued by people. Heritage places include, but are not limited to:

- Landscapes, sites, areas of land, archaeological sites, sacred sites, sites of natural beauty
- Works of architecture, engineering works, places of faith, bridges
- Everyday places where people live, work and play: homes, town squares, agricultural structures.
- “Special” places set aside as rare or important examples or touchstones with history.

— Heritage conservation puts people at the centre and strives to approach heritage places in a way that is truthful, inclusive, and equitable for all. It is about sustaining all communities and uplifting all groups as part of the collective story. It is about looking at how people interact with other people and their world through heritage, seeing tangible places as embodiments of intangible living cultural associations, meaning and value, never to be destroyed, always rehabilitating with renewed purpose.



— Heritage must acknowledge the tension, the difficult historical and contemporary truths and competing values embedded in the places and spaces we designate as special. Heritage places can make space for Indigenous, racialized and equity-deserving groups to share greater perspectives and histories and help correct the wrongs of the past.

— Some heritage places are marked with plaques or included on watchlists, inventories or registers. Some are legally protected by local governments using provincial/territorial legislation, or by federal legislation, to help ensure changes to the places are well considered, or to make investments in their conservation eligible for financial assistance. Many heritage places have no special status recognized by government, but still have value in our communities.

— There are many different values that lead people to think of a place as heritage — and most heritage places are valued in multiple ways:

- Values that people associate with heritage places may be attached to physical and tangible qualities, such as architectural, landscape or community design, examples of technical innovation or traditional practices, or material culture traditions.
- Value may be based on direct historical connections with people, places or events.
- Value may be attached to intangible qualities — the stories, cultural practices, and traditions that physical places evoke or enable.
- Value may be related to historical associations, individual or shared memories, or symbolic meanings, such as identity.
- Value may be spiritual.
- Value may be pragmatic and practical, like economic value for tourism, traditional use activities, functional use, scientific value, archaeological value.
- Value can be ecological, for example in the way a heritage place shelters a component of an ecosystem.



Live Aware.

— The value of heritage is different for everyone. What is meaningful for some may not be for others. This diversity of meaning — whether historically, culturally, socially, economically, or environmentally derived — gives heritage a powerful voice to advance progressive and inclusive thinking that advocates for positive change.

— Heritage conservation is fundamentally about an ethical obligation to future generations. It's about saving our collective future.

LIVE AWARE