



Municipal Heritage Partnership Program

Evaluating Historic Resources in Alberta

The Historic Resources Management Branch of Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation, and Culture has developed a standardized, three-part evaluation process for the designation of historic resources under the *Alberta Historical Resources Act*. This system is intended to ensure consistency, and has been formulated for use across Alberta. While all municipalities are empowered to determine their own heritage values in designating Municipal Historic Resources, we encourage them to adopt and implement these evaluation standards.

To be considered an historic place eligible for designation as a Provincial Historic Resource a potential historic place must:

1. Be an **eligible** resource type.....*Eligibility, page 3*

AND

2. Be **significant** to our past.....*Significance, page 6*

AND

3. Possess **integrity**.....*Integrity, page 11*

First, the eligibility of the resource is determined. Some resources are excluded from consideration for designation in Alberta. There are two types of exclusions. Type 1 exclusions are ineligible for consideration under any circumstances. Type 2 exclusions are not ordinarily eligible for designation, but may qualify for an exception under special circumstances. If a resource is not of an excluded type, or qualifies for an exception, it may be evaluated for designation.

Second, the significance of the resource is assessed within its historic context, through the application of five evaluation criteria. While a resource may be determined to be significant for several of the evaluation criteria, it need only be significant for one, to merit consideration for designation. Under this system, significance is determined through comparisons with other resources having similar characteristics, within a given context. A resource will be considered to merit designation as a Provincial Historic Resource if it is determined to be of such significance within the spectrum of the province's history that its preservation as an integral component of Alberta's heritage is

required. A resource that has been determined to have provincial significance may qualify for designation.

Third, the integrity of the resource is assessed, in relation to its significance, taking into account its character-defining elements and applicable aspects of integrity. The integrity of a resource is directly related to the criterion for which it has been determined to have significance. The evaluation of integrity must always be grounded in an understanding of a resource's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic resources either retain their integrity - convey their significance - or they do not. Once the province has determined that a resource is eligible and that it possesses both significance and integrity, it may be considered for designation.

1. ELIGIBILITY

Before the significance and integrity of a resource are assessed, it must be determined to be of an eligible type. If a resource is of an excluded type, and does not qualify for an exception, it will not be considered for designation.

1.1 TYPE 1 EXCLUSIONS: INELIGIBLE RESOURCE TYPES:

The following resources are not eligible for provincial designation:

- a. Buildings, structures or objects outside Alberta's jurisdiction
- b. Buildings, structures or objects that are situated in an historical park or village
- c. Small moveable objects
- d. Reconstructions
- e. Human remains

a. Buildings, structures or objects outside provincial jurisdiction

Resources located in areas owned or regulated by the federal government are not eligible. With the exception of situations where a university requests designation, property subject to the provisions of the provincial *Universities Act* is not eligible.

b. Buildings, structures or objects that are situated in an historical park or village

One of the basic purposes of designation and the ARHP is to encourage the preservation of historic resources as living parts of their communities. In keeping with this purpose, artificial groupings of buildings that have been created for purposes of interpretation, protection, or maintenance are not eligible for listing on the ARHP. Creating such a grouping destroys the integrity of location and setting, and can create a false sense of historic development.

c. Small moveable objects

Small moveable objects not designed for a specific location are not eligible. Such works include transportable artefacts, sculpture, furniture, and other decorative arts that, unlike a fixed outdoor sculpture, do not possess association with a specific place. (Objects that are integral to the significance of a non-excluded historic resource may be considered as part of that resource for the purposes of designation).

d. Reconstructions

Reconstruction is defined as the process of recreating the exact form and detail of a vanished resource or major part thereof. A resource in which most or all of the fabric is not authentic is not eligible for designation.

e. Human remains

Human remains are beyond the purview of the Alberta *Historical Resources Act* and therefore are not eligible for designation.

1.2 TYPE 2 EXCLUSIONS : RESOURCE TYPES NOT ORDINARILY ELIGIBLE:

The following resources are not ordinarily eligible for designation:

- a. Cemeteries
- b. Birthplaces or graves
- c. Resources that have been moved
- d. Resources primarily commemorative in nature
- e. Resources that have achieved significance in the last 50 years

a. Cemeteries

A cemetery is a collection of graves that are marked by stones or other artifacts, or that is unmarked but recognizable by features such as fencing or depressions, or through maps, or by means of testing. Cemeteries serve as a primary means of an individual's recognition of family history and as expressions of collective identity. Because cemeteries may embody values beyond personal or family-specific emotions, cemeteries may be eligible under certain conditions.

b. Birthplaces or graves

Birthplaces or graves often attain importance as reflections of the origins of important persons or as lasting memorials to them. The lives of persons significant in our past normally are recognized by the designation of resources that illustrate or are connected with that person's productive life's work. Therefore, birthplaces or graves, which represent the beginning and the end of the life of distinguished individuals, and may be far removed from the period and location of a person's significant activities, are not usually considered eligible.

c. Resources that have been moved

The consideration of a moved resource is restricted because its significance is embodied in its location and setting as well as in the resource itself. Moving a resource destroys the relationships with its surroundings and destroys associations with historic events and persons. A move may also cause the loss of historic features such as landscaping, foundations, and chimneys, as well as loss of the potential for associated archaeological deposits.

d. Resources primarily commemorative in nature

Commemorative resources are designed or constructed after the occurrence of an important historic event or after the life of an important person. They are not directly associated with the event or with the person's productive life, but serve as evidence of a later generation's assessment of the past. Therefore, such resources are not usually eligible for designation.

e. Resources that have achieved significance in the last 50 years

Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This consideration guards against the listing of resources of passing contemporary interest and ensures Alberta's designated resources are truly historic places.

1.2.1 Exceptions

Under special circumstances, exceptions may be made to the Type 2 Exclusions listed above, and resources may qualify for designation if they fall within the following categories:

a. Cemeteries

A cemetery may qualify, if it derives its primary significance from distinctive design features or is associated with a significant event (note that in all circumstances, cemeteries are designated exclusive of any human remains).

b. Birthplaces or graves

The birthplace or grave of a figure of importance may qualify, if there is no other appropriate resource associated with his or her productive life (note that in all circumstances, cemeteries are designated exclusive of any human remains).

c. Resources that have been moved

A resource removed from its original location may qualify, if:

i. it was moved early in its history and developed significant historical associations on its new location prior to the last 50 years.

OR

ii. it is primarily significant for its exceptional architectural value.

OR

iii. it is the sole surviving resource most importantly associated with an historic theme, event, activity, person or institution.

OR

iv. it was specifically designed to be relocated as part of its normal use.

OR

v. it is in the immediate vicinity of its original location and its association with its historic environment is maintained.

d. Resources primarily commemorative in nature

A resource that is primarily commemorative in intent may qualify, if its design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own significance. The significance of a commemorative resource comes from its value as a cultural expression at the date of its creation. Therefore, a commemorative resource generally must be over fifty years old and must possess significance based on its own value, not on the value of the event or person being memorialized.

e. Resources that have achieved significance in the last 50 years

A resource that has achieved significance in the last 50 years may qualify for exemption from this exclusion, if:

i. it can be demonstrated that the resource is extraordinarily significant under any of the five significance criteria.

OR

ii. it is particularly fragile, of high significance, and would probably not survive for 50 years without protection.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

A resource may be significant because of its importance to Alberta's history, architecture, archaeology, palaeontology, engineering or culture. Significance is assessed by evaluating a resource in relation to others having similar characteristics within a given context. Resources are significant in the provincial context when they represent an important aspect of Alberta's history. To be considered for designation by Alberta as a provincial historic resource, a resource must be demonstrated to have significance within a provincial context.

2.1. STEPS INVOLVED IN ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE

1. Select applicable Significance Criteria
2. Describe the resource's context
3. Assess resource significance within its context

2.1.1 Significance Criteria

Significant historic places are those eligible historic places that meet at least one of the following Significance Criteria. The criteria are individually sufficient (a resource only needs to meet one), and of equal value.

- A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event
- B. Institution / Person
- C. Design / Style / Construction
- D. Information Potential
- E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

A resource must be directly associated with a theme, activity, cultural practice or event that has made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of Alberta history.

OR

B. Institution / Person

A resource must be directly associated with a significant institution or with the life of a significant person in Alberta's past.

OR

C. Design / Style / Construction

A resource must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or express high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishing entity or district, the components of which may lack individual distinction.

OR

D. Information Potential

A resource must have yielded, or be likely to yield, information important to Alberta's history, prehistory or natural history.

OR

E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

A resource must be particularly prominent or conspicuous, and must have acquired special visual, sentimental or symbolic value that transcends its function. A landmark contributes to the distinctive character of Alberta.

2.1.2 Context

It is impossible to overstate the importance of establishing the context of a resource being considered for designation. Context provides the framework within which the significance of a resource can be examined. The purpose of establishing the context of a resource is NOT to make an argument for the importance of the resource, but rather to provide sufficient relevant background information to see clearly how the resource relates to others of a similar type. The thematic framework found in Master Plan 2005 is a very useful tool for determining a resource's context. The context of a particular resource will depend upon which evaluation criteria are applicable.

A resource is placed in its context by compiling background information in written form, answering the question that relates to the selected significance criterion:

A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

What is the historical context in which the significant theme, activity, cultural practice or event with which this resource is associated took place? Explain how the event or pattern of events contributed to Alberta's history, and how related types of resources reflect these events.

B. Institution / Person

What is the historical context of the institution or person associated with this resource? Explain the role of the person with whom the resource is associated in Alberta's history. Identify other resources associated with the person and explain their role in the career of the person.

C. Design / Style / Construction

What is the historical context of the building form, architectural style, engineering technique, artistic value, material, method of construction or local area development associated with this resource?

Type, style, period or method of construction

Explain why the type, style, period or method of construction represents architectural features that are significant in Alberta's development.

Work of a master

Provide facts about the career and work of the artist, architect, engineer, or landscape architect to explain how the person was accomplished in his or her field and made contributions to the art, architecture, or landscape architecture of Alberta.

High artistic values

Describe the quality of artistry or craftsmanship present in comparable works in Alberta.

Districts

Discuss how the associations, architectural types, styles and periods reflected by the district represent one or several aspects of Alberta's historic development, whether the province has a number of districts with the same or similar qualities, and how the district is unique or representative in comparison to other districts representing its theme and period.

D. Information Potential

What is the historical context for the research topic that this resource and its physical materials have the potential to address? Explain why the information the resource has or is likely to yield is important to the knowledge of Alberta's prehistory or history.

E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

What is the historical context within which this resource acquired its landmark or symbolic value? Describe the historical events associated with the resource, and the geographical situation of the resource within Alberta. Provide information about how and why it acquired its landmark or symbolic value, and indicate its relationship to any other similar resources in the province.

2.1.3 Significance Assessment

To merit provincial designation, a resource must be of provincial significance within the established context. Simple association with one or more significance criteria is not sufficient. The association must be important. For example, a building historically in commercial use must be shown to have been significant in Alberta's commercial history. In addition, this important association must be documented, if a resource is to be considered for designation. A resource is not eligible if its associations are speculative. For archaeological sites, well-reasoned inferences drawn from data recovered at the site can be used to establish the association between the site and the events.

A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

To merit provincial designation because of significance under this criteria, a resource must be directly associated with a theme, activity, cultural practice or event and be provincially significant within the defined context.

Criterion A recognizes resources associated with single events, such as the signing of a treaty, or with a pattern of events, repeated activities, historic trends or themes, such as the rise to prominence of the oil and gas industry. Significance relating to cultural practice is derived from the role a resource plays in historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.

B. Institution / Person

To merit provincial designation because of significance under this criteria, a resource must be directly associated with an institution or person that is provincially significant within the defined context. The resource is usually associated with an institution or person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he, she or it achieved significance. In some instances this may be a person's home; in other cases, a business, office, laboratory, or studio may best represent their contribution. A resource associated with an individual's formative or later years may also qualify if it can be demonstrated that the person's activities during this period were historically significant or if no resources from the person's productive years survive. Length of association is an important factor when assessing several properties with similar associations.

Several resources may be eligible for designation because of their association with the same important institution or person, if each resource represents an important aspect of their productive life. A resource may also be eligible if it had brief but consequential associations with an important institution or individual. Such associations are often related to specific events that occurred at the resource and, therefore, it may also be eligible under Criterion A.

C. Design / Style / Construction

To merit provincial designation because of significance under this criteria, a resource must satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

Embody the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, or method of construction.

This is the portion of Criterion C under which most resources are eligible, for it encompasses all architectural styles and construction practices. To be eligible under this portion of the Criterion, a resource must clearly illustrate the following:

- The pattern of features common to a particular class of resources;
- The individuality or variation of features that occurs within the class;
- The evolution of that class;
- The transition between classes of resources.

OR

Represent the work of a master

A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. The resource must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft.

A resource is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a prominent architect. For example, not every building designed by Alan Jeffers is eligible under the Work of a Master portion of Criterion C.

OR

Express high artistic values

High artistic value may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. A resource is eligible for its high artistic values if it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal. A resource is not eligible, however, if it does not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts more fully than other properties of its type.

OR

Represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

D. Information Potential

To merit provincial designation because of significance under this criterion, a resource must have provided or have the potential to provide:

- important information about a particular theme, event, institution or person, or about a particular type of building, structure or object;
- an opportunity to test a hypothesis, corroborate or amplify currently available information, or reconstruct the sequence of cultures;
- an opportunity to test a hypothesis, corroborate or amplify currently available information, or reconstruct the sequence of species or geological formations.

Certain important research questions about human history can only be answered by the actual physical material that comprises some cultural resources. Criterion D encompasses resources that have the potential to answer, in whole or in part, those types of research questions. The most common type of resource nominated under this criterion is the archaeological site (or a district comprised of archaeological sites). Buildings, objects, and structures (or districts comprised of these resource types), however, can also be eligible for their information potential.

E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

To merit provincial designation because of significance under this criterion, a resource must satisfy one or more of the following conditions:

- it is particularly prominent or conspicuous and contributes to the distinctive character of the province;
- it has acquired special visual, sentimental or symbolic value that transcends its function or physical characteristics within the province.

3. INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of the resource to convey its significance. To merit designation as a provincial historic resource, a resource must not only be shown to be significant for one or more evaluation criteria, but it also must have integrity. The integrity assessment takes into account both the resource’s character-defining elements and its applicable aspects of integrity and is always grounded in an understanding of how a resource’s physical features relate to its significance. Historic resources either retain their integrity (convey their significance) or they do not.

3.1. STEPS INVOLVED IN ASSESSING INTEGRITY

1. Identify the resource’s character-defining elements (the essential physical features that must be present for a resource to represent its significance), and determine whether they are visible enough to convey their significance.

.....*Character-defining Elements, page 10*

2. Determine which aspects of integrity are applicable to the criterion under which the resource is being evaluated, and if they are present.

.....*Aspects of Integrity, page 12*

3.1.1 Character-Defining Elements

Character-defining elements are the materials, forms, location, and spatial configurations that contribute to the significance of a resource, and which must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value.

Character-defining elements may be found in:

- the style, massing, scale or composition of the resource
- features of the resource related to its function
- the interior spatial configurations, or exterior layout, of the resource
- the materials and craftsmanship of the resource
- the relationship between the resource and its broader setting
- traditional activities that continue to occur at the resource

- features or materials that have direct bearing on important research themes

Character-defining elements do not include:

- features that do not contribute to the resource’s significance

- elements that have been removed or destroyed, or that were planned but never executed.

- elements that have been reconstructed

3.1.1.1 Identifying Character-defining Elements

Resources change over time. Changes made to a resource may be related directly to its heritage value, or they may detract from it. A resource need not retain all of its original physical features or characteristics to retain its integrity. However, it must retain the essential physical features, or character-defining elements, that enable it to convey its historical identity. These are: those features that define both why a resource is significant and when it was significant. They are the features without which a resource's significance cannot be retained. Identifying a resource's character-defining elements must take into account the Significance Criteria selected for the resource.

A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

AND

B. Institution / Person

The character-defining elements of a resource significant for its historic associations are those features that made up its character or appearance during its period of association with the important Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event, or Institution / Person. If the resource is a site where there are no material cultural remains, such as the location of a treaty signing, the character-defining elements are those that made up the environment during its period of association.

C. Design / Style / Construction:

The character-defining elements of a resource significant for its ability to illustrate a particular style or construction technique consist of the historic materials and details that originally distinguished it as an example of that style or technique.

The character-defining elements of a resource significant as a district are those features present at the time the district gained its significance, and which distinguish the individual components as being contributing elements of the district.

D. Information Potential

The character-defining elements of resources significant for their potential to yield information, including archaeological and palaeontological sites and standing structures, are defined by the important research questions that have been or may be answered by investigating the resource. These features will include some which are known, as well as some which, by inference, may reasonably be expected to exist.

E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

The character-defining elements of a resource significant for its landmark or symbolic value are those that allow it to convey its significance. These may extend beyond the resource itself to include elements of its location and environment.

3.1.1.2 Determine if a Resource's Character-Defining Elements Are Visible

Resources eligible for designation under criterion A, B, C or E (and sometimes D) must not only retain their character-defining elements, but these must be visible, well documented or conclusively demonstrated to be present. Even if a resource is intact, its integrity is questionable if its character-defining elements are concealed. Resources covered by non-historic materials are considered to lack integrity. Should such covering be removed, revealing intact historic period materials, the resource's integrity can be re-evaluated.

A resource significant for its ability to yield information, such as an archaeological resource, usually has its essential physical features concealed. Such resources have either yielded important information and are known to contain more yet unretrieved information, or have, through testing or research, been determined to be a likely source of important information.

3.1.2 Aspects of Integrity

There are seven Aspects of Integrity to be considered. Determining which of the Aspects of Integrity are most applicable to a particular resource requires an understanding of its significance and its character-defining elements.

3.1.2.1 Seven Aspects of Integrity

As a guide to determining integrity of a potential historic place, the following Aspects of Integrity can be considered:

1. Location
2. Design
3. Environment
4. Materials
5. Workmanship
6. Feeling
7. Association

1. Location

Location is the *place* where an historic resource was constructed or the site where an historic activity or event occurred. This is not the same as the character of the place in which a resource played its historic role, which is referred to as its environment (see 3. Environment, below). The relationship between a resource and its location is important to understanding why it was created or why an event happened there. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a resource and its historical associations is destroyed if the resource is moved.

2. Design

Design is the *combination of elements* that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a resource. A resource's design reflects historic function and technologies as well as aesthetics. Design results from decisions made during the original conception and planning of a resource, or its significant alteration.

Design may include, but is not limited to, elements such as:

- structural system
- form and massing
- arrangement of spaces
- pattern of fenestration
- textures and colours of surface materials
- type, amount and style of detailing
- arrangement and type of plantings in a landscape

3. Environment

Environment is the *physical setting* of an historic resource. Whereas location refers to a specific place, environment refers to the character of the place in which a resource played its historic role. It involves not only where a resource is situated and its relationship to surrounding features or open space, but also how it contributes to the sense of continuity to the area.

Features that contribute to the environment include, but are not limited to:

- topographic features
- vegetation
- manmade features (paths or fences)
- relationships between resources and other features or open space
- character of street, neighbourhood or area

4. Materials

Materials are the *physical elements* that were combined or deposited during a particular period(s) or time frame and in a particular pattern or configuration to form an historic resource. Integrity is compromised if a resource does not retain the key materials dating from its period of historical significance. The historic materials and significant features should be present and their original inter-relationships retained.

5. Workmanship

Workmanship is the *physical evidence* of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is important because it can provide information about technological practises and aesthetic principles.

Workmanship can be:

- plain or ornamental
- basic or sophisticated
- based on tradition or innovative techniques
- seen in all or individual parts of a resource

6. Feeling

Feeling is the resource's continued *ability to convey* the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, express the resource's historic character.

7. Association

Association is a *direct link* between an historic resource and a significant historical theme, activity or event; or an institution or person. A resource retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Integrity is based on significance. Only after significance is fully established can integrity be assessed. The question of integrity is answered by whether the resource retains the identity for which it is significant.

3.1.2.2 Applicable Aspects of Integrity

Each of the five significance criteria depends on certain aspects of integrity more than others to express a resource's historical significance. Determining which of the aspects of integrity is most important to a particular resource requires an understanding of its significance and its character-defining elements.

A. Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

AND

B. Institution / Person:

A resource significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the character-defining elements that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, institution or person(s). Ideally it might retain features of all seven aspects of integrity. However, for historic places that are the sites of important events, integrity of environment would be required. Integrity of design and workmanship will be important to an historic place's significance if the resource is a building or structure.

C. Design / Style / Construction

A resource significant for its design or construction must retain those physical features that characterize the type, period or method of construction that the resource represents. Retention of design, workmanship and materials will usually be more important than location, environment, feeling and association. However, location and environment will be important for resources whose design is a reflection of their immediate environment.

D. Information Potential

For a resource significant for its potential to yield information, environment and feeling may not have direct bearing on the resource's ability to yield information. In these situations, evaluation of integrity probably will focus on location, design, materials and perhaps workmanship.

E. Landmark / Symbolic Value

A resource significant for its landmark or symbolic value ideally will retain elements of all seven aspects of integrity. However, integrity of location, environment and feeling are of particular importance.

Should require any additional information on these evaluation standards, please do not hesitate to contact:

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