



Fortifications of Québec  
National Historic Site

# Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site of Canada

including Forts and Châteaux Saint-Louis, Montmorency Park and  
Lévis Forts National Historic Sites of Canada

**Public consultation report, September 2017**



## **Introduction**

The management plan of the Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site, including the Saint-Louis Forts and Châteaux, Montmorency Park and Lévis Forts National Historic Sites, is currently being developed. On this occasion, the Parks Canada Agency has offered the public and community stakeholders the opportunity to give their opinion on the management approach and objectives proposed for the site for the next ten years. This public consultation was held from June 27 to July 30, 2017 (5 weeks).

This document outlines this consultation process and presents a summary of the opinions expressed by the citizens, community stakeholders and regional representatives that were consulted.

## **Objectives**

The consultation had two objectives:

- To make known the management approach and objectives proposed for the draft management plan.
- Obtain the views and comments of the public and partners to allow Parks Canada to improve and adjust the proposed management plan.

## **Consultation Process**

The national historic site's planning team developed a "public consultation newsletter" that covered the following points:

- The historic significance of the site;
- The operation of the site;
- The key achievements since the 2007 management plan came into effect;
- The key issues;
- The proposed management approach for the next ten years, including key strategies and set objectives;
- The vision for the site.

This document, published in French and English, was posted on the historic site's website. The public was invited to read it and make comments and suggestions by completing an online survey that was available until July 30, 2017. For this purpose, an online comments form was available during the consultation period.

This consultation was also promoted on the Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site's Facebook account on July 3, 14 and 27, 2017. It reached 7,064 individuals, received 47 "Likes," was shared 4 times, and the link to the historic site's web page to consult the document was opened 13 times.

The consultation was also advertised in local newspapers (Journal de Lévis, Chronicle Telegraph and Transcontinental's regional weekly newspapers).

A link to the online consultation was posted on the following website:

<http://www1.canada.ca/consultingcanadians/>

On July 6, 2017, personalized emails with information about the possibility of organizing individual meetings were also sent to elected officials and to regional partners. A reminder email, sent on July 26, 2017, invited the parties concerned to share their comments.

The following organizations requested a meeting with Parks Canada, sent their comments by email or phoned: Québec City Tourism, Québec City, the City of Lévis and the National Battlefields Commission.

Finally, a guided tour specially dedicated to the residents of the Historic District of Old Québec was organized on July 12, 2017 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. These visitors toured the fortifications with a Parks Canada guide. The issues and objectives targeted by this preliminary management plan were also presented to them, and they shared their comments. Overall, the people were pleased to have participated in this special tour with Parks Canada. They expressed an interest in the site's history and were informed about the conversation, presentation and communication issues that Parks Canada will pay particular attention to over the coming years.

## **Summary of the main comments received during the consultations**

### **Conservation and maintenance of cultural resources**

The people, in particular those who participated in the guided tour, expressed that they were very curious about the work that Parks Canada does for the conservation and restoration of the fortifications. Several subjects on the precise nature of the work, restoration processes and origin of the material generated interest. In their eyes, it is important and necessary to pursue the conservation work, allocating budgets in the medium- and long-term, ensuring the durability and presentation of the defensive structures. It is considered that the site's heritage character should be retained with as much integrity as possible in order to preserve this "inalienable heritage at the heart of the history of Québec City, of the aboriginal people [and of] Canada as a whole." Some specified that the equipment maintenance budgets (fences, paint, benches, etc.), which are deemed secondary, should also be retained.

It was proposed that Parks Canada undertake a new phase of archaeological excavations at the Montmorency Park National Historic Site, which would provide the opportunity to present the site's parliamentary history. It was even expressed that a permanent exhibit resembling the archaeological crypt of the Saint-Louis Forts and Châteaux National Historic Site be considered.

It was criticized that some elements of the historic sites appear to have been forgotten in the statement of strategies, such as the Governors' Garden and the New Barracks sector.

The lack of positioning with regards to the Palace Gate was pointed out. The gate's disappearance from the landscape created a gap in the northeast section of the fortification wall. Hope that it would be permanently rebuilt was expressed, enabling the completion of the enceinte formed by the fortification walls.

Furthermore, it was pointed out that the management plan is essentially based on real property and that there is little reference to the archaeological and ethnological collections or to the intangible heritage.

Finally, the importance of the archaeological collections for the knowledge and presentation of the heritage of Québec City, including Old Québec, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was highlighted. Moreover, it is deemed that these collections should be stored, presented and managed *in situ*, preferable in partnership.

## **Vegetation and cultural landscapes**

The condition of the cultural landscapes of the Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site is a concern. The growth of the vegetation has gradually obstructed some of the significant views that constitute the characteristic features of these landscapes. The preservation of these views is a desire shared by most of the people consulted. However, the importance of maintaining and increasing the canopy index in Old Québec is not forgotten. It was said to work together with the actors, mainly at the municipal level, for there to be consistency in the actions undertaken.

Within a few years, the vast majority of ash trees at the historic sites will have to be cut down because of the emerald ash borer, recently detected in Québec City. One person wishes to know which actions Parks Canada intends to take to promote the renewal of these trees.

## **Visitor experience and communication of the site's commemorative value**

Many consider that “*the stones and artifacts*” are a treasure to be preserved and made known to both today's and future generations. The fortifications are the hallmark of the city and make it possible to learn more about the various characters that helped shape history and about the social context during that period.

Some people observed that some of the presentation techniques are outdated. Consequently, it was asked on several occasions if new museological or presentation projects were being planned for the coming years, such as a lighting plan, an archaeological presentation, the rebuilding of a gate, the development of other themes (role of some of the sites and characters, for example), and the enhancement of the posters' value.

Some of the cultural partners would like to be informed of the fortifications' ensuing interpretative development plan in order to fuel reflection and draw inspiration from it in their own historic development. These exchanges can thus offer additional products to visitors.

It was mentioned that the widest possible range of experiences and activities should continue to be offered, even if they are only proposed on an occasional basis. Some expressed the desire to present a greater variety of themes.

One person even proposed that a portion of the funds invested in the restoration and conservation of the built assets be allocated to “initiatives for the presentation, education and promotion of the historic sites managed by Parks Canada in the Québec City area.” It was specified that for the better understanding of the country's history it is not enough to simply have historic structures in good condition; explanation is also required. The vital role of Parks Canada's historic sites in educating the public about the essence of Canadian history was often recalled.

## **Recognition of the historic site by stakeholders and the public**

The issue concerning the recognition of the fortifications as an important factor in the designation of the Historic District of Old Québec as a World Heritage Site gave rise to different points of view according to each individual's perspective, be it as a resident, a partner in the museum industry or an event organizer.

Some believe that it is necessary to inform Québec City's Bureau des grands événements, event organizers and the Société de développement commercial du Vieux-Québec of the values associated with heritage. Along the same lines, it was suggested to promote synergy with other tourism authorities with objectives that are complementary to those of Parks Canada, thus supporting this recognition (for example, l'îlot des

Palais, the Place-Royale and the Royal Battery). It was proposed to encourage regular meetings to align Parks Canada's directions with those of event organizers.

The residents stressed that it is important that Old Québec does not simply become a "post card" that only attracts tourists. In this regard, it is important to support residential life in the neighbourhood while preserving its history.

Finally, it appears that the statement of strategy No. 3 requires clarification. "Promoting cooperation among the various stakeholders and raising their awareness in order to ensure that the new initiatives at the heart of the Historic District of Québec City will not compromise the commemorative integrity of the fortifications and consequently its outstanding universal value," is an important intention of Parks Canada that is shared by many, but interpreted differently depending on the groups and organizations heard. One of the objectives of this management plan is that the outstanding universal value of the Historic District of Old Québec as defined by UNESCO is taken into consideration in the planning of all urban development projects by third parties, particularly in the vicinity of the fortifications.

Some people have interpreted that the Agency wishes to put in place corrective measures related to the laws and regulations that would have a negative impact on the partners that would like to develop the sites that are adjacent to those of Parks Canada. It was mentioned that it would be interesting if Parks Canada could take action prior to planning joint projects with Québec City. It was also suggested that Parks Canada take on the role of raising awareness among the federal agencies present in Old Québec of this world heritage. Finally, it was desired that Parks Canada continue playing an active role as advisor in the conduct of heritage impact studies.

### **Tourism promotion**

From a tourism point of view, it is desired that Parks Canada play a leadership role in the use and promotion of the "UNESCO label", which could be further exploited and better known to emphasize the outstanding universal value of the Historic District of Old Québec. In this perspective, Parks Canada should encourage joint collaboration around the "UNESCO product" and its heritage that is to be protected and promoted.

Tourists are drawn to Québec City for its history and heritage. The fortifications of Québec contribute significantly to this cultural wealth. One of Parks Canada's objectives is to ensure that the Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site be known and recognized by visitors and key stakeholders alike.

It was suggested that the Québec City Field Unit promote the national historic sites with a greater collaboration with the Québec City region's tourism industry. This joint effort would enable an increase of the promotion of religious and military tourism over the next few years.

The tourism industry relies on the events held in Québec City, which can serve as triggers giving rise to increased visitation and become urban outreach tools. It was also expressed that research in tourism carried out by Québec City, by the tourism industry and by Parks Canada should be shared in view of promoting work collaboration and sharing.

It was also desired that Parks Canada continue to invest in the school clientele and show interest in emerging clienteles.

To compensate for the lack of visibility of the national historic sites managed by Parks Canada, some proposed installing booths near the gates of the fortified city and on Dufferin Terrace, thus encouraging people to come visit the sites and follow the Parks Canada guides. Others suggested increasing publicity on television and in newspapers.

## **Vision**

Although the people who completed the survey adhered to the proposed vision, the new management plan and its preliminary vision are viewed as a continuity of the initial management plan; the future commitments remain rather general.

It was mentioned that the fortifications of Québec owe their safeguarding to the initiative of Lord Dufferin, who had visionary projects for the fortified city. It was asked if Parks Canada had any plans that would give hope, mainly with regards to enhancing the ramparts and their components. However, those who participated in the survey are aware that these projects depend on funding and that, under these circumstances, it is difficult to develop new ones and encourage hopes.

Finally, it was suggested that the path of the fortifications not be limited to a single linear path, but that alternative paths should be developed, for example, by creating routes that would be adapted according to themes, seasons and events.

## **Conclusion**

The consultation exercise proved to be a positive one and enabled Parks Canada to improve its approach to the management of the national historic site and to its work with the stakeholders. As a whole, the people who participated in the consultations expressed that they were in favour of this approach and supported the management objectives proposed by Parks Canada.

The management plan will be finalized by the end of 2017.

Finally, Parks Canada would like to thank all the participants that took part in the consultation exercise for having submitted their ideas and vision concerning the future of this national historic site.