



## **Community Voices: A stakeholder initiative**

## **Sites of Significance for Recognition**

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The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA) assists, supports, and enhances the provincial government's delivery of services to African Nova Scotians. It acts as a conduit in developing innovative solutions that lead to self-reliance and sustainable development for African Nova Scotians and their communities. This document has been prepared by the ANSA as part of Community Voices: A Stakeholder's Action Plan.

This document intends to lay the foundation to increase recognition and awareness for tangible and intangible heritage for African Nova Scotians.

Communities are encouraged;

- to investigate, identify and evaluate heritage assets that should be recognized and/or preserved in their area.
- to think about recognition in terms of municipal, provincial, federal and international considerations.
- to use the outlined criteria to assist communities in beginning to determine sites of significance. The intent of this document is to help in developing a starting point to assert sites related to heritage that should be recognized and honoured.

## **Operational Definitions**

For the purpose of this document:

**Heritage** is that which is inherited from previous generations and which special measures are taken to preserve for future generations; gives us a deep knowledge of our past.

**Heritage Values** refers to the historic, cultural, scientific, aesthetic, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations.

**Tangible Heritage:** Buildings and structures (bridges, churches, cemeteries). Artifacts including art, music, records, photos, and documents.

**Intangibles Heritage:** Folklore- oral traditions, storytelling, traditions, belief systems passed down, music traditions and dance.

**Natural Heritage:** Areas of land, bodies of water, and wild life areas.

### **What are sites of significance?**

This can include: structures such as churches, cemeteries, buildings, bridges, landmarks or sites such as old school grounds, community halls, and baptismal lakes.

**Built heritage:** represents structures and places that help define a community's shared history.

**Cultural Heritage Landscapes:** a distinct area or property representing the combined work of nature and of people.

**Historic Places:** a structure, building, district, landscape, archaeological site or other place that has heritage place.

**Cemeteries:** burial grounds are important heritage resource that can provide records and therefore links to the past. If abandoned and ownership cannot be determined, there are laws in place to allow access and protection to the site.

### **What is the Historic Places Initiative?**

The goal is to develop a culture of conservation across the country. A historic place is a structure, building, group of building, district, landscape, archaeological site or other place in Canada that has been recognized for its heritage value. Historic places in Nova Scotia offer social, economic and environmental benefits that add to the quality of life in our communities.

### **What makes the place important?**

- Does the place have special meaning because of its landmark?
- Does the place have special spiritual or cultural association?
- Is the place important at national, provincial or municipal?

### **What criteria should a community consider to assert a local site of significance?**

To help identify sites of significance in your community for municipal or provincial considerations

- What makes it significant in the lives of the residents?
- Does it reflect a particular historical period or event?
- Does this location have a historical connection with an outstanding community leader or local hero which raises the profile for that community or the province?
- Has a significant person from the African Community visited or stayed there, which has been documented or passed along through oral traditions?
- Does this site or place provide a tangible record and/or link to the past, if so, specifically how?
- Is there an artistic legacy through carvings and detail work?
- Will it provide opportunity for enhancement, revitalization and heritage based tourism or development?
- Is the property an outstanding example of a specific architectural style?

### ***For more information***

Historic Places: ([www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca)).

Heritage Places in Nova Scotia ([www.gov.ns.ca/cch/heritage/HPP/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/cch/heritage/HPP/))

# Sites of Significance

## Recognition with

## International Organizations

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Communities are encouraged to:

- Think about sites for recognition in their local area.
- Work towards ownership in steps moving forward towards international recognition through grass roots efforts.

### **Who are the international organizations of interest?**

- Smithsonian
- UNESCO

The UNESCO Transatlantic Slave Trade Sites of memory is a highly ambitious initiative with its sights set resolutely on the future, to the extent that it contributes in the long term to enhancing mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

There is a need to link the African Nova Scotian experience, history and culture to this global inventory for sites of memory. As well, there are possibilities for developing common linkages with the National Museum of African American.

## **What is UNESCO?**

It is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which leads an international system to support countries in their efforts to identify and protect cultural and natural heritage that are threatened with destruction by causes of decay and by changing social and economic conditions. It highlights the cultural or natural heritage that is outstanding in international interest and asserts a need that this (site) be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole. It strives to maintain, increase and share knowledge by assuring the conservation and protection of cultural and natural property for all peoples of the world.

## **What is the Smithsonian?**

The Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park and nine research facilities. Its mission is in shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. It was founded in 1846, and continues to be a world leader in honouring and recognizing cultures.

## **How to get International Organizations to consider something for recognition?**

Nominated sites must meet some of the criteria, in order to be placed on a tentative list before moving to a nomination file.

## **Why does this matter to Nova Scotians?**

UNESCO and Smithsonian recognition are exceptional testimonies to our cultural traditions.

International organizations create and solidify opportunities for links to the larger mapping and honoring of African Diaspora. These links provide the international platform for African Nova Scotians. Is an outstanding example of a type of recognition which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

## **For more information:**

A Treasured Past, A Precious Future ([www.gov.ns.ca/novascotiaheritage/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/novascotiaheritage/) )

UNESCO ([www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/)).

Smithsonian (<http://www.si.edu/>)

# Preservation Guide

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This document has been prepared by the ANSA as part of the Community Voices: a stakeholder's project. This document intends to lay the foreground to increase the amount of sites recognized at all levels related to African Nova Scotian Culture in Province of Nova Scotia.

Communities are encouraged to:

- Think about artifacts deemed worthy of preservation.
- Work towards sharing items (tangible and intangible) related to historical and cultural significance of African Nova Scotia culture.

## Preserve artifacts of historical and cultural significance

If your community has been considering sites of significance, it's also important to think about artifacts as well, this can be done as you explore the history in your home, your neighborhood and community. The idea is that there are many hidden treasures.

Protected and conservation of artifacts of significance enrich a sense of family heritage and cultural pride and they help others to explore the community history.

Use this check list to help preserve your cultural artifacts and heritage.

- Reduce the amount of light that strikes your treasures, especially in the summer.
- Maintain a stable temperature in a comfortable, cool dry space for your treasurers.
- Protect treasured items from contaminants like soot, dirt, dust and cleaning solvents as well as storage boxes or bins made of poor materials.
- Consider implications from bugs, pests and rodents.
- Prevent moisture and humidity from reaching your treasures.
- Move carefully around your fragile materials as scratches or breaks can result in irreversible problems.

## Items and cultural treasure to consider collecting

Consider these objects for preservation: books, furniture, paper documents (news paper clippings, deeds, birth, marriage, and death certificates), preserving photographs, clothing, textiles, crafts, carving, quilts, instruments, jewelry, household artifacts, agricultural tools.

Preservation of Items of cultural significance

- **When handling** use white gloves, or powder-free vinyl gloves. Or clean hands.
- **When cleaning** artifacts use a mild liquid detergent, paper towels or soft rags, as well consider a vacuum cleaner with brush nozzle and adjustable suction, and a dehumidifier.

- **When storing** your artifacts consider using archival and adhesive-free photo albums or archival photo envelopes, archival acid-free tissue paper. PDB moth balls; metal footlocker or galvanized closed canister. Plastic storage bins.

Consider a submission to ANSA Share Your Story to share your artifact with NS and the world.

**For more information visit:**

*African American Treasures – A Preservation Guide*  
*Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, available at ANSA and online here (<http://nmaahc.si.edu/programs/treasures> )*