

Values-Based Management

Heritage buildings are rich, even complicated, repositories for anyone interested in our history. They connect us to our forebears, to their ideas, their ways of life, their hopes and dreams and even their disappointments. Some of these buildings also help tell major stories about our past, about the currents and torrents of history — settlement, economic growth (and decline), political conflicts, cultural and scientific advances, social change.

All of the subjects that can be attributed to a heritage building can be called values. And for anyone involved in the conservation of a heritage site, it is imperative that the values for their building be clearly articulated and understood. In Manitoba, various governments have protected more than 700 sites that are understood to have value to the community or the province. Most of these sites have been recognized for their cultural heritage values, which can be analyzed with reference to the following three broad categories:

Physical Values

Those technical issues (style/tradition, material, function, craftsmanship) that typically are associated with the architecture of a building

Associative Values

Those broad historical issues (historical theme, social/community, cultural, spiritual, scientific, educational) that often are connected with a person, group or event associated with a building

Environmental Values

Those contextual issues (relational of historic place to site/setting, contribution of historic place to greater context) that help make a building a significant part of a whole

Each designated building in Manitoba possesses its own distinct constellation of values. A clear and concise expression of these values is a key goal of ongoing promotion and conservation. Indeed, heritage building conservation is based on this foundation, with the understanding that a clear expression of a building's core values will ensure that decisions made about it—maintenance, research, interpretation, promotion, repairs, conservation—are directed at the right places. In short, values-based management will be a tool that can be used by owners to clarify purpose, focus resources and interpretation, avoid mistakes and protect their investment.

Statement of Significance

The first element in the values-based management approach is called the Statement of Significance (SoS), the primary document that describes a building's core values. The province's Historic Resources Branch has a commitment to produce an SoS for every designated site in Manitoba. Building owners are asked to contribute to this process, and to identify the values they believe should be addressed in the production of the SoS.

Most designated buildings in Manitoba are featured on the Canadian Register of Historic Places, on the website historicplaces.ca. This major website, maintained by Parks Canada, features more than 10,000 protected sites across Canada, and thus is a major tool for heritage promotion and education. Placement on the Register is voluntary, and building owners are

asked to provide consent to having their site included.

The SoS is the key part of the documentation record that forms each entry on the Canadian Register of Historic Places. The SoS has three primary purposes: 1) to explain the heritage value of a historic place to visitors viewing the Historic Places Initiative website, historicplaces.ca, 2) to provide guidance about heritage value to property owners, planners, architects, etc., and 3) to help guide the preparation of conservation plans when work is required to a heritage building.

There are three sections of a Statement of Significance:

Description of Historic Place, which describes what has been designated

Heritage Value, which describes why the historic place is important

Character-Defining Elements, which describe the key physical qualities of the building that speak directly to the heritage value and must be protected in order to preserve value

In terms of the values-based management approach, it is the Heritage Value section that assumes key importance. The creation of the Heritage Value section will be the result of two distinct processes:

Research, which will include the review of historical reports, evaluations, general overviews, technical reports, etc.

Consultation, which will involve interviews with building owners, and if applicable other stakeholders – neighbours, heritage organizations, interested parties, historians, architectural historians, etc.

The creation of a good, and useful, Heritage Value section will also address the following issues:

- It will identify and effectively describe the core heritage values of a historic place.
- It will ensure that the principal area of heritage value is emphasized (i.e., one of either architecture; person, group, event; or context).
- It will identify secondary values and place them in a hierarchy after the primary value. Values that are interesting, but not deemed significant, will not be identified in the SoS.
- It will be written in a clear and easily understood manner.
- It will guide the identification of character-defining elements.