FS01 Building Conservation at the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site: Technical and Real Life Challenges

FIELD SESSION DESCRIPTION

Located in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, Grosse Île was a quarantine station for the Port of Québec from 1832 to 1937, and the main point of entry for immigrants coming to Canada for almost a century. In this role, the station has also witnessed the tragic events experienced by the Irish immigrants, primarily during the typhoid epidemic of 1847.

In addition to presenting an overview of this rich history, this field session will focus on recent building conservation projects completed in Grosse Île, highlighting the specific challenges of working in such a unique site today, and some of the technical solutions developed to address these conditions.

Objectives:
1. Understand the unique history of the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site of Canada;
2. Visit key restored buildings of the quarantine station;
3. Understand the various challenges of conserving the remaining buildings on the island, considering the isolation of the site, the harsh weather conditions, the current budget restrictions, etc.;
4. Understand some of the management strategies and construction details developed over the years to address these challenges.

Should planes be grounded due to bad weather conditions, making it impossible to fly to Grosse Île, the field session will be replaced with a morning-long presentation about conservation work in Grosse Île, held at the Château Frontenac.

ADDITIONNAL INFORMAITON

Located in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, Grosse Île enjoys a maritime environment subject to rapid changes in weather conditions (usually cooler and windier than on the mainland). For a pleasant visit at the end of October, participants should make sure to wear warm clothes (including hat, scarf and mitten), comfortable walking shoes, and to bring rain gear should the weather forecast be uncertain. Buildings on site are not heated.

Please note that we will be flying to Grosse Île on board small Britten-Norman BN-2B Islander planes (high-wing aircraft with two engines, capacity of 8 passengers), at low altitude over water and most likely in windy conditions, and that the island has a short gravel/dirt runway. The less than 10 minutes flight is therefore always safe and spectacular, but can also be rough.

Please also note that the staff of Parks Canada working on the island is trained for emergency first response, and will do its best to assist in case of an accident. However, participants should be aware that there are no proper medical services per se on Grosse Île, that any evacuation is by plane (which has to fly in), and that the closest hospital is located in Montmagny (about 15-20 minutes by car from the airport). Delays are therefore to be expected.

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CONTACTS

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Jo-Anick Proulx, Visitor Experience and Site Manager, Parks Canada

INTERNET REFERENCES

Library and Archives Canada: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/grosse-ile/index-e.html

SCHEDULE AND MAP

October 27, 2014

Meet à 6:30 am at the main entrance of Fairmont Château Frontenac Hotel

6:30am
Participants boarding bus outside the Château Frontenac Hotel

6:45am
Departure for Montmagny Airport

8:00am-8:15am
Arrival at Montmagny Airport

8:15am-9:00am
Three flights to Grosse Île
(may take a little less time if two simultaneous flights can be made)

9:00am-12:00pm
Visit of the Lazaretto, Catholic Chapel, Anglican Chapel, and Disinfection Building

12:00pm-12:45pm
Lunch inside the First-Class Hotel dining room

12:45pm-14:15pm
Visit of the First-Class Hotel, trail to Celtic Cross, Memorial and cemeteries, and Electrician’s House

14:15pm-14:30pm
Travel back to landing strip

14:30pm-15:15pm
Three flights to Montmagny
(may take a little less time if two simultaneous flights can be made)

15:15pm-16:30pm
All participants must be returned to the Fairmont Château Frontenac Hotel by 4:40 pm. Opening Session and Keynote Speaker at 5:00 pm at Frontenac Room

Participants subject to airsickness or that have a specific health condition, or who may be uncomfortable with the above conditions may probably wish to select another field session.

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