



Date: May 4, 2004

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Stanley Park Commemorative Integrity Statement

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board adopt the Stanley Park Commemorative Integrity Statement, Appendix 1, with the amendment described in this report, as an acknowledgment of the Park's status as a National Historic Site and as a reference for future decision making.

POLICY

There is no applicable policy.

BACKGROUND

In 1988 the Federal Government, on the advice of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), declared Stanley Park a National Historic Site. The government recognized that "Stanley Park, which in its splendid setting and through the relationship between its natural environment and its cultural elements developed over time epitomizes the large urban park in Canada, is of national historic and architectural significance and should be commemorated by means of a plaque."

Further, the Board encouraged those entrusted with determining the future of Stanley Park to strive to preserve this balance between natural and cultural environments, so crucial to its place among Canada's urban parks.

Federal legislation requires a Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS) to be developed for all National Historic Sites to be approved by both the federal government and the park management agency. Staff have been working with Parks Canada during the last couple of years to develop the attached CIS, which is now submitted to the Board for ratification.

This matter was first brought to the Board at its meeting of October 6, 2003 and was referred to the Board's Planning and Environment Committee.

On April 1, 2004 the Committee heard delegations and received submissions from AAA Horse and Carriage, the Vancouver Aquarium and Parks Canada. Staff were asked to report back with an amended Commemorative Integrity Statement.

DISCUSSION

What is a Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS)

The CIS has been developed to provide a framework to assist the custodians of Stanley Park National Historic Site in managing this outstanding place according to its heritage values. A national historic site is said to possess commemorative integrity when the resources that symbolize its importance are not impaired or under threat, when the reasons for its significance are effectively communicated to the public, and when the heritage value of the place is respected in all actions affecting the site. For the first element, the Level 1 cultural resources, or resources directly associated with the commemoration are enumerated under a discussion of the Designated Place, as well as component categories of cultural resources. A series of objectives to protect their values, enumerated after the description of values of the designated place, is intended to apply to all cultural resources within the park, and in particular, to the Level 1, or nationally-significant cultural resources directly connected to the commemoration of Stanley Park as the epitome of the large urban park in Canada.

The second element involves the identification of the nationally-significant messages. These are drawn directly from the Statement of Commemorative Intent, a capsule summary of the site's national historic significance. These messages pertain to the ways in which this site speaks to the history of Canada. In the third element, the Statement begins to enumerate cultural resources, messages and other values not directly tied to the commemoration, but which are nevertheless considered to have value.

It is intended that, once reviewed and approved, the CIS will serve as a guiding document for the planning and day-to-day management of the site and its cultural resources. The goal is that it should help ensure that the heritage values of the national historic site are respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site. This means that the Statement should help guide a range of decisions, from the conceptual planning stage, to development or alterations to facilities, landscapes, and structures, to everyday maintenance.

In terms of its concrete application, the objective is that park custodians would use the statement as a guide to heritage values which must be respected in the context of change. For any planned intervention that might affect the identified elements of the commemorated environment, it is recommended that interdisciplinary teams be formed to evaluate and report on the impacts of proposed changes from the standpoint of commemorative integrity. Such assessments would then help to guide decision-making, ensuring the sound protection and presentation of the outstanding values of Stanley Park National Historic Site.

Stanley Park Commemorative Integrity Statement

The Stanley Park statement (see Appendix 1) enumerates the parks cultural and natural resources, and the values that are associated with each of these resource components.

The very basis of Stanley Park's designation as a National Historic Site lies in the balance between natural and cultural resources. Over time the make up of the natural and cultural resources has changed, but balance has been maintained over more than 100 years of stewardship by the Board.

AMENDMENT

A review of the suggestions received at the Planning and Environment Committee by Parks Canada and Park Board staff have resulted in the following amendment being recommended to be added to the document.

“The Vancouver Aquarium Values

The Vancouver Aquarium has been a major attraction in the park since its establishment in 1956. It is a modern complex set up to display live animals and fish of the marine environment to visitors. The aquarium's mandate encompasses research, education, and conservation. Unlike other programs at the park, the aquarium charges admission fees, and is self-supporting.

The facility was established through the efforts of the Vancouver Public Aquarium Society, an organization of citizens of the City, founded in 1951, which has managed the facility since its establishment. Major expansion of the aquarium occurred in 1966, when the Rufe Gibbs Hall, the British Columbia Hall of Fishes, the BC Tel Pool, the Foley Pacific Ocean Foyer, and research facilities were constructed. The expanded building comprises more than 7,500 m² in surface area.

In the respective facilities are displayed live specimens of the marine environment of British Columbia and tropical regions, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. The display areas also include the Graham Amazon Gallery, the H.R. MacMillan Tropical Gallery, the Killer Whale Pool, and the Outdoor Pools. Among other species, orca, beluga, dolphins, sea lions, seals, and sea otters have been major attractions since their installation in the aquarium. Since the 1960s the aquarium has also carried out an extensive program of research and publication on the ecology of the marine environment. While the infrastructure of the aquarium and its component galleries are not considered to be cultural resources, the traditions of public education regarding the marine environment are considered to be compatible with the park purpose as it has evolved”.

With regards to the suggested inclusion of a reference to horse drawn carriages staff note that the report provides sufficient recognition in the section dealing with the primary scenic driveways. The key heritage value lies in ensuring continuing vehicular access along traditional routes, which implies maintaining the route of Stanley Park Drive. The kinds of vehicles to be granted access to the Park is a Board decision, but is unrelated to the nationally significant values of the park.

SUMMARY

Adoption of the Commemorative Integrity Statement for Stanley Park will firstly acknowledge the values for which the National Historic Site Statement has been conferred and secondly provide a guide for decision making and management in the context of the stated values.

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