

Before a site is referred to the Board for consideration, a background paper is prepared by the research staff of the Historic Sites Service. The Board then determines the significance of the site and makes its recommendation to the Minister. If ministerial approval has been granted to a project, a development plan is prepared.

Land for historic parks and sites is acquired in various ways. Normally it is transferred free of charge by the province concerned to the Federal Government, but occasionally, in special circumstances, the Department itself acquires the land through purchase or private donation.

Administration

The National Historic Sites Service is part of the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Its Ottawa office consists of two divisions -- Research and Operations Policy. Operational responsibility for the development and maintenance of new and existing parks has been decentralized to three regional offices in Halifax (Atlantic Provinces), Cornwall (Quebec and Ontario) and Calgary (four Western provinces and the two territories).

The Historical Research Section of the Research Division carries out documentary research as a basis for the interpretation of parks and sites and for the guidance of archaeological activities. The Archaeological Research Section produces information for site development on the basis of field investigation and laboratory analysis and an underwater-research program.

The Canadian Inventory of Historic Building is the main program of the Architectural History Section. The Inventory, begun in 1970, is a computerized screening program to survey, analyse and categorize the surviving old buildings in Canada.

The Operations Policy Division is responsible for implementing and co-ordinating projects selected for commemoration and preservation. Some of its responsibilities include the planning of existing and potential national historic parks and sites, the designing of exhibits and displays, the acquisition, restoration and conservation of military and domestic furnishings for use in parks and sites, and the provision of visitor services.

Parks and Sites

Since its establishment, the Board has been instrumental in the creation of some 90 historic parks and major sites and in the commemoration of over 600 persons and events of national (as opposed to local or regional) significance. Of the 90 parks and sites, 38 are open to the public, and the remainder are in various stages of development or awaiting development.

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