

Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site

Parks Canada

A Case Study

The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles

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The Getty Conservation Institute works internationally to advance conservation and to enhance and encourage the preservation and understanding of the visual arts in all of their dimensions—objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research; education and training; field projects; and the dissemination of the results of both its work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the Institute is committed to addressing unanswered questions and to promoting the highest possible standards of conservation practice.

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Introduction

Over the past five years, the GCI has undertaken research on the values of heritage. Following work on the nature of values, on the relationship between economic and cultural values, and on methods of assessing values,¹ the current effort aims to illustrate how values are identified and assessed, how they play into management policies and objectives, and what impact management decisions have on the values. This analysis of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site is one of four analyses of heritage sites undertaken by this project. Each discussion is published as a case study.

Site Management—Traditional and Values Based

Heritage site management can be defined simply as “the way that those responsible [for the site] choose to use it, exploit it, or conserve it.”² Authorities, however, seldom make these choices solely on their own. As the interest in heritage and heritage sites has grown, people have come to anticipate benefits from these resources, and authorities must take into consideration these expectations. Many cultural sites are appreciated for their cultural and educational benefits; some are seen primarily as places of recreation; and others are expected to act as economic engines for communities, regions, or nations. Sometimes the expectations of different groups can be incompatible and can result in serious conflicts.

Although heritage practitioners generally agree that the principal goals of cultural management are the conservation of cultural resources and/or their presentation to the public, in reality, cultural sites almost always have multiple management objectives. The result is that often the various activities that take place at these sites—such as conservation interventions, visitor management, infrastructure development, and interpretation—are handled separately, without a unifying process that focuses all decisions on the common goals.

In recent years, the field of heritage preservation has started to develop more integrated approaches to site management and planning that provide clearer guidance

for decisions. The approaches most often favored are those called *values-based*.

Values-based site management is the coordinated and structured operation of a heritage site with the primary purpose of protecting the significance of the place as defined by designation criteria, government authorities or other owners, experts of various stripes, and other citizens with legitimate interests in the place.

Values-based approaches start by analyzing the values and significance attributed to cultural resources. They then consider how those values can be protected most effectively. This systematic analysis of values distinguishes these management approaches from more traditional ones, which are more likely to focus on resolving specific problems or issues without formal consideration of the impact of solutions on the totality of the site or its values. While there are variations in the terminology and specifics of the processes followed, values-based management is characterized by its ability to accommodate many heritage types, to address the range of threats to which heritage may be exposed, to serve the diversity of interest groups with a stake in its protection, and to support a longer-term view of management.

There are many sources of information that can be tapped to establish the values of a site. Historical records and previous research findings have been the most used in the past, and they are generally consulted first. Values-based management places great importance on the consultation of stakeholders—individuals or groups who have an interest in a site and who can provide valuable information about the contemporary values attributed to the place. Traditional stakeholders of cultural sites have been professionals in various disciplines—such as history, archaeology, architecture, ecology, biology, and so on—whose input is expressed through their research or expert opinions. More recently, other groups who value heritage sites for different reasons have been recognized as stakeholders too. These new stakeholders can be communities living close to a site, groups with traditional ties or with interests in particular aspects of the site. Stakeholders

with wide ranging and sometimes conflicting interests in a place may perceive its values quite differently. However, most of the values articulated in a values-elicitation or consultation process are legitimate, and thus they merit serious consideration and protection as the site is used.

In its strictest definition, values-based management does not assume a priori the primacy of traditional values—historical, aesthetic, or scientific—over others that have gained recognition more recently, such as social ones. However, in the case of sites of national or regional significance, the principal values recognized are almost always defined by the authorities at the time of designation. In those instances, the values behind that significance ordinarily have primacy over all others that exist or might eventually be identified. In all sites (national and others) some of the ascribed values will be deemed more important than others as the significance of a place is clarified.

Once the values of a site have been identified and its significance established, a critical step to assure their conservation—and one of the most challenging aspects of this approach—is determining where the values reside. In its most literal sense, this step can mean mapping the values on the features of the site and answering questions about which features capture the essence of a given value. What about them must be guarded in order to retain that value? If a view is seen to be important to the value of the place, what are its essential elements? What amount of change is possible before the value is compromised? A clear understanding of where the values reside allows site managers to protect that which makes a site significant.

Values-based heritage management has been most thoroughly formalized in Australia, where the Burra Charter guides practitioners.³ Faced with the technical and philosophical challenges posed by aboriginal places, nonarchitectural sites, and vernacular heritage, Australian heritage professionals found that the existing guidance in the field (such as the deeply western European Venice Charter) failed to provide adequate language and sensitivities. Building on the basic ethics and principles of the Venice Charter, they devised guidelines for heritage management that became the Burra Charter, a site-specific approach that calls for an examination of the values ascribed to the place by all its stakeholders and calls for the precise articulation of what constitutes the site's particular significance. While it is officially endorsed only in Australia, the Burra Charter is an adaptable model for site management in other parts of the world, because the planning process it advocates requires the integration of local cultural values.

VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Value and significance are terms frequently used in site management with various definitions. This holds true for the organizations involved in this case study project; each of them uses these terms slightly differently and they are often guided by wording included in legal or regulatory documents.⁴

In this study, *value* is used to mean the characteristics attributed to heritage objects and places by legislation, governing authorities, and/or other stakeholders. These characteristics are what make a site significant, and they are often the reason why stakeholders and authorities are interested in a specific cultural site or object. In general, these groups (or stakeholders) expect benefits from the value they attribute to the resource.

Significance is used to mean the overall importance of a site, determined through an analysis of the totality of the values attributed to it. Significance also reflects the degree of importance a place has with respect to one or several of its values or attributes, and in relation to other comparable sites.

As mentioned earlier, the significance of national sites is often established by legislative or designation processes, and these processes generally yield a narrower definition of significance than the one provided here. In the case of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, its significance was defined in 1974 by a recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). The significance of historic sites in the Parks Canada system is reflected in statements of commemorative intent (a pivotal tool for heritage management, discussed in detail below).

The Case Study Project

Since 1987 the Getty Conservation Institute has been involved with values-based site management planning through research efforts, professional training courses, symposia, and field projects. As an extension of this commitment, and associated with a related research and publication effort on values and heritage conservation, the Institute has led an effort to produce a series of case studies that demonstrate how values-driven site management has been interpreted, employed, and evaluated by four key organizations. In this project, the GCI has collaborated with the Australian Heritage Commission, English Heritage, Parks Canada, and the U.S. National Park Service.

All four national agencies employ approaches to the management of their own properties that reflect their own histories and legal environments. However, they all have expanded their approaches to define, accommodate, and protect a broader range of values than a stock set traditionally associated with heritage places.

The case studies in this series focus on values and their protection by examining the place of values in management. By looking at individual sites and the management context in which they exist, they provide a detailed example that describes and analyzes the processes that connect theoretical management guidelines with management planning and its practical application. The analysis of the management of values in each site has been structured around the following questions:

- How are the values associated with the site understood and articulated?
- How are these values taken into account in the site's management principles, policies, and strategies?
- How do management decisions and actions on site affect the values?

The four sites studied as part of this project—Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site in Canada, Port Arthur Historic Site in Australia, Chaco Culture National Historical Park in the United States, and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site in the United Kingdom—were identified by their national organizations. Each of the sites examined in this study was put forth as an example of how values issues have been addressed by their respective stewards. The studies do not attempt to measure the success of a given management model against some arbitrary standard nor should they be construed as explaining how an agency handles all its sites. Rather, they illustrate and explain how four different groups have dealt with the protection of values in the management of four specific sites and how they are helped or hindered in these efforts by legislation, regulations, and other policies. In those instances where the negative impact of policies or actions has been noted, it has been done to illustrate the complexity of managing sites with multiple values. These comments should not be taken as a judgment of the actions of the site authorities.

The organizations participating in this project share a belief in the potential usefulness of values-based management in a broad range of international contexts. These studies have a didactic intent, and they are intended for use by institutions and individuals engaged in the study and/or practice of site management, conservation

planning, and historic preservation. As such, they assume that the reader is familiar with heritage management concepts, international charters and guidance, and general conservation principles.

About This Case Study

This case study examines Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, which is managed by Parks Canada. The small island of Grosse Île is located in the St. Lawrence River, near Quebec. Largely because of its strategic location, it began to play an important role in Canadian history in 1832, functioning as a quarantine station that received newly arriving immigrants from Europe and the British Isles before they reached the mainland. For 150 years it was a place of intense activity; as of 1984, it was recognized as a place of memory by Parks Canada. Its management is still evolving, and the eventful first phases of planning are still fresh in the minds of staff.

The remainder of this section consists of a brief orientation to the site itself and a preview of issues that are discussed in the rest of the case study.

The next section, "The Management Context and History of Grosse Île," describes Parks Canada, including its place in the government, its organization, and the guidance it provides for the resources under its stewardship. This background is meant to aid the reader in understanding the evolution of Parks Canada and the current environment in which decisions are made. This section continues with a description of the strategic location of Grosse Île and the history of its use, as well as of its evolution as a heritage site.

The following section, "Understanding and Protecting the Values of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site," focuses on the identification and management of the values of the Park and takes as its structure the three questions highlighted above: the identification of the values associated with the Park, their place in management policies and strategies, and the impact that the actual management of the site is having on the values.

The final section, "Conclusions," reviews the principal issues and questions that have emerged in the discussion of this case. Some of these may also be applicable to other cases in this series, as well as to management situations at other sites with which the reader may be familiar.

Issues Addressed in This Case Study

Many of the challenges of managing a heritage site designated as having national significance are very similar from one site to another: defining what is important and determining what is fragile, what requires vigilant protection, and what merits interpretation for the public on whose behalf it is held in trust. The three questions that anchor the discussion—noted above—testify to these similarities. The difficulties faced by those who plan for and manage heritage sites quite often arise when policies conflict or when the balance among social, administrative, or other components is upset. These problems and their resolutions are opportunities—or “learning points”—from which others involved in heritage site maintenance can learn.

In this case study, four main learning points emerge:

1. As practiced by the planners and stewards of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, values-based site management places significant weight on the role and voice of stakeholders. Initial assumptions about categories of stakeholders differed somewhat from the actual stakeholders who stepped forward. The process was designed to be flexible and inclusive, and it expanded and worked effectively, even in ways that were not always anticipated.

2. With regard to a national historic site like Grosse Île, the mission of Parks Canada is to foster appreciation of Canada’s past by protecting and presenting the site for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of current and future generations. They are responsible for focusing on aspects of the site that define its value to the nation. Thus, local values and interest in the site are secondary to values that are meaningful at the national level.

3. Parks Canada has developed two pivotal concepts—commemorative intent and commemorative integrity—that define the principal objectives for the protection and presentation of a national-level site and describe in detail what constitutes the site in its optimal condition. These two concepts serve to anchor policy discussions about objectives and limits of acceptable change.

4. At Grosse Île, one of the most interesting challenges in the development of the interpretive scheme is how to tell one of the principal stories of the site when much of the historic fabric associated with that story has been destroyed and overlaid with later additions to the historic fabric. Interpretive programming that enables visitors to see past the visual confusion created by the

existing fabric is difficult but necessary. Moreover, choices regarding treatment interventions (which affect the appearance of the built resources) must balance historical accuracy with physical durability while maintaining the hierarchy of messages mandated by authorities.

Management Context and History of Grosse Île

This section looks first at Parks Canada, the agency responsible for Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial, as an administrative entity and as a keeper of heritage sites on behalf of the Canadian people. The organization has evolved over time, and its purpose and mission are reflected in the way in which its holdings have been and are valued and managed. Following this account of the management context is a fuller description of Grosse Île itself, of its location in the St. Lawrence River, and of how it came to occupy a position of significance.

Parks Canada

The Parks Canada Agency was established on 1 April 1999 by an Act of the Parliament of Canada.⁵

The Chief Executive Office of Parks Canada reports directly to the minister of Canadian heritage. This minister “is responsible for national policies and programs relating to broadcasting, cultural industries, arts, heritage, official languages, Canadian identity, Canadian symbols, exchanges, multiculturalism, and sport.”⁶

Prior to the passage of the Agency Act, Parks Canada had been part of three different departments during the period of time covered in this case study. For each of these three departments, the official responsible for Parks Canada was an assistant deputy minister. From 1974 to 1979, Parks Canada was part of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; from 1979 to 1993, it was part of the Department of the Environment; and from 1993 to 1999, it was part of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The mandate of Parks Canada is “to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.”⁷

The agency administers three programs or systems—national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas—and other programs for sites.

The national historic sites directorate of Parks Canada “is responsible for Canada’s program of historical

commemoration, which recognizes nationally significant places, persons and events.”⁸ It comprises not only the historic sites but also the more than five hundred persons and three hundred events deemed to be of national significance. Parks Canada has direct responsibility for 145 of the 849 designated national historic sites across the country. The agency contributes to the conservation and/or presentation of an additional 71 sites through cost-sharing agreements.

Parks Canada has a broad range of responsibilities in the management of national historic sites. These include developing policies for conserving and presenting each site’s cultural resources, for conserving natural resources, and for providing infrastructure for public visitation. These activities often involve consultation with interested members of the Canadian public. The agency also reviews existing heritage legislation in order to propose enhancements to federal law for the protection of national historic sites.

The federally appointed Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC, or “the Board”) advises the minister of Canadian heritage on various aspects of the work of the historic sites program. The Board is made up of individuals representing all of the Canadian provinces and territories and some of the national heritage agencies. Their duties and functions are described in the Historic Sites and Monuments Act, and the Board develops its own policies and procedures, which are then approved by the minister. With the administrative support of staff from the national historic sites program, the Board examines new site or monument nominations, commissions research as needed, balances stakeholder claims, and formulates recommendations to the minister regarding designation and the most appropriate form of commemoration of a given subject.

The criteria for national significance (as stated by the HSMBC) are as follows:

A place may be designated of national historic significance by virtue of a direct association with a nationally significant aspect of Canadian history. An archaeological site, structure, building, group of buildings, district, or

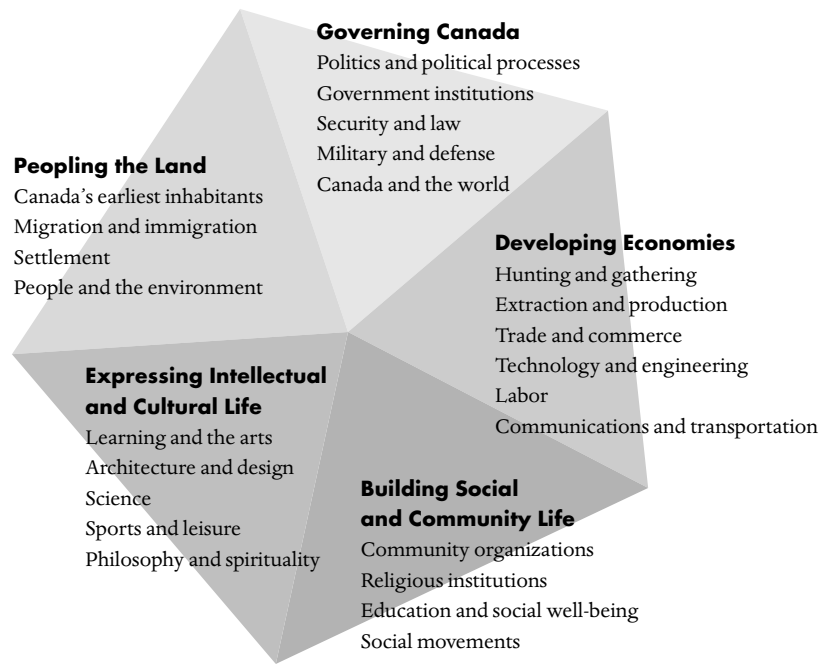


Figure 1. National Historic Sites of Canada thematic framework.

cultural landscape of potential national historic significance will:

- a. illustrate an exceptional creative achievement in concept and design, technology, and/or planning, or a significant stage in the development of Canada; or
- b. illustrate or symbolize in whole or in part a cultural tradition, a way of life, or ideas important in the development of Canada; or
- c. be most explicitly and meaningfully associated or identified with persons who are deemed of national historic importance; or
- d. be most explicitly and meaningfully associated or identified with events that are deemed of national historic importance.⁹

Since 1981 the work of the Board in the identification of subjects for commemoration has also been guided by the *National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan*,¹⁰ which provides a framework to ensure that the National Historic Sites System adequately represents each of the important historic themes in Canadian history. The system plan uses a thematic construct to organize history, classify sites, and provide a comprehensive view of Canadian history; the themes of the current plan are listed below. Today, Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site is associated with the “Peopling the Land” theme, under the subtheme “Migration and immigration.”

Geography and History of Grosse Île

BEFORE 1832

Human habitation on Grosse Île prior to European contact appears to have been occasional and seasonal, probably attracted by the fish and game resources that still draw hunters to this area.¹¹ When the Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century, they quickly recognized the value of the St. Lawrence River, which gave their ships access well into the North American interior.

The first record of a land concession on Grosse Île dates to 1662, only fifty-four years after the city of Quebec was founded on the site of the indigenous settlement of Stadacona. For the next 150 years, Grosse Île was used primarily for hunting and fishing by nonresident colonial landowners. By 1816 records indicate the presence of homesteads and agriculture; farming continued on Grosse Île until 1832, when the island was expropriated by the government for use as an immigrant quarantine station.

1832 TO 1937

After the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, emigration to North America from Ireland, Scotland, and England surged. By 1830, Quebec had become by far Canada's largest immigrant port, accepting some thirty thousand entrants annually, two-thirds of whom came from Ireland. With these new arrivals came the cholera epidemic that was then raging in the British Isles; about thirty-eight hundred people died of cholera in 1832 in Quebec City,

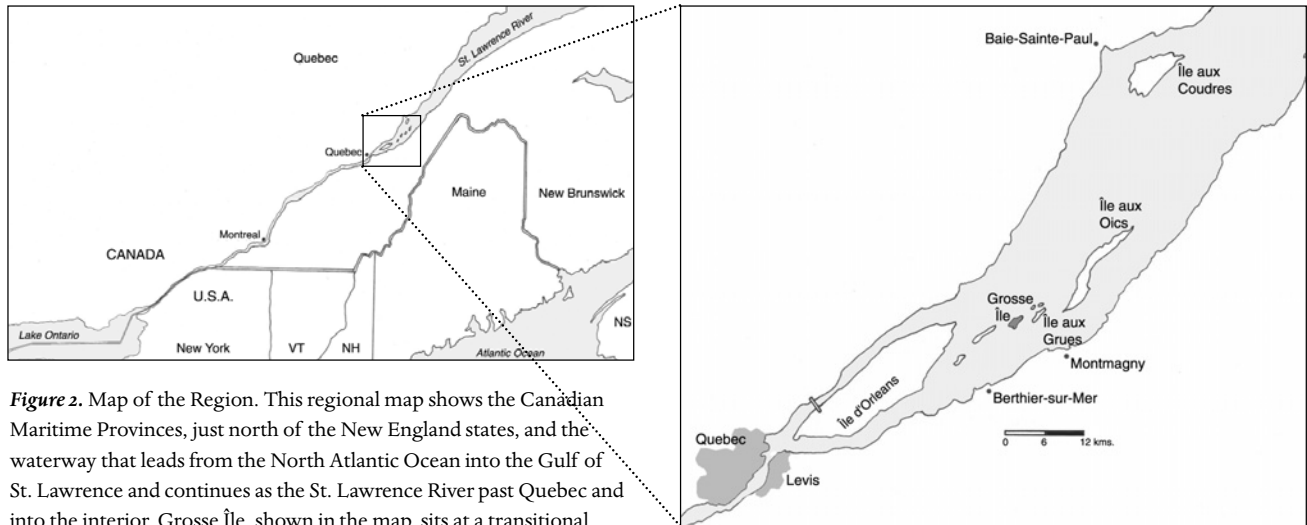


Figure 2. Map of the Region. This regional map shows the Canadian Maritime Provinces, just north of the New England states, and the waterway that leads from the North Atlantic Ocean into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and continues as the St. Lawrence River past Quebec and into the interior. Grosse Île, shown in the map, sits at a transitional position in the river where freshwater meets seawater; it is therefore home to a distinctive array of flora and fauna. The towns shown on the south shore are those from which ferry service carries visitors to the island.

and half that number died in Montreal. With this, and with their experience with outbreaks of typhus among immigrants in the 1820s, the British authorities recognized the need for an immigrant quarantine station for the port of Quebec to check the spread of disease. They chose Grosse Île for its size, its harbor, its proximity to Quebec City, and its isolated position in the river.

The Great Famine raked over Ireland from 1845 to 1849; during its peak years of 1847–48, about 100,000 European emigrants came to Quebec City, most of them Irish. Already weakened by malnutrition, many contracted typhus and dysentery during the six-week sea voyage. Waves of gravely ill passengers overwhelmed the quarantine station’s staff and facilities—there were only 200 beds for sick immigrants and about 800 for the healthy; yet, by the spring of 1847, more than 12,000 individuals were detained at Grosse Île.

Colonial authorities scrambled to build hospitals and shelters. When the station’s facilities were finally adequate, the end of the sailing season stopped the seemingly endless stream of immigrant ships. During the course of 1847, more than 5,000 immigrants had perished at sea, and 5,424 more had died and were buried on Grosse Île. Thousands more perished in Quebec, Montreal, and other cities in eastern Canada.¹²

After a less-devastating epidemic of cholera hit in 1854, the function of Grosse Île began to change. From 1861 to 1900, while the average annual number of immigrants to Quebec City remained between 25,000 and

26,800, they were coming from different places. During this period the Irish became the minority; English emigrants were most numerous, and more Scandinavians and other western Europeans were joining them. They all were leaving considerably less desperate conditions in Europe and Great Britain. They arrived in Canada in much better health, having been far better accommodated and fed on board than earlier immigrants. The replacement of sailing vessels with steam ships cut the crossing time from Great Britain to twelve days—one-quarter of the previous passage. And, toward the end of the nineteenth century, St. John and Halifax, better connected to the country’s interior by railroad, began to compete with Quebec as immigration ports.

During the economic boom in 1900 to 1915, annual arrivals to Quebec surged to 92,000. While emigrants from Great Britain still dominated and many still came from Scandinavia and western Europe, joining them now were people from the Middle East, Australia, North and South Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

During World War I and continuing through the Depression, immigration numbers dropped markedly. Between 1932 and 1941, Quebec received only a quarter of those arriving in Canada, reflecting the opening of new ports of entry, some on the Pacific coast. In February 1937, the Canadian government finally closed the Grosse Île quarantine station; it was no longer needed.

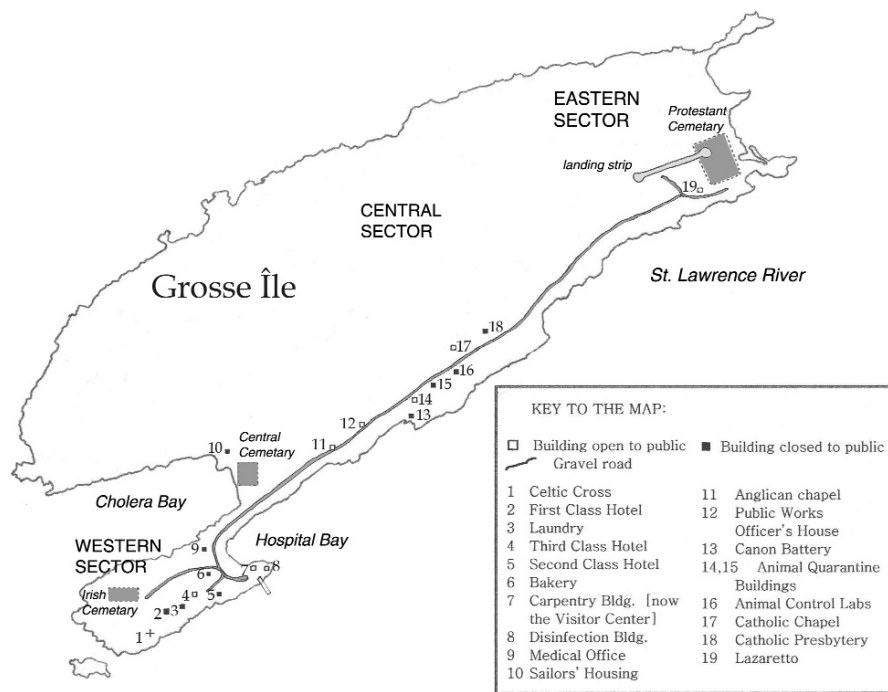


Figure 3. Map of Grosse Île. Grosse Île is one of the twenty-one islands in the Îles-aux-Grues archipelago in the St. Lawrence River, about 48 kilometers northeast (downstream) from the city of Quebec. The island is 2.5 kilometers long and 800 meters wide at its broadest point, with a land surface of approximately 185 hectares. The shoreline includes beaches (at Cholera Bay), cliffs (on the southern edge of the Western and Central Sectors), tidal wetlands (Hospital Bay), and tide pools. Pine trees and other woodland plants cover much of the island north of the gravel road. Access to the island is largely by ferry from the south shore of the St. Lawrence River; staff and visitors are ferried to the wharf, which is located at the northeast end of the Western Sector. (Numbered and named features are discussed in the text and/or shown in photographs.)

1937 TO 1980

During World War II, under the Canadian Department of National Defense, Grosse Île became the War Disease Control Station. Taking advantage of the site's isolation, scientists experimented with viruses and vaccines to prevent the deliberate introduction of animal diseases to North America. Although this work ended in 1945, similar scientific work was performed there from 1951 to 1956 in response to the Korean War and the Cold War.

In 1957 animal disease research on the island shifted to the Canadian Department of Agriculture, whose work continued there until 1988. In 1965 Agriculture Canada's contagious disease division also started using the island as a quarantine station for imported livestock. Although there have been no animal quarantine activities on Grosse Île since 1986, lands and facilities used by Agriculture Canada are still subject to sectoral agreements between Parks Canada and Agriculture Canada.¹³

Grosse Île Becomes a Heritage Site

This section traces the evolution of the status of Grosse Île as a heritage site and discusses how ideas and contributions leading to an understanding of the site's values and significance emerged during this process and coalesced.

1897: THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE

Grosse Île was first recognized as a place of significance in 1897, when a group from the Ancient Order of Hiberni-

ans, an Irish Catholic fraternal organization whose members were Canadians of Irish descent, visited Grosse Île to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the terrible year of 1847. It is important to note that the Great Famine of the mid-1840s in Ireland was not a simple natural disaster; rather, it was a tragic coincidence of failed agricultural methods, harsh social policies, unrelenting poverty, and inadequate medical practices, the legacies of which still haunt English-Irish relations. At only fifty years after the fact, some who made the Hibernian pilgrimage to Grosse Île in 1897 were themselves likely to have been survivors of that traumatic time; others may have been relatives or friends of those who perished. For them and for many others, Grosse Île had the powerful and poignant quality of a cemetery of innocents.

1909: DEDICATION OF THE CELTIC CROSS

In 1909 the Ancient Order of Hibernians dedicated a Celtic cross on a high promontory on the southwestern end of the island as a memorial to the lost immigrants. Inscriptions on the base of the monument testify particularly to residual bitterness about the conditions that forced the flight of so many Irish to the New World. The English inscription reads, "Sacred to the memory of thousands of Irish emigrants who, to preserve the faith, suffered hunger and exile in 1847-48, and stricken with fever, ended here their sorrowful pilgrimage." The translation of the Gaelic inscription reads rather differently: "Children of the Gael died in the thousands on this island, having fled from the



Figure 4. The Celtic Cross. Erected in 1909 by the Ancient Order of Hibernians to commemorate the Irish emigration, it stands on a south-facing cliff in the Western Sector of Grosse Île; cut from Irish stone, it is about 15 meters high.

laws of foreign tyrants and artificial famine in the years 1847–48. God’s blessing on them. Let this monument be a token to their name and honor from the Gaels of America. God Save Ireland.”

From 1906 on, the Ancient Order of Hibernians organized a nearly annual pilgrimage from Quebec City to the great stone cross, a tradition that continues to the present.¹⁴ To go there as a pilgrim was to retrace the steps of one’s forebears and to acknowledge the courage and pathos of the immigrants’ journeys. The isolated location of the island and its minimal development easily evoked earlier times and surely added to the emotional power of the experience.

1974: HSMBC RECOMMENDS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

In 1974, long after Grosse Île had finished its work as an immigrant quarantine station and had seen service as a biological testing station, an agricultural research station, and a livestock quarantine station, the HSMBC made its recommendation to place a commemorative plaque on Grosse Île. With the acceptance of this recommendation by the minister, Grosse Île became a national historic site. The plaque, unveiled in 1980, bore the following inscription:¹⁵

In 1832, a quarantine station was established here on Grosse Île in an attempt to prevent the introduction of cholera from Europe. The station’s medical and quarantine facilities proved inadequate in the face of the

cholera and typhus which periodically accompanied immigrant ships; consequently, epidemics spread through the Canadas on a number of occasions in the course of the nineteenth century. Originally designed as a temporary establishment under military command, the station was later operated as a regular service by the Canadian government until superseded in 1937 by new facilities at Québec.¹⁶

1981: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA SYSTEM PLAN

With the introduction of the National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan, all of the national historic sites were concatenated into a thematic framework, described in the previous section.¹⁷ By categorizing sites according to themes and subthemes, the system plan aids the HSMBC and Parks Canada to see the strengths and gaps in the commemorative programs they oversee and to identify needs or opportunities for education programs or strategic planning.

1984: THE BOARD REAFFIRMS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GROSSE ÎLE IN CANADIAN HISTORY

In 1983 and 1984, the HSMBC discussed at length the theme of immigration. The minutes of its meetings record that “the Board once more stated its opinion that the theme of Immigration is among the most significant in Canadian history.” In the same meeting, the Board “reaffirmed its statement of June 1974 that the Quarantine Stations at Grosse Île and Partridge Island are of national historic significance” and recommended that “in light of the number and quality of the in situ resources on Grosse Île related to the theme of immigration, the Minister should consider acquiring the island, or portions of it, and there developing a national historic park.”¹⁸

1988: GROSSE ÎLE COMES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF PARKS CANADA

Following the recommendations of the Board, the environment minister (then responsible for Parks Canada) reached an understanding with the agriculture minister, and in August 1988 a formal agreement was reached between the two departments to transfer the buildings and sites of historical interest to Parks Canada.¹⁹

Beginning in the late 1980s and extending into the mid-1990s, the period covered by planning for the management of Grosse Île, there were significant policy changes and related developments in Parks Canada. These included the development and approval of the cultural resource management policy and of commemora-



Figure 5. Two of the ferries that operate out of the private marina at Berthier-sur-Mer. The one on the left can carry 140 passengers, the one on the right 50.

tive integrity, both of which were much more explicitly values-based than Parks Canada’s previous policy documents. While it was a challenge for people involved in planning (and management) to integrate the latest thinking, overall, there was surprisingly little lag between new policy direction and other activities.

Facilities and Services Today

Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site is open to the public May through October. High season for visitation generally lasts from mid-June through the beginning of September. All visitors to the island arrive by private ferry service from either the south shore of the St. Lawrence or from the port of Quebec. Ferries from the south shore depart from the ports of Berthier-sur-Mer and Montmagny (fig. 2). Most visitors depart from Berthier-sur-Mer for the thirty-minute boat ride to the island. This schedule allows visitors to stay at the site from two to four hours. In 2001, adult tickets from Berthier-sur-Mer were about \$34 each, and a child’s ticket (ages 6–12) was about \$17.²⁰ Admission to the site is included in ticket prices (all quoted in U.S. dollars).

Ferries from the port of Quebec are marketed as cruises offering sightseeing along the river rather than as transportation exclusively to Grosse Île. They are available by reservation only. The boat trip takes approximately three hours each way, thus allowing visitors to stay at the



Figure 6. A view toward the east, showing the Disinfection Building and the Carpentry and Plumbing Workshop (now the Visitors Center and gift shop) at the left. Built in 1892 on the north end of the western wharf, the Disinfection Building housed three disinfection chambers and, eventually, showers. The south wing was erected in 1915 and the north in 1927. The Disinfection Building has been restored to its 1927 appearance; it is the first place modern visitors enter.

site for about three hours. Tickets for this service from Quebec are about \$48 for adults and about \$24 for children. The ferry service from Montmagny mainly transports site staff. The journey takes some forty-five minutes, depending on the tides. Two round-trip ferries depart from this small dock—early each morning and in the late afternoon.

Upon arrival at the wharf on the south shore of Grosse Île, which is situated in the island’s Western Sector, visitors are met by trained guides. Guided tours are divided into three parts. They begin with a visit to the Disinfection Building (location 8, fig. 3), where several exhibits explain the history and workings of the quarantine station. This building was fitted with bathing facilities for new arrivals and with a steam chamber for disinfecting their clothing and carried items.

Visitors can then take a sixty-minute hike around the Western Sector, to see the hotels and other facilities (locations 2–6, fig. 3), the Celtic Cross (location 1), and the Irish Memorial at the Irish Cemetery. This loop takes the visitors back around to a point at the head of Hospital Bay, where a tram takes visitors out to the Central and Eastern Sectors.

This approximately 60-minute tour includes a stop at the Catholic Church and Presbytery and the Lazaretto (location 19, fig. 3), where the interpretive scheme focuses on the tragedy of 1847. Fifteen of the buildings surviving from the quarantine station will



Figure 7. The Catholic Presbytery and the church next door, built in 1848 and 1874, respectively. The presbytery was remodeled in 1913, when a wraparound porch was removed and a second story was expanded. In the backyard of this structure, archaeological work, shown in figure 8, was done in summer 2001.



Figure 8. A small excavation in the back of the Catholic Presbytery, which was opened in autumn 2001 as part of a water piping project. It reveals wooden piers on which a small outbuilding stood. While no traces of the building remained above ground, this find substantiates records and photographs of the time.

Figure 9. The Public Works Officer's House. This house was built for the public works officer (location 12, fig. 3). It was an important building, judging from the quality of its decoration. The exterior has recently been restored, and the interior has been conserved.



eventually be accessible to visitors.²¹ Several are undergoing conservation work and will be open to the public in the near future, such as the Public Works Officer's House, the Anglican Chapel, and the Marconi Station. The other historic buildings, as well as those from the Canadian Army and Agriculture Canada's occupation of the island, are not open to the public.

Some of the historic structures are used by visitors and staff for other purposes. The old Carpentry and Plumbing Workshop (location 7, fig. 3) houses the Visitor Center and its gift shop. The second floor holds the administrative offices of the site. The Disinfection Building (location 8) and the Third Class Hotel (location 4) house public washrooms. The Third Class Hotel also accommodates the cafeteria that serves visitors as well as site staff and others working on the island.²² Rooms on the upper floors of this building are used as short-term sleeping accommodations for staff and others working on site. The Medical Examination Office (location 9), and other buildings in the Central Sector are also used as seasonal residences for staff.²³

Other more modern facilities on the island include an aircraft landing strip in the Eastern Sector, used exclusively by Parks Canada, a wastewater treatment plant, an underground water storage tank, and heating oil tanks.



Figure 10. The Anglican Chapel. Built in 1877–78 (location 11, fig. 3), the Anglican Chapel was made of wood and set on masonry pillars. It was intended for the use of the staff and residents of the island, not for the immigrants. In order to preserve the structure's largely original appearance and to stop leaks, the pillars are being reinforced; a moisture barrier is being placed between the interior walls and the board-and-batten exterior skin; and the tin roof is being repaired.



Figure 11. The gift shop interior.



Figure 12. The First Class Hotel. Built in 1912 of concrete with some wooden cladding and other details, the First Class Hotel accommodated arriving passengers who were placed under medical observation. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the shipping companies had made it clear to the authorities that facilities for passengers being detained for medical reasons needed to correspond to their classes of passage, to avoid uncomfortable mixing of passengers.



Figure 13. The Second Class Hotel. Now called the Second Class Hotel, this building served as the first-class hotel from its construction in 1893 until 1912. This two-story wooden building is forty-six meters long and had room for 152 cabin passengers; there was a dining room, a sitting room, and washrooms.



Figure 14. Third Class Hotel and the Bakery. The Third Class Hotel, built in 1914, is the largest of the three hotels, designed to hold 140 beds in its fifty-two rooms. Built of concrete, it included kitchens and dining areas at either end of each floor of the building, with living quarters in the center. While it offered close quarters and little privacy, it was fitted

with electricity and central heating. Today this building houses the cafeteria that caters to visitors to Grosse Île. Also seen here is the square-plan Bakery, built between 1902 and 1910. Inside the wooden building are many of the original specialized features used for making and baking bread.

Understanding and Protecting the Values of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site

Values Associated with Grosse Île

In essence, the values associated with Grosse Île emerge in three categories—the role played by this island in Canada’s history, the good condition and representative character of the buildings and other features relating to its various roles over the period of a century, and the potential for effective communication of its importance. Even though all of the elements of value that are currently recognized and captured in the management policies and principles for the site were present in the earliest discussions, they were articulated and prioritized slightly differently by the stakeholders as the process detailed below unfolded.

PARKS CANADA BEGINS TO FORMULATE ITS PERSPECTIVE

For Grosse Île, as with most historic sites of national or international interest, perspectives on the value of the place emerged gradually from several directions. Following the 1988 agreement to transfer historic resources on the island to Parks Canada, the staff launched the process of planning for the preservation and presentation of the new national historic site.²⁴ The products required of this planning process are described in detail in Parks Canada management directives.²⁵ They were:

1. *Themes and objectives*—based on the commemorative intent established by the HSMBC when the site was designated, which articulates the historical rationale and national context for planning, management, and development of the site.
2. *Terms of reference*—provide direction on essential protection and site operation measures, pending the approval of a management plan.
3. *Interim management guidelines*—provide direction on the priorities, roles, responsibilities, and implementation of the planning program.
4. *Management plan concepts*—identify a range of possible options that would direct the future management of the site.
5. *Management plan*—articulates long-range direction for the protection, presentation, and use of resources

of the site, and the proposed means and strategies for achieving statement management objectives. The management plan provides a framework within which subsequent decision making and detailed planning could take place.

The Quebec regional staff of Parks Canada undertook and reported on their work on items 1 through 3 in 1989 in a public information paper.²⁶ The information paper became the basis of the development concept discussed below,²⁷ and it represented the first official proposal of Parks Canada regarding the values of Grosse Île. It considered how the site might best be presented to the public and elaborated on the themes that would frame the interpretive program.²⁸

The general theme was “Canada: Land of Welcome and Hope,” to be expressed through two themes. The main theme—“Immigration to Canada via Quebec City (1830–1939)” —would be conveyed by six concepts:

- the national and international context surrounding the arrival of immigrants in Canada
- government policy
- risks and perils of the Atlantic crossing
- profiles of immigrants
- public opinion about new arrivals
- contributions of immigrants to Canadian society

The second theme—“Grosse Île Quarantine Station (1832–1937)” —would be conveyed by five concepts:

- selecting the site of Grosse Île
- the station as it dealt with people and their illnesses
- operation of the station (authorities, legislation, reception of immigrants, the tragic years of 1832, 1834, and 1847)
- daily life
- geographical and environmental features

This last subtheme dealing with the geographical setting seemingly recognizes the natural value of the site and “will try to evoke the natural environment as it may have been at the time . . . and will consider the natural environment as it appears today.”²⁹

In effect, Parks Canada was devising an approach to presenting the stories of a small island and attempting to connect them to the expansive concepts that framed the national experience. They had worked to present Grosse Île in the proposal documents as a national historic site and endeavored to reveal the values recognized for the place by means of research and expert testimony. The Quebec regional staff used as a starting point the position of the HSMBC as stated in 1984: “in light of the number and quality of the in situ resources on Grosse Île related to the theme of immigration, the Minister should consider acquiring the Island, or portions of it, and there developing a national historic park.” The Board added that interpretation should focus on the national significance of the immigration theme and not exclusively on immigration from Ireland, although particular emphasis would be placed on Irish immigration.³⁰ In what can be seen as an early version of a statement of significance, the public information paper states:

The Grosse Île quarantine station played a major role in the process of immigration to central Canada for more than a century. The contribution of immigration to the formation of the Canadian population was substantial. Immigrants arriving from every corner of Europe, from every class, helped to build the country by bringing their courage, toil, and culture. Some of them settled in Québec, while others traveled onward to various regions of Canada and the United States. The least fortunate, no doubt several thousand strong, saw their adventures end before their new lives began.³¹

While this perspective shaped the research and its outcome to a considerable extent, other values were also recognized and described in this early document. The information paper also incorporates the results of a marketing study conducted on behalf of Parks Canada.³² Perhaps as a result of this market orientation, the information paper recognizes the economic value placed on the site by the authorities, interest groups, and communities on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, who saw the development of Grosse Île as a potential engine for regional tourism and economic development. The information paper also identified actual and potential stakeholders of the national historic site, such as some ethnic and cultural communities (mentioning the Irish specifically), which it recognized would attribute spiritual and associative values to the site. And, while it is not discussed in the paper, an interesting challenge taking shape

was that of presenting a national story with an Irish connection within a long-established local society that was French speaking and not particularly enthusiastic about all aspects of immigration.

Many of the buildings and structures dating from 1847 onward still stood, and identifiable ruins and subsurface remains of historic features were located all over the island. These historic features—housing, kitchens, disinfection facilities, isolation wards, hospitals, residences, piers, roads, churches, and so on—were found to be remarkably authentic, as few major changes were ever made. They were witness to all chapters in the history of Grosse Île.

Furniture, fittings, personal items, and even vehicles from all phases of the island’s use were also found in good condition, evoking the quality of life for the various kinds of residents, patients, and visitors who passed through. Moreover, the unique character of the island in its riverine location gave rise to a great variety of habitats, flora, and fauna.

The paper concludes with a summary of reasons why Parks Canada predicted that Grosse Île would become a significant site in the national system: the continuing importance of immigration in Canada’s history; the number, diversity, and representative quality of the cultural resources; the emotional power of the place for thousands of descendants of immigrants (particularly the Irish); and its geographic location and favorable position on the tourism market.

PARKS CANADA PRESENTS ITS IDEAS AND PLANS TO THE PUBLIC

The Parks Canada guidance available at the time states that: “management planning is based on consensus, both internally through team work and functional review, and externally, through public participation. . . . A comprehensive public consultation strategy should be developed early in the planning program to ensure that operationally relevant information is sought, obtained and used proactively, and to facilitate consensus building with stakeholders and with the public at large.”³³

In early 1982, the public consultation effort was launched by Parks Canada to present its plans for the protection and interpretation of the site. In advance of the public meetings, copies of the development concept document were made available to interest groups and the press in areas where the meetings would be held.

In spite of the extensive research and preparation of thorough and comprehensive internal documents relating to all aspects of the history of Grosse Île, the development concept was subject to fairly broad and, in some cases, quite negative interpretation by certain groups. The development concept carried forth the themes of immigration and quarantine identified in the information paper, but it did not reflect the sensitivity to the Irish tragedy that was evident in other preliminary documents.

Throughout, from descriptions of the status and condition of individual features and classes of resources on the island through a detailed section about the government's objectives for the site,³⁴ there is no mention of the experience of the Irish in 1847. The main point of contention during the public debate was that some groups felt significance was being taken away from the Irish tragedy of 1847. In a discussion of how the site should be promoted, the topic arises. "As for the 'image' of the site to be promoted, both current and potential clientele clearly stated that the theme of immigration has little impact. In that respect, the image must be modeled on clientele expectations, interests, and motivations, using the thematic context primarily as a backdrop. . . . It is also felt that there should not be too much emphasis on the tragic aspects of the history of Grosse Île. *On the contrary, the painful events of 1832 to 1847, which have often been overemphasized in the past, need to be put back into perspective, without robbing them of their importance* [emphasis added]."³⁵

Unfortunately, the last sentence of this statement would be quoted often in the next phase of the process.

After a lengthy exploration of the local commercial development interests and logistical considerations relating to transportation and infrastructure, the report returned to the subject of values and themes, stating that one of the three development principles should be respect for the emotions felt by visitors who are connected to those who died on the island and the fact that the island is seen as a "place of pilgrimage, remembrance, and contemplation." The second principle was that the interpretive program should cover the full range of historical themes chosen for the site. The third principle was that the development of Grosse Île would follow an integrated approach, "drawing on both the natural and cultural facets of the site."³⁶

THE PUBLIC RESPONDS

17 March–8 April 1992

Several information sessions were held in Montmagny, Quebec, L'Île-aux-Grues, St. Malachie, and Montreal,

attended by approximately two hundred people.

22 April–20 May 1992

A series of three formal public meetings were held in Montmagny, Quebec, and Montreal.

Two hundred Irish Canadians who attended the final meeting in this series insisted that additional meetings be held outside Quebec in order to give more people from across Canada the chance to be heard, adding that the development concept did not do justice to or was otherwise deficient with respect to the "Irish dimension" of the site. This point of view was echoed in statements from across the country. The minister directed Parks Canada to organize a second round of public meetings in spring 1993.

16 February 1993

The *Grosse Île National Historic Site—Development Concept Supplement*³⁷ was issued in response to the clearly unexpected reactions of many Irish Canadians to the original development concept document. This supplement was intended to "expand upon and clarify certain points before continuing with the public exercise."³⁸ The document acknowledges the inappropriateness of the emphasis of the development concept: "Based on this passage [quoted above], representatives of the Irish community have generally attributed to the Canadian Parks Service the intention of minimizing the importance of the tragedy that Irish immigrants experienced in 1832 and 1847. Such is not the case. The passage in question expresses the personal opinion of individuals who participated in the market study; that is, that *promotion of the site* for future tourists—which was the specific issue they were addressing—should not be based solely on the tragic events of 1832 and 1847."³⁹

Correcting what had become—and would continue to be—an emotionally charged situation promised to be a test for those who would manage the next phase of the process. In this document, Parks Canada acknowledges that clarification is needed when it states, "in light of the reactions and comments received, the Canadian Parks Service has concluded that the March 1992 document did not fulfill its mission of informing the public. It is indeed somewhat vague on certain points, particularly those of specific concern to the Irish community."⁴⁰ The last page of this document attempts to correct the vagueness of the development concept by stating clearly and forcefully the intentions of the Canadian Parks Service with regard to the site, which include utmost respect for the Irish events in the island. It further recommends that "the expression of the immigration theme as 'Canada: land of welcome and hope' should be dropped; the tragic dimensions of

events on the island make it inappropriate. The story told, and the theme, is *immigration*; simply that.”⁴¹

22 March–15 April 1993

In this second round, seven public meetings were convened in Vancouver; Fredericton, N.B.; Charlottetown, P.E.I.; and Toronto. Participants at these meetings made statements and submitted briefs; people who did not attend were invited to submit formal statements as well. A toll-free telephone number was set up to take statements from callers. Written statements were received from 228 people, most of Irish descent. Some 920 people sent letters to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, whose Irish heritage did not escape the writers’ notice. About two-thirds of the writers used boilerplate text that had been suggested for this purpose. The letters and the written briefs demonstrate the deep emotion stirred by reaction to the perceived shortcomings of the development plan, but most convey concern without accusations. Three petitions were also received bearing signatures of 23,855 additional people.⁴²

The content of the responses relating to the significance of the site stressed the importance of Grosse Île as a memorial to the dead and as a reminder of a bitter chapter in Irish history. Present in many of the statements was the appreciation that many immigrants recovered from illnesses and went on to thrive; even so, this was not considered sufficient reason to forget the tragedy. Some note that the immigrant experience of the 1840s was not a simple, joyful arrival on the fertile shores of Canada as much as it was the end to a treacherous crossing through hell and high water.

Apart from the occasional inflammatory misstatements, these were genuine sentiments, put forth in good faith during this uncomfortable episode. Some difficulty was probably inevitable at this point, as the site was, in effect, converted from a shrine of significance to a specific group to a national historic site. And while the former memorializes a tragedy, the latter was intended to celebrate the arrival and contributions of thousands of immigrants to Canada. *The National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan*⁴³ had not been in force for very long, and it seemed to some that these efforts to convey the story of immigration—at one of the few sites with the historic fabric to support the story—were taking over the long-established significance of the site. The task ahead for Parks Canada would be to recognize and shelter the spiritual qualities of the place as the development of the national historic site went forward.

RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM

Although the public consultation program had a strong confrontational edge, Parks Canada published their experience of this pivotal phase of planning at Grosse Île. The staff transcribed all the audiotaped verbal presentations at the public meetings as well as the messages left at the toll-free telephone number. They collected all the briefs presented and all the letters received by the government. Each one had its own computer file, and the topics covered were classified and charted. This documentation now constitutes an important resource for those in search of models for heritage preservation.

March 1994

Parks Canada published *Grosse Île National Historic Site—Report on the Public Consultation Program* (Parks Canada 1994c), which presents passages quoted from these files, organized under five topic areas.⁴⁴ It also lists the names of people and organizations present at each of the public meetings.

The report contains only minimal analysis or judgment of the commentaries, and no attempt was made to react to the issues. It is remarkably free of defensiveness and, in fact, encourages still more feedback. The final page in the report text informs the reader that the HSMBC would be responsible for the analysis of the findings from the consultation phase and would submit its recommendations to the minister. The government would then formulate and announce its position regarding the “orientation of the project.”

10 August 1994

Minister of Canadian Heritage Michel Dupuy announced that he had accepted the new advice of the HSMBC regarding the future development of Grosse Île, and thus he would direct Parks Canada to tell “the full story of the Canadian immigrant experience at Grosse Île. The Irish experience on the island, especially during the tragic epidemic years of the first half of the nineteenth century, is to be a particular focus of the commemoration. . . . [He] also announced the establishment of a panel of prominent Canadians reporting to him to assist Parks Canada in the implementation of his decision on Grosse Île.”⁴⁵

The members of the panel, together with eight ranking Parks Canada staff, analyzed all the responses and requests received during the public consultation program, and they formulated and justified a set of recommendations for submission to Dupuy.

August 1995

Parks Canada published the report of the panel,⁴⁶ which contains eleven recommendations on matters of interpretation, use of specific historic buildings, ranking of the island's resources with regard to their care, themes for development, tone of presentations, ambience and atmosphere, financing, and access. Each recommendation is accompanied by specific operational suggestions as to how it might best be realized.

One dependable fact in the heritage field is that values evolve with time and with the involvement of new stakeholders. In the case of Grosse Île, however, it was becoming clear that the values of the original Irish stakeholders had not changed to permit a broad acceptance of the proposals as stated in the development concept. It appeared that an optimistic, thematic construct that knitted together Canada's national historic sites had, in Grosse Île, collided with memories of suffering and injustice that still remain profoundly important to some people of Irish nationality or descent. It also became evident that both positions represent legitimate values of Grosse Île and that they needed to be preserved and presented in the new national site.

In recounting events whose resolution is now known, one risks the trap of "present-ism"—judging a past situation through present sensibilities. Contextualizing and explaining the reasoning of Parks Canada is done not to stanch discussion but, rather, to inform it. Toward this end, then, the question can be posed: Who were the Irish? This may seem to be a curious question, but it is an important one given recent scholarship on the Irish in Canada.

Traditionally it has been presumed that the Irish in Canada were primarily Roman Catholic and largely urban dwellers (and probably anti-British and republican as well), much as was the case in the United States. But recent scholarship, particularly on nineteenth-century Irish immigration to Canada, has challenged that view. In fact, based on quantitative data, approximately two-thirds of Irish immigration to Canada was Protestant; the immigrants more typically settled initially in rural areas and in smaller towns; and they may well have chosen Canada (which before 1867 was commonly referred to as British North America) rather than the United States because it was British.

In the case of Grosse Île, references to "the Irish" (including to the "Irish Memorial") generally reference the Irish Catholic community, but this narrower use needs to be understood in context, because Canadians of Irish

origin constitute a much broader group, and the group as a whole does not necessarily have the same concerns or share the same views.⁴⁷

Therefore, the strength of the public reaction to the perceived underemphasis on the "Irish tragedy" was somewhat surprising for the Parks Canada staff working on this project. It seemed to be out of proportion and based on a misreading of imperfect materials—and possibly related to the political events of the moment in Ireland.

An important point one may glean from this case is that stakeholders' divergent views on values are subject to a broad range of influences not confined to official histories or even to facts. Anticipating potential sources of influence in a planning situation can prepare participants for effective public consultations; retrospective analysis of consultations can shed new light on how values have emerged and how they may have changed.

NEW STATEMENT OF COMMEMORATIVE INTENT AND ITS IMPACTS

A statement of commemorative intent is the concise declaration of the reasons and purpose for which a national historic site has been so designated. Following extensive research and deliberations, the HSMBC writes this statement for the approval of the minister of Canadian heritage. Once approved, it becomes the touchstone for the management planning at the site. The statement of commemorative intent delimits and prioritizes the main interests of Parks Canada regarding the stewardship and presentation of a site under its jurisdiction. In March 1996, following the research and public consultation, the statement of commemorative intent for Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial was announced, bringing the fateful year of 1847 into sharper focus than was proposed by the development concept four years earlier (Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service 1992a).

Statement of Commemorative Intent for Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site

Grosse Île commemorates the importance of immigration to Canada, especially via the entry port of Quebec, from the early nineteenth century until World War I.

Grosse Île also commemorates the tragic experiences of Irish immigrants at this site, especially during the 1847 typhus epidemic.

Finally, the site commemorates the role played by the island from 1832 to 1937 as a quarantine station for the port of Quebec, for many years the main point of entry for immigrants to Canada.

When compared to the wording in the development concept, this statement demonstrates that while the recognized facts are the same and no new values have been added, an important shift in emphasis has taken place. Instead of shying away from putting the “Irish tragedy” in a position of prominence that (it had been thought) might overshadow the other aspects and interpretive opportunities of the site, this statement reflects the voices of the stakeholders by promoting the tragedy to prominence along with the recognition of the role of immigration and of this island in the establishment of modern Canada.

The significance of this change in emphasis is further demonstrated by the renaming of the site Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site of Canada. In 1998, a new HSMBC plaque replaced the one dedicated in 1980; the new text referred to the role of Grosse Île as a quarantine station, stressed the phenomenon of immigration, and gave special attention to the Irish experience of 1847.

Figure 15. A woodland trail, which leads to the cliff-top location of the Celtic Cross.



Figure 16. The Doctors’ Memorial. The trail shown in figure 15 continues over the top of the crag; on the other side, a small marble monument stands in a birch grove next to the Irish Cemetery. This stele is a memorial to the physicians who sacrificed their lives in the 1830s and 1840s for the sick immigrants. It was placed here in about 1853 by Dr. Douglas, the first superintendent of the quarantine station.



Figure 17. The Irish Cemetery. The Irish Cemetery was laid out in 1832 between two crags located southwest of Cholera Bay. This view looks east across the cemetery, with Hospital Bay in the distance. Until 1847 individual burials were performed here. That year, because of the high rate of mortality from typhus, long trenches were used as mass graves. The cemetery’s topography shows evidence of the trenches. This cemetery is believed to hold over 6,000 of Grosse Île’s 7,553 dead.

The three elements most closely associated with the tragic events are located in the Western Sector of the island. The Celtic Cross, erected in 1909, stands above the southeastern cliff of Grosse Île (fig. 4) and is reached only by a rustic woodland trail, seen in figure 15. The other two elements are the Doctors’ Memorial and the Irish Cemetery (figs. 16, 17).

A new element was planned as an enhancement to the spiritual aspect of Grosse Île—a new Irish Memorial. A design competition was held, and from the winning design, an expressive earthwork and surround were built to commemorate those who had died and been buried in unmarked graves on Grosse Île. The new memorial, a few meters south of the Irish Cemetery, evokes an ancient barrow tomb. It consists of paths in the shape of a Celtic cross cut through an earthen mound, which is topped by native shale. It is framed on the north by an arc of glass panels that bear the engraved names of those who died on the island. In August 1998, Parks Canada inaugurated this memorial in the presence of Ireland’s president, Mary McAleese.

At the end of a difficult but successful process that was best understood in retrospect, the values cited in the commemorative intent of the historic site of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial are a poignant blend of optimism and sadness that captures the full character of the place.



Figure 18. The new Irish Memorial. The new Irish Memorial is tucked against the hillside, just southwest of the Doctors' Memorial and above the Irish Cemetery. The stone structure in the center is framed by glass panels etched with the names of the dead from the epidemic years.



Figure 19. Glass panels at the Irish Memorial. The visitor may read the names of those who died in route to or at Grosse Île.

Consideration of Values in Management Policies and Strategies

Once discovered and stated, how would the values expressed in the statement of commemorative intent be framed within a management plan? How are they connected to and incorporated into the guidance regarding actions recommended on the site?

COMMEMORATIVE INTENT AND COMMEMORATIVE INTEGRITY

As of 1994 Parks Canada has employed a powerful normative approach to establishing the management and interpretive framework for the sites under its stewardship. Two core concepts help to maintain the focus of management decisions—commemorative intent (described above) and commemorative integrity.⁴⁸ Each of these concepts is operationalized by a document that defines in detail the concept as it applies to a specific site.

Commemorative integrity is a term used to describe the health or wholeness of a national historic site. A state of commemorative integrity can be said to exist when:

- the resources that symbolize or represent a site's importance are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for the site's national historic significance are effectively communicated to the public;
- the site's heritage values (including those not related to national significance) are respected by all whose decisions and actions affect the site.

The commemorative integrity statement is a detailed document written as part of the management planning process for a site. It ties the commemorative intent to the physical features where value resides and expands on the specific characteristics of that value. It also emphasizes the obligation of the site managers to ensure that the site retains its commemorative integrity. The statement serves as a guide for the management of the site and as a means of assessing its state and determining the necessary measures to be taken.

The first part of the statement identifies and evaluates the cultural resources with reference to the historic values that prompted the national designation of the site. Included are specific goals and objectives regarding the desired state of these resources, as well as work that may be necessary to achieve these goals. The second part is the articulation of the key messages, any secondary messages, and any context or tone that is seen as important to associate with the messages that are to be communicated to the public about the site. Included in this part is the mention of any challenges that are already anticipated in the area of communication. The third part of the statement describes resources and other values that are not of national significance but that carry historic significance for the site, and it identifies messages regarding these resources that are important to communicate through the interpretive program.

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND VALUES PRESERVATION

For Parks Canada, historic value—rather than social, cultural, scientific, economic, use, program, or other values—determines whether a resource is a cultural resource and, hence, whether it should be managed under the policy. The seminal guidance contained in the cultural resource management policy, part of the *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*,⁴⁹ ensures a values-based approach to heritage management through its definition of its principles, practice, and activities. Throughout, all the principles deal in one way or another with values, even when the word *value* is not specifically used. The following excerpts demonstrate this fundamental commitment.

1.1 PRINCIPLES⁵⁰

1.1.2 While all cultural resources are valued, some cultural resources are deemed to be of the highest possible value and will be protected and presented accordingly. Parks Canada will value most highly those cultural resources of national historic significance.

1.1.4 Cultural resources will be valued not only for their physical or material properties, but also for the associative and symbolic attributes with which they are imbued, and which frequently form the basis of their historic value.

1.1.5 A cultural resource whose historic value derives from its witness to many periods in history will be respected for that evolution, not just for its existence at a single moment in time. Parks Canada will reveal an underlying or previous physical state of an object, structure, or site at the expense of later forms and material only with great caution; when historic value is clearly related to an earlier form, and when knowledge and existing material of that earlier form allow.

1.2 PRACTICE

1.2.2 To understand and appreciate cultural resources and the sometimes complex themes they illustrate, the public will be provided with information and services that effectively communicate the importance and value of those resources and their themes.

1.2.3 Appropriate uses of cultural resources will be those uses and activities that respect the historic value and physical integrity of the resource, and that promote public understanding and appreciation.

1.4 RESPECT

1.4.1 Cultural resources will be managed with continuous care and with respect for their historic character; that is, for the qualities for which they are valued.

The cultural resource management policy

describes the “practice” of cultural resource management as providing a “framework for decision-making rather than a set of predetermined answers. Its aim is to ensure that the historic character for which resources are valued is identified, recognized, considered, and communicated.” In the same vein, it provides the principles for decision making in conservation and other interventions. This is an important document, as it is at the same time clear about the important relationship between value and resource and concerned more with process than with outcome.

SAFETY FROM IMPAIRMENT OR THREAT

The first task in ensuring the protection of physical resources from impairment is to identify and characterize all the resources in the Level I category. Brief passages extracted from the cultural resource management policy define Level I and Level II resources:

2.2.1 Level I:

National historic significance is the highest level assigned to a cultural resource in the custody of Parks Canada. National historic significance will be determined in accordance with the National Historic Sites Policy.

2.2.1.1 Evaluation to determine national historic significance is undertaken by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Its recommendation to the Minister, and any subsequent Ministerial designation, may specify which resources within a designated national historic site are themselves of national historic significance.

2.2.1.2 Where a Ministerial designation is not specific with respect to the national historic significance of resources at a national historic site, the program will apply the commemorative intent of the designation to determine which resources are to be specifically considered of national historic significance.

2.2.2 Level II:

A resource that is not of national historic significance may have historic value and thus be considered a cultural resource.

2.2.2.1 Parks Canada will establish and apply criteria to determine which resources under its jurisdiction are Level II. A resource may be included in this category by virtue of its historical, aesthetic, or environmental qualities. Criteria will also give consideration to such factors as regional or local association; or provincial, territorial or municipal designations.

2.2.2.2 Buildings that are designated “classified” or “recognized” in accordance with the Federal Heritage Buildings Policy will automatically be considered as Level II cultural resources, unless they meet the requirements that

have been described for Level I cultural resources. Buildings may also be considered Level II cultural resources in accordance with criteria described . . . above.⁵¹

The commemorative integrity statement catalogs all the features and characteristics that symbolize the importance of Grosse Île and draws on historical and archaeological research to explain and interpret these elements.⁵² The Level I features are cultural landscapes, architectural and archaeological vestiges, and movable cultural resources. The cultural landscapes include the geographic location, as well as the natural features and characteristics of the island that were so well suited to its uses—and that are in ways still largely unchanged since 1832. Also included are the roads, wharfs, views, and cemeteries, as well as the strategic separation of activity sectors employed for health purposes.⁵³ Taken together, all these resources are valued for their authenticity, for the fact that they represent the periods in Canadian history being commemorated, and for their ability to help convey the themes to the public.

The integrity statement also sets the stage for defining the management strategies. For each class of feature, the text includes objectives for securing the linkages between the feature and the communication of its significance, in the form of statements of a desired outcome: “Presentation of the landscape reinforces the expression of landscape components in such a way as to support the historic nature of significant sites from the human quarantine period; . . . a maintenance program to control vegetation, notably in the heritage areas, has been elaborated and implemented; . . . the various maintenance and presentation facilities take into account the fact that the fences are among the dominant and significant elements of the island’s historic landscape.”⁵⁴

This approach is also used in describing the structures, proceeding building by building; reestablishing connections of historic fabric with the historic uses of the buildings; and delineating their respective relevance to the larger site’s commemorative intent. Key messages associated with Level I features are also gathered and presented in a summary supporting the themes of immigration, quarantine, and the Irish dimension.

The second component of protecting the significant resources from damage or threat is the identification of threats that pose risks, of their sources, and of their potential impacts. Attention to this is ensured through the guidance available in the site management plan. The physical condition of each of the three classes of Level I resources is described, with examples of some of

the principal risks; these include inherent characteristics of materials or context, weather and the deterioration of previous protective measures (such as paint), impacts caused by vehicles, or changes in vegetation.⁵⁵

The third component in protecting these resources is developing and/or employing management strategies—including conservation interventions—that have as their objective the mitigation or avoidance of threats to the integrity of the physical resources. There are two main sources of guidance for decision making, covering prevention and intervention. The first is the cultural resource management policy section of the document *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*.⁵⁶ The chapter on conservation begins by stating, “Conservation encompasses the activities that are aimed at the safeguarding of a cultural resource so as to retain its historic value and extend its physical life.”⁵⁷ The guidelines that follow cover the steps to be taken by site managers as they formulate approaches for the general care of cultural resources or formulate the detailed plans leading to a conservation intervention. They refer the user to site management plans and to the resources available from the Federal Heritage Building Review Office (FHBRO)⁵⁸ for more specific guidance.

Section 4 of the management plan⁵⁹ supplies direction for actions being considered for landscapes, buildings, and other Level I resources, as well as for Level II resources.⁶⁰ The guidance provided for these actions indicates the importance attributed to the presentation of the resources. The plan offers the most specific guidance on ensuring that decisions are made according to established policies, taking account of concerns for the physical safety of Level I resources when presentation is also a requirement. The quality of this guidance is demonstrated by summaries offered for two resource types:

Landscapes and Environment

Actions should seek to protect significant views recognized as Level I; restore and maintain the divisions and character of the three-sector organization of the station; and accentuate the landscapes that highlight the areas associated with the quarantine activities. The plan favors subtle indicators over explicit text panels at every turn, such as using vegetation to locate features or limit views or access.

Buildings

Action or inaction is proscribed that will directly or indirectly damage the appearance, architectural detail, or structural integrity of a historic building. For each build-

ing, an architectural intervention plan is to be produced that describes problems anticipated in preserving, using, and presenting the structure. The plan requires the use of best practices in planning and implementing interventions and points the staff toward additional guidance, such as the FHBRO Code of Practice, which specifically governs federally owned structures.⁶¹

FHBRO Code of Practice

Principles of Conservation Actions

The first principle is that of minimum intervention; it requires that a problem and its possible solutions be considered such that no more is done to the features than is actually necessary. This ensures that replacement (high intervention) is the last option considered, not the first. Other principles in this set are as follows:

- *each case unique*, which demands that measures and materials are selected for the specific situation at hand
- *balancing*, which requires that interventions weigh conservation principles of caution, honesty, and fit in relation to the heritage values of the building
- *caution*, which is important particularly when the authenticity of the material is especially valued
- *honesty*, which regulates choices based on existing evidence, so that the difference between new and old fabric is legible
- *fit or compatibility*, which aims to encourage harmony of proportion, texture, materials, etc., when dealing with contextual values

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF THE REASONS FOR THE SITE'S IMPORTANCE

As eloquent as a dilapidated but intact nineteenth-century laundry house might be to an architectural historian, it may stand mute before a nuclear physicist on vacation with her family. As is recognized fully in all of the pertinent Parks Canada guidance, the meaning of the cultural resources such as those at Grosse Île is revealed through effective communication of the values held therein. Furthermore, the site is actually seen to lose its commemorative integrity if the messages authored for the site are not effectively communicated to visitors.

The interpretive scheme for Grosse Île is not yet fully in place. In keeping with its responsibilities, Parks Canada has divided its attention between the stabilization of the physical resources and the phased development of the interpretive plans. Therefore, while it is not yet possible to experience a completed presentation, it is possible to review the ideas and principles that will help shape the interpretive scheme and to see how they reflect the values

identified for the site. The *Plan of the Visit Experience*⁶² of Grosse Île defines the experience that the visitor will have at the site, through the activities and services to be offered. This document identifies three dimensions of the visitor's encounter with the site: associative, educational, and spiritual. These dimensions are values related to the solemn, serene atmosphere of the place. The first dimension of the encounter relates to the spirit of the place, defined as the emotions evoked in the visitor by the site. A second dimension is the knowledge that can be transmitted to visitors through the resources of the island. The final dimension or value is a spiritual one, consisting of insights about themselves that visitors might obtain from their visit to the site.

An important contribution of this document is that it analyzes and ties the various elements of the site—buildings, layout, patterns of land use, landscapes, and views—to the three statements of the commemorative intent and other heritage values. It also elaborates on the topics to be presented to communicate the three elements of the commemorative intent and indicates which resources will be used to do so. For example, under the theme of the Irish Memorial, the information about Irish immigration during the first half of the nineteenth century is planned to be mentioned first in the Disinfection Building, although this structure did not exist during the period being discussed. Later, guides will present information about the Irish Famine and the tragedy of 1847 during the visit to the Celtic Cross, the Irish Cemetery, the new Irish Memorial, and the Lazaretto. Finally, the topic of the symbolic value of Grosse Île to the Irish is to be “communicated” through visits to the cemetery and the Irish Memorial. Similar analyses and plans are presented for each of the themes and their topics.

The *Plan of the Visit Experience* also examines the potential for and constraints relating to expanding the audiences for Grosse Île, including the logistics of getting to and from the island. The plan proposes a range of selective tours, each targeting a particular audience or concept, to be developed and tested over time. The various tours recognize the constraints imposed by the short duration of visits to the site, a result of the transportation schedule.

Both the management plan and the integrity statement acknowledge other issues that promise to complicate the presentation of messages regarding the significance of Grosse Île in several areas: periodization, survival of features from all phases, and uneven representativeness of the cultural resources, among others.

The one-hundred-year span of time being commemorated saw dramatic changes in the operation of Grosse Île as a quarantine station. Public health, science, medicine, and transportation all went through important developments that left an impact on the island; these changes form part of the significance of the landscape and built environment. As the integrity statement reports, “The initial installations at the quarantine station were marked by improvisation (hurried planning) and ignorance (forms of transmission of epidemic diseases). This phase was followed by a rationalisation of reception infrastructures for immigrants that went beyond Grosse Île, improving the complementary facilities at the port of Québec, Lévis, and Pointe au Père. In this manner, the history of quarantine is in many ways marked by the evolution of the phenomenon of immigration in the world and especially at Québec.”⁶³

The traces of these events can be difficult to maintain, but they are important to the story. To realize the commemorative intent of the site, the story of a particular period must be told in the physical context of buildings and other features that were not present during that time. Without some thoughtful interpretive cues, the visitor would have a difficult time distinguishing the features of one period from those of the next.

In fact, most of the historic resources on the island date to the final phase of use of the quarantine station. Very little standing architecture survives from the time when the station’s most dramatic events transpired—and for which the site is, in part, commemorated. This situation challenges the interpretive program to address the history in other ways.

Communicating the principal themes and the stories that convey them through the physical remains requires a sophisticated program of interpretation. While it might be possible to dismantle some of the very recent structures (such as storage buildings from the 1960s) in order to simplify the landscape, it may not be appropriate. Requirements inherent in the statement of commemorative intent require an innovative approach that does not sacrifice any of the resources. Thus the statement affords strong, holistic protection that calls for creative and conscientious management.

The management plan echoes these protectionist concepts and offers guidance on methods for realizing these objectives, by folding them into three workable principles: respecting the spirit of the place, employing a comprehensive and specific view of history, and using an approach that emphasizes the important connections

between the natural environment and the cultural resources.

In light of these principles, the intention expressed in the management plan is to present the historic and natural features in an informative and engaging way while maintaining a dignified and relatively somber image for the site. A low-key tone is preferred on site, and off-island interpretive panels and brochures about Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial will be only sparsely used.

Objectives for Messages of National Historic Significance from the Commemorative Integrity Statement

- The presentation of Grosse Île is tied in with commemorative intent, linking the resources that symbolize the site’s national significance with messages of national historic significance.
- The messages elaborated in pursuing the commemorative intent ease the interaction between the visitor and the resources of the national historic site, for which the values are communicated.
- The resources are presented as a coherent and significant whole.
- The messages are communicated to the public in a clear fashion, taking into account the needs of different clienteles and using appropriate means.
- Evaluation methods and tools are established to determine the efficiency of message transmission.⁶⁴

Quality of the Visitor’s Experience

The quality of the visitor’s experience is a concept that is used in the management of many cultural resources and that generally summarizes what the staff has identified as the key values or aspects of the place. For Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial, this is done in the *Plan of the Visit Experience*,⁶⁵ which identifies the factors that contribute to this positive experience and ties it to specific resources on the site. The elements identified as contributing to a quality experience are

- historic landscapes and views that evoke the past
- visible archaeological remains
- important buildings with public access
- competent guides
- interpretation routes and paths that allow the visitor to experience the site firsthand
- a cultural and natural experience
- the presence of partners of Parks Canada who can enrich the experience of the visitor

PROTECTION OF THE SECONDARY HERITAGE VALUES OF THE SITE

All management documents touch on the secondary heritage values of the site, which include historic, archaeological, or other evidence of paleohistoric dimension; the early land-grant settlements; the army presence during periods of war; and use by Agriculture Canada.⁶⁶ The exceptional natural environment of the island also falls in this category. Assignment of these diverse and interesting kinds of resources to this second level does not imply that they are not important or delicate or worthy of attention. The principle of commemorative integrity of Parks Canada requires that the heritage values of the site—represented by Level II resources—be respected in management decisions. These resources, however, are not the focus of intensive interpretive or protective activity.

In the case of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial, many of the resources on site date from periods following the years that are the focus of the commemorative intent. In some instances, buildings of the postwar era are in conflict with some of the Level I landscapes, particularly in the Central Sector of the island. While the commemorative integrity principle requires that these structures be respected, site management staff has considered removing or relocating some of them to free some significant vistas. None of the buildings have yet been removed, and there is serious discussion as to the impact that actions of this type would have on the commemorative integrity of the site.

In the management plan, strategic direction with regard to facilities infrastructure notes that all new facilities will be designed and located to have the least possible impact on cultural and natural resources. The environmental values of Grosse Île, while they are seen as Level II, have their own set of protections under federal law. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, passed in 1992, provides powerful support for environmental protection at nationally managed sites, among other places. The act established a federal environmental assessment process that requires that any action that may have an effect on resources of natural or cultural significance must be preceded by an assessment of potential risks or damaging impacts. An effect is considered to be “any change that the project may cause in the environment, including any effect of any such change on health and socio-economic conditions, on physical and cultural heritage, on the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by aboriginal persons, or on any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or archi-

tectural significance.”⁶⁷

The act calls for the redesign with appropriate risk mitigation, or for the withdrawal of the project, in order to ensure a proactive protective approach. Again, all management documents encourage avoiding solutions that require dramatic decisions regarding the environment in order to save an important historic feature.

The management plan contains a summary of the environmental assessment that examined the potential impacts of the activities of visitation and management at Grosse Île. The report found that the strategic guidelines in the plan that relate to protecting and presenting the natural resources of the site are enhancing the vision of the site and fostering sound management.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, some areas of potential conflict are singled out for monitoring, including the possible impact on the shoreline of new or expanded visitor facilities, difficult choices relating to the effect of vegetation (rare or typical) on historic structures, and impact on bat colonies of conservation interventions on buildings. These areas will be discussed further below.

At the site level, two specific management policies are aimed directly at protecting the environmental values, and they have an interesting effect on an important objective of the site. The first is that visitors are not allowed to go into the backcountry, away from the areas near the gravel road, the buildings, and the public spaces. Second, they are not allowed to come ashore from private transport or from anywhere except the main wharf. These policies both protect the natural environment and limit access to the site to only the commercial carriers. While managers would welcome more visitors and would like to have visitors stay for longer periods, they are not willing to put even the Level II resources at risk to accomplish these goals.

Impact of Management Policies on the Site’s Values and Their Preservation

How do management decisions and actions on site affect the values? This question may also be posed in terms of the integrity statement: How are management decisions affecting the protection of the Level I resources or the effective communication of the site’s significance or the management of the other heritage values?

This question can be addressed from at least two directions. First, Parks Canada has several procedures to track their own effectiveness in achieving the objectives defined during the planning process. Second, specific situ-

ations and their resolutions can shed light on how well plans are being implemented and whether they are producing the desired effects. This discussion will look at each of the areas of value at Grosse Île and the means used by Parks Canada staff to assess effectiveness. Particular situations in each of the areas will be used to illustrate decisions made on site.

PROTECTING LEVEL I RESOURCES

A number of operational controls help Parks Canada staff ensure the protection of the resources for which Grosse Île is recognized at the national level. Each year, the crew of skilled technicians and the site managers define a work program of urgent remedial actions, normal maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and the occasional research activity. Various factors affect the design of this program, including opportunity, importance, and available resources. In the discussions regarding these decisions, the staff depend on a relational database in which specific resources have individual files, and their physical histories are tracked. Having detailed records of this kind helps maintain objective priorities when there are literally hundreds of conservation challenges awaiting attention. A team-based approach used in planning situations—combining architects, archaeologists, technicians, ethnographers, and interpreters—and in the field also helps the site staff maintain a balanced approach to ensuring the health of the resources. While each specialty has its own concerns, the team is united by the institutional commitment to Grosse Île’s commemorative integrity. The fact that the buildings are important because they have stories to tell makes it all the more important that the architects, the technicians, and the interpretive experts all participate in decisions about their care.

One of the reasons the HSMBC recommended the designation of Grosse Île as a national historic site was the presence of many structures on the site that represented its quarantine functions. Today those buildings constitute one of the most eloquent elements of the site; they also present a challenge in terms of conservation. The number of structures and their condition call for a long period of conservation activities until all of them have been stabilized and made sound. Maintenance of any building in this climate is always a challenge, even when there are no requirements apart from pure physical preservation. However, when the building is considered to have value in part because of its age, its bleak location, and its fragile status, the job becomes rather more

[continued on page 31]

The Lazaretto

lazaretto [or lazaret or lazarette] — 1. a hospital treating contagious diseases. 2. A building or ship used as a quarantine station. 3. A storage space between the decks of a ship.¹

Significance of the Building

The Lazaretto is a Level I structure located near the eastern tip of Grosse Île (location 19, fig. 3). It is one of four structures on the island that date from the early years of the quarantine station, and it is the only one remaining from the tragic year of 1847. It is also the only remaining intact building that served as a hospital during the period commemorated at Grosse Île. Because of its unique significance, it was designated a Federal Heritage Building and singled out for commemoration by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.²

The Lazaretto was built as one of a set of similar buildings in a complex dedicated to the care of the ill and convalescing immigrants. The complex included kitchens, residences for cooks and nurses, a police station, washhouses, outbuildings, and latrines built in response to the vast number of immigrants who reached the island in 1847.

Most of the structures from this complex have since disappeared, and any remaining vestiges are underground or overgrown with vegetation; even the western cemetery, nearby, was



The Lazaretto seen from the southwest.



The west end and rear of the Lazaretto, showing some of the windows and doors in the back wall of the building, as well as the bead-board skirt that covers the replaced piers that support the building.

partly obliterated in the construction of the landing strip. As a result, it is hard to visualize the original spatial organization of this special zone.³ Thus, the survival of the remaining Lazaretto takes on great importance in communicating the commemorative intent of the site.

History

Although Grosse Île began operating as a quarantine station in 1832, its early role was largely limited to cursory examinations of immigrants on their way to the port of Quebec.⁴ It was not until the great epidemics of the 1840s that passengers, both healthy and sick, were detained on the island. A historian describes the situation vividly: “Conditions were chaotic at GI throughout 1847. Both the facilities and staff

were inadequate. . . . All the buildings intended for the general use of emigrants were converted into hospitals. By 1848, the quarantine station, which could accommodate at the opening of navigation in 1847 only 200 hospital patients and 800 healthy immigrants, possessed facilities sufficient for 2,000 sick, 300 convalescent and 3,500 immigrants in detention. There were two convalescent hospitals in the end of the island, ‘containing 150 beds each, together with sheds capable of lodging 3,500 immigrants.’”⁵

The Lazaretto is one of a dozen of the quickly assembled sheds erected that year to handle the large numbers of arriving immigrants. By the following year, all the accommodations in the Eastern Sector of the island had been designated as sick bay, keeping the sick and conva-



The interior of the east end of the Lazaretto, showing one of the diagonal braces as well as one of the windows modified for a late use of the building.



The Marconi Station in September 2001. Built in 1919, the Marconi station is a small building with a double-sided roof. It is set back from the road, close to the river, and not far from the physicians' residence. The utilitarian role of the building is reflected in its interior arrangement: the console and its operator were in the western half, and the generator and washroom were in the eastern half. The Marconi Station replaced the old telegraph office between 1885 and 1892. The building demonstrated the technological advance in communications as well as the daily operations of a human quarantine station such as Gross Île.

lescing immigrants away from their healthy travel companions, who were housed in the Western Sector in the First, Second, and Third Class Hotels.

By 1878 all the 1847 sheds had disappeared except for this one. Over the years, this remaining shed was repurposed several times and altered many more. The first transformation was done quickly in 1848, to change the shed's use from passenger accommodations to hospital quarters. At that time the interior was divided into four separate areas, evidence for which survives to some extent today. Floors, ceilings, paneling, and exterior siding were changed several times over the years. Documents indicate that during its years as a hospital, the interior and exterior walls were lime-washed regularly as a means of disinfection. From the 1850s until it ceased being used as a hospital in the 1920s, it housed mainly smallpox patients, and it became known as the *Shed des picotés*. Plumbing for toilets and baths was installed around the turn of the twentieth century. In line with the contemporary practice of shielding smallpox patients from daylight, a project was started in 1904 to cover the interior walls of the rooms with red paneling—and possibly to install red glass in the windows. This measure appears to have been achieved only in the westernmost room.

Around 1942 the island was used by the



The Laundry. Built in 1855, at the shoreline, the Laundry facilitated the washing of the immigrants' clothing. Inside are some of the original features, including three of the four original chimneys and fireplaces used for heating water and disinfecting clothing. It is the only remaining structure that attests to one of the important steps in disinfection as practiced in the mid-nineteenth century.

Canadian Army for experimental research on animals. At that time, the Lazaretto was converted into a chicken coop, with significant modifications that closed several of the doors on the facade and cut new windows into the walls to improve air circulation. The eastern-most of the four interior rooms was not altered much, keeping its old paneling, ceiling, and windows.

Conservation Treatment

The Lazaretto is one of the few buildings on the island that saw continuous use from the 1840s until it was restored in 1997 and 1998. As recorded in the Cultural Resources Registry of Quebec, it had been modified several times: walls were paneled, the interior was partitioned into four zones, and a three-section ceil-

ing and then a flat ceiling were added. Nevertheless, the structure has retained a number of original features in addition to its volume: French casement windows with many small glass panes, ventilation outlets, and traces of the original interior, including graffiti from patients housed in the building over the years.

In the first condition assessment of the built resources done by Parks Canada staff when the island became a national historic site, this building was found to be in precarious condition. Perhaps most alarming was the fact that it was sagging badly, because its foundation footings had shifted and settled. While the structure was supported on jacks awaiting the new footings, a brief salvage archaeology project was undertaken, yielding objects that came across on the ships with the Irish in those early years.⁶ Today a small glass display case in the eastern room contains objects found during this work.

The challenge before the technical team was to employ all the requisite guidelines, retain (or reinstate) the historic aspect and value of this unique structure, and make it safe for visitors and guides to use. This team—as is standard for historic sites in Quebec—included representatives from the fields of architecture, engineering, history, archaeology, and historic preservation. They examined and analyzed the structure and the site and concluded that the “as-

found” form of the Lazaretto allowed for a complete presentation and “reading” of its evolution, described briefly above. They proposed that the interior of the building be divided into three sections, each presenting one phase of the building. The eastern room would represent the building during the 1847 epidemic; the central section would correspond to its service as a hospital; and the western section would evoke the 1850–1927 period of the smallpox quarantine.⁷

As it now stands, the building sits on new foundations, so the sagging floors and slightly leaning walls are not very exaggerated or precarious. Some early graffiti on the interior white-washed wood is protected behind clear plastic sheets. The westernmost room has its red-painted walls and ceiling restored from the 1920s.⁸ Much of the interior space retains its original fabric, and the windows opened during its period as a chicken coop can be closed in the easternmost room to show how the room looked originally. Any new elements that have been added in the interior are immediately recognizable, distinguished by their different paint treatment.

The interior of the Lazaretto now reads like a historic narrative of the life cycle of the building, from 1847 to 1950. Restoring a building to a single phase of a multiphase history (a process referred to as “periodization”) has been recog-

nized as an undesirable management option, but in previous generations, it was often the option chosen. Parks Canada planners anticipated the potential for periodization during the planning phases and were able to avoid oversimplifying this unique building.⁹ The technical and philosophical decisions followed the normative guidance, which states that cultural resources should be valued in their context and that a cultural resource “whose historic value derives from its witness to many periods in history will be respected for that evolution, not just for its existence at a single moment in time.”¹⁰

By comparison, the current appearance of the Lazaretto’s exterior seems to tell quite a different story. Certainly it is the result of decisions that required juggling a number of considerations, and the difference between the interior and the exterior demonstrates visibly how management decisions can affect how a place expresses its own history. Below are listed some of the considerations that were part of the discussions about how best to protect this particular building.

- The general objectives for protecting in situ cultural resources, which include protecting the structure and all external characteristics of the buildings and ensuring that all maintenance respects the range of interior finishes.¹¹
- The objective of preserving the “spirit of the

place” and of maintaining in the structures some of the character they have acquired over years of neglect.¹²

- Where material (or artifactual values) are preeminent, prolonging the life of surviving historic fabric becomes the primary concern; generally speaking, a preservation approach focused on stabilization/ consolidation and supported by a concern for caution in the conservation principles applied will provide the best means to respect these values.¹³
- Interventions respectful of heritage character should be guided by the principles of fit (or compatibility)—for example, harmonizing proportions, color, texture, forms, materials, or structural characteristics of added elements, when contextual values are dealt with. Where contextual values are concerned with physical relationships, the primary concern may be preserving or reestablishing important relationships between and among building elements and the whole; where these values are concerned with functional context, reestablishing proper fit between a building and its use would become important.¹⁴
- The cost-effectiveness of long-wearing surface finishes for protecting the wooden shell, as well as the more fragile and fully authentic features inside, requires no long explanation. One needs only to witness one nor’easter to see how violent the weather can be, especially up on this exposed promontory. Normal exposure to

weather at this latitude is unquestionably stressful on clapboard buildings, particularly one set on pilings instead of on full foundations.

From the outside, the Lazaretto today can be read as a handsome building in an antique style, covered not with whitewash but, rather, with robust butter-colored latex paint, with green trim. The same finishes are used for the Marconi Station, which was built seventy-eight years later. For a visitor who expects an approximation of authenticity in the appearance of the sole survivor from the crisis years, the Lazaretto’s pristine appearance is a visual surprise. The unique importance of the building and of the events it represents are obscured by what can be seen as a mask—protective, perhaps, but inscrutable. The external appearance could be said to diminish the associative value of this building by making it more difficult for the visitor to make associations with the times and events being commemorated. This strong contrast with the as-yet-unrestored historical buildings on the island, such as the Laundry, might lessen as the other structures are restored or as the Lazaretto weathers over time.

Notes

1. *American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3d ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).
2. HSMBC 1993; Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office 1995.

3. Parks Canada 1998a, 7.
4. A considerable amount of information regarding the history of use and transformation of this building is found in the *Registre des ressources culturelles du Québec*.
5. Anick 1984.
6. Informal comparisons done to date with object assemblies of the time in Ireland suggest the potential for extraordinary research in this particular area of the island; they also suggest a rich information resource for the interpretive program (Monique Elie, Parks Canada, personal communication).
7. From Fortier 1997.
8. The dark red environment was thought to reduce damage to patients' eyesight as they recovered.
9. Parks Canada 1998a, 45.
10. Parks Canada 1994a, 103.
11. Parks Canada 1998a, 10.
12. Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service 1992a, 27.
13. FHBRO 1996, 23.
14. FHBRO 1996, 24.

demanding. Parks Canada has developed approaches to the conservation and presentation of the individual buildings, something that has been discussed at various points in this case. The *Grosse Île National Historic Site—Development Concept* of 1992 states the following in this regard: “the treatment of visible archaeological remains, structures and buildings would remain discreet and non-invasive . . . work would be performed on the buildings with the aim, primarily, of maintaining the features they have generally retained since their relative abandonment, while protecting them against further deterioration. Care would be taken, in particular, to preserve the marks left by the passing years, which heighten the authenticity of resources. No building would be restored to a former state and none would be rebuilt.”⁶⁹

To be consistent with this directive, decisions regarding how best to protect and present such buildings must address and balance considerations of protection from weather and exposure, the authenticity of the materials, and the visual presentation. These are not simple decisions. In a few cases at Grosse Île, recent treatment projects reflect decisions that appear to be in conflict with these principles. Three buildings—the Marconi Station, the Public Works Officer’s Residence, and the Lazaretto—now have a pristine appearance, in stark contrast to other historic structures that surround them. The restoration of the Public Works Officer’s Residence has recently been completed. The funding for this work was provided by the Ministry of Public Works, which supplemented the budget available to Parks Canada. The participation of another government department made possible the conservation of this Level I building, which up to that point had not been among the ones identified for priority attention.

The case of the Lazaretto is examined in more detail in the sidebar (*see p. 25*). Topics addressed include the treatment process for that building and its impact on the values associated with the building, as well as a possible missed opportunity to develop an innovative approach to treatment for an important building.

The conflict created by the existence of postwar structures in the central part of the island remains to be resolved. While there are plans to rehabilitate some of the animal quarantine stations for new uses after moving them to remote areas of the island, no action has been taken. There is no doubt that these newer structures stand where significant structures (such as the Medical Superintendent’s House) once stood and that they block what would have been the historic views of the eastern and

western wharfs. While these are Level II structures, the principle of commemorative integrity requires that they be “respected” in all decisions. It remains to be seen how the site staff will interpret this guidance.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF THE SITE’S NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Effective communication requires that both the speakers and the listeners are able to do their respective jobs. First, Parks Canada and the site staff have the responsibility to express the messages crafted for the site. There are also some interpretive panels in locations around the island that offer information on particular features. However, there is currently a preference for the more personal approach to interpretation that depends on guides.

The quality of the guides’ presentation, the style of their delivery, their ability to respond to questions, and their own knowledge of and interest in the subjects can determine to a great extent the quality of the visitors’ experience. Parks Canada pays a great deal of attention to this indicator of the commemorative integrity of the site.

Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial is open May through October. After the close of the season, an assessment of the experience of the guides is undertaken by means of a survey. This gives the guides the opportunity to report on the relative success of the content of their presentations; on the levels of interest demonstrated by visitors; and on the ways in which content is calibrated to the particular interests, ages, nationalities, ethnicities, and so on of people to whom they spoke. They can report on their difficulties in conveying certain issues or on their views of the need to expand on particular topics. At some point before the start of a new season, site staff studies the surveys, and adjustments may be made to the interpretive presentations for the coming season.

Before the site opens again in the spring, the guides who will work on Grosse Île during the season are brought together for seventy-five hours of classroom training. Training materials are prepared and given to each member of the group; specialists from Parks Canada, other agencies, and academic institutions in the region serve as lecturers on Irish history, medical history, Canadian history, Parks Canada policy, and other topics.

The content of the interpretive scheme is subject to constant change and refinement, depending on the findings from surveys and on new ideas that come from staff and partners. Other sources for new content are the HSMBC and additions to the system plan that the Board and Canadian Heritage might recommend. Two recent

additions will have an impact on the presentation of Grosse Île: the commitment to telling the stories of women in Canadian history, as well as the commitment to tell the stories of cultural and ethnic diversity. This new emphasis reiterates the point, made earlier in this discussion, that when a place becomes a national historic site in Canada (as in many other countries), it becomes part of a system that exists for all the citizens. Its stories become larger when presented on a national, rather than local, stage. There is the risk of losing some of the specific meaning of the place, and decisions about this are in the hands of the national authority. It is interesting to see that in the case of Grosse Île, a preponderance of visitors to the site is, in fact, native to the province.

AUDIENCE AND ACCESS

The second element in effective communication is the ability of the audience to receive and understand the messages being delivered. Part of the reason why so much historic fabric survived on Grosse Île relates to the fact that this is a protected island in the middle of a river that has been off limits to the public for many generations. While the benefits of this isolation are obvious, the difficulties it poses in presenting the site to the public are considerable. Briefly stated, transport to Grosse Île is limited and expensive. A visit to the island ranges between 1.5 and 4.5 hours. Taken together, these factors significantly constrain the potential for access to the site and for a thorough presentation of the commemorative intent messages.

The earliest planning documents for the site stipulate that Parks Canada “will operate no marine or air transportation services to Grosse Île. Responsibility for the marine transportation service may be assumed by the service provider or by independent carrier.”⁷⁰ As described earlier, visitor transportation is provided mainly by one boat company operating from the south shore town of Berthier-sur-Mer. The crossing lasts approximately thirty minutes, and there are only three trips to the island per day during the high season (each trip can transport approximately 150 passengers). The captain gives a brief river tour along the way as they pass other islands on the way to the Grosse Île dock.

The business partnership between this boat company and Parks Canada can be construed as vital to Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial, but not necessarily to the company. Their other business comes from whale-watching trips in the St. Lawrence, and from charter trips arranged for hunters during the October and November hunting season. This situation has made it difficult for Parks

Canada staff to negotiate different arrangements or longer stays on the island for visitors. The situation may soon change, as other transport companies seem to be interested in providing access to Grosse Île from Quebec City. Discussions are also under way about the possibility of large cruise ships sending passengers to the island on small launches. No private boats are presently allowed to dock or anchor to bring visitors to the island, and there are no plans to change this policy. While transportation to the island was being provided only by boat companies based on the south shore, the economic benefits that the site might bring were limited to this area. The transportation now being provided directly from Quebec, although potentially increasing the number of visitors to the site, might diminish the number of those who travel through the south shore towns.

All means of access must take into consideration their impact on the resources of the national historic site. In 2001, a firm in Quebec approached Parks Canada with interest in delivering visitors to Grosse Île by hovercraft, but this scheme posed several problems. First, the craft would need a floating dock to be constructed at a cost of Canadian \$100,000, as it would be unable to use the existing fixed, multilevel dock. Second, the noise made by the compressed air engines would interfere with the quiet ambience of the island. In addition, the impact of this type of vessel on the flora and fauna of the shore would need to be evaluated.

Wind or rain can make the crossing from the mainland difficult and unpleasant for visitors unaccustomed to rough seas. Getting around on the island is relatively easy if one is ambulatory. An uphill hike with stairs and rough terrain prohibit wheelchair access to the Celtic Cross, although a level road is available to the cemetery and the new Irish Memorial. Trolleys carry visitors through the village and out to the island's Eastern Sector.

Although Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial is a national historic site, it has not been actively promoted for long, and it is not yet well known to travelers from other provinces or from outside Canada. Its interpretive programs are not fully deployed, and the carrying capacity of this site is still below the projections. Various aspects of the infrastructure are still being improved, with the possibility in view of larger numbers of visitors. The water system has recently been upgraded; expanded sewage facilities are in the works; and overnight accommodations on a modest scale are being contemplated. It is up to the local and regional Parks Canada staff to undertake marketing efforts; they attend tourism fairs to seek publicity for the

site and to identify channels through which they can encourage interested visitors.

While the "success" of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial is not judged on the basis of the numbers of visitors attracted annually, the development of the site (and the enhancement of the interpretive programs) does hinge partly on its attendance and income. The success of the site is, however, evaluated on the basis of how effectively its heritage values are conveyed to its visitors. The current situation has visitors on the island for three to four hours at most. There are a dozen historic features spread out over the 2.14-mile (3.45-km) length of the island that are open to the public, numerous others that can be visited from the outside only, and many opportunities for taking in the scenery from various vantage points. Leaving time for lunch—either a picnic or a meal in the cafeteria—there is little chance the visitor can see the whole site. If the guides have only 1.5 hours in which to present a four-hour interpretive program, they cannot be as effective as they are trained to be.⁷¹

The content of the interpretive program is still in development. Success in this area is tracked by periodic reporting. The 1999 report on the state of protected heritage areas⁷² includes a commemorative integrity reporting table, covering several national historic sites, including Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial. The table assigns a grade to several items listed under the categories of "Resource Condition," "Effectiveness of Communications," and "Selected Management Practices." All indicators at Grosse Île had improved since the previous evaluation two years earlier, except in the area of "Communication," which includes overall communication, communication of national significance and of the national historic site general values, and communication of the range and complexity of perspectives presented. Grosse Île was given poor marks in this category, indicating shortcomings in the presentation of the site and an absence of programming on the general subject of "Immigration."

Another way to visit Grosse Île is through its Web site.⁷³ Interestingly, the Web site reflects some of the problems in communication seen on the island. In the medium that allows the creative revisualization of the site, its buildings, and its landscapes, the Web site designers chose to present the site in its three geographical sectors, exactly the way one sees it on the ground. In the "Grosse Île at a glance" part of the Web site, the Western Sector is explained building by building, illustrated by individual photographs. Elsewhere on the Web site, a very abbreviated history is given that does not connect the physical

remains to the stories of the place.

There is an intertwined set of issues that will continue to challenge the managers of Grosse Île. Constraints on access to the island allow the continued protection of the natural environment and ensure that all visitors enter the site at the main wharf. The conservation priorities for the natural resources of the island include the shoreline as a Priority I sector; Priority I elements are considered unique or highly sensitive, and limited access is recommended, since “all human activity . . . runs the risk of ultimately extinguishing the element in question.”⁷⁴ The current arrangement with transport companies may be limiting the number of visitors to a level lower than the actual demand; the arrangement also keeps their visits short. The apparent exclusivity of the transport arrangement has economic benefits for the south shore and for the business partnerships in force, but these benefits might be shared between several companies in the near future.

RESPECT FOR AND PROTECTION OF OTHER HERITAGE VALUES

This category of values includes most notably the cultural remains and built environment dating from before 1832 and after 1937 discussed earlier, as well as the natural environment. Cultural remains predating 1832 are scant, but their protection is addressed through strict controls over any activity involving excavation or disturbance of subsurface remains. When archaeology is undertaken, it is usually in the context of some inevitable works project, or when it can be justified as crucial for some other reason. Cultural features postdating 1937 include a number of structures built for storage, quarantine-related uses, or scientific activity by the military or agricultural sectors of the Canadian government. While these structures seem less romantic to the visitor keen to see vestiges of the nineteenth century, the buildings and their contents represent parts of the multilayered history of Grosse Île, and they are likely to grow in interest as they age, within the context of the larger story.

The natural environment is central to the condition of commemorative integrity of Grosse Île, as the environment is so much a part of the spirit of the place. In addition, there is a significant set of ecozones and habitats in this riverine context. As has been noted, the delicate nature of the littoral zone encircling the island is probably one of the key features of the protective plan in this area. The protection of this fragile shore system is part of the reason why Parks Canada has prohibited the docking or

anchoring of private boats. But, as mentioned above, this restriction limits the modes of access and the number of visitors who can experience the site or become familiar with the commemorative message in situ. At this point, the protection of the “other cultural value” of the natural environment appears to be taking priority over creating opportunities for greater communication of the significance of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial. Managing the conflict between dual responsibilities—protecting a fragile area and making an important site available—is a classic challenge for a site manager.

One interesting situation demonstrates the delicate balance of historic structures and the local wildlife population. For many years, a number of historic buildings on the island were home to large bat colonies, including the Lazaretto, which is the oldest building on the island. Here, bats entered under the eaves and nested in the rafters, above the drop ceiling. When Parks Canada took over the site and began their systematic examination and evaluation of buildings, it became obvious that the bats were compromising a number of significant structures. They also recognized that the bats needed somewhere to live, as they require considerable heat and enclosed spaces to survive the island’s weather.

Possible options for dealing with them included allowing the bats to remain in the buildings, eliminating the bats altogether, or offering them alternative housing. The option chosen was the third. Several specially designed structures were built close to the historic structures where bats had become a serious problem. They were high off the ground, with extended eaves and internal baffling that retained the body heat of the crowding bats. They were built on skids, rather than set into the ground, so that as the bats came to prefer these structures to the restored historic buildings, the new structures could be gradually moved away from the historic buildings.

It is important to note that one of the most important mechanisms for ensuring the continued protection of all of a site’s values and resources is the Canadian federal law that requires Parks Canada to review the management plans of its sites every five years. In this way, the values of the site and the way in which they are articulated, presented, and protected are continually monitored.

The review begins with staff assessing progress made on implementing the plan in force; this is done through the production of a State of the Park Report (now called the State of Protected Heritage Area Report). This report evaluates the state of commemorative integrity of the site under review. It can shed light on the

effectiveness of the management plan and can indicate to the managers certain adjustments that may be necessary. In some cases, public consultation is undertaken as part of this review if it is felt that the plan (or the work that it recommends) does not fully support the commemorative integrity, if policy or legal shifts provide new information or considerations relating to the plan's objectives, if significant new information becomes available about risk or damage, if substantial changes are noted in visitation, or if other changes affect the management context.⁷⁵

Conclusions

The Parks Canada guidelines provide a structured and systematic approach to the planning and management of historic sites. In most national heritage systems, the designation of a national site attributes a particular value or significance to a site, often prior to an analysis of the full range of values that the site might embody. The Canadian system is no exception. The official declaration of a site's values—the commemorative intent in the case of Canadian national historic sites—acquires primacy in all decisions on site, and in some cases it can overshadow other values associated with a place before it was recognized at the national level. In the case of Grosse Île as a national historic site, the values that were initially deemed to be important were those that told a story about the development of the nation, and those that were already important to a particular group of stakeholders were initially downplayed. However, when the prescribed process of public consultation and review was undertaken, the conflicts over values were resolved.

One of the interesting issues that emerged in the public consultation phase was the possibility of unexpected stakeholders stepping forward and demanding inclusion. While this process involved some stress and expense, it reminds us that heritage touches human emotions, and it is advisable to allow their expression. Also, it offered further evidence that places can have stakeholders who may never see the place itself. A year after an affecting visit to Grosse Île, Mary Robinson, president of Ireland, gave a speech to the Irish legislature entitled “Cherishing the Irish Diaspora,” in which she talked about the important connections between contemporary Ireland and its people to those who emigrated during the dark famine years.

Parks Canada's concept of commemorative integrity, with its three indicators of the health and wholeness of the resource, advocates an approach that takes into consideration the totality of the site and its values. By requiring not only that the physical elements be conserved but also that the significance of the site be effectively communicated, commemorative integrity effectively places equal value on the protection of the physical

materials and of their meanings, ensuring the preservation of both for present and future generations. The practice of devising a statement of commemorative intent and then building a commemorative integrity statement seems to be an enormously useful process that encourages focus on the principles and values that are most important and allows the technical and statutory compliance to follow behind.

The technical issues are not any simpler here than at other historic sites. Site managers need to be vigilant as they make treatment and management decisions that have impacts on Level I buildings—balancing historical integrity and physical survival. The protection of a unique building such as the Lazaretto as an artifact and as a museum is a complex challenge, an interesting didactic case in itself.

The isolated location of Grosse Île and the accompanying logistical constraints on use, access policies, and environmental protections have in some respects limited the ability of those who value the site to experience it. Creative means will be necessary in order to implement the commemorative intent fully.

The third indicator of the health of a historic site is that the heritage values of the site are respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site. The purpose of this requirement is to avoid harm to values attributed to a site that are not included in the statement of commemorative intent. The ambiguity of the phrase “respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site” does not provide much guidance in cases where the protection of the heritage values of some of the Level II resources is seen to diminish the commemorative intent of the site. As the site and its interpretive program continue to be developed and as the place becomes better known, the balance of perspectives regarding messages, preservation, access, and other currently dynamic issues is likely to become steadier.

Notes

1. This work has been reported in three publications: See Mason 1999; Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre 2000; and de la Torre 2002.
2. Pearson and Sullivan 1995, 7.
3. Australia ICOMOS 1999; the Burra Charter is the popular name for the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, which was adopted by Australia ICOMOS in 1979 at Burra, Australia. The charter has since been revised and updated, and the sole version now in force was approved in 1999.
4. For the purpose of this study, *value* and *significance* are given consistent meanings; if the organization involved in the site uses the terms differently, the difference will be clarified.
5. Referred to as the Agency Act, its purpose was “to establish the Parks Canada Agency and to amend other Acts as a consequence.” Statutes of Canada 1998, chap. 31 (assented to 3 Dec. 1998). First Session, Thirty-sixth Parliament, 46–47 Elizabeth II, 1997–98.
6. From the Web site of Canadian Heritage: A Report on Plans and Priorities 2001–2001: http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/pubs/rpp2001/vue-ens_eng.htm (as of Jan. 2003).
7. Parks Canada, n.d, 1.
8. Home page of the National Historic Sites of Canada Web site: http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhnhhs/index1_e.asp (as of Jan. 2003).
9. The HSMBC Web site provides a thorough discussion of the board’s history, activities, and procedures, including the criteria as cited in the text at : http://www2.parkscanada.gc.ca/hsmbc/english/criteria_e.htm (as of Feb. 2003).
10. The first version was published in 1981. The version in force today is Parks Canada 2000a; http://www2.parkscanada.gc.ca/Nhs/sysplan/english/comp_e.pdf. In 1974, when Grosse Île became a National Historic Site, it was associated with the theme of immigration under the heading “Demography/Population.”
11. This section summarizes information included in several documents, including the *Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial Management Plan* (Parks Canada 2001).
12. Parks Canada 2001.
13. Parks Canada 2001, 63.
14. The August 2001 pilgrimage included about two hundred people, from the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Irish Heritage (Quebec), and Action Grosse-Île (Toronto).
15. One of the guiding documents in considering the site for commemoration at this level would have been the 1968 version of the *National Historic Sites Policy*, which states that historic sites could be designated on the basis of five criteria, which related to a site’s association with events that shaped Canadian history, or with the life of a great Canadian, or with an important movement in Canadian history (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1968, 5).
16. From Parks Canada 1998a, annex 1, Deliberations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.
17. Parks Canada 1981.
18. Minutes of the HSMBC meeting, June 1984 (HSMBC 1984), presented in Parks Canada 1998a, annex 1, 55–56.
19. Parks Canada 2001, 2.
20. All prices in this section are in U.S. dollars, quoted from the Web site of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site: http://www2.parkscanada.gc.ca/parks/quebec/grosseile/en/schedule_e.html (as of Feb. 2003).
21. Parks Canada 2001, 50.
22. The cafeteria and special events are catered by Le Manoir des Erables, one of Parks Canada’s business partnerships.
23. Parks Canada 2001, 40.
24. Their point of departure was the 1984 recommendation that Parks Canada acquire the site, which followed on the recognition by the HSMBC of two important components: a commitment to the element of immigration as part of the national story, and the surviving historic resources that would support the telling of the story of immigration and its pivotal role in the building of the nation. The other nineteenth- and twentieth-century ports of entry for immigrants had long since, and repeatedly, been redeveloped.
25. Environment Canada 1986; earlier and later versions of this directive are also available.
26. Environment Canada 1989.
27. Environment Canada 1992a, 5.
28. Environment Canada 1992a, 47.
29. Environment Canada 1992a, 54–55.
30. HSMBC 1984.
31. Environment Canada 1989, 9.
32. As has been noted, Parks Canada is entrusted with the stewardship of significant sites with the trust of the government and the faith of the citizenry. With this mandate, they must present a view derived from their best efforts to gather accurate and comprehensive information and perspectives from all appropriate sources. In the case of Grosse Île, this was effected through commissioned research, consultation with experts, and a marketing study.
33. Environment Canada 1991, app, A, p. 4.
34. Environment Canada 1992a, 46.
35. Environment Canada 1992a, 62.
36. Environment Canada 1992a, 69.

37. Environment Canada 1993.
38. Environment Canada 1993, 3.
39. Environment Canada 1993, 21.
40. Environment Canada 1993, 3.
41. Environment Canada 1993, 23.
42. Two texts were used: (1) "We, the undersigned, are dismayed that the tragic truth of the death of 15,000 Irish men, women, and children whose mortal remains are buried in mass graves on Grosse Île is ignored in Environment Canada's plan to develop the island as a theme park celebrating Canada: Land of Welcome & Hope. We therefore urge the Government of Canada to ensure that the Irish graves of Grosse Île are perpetuated as the main theme of the National Historic Park, and as a reminder of the Irish role in the building of Canada"; and (2) "The Federal Government of Canada has stated the remains of 20,000 Irish people who tried to escape the Famine lie buried in Grosse Île. Yet, they plan to turn this National Historic Site into a playground for the boaters of the St. Lawrence. They wish to forget the tragic events of 1847 stating the story of those who lie there has been over-emphasized. Action Grosse Île has been formed to ensure that the mass graves on the island are protected and to ensure that the revisionists do not distort or bury the story of those who rest at Grosse-Île and those who managed to survive the island. Action Grosse-Île plans to ensure that Grosse-Île maintains a prominent place in both Canadian and Irish history and that the graves and the story of those buried there are protected and preserved. Show your support by lending your signature to this petition." (Parks Canada 1994, 70-72).
43. Parks Canada 1981.
44. The five topic areas are: Historical significance, development objectives and principles, commemoration themes, cultural resources, and public participation. Parks Canada 1994c.
45. Canadian Heritage News Release Communiqué P-07/94-84.
46. Parks Canada 1995.
47. Gordon Bennett, Parks Canada, personal communication, 2002
48. See appendix A for further discussion of commemorative intent and commemorative integrity.
49. Parks Canada 1994a.
50. In Parks Canada 1994a, sec. 1, Principles of Cultural Resource Management, subsecs. 1.1.2-1.4.1: http://www2.parksCanada.gc.ca/Library/PC_Guiding_Principles/Park146_e.htm.
51. Parks Canada 1994a, sec. 2.2, also found at the Web site cited in note 48.
52. Parks Canada 1998a. This statement is also summarized in Parks Canada 2001, 13-18.
53. The more modern elements from later occupations are classified as Level II resources, discussed later in this section.
54. Parks Canada 1998a, 8.
55. Parks Canada 2001, 27ff.
56. In Parks Canada 1994a, sec. 3, Activities of Cultural Resource Management, subsec. 3.4: http://www2.parksCanada.gc.ca/Library/PC_Guiding_Principles/Park157_e.htm#3.4.
57. Parks Canada 1994a, sec. 3.4.
58. Specifically, FHBRO 1996, found at: http://www2.parksCanada.gc.ca/Library/DownloadDocuments/DocumentsArchive/CodeOfPractice_e.pdf (as of Feb. 2003).
59. Parks Canada 2001, 43ff.
60. In the case of Grosse Île, Level II resources are those associated with the "other heritage values" discussed below.
61. FHBRO 1996.
62. This document is available only in French (Parks Canada 1998b).
63. Parks Canada 1998a, 52.
64. Parks Canada 1998a.
65. Parks Canada 1998b.
66. Parks Canada 1998a gives particular emphasis to issues related to the management of natural resources in appendix 2, "Conservation Priorities for Grosse Île Natural Resources." This section discusses management decisions through the assignment of four levels of conservation priority to particular natural resources on the island.
67. This passage is quoted from *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 1992, c. 37*, found at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-15.2/26791.html#rid-26830> (as of Feb. 2003).
68. Summary of the environmental assessment in Parks Canada 2001, 68.
69. Environment Canada 1992a, 72.
70. Environment Canada 1989, 46.
71. First raised in Environment Canada 1989, 19.
72. Parks Canada 2000b, 49, 51.
73. The official Web site for Grosse Île is found at: <http://www2.parksCanada.gc.ca/parks/quebec/grosseile/en/index.html> (as of Feb. 2003).
74. Parks Canada 2001, 83.
75. Parks Canada 2000c, secs. 4.4, 7.4.

Appendix A: Commemorative Integrity—A Short History of a Central Concept in Heritage Management in Parks Canada

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The concept of commemorative integrity was originally developed by Parks Canada in 1989 for purposes of reporting on the state of national historic sites in the 1990 State of the Parks Report. In the course of preparing this report, it became apparent that Parks Canada had information on many of the individual features and program activities that existed at individual national historic sites but that it lacked a conceptual framework to report on the overall state of health and wholeness of its national historic sites. In other words, we had information about the parts but not about the whole. And it became apparent to us that we could not simply aggregate the parts and equate the resulting sum with the state of the whole (the site). Thus was born the concept of commemorative integrity.

Simply stated, commemorative integrity describes the health and wholeness of a national historic site. A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity

- when the resources that symbolize or represent the site's importance are not impaired or under threat,
- when the reasons for the site's national historic significance are effectively communicated to the public, and
- when the site's heritage values (including those not related to national significance) are respected by all whose decisions and actions affect the site.

What began as a framework to monitor and report systematically on the state of the national historic sites quickly evolved into something much broader. Indeed, by 1994, when *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*¹ was issued, and when new approaches to management and business planning had been introduced, commemorative integrity had evolved into

- a fundamental program objective (ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites);

- a statement of results to be achieved (health and wholeness of national historic sites, i.e., commemorative integrity), and a primary organizational accountability.

Over the next few years, the concept was rapidly elaborated. One of the most important advances was the introduction of Commemorative Integrity Statements. The purpose of these statements is to provide a site-specific description of what commemorative integrity means for a particular national historic site (how can we try to ensure commemorative integrity if we do not know what it means in the context of a specific site?). As is the case with commemorative integrity itself, the Commemorative Integrity Statement (referred to as a CIS) is rooted in Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy. The CIS identifies the historic/heritage values—associative as well as physical—relating to the site (including those not directly related to the formal reasons for designation) and provides guidance or indicators for determining when these values might be impaired or under threat, not adequately communicated or respected. Stakeholder and public participation in the development of the CIS is encouraged. Along with the Cultural Resource Management Policy, the CISs were critical components in Parks Canada's move to values-based management. They responded to the question posed by former ICOMOS secretary-general Herb Stovel: "Where does value lie?" As stated in the 1995 draft Guidelines for the Preparation of Commemorative Integrity Statements, knowing where value lies (i.e., what the values are) is essential to stewardship, because knowing where value lies fundamentally informs

- what we need to do (i.e., manage),
- how we should do/manage it (i.e., adopt management strategies appropriate to the specific case based on the values), and
- what one should be accountable for (i.e., the nature of management accountability).

The draft guidelines were superseded by a considerably more detailed *Guide to the Preparation of Commemorative Integrity Statements* in 2002² to provide clarification and direction on issues that had not been addressed or adequately addressed in the 1995 version, to codify best practice that had developed after 1995, and to provide guidance to a wide range of historic site managers and stakeholders—not simply those in Parks Canada—who might wish to prepare such statements. Commemorative integrity and Commemorative Integrity Statements require the input of experts, but they are not the private preserve of experts. The new guide also made some

minor editorial changes to the definition of commemorative integrity, which now reads as follows:

A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity (health and wholeness) when:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat,
- the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public, and
- the site's heritage values (including those not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

The new guide is available on the Parks Canada website at http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/docs/pc/guide/guide/commemorative_i_o_e.asp

On the monitoring front, it was not until 1997 that Parks Canada began to explicitly report on the state of commemorative integrity of national historic sites. In that year, eight sites were reported on. One of the most interesting findings was that the greatest impairment to these eight sites was in the communication of national significance. Beginning in 2001–02, Parks Canada committed to evaluating the state of commemorative integrity for fifteen national historic sites a year. The Commemorative Integrity Statements serve as the basis for these evaluations.

Within a Parks Canada context, commemorative integrity has become the key component in planning, managing, operating, evaluating, and taking remedial action in national historic sites. The Commemorative Integrity Statement provides the core for national historic site management plans and annual business plans. Commemorative integrity evaluations point to where remedial management action is required and, for an increasing number of managers, they are considered to be a prerequisite to any new management planning activity (how can you plan if there is not a sound understanding of the state of the place for which the plan is being done?).

Commemorative integrity will also be the centerpiece of new legislation planned for Canada's national historic sites, including sites not owned by Parks Canada. In little more than a decade, the values-based management approach inherent in commemorative integrity has gone from a conceptual construct to a way of describing our business. How could this have happened, given all the interests (managers, operations people, professional disciplines, stakeholders, etc.) affected and/or involved? A number of reasons can be suggested to explain this:

- the simplicity of the concept
- the emphasis on values and on a systematic and comprehensive articulation of values
- the focus is on the site, rather than on an organization or specific activities or functions
- its usefulness as a management, planning, and evaluation tool
- its clear relationship to what we (should) do at historic sites
- the involvement and engagement of a broad range of people
- it's not exclusionary
- it's a unifying concept

Notes

1. Parks Canada 1994b.
2. Parks Canada 2002.

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Acknowledgments

As is true with all the case studies in this series, this study of the management of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site draws on extensive consultation among the members of the project steering committee, staff of the site being examined, and authorities from the responsible agency, in interviews and frank discussions. The authors have consulted an extensive range of reports, plans, and statutory and guidance documents relating to this site, to other Level I heritage sites in Canada, and to Parks Canada in general. We have relied on the staff of the site and of the regional Parks Canada office in Quebec for the interpretation of this documentation and the rationale for many decisions made on site. The text presented here reflects many hours of discussion among the steering committee, as well as several rounds of draft reviews.

The situation studied in this case existed between June 2001 and June 2002, when the case was developed and written. Parks Canada is a dynamic organization, and certain changes have taken place in the interim, including policy reviews and adjustments; also, certain activities have been completed on site that had been in the planning stages during the research for this study. Our analysis focuses on the situation as we found it, not on the recent changes. Management is a continuous process, and our case presents a snapshot taken at a particular moment in time. A similar study done in a few years would likely capture a different picture.

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