

Rampart House and LaPierre House Historic Sites

Newsletter No. 1 December 2019

Background

The 1993 Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement recognizes the importance of Rampart House and LaPierre House historic sites, to the Vuntut Gwitchin people and all of Yukon. Chapter 13, Schedule B of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement (VGFNFA), signed by the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, Government of Yukon and Government of Canada in 1993; states that Rampart House and LaPierre House are to be co-owned and co-managed by Vuntut Gwitchin Government and Yukon Government. The historic sites are to be managed in accordance with the VGFNFA, the Implementation Plan, the Yukon Historic Resources Act and the approved Rampart House and LaPierre House Historic Sites Management Plan, completed in March 1999 and signed in July 2001.

In accordance with the VGFNFA, the goal of this project is to produce an “updated” Management Plan (Plan) for Rampart House and LaPierre House Historic Sites that will guide the continued protection, conservation and interpretation of these heritage resources.

Why an Updated Plan?

The purpose of updating the Plan is to review the directions for each site that were set out in the 1999 Management Plan and determine what work has been accomplished, what remains to be done and what new information can be used to guide site management over the next several years.



Dan Cadzow's Store in 1915.
University of Alaska Archives



Stabilization and restoration work begins on the store in 2000.
YG photo

Since the initial Management Plan was completed, there has been additional information collected in the form of interviews with Elders and increased recognition of Gwich'in language and cultural history. Also, there has been pan-Canadian collaboration to develop Standards and Guidelines in heritage conservation which will guide the Management Plan Update.

The updated plan will address how the sites can accommodate visitors and continue to be conserved. The plan will identify potential uses that will not detract from the heritage significance or damage the heritage features of each site.

The updated plan will build on the solid foundation of the original plan and add:

- a Vision Statement for each site clearly stating the overall future direction.
- a Statement of Significance summarizing why the sites are valued by Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukoners.
- a phased implementation plan with priorities, a schedule, and estimated costs for future work for each site.

Community involvement will inform how the sites are managed and developed in the future.

Steering Committee:

VGFN Heritage Committee:

Robert Bruce Jr.
Jane Montgomery
Marion Shaffer
Megan Williams

Yukon Government Historic Sites:

Barb Hogan, Manager, Historic Sites
Brent Riley, Historic Sites Restoration
Planner
Ty Heffner, Yukon Archeologist
Shannon Van Bibber, Project Manager



September 2019 community meeting in Old Crow.
YG photo

Project Team

Wendy Shearer, Landscape Architect and Cultural Heritage Specialist from Guelph, Ontario is working with Helene Dobrowolsky and Rob Ingram of Midnight Arts and the Steering Committee to update Rampart House and LaPierre House Historic Site Management Plan.

Wendy Shearer has 30+ years' experience in landscape architecture and heritage planning. Wendy also teaches the Cultural Landscape Course with the University of Victoria. Wendy's Yukon experience includes:

- *Lansing Post Historic Site Management Plan* with YG and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun
- *Conrad Historic Site Management Plan* with YG and Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- *Fort Selkirk Management Plan Update* with YG and Selkirk First Nation
- *Top of the World Highway Interpretation Plan* for YG and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- Keno Hill Silver Mining District for Na-Cho Nyak Dun

Helene and Rob, Midnight Arts, Cultural and Heritage Resource Consultants from Whitehorse have 30+ years' experience in research, writing, heritage planning, management and interpretation. Their projects include:

- *Rampart House and LaPierre House Management Plan*, 1999;
- *Rampart House and LaPierre House Historic Sites Interpretation Plan and Interpreters Manual*, 2008;
- John Tizya Centre, Old Crow, 2005. Provided design assistance, final text, graphic and specimen selections for all exhibits.
- *Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan and Interpretive Manual*, 1994, for YG and SFN
- *Fort Selkirk Management Plan Update*, 2000, for YG and SFN

Features of the 1999 Management Plan

The 1999 Management Plan outlined the following:

Planning Context: Boundaries, ecological settings, traditional and current uses.

Heritage Resources: Inventory of structures, archaeological resources, artifacts, and documentary sources including oral history recording.

Conservation: Description of the various processes for safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations and suggested conservation priorities.

Site Development and Visitor Services: Description of visitors to the sites – both VG citizens and others; safe and desired levels of visitation, infrastructure needed, and measures to safeguard the sites and their resources.

Interpretation: Organization of site stories into themes and topics, identification of natural and cultural interpretive resources, recommendations for on and off-site interpretation.

Implementation Strategies: Suggested priorities for tasks such as continued research, protection of the historic sites' resources, any needed infrastructure, conservation of heritage structures, on and off-site interpretation, together with estimated costs and suggested timeline.



Rampart House restoration and interpretive panel 2014. YG photo

What has been accomplished

In the two decades since the completion of the last Management Plan, a great deal of work has been accomplished on both sites. Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukon governments' heritage staff have overseen preservation and stabilization work on the buildings at Rampart House, and interpretative features and boardwalks at LaPierre House.

On the next pages are a few highlights of the work carried out at Rampart House and LaPierre House over the last 20 years. Both YG and VGG provide funds and staff to undertake the conservation projects.

ONSITE

Rampart House

1998 – archaeology report on excavations at Rampart House by Grace Tanaja, B.A.

1999-2018 – Summer work crews from Old Crow conduct stabilization and exterior restoration of five buildings: Cadzow Store, Cadzow House, Cadzow warehouse, St. Luke's Rectory and a frame cache. A sixth – St. Luke's Church is underway. Workers also handle routine site maintenance and upkeep.

2001 – signing of RH-LH Management Plan at Rampart House, the largest on-site gathering in 50 years

2003 – construction of wooden footbridge over gully between two parts of the site

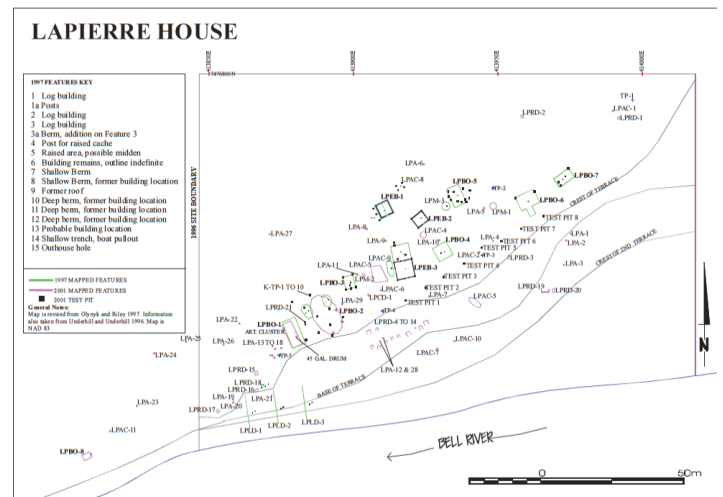
2013 - installation of three interpretive panels

2016 – installation of riverbank site identification sign

Periodic visits to Rampart House by school groups and for culture camps.



LaPierre House.
YG photo



LaPierre House site plan.
YG photo



Florence Netro interviewing John Joe Kyikavichik at LaPierre House.

VG photo

Zheh Gwatsàl / LaPierre House

1997 – documenting and mapping features by Ruth Gotthardt, Archaeologist, Greg Hare, Archaeologist and YG Historic Sites staff.

2001 – documenting and mapping at LaPierre House by T. J. Hammer.

2014 – installation of riverbank identification sign.

2018 – installation of six interpretive panels and boardwalks to help protect fragile remains.

OFFSITE

Ongoing – archival research and oral history recording with Elders.

Interpretation resources for both sites available in Old Crow.

2008

- Preparation of *Rampart House and LaPierre House Interpretation Plan and Interpreters Manual*.
- Grand opening of John Tizya Centre during Biennial International Gwich'in Gathering.

2010

- Publication of booklet Rampart House with history and guide to site

Online interpretive resources:

- “Sights and Sites of the Yukon” Rampart House and LaPierre House interpretive content.

<https://sightsandsites.ca/rivers/site/lapierre-house>

- *Guide to Rampart House Historic Site*

<https://yukon.ca/en/rampart-house-guide>

- LaPierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites Interpretation Plan

<https://yukon.ca/en/lapierre-house-and-rampart-house-historic-site-interpretation-plan>

2019

- Start of Rampart House and LaPierre House Management Plan Review and Update



Work crew at Rampart House, 2008.

YG photo



St. Luke's Church in Rampart House, 2007.

Midnight Arts photo



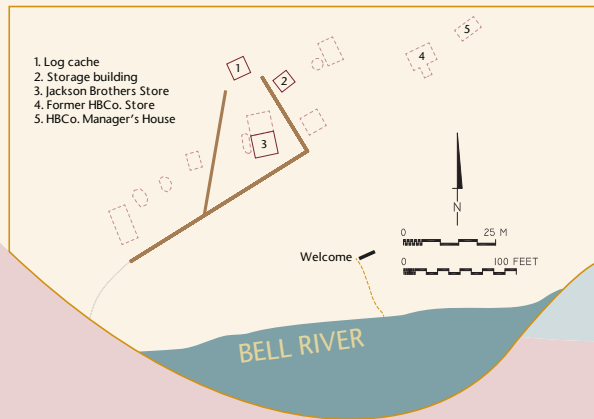
LaPierre building corner joint detail, 2012.

YG photo

Welcome to Zheh Gwatsàl: LaPierre House

LaPierre House* sits in a rich and diverse area that was part of the homeland of the Dagoo Gwich'in of the upper Porcupine River. The area has a long history of use by Dagoo Gwich'in, Van Tat Gwich'in (also spelled Vuntut Gwich'in) from the Old Crow area, and Teet'it Gwich'in (also spelled Tetlit Gwich'in) from the Fort McPherson area, Northwest Territories. Drawn by the abundance of flora and fauna, people came here to hunt, trap, fish, gather plants and congregate. Gwich'in stories emphasize an ancestral connection to the land that is deep and timeless. The stories are complemented by archaeological findings of artifacts and animal bones that date back over 2,500 years in this area.

LaPierre House is a former Hudson's Bay Company outpost, established in 1846 and run as a winter supply post. Named after the man who built and ran the post for the first few years, LaPierre House is known as Zheh Gwatsàl [small house] in Gwich'in.



* Unofficial Name

Nestled in a rich hunting area, LaPierre House became a meeting point between Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories and Fort Yukon, Alaska, and supplied the dried caribou and fish consumed there. After the Hudson's Bay Company left Yukon in 1893, it was run by private traders. By 1940, use of LaPierre House had dramatically declined. Today, the site welcomes visitors and tells the fascinating story of history and continued cultural connections to LaPierre House. You are invited to tour the site and experience its rich natural and social history.

Tread Softly at LaPierre House

LaPierre House is a historic site in a delicate ecosystem. Tread softly and leave the site as you found it. This site is protected under the Yukon Historic Resources Act and the Vuntut Gwich'in Heritage Act. Do not disturb archaeological or historic remains.

LaPierre House



Charlie Peter Charlie Sr.

"A good place. That's the main place, that's the reason the Gwich'in people pick that place to stay around there because it's good for fish, good for trapping, good for hunting and that's the main place for caribou. People used to gather there and dry meat."

Charlie Peter Charlie, 1995
VGG photo



Interpretive panel erected at LaPierre House in 2018.
Midnight Arts photo



Installing the panels at LaPierre House in 2018.
YG photo



Wendy Shearer, project team leader, (at right) meeting with Megan Williams, VGG, Heritage Manager, and Brent Riley, YG Historic Sites Restoration Planner.
YG photo

September 2019 Community Meeting

On September 11, 2019, the Steering Committee and members of the project team hosted the community at a start-up meeting, featuring a delicious caribou dinner. The Management Plan Update was introduced, and people were invited to provide their input into the project. Several people shared their memories of past visits to the sites, particularly Rampart House. Other comments generated discussion of the role of tourism at the sites and potential benefits to the community.

Some issues suggested for the updated plan included:

- information about the trails and historic routes to and from the sites,
- the use of Gwich'in language,
- information about cultural technology, such as fishing and hunting, that can be shared with school groups,
- increased measures for site brushing and fire protection,
- and improved access up the riverbank at Rampart House.

Community members were invited to assist the project team by completing questionnaires. These are still available for people to complete and share their thoughts about current and future uses of the sites.

Next Steps

The project team plans to visit Rampart House and LaPierre House in June 2020.

At that time, they will also meet with the community to:

- provide information on the original Management Plan and the progress that has been made since its completion,
- respond to the questions raised by the community at the September open house,
- share their observations from the on-site visits.

The team will present a draft *Rampart House / LaPierre House Historic Sites Management Plan Update* including a Vision Statement for each site and preliminary recommendations for their future care and maintenance. The community will be invited to provide comments for the next steps for the conservation of each site.

Once the contributions from the community and the Steering Committee are considered, a Final Management Plan Update will be prepared. It will contain sections dealing with interpretation messages, a schedule for ongoing conservation, maintenance and monitoring work, cost estimates, and community capacity to contribute to the work. The Final Management Plan Update will be available to the community for review and approval in late 2020. All community members are invited to participate in the upcoming meetings to ensure a successful project.

Old Crow Community Open Houses

- 1 September 2019
- 2 June 2020
- 3 November 2020

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