



John Doucet Architects Limited

Architecture
Planning
Interiors

Ottawa House Status Report **January 18, 2010**

Interpretive Report

The interpretive report began with meetings between JP Camus and members of The Interpretive Report Committee. The research of Conrad Byers has been invaluable in the development of the Interpretive Plan. The work of this report has been developed under three possible themes: “our setting”, “our building” and “our people/our stories”. Con Byers has researched archival material in Halifax and Amherst in an effort to authenticate material pertaining to Ottawa House and Partridge Island area.

In July of 2009, JP Camus and John Doucet recommended the hiring of Mr. John Johnson to work with Con Byers, JP Camus and John Doucet. Mr. Johnson’s role would be as a “writer/editor assisting the local community, notably researcher, collector and archivist Conrad Byers, distill and select the major messages about Ottawa House and its environs for communication to the general public”.

As Mr. Johnson has recommended the work of the following headings:

Our Setting would cover geological and geographic content; formation of the Minas Basin, rising sea level discussion, ship-building era, and linkages with the Fundy Geological Museum, nearby ship-building museum, past ferry transportation links, Cape d’Or, Cape Chignecto and Joggins. The panoramic views from Ottawa House and its grounds make this a natural fit.

Our Building would tell the story of the evolution of the property and building, from its presumed post-Deportation Acadian origins through to the present. The focus here is on architecture, changing use and furnishings. The restoration (past, present and future) would all be treated here.

Our People/Our Stories would come all the human history, with the Tupper period being the likely highlight. But there is more than Tupper’s story here. This is a place where the current community involvement and role of the building as a community centre could be presented.

Mr. Byers and Mr. Johnson’s recommendation would form the basis of Mr. Camus’ audio, video and static display presentations. The building electrical and mechanical systems will be designed in conjunction with Mr. Camus recommendation.

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A proposal to hire Mr. Johnson was presented on July 28, 2009. On Aug. 14, 2009, the decision of The Interpretive Report Committee was to defer the hiring of Mr. Johnson.

By September 2009 the focus of the design team became the completion of the building renovation contract. With the prospect of Mr. Byers having surgery the planning was deferred till the New Year. The possible collaboration of Mr. Johnson working with Mr. Byers would have to be delayed until Mr. Byers recuperated.

Now that Mr. Byres has recovered, our design team is hoping that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Byers can work together to develop the themes: our setting, our building and our people/our stories. We are certain that the work of Mr. Johnson will be of benefit to the production of the best possible Interpretive Plan.

The timeline required to complete the Interpretive Plan would start with a meeting with Mr. Johnson in February to start the collaboration with Mr. Byers. The final decision on material to be used at the Ottawa House site would be determined by May 2010. The final plans for Mr. Camus interpretive display layout would be August 2010. After the final layout the new electrical/ventilation plan for Ottawa House would be designed and tendered in Spring 2011. The renovations to the interior of the building would coincide with the construction implimentation of the Interpretive Plan.