

AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY: World Heritage Convention and National Park Service Definitions

There are significant differences between how the World Heritage Convention (WHC) and the National Park Service (NPS) define the terms “authenticity” and “integrity”. The World Heritage Convention has eight criteria for authenticity, which are similar to the National Park Service’s seven criteria for historic integrity. The National Park Service does *not* have a separate definition for authenticity, but uses the term to define integrity. The World Heritage Convention generally uses integrity to denote the condition of the property, while the National Park Service does allow the physical conditions of a property (e.g., its deterioration) to be considered when evaluating historic integrity.

To summarize:

1. WHC’s “authenticity” = NPS’s “historic integrity.”
2. WHC’s “integrity” = NPS’s “condition.”
3. NPS only uses “authenticity” to define integrity.

WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION DEFINITIONS

Authenticity (from *World Heritage Operation Guidelines, II.E.82-86*)

A property meets the conditions of authenticity if its cultural values are truthfully and credibly expressed via reliable information sources¹ through a variety of attributes. Documentation should assess the degree to which authenticity is present in or expressed by each of these significant attributes, including:

1. Form and design;
2. Materials and substance;
3. Use and function;
4. Traditions, techniques and management systems;
5. Location and setting;
6. Languages, and other forms of intangible heritage;
7. Spirit and feeling- attributes which are important indicators of character and sense of place (e.g., in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity);
8. Other internal and external factors.

NOTE: Reconstruction is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, and is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

Integrity (from *World Heritage Operation Guidelines, II.E.87-89*)

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity requires assessing the extent to which the property:

- a. includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).
- b. is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance. A significant proportion of the elements necessary to convey the totality of the value conveyed by the property should be included. Relationships and dynamic

¹ “Information sources” are defined as all physical, written, oral, and figurative sources which make it possible to know the nature, specificities, meaning, and history of a cultural heritage.

functions present in cultural landscapes, historic towns, or other living properties essential to their distinctive character should also be maintained.

- c. suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. The property's physical fabric and/or its significant features should be in good condition, and the impact of deterioration processes controlled.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DEFINITIONS

The National Park Service, on its Preservation Terminology webpage https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_10.htm, defines "Integrity" in terms of authenticity, and does not have a separate definition for "Authenticity."

"Integrity—the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period."

"Historic integrity" is further explained (below) on the National Park Service's glossary page, <https://www.nps.gov/nhl/apply/glossary.htm>, where terms are defined relating to historic properties and resources, their assessment, and their documentation for the National Register and National Historic Landmarks programs.

Historic Integrity

Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes. While the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) and National Register of Historic Places (NR) programs use the same seven aspects of integrity to evaluate properties (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association), NHLs must retain them to a higher degree than required for NR listing. If the resource has been more than modestly modified or deteriorated since its period of national significance, it may meet the NR threshold for integrity, but not the higher NHL standard.

1. Location: Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons.

2. Setting: Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. It refers to the historic character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its historical relationship to surrounding features and open space. The physical features that constitute the historic setting of a historic property can be either natural or manmade and include such elements as topographic features, vegetation, simple manmade paths or fences, and the relationships between buildings and other features or open spaces.

3. Design: Design is the combination of elements that create the historic form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. This includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. Design can also apply to districts and to the historic way in which the buildings, sites, or structures are related. Examples include spatial relationships between major features; visual rhythms in a streetscape or landscape plantings; the layout and materials of walkways and roads; and the relationship of other features, such as statues, water fountains, and archeological sites.

4. Materials: Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. If the property has been rehabilitated, the historic materials and significant features must have been preserved. The property must also be an actual historic resource, not a re-creation; a property whose historic features have been lost and then reconstructed is usually not eligible.

5. Workmanship: Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. It may be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. Examples of workmanship in pre-contact contexts include Paleo-Indian Clovis points, Archaic period beveled adzes, Hopewellian worked bone pendants, and Iroquoian effigy pipes.

6. Feeling: Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district which retains its original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the nineteenth century.

7. Association: Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Therefore, a property where a nationally significant person carried out the action or work for which they are nationally significant is preferable to the place where they returned to only sleep, eat, or spend their leisure time. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.

Although not listed in the seven criteria for historic integrity, the National Park Service does allow the physical *condition* of a property to be taken into consideration when evaluating property type and integrity as part of the assessment of historic context, as follows:

The evaluation should state how the particular property meets the integrity requirements for its type. When a property is disqualified for loss of integrity, the evaluation statement should focus on the kinds of integrity expected for the property type, those that are absent for the disqualified property, and the impact of that absence on the property's ability to exemplify architectural, historical or research values within a particular historic context.

The integrity of the property in its current condition, rather than its likely condition after a proposed treatment, should be evaluated. Factors such as structural problems, deterioration, or abandonment should be considered in the evaluation only if they have affected the integrity of the significant features or characteristics of the property.

(from https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_3.htm, Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Evaluation)