

Integrity and authenticity

“To be deemed of outstanding universal value, a property must also meet the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity....” – *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*

What do “integrity” and “authenticity” mean when we talk about the Landscape of Grand Pré?

UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines define them like this:

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.

Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of **authenticity** if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes.

Integrity of the Landscape of Grand Pré

The Landscape of Grand Pré has integrity. Its clearly defined boundaries encompass all the elements relevant to the agricultural landscape, created from the transformation of salt marsh into farmland over several centuries. They also encompass the elements relevant to the symbolically reclaimed landscape.

These elements include earthen dykes, ditches, *aboiteaux*, and field patterns, as well as the memorials, archaeological evidence of the village, and commemorations related to the forced removal and subsequent renaissance of the Acadians.

The nominated property comprehensively represents the past and present agricultural settlements as defined by dykeland farmland, upland farmland, and the heart of the community.

It includes the dykeland managed collectively by the Grand Pré Marsh Body and the entire area of symbolic importance to the Acadians. The integrity is enhanced by the farmland included in the buffer zone. The nominated property’s attributes are in good condition.

What makes this landscape distinctive is that it was created and has been maintained exclusively for agricultural purposes in an intertidal zone. Its approaches to wetland transformation and land tenure were adapted from mediaeval Western European approaches, predating those used at the Dutch polders (dykelands) already on the World Heritage List. It stands out in its

authenticity and integrity, as it has kept intact those three characteristics – agricultural use, vernacular approach to dyking, and community-based management – since its creation because of the ongoing protection and stewardship of farmers and authorities.

At 1323 hectares, Grand Pré is the largest dykeland in eastern Canada in which 100 per cent of the land is actively farmed. In that respect it has the highest level of integrity for a dykeland created for agriculture.

Other dykelands have suffered permanent structural intrusions, changes in function, and abandonment. Compared to other dykelands in eastern Canada, Grand Pré provides rare intact evidence of the agricultural system that was once prevalent in the region and remains extremely successful in ensuring the livelihood of the local community.

Authenticity of the Landscape of Grand Pré

The Landscape of Grand Pré has authenticity. The archaeological and historical evidence confirms the locations of the original Acadian and Planter settlements, the enduring agricultural use, and the location of the memorials.

That evidence also confirms that the dykelands are maintained in the 21st century using the same principles and techniques originally implemented by the Acadians in the 17th century, and that they have been managed collectively for over 300 years.

The Grand Pré Marsh Body is the oldest and most active body of its kind in North America. Its stewardship has contributed greatly to maintaining the authenticity of the agricultural aspect of the Landscape of Grand Pré.

The authenticity of Grand Pré is also found in its agricultural system through the dykes, *aboiteaux*, land use and patterns. Centuries of local and provincial planning have helped to ensure the continued use of the dykeland for agriculture.

The dykelands evoke the agricultural land that was created by the ancestors of today's Acadians, typical of their way of life.

Grand Pré is associated with the Acadians' homeland and the most important events in their history. Authenticity in this case relates to the mental image of the homeland as well as to the tangible expression of that image in a specific place.

At Grand Pré, the location of the memorials next to the dykelands and in the heart of the Acadian settlement, as confirmed by archaeological evidence, creates the sense of place and the authenticity of the *lieu de mémoire* – the place of memory.

The presence of the archaeological features is tangible evidence of the Acadians' historical presence and of the events surrounding the Deportation.

The impact of the Deportation on the Acadians is still felt and expressed in songs, pilgrimages to Grand Pré, and artistic expressions. The Acadians' return to Grand Pré and their reclamation of it through symbols is a powerful illustration of the importance of *lieux de mémoire* in maintaining and nurturing a collective identity.

The symbolic reclamation also illustrates a collective desire for reconciliation with history, with both the events of the Deportation and the resulting loss of land.

Grand Pré is the most important *lieu de mémoire* for Acadians. In Acadian communities around the world, its memorials serve as landmarks and symbols of their shared heritage and collective identity.

The Landscape of Grand Pré is an ongoing act of reconciliation for the Acadian community, one that was and continues to be achieved peacefully through a sharing of a common heritage with the local inhabitants.

In characterizing the spirit of Grand Pré, the agricultural and memorial dimensions are equally dominant.

Grand Pré memorials

All the memorials except the Deportation Cross are located in their original settings.

The Memorial Church stands on the land that was acquired by the Acadian community and was thought to contain the vestiges of the church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines.

The Statue of Evangeline stands at the entrance of the commemorative gardens where visitors would have arrived from the train station.

The Herbin Cross continues to mark the location of the Acadian cemetery.

When the Deportation Cross was erected in 1924, it was placed where people then believed the Acadians had boarded the ships in 1755. The Acadian community moved it to its current spot at Horton Landing in 2005 to mark the 250th anniversary of the Deportation. By then, research had confirmed that Horton Landing was the actual site of the departure. Moving it has strengthened the authenticity of its location and setting.

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