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Sir George-Étienne Cartier

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2018



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SIR GEORGE-ÉTIENNE CARTIER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2018.

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Foreword



Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas belong to all Canadians and offer truly Canadian experiences.

These special places make up one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and cultural heritage areas in the world.

The Government is committed to preserving our natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places and contributing to the recovery of species-at-risk. At the same time, we must continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities so that more Canadians can experience Parks Canada places and learn about our environment, history and culture.

This new management plan for the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed through extensive consultation and input from various people and organizations, including Indigenous peoples, local and regional residents, visitors and the dedicated team at Parks Canada.

National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are a priority for the Government of Canada. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of co-operation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

Catherine McKenna
*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and
Minister responsible for Parks Canada*

Recommendations

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Executive Summary

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site is located at 458 Notre-Dame Street East in Montréal (Quebec), at the north-eastern end of the Historic District of Old Montréal. It includes two semi-detached houses that were occupied by Sir George-Étienne Cartier in the mid-nineteenth century. Since 1985, the East House has been used as an interpretation centre, while the West House's Victorian decor has been restored for visitors. The national historic site, whose architecture exemplifies the Second Empire and neo-Queen Anne styles, houses an exceptional collection of ethnological objects linked to Cartier and his loved ones.

In the present management plan, two key strategies are presented that aim to guide the historic site's management for the next decade.

KEY STRATEGY NO. 1: A SITE THAT INSPIRES A SENSE OF ATTACHMENT AND CREATES A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE AND IDEAS THAT SHAPED MODERN CANADA.

The purpose of this strategy is to create a personal connection between the site's visitors and the people, ideas, and social issues that helped shape modern Canada (from the Confederation to today).

The strategy aims to:

- Establish the national historic site as the principal place in Montréal to learn about the Confederation and the creation of modern Canada.
- Strengthen the public's sense of attachment to the site and to Canada's history by implementing interactive activities based on the site's commemorative intent, the various historical perspectives and cultural resources.
- Immerse visitors in the historical context of the Victorian era by using evocative and well-maintained cultural resources (buildings and collection objects).
- Showcase the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, especially in connection with the Confederation.
- Offer signature activities to build loyalty with the community and instill a "visit tradition."

KEY STRATEGY NO. 2: A SITE THAT IS WELL-POSITIONED IN THE HEART OF OLD MONTRÉAL'S TOURISM OFFER, ONLINE, ON SOCIAL MEDIA, AND WITH GROUPS

The purpose of this strategy is to improve the site's positioning to attract a greater number of visitors.

The strategy aims to:

- Adapt the offer and operating schedule to accommodate targeted returning visitors: new Canadians, school groups, and language learning groups.
- Increase the number of individual visitors by integrating our offer with other tourism offers in Old Montréal, the Old Port, and other Parks Canada heritage sites in the region.
- Increase the importance of the historic site in the community by encouraging opportunities for the community to use the site in new and alternative ways.
- Use the most promising digital and traditional media to enhance the site's visibility.

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and those national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's vision:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by the Agency. *The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site in years to come.

Map 1: Regional Setting

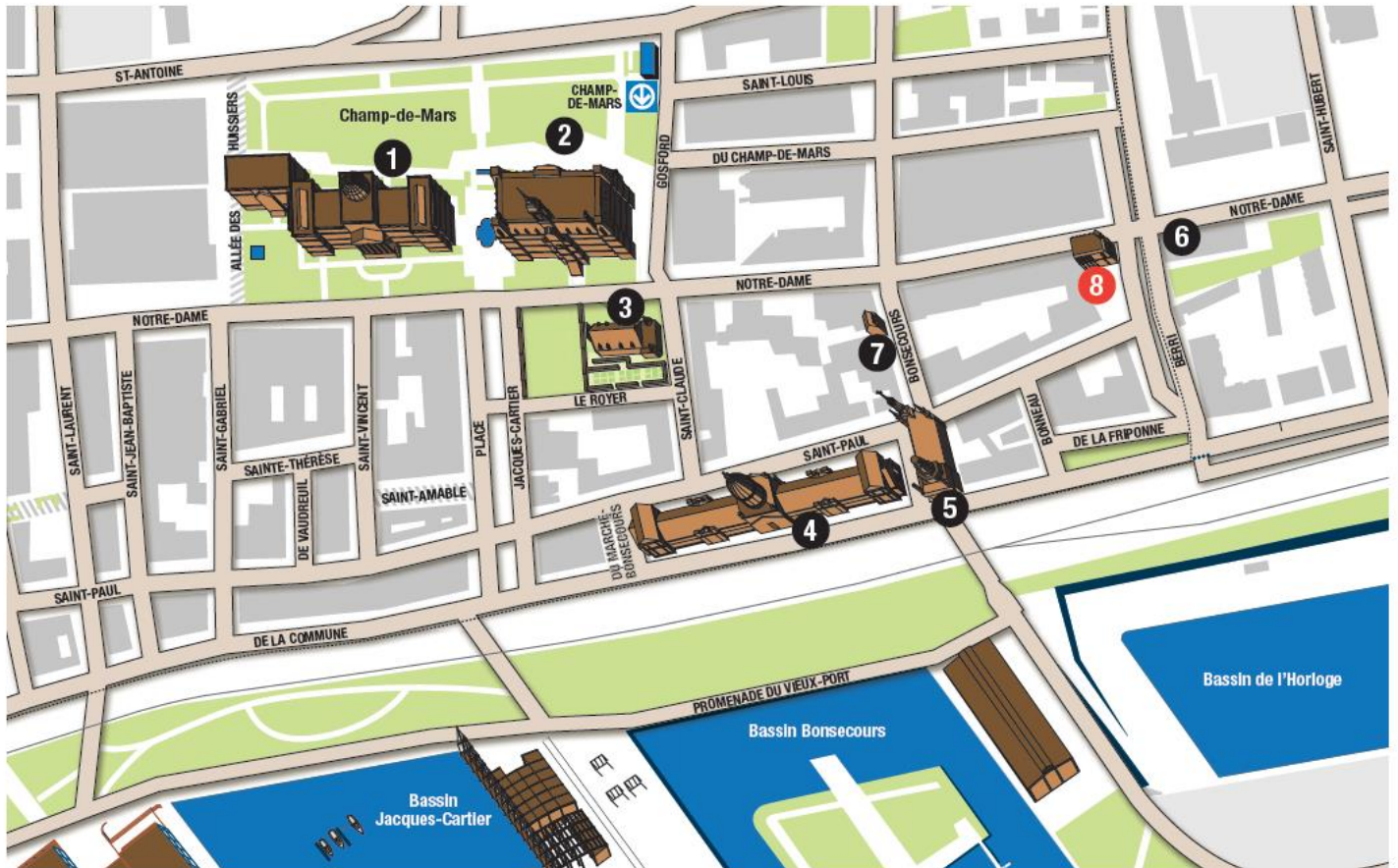


Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site

LOCATION



Map 2: Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site



- 1 Old Court House
- 2 Montreal City Hall
- 3 Chateau Ramezay

- 4 Bonsecours Market
- 5 Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours Church
- 6 Old Dalhousie Train Station

- 7 Louis-Joseph Papineau National Historic Site of Canada
- 8 Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada

2.0 Significance of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site

The national historic site, designated in 1964 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, consists of two adjoining houses that were owned by George-Étienne Cartier in the mid-nineteenth century. The Cartier houses were commemorated because:

- *These two houses together served as the residence of a major Canadian political figure, Sir George-Étienne Cartier.*
- *Cartier was the Prime Minister of the Province of Canada from August 1858 to May 1862.*
- *Cartier was one of the principal Fathers of Confederation.*
- *Cartier was one of the most influential members of the first Canadian cabinet.*

The semi-detached houses, acquired by Parks Canada in 1973, were recognized by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) in 2006 for their heritage and architectural value. The site is also part of the Historic District of Old Montréal, a provincial designation that confers additional protection.

The West House is distinguished by its authentic Victorian decor and abundant ethnological collection, which includes more than 1,000 objects linked to Cartier and his entourage. These objects immerse the visitor in the life of Montréal bourgeoisie in the 1860s, and convey the personality, private life, and political career of Sir George-Étienne Cartier. Interpretation exhibitions are held in the East House. Visitors can learn about the historical context of the Confederation and the importance of Cartier's political career.

3.0 Planning Context

The national historic site opened its doors to the public in 1983. To date, conservation and development efforts have been carried out based on two previous management plans, the most recent of which has been in effect since 2007. Most of the management measures set out in the 2007 management plan were implemented.

Open to the public from mid-June to the end of December, the site can be visited in self-guided (individual) or guided (group) tours. Visitors can discover the history of the national historic site and the reasons for its designation by exploring the exhibitions inside the houses. In December, a special activity called “A Victorian Christmas” allows the public to experience the holiday season as lived by the Montréal bourgeoisie in the 19th century.

Since 2012, interpretative tools have been made available to adapt the visitor experience and encourage self-guided tours. The visitor circuit was changed, the interpretation panels were updated, and signage was improved. “Imagine a Country,” an interactive exhibition showcasing the creation of modern Canada and the Confederation, helped modernize the visitor experience and strengthen the public's sense of attachment to the site.

The national historic site works in collaboration with several partners, including the principal associations and history museums of Montréal, the Commission scolaire de Montréal, and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship.

To plan the future of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada, the Parks Canada Agency considered the site's condition, the issues and possibilities, and the global trends influencing the site. Relationships with principal stakeholders and their interests were also considered in this management plan.

Two main issues were raised during the management plan's development:

- The decrease in visitor numbers. Between 2011 and 2013, the national historic site's visitor numbers decreased by 67% (11,742 to 3,788) due to reduced opening hours, and again in 2015 following a decrease in school groups. However, since 2016, visitor numbers seem to be on the rise again, reaching 4,478 following changes to our opening hours and activities.
- The geographic and thematic positioning of the national historic site. The site is located at the end of Old Montréal, in a secluded area rarely visited by tourists. What's more, the abundance of museums in Old Montréal creates strong competition; the area includes major institutions (Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Archeology and History Complex; the Montreal Science Centre) as well as smaller, but thematically similar, museums (Centre d'histoire de Montréal, Château Ramezay, etc.). It is therefore difficult to draw attention to the site and attract visitors in this context.

4.0 Vision

Located in the Old Montréal, the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site transports visitors to the Victorian era and allows them to experience the daily life of a bourgeois family in Montréal.

Visitors learn about the creation of modern Canada and the key political role played by Sir George-Étienne Cartier in the early days of Confederation. The site also gives visitors the opportunity to discover certain chapters of Indigenous history in Canada and different points of view on the history of the country.

The site testifies to Canada's diverse cultural identity and represents an ideal space to connect with new Canadians, school groups, language learning groups, and tourists from abroad.

The good condition of the buildings and the richness of the collection objects on display enhance the visitor experience and evoke their appreciation.

Thanks to a regularly updated service offer tailored to visitor expectations, visitors are more loyal and increasing in number.

The site redoubles its opportunities for outreach thanks to its strong relationships with the education and museum communities and local tourism stakeholders. The site is well-loved by the community, who appropriate the space for activities.

5.0 Key Strategies

KEY STRATEGY NO. 1: A SITE THAT INSPIRES A SENSE OF ATTACHMENT AND CREATES A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE AND IDEAS THAT SHAPED MODERN CANADA.

The purpose of this strategy is to create a personal connection between the site's visitors and the people, ideas, and social issues that helped shape modern Canada, from the Confederation to today. It is based on two pillars:

- Travel back in time: Immerse visitors in the historical context of the Victorian era and the life of Sir George-Étienne Cartier through evocative cultural resources, an authentic visitor experience, and signature activities.
- Encourage reflection, understanding, and attachment: Help visitors understand and reflect on Canada's political history and its diversity of perspectives through interactive activities and exhibitions.

Objective 1.1: Visitors develop a strong sense of attachment to the national historic site and the political history of modern Canada and the Confederation of today.

- **Target :** Launch five new or updated activities by 2028.
- **Target :** By 2028, maintain visitors' sense of attachment to the site so it remains at or exceeds 85%.

Objective 1.2 : Work together with indigenous communities, linked to the site, in order to honor and showcase their culture and to present their contributions to the history.

- **Target :** By 2020, build a relationship with the Indigenous communities linked to the site.
- **Target :** By 2025, hold activities or events at the site in collaboration with the Indigenous communities linked to the site.

Objective 1.3: The cultural resources are well-maintained and help immerse visitors in the Victorian era and the daily life of Sir George-Étienne Cartier.

- **Target :** Maintain the “good” condition of the national historic site’s cultural resources.

Objective 1.4: Many visitors return to the site annually, creating a “visit tradition.”

- **Target :** Host an annual “signature” activity on site.
- **Target :** Increase the number of people returning to the site by 10% compared to reference year 2016.

KEY STRATEGY NO. 2: A SITE THAT IS WELL-POSITIONED IN THE HEART OF OLD MONTRÉAL’S TOURISM OFFER, ONLINE, ON SOCIAL MEDIA, AND WITH GROUPS
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The purpose of this strategy is to improve the site’s positioning to attract a greater number of visitors. It is based on three pillars:

- Enhance the attractiveness and relevance of the national historic site for returning visitors: new Canadians, school groups, and language learning groups.
- Improve the positioning of the site by integrating it with other tourist or museum attractions in the Old Port and increase its presence on social media to attract a greater number of individual visitors.
- Increase the importance of the historic site in the community by encouraging opportunities for the community to use the site in new and alternative ways.

Objective 2.1: The offer and operating schedule meet the needs of new Canadians, school groups, and language learning groups.

- **Target :** Every year, the national historic site will approach target partners (new Canadian integration organizations, school groups, and language learning groups) to promote the site and confirm that the content of the tours and the site’s operating schedule meet their needs.

Objective 2.2: Integrate the national historic site with other tourism offers in Old Montréal, the Old Port, and other Parks Canada heritage sites.

- **Target :** One activity will be organized annually in collaboration with other tourist sites.
- **Target :** Two promotional activities or networking events will take place annually.

Objective 2.3: Increase the site's presence in Montréal by encouraging opportunities to use the site in new and alternative ways that are compatible with its heritage value.

- **Target :** Every year, the site will host an alternative activity in collaboration with the community.

Objective 2.4: The site uses digital and traditional media to strengthen its links with its target audience and enhance its visibility.

- **Target :** Annually, the site follows trends and is present on the most promising digital and traditional platforms.

Objective 2.5: Increase visitor numbers.

- **Target :** By 2028, increase the number of people visiting the site by 10% compared to reference year 2016.

6.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impacts of management actions on ecosystems and on cultural resources. The *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, requires a strategic environmental assessment of all plans and policies submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a Minister for approval deemed to have important positive or negative environmental effects.

A strategic environmental assessment was undertaken on this management plan. This assessment has been submitted to participants in the consultations, and the management direction found within has been adjusted to respond to findings. The following presents the environmental assessment.

The strategies set out in the management plan will allow Canadians to gain a broader understanding and appreciation of the historic site, strengthen the site's ties with the community, by creating a personal connection between the site's visitors and the people, ideas, and social issues that helped shape modern Canada (from the Confederation to today). The site will have to be well integrated with other tourist or museum attractions in the Old Montreal, the Old Port, and other heritage places managed by Parks Canada. It will have to increase its presence on social media to attract a greater number of individual visitors. Finally, the national historic site will continue its efforts to maintain its heritage resources in good condition.

Implementing measures for attaining the objectives and targets set out in this management plan should help to improve the site's positioning, thereby drawing in more visitors and making the historic site the principal place in Montréal to learn about the Confederation and the creation of modern Canada.

Impact assessments will evaluate the potential negative effects of the individually proposed projects on the site. The Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that the management plan for the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site would have several positive effects on the visitor experience.

It is impossible to determine whether the management plan will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy's goals, but considering Parks Canada's mandate, it is unlikely that it will hinder their progress. No significant negative environmental impacts are expected following the implementation of the management plan.