In 1995, UNESCO designated the Old Town of Lunenburg a World Heritage Site, for being “an outstanding example of the planned European colonial settlement in North America.” The evaluation concluded that the town “retains most of the qualities of the original British model colonial settlement, without losing its status as a fully functioning community in the modern world.” Yet eight years later, a resident of Lunenburg, who was also Nova Scotia’s representative on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, asked “if any good has come from the UNESCO designation” in an article titled “Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, World Heritage Site—Would We Do it Again?”

Lunenburg is today one of Nova Scotia’s better known heritage attractions. But to what extent is it an historic site? And how has the necessary preoccupation with tourism, use, profitability, and management—the concerns of “the modern world”—affected historical interpretation? This study discusses some of the more pressing issues in Lunenburg, especially a lack of public interpretation dealing with the colonial period. It also raises other questions such as pressures on the local economy and the environment, and a collage of governmental authorities. Throughout Atlantic Canada, communities which are designating historic districts and marketing themselves as heritage destinations are confronting similar challenges: the economic confines of being a “period piece,” the delicate negotiation of regulatory by-laws, the various demands of tourist audiences. And so a study of Lunenburg sheds light on regional issues, as it parallels circumstances in places like Annapolis Royal and St. Andrew’s by the Sea; these are all planned towns founded around eighteenth-century military fortifications, now national historic districts whose attractive colonial architecture and seaside locations make them prominent tourist destinations and sources of promotional...
images for Eastern Canada. Given that Parks Canada continues to propose World Heritage Sites, including two in Nova Scotia (Joggins, a significant fossil site, and Grand Pré), a public discussion of the principles and implications of World Heritage designation is timely.

**THE LITERATURE**

Lunenburg has not attracted the same interest from public historians as other sites in Nova Scotia such as Louisbourg. The popular illustrated histories emphasize the heroics of the age of sail and the town’s prosperity evident in its ornate Victorian housing. Designation has prompted extensive architectural studies, but these focus on recording visible features rather than explaining societal context. Despite the excellent research on the colonial seaboard underway, especially in graduate programs (with particular interest in region, the Atlantic world, and imperial cartography), there is not as deep a body of academic material as one might expect given Lunenburg’s status as a World Heritage site. Even James D. Kornwolf’s enormous, three-volume *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America*, to take one example, devotes only one paragraph to Lunenburg in its 1770 pages.

On the other hand, studies of heritage tourism have been preoccupied with questions of commerce, assessing the sources and effects of market demand; how “destination images” are cultivated, for example. In other words, the emphasis is on the sociology of tourism rather than the sociology of historical practice. However, growing awareness of environmental issues has introduced concepts such as sustainability and carrying capacity, and demonstrated the need to evaluate the resources which must meet that demand. To some extent, the European experience with cultural landscapes and historic cities serves as a useful model. Despite the rush to embrace tourism as a replacement industry in the post-coal and cod age, it is important to remember that cultural or heritage tourism is neither a recent nor a Canadian phenomenon. Venice became an early subject of international concern because of wear and tear from centuries of visitors, and a UNESCO conference there in 1964 produced the foundational International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. More recently, a collaborative study between UNESCO and universities in Venice and Rotterdam has been tracking the effects of tourism in European heritage cities.

**LUNENBURG: “THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE MARITIME CIVILIZATION”**

Although Canada traditionally has touted its outstanding natural features to the world community, the colonial landscape is deeply entrenched in the culture and history of its Atlantic provinces. The “outstanding example” of planned colonial settlement, Lunenburg had its origins in the summer of 1753, when Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Lawrence (at the direction of Governor Peregrine Thomas Hopson)
oversaw the resettlement of 1453 German-speaking emigrants about 90 kilometres from Halifax on a site known as Merliguesche. The British hoped to counteract the French and Catholic Acadian majority with these loyal “Foreign Protestants,” recruited from southwestern Germany and the Montbéliard district of France and Switzerland. The site was chosen for its defensible peninsula, protected harbour, and moderately tillable land—a rarity on the Atlantic shore. The town was laid out by the colony’s Chief Surveyor, Charles Morris, as a near-copy of his planned town at Halifax four years before.\(^7\) In addition to mathematically precise streets, house lots, garden lots and farm lots for settlers, it included sections designated for industrial (closest to the harbour), commercial (north of the waterfront), and institutional use (the central parade square, courthouse and Anglican Church lots); plus nine blockhouses, a reminder of the inhabited environment (French and Mi’kmaq) into which the British were intruding.\(^8\) Such “model towns” had been planted along the British

Figure 2. Charles Morris’s Plan for Lunenburg
American seaboard for a century, at places like Charleston (1680) and Savannah (1732). The grid, therefore, served possessively symbolic as well as organizational purposes, for it “stamp[ed] a British design onto the new geography.”

In short, Lunenburg was planned as a fortified and an agricultural settlement, not a fishing community. A coastal trade appeared by the end of the eighteenth century, but it was not until the 1860s—over a century later—that the town began to profit from a booming fish export trade and a new industry building “saltbankers” destined for the offshore fishing grounds. Thus merchants profited from both equipping the fleet and selling their catch upon their return. The town’s incorporation in 1888 reflected this new confidence, prominence, and prosperity, a prosperity which would also build the signature streetscapes which visitors see today. This period would also produce the definitive icon of the province in the racing schooner Bluenose—an icon that embodies (and preserves) the enduring influence of one period over Lunenburg’s identity. Together with the annual Fishermen’s Picnic, begun in 1918, there are already signs of nostalgia for the late nineteenth century that would dominate public discussions of Lunenburg in the twentieth.

By the mid 1960s, Lunenburg was tilting sharply towards a heritage industry. An urban renewal study in 1966 voiced both the concerns and priorities that have preoccupied the town ever since: traffic congestion, rising property values, outflow to Bridgewater, and antipathy toward outsiders (though in 1966, this meant specifically Newfoundland labourers). But the 1966 report heralded Lunenburg as “the urban jewel of Canada…the very essence of the Maritime civilization”; praised the colonial grid for protecting the town from post-war urban sprawl; and recommended that this “gem of Canadian urbanism” be preserved through a buildings register, architectural legislation, restoration, and the creation of a national historic site. Interest in featuring historic resources in economic renewal was not unique to Lunenburg; in Cape Breton the greatest historic reconstruction Canada would ever see was taking shape at Fortress Louisbourg, precisely to provide employment in a post-industrial landscape.

Growing interest in heritage tourism blurred the boundaries between a working fishery and a heritage waterfront. Smith and Rhuland constructed replicas of the HMS Bounty in 1960, the Bluenose in 1963, and the HMS Rose in 1970, all of which attracted external (read: corporate and tourist) interest in the town. A clutch of provincial development studies recommended tourism as a means of diversifying from fish and forest exports, and to “take advantage of the historical and waterfront attractions with the aim of arresting the relative decline of the town.” The small Fisheries Museum received a dramatic boost in profile in 1975, when Ottawa designated it a National Museum and funded its reinvention as the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic. There was also a growing realization throughout Nova Scotia that “poverty preserves”; economic downturns in the twentieth century had “protected”...
Victorian homes by removing any incentive for redevelopment, leaving towns with buildings that were once again fashionable as historic destinations. Interest shifted from costly megaprojects to urban streetscape renewal, but this also placed greater responsibility on municipal governments, and greater pressure on heritage properties to demonstrate commercial value. Nova Scotia’s first Heritage Property Act (1980), for example, provided for the designation of heritage properties and districts, but emphasized the importance of rehabilitation “to ensure their continued use.”

In 1992, the entire Atlantic seaboard was convulsed with the groundfish moratorium. It was no coincidence that the campaign to designate Lunenburg accelerated at precisely this moment. In 1991 it was named a National Historic District (the first of four in Nova Scotia), and in 1995 became Canada’s eleventh entry onto the World Heritage Site list. Since nomination is a federal prerogative, Parks Canada was necessarily involved in the process, but it is interesting to note the town’s own interest in designation—particularly its economic benefits. According to longtime mayor Laurence Mawhinney, Gordon Fulton, then an architectural historian with Parks Canada (now Director of its Historical Services Branch) broached the idea of World Heritage designation in 1993. Roy Graham, the ICOMOS evaluator, considered Fulton the historical authority when he visited the town in February of 1995; and Fulton, as the federal representative, authored the formal application to UNESCO. But Parks Canada—an agency which, by the 1990s, was seeing a marked shift in its practices of local consultation—made a point of acknowledging their counterparts on the ground. Peter Haughn, the Assistant Town Manager, was a key contact for both Fulton and Graham, and the Department of Canadian Heritage named the Lunenburg Heritage Society and Heritage Advisory Committee as winners of Parks Canada Awards in 1996 for their work in the designation process and as leading examples of a “spirit of cooperation.”

But if there was a common interest in recognizing the heritage fabric, it is evident that the town (notably the Town Council) was also very conscious of the potential revenue at stake. In 1997 it commissioned Roy Graham to write the Lunenburg World Heritage Community Strategy, as essentially a management plan (though most of its innovative suggestions have yet to be implemented). The Strategy opens with a frank reference to this pragmatic view of the UNESCO designation: “the Town Council was aware that World Heritage Listing presents the community with tremendous opportunities for new economic development through international marketing, increased tourism, new cultural industries, and rejuvenation of local business and industry.” The municipal preoccupation with the fishery and “economic diversification” has, as we will see, pervaded its attitude toward World Heritage designation. In short, an exploration of the issues being faced in Lunenburg today place the town squarely in the middle of an important global debate about heritage, and the costs and benefits of designation.
“A Model Town”: World Heritage Designation, 1995

The concept of World Heritage Sites originated with the 1972 UNESCO “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” which proposed a “system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.” Most of Canada’s other World Heritage Sites are natural or archaeological; the nearest precedent for Lunenburg was Quebec City, whose citadel, walls, and basse-ville constituted “by far the most complete [example] in North America” of a fortified colonial town. Canada nominated Lunenburg on three of UNESCO’s criteria: “an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history” (IV); “an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change” (V); and—regarding Morris’ model plan—“a masterpiece of human creative genius” (I). The nomination conflated the “successive stages” of the town’s history in order to include both its layout (eighteenth century) and architectural fabric (nineteenth). However, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) definitively emphasized the colonial period in its evaluation. “It may be fairly claimed,” it concluded, “that Lunenburg is the only one of over twenty British settlements in North America to retain all the elements of its original plan virtually intact...it is the best surviving example of this colonial settlement phenomenon.”

Designation: How Well Does it Work?

Academics have criticized heritage tourism for gentrifying the Old Town into “an amusement park for tourists.” Craftsmen that once served a productive fishery, they argue, now dance attendance on an urban-consumer market: “The blacksmith who once made anchors and other hardware for fishing vessels began creating decorative iron works...shipyards and chandlers started servicing yachts and other pleasure craft where once they built fishing schooners.” Such criticism, with its implicit sympathies for working fishermen, fails to acknowledge a few harder realities. In the 1990s the future of the fishery was in doubt; implying that tourism ended its life prematurely is a nostalgic, if not ahistorical judgment. Idealizing the industry also overlooks the environmental costs of an exhausted resource. To depict a working population victimized by upper- and middle-class tourists neglects the fact that the leading features of the town were built as civic demonstrations of wealth and societal aspirations by relatively few of its leading citizens. And to suggest that tourists merely exploit heritage resources ignores the important truth that they also can value them. In 1995 the mayor told the Halifax Daily News, “I don’t think Lunen-
burgers have the same appreciation for what we have as do those who come from beyond Lunenburg.” He also indicated a preference for tourists attracted by that history. Generally speaking, cultural tourism is an attractive proposition for economic sustainability because these tourists generally stay longer, have higher levels of income, are more educated, and prefer lower-impact or place-sensitive activities to mass “tourist” entertainment. In the decade following designation, however, several complications have become evident, such as heritage education, public pressure on the community and the environment, and jurisdictional rights-of-way.

1. THE LIMITS OF STREETSCAPE HISTORY

With the town presenting a unified nineteenth-century waterfront and streetscape, there is a disparity between the period seen and the period prioritized in designation. This is the concern of an academic – not the concern of the town council – but it is precisely for that reason that it needs to be discussed. The waterfront evokes a romantic era of seafaring, the colourful houses an era of cosmopolitan wealth (a far cry from Ian McKay’s simple fisher-“folk”!). But these Victorian artifacts are largely anachronistic to the UNESCO designation. Only about 1 percent of the Old Town dates to the eighteenth century, nearly half to 1880-1899. The housing of the prosperous nineteenth century replaced (or built over) the more modest settlement landscape, but it is misleading: Stephen Hornsby points out that American ports boasted a “wealth of fine housing and public building,” but British Atlantic towns-
it is planning to interpret the eighteenth century settlement era as well; but, as it is run by the local heritage society, it lacks the profile and resources of the Fisheries Museum which consequently exerts a far greater influence. This also contains visitors at the waterfront rather than drawing them up the hill to the eighteenth-century grid or one of the few older buildings. But even here the streetscapes go unexplained, an eclectic mix of architectural styles that collectively suggest a generic Victorian character.\textsuperscript{31}

This reliance on ambiance leaves too much to commercial venues, which play exclusively to the maritime theme. Visitors may buy a model dory at one of the gift shops; have a lobster lunch at the Fishermen’s Arms; walk onboard the Bluenose II; and retire to a bed and breakfast in a converted sea captain’s house. To be fair, it is easier to re-use and re-inhabit buildings of the late nineteenth century than a two-dimensional grid of the eighteenth; and one of the hard realities of preservation is that it must treat not only what is left, but what can be made worth keeping. And yet the commerce that can exist sympathetically inside that streetscape is itself limited, to bed and breakfasts, restaurants, art galleries (particularly of maritime or folk art such as that of Maud Lewis). Thanks to Nova Scotia’s “theming” of highways, Lunenburg is situated on the “Lighthouse Route,” with the iconic Peggy’s Cove and yachtsmen’s favourites Mahone Bay and Chester. It is thus positioned as an ideal day trip from Halifax. Cruise ships and convention centres from Halifax regularly send buses on this “south shore loop.”\textsuperscript{32} Unfortunately, this again minimizes Lunenburg’s historical qualities by cutting short the opportunity for interpretation, and instead lends itself to a light day of searching for visually similar seaside villages. As one scholar described the experience of bus tours in Ireland, “The idea is to have been there, not necessarily to have been enlightened.”\textsuperscript{33} Another has studied the effects of World Heritage designation on Quebec City, and noted a public indifference toward an essentially benign World Heritage status, and an inability for the site to communicate effectively its historic importance. Presumably these two things are related.\textsuperscript{34}

2. COMMUNITY TENSIONS

There is also a concern that heritage tourism unbalances the town’s economic and social equilibrium. Many everyday services—which cater to residents, rather than tourists—have decanted to neighbouring Bridgewater. Employment in a seasonal
service industry pushes the younger generation to look elsewhere for employment (the median age of the town’s population is 50). Wealthy retirees or summer residents from Ontario, the United States and Europe seeking pretty Victorian homes drive up real estate prices and property taxes. The majority of visitors being from outside Atlantic Canada exacerbates the distance between visitor and local. With a population hovering around 2500, Lunenburg has neither the physical infrastructure nor demographic depth to absorb large numbers comfortably, nor, for that matter, the space to protect the privacy of residents. Fear of a tourism monoculture is common to historic cities, yet the economic benefits of tourism depend on sufficient numbers to justify the costs of a tourist infrastructure, to defend preservation as a profitable venture, and to attract government grants.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES AND ISSUES

Heritage tourism is usually analyzed in socioeconomic terms, but it places as much pressure on a site’s natural resources as its human ones. In the 1960s, some of the world’s most famous sites began to assess their environmental damage and carrying capacity, or how much use they could bear. The Lascaux caves were closed in 1963; Stonehenge and Colonial Williamsburg noted the wear of overuse, and began discussing energy consumption, local purchasing, and pollution; and recurring *aqua alta* in Venice mobilized public concern over a sinking city amid rising sea levels. Accordingly, the 1972 convention tried to “[relate] cultural identity associated with sites to the natural environment in which they occur.” Subsequent conventions—the 1975 Amsterdam Declaration for Europe, the 1979 Burra Charter for Australia, and the 1982 Deschambault Declaration for Quebec—broadened the definition of heritage to include historic landscapes, while other ICOMOS charters expressed concern over pollution and overvisitation.

Lunenburg may not be sinking, but it entered its tenure as a World Heritage Site bearing the cumulative effect of decades of water pollution. In a 1992 survey prepared for the Atlantic Coastal Action Program, the majority of the respondents considered Lunenburg and Mahone Bay harbours to be in “poor or very poor” condition, and it was arguably the UNESCO spotlight that prompted a harbour clean-up and construction of a water treatment plant. The town does not regulate visitor numbers, and its 350,000 annual visitors leave a substantial footprint in waste and energy. Interestingly, the 1998 *World Heritage Community Strategy* written for the town borrowed several strategies from European heritage planners, such as expanding the existing visitor centre outside the downtown at Blockhouse Hill and then shuttling visitors into the Old Town, insisting on pedestrian access, and charging admission to town sites. Limiting automobile traffic is frequently proposed for historic towns; with overhead wires, traffic congestion presents the biggest historical-visual discord with Lunenburg’s model town grid, and ICOMOS specifically states...
that traffic must be controlled in order to preserve historic fabric. Given Nova Scotia’s poor environmental track record, Lunenburg’s small scale suggests it might serve as another kind of “model town”: a greener, post-industrial community. Even in 1966 the town was seen as an alternative to the prevailing practices of suburban sprawl on the one hand and downtown levellings as “renewal” on the other. There is “a scale of contact with the sea and the land behind which is missing in our larger cities and should be nurtured here,” planners wrote. “It is an inspiration for our generation in creating new urban forms.”

In addition, the relationship between Lunenburg and its eighteenth-century environment needs to be acknowledged in site interpretation. After all, it was designated as “an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use...or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.” It was the need for territorial security that prompted the British government to found the settlement, and the prospect of land holding that prompted the “Foreign Protestants” to agree. It was the prospect of arable soil that partly determined the choice of site, and the limits of that soil along the Atlantic that shaped differences from north to south along the colonial seaboard. Whereas Annapolis Royal and St. Andrew’s were preserved by their geographical inconvenience, it was the hilly topography that helped contain Lunenburg’s colonial grid from sprawling development. The “sea-use” of the later period explains the architectural fabric, for those ornate houses were paid for by fish exports (and built with widows’ walks). Lastly, its history of environmental injuries needs to
be remembered. The collapse of fishing stocks is only the latest example; sawmills dumped leavings into county rivers, clogging spawning grounds, and industries like the iron foundry did the same with the town harbour. Environmental interpretation is necessary both to historicize the visible streetscape and to relate the historical experience of the town to contemporary environmental issues. Indeed, UNESCO is currently authoring a History of Water and Civilization project designed to integrate historical and cultural values into water-use planning—precisely because historians can throw light upon the limits imposed by nature on human objectives.

4. JURISDICTIONAL COMPLEXITY

Equally delicate, and rather more confusing, is the political landscape within which Lunenburg rests, hedged about by multiple jurisdictions. Four levels of government are involved, each with different agendas with regard to preservation. As a signatory to the 1972 Convention, first of all, Canada agrees that the protection of world heritage “is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate” [Article 6]. So there is an international standard, if not international governance—the distinction is important, because the World Heritage Organization, acknowledging the sovereignty of member nations, can do little more than remove a site from the list after its heritage is compromised. More generally, if a designation explicitly recognizes external, indeed, global (or “universal”) value, then there is the potential for a hierarchy or rivalry between local history and international significance, between community memory and external expectation, between a specific place and local artifacts and a generally accessible heritage.

All World Heritage Sites must be designated nationally before they can be nominated to UNESCO. Indeed, as far as UNESCO is concerned, the federal government is the only authority at the site: the only body able to nominate a site, define its “universal values” [Article 1], or request assistance [13]; and most important, as the signatory to the convention, the only government responsible for site protection, regardless of constitutional jurisdiction [34]. (It is not surprising, then, that both Canada and the United States have preferred to nominate sites that already fall within federal jurisdiction). Although this bucks the current trend in historic site management—toward decentralization, local consultation, and levelling the hierarchy that traditionally ranked national sites as most important—it is a reasonable premise, designed to prevent local authorities from acting independently. Federal resources are therefore apparent (if not, in the town’s opinion, adequate) in terms of expertise and funding. A Parks Canada historian suggested UNESCO designation; Parks and Canadian Heritage produced comprehensive documentation of Old Town streetscapes, as required by the national Inventory of Historic Buildings; federal funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency [ACOA] paid for harbour cleanup. Yet the town “expected significant financial support” from the federal
government with the signing of the UNESCO agreement, and has criticized Ottawa for not accepting its “shared responsibility” in World Heritage Site management. Lunenburg prides itself on being a rare example of an historic site that is not state-owned, but it should acknowledge the contradiction in desiring local sovereignty and demanding national monies. The hard reality is that Parks Canada still represents the single most influential, sophisticated and rigorous agency in heritage management in this country, and enjoys a status with UNESCO that the town does not.

But with the Atlantic Provinces seeking to shake off the memory of four decades of federal development programs, the provincial government has been concerned primarily if not exclusively with economic sustainability. In the late 1980s, Nova Scotia embraced a strategy of “community economic development” (though, ironically, the Regional Development Authorities created in 1994 were funded by the Canada/NS Cooperation Agreement on Economic Diversification, and remain closely linked with ACOA). In 2005, the province’s Waterfront Development Corporation, on behalf of the Lunenburg Waterfront Association, assumed responsibility for purchasing from Clearwater Fine Foods its waterfront properties, and then looking for new leaseholders to maintain a proposed “marine enterprise zone” along the old industrial waterfront. This would help sustain vernacular tradition, by using dory shops, sail lofts, and the like for boat construction and maintenance. But the 2005 purchase did not stem from the town’s designation — in fact, it tended to skirt it. Noting that “UNESCO recommendations do not provide major impediments to a continued working waterfront,” the agreement acknowledged that “[w]hile heritage and cultural issues are also at stake, the ultimate defining issue is the overall economy and most specifically, jobs.”

This brings us, finally, to the municipal agenda. A 1981 Heritage Property Bylaw provided for the protection of individual properties (although architectural controls were not adopted until 1996) and a Heritage Conservation District was established for the Old Town in 2000. But with the smallest tax base, the pressure for income-generating redevelopment is greatest at the local level; and one way to ensure community support for heritage is to demonstrate its economic returns. To date,
“tourism management” has consisted primarily of promotional strategies. Lunenburg town leaders have emphasized the importance of economic diversification, but in the sense of courting new industrial and commercial users for the waterfront. For the same reason, the province’s Municipal Government Act (1998), which empowers municipalities to govern “the protection, use and development of lands within the municipality, including ... environmentally sensitive areas,” is troubling. Conservation practices tend to vary more widely at the local level, compared to national standards and registers (eg. FHBRO); municipalities (Lunenburg is a case in point) often lack resources to hire full-time conservators. One alternative that balances a diplomatic concession to local control with broader landscape management and national standards might be the model adopted at Hadrian’s Wall, in Northumberland, the United Kingdom, which contends with literally hundreds of landowners. A Management Plan Committee, a Coordination Unit, and a Tourism Partnership oversee site operation—only 10 per cent of which is state-owned—while English Heritage acts as a review authority. This would allow a more sophisticated and coordinated regional presentation of the South Shore than the “Lighthouse Route.”

“Protection, Conservation, and Presentation”: What needs be done?

That we have relied on the tourist-oriented “Lighthouse Route” reflects a larger problem in Nova Scotia, in that heritage is increasingly conflated with culture and cultural commerce. The Economic Diversification Agreement (1996), which cited Nova Scotia as “a leader in the celebration of culture and heritage,” mentioned only music, crafts, art, and the film and television industry. A 1997 study of cultural tourism recommended selling “made in Nova Scotia” products, because “in festivals and in experiencing the community culture of traditional fishing villages...the tourists, as consumers, found cultural products that fitted their expectations.” There is no mention of historic content, site management, or public education. If the historical basis of cultural heritage is superfluous, it disregards, even contravenes, the 1972 convention with its stated emphasis on “protection, conservation, and presentation.” If, as some scholars have argued, World Heritage designation is used only “for national aggrandisement and commercial advantage within the international competition for tourists,” then it becomes nothing more than an advertising logo. But designation raises expectations of substantial historical content, by suggesting that this is a site of significance on par with the Palais des Papes in Avignon and the Great Wall of China, or in this case, cities such as Vienna, St. Petersburg, or Tyre. In other words, Lunenburg has to live up to the hype.

One way to do this is to institutionalize historical study. This would fulfill the mandates of the international charters, which require archaeological and technical research and education be carried out at World Heritage Sites. The 1998 World
Heritage Community Strategy had the wonderful idea of a World Heritage Institute, to coordinate “heritage arts education” (including a base for historical and genealogical research, training in restoration technology, a conference centre, etc.). This could give universities and colleges a place to integrate theory and practice, by applying academic research in museology, archaeology, etc. to local conditions; and it would provide this small community with better technological and educational resources. The Canadian Historical Association has repeatedly urged academics to become more involved in public life, and integrating their expertise into the community in a practical way might help bridge the “academic/public” divide which has troubled the profession in recent decades.

This would also allow for an enrichment of the public experience of Lunenburg. ICOMOS specifically instructs site managers to prioritize site access; to determine not only the site’s carrying capacity but its primary significance. In other words, a World Heritage Site has the obligation to guide how people visit, as well as how many. It is fair to expect Lunenburg to provide interpretation to match its designation. There is a wealth of ways to interpret the “model town” era (whether in a central institution or plaques to draw visitors to some of the best preserved buildings from the eighteenth century). For example, we might present Lunenburg as part of an eighteenth-century defence network throughout Acadia, as part of the British response to the French and Mi’kmaq. Emphasizing the precariousness of settlement in the 1750s would reintroduce Mi’kmaq and Acadian actors in an historically accurate way. The “Foreign Protestants” could be placed in a larger story of the politics of colonial emigration. The role of model town in the history of urban planning, and the ideological and practical implications of imposing an imperial, geometric grid on the rocky, coastal landscape of Merliguesche, could be discussed. The cluster of eighteenth-century churches (including Canada’s oldest Presbyterian (1769) and Lutheran (1770) churches, and second-oldest Anglican (1754) church) could be the basis of studies on the place of religion in colonial society and architecture. By placing Lunenburg on the colonial seaboard, its constructive and contentious relationships with the United States come to the fore: trade on the one hand, privateering on the other. The trade with the West Indies, which extends backwards the town’s seafaring history, could be explored. Not only does this give Lunenburg a transnational presence, as befitting a World Heritage Site, it situates the town in a group of maritime sites around the world which today struggle with similar issues in heritage tourism and environmental management.

All of this interpretation amplifies the importance of the town, and distills it from a generic, picturesque South Shore. Moreover, extending the periodization to include colonial and Victorian would counteract the singularity of a “period piece” landscape. It is an irony of globalization that heritage tourism must exploit “the lure of the local,” selling destinations on the basis of their unique histories. But at the
same time, bestowing the prestigious designation of World Heritage Site upon a place elevates that local history and its importance in the public realm. Lunenburg, the World Heritage Site, has an obligation to promote conservation and education; to treat its heritage as an ongoing project, rather than a commercial advantage.

ENDNOTES


3. Canada’s Tentative List for World Heritage List (Parks Canada, 2004) http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/spm-whs/index_e.asp. The tentative list includes Aisínípi (Writing-On-Stone); Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations; Grand-Pré; Gwaii Haanas; Ivavik/Vuntut/Herschel Island (Qikiqtaruk); Joggins; The Klondike; Mistaken Point; Quttinirpaaq; and Red Bay.


12. An Approach to a Development for the Lunenburg-Queens Region (Planning and Economics Branch, Department of Development, March 1975), pp. 30 and 42.

13. In 1966, the Lunenburg Marine Museum Society purchased the salt-banker Theresa E. Connor, and in 1975 the museum moved into the waterfront buildings vacated by National Sea Products ten years before. Federal funding came from the National Museums of Canada Corporation, part of its mandate for decentralization in the 1970s.
14. The most famous example of this was again in Nova Scotia, with the redevelopment of seven early-nineteenth century waterfront warehouses on Lower Water Street in downtown Halifax as the "Historic Properties." *Halifax Waterfront Development Area Plan* (Halifax Planning Department, 1976).

15. For an interesting contrast, consider Canso, which began investigating heritage tourism opportunities at this same moment but which has never reached the status of communities along the south shore. Ellen Wanda George, *Diversification Strategies of One-Industry Towns: The Case of One Nova Scotia Community*, MBA Thesis (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1995).

16. The other districts were the Hydrostone District in Halifax (1993), Annapolis Royal (1994), and Grand-Pré Rural Historic District (1995).


24. ICOMOS Report No. 741, pp. 109-110. Though, interestingly, it also recommended a deferral of two years to confirm this via a comparative study of such planned settlements—which reinforces the conclusion that ICOMOS’ central interest in Lunenburg was in its model plan. The National Historic Site designation, for example, cites a “homogeneous architectural ensemble on British model town plan.”


29. Bill Plaskett, *A Series of Maps Illustrating Lunenburg Buildings by Age, Architectural Character, Architectural Intactness and Historical Association* (Lunenburg County District Planning Commission, 1985), pp. 2.0-2.1 This study dated 6 of the pre-1935 buildings of the Old Town (or 1%) to the period of 1753-99: Romkey House, St. John’s Church, St. John’s Parish Hall, Solomon House, Ernst House, Metzler House. Of the remainder, 58 (10%) dated to 1800-59; 89 (15%) to 1860-1879; 257 (44%) 1880-1899; and 173 (30%) 1900-35. St. John’s Church, the second oldest Anglican church in Canada [1754], was destroyed by fire in 2001 and subsequently reconstructed in 2005. Currently, of the 57 sites listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places, the vast majority are designated for their architectural value (ie. as examples of the “Lunenburg Bump”), and only 6 date to before 1800.


35. Critics include Binkley, *Set Adrift*, p. 192, and Getson, p.27. But according to the 2001 census, only 26% of residents (or 295 of 1120) were employed in sales or service, with another 35, or 3%, in art, culture, recreation and sport.

36. Mawhinney noted that property assessments have risen between 8-12% annually for the past decade (15 November 2007). A housing project on the north face of Blockhouse Hill, overlooking the Back Harbour, was originally designed to provide 60 new homes to young local residents; but was halted by the Town Council because it was instead attracting interest from older, richer come-from-aways. “Lunenburg Council ditches touted housing development,” *Chronicle Herald* (Halifax), 2 January 2005.

37. It has been estimated that 48% of cultural tourists came from elsewhere in Canada, 27% from outside the country. *Nova Scotia Cultural Tourism: Final Report*, the ARA Consulting Group in association with LORD Cultural Resources Planning and Management (Halifax: 1997), p. 73. One undergraduate survey found that 32.5% of visitors to Lunenburg were from the United
States, compared to a provincial average of 14%. Steven Danny Croft, “A Geographical Analysis of Tourism in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia,” Honours thesis (Halifax: Saint Mary’s University, 2003), p. 23. Troublingly, this survey also found that only 10% of visitors came to Lunenburg because of its “history” or the UNESCO designation (pp. 30-31).


42. Managing coastal environments: *A Snapshot of Community Attitudes. A Background Study Prepared for the Mahone Bay and Lunenburg Atlantic Coastal Action Program* (Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1992), p. 34. The 1996 urban renewal study noted that while residents were content to use the sea for disposal, the provincial planning department was intent on making sewage treatment compulsory (*Town of Lunenburg*, 1966, p. 27).

43. The Washington Charter (1987) states that “Traffic inside a historic town or urban area must be controlled and parking areas must be planned so that they do not damage the historic fabric or its environment” (Article 12). European studies have warned especially against “excursionists,” day visitors who flood the tourist core during the day but who leave before spending substantial time or money in the district. However, suggestions like a “city card” or entrance pass, or banning tour buses altogether, are less practical (given the lack of alternative transportation to Lunenburg). See Antonio Paolo Russo, “The ‘Vicious Circle’ of Tourism Development in Heritage Cities,” *Annals of Tourism Research,* 29:1 (2002), pp. 165-82; Jan van der Borg, Paolo Costa and Giuseppe Gotti, “Tourism in European Heritage Cities,” *Annals of Tourism Research,* 23:2 (1996), pp. 306-321; and Van der Borg, “Tourism Management and Carrying Capacity,” in Coccossis and Mexa, eds.


47. Martin Reuss, “Historians, Historical Analysis, and International Water Politics,” *The Public
48. This has only been done once in the history of the Convention; in 2007 UNESCO and the IUCN removed the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman from the World Heritage List.


51. “Lunenburg steps onto world stage,” p. 16.


55. See *Lunenburg Old Town Heritage Conservation District Plan and Bylaw with Design Guidelines* (April 2001). Most of the Town is designated only at the municipal level; of the 59 sites currently listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places, only six (Lennox House, Knaut-Rhuland House, Lunenburg Academy, St. John’s Anglican Church, Zion Church, and John Henry Ernst House) are also designated by the province, and eight by Ottawa (Bank Fishery (commemorated at Lunenburg), the Bluenose, Knaut-Rhuland House, Lunenburg Academy, St. John’s Church, Old Town Lunenburg Historic District, Sack of Lunenburg, and Captain Angus J. Walters). One study, however, has suggested that removing individual designations in favour of a district bylaw discourages a sense of individual stewardship over private homes. Jan van Zyll de Jong, “A Study of Heritage Tourism in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia,” Honours thesis (Wolfville: Acadia University, 1997), pp. 88-89.

56. This site falls across the boundaries of two regional agencies, two national trusts, 12 municipalities, 42 parish councils, and about 700 private owners. Ninety per cent of the Hadrian’s Wall site is retained under private ownership and in diverse land uses ranging from towns to pasturage; only 10% is managed for public presentation, or research and conservation. Randall Mason, Margaret G.H. MacLean, and Marta de la Torre, “Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site,” in *Heritage Values in Site Management: Four Case Studies*, Marta de la Torre, ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2005), pp. 171-213; *Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan, 2002-2007* (Northumberland: English Heritage, 2002), pp. 20-25.

57. According to the prevailing philosophy in preservation today, aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual values are all held to be significant. In the Canadian practice, this philosophy is apparent at both the national and provincial levels: see the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (Parks Canada, 2003) and *Heritage Places in Nova Scotia: What You Need to Know* (Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, 2006).

58. “A Celebration of Culture and Heritage,” *Focusing on Success: An Overview of the Economic Diversification Agreement* (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Enterprise Cape Breton Corpora-

60. Ashworth and Tunbridge, p. 30.

61. The 1972 Convention requires heritage sites "to develop scientific and technical studies and research" and "to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field" (Article 5); the 1987 Washington Charter notes that "Knowledge of the history of a historic town or urban area should be expanded through archaeological investigation and appropriate preservation of archaeological findings" (Article 11).


64. Site managers have an obligation to provide—through tours, an orientation centre, etc.—"a basic understanding of the site's significance, its size, and what options it offers visitors in terms of visiting the site." ICOMOS, *Site Manager's Handbook*, pp. 11 and 50.

65. As Mather B. DesBrisy noted in his 1895 *History of the County of Lunenburg*, in the 1750s "the people of Lunenburg were much alarmed by the movements of Indians" (Bridgewater: Bridgewater Bulletin, reprinted 1967), p. 49.


**PHOTO CREDITS**

Figure 1. Author

Figure 2. *A Walk Through Old Lunenburg* (2007 ed.)

Figure 3. Author

Figure 4. Author

Figure 5. Author

Figure 6. Author