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**SPENCER'S ISLAND IS NOT A GHOST TOWN:
A CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY**

by
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ABSTRACT

Rural communities are often neglected in contemporary architectural research which traditionally studies urban issues. This thesis, framed by an ongoing collaborative design/build project in Spencer's Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, confronts the problem of depopulation and economic stability in post-industrial remote communities. By tapping into the energetic amateur historian community and developing a body of related representational work, I attempt to translate nostalgia into an architectural language used in the design of an Arts Centre. The proposed Arts Centre uses the industrial model of the region's past as inspiration and the present-day involvement of Dalhousie School of Architecture to realize aspects of its construction in design/build labs. A programmatic component of the project, a film and music festival, is introduced and begins to clarify a new direction for the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Roger Mullin and Craig Rodmore for their enthusiasm and engagement with the project and its many tangents.

The characters in Spencer's Island, particularly Laurie Currie and family for their generosity, hospitality and energy as hosts in the community. Likewise, Paul Calison for his generosity, humour, ideas, and of course, wood. Kerr Canning for his time and resources on all things regarding the Age of Sail.

To my friends and recent graduates, Tom Evans, Josh Lunn, and Sarah Zollinger for their wisdom, good cheer and late nights.

To my parents, and my in-law parents for their continued interest and support.

To my wife, Christina, for her unending love, support, encouragement and thoughts.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ICOMOS: International Council on
Monuments and Sites**

**NSARM: Nova Scotia Archives and
Record Management**

**UNESCO: United Nations Educational,
Scientific, and Cultural Organization**

INTRODUCTION



"Fill-in-the-blank" postcard from the 1950s
Source: Kerr Canning.

This thesis explores the potential for architecture to be an instrument for positive change in depopulated rural communities; to challenge the preservationist and nostalgic tendencies of dying communities and propose a confident step toward a sustainable future. This may be achieved by consciously marking a point in history at which the community begins to look forward; the moment when individuals in the community can imagine a future. Historical preservation is important in Spencer's Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. The community's rich history is certainly worth acknowledging. But it requires consideration as a foothold for progress. The move forward is embodied in a place of new creation, an Arts Centre, which serves as a new industry that will grow and evolve with the rejuvenated community. History is the guide throughout this design project; a successful architectural response embodies familiarity with the community and thereby provides a sense of ownership: these are the necessary components of cultural sustainability.

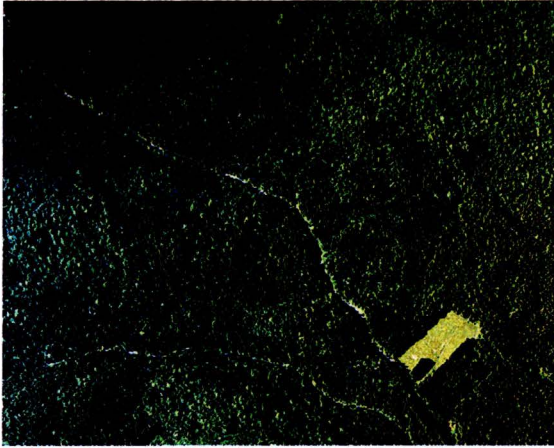


Map of the Bay of Fundy drawn by Samuel De Champlain in 1607, detail. Source: Library of Congress.

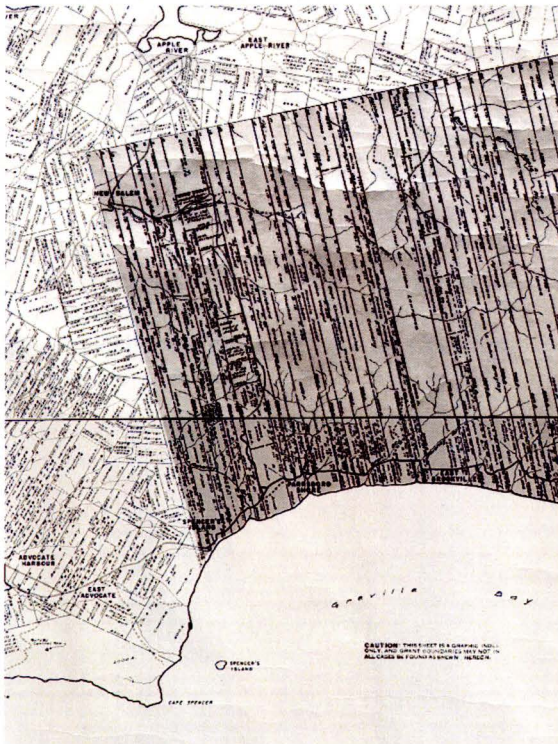
Early Settlement

Spencer's Island was first settled by the Mi'kmaq 10,000 years ago and the legends of their creator Glooscap still animate the iconic geographical landmarks in the Bay of Fundy and Minas Basin in particular. The island for which the village is named represents Glooscap's kettle or cooking pot, which he overturned before leaving the area after European settlement (Robertson, 1969, 71).

In the early 1600s Samuel de Champlain was the first European to explore the Minas Basin (*Bassin des Mines*) before attempting settlement across the Minas Channel at Port Royal. A cartographer, he produced some of the first maps of the region with the help of Mi'kmaq canoeists. In his records, Champlain took note of the abundance of minerals contained in the fossil-laden cliffs for future exploits of New France, naming places such as Cape D'Or, which in the late nineteenth century would become a large-scale copper mine.



Aerial Photograph near Spencer's Island, detail, 2005. Source: Land Registration Office - Halifax County Map Library Services.



Spencer's Island Land Grants, detail. (highlighted in gray). Source: Kerr Canning.

Eighteenth century Acadian dykes still lie in the tidal marshes and until the 1950s the Acadian seigneurial system defined property lines, each plot stretching from the shore far inland to the Cobequid Mountains.

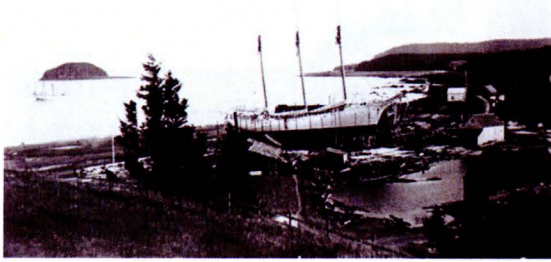
Carving the Wilderness

In 1781, Spencer's Island was settled by Robert Spicer, a Loyalist who left Massachusetts following the American War of Independence. Spicer was one of many individuals who took advantage of Crown land grants made available following the expulsion of the Acadians more than a decade earlier. The appropriated land, including the Annapolis Valley and Minas Basin region, attracted other stranded supporters of the British as well as a group of planters that included the region's prolific Loomer and Bigelow families (Stanley, 2008, 28, 29).

The land at Spencer's Island was suitable for small-scale agriculture, but timber resources were more abundant, as were small inlets, tidal marshes, and sandbars, and these combined to create ideal conditions for shipbuilding.

The Spencer's Island Company

The definitive chapter in the region's history is the wooden shipbuilding industry that flourished in the late nineteenth century along the shores of the Minas Basin. The successful operation in Spencer's Island was one of many such operations along the Parrsboro shore. Financial success was



Tern *Myrtle Leaf* nearing completion in 1903.
Source: Kerr Canning.

Captain's Copy *St Vincent, C.V., 5th, Jan: 1900, 189*

Messrs J.F. Whitney & Co.
Agents for Captain Spicer of ship "Glooscap"
New York.

Dr to Wilson, Sons & Co. Limited.

To Customs duty paid by us as per attached receipt (in duplicate) on 2,801½ tons of coal discharged on ship "Glooscap" sold to The St. Vincent C.V. Coaling Co. duty free	21.34	5	11
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For William Bone & Co Ltd.
W. B. Bone
Tob. Manager.

Receipt for the duty paid for over 2,800 tonnes of coal aboard the vessel *Glooscap*.
Source: Spicer Family Collection, NSARM.

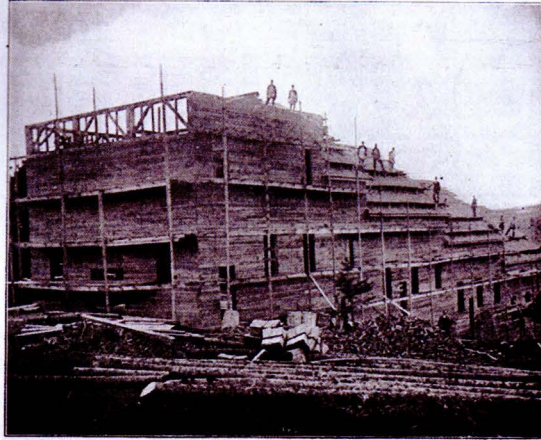
ensured by the immediate connection with resource-based commodities harvested in the region and loaded directly onto recently built vessels.

The Company's brokers, J.F. Whitney and Company, were in New York City. Timber, coal, manganese, and gypsum from the basin community was often destined for American ports before continuing on to Europe or the Caribbean. Their return brought traded processed goods from abroad back home. The New York connection seems far-fetched when one stands today among the rotting piles on the beach.

The Colonial Copper Company

Further west at Cape D'Or, the Colonial Copper Company followed through on Champlain's hunch and set up an extensive mining operation in 1900 which included three mines and "a most elaborate plant, consisting of every modern device for the mining, milling, and shipment of the ore" (Drummond, 1918, 123). Very little copper was actually retrieved, however, and the mine closed in 1903.

Many of the buildings from the operation were captured in a collection of photographs published by the president of the company in a brochure to reassure shareholders.



CONCENTRATING PLANT IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.
(BUILDING NOW COMPLETED.)

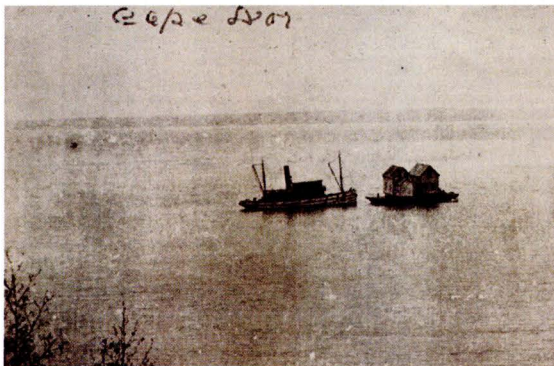
Image of the Colonial Copper Company's concentrating plant at Cape D'Or. From President's message to shareholders (1903). Source: NSARM.



POWER AND SHAFT HOUSE NO. 1.

The power and shaft house at Cape D'Or. From President's message to shareholders (1903). Source: NSARM.

These curious buildings express their function through their form, and illustrate an awkward time when industrial buildings were constructed of wood and more ephemeral than modern steel and concrete facilities, partly because of the abundance of wood, and partly due to the transient nature of resource-based industries like mining and lumbering.



Two dwellings leaving Cape D'Or by barge. Source: Kerr Canning.

This ephemerality is compounded by the documentation of dwellings moved from Cape D'Or by barge following the mine's closure. Many of these houses exist today in nearby communities.



Spencer's Island shipyard in 1909.
Source: Kerr Canning.

Decline and Redefinition

Modernization rendered the wooden shipbuilding industry obsolete, and by the 1920s most of the region's operations were shut down. Remaining vessels were requisitioned for the war effort as minesweepers. However, several generations of shipwrights and sea captains, including descendents of Robert Spicer, called Spencer's Island home and life continued into the twentieth century with subsistence farming, fishing, small-scale lumbering, and, of course, tourism.

In 2006, key community members established a partnership with Professor Roger Mullin of Dalhousie School of Architecture to cultivate a vision for this step into the future through course-work, design studios and design/build projects. By 2008, a multidisciplinary group of interested parties including the landowner (and "village architect"), a sawyer and woodlot owner, a retired physics professor, local historians, business people, politicians, and persons from the School of Architecture formed *The Mary Celeste Society* and set out to formulate a strategy for economic sustainability. This thesis has evolved from participation in some of Professor Mullin's earlier projects in the community to confront challenges presented by the scope of the regular curriculum.

Two main challenges exist: first, to define a program for the slowly evolving complex executed by Dalhousie students and community members, and, secondly, to develop a connection to the community and culture which elicits further participation.

Thesis Question

How can remnants, myths, and memories from obsolete industries inspire an architectural strategy for economic and cultural renewal in a remote community?

THE REGION

Community by Sea

Historically, the coastline of the Minas Basin including parts of the Annapolis Valley, Hants County, and the Parrsboro shore was a cohesive community connected by water. Wooden sailing vessels were built in various communities along the shore and natural resources like gypsum, coal, and timber were distributed throughout the world's seaports. Until the early 1900s, land travel was accomplished by simple ox-cart roads which ran along the Parrsboro shore. There was little need for transportation by land; travel and commerce were accomplished by sea. When modernization occurred between the wars, the merchant marine economy disappeared or relocated, the waters were still, and the community was left in isolation.

Community by Land



An abandoned gift shop outside Spencer's Island.

The coastal route heading west passes treed islands shaped like overturned bowls and stretches of primordial forest which resonate with the Glooscap legends. The route rhythmically passes through nineteenth century settlements, ancient Acadian dyke lands and massive tides, modern subsistence and small-scale commercial



A fibreglass statue of Glooscap at Parrsboro Town Hall. Artist: Buzz Tuck.

farms, recreational vehicle parks, and provincial parks. Closed-up restaurants and gift shops tell the story of the many failed endeavours over the past several decades. Rather than a packaged roadside attraction, these things mingle and confront the visitor with a more complex reading of the region's past and present.

Amenities

The community at large includes neighbouring villages Port Greville, Advocate Harbour, Apple River, and, 40 kilometres further east, Parrsboro, the largest community on the shore.

Advocate Harbour, being only eight kilometres from Spencer's Island, is the closest semblance of an urban centre with amenities. It is also the liveliest community in the area, with an industrial fishing pier, fish farm, metal fabrication shop, school, hospital, restaurant, post office, library, weekend market, and the only gas station outside of Parrsboro.



Fishing boats at the Advocate wharf.
Source: Owen McSwiney.

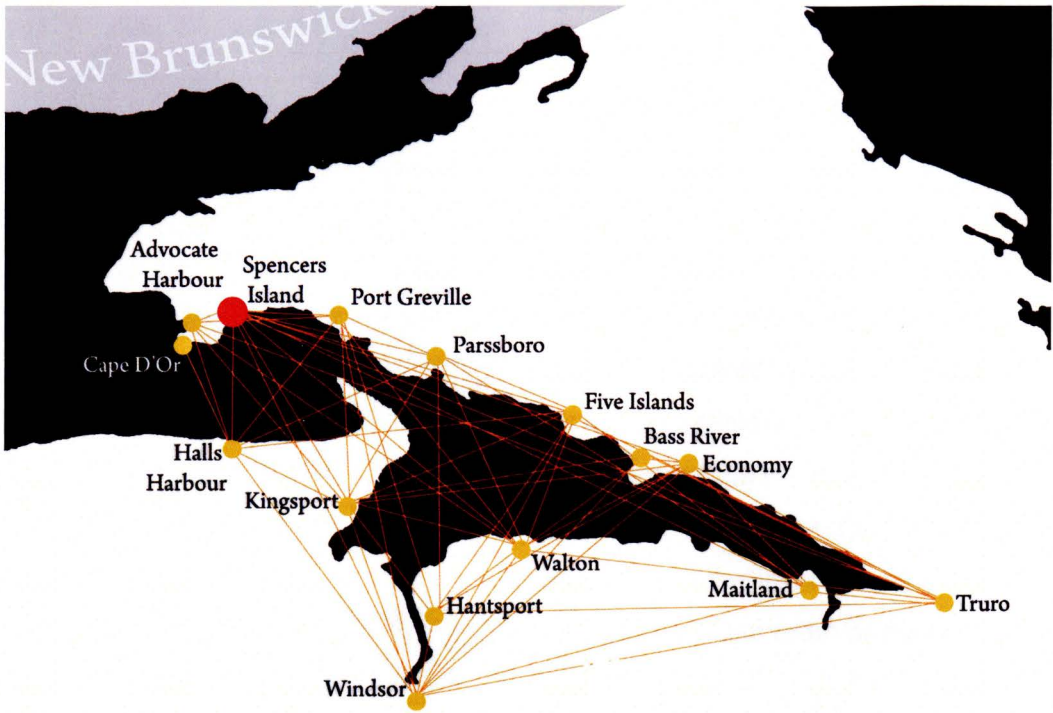
The interdependence of the amenity-sharing communities along the shore strengthens the region's cultural identity. For the resident, the concept of community develops through participation: exchanging goods or services, hiring its trades, shopping

at local establishments, and attending social activities such as the market, community suppers, clubs, and team sports. Over time, these activities become cultural institutions with their own traditions and rituals transcending the significance of a particular venue; the market regularly changes venues but consistently occurs and is well-attended. These venues are simply large community rooms, like the banquet hall or church basement in Advocate Harbour, maintained and made amenable to many programmatic demands.

Shared amenities in the area are also a conduit for communication. Strong community centres like the store in Advocate Harbour and even the laundry facilities at the Spencer's Island campground have significance as social hubs, their message boards filled with announcements of upcoming events. To the visitor, culture is visible, authentic, and accessible.



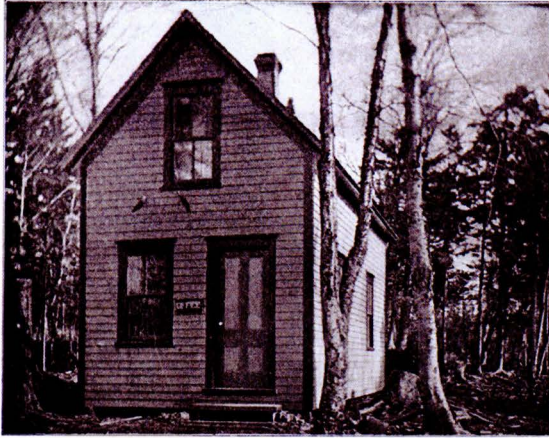
Wing night at the Royal Canadian Legion in Joggins. Social activities are well-advertised and well-attended.



The Community by Sea. The trans-basin community during the Age of Sail.



The Community by Land. The community now consists of villages connected by "The Glooscap Trail", bypassed to the east by the Trans-Canada Highway.



Typical dwelling at Colonial Copper Company.
Source: Kerr Canning



Moving a dwelling after the mine closed.
Source: Kerr Canning



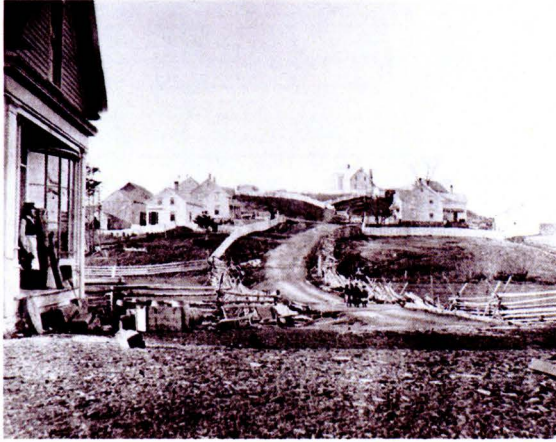
A Cape D'Or dwelling adapted for modern living
in Port Greville, 2009.

Isolation and Cultural Preservation

The string of tiny villages along the coast from Parrsboro to Joggins are sustained by a micro-economy system of barter and exchange, agriculture, fishing, small businesses, retirement funds, and a relatively low intensity tourist season. Their slower economies, which favour repair over replacement, have allowed (or compelled) these communities to retain many of their old, sometimes grand structures by continuing to use them or adapting them to modern uses.

It is a version of preservation which springs from a culture in a non-self-conscious manner, in contrast to an intentional reconstruction of an image of history. By way of a building's value to its community, it is ensured continued existence and relevance to everyday life. The reciprocal benefit of this type of preservation is the influence these old structures have on the culture which uses them. The adaptations they may have required, the repairs and maintenance, along with the types of activity they foster speak to the continued history of the community beyond its golden age.

Similarly, if a building is not valued or needed, or present economic realities prohibit conservation, it will decay naturally



The Spencer's Island Company store, early 1900s. Source: Kerr Canning



The Company store in 2007 as the Beach Cafe. The building was fitted with shutters to protect the seaward face from weathering during the off-season. During the summer they act as awnings for outdoor seating.



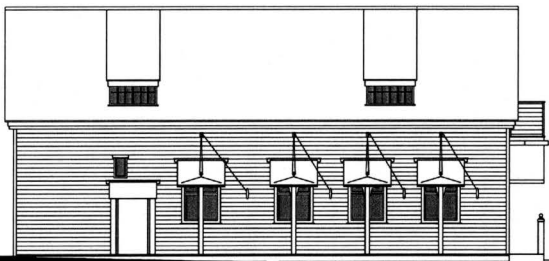
The Beach Cafe closed for the season, 2009.

or be dismantled. The result: layers of time mapped onto the community's built heritage. Some things remain, some change, some disappear, some new things appear. Survival requires venues for cultural practices of work and leisure to evolve, and with them the development of a tangible, experienced cultural identity. Keith L. Eggener writes "built form does not simply reflect culture; it shapes it, and therein lies its power". (Eggener, 2002, 232). This non-self-conscious mode of developing regional form is a more authentic regionalism than one which is identified by a particular individual's "regional style".

Regionalism

The region of the northern Glooscap Trail was able to develop its culture more naturally because it failed to "cash in on antiquity" (MacKay, 1993, 104) like many other sites in the province. To some degree, life in the twentieth century went on in the normal manner with the focus on survival. As increased traffic discovers the area by way of the newly designated UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site at Joggins, traditions and institutions strengthened during the lull will hopefully provide resistance to the documented effects of intensified tourism.

From an architectural perspective, it brings us closer to an understanding of regionalism as a defense against the globalizing effect of tourism. “Regional forms,” wrote Lewis Mumford in “The South in Architecture,” “are those which most closely meet the actual conditions of life and which most fully succeed in making a people feel at home in their environment: they do not merely utilize the soil but they reflect the current conditions of culture in the region” (Mumford, 1941, 41). Preservation of buildings is secondary to the preservation of the adaptive, creative culture which erects, maintains, and adapts their built environment to suit everyday life. A study of the particulars of site, including cultural and physical dimensions, preclude the design of a coherent future direction.



Seaward-facing elevation of the Beach Cafe in Spencer's Island. Scale 1:200

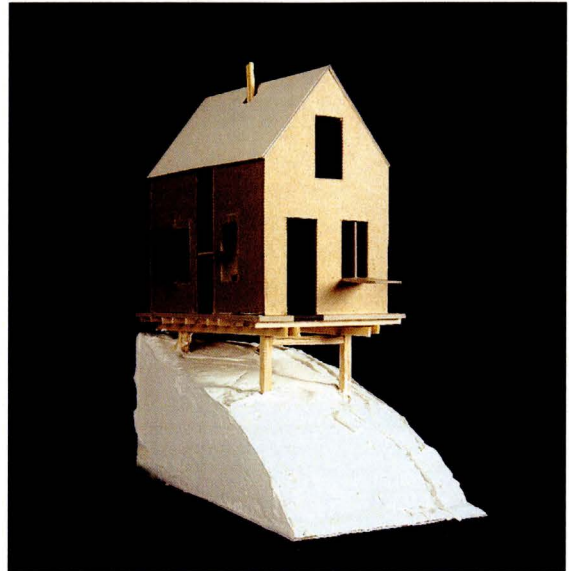


Entrance to the Beach Cafe. Scale 1:200

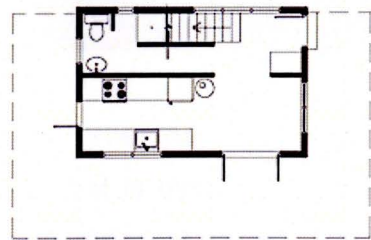


Cape D'Or dwelling used for storage in Advocate Harbour, 2009.

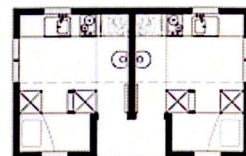
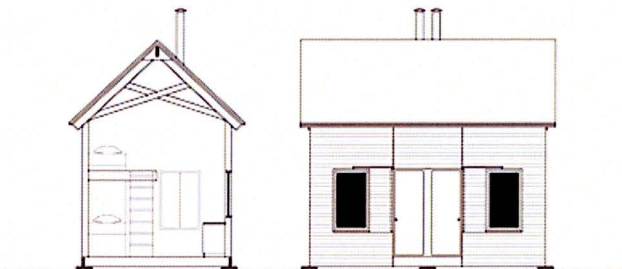
Measured drawing of a Cape D'Or dwelling. Scale 1:200.



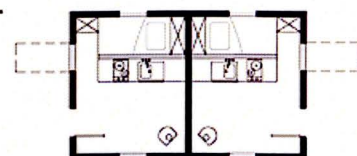
Model of a duplex variation on the Cape D'Or dwelling which uses shutters and a pile foundation.



1.



2.



3.

Study: Adaptations to the Cape D'Or dwelling to suit contemporary use. 1. Single dwelling variation. 2,3. Duplex bunkhouse variations. Scale 1:200

THE VILLAGE

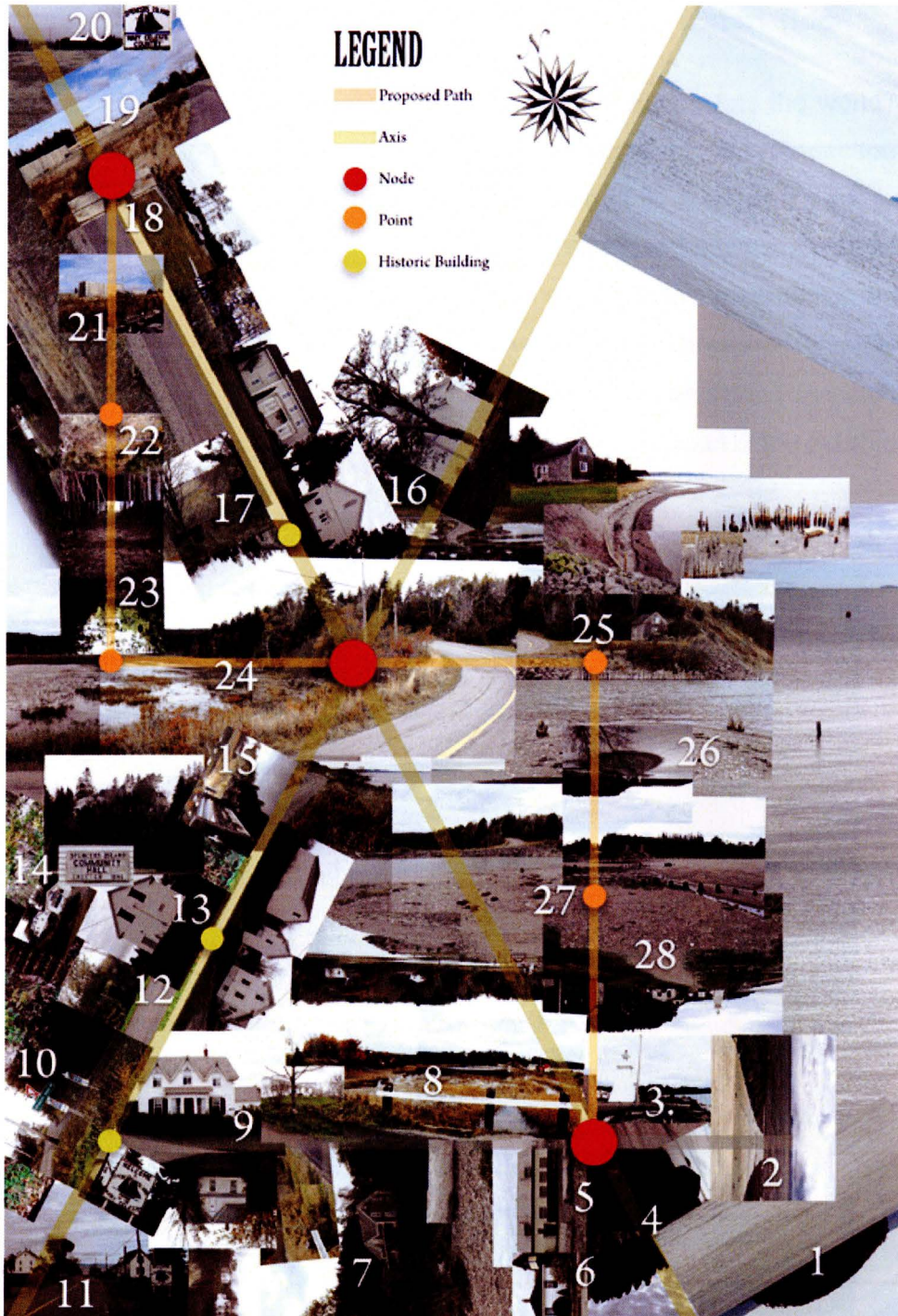
Dead or Alive?

There are fewer than thirty year-round residents of Spencer's Island. Most of the population has relocated to larger cities for employment. The list of businesses in the village is short: a restaurant, campground, bed and breakfast, gift shop, and a handful of rental properties. All of these businesses close in the fall and winter.



The ruins of the old shipyard at Spencer's Island, 2007.

This might give the impression of a community that is dying. Admittedly, the sparse population in collusion with the cemetery quality of the old shipyard deliver such a message. But the life in the community is strong and understated. Many people return when financially possible, and those who never leave may sacrifice prosperity in order to remain. Further evidence of this life is the organization of the *Mary Celeste Society*, which works toward a confident vision for the future.



A photomontage mapping of Spencer's Island. 1. Spencer's Island, 2. Boat Launch/Old Wharf, 3. Lighthouse/Museum, 4. Mary Celeste cairn, 5. Beach Cafe/Spencer's Island Company Store, 6. Fossil House (rental), 7. The Beach House (rental), 8. Salt marsh, 9. Spicer House, 10. Traffic island, 11. Entering from the south, 12. Mystery Stair, 13. Spencer's Island Community Hall/Old Schoolhouse, 14. Gift shop, 15. Culvert/road through the marsh, 16. Spencer's Island Union Church, 17. Path down into field (site), 18. North/south axis meets Spencer's Island Road, 19. Outdoor Cinema, 20. Upper field/View to Currie House, 21. Construction waste pile, 22. Entering the Wood, 23. Leaving the Wood, 24. The Salt Marsh, 25. Cabin/Site of Old Shipyard Photos, 26. Sandbar, 27. Spencer's Beach/Old Shipyard, 28. Old Shipyard Campground.

Living by the Water: Tides

The Bay of Fundy has the world's highest tides, surging into the landscape twice a day to flood its many marshes and inlets. To control these tides, the shipbuilders used piles and earth to form retaining walls which have since been breached. In contemporary times, a strip of land used as a campground remains the only part of the old shipyard site consistently above water.



The shipyard at low tide exposing remnants of pile foundations and retaining walls.



The shipyard at high tide, nearly submerged.

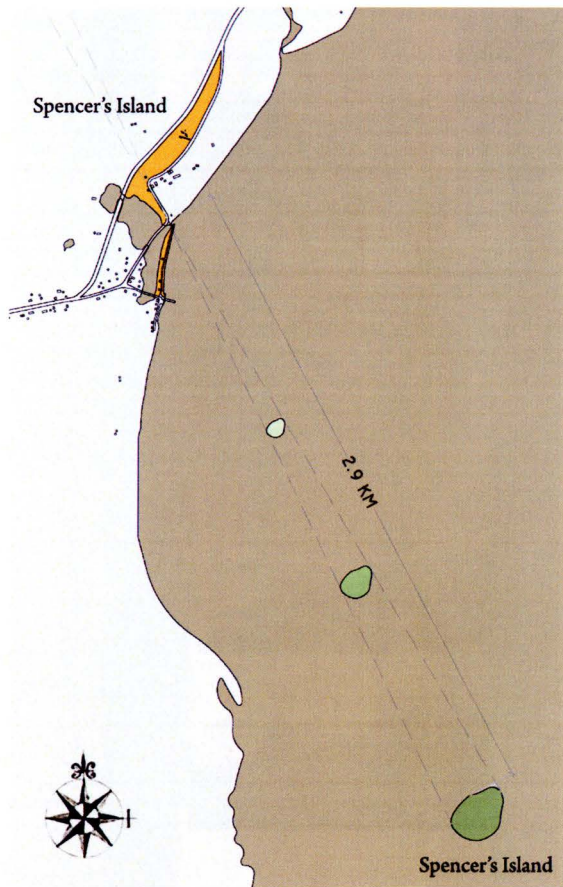


Low Tide

Mid Tide

High Tide

Illustration of the transformation which occurs twice daily when the Fundy tides flood the marsh.



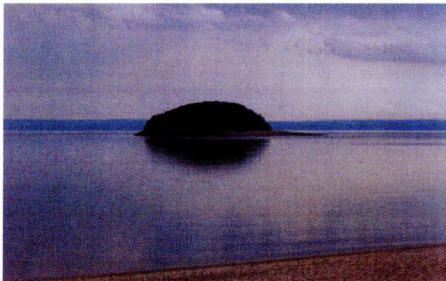
The Island: A Performance

Spencer's Island is the name of the uninhabited island three kilometres offshore. It lends its name to the village on the mainland. The island asserts its presence from anywhere in the village, as though the mainland is tethered to it. The measure of the village can be determined to be that which is "of the island."

Its silent form in combination with the magnitude of the tides create an eerie performance in which the island seems to inch closer and recede.

The Island Viewed Through Time

The iconic quality of the island was recognized by the Mi'kmaq in Glooscap's legends as his kettle or cooking pot. Later, the settlers and their descendents who built ships in its presence acknowledged Spencer's Island by including it in portraits of the vessels as they lay on the beach awaiting completion and launch.

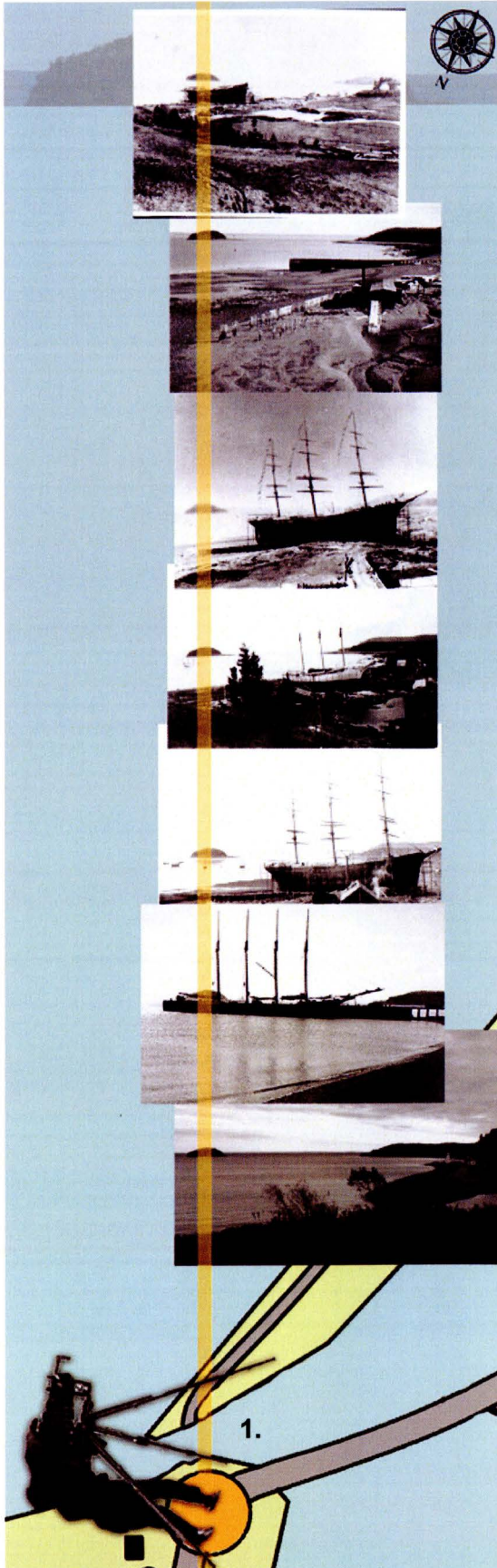


The Island at low tide appears extremely close.



A view of Spencer's Island from the salt marsh.

The location from which the historic photographs were taken, a perch above the beach, becomes a place of contemplation where these images mingle with the power of the tides, the passage of time, and the stark reality of decay.



The “photographer’s perch” is a place from which to view the community at many times simultaneously. The absence of any physical trace of history aside from the remnants of piles charges the imagination to conjure images and stories from photographs, literature, artifacts and art. The cycles of the tides, of timber to vessel, of population and depopulation turn through the viewer’s mind, all the while the ancient landforms sit still.

The Island viewed through time. Documentation of shipbuilding nearly always included views of the island.

1. The link from the photographer’s perch to the shipyard is still marked by a double-row of piles which used to form a causeway. This link to the beach road has been eroded by the sea. Passage is impeded by water except at lowest tide.



Location model.

THE MARY CELESTE

The Story

The infamous *Mary Celeste* was the first ship built on the beach in Spencer's Island in 1861; at that time she was named *Amazon*. Several misfortunes through her life on the sea brought her to Glace Bay, Cape Breton Island, where she was given up for salvage and picked up by Captain Benjamin Briggs of Marion, Massachusetts. Having renamed the ship *Mary Celeste* and made her fit to sail again, Briggs, his crew, and his young family departed New York City for Genoa carrying a load of alcohol. Several days later the ship was discovered drifting east of the Azores with no one aboard and no sign of struggle. The mystery has never been solved and has invited endless speculation.



Photograph of the *Mary Celeste* overlaid on Spencer's Island Beach.



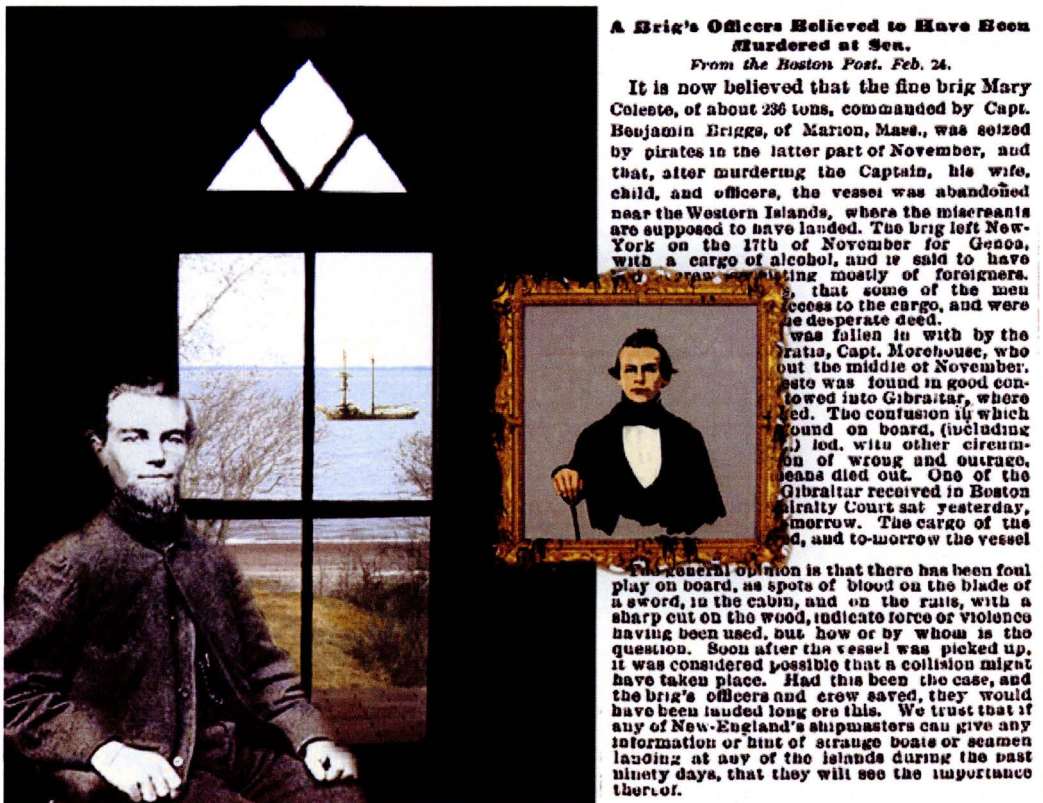
The Chronicles of the *Mary Celeste* plot points at which events unfolded during its fateful career. More importantly, these axes point to the greater community of Trans-Atlantic trade in the nineteenth century, of which Spencer's Island was an important part.



Still from *Phantom Ship*, 1935.

Life out There: Media

Arthur Conan Doyle wrote "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" in 1884, shortly after the incident. This blatantly fictional interpretation of the *Mary Celeste* story set in motion a cultural phenomenon by which the *Mary Celeste* is continually reborn in pop culture and media. In 1935, Bela Lugosi starred in the film *Phantom Ship* which helped define a whole genre of films based on the concept of the ghost ship.



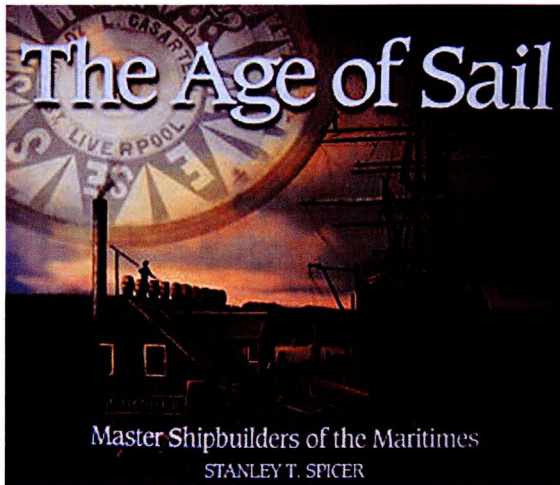
Collage: a newspaper article in which the *Boston Post* reports the *Mary Celeste* tragedy as murder, a present-day view from a Spencer's Island house, an image of the ghost ship on the sea, her Captain Benjamin Briggs seated by the window, and a painting of Briggs (artist unknown) hangs on the wall. A constructed reality which takes form from a pluralist view of the myth in fact and fiction.

Reclaiming the Myth

Spencer's Island, like many Nova Scotian communities, has sought to capitalize on former glories as an antidote to poverty and depopulation. There is little evidence of the myth to experience here though, aside from the cairn at the water's edge. Connecting the community to the myth in a meaningful way will satisfy the identity the community it feels it has through the myth as well as the tourist who searches for the significance of the myth by visiting the place.



Plaque and cairn at the beach in Spencer's Island commemorating the launch of the *Mary Celeste*.



Stanley T. Spicer's *The Age of Sail*.



Video still: Conrad Byers gives his account of the *Mary Celeste* story on television's *Unsolved Mysteries*, 1994. Cosgrove/Meurer Productions.

STORYTELLING & LOCAL HISTORIANS

Stanley T. Spicer et al.

The recently departed Stanley Spicer, descendent of the original Spencer's Island Spicer family and author of several books on the region, along with author Conrad Byers, the region's last surviving schooner captain and 2008 Parrsboro "Citizen of the Year" (*Amherst Citizen*, Feb. 26, 2009), are exemplary of the interest in local history and the preservation of, at the very least, the identity of the community as successful merchant mariners. Both men were instrumental in the founding of the Age of Sail Heritage Centre in Port Greville, which houses artifacts from more prosperous times. Their research has retrieved and catalogued a prolific collection of primary and secondary historical entities and interpretations, including individually published research on the mystery of the *Mary Celeste*. Together, they have created an archive which serves as a starting point for any number of subsequent activities and endeavours.

Proposal: Using this Resource/ Archive

The invaluable resources encapsulated in the documentation by historians, the history embedded in the place, and the mystical qualities of the ancient landscape provide conditions for a new type of industry which thrives in isolation. This thesis proposes an

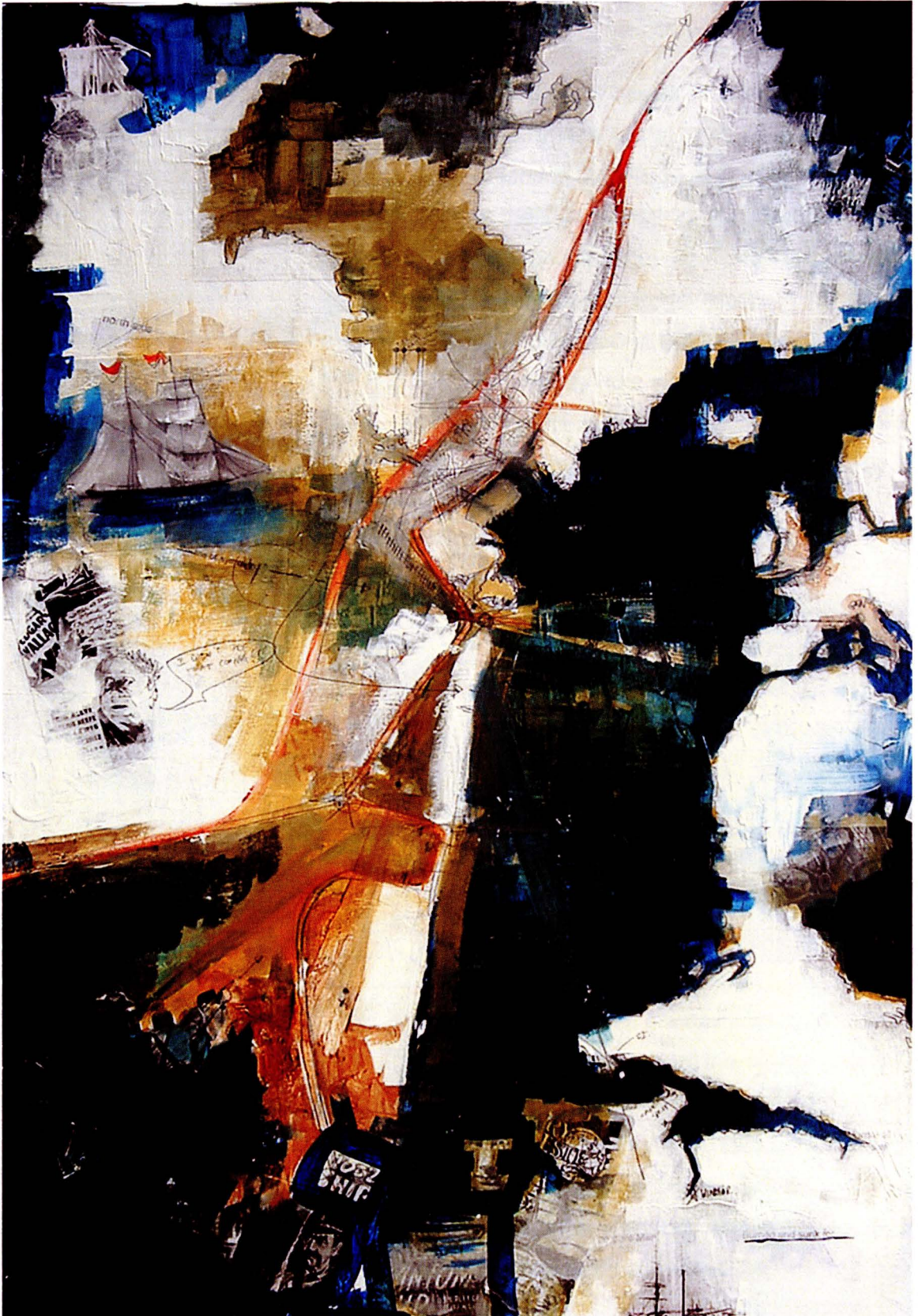


Romanticism and the Sea in Art. Countless works of art have been inspired by tales from the sea.

Arts Centre whose mandate is to provide access to the richness of the history, myth, and landscape of the region to inspire works of art, print and digital media, and research. This is achieved by providing a residency over longer periods of time, facilities to produce this new work, and

events and exhibition venues. The program is dependant on the types of participants, and the architecture adapts to accommodate the evolving program.

The transient nature of the shipbuilding industry provides a model for the Arts Centre; it invites participation for longer stays in the community for the making of work inspired by the stories and remnants of the past, iconic landscape, massive tides, and legends. It is the setting for aspirations to take shape, a venue for education in the performing arts, of local history and craft, and an individual's opportunity to realize projects which, without such furtherance, may otherwise be unfulfilled. The spirit of the work remains in the community and becomes part of the ongoing history of a place that has welcomed visitors for decades.



Trans-Atlantic travel pondered from the photographer's perch. Acrylic and collage on panel, 2009.

SITE

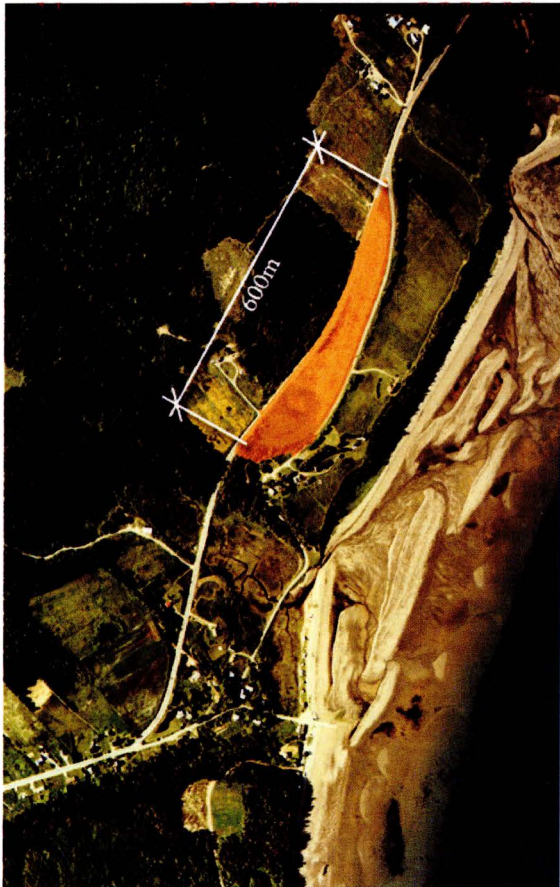


On site, looking down into lower "bowl".

The project began in 2007 with a local landowner's designation of a large piece of land in the village of Spencer's Island to a, then, undetermined initiative intended to bring people to the community. By partnering with Professor Roger Mullin of the School of Architecture at Dalhousie University, the community now engages in collaborative design/build projects with the school on site while slowly shaping the overall strategy.

The Field

The site is a long, slender ten-acre plot of land adjacent to the principal highway where the original coastal road, now called Spencer's Island Road, diverges at the northern tip and leads into the village.



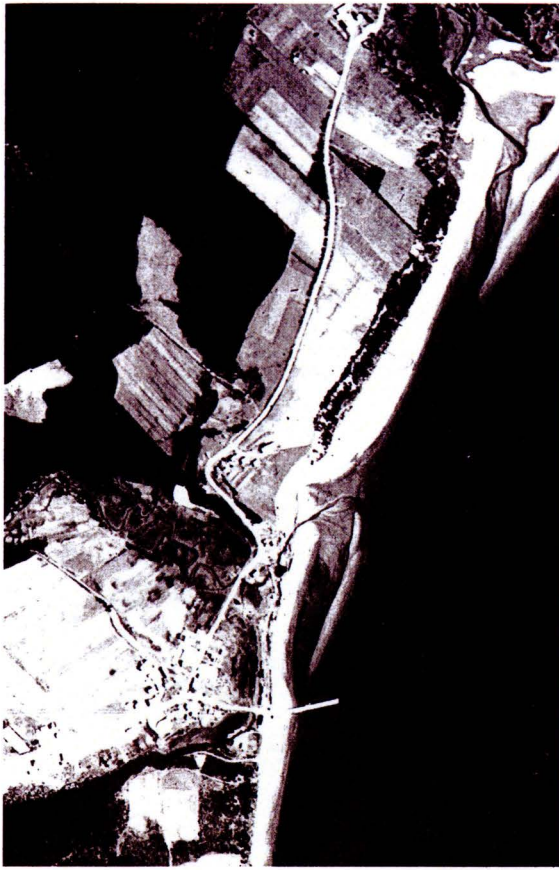
Aerial photo, 2005. Site highlighted in orange.
Source: Land Registration Office - Halifax County Map Library Services.

The conditions of the site change drastically with the seasons: one finds it barren and windswept in winter, and lush with brush, foliage, wild flowers in the spring and summer. The land slopes gradually downwards from the northern tip toward the marsh. The lower "bowl" near the woods at the southern end of the site stays damp most of the year. In the fall the upper portion delivers a crop of blueberries. The winds blow north and south predominantly all year round.

Archaeology and the Equal Treatment of Past and Present

The site has a long history of varied usage and through analysis of the topography and historic aerial photos, graded areas where old service roads and pathways existed provide an opportunity to explore reusing them as a less intrusive form of intervention.

The following drawing (p.33) catalogues the sum of structures, land forms, and pathways over the past sixty years to create an index of activity in the village. The intention is not only locate sites past and present, but “this mixture of real and fictitious imagery” (Boyer, 1994,5) determine an underlying order; a constructed version of the present which includes memories and mythology alongside conventional empirical mapping.



Top: Aerial photo, detail, 1939. Source: Land Registration Office - Halifax County Map Library Services. Depicts village before the principal highway was built and the massive wharf was intact. A road through the wood and along the marsh is visible, as is the link to the beach road. The wood is largely deforested, presumably a result of the shipbuilding operation in previous decades.

Left: Aerial photo, 1984. Source: Land Registration Office - Halifax County Map Library Services. The wharf has partially eroded, and the wood has begun to regenerate.



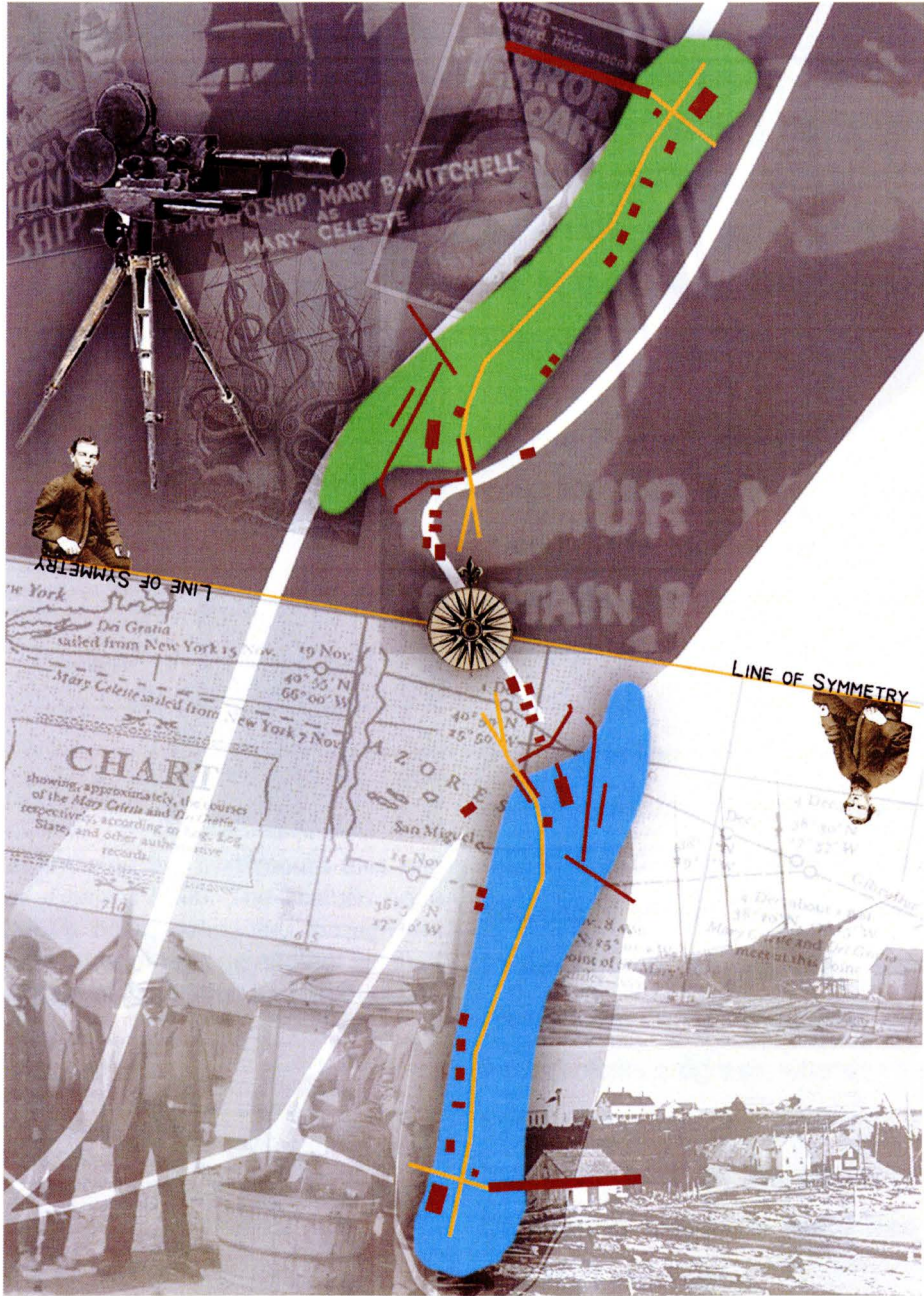
Composite map revealing locations of present and former buildings, roads and pathways through village discovered by wandering, aerial photos, and historical photos. This exploration serves to discover graded areas, ruins, and remnants for future use.

Symmetry

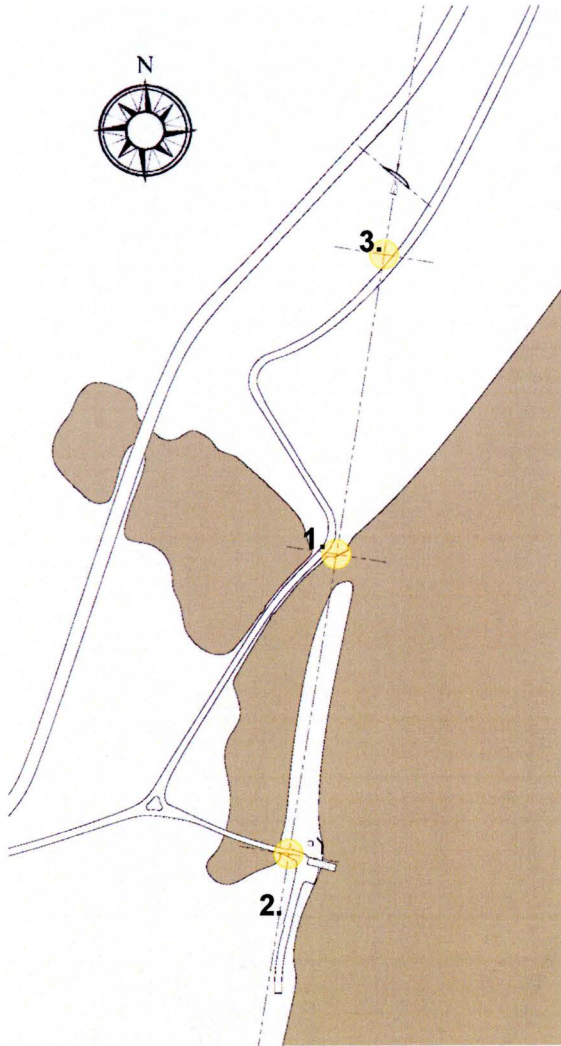
The site is currently considered outside of the traditional limits of the village which concentrates around the intersection of the road to Advocate Harbour, the road to the lighthouse, and the road to the old schoolhouse (see p.17, 10: Traffic Island). The shipyard occupied the beach and also formed the original coastal road to the neighbouring hill on top of which the church still stands. The site lies inland of this hill.

The village is otherwise split by a tidal marsh which has since been crossed by a new road and *aboiteau*, a type of culvert devised by the Acadians to permit the control of tidal waters in and out of the marsh.

Studying the site's relationship to the historic village centre revealed an impression of symmetry: the shipyard was nearly identical in shape and size to the site. Applying an overlay of the shipyard and all its known buildings reveals design potential spatially, the site being equidistant from a new centre, the "photographer's perch", and conceptually, the site becoming a symbol of new industry on the trace of the old.



Visualizing the New Industry, the shipyard reflected onto the site.



Village plan showing the north/south axis and three nodes. Scale 1:5000. The Historic node and Arts Centre node, connected through the Shipyard node, strengthen one another via their interdependence of inspiration and production.

Three Nodes

This masterplan organizes the village around three nodes:

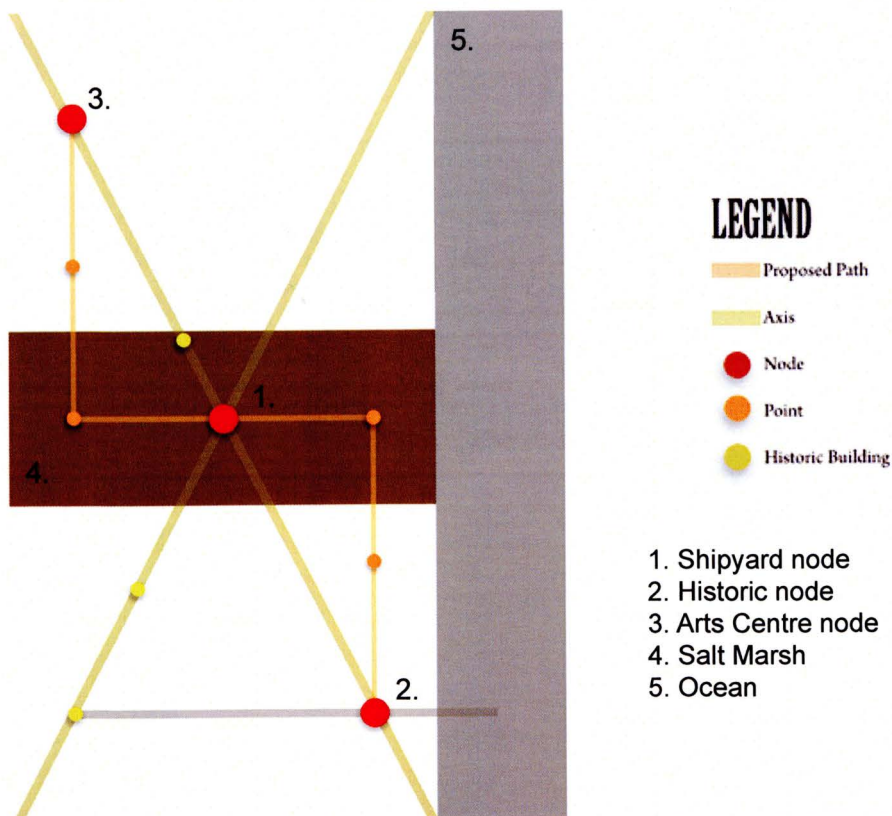
1. The Shipyard node is the axis of reflection. It looks over shipyard and is recognizable as the photographer's perch and the site of the old shipyard road. The water breaches the land by way of the tidal river through this point.

2. The Historic node is the civic core containing the restaurant (former Company Store), schoolhouse, residences, former wharf site, beach access, light house, and cenotaph. It is the historical centre.

3. The Arts Centre node is the intersection of the north/south axis and Spencer's Island Road. This node informs the civic address of the Arts Centre. It has proximity to the church, an old farm, some newer residences, and is visible to passing traffic. It symbolizes progress, whereas the Historic node embodies preservation. It acts as the "reciprocal" of the historic centre by translating historical facts into modern modes of expression.

The Path

The path connects the three nodes by revealing some of the older paths through the village. The slope from the Arts Centre node carries one down to the opening in the wood which separates the field from the marsh. An old logging road passes through the woods to the marsh. Along the marsh a boardwalk is proposed to connect the logging road to the Shipyard node, the site of the original road to the shipyard, where a foot bridge to the site of the old shipyard completes the loop. The campground connects the path to the lighthouse and restaurant (Historic node).





The field (site), panorama from Spencer's Island Road. 1. Site of Design/Build Module I. 2. Arts Centre node. 3. Opening to the woods.



The woods, looking toward opening to the field.



The salt marsh from the edge of the woods. 1. First view of Spencer's Island 2. View of the lighthouse.

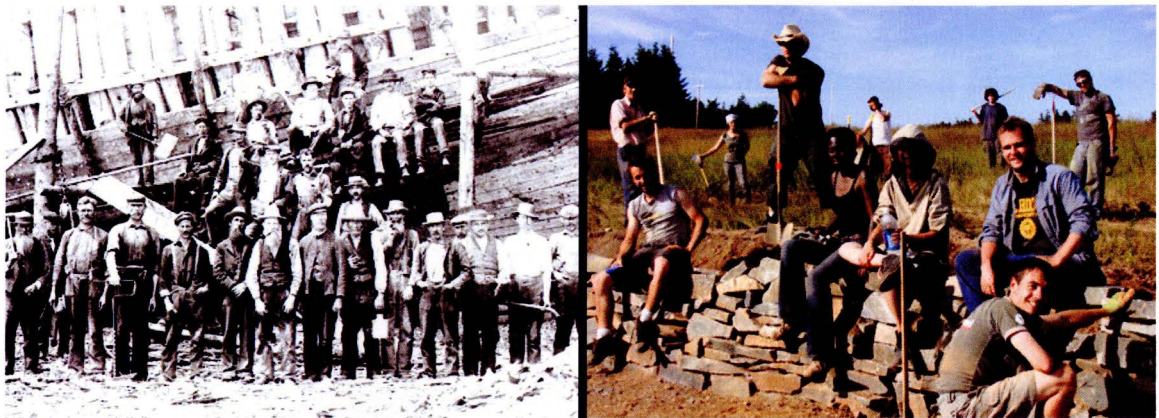


View of the lighthouse from the Shipyard node.

DESIGN/BUILD STUDIOS

The Mary Celeste Centre

In partnership with community members and guided by Professor Roger Mullin, the School of Architecture has, so far, completed three two-week design/build projects; these took place during the summers of 2007, 2008, and 2009. The projects are part of a collective vision to create a centre for the activities of the *Mary Celeste Society*.



Building the cinema in the spirit of the past. Source, left: Age of Sail Heritage Centre. Source, right: Dalhousie School of Architecture.

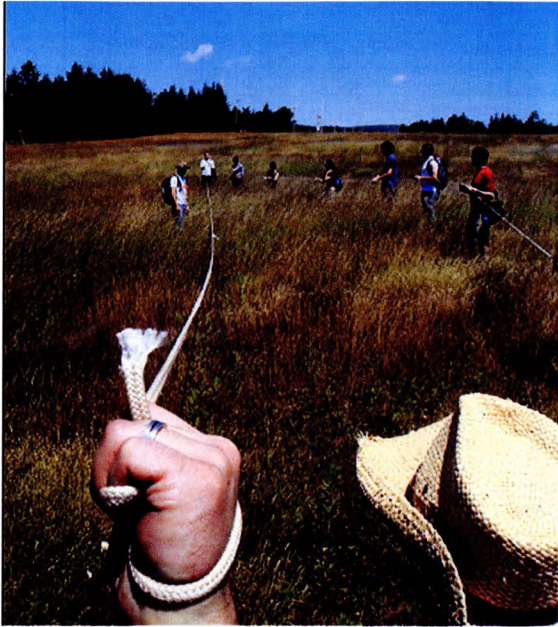
The students stay in tents at the shipyard campground for the entire session (while dreaming of having their own weatherproof dwellings on-site). Community members extend their hospitality with dinners, site visits, and frequent honks of support as they pass by the site in transit to their various occupations. Many students continue to visit the community following their tenure as designers to experience the place for leisure and to reconnect with locals they have met.

Design/Build Module I

The most challenging aspect of the site is its vastness in comparison to the parameters within which the design/build labs must operate, namely limited budget, the students' skill-levels and construction experience, and having only two weeks each year allocated to work on-site. The first intervention was crucial to establishing an order for architecture to develop.

The Mary Celeste in the Landscape

The initial move on the site simultaneously dealt with the ocean-like quality of the field and the compulsion to acknowledge the myth of the *Mary Celeste*. It consists of a curved transverse slice through the site lined with a 110-foot dry-stacked stone wall and a wooden keel-like structure that acts as a threshold into the space. This gathering space describes the length and breadth of the *Mary Celeste* and provides two tiers of seating.



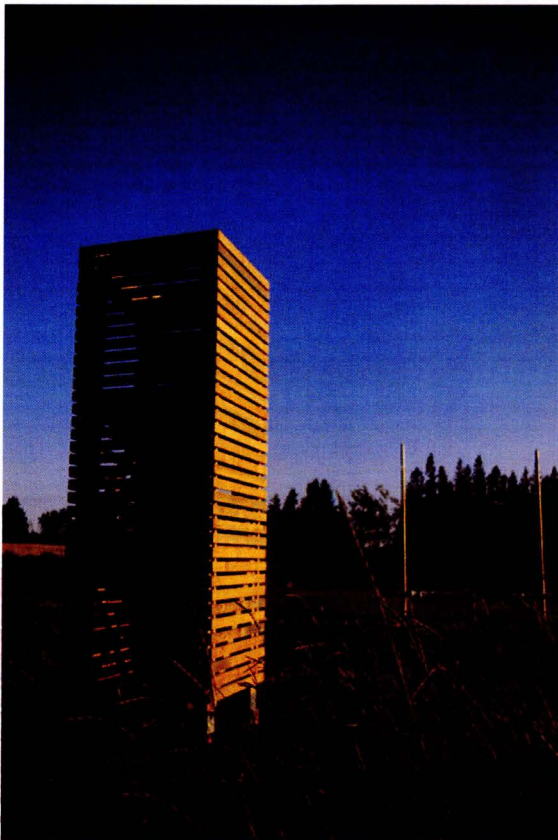
Top: The crucial first move. Drawing the *Mary Celeste* on site at 1:1. Source: Dalhousie School of Architecture.

Middle: A community member donates his services and excavator to kickstart the project. Source: Dalhousie School of Architecture.

Left: The rock wall and seating area nearing completion. Source: Dalhousie School of Architecture.

Projector

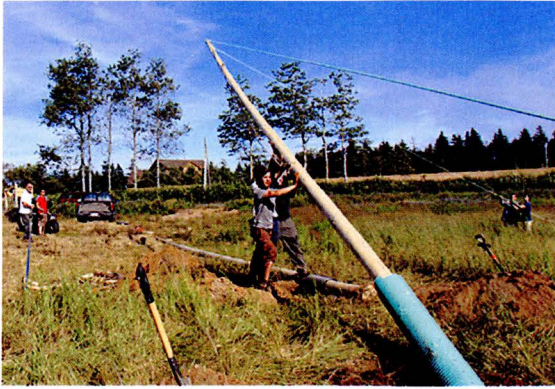
A projection tower, featuring a re-purposed grain hopper to house the projector, stands behind the wall as a beacon or landmark; an analog to the lighthouse on Spencer's Island beach. The tiny building allows enough space for the projectionist to stand and work, while an upper platform accessed by a "cladder" serves to allow documentation of an event or simple observation. The projection booth was built off site and transported to its precast foundation, then clad.



Top: Unloading the projection booth.

Middle: The tower is a solitary figure in a vast landscape.

Left: The projection tower in 2007.
Source: Brad Pickard.

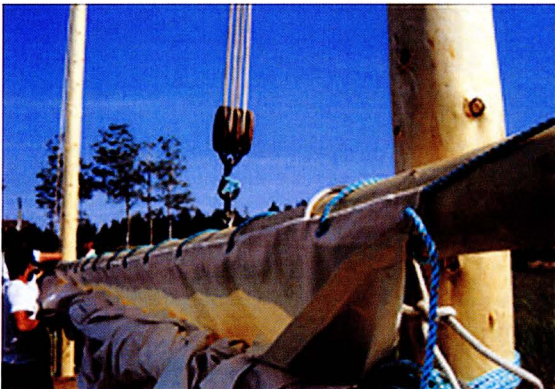


The Screen

Further along a north-south axis (see plan p.44), 100 feet down the slope, two masts, 20 feet apart and 25 and 30 feet tall, form the major support for the projection screen and recall the masts of a wooden sailing vessel.



This axis nods to navigation in seafaring days and provides an organizational datum which extends through the village, passing through the former junction to the old shipyard road onward through the lighthouse and wharf area.



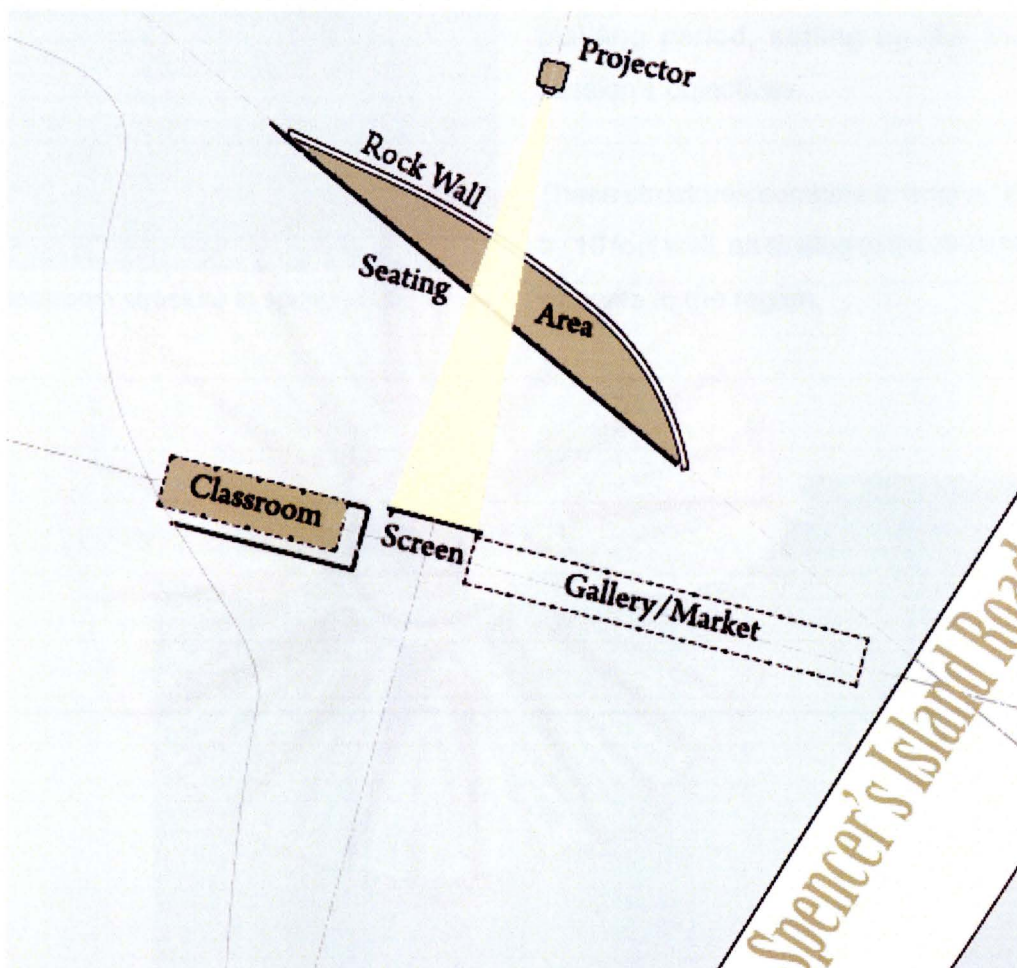
In the true spirit of design/build labs, the screen was an investigative design exercise. The masts held strong in the ground and the rigging, fashioned from salvaged ropes and pulleys from retired sailing and fishing vessels, worked flawlessly, but the underestimated force of the wind immediately tore the canvas screen upon deployment.



The masts and first attempt at the screen.
Source: Dalhousie School of Architecture.



The outdoor cinema complete in 2007.



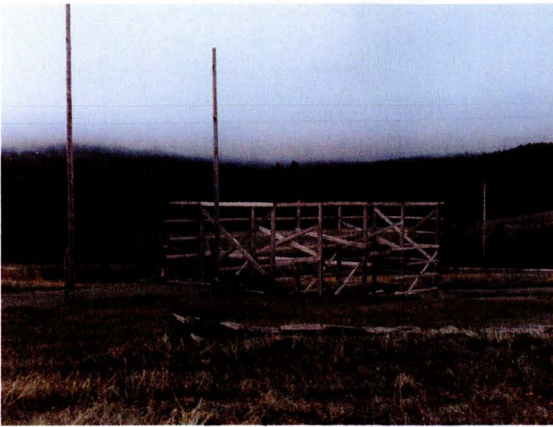
Plan of the outdoor cinema after Design/Build Module II when the classroom and gallery were framed in. Scale 1:500

Design/Build Module II

A Wharf-Like Structure



Looking down the outdoor gallery from Spencer's Island Road.



The classroom structure in spring 2009.

An east-west axis passes through the masts in the form of a 100 foot outdoor gallery or market to the east and a 10 foot by 40 foot building to the west providing a classroom, workshop, or a smaller projection venue. These two elements are held together by a 20 foot by 10 foot space that marks the intersection of the north/south and east/west axis. The building was partially completed by the end of the two-week building period, setting up the summer session's objectives.

These structures combine to form a 160 foot by 10 foot wall, an analog to the monumental wharves in the region.



Part of the wharf in near-by Diligent River.

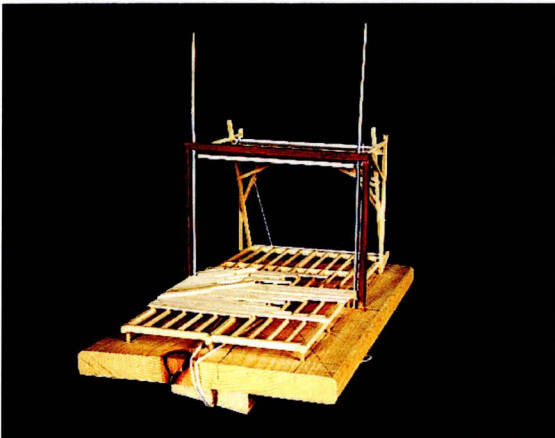
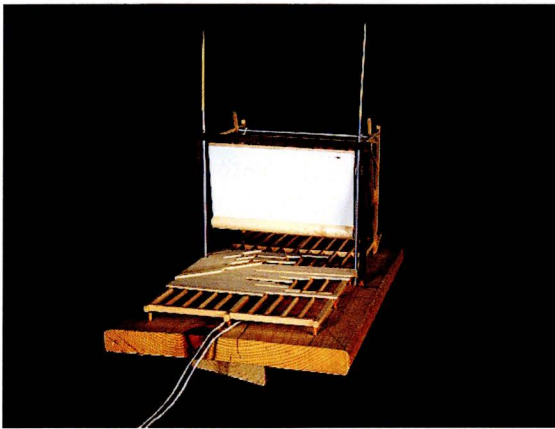


Panorama from the projection tower, 2008.

Design/Build Module III

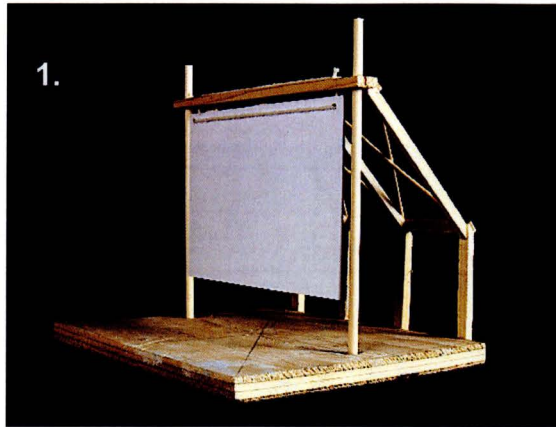
Preliminary Design

The 2009 session of the design/build lab was under pressure from some community members to complete the structure from the previous summer, and to begin to define the program for the complex. I undertook the challenge and began organizing a film event, in the spirit of the *Mary Celeste's* pop-culture legacy, to take place immediately following the lab. This set in motion an imperative to enclose the structure and to revisit the screen with several design exercises in preparation for the design/build lab.

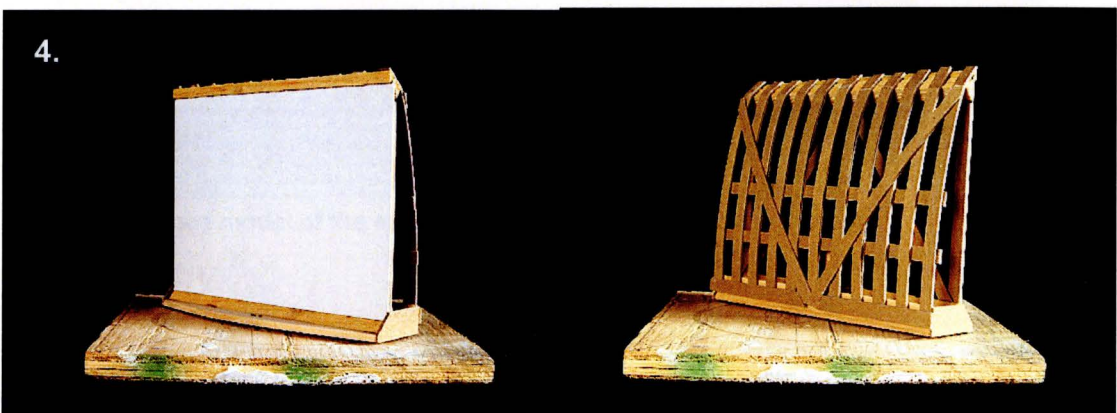
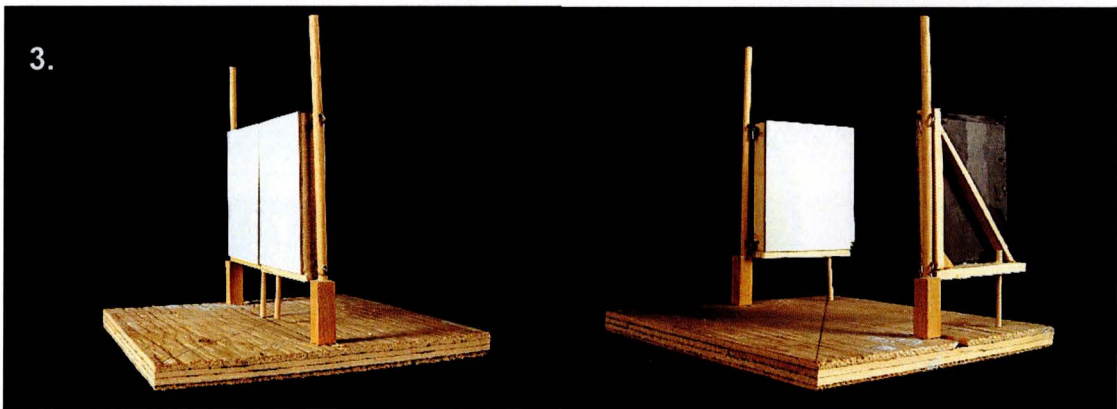
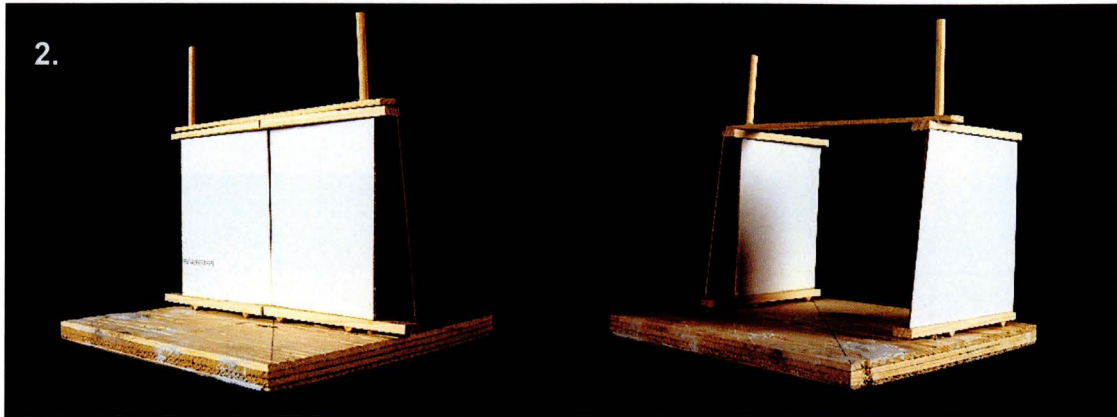


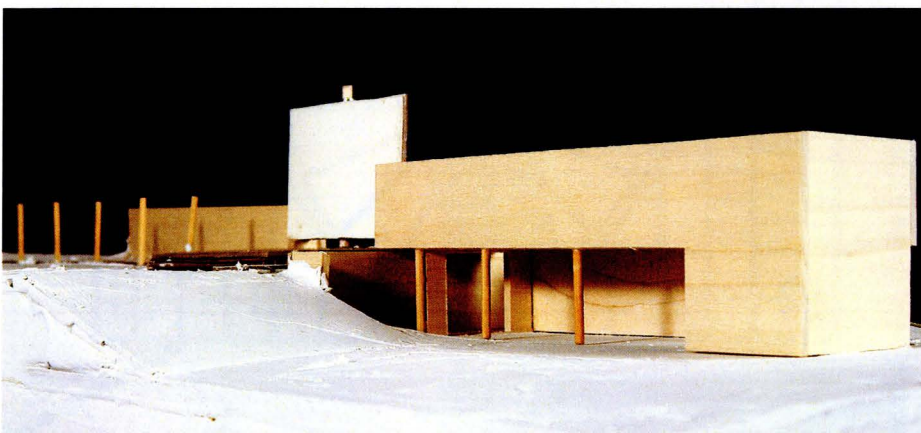
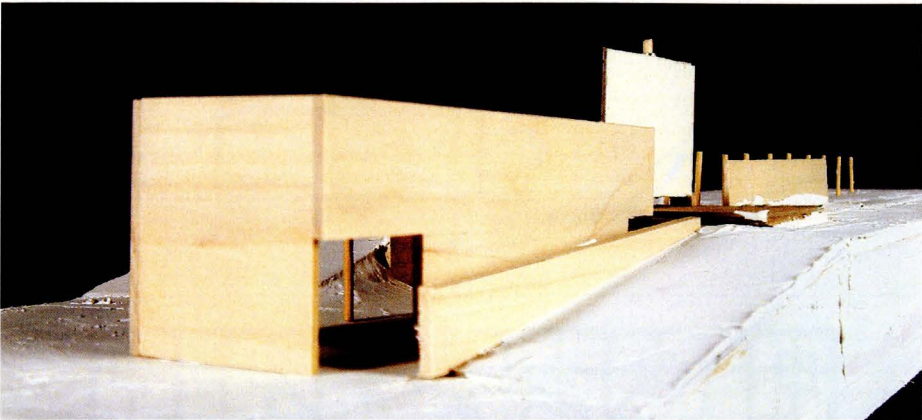
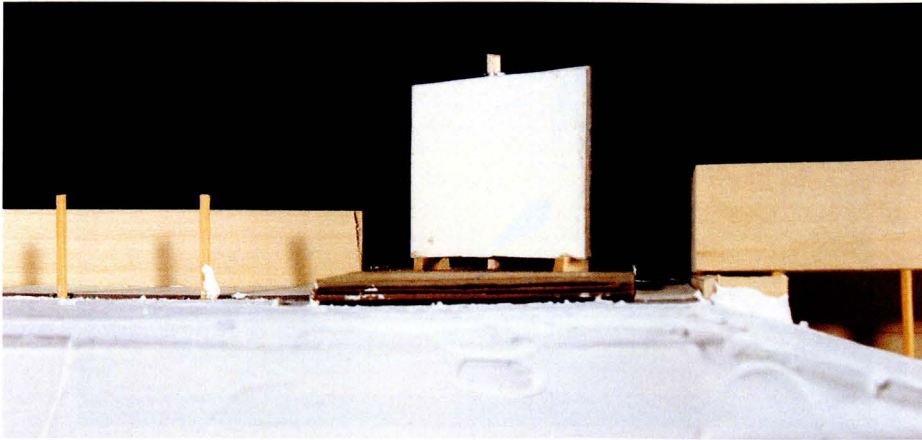
Process model of a proposal featuring a projection screen that becomes a roof with use of a top hinge, pulleys and cable. The space can be used as a cinema, bandshell, and gateway.

Process models representing screen proposals:

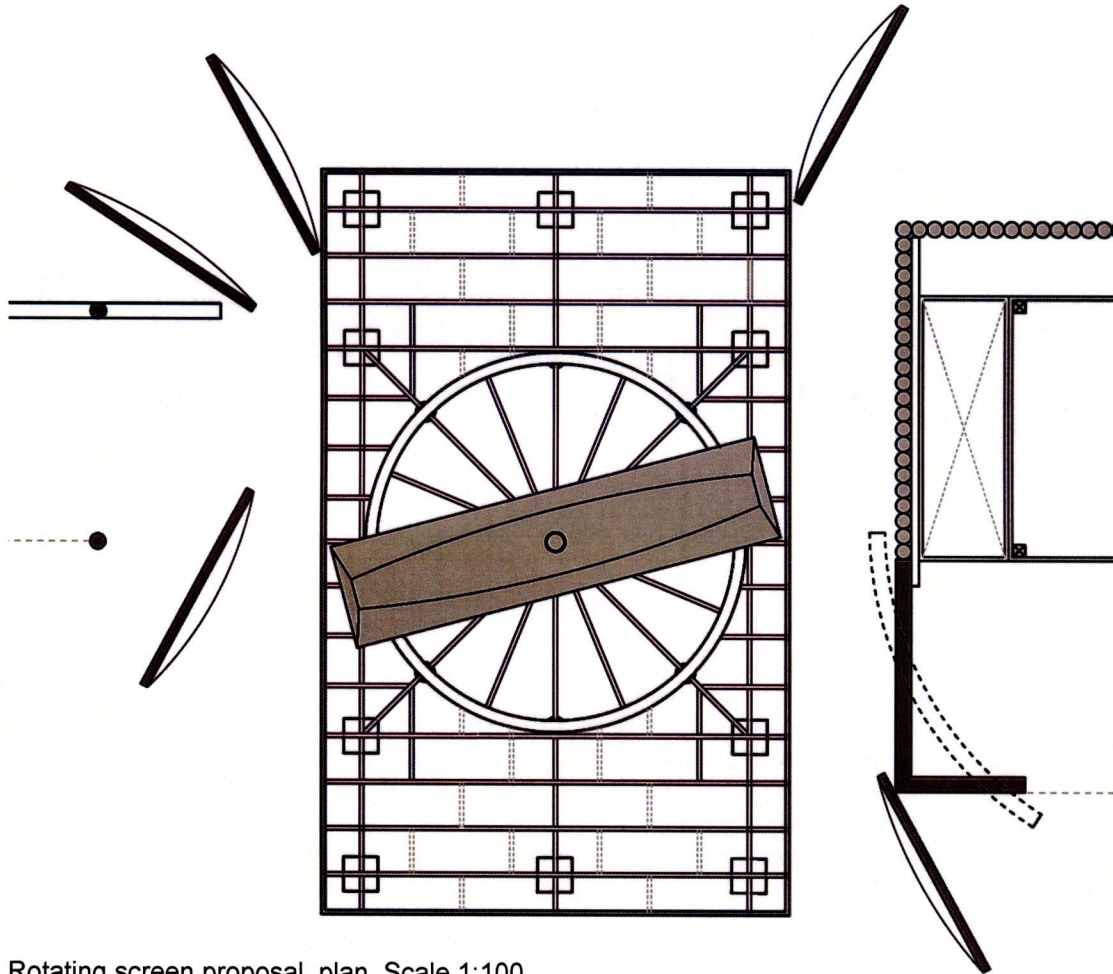


1. A swinging screen absorbs wind load.
2. Barn doors, with ballast in the base, use the ground and a minor pin connection. They also form a bandshell when open.
3. Barn doors, removable.
4. Compass rose. The screen rotates on a pivot anchored into the ground. The base is heavily ballasted while the upper screen structure is relatively light. The entire structure absorbs wind load with movement and deflects it with an aerodynamic form.

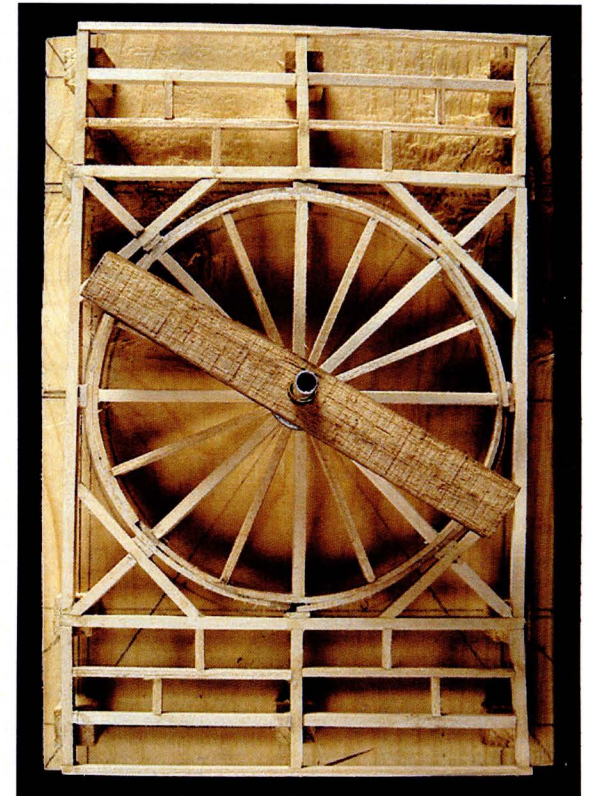




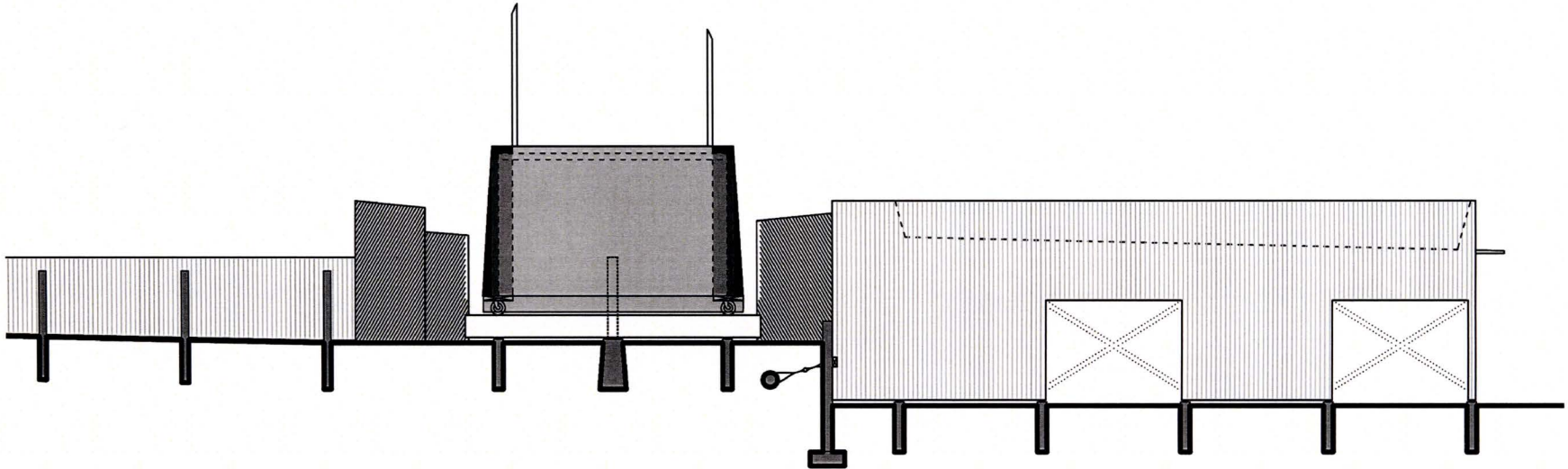
Process model of the rotating screen integrated into the complex.



Rotating screen proposal, plan. Scale 1:100



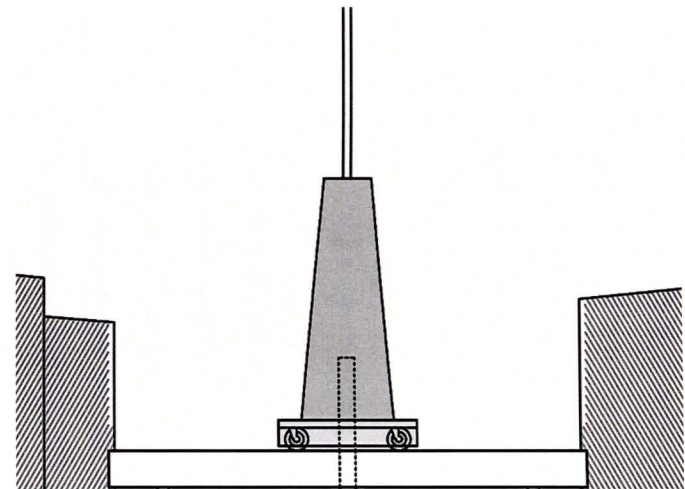
Rotating screen proposal, framing model. Scale 1:100



Rotating screen: elevation showing spindle, castors and footings. Scale 1:200

A steel spindle passes through the centre of the stage from a heavy concrete footing. The steel base is made from an existing steel trailer frame. The base rotates on the spindle, supported by castors that roll along a laminated ring beam in the stage. Ballast is added to the base to increase stability. The screen structure is light wood framing, slightly bent or sloped to cheat the wind (within the correcting capabilities of the projector). It is clad with wood or a stressed skin and lit from inside when not in use as a screen. When in stage/theatre mode, the screen as backdrop can be rotated for quick set changes and locked into place. The moveable walls around the stage are used for spatial transformations and acoustics, made with similar construction to the screen.

The plan is like a compass rose and the elevation is like a square-rigged sail, able to move with the wind when not in use to take some load off the structure. The character of the stage area breaks free from the wharf structure, like a breach, or like several ships anchored around port.

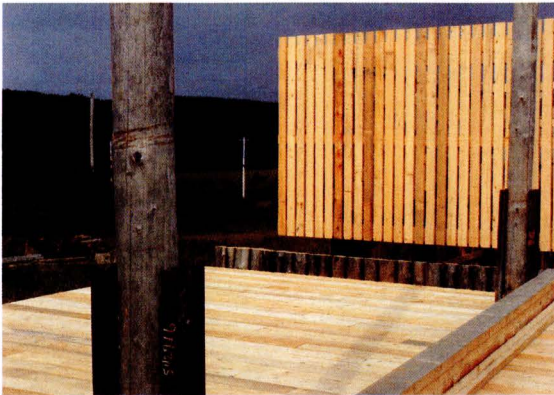


Rotating screen profile with view through base to castors and spindle. Scale 1:100

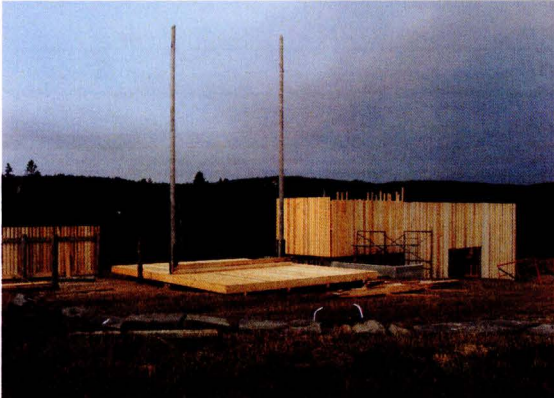


In July 2009, the plans were brought out of the studio and into the field. The following photos chronicle the intensive two-week process during which new concrete footings for the masts and a retaining wall were poured, the stage was built, and the classroom was clad and reinforced.

Building the Stage and Screen



The final design differed greatly from the preliminary sketches; a lesson in the realities of construction, cost, and skill limitations. What was built instead are simple, elegant solutions that permitted the immediate use of the facility.



The existing masts were retained, but were first removed and laid aside while substantial steel and concrete footings were installed. Four eight-foot steel c-channel members, procured from the fabrication shop in Advocate Harbour, sit embedded in board-formed concrete footings that extend five feet below grade. Once the stage was built around the footings, the masts were refitted to the c-channel with threaded rod: one piece at the base acts as a pivot for installation and removal of the masts, while the upper rod secures them.



Building the stage and screen.

Cladding the Classroom



The classroom building presented a complex set of problems, having settled unevenly in the ground since it was erected the previous summer. The crew set out to correct the structure, reinforce it with additional structural members, and bring it into true. Once the 40 foot by 10 foot building stood square and horizontal strapping was in place, one-by-four boards were installed vertically to clad the building. Two openings were left on the north facade.



Source: Owen McSwiney

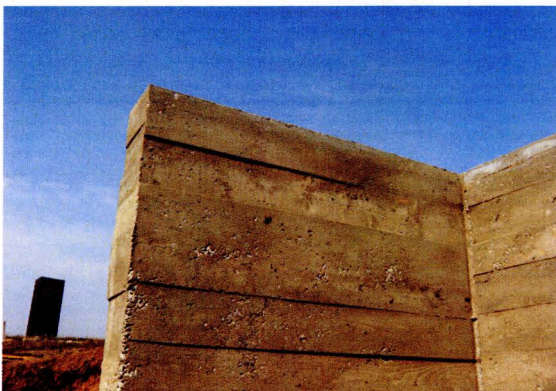
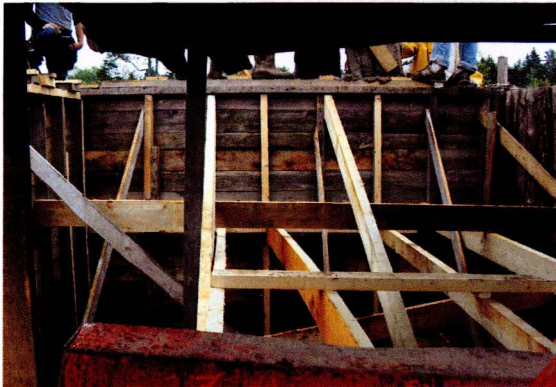
The Retaining Wall



The classroom building sits approximately five feet below the level of the stage. In 2008, a retaining wall constructed of logs was built around the footprint of the building. In 2009, the wall was extended toward the seating area to define a small entry court and divert water from the building. Drainage tile was installed ten feet from the north facade at the same time the wall was constructed.



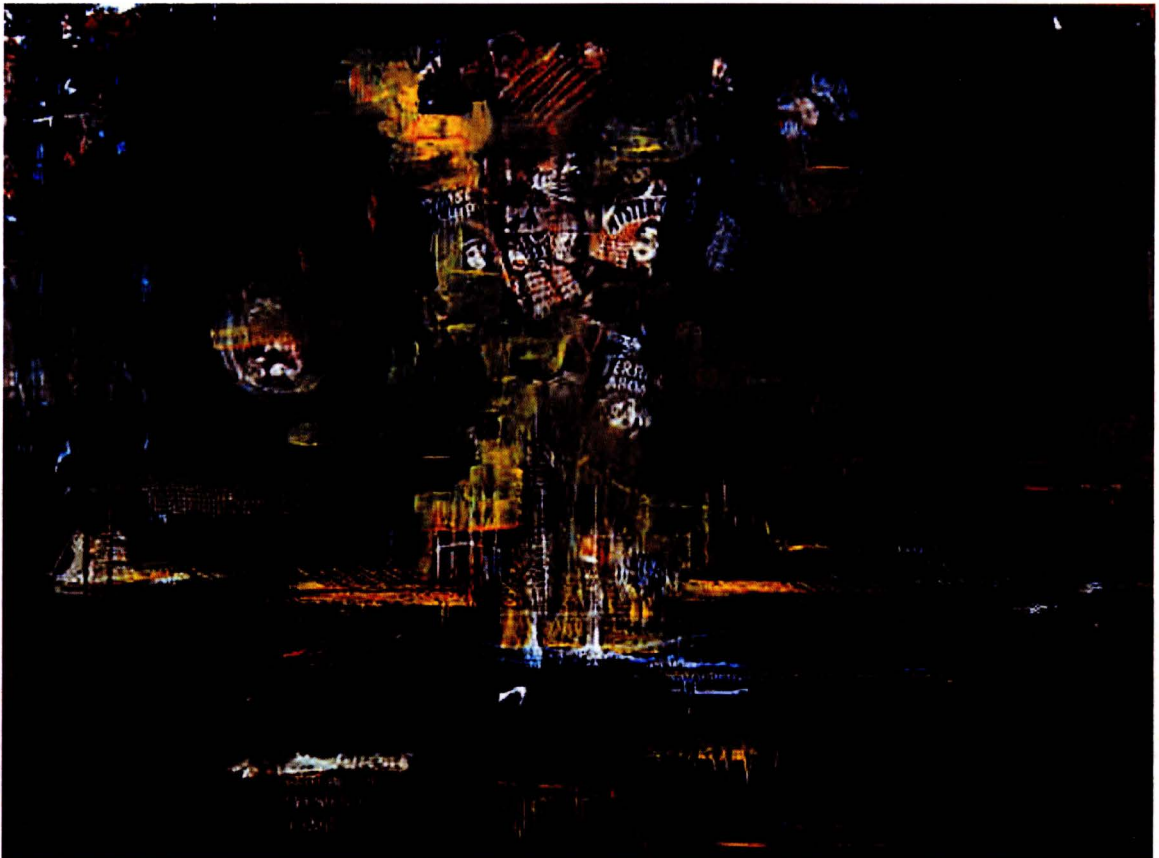
The new wall is constructed of board-formed reinforced concrete. The scope of this undertaking marked the beginning of a more permanent type of construction on the site, though not without a learning curve. The boards used in the formwork were reclaimed from a collapsed barn in the area and proved not to be up to the task of containing several tonnes of concrete. The forms started to bow and crack, but the crew acted quickly, and, using a tractor and spare boards as a buttress, prevented the catastrophic failure of the wall.



Source: Owen McSwiney

DESIGN PROCESS

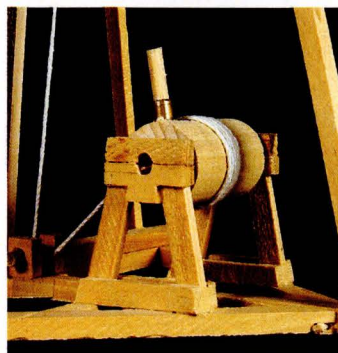
Simultaneously a part of the program and the design process, by playing the role of an artist in residency I hope to suggest an institution or tradition while an actual building comes to exist. Creating a body of work in response to site and historical research is aimed at gaining an ephemeral, material, and temporal understanding of the place while also initiating the sort of activity around which the Arts Centre comes to be.



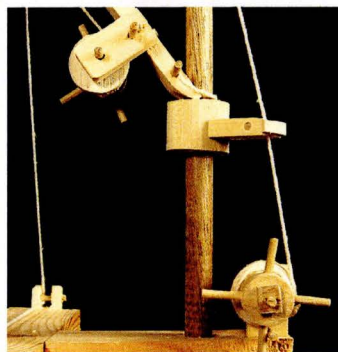
Imagining a midnight arrival to the "Home of the Mary Celeste", 2007.
Acrylic and collage on masonite.



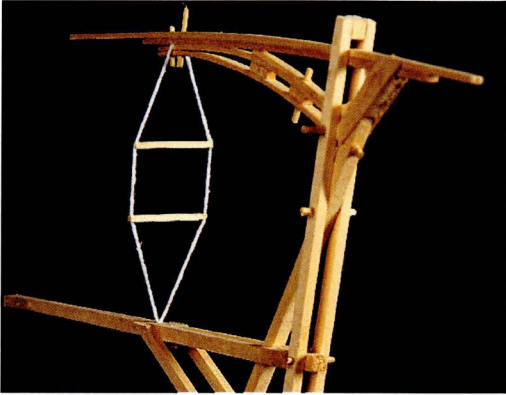
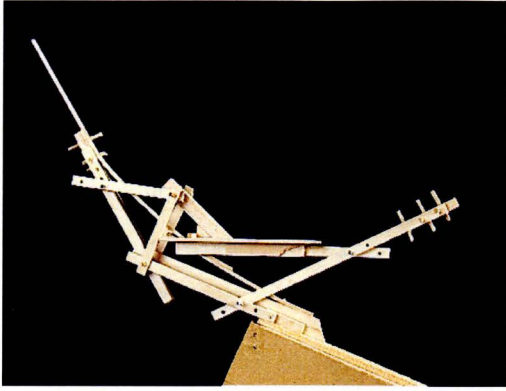
Paintings picturing the shipwright's work environment. Multi-media on masonite, 2007.



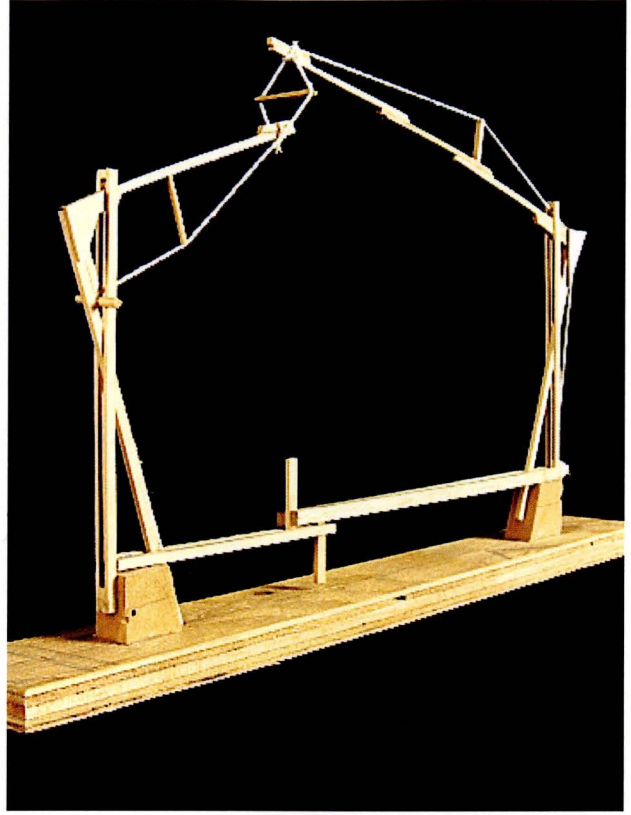
A functioning model of a pile driver similar to those used in wharf-building and construction. Many of the industrial buildings in the area were supported by wooden pile foundations.



A functioning model of a derrick crane. A derrick is used on land and onboard vessels to load and unload cargo and materials, and was a familiar character at the old shipyard.



Frame and truss studies using bent-wood, moving parts, and tensile components.



Frame featuring two bent-wood trusses pre-tensioned to pull away from one another, resisted by a tensile link.

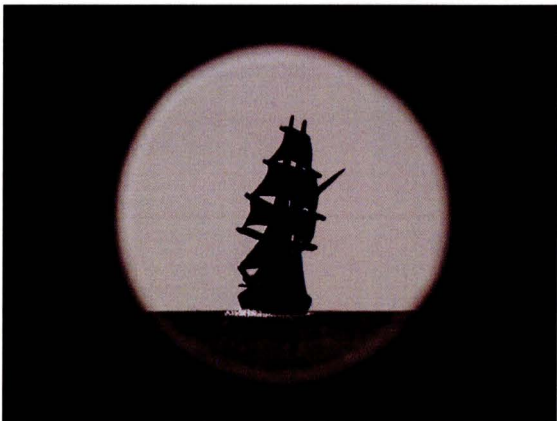
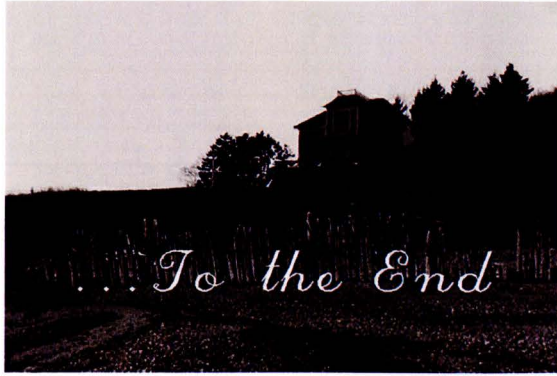


Drawbridge model derived from machine studies.

Constructed Narratives

Responses to site, stories, and history in artwork parallel to architectural work simultaneously develops content for exhibition at the film festival and material for community meetings. Community-based architectural work necessitates adopting several roles in order to engage the community in the process of design. A key component of a successful community project is the nurturing of a community's ownership and input in the overall vision.

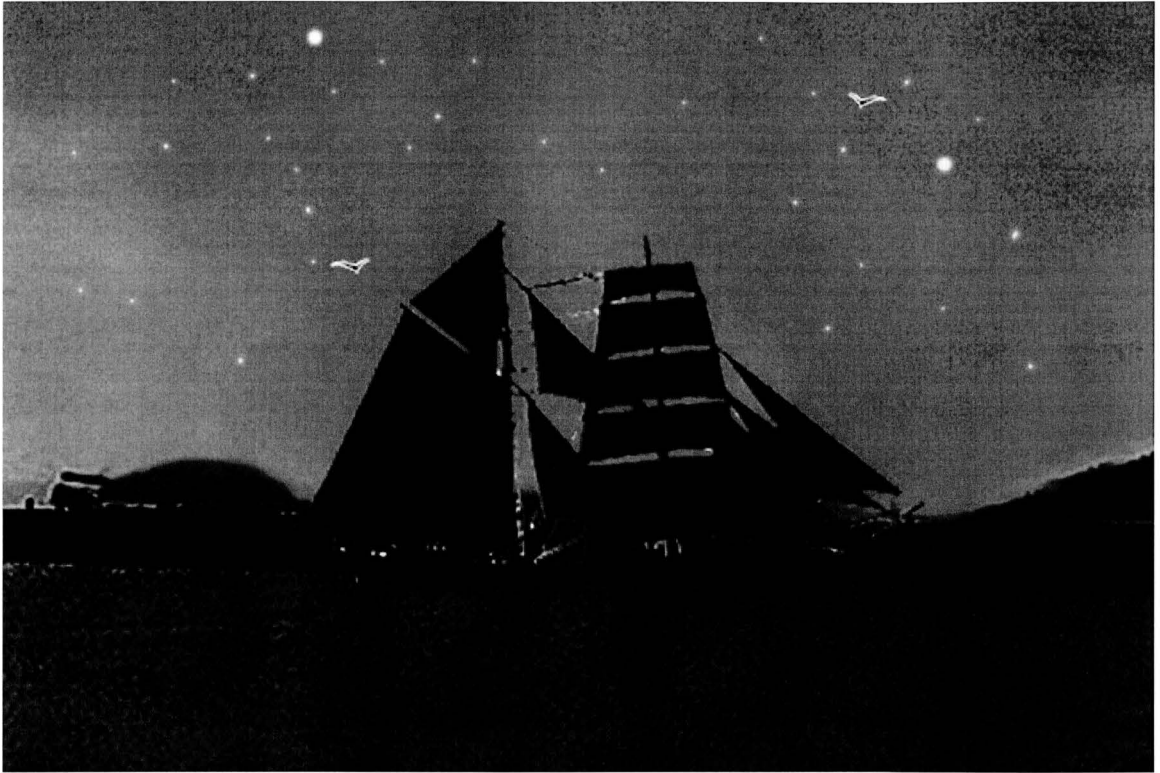
The animation, produced during the design process for the screen, contains an assemblage of historical and mythical connections to Spencer's Island and the myth of the *Mary Celeste*. It symbolizes a dedication to the community's interests, their history and aspirations, and a willingness to work within the parameters provided.



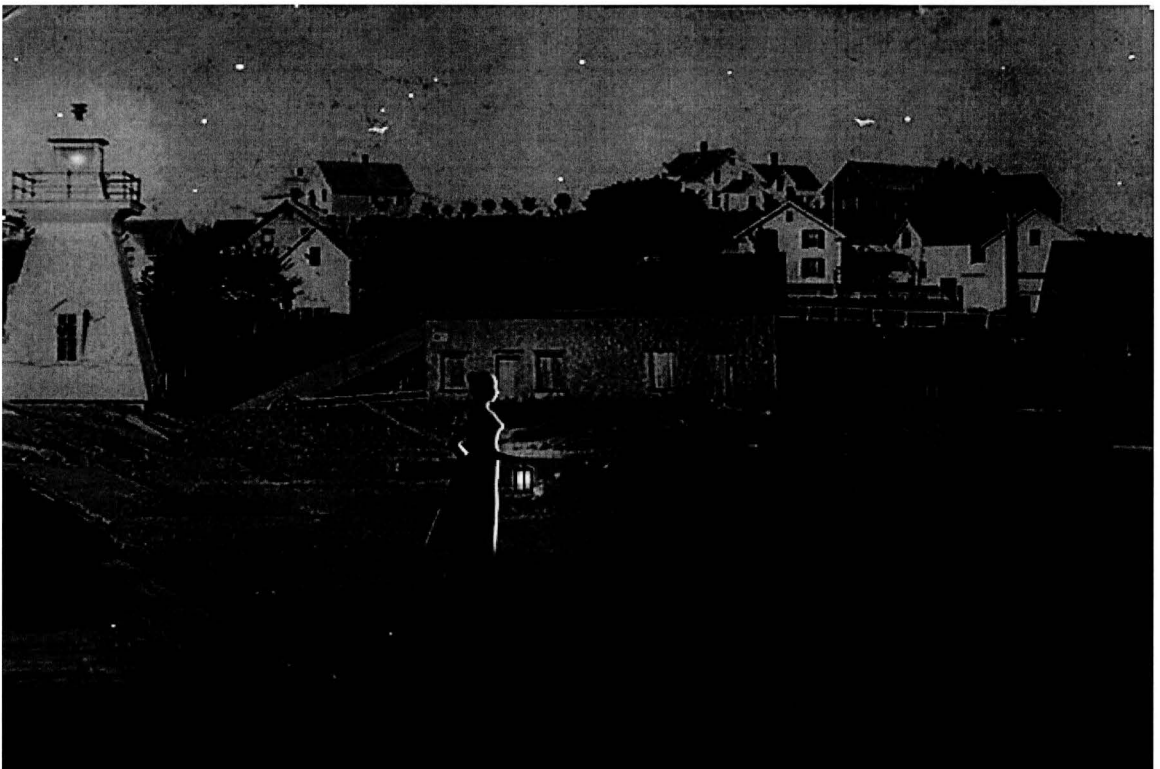
Animation stills from *To the End*, 2009.

My stop-motion animation based in Spencer's Island. Historical photos serve as the backdrops for invented stories. Invented characters and buildings frame actual events and geographical features.

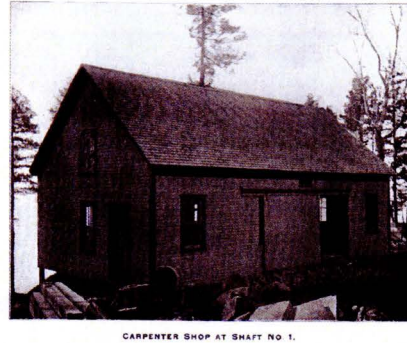
Left: Spencer's Island and Cape Split, seen through the window. Top: The Observation node with a transplanted home with a widow's walk.



The *Mary Celeste* in silhouette, moored at the now-destroyed wharf in Spencer's Island.

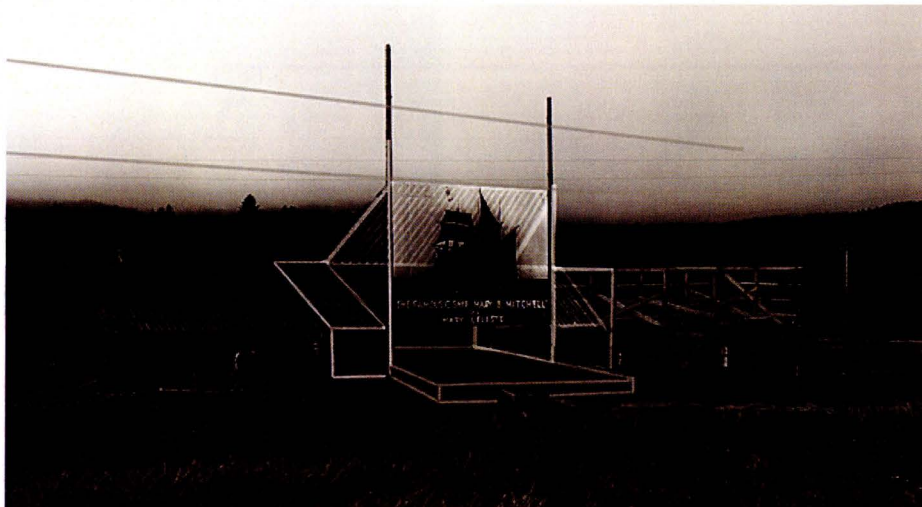


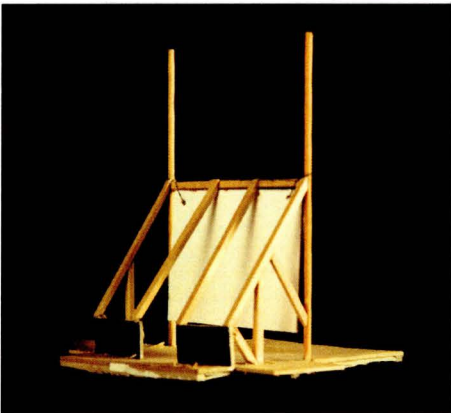
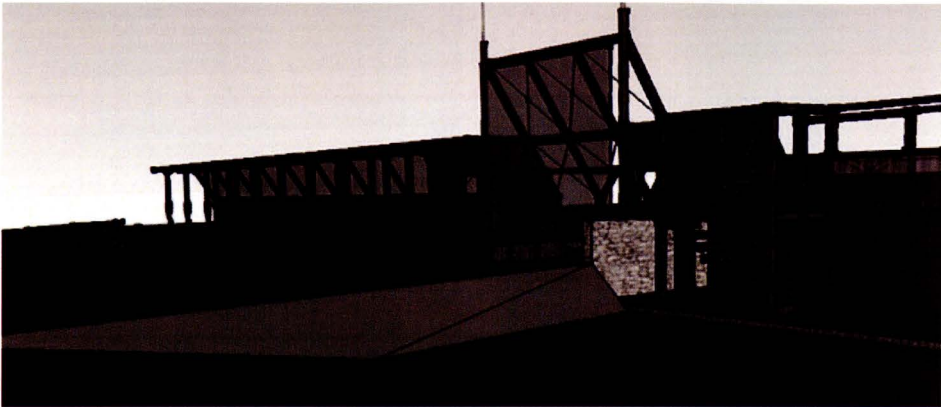
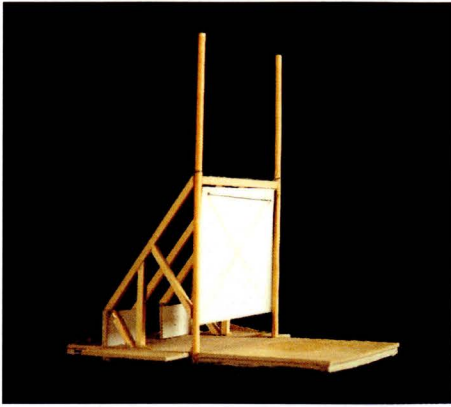
The "widow", making the lonely trip along the beach road to her home. The background image depicts Spencer's Island in the early 1900s.



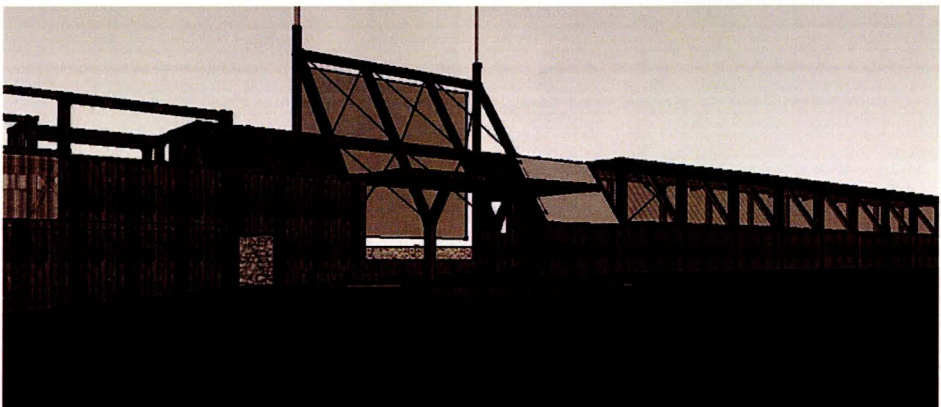
Images of the sawmill and carpentry shop at Cape D'Or. Source: President's message to shareholders, NSARM.

Below: Photocollage depicting an assemblage of historic buildings onto the existing structure from Design/Build Module II. A still from *Phantom Ship* serves as the screen. Representations such as this allow characters from past to play with the emerging characters on the site and to inform relationships between different programmatic elements: production and performance.





Process models in preparation for the design/build lab derived from photocollage exercise.





Photocollages.

THE INAUGURAL EVENT: FOGGY LENS FILMY FEST

August 8, 2009

To inaugurate the new facility and to initiate the multidisciplinary aspect of the program, a film festival with musical guests was scheduled to take place a week following the design/build lab.



I designed a website and posted a call for submissions to the greater filmmaker community through established cooperatives and arts centres. A description of the place accompanied the call as well as a thematic tie to the ghost stories of the sea. Six films were selected for the event, including my animation.

Invitation to Participate

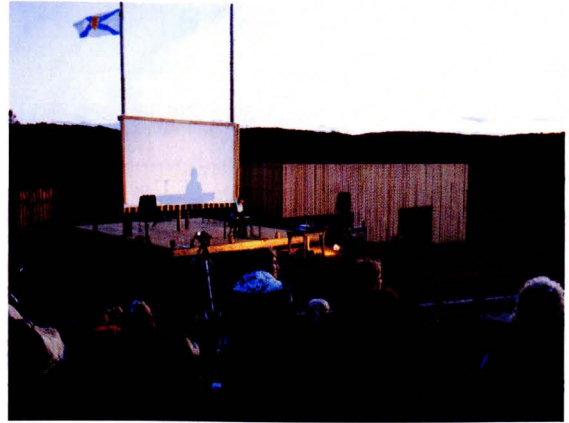
The film festival brought a number of people to the shore who had never visited before and elicited participation for next year's event. The films were bookended by musical performances by Erin Costello and Al Tuck, that confirmed the facility's ability to handle a multidisciplinary program. Additionally, the festival inaugurated what is hopefully an ongoing and growing program initiated by parties from other disciplines as well.

Reconnect to Community

The transformation of the bare structure built by the school in 2008 into an imageable building was vitally important to affirm to the community that we were there with the intention to create something tangible and alive. The event strengthened that pronouncement and extended an invitation for further collaboration, for patience, and for the enjoyment of defining the site's program through participation.



Source: Brad Pickard.



Erin Costello on stage as dusk falls.
Source: John Matthews.

Al Tuck performs in front of a projection of the *Mary Celeste*. Source: John Matthews.

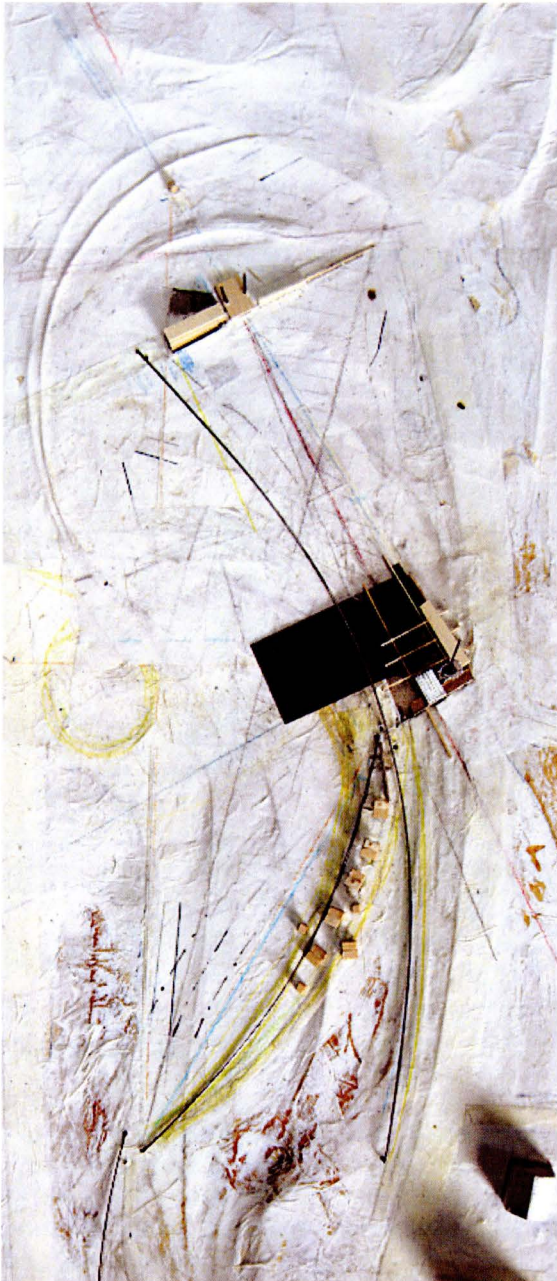


An introduction to the event by Professor Mullin. Source: John Matthews.

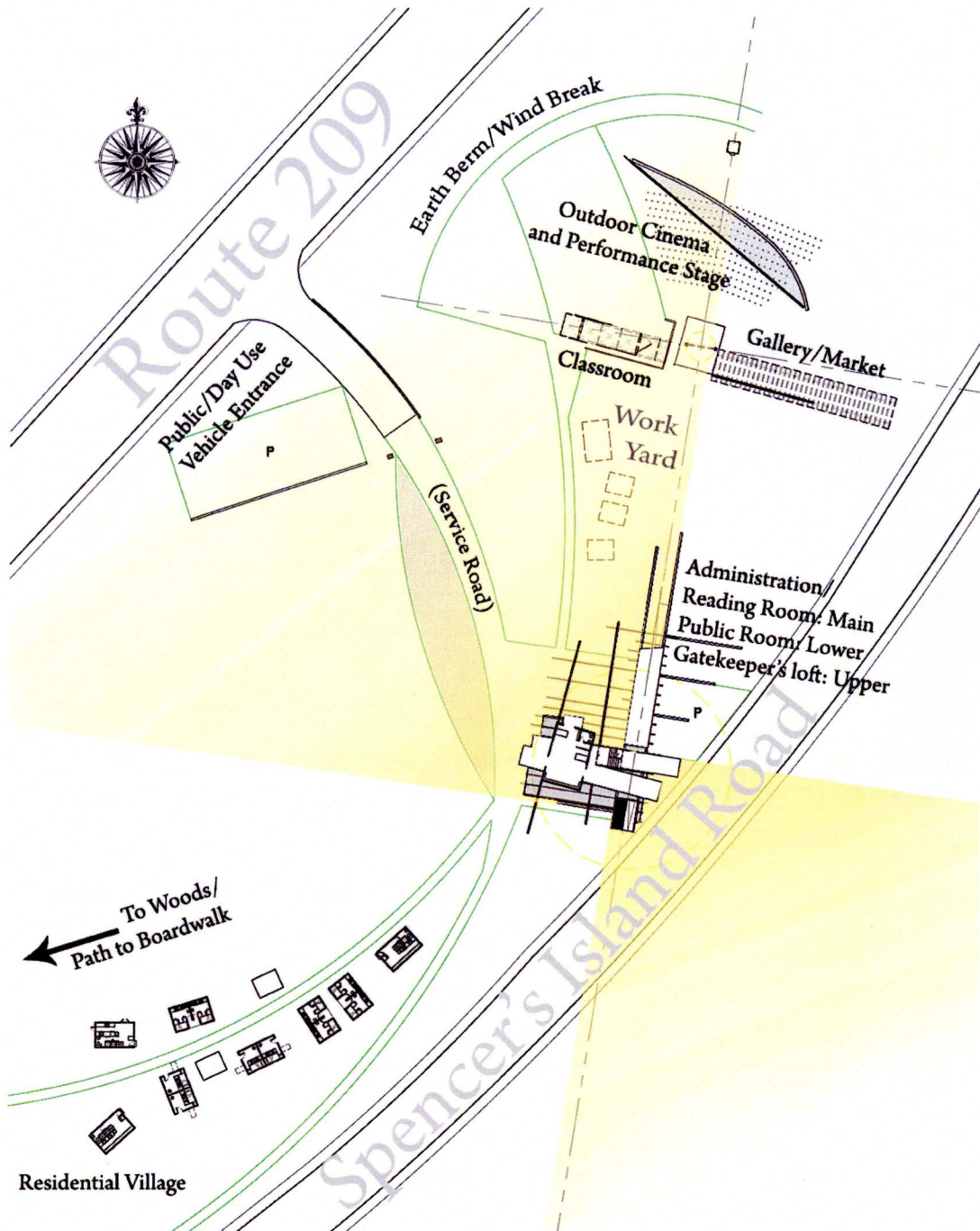
THE ARTS CENTRE

The proposed Arts Centre builds upon this work by supplying the facility with a vision for self-sustaining programming beyond the curriculum of the School of Architecture and by establishing a framework by which to expand.

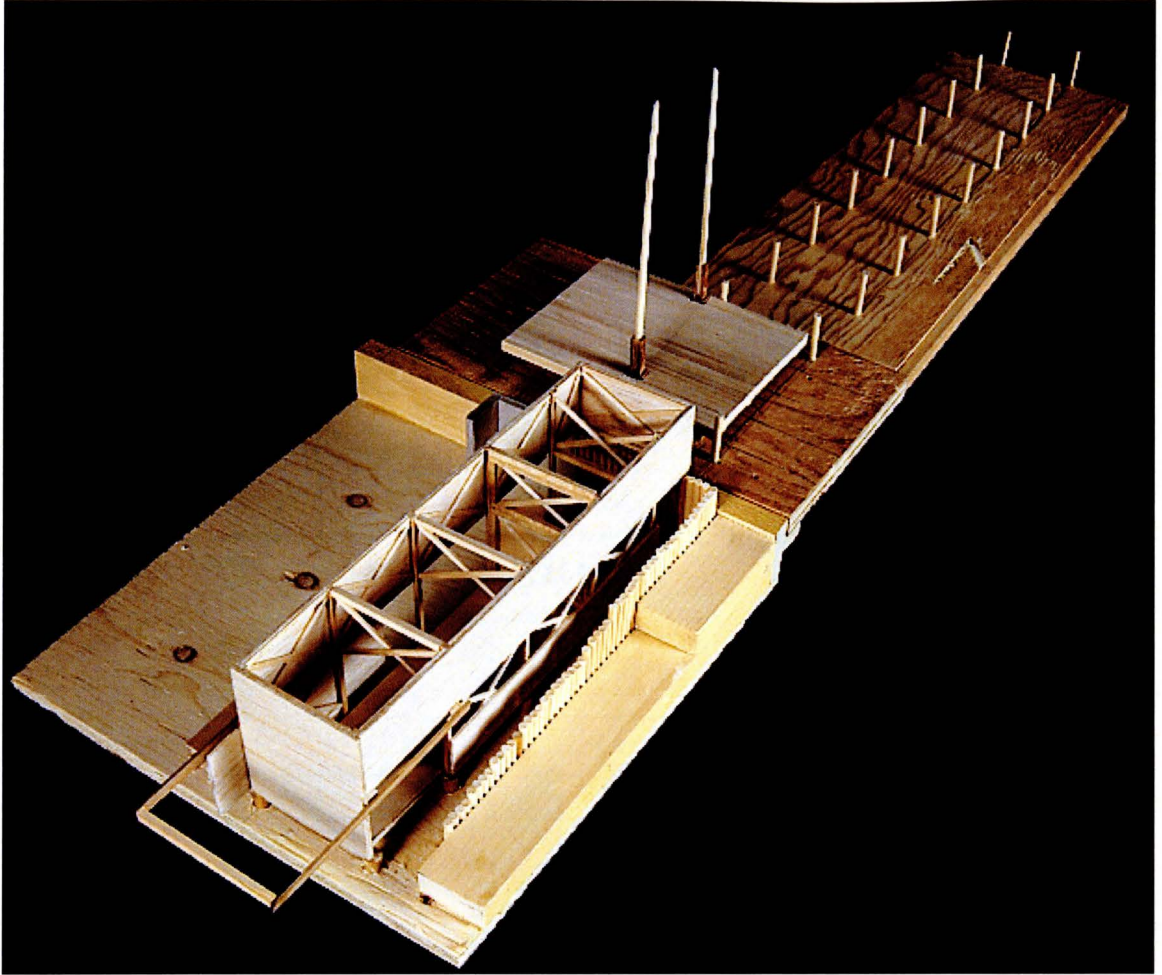
The administrative building, located at the intersection of the north/south axis and Spencer's Island Road, contains an office, reading room, and exhibition space at road level, a large public room and courtyard at the lower level, and a loft apartment for the "gatekeeper", or program director on the top level. The residential village, consisting of small single and multiple occupancy dwellings, cascade down the path leading from the site toward the woods.



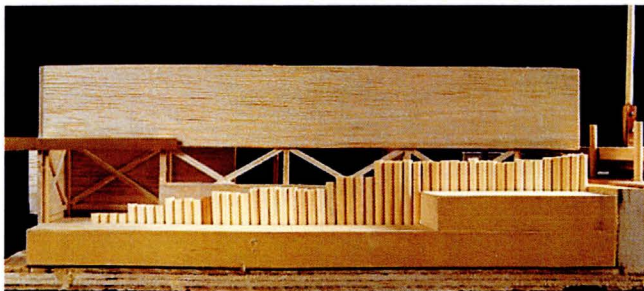
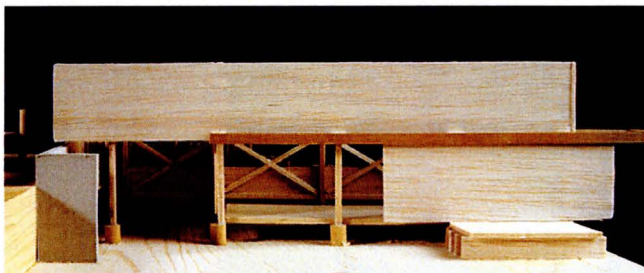
The Arts Centre at 1:500.



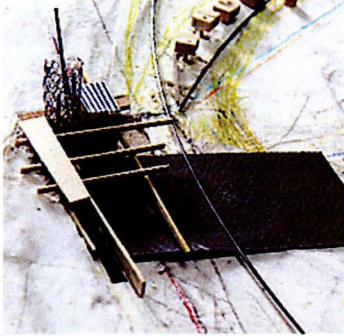
Plan of the proposed Arts Centre. Scale 1:750. A long tunnel picks up the north/south axis from the screen, enveloping a ramp rising to the road level. The administration building is built perpendicular to the tunnel forming a courtyard. The courtyard opens toward the highway entrance, work yard and performance facilities. It is the public centre of the complex. At Spencer's Island Road, the stair and building form an entry court.



The stage and screen modeled "as built" attached to a proposal for enclosing the classroom.



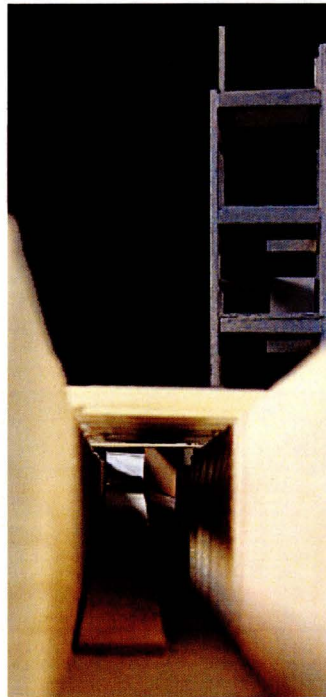
The classroom fitted with sliding doors.



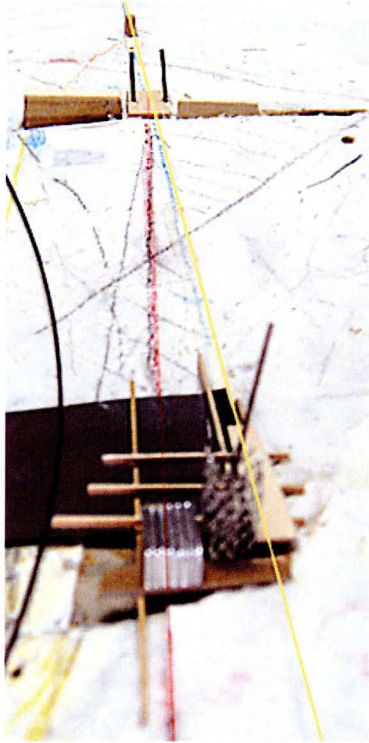
The administration building at 1:500.



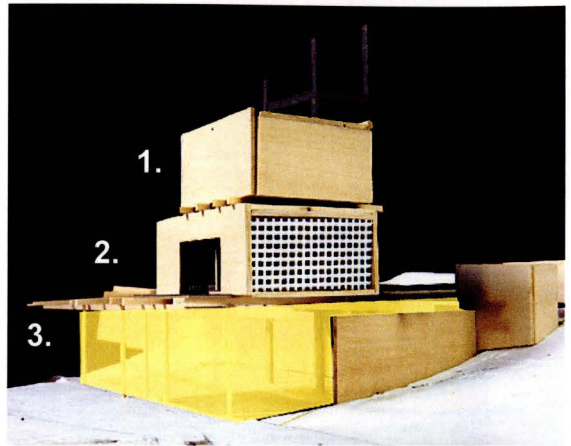
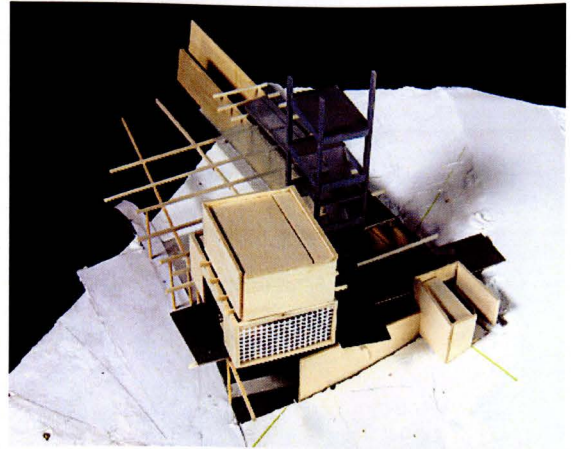
Painting study, detail.



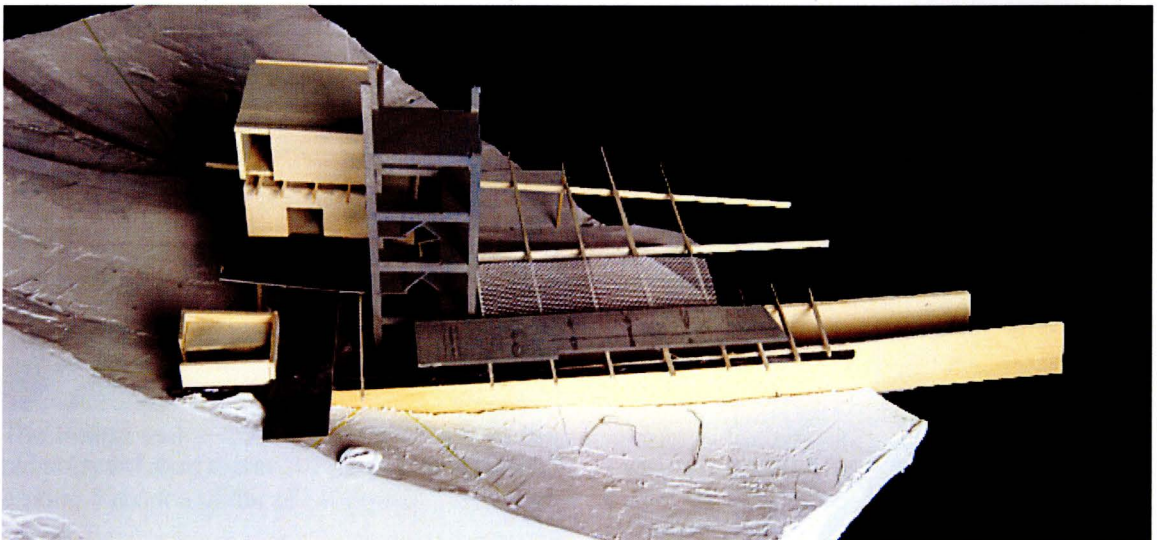
The ramp and tunnel.



The axis picked up by the ramp.



Above: Views of the 1. Gatekeepers loft, 2. Reading room, and 3. Lower public room.



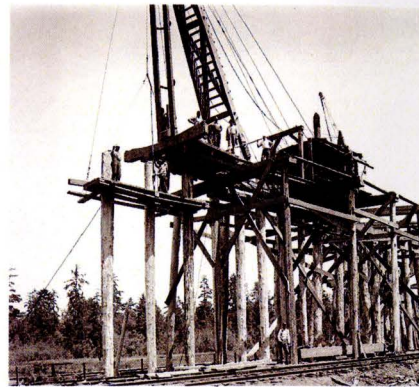
View toward the entry court and stair from Spencer's Island Road.

THE BRIDGE

The final link in the path is a trestle bridge constructed using a piledriver. It leaves the shore at the site of the old shipyard road and travels 150 feet toward Spencer's Island. The path then continues to the lighthouse, completing the loop.



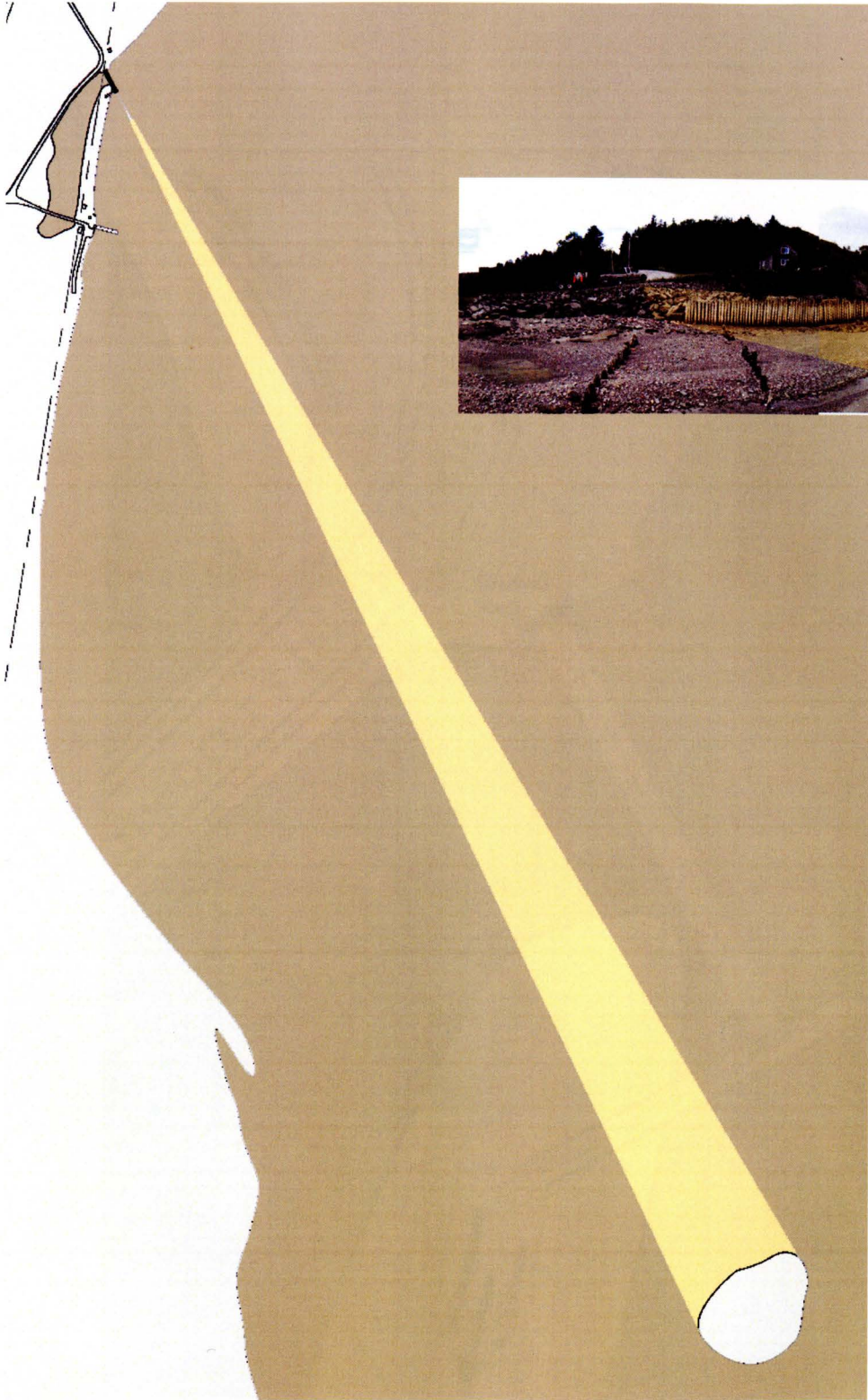
The bridge spans 150 feet from the site of the old shipyard road to a cribbing structure installed among the ruins of the old shipyard.



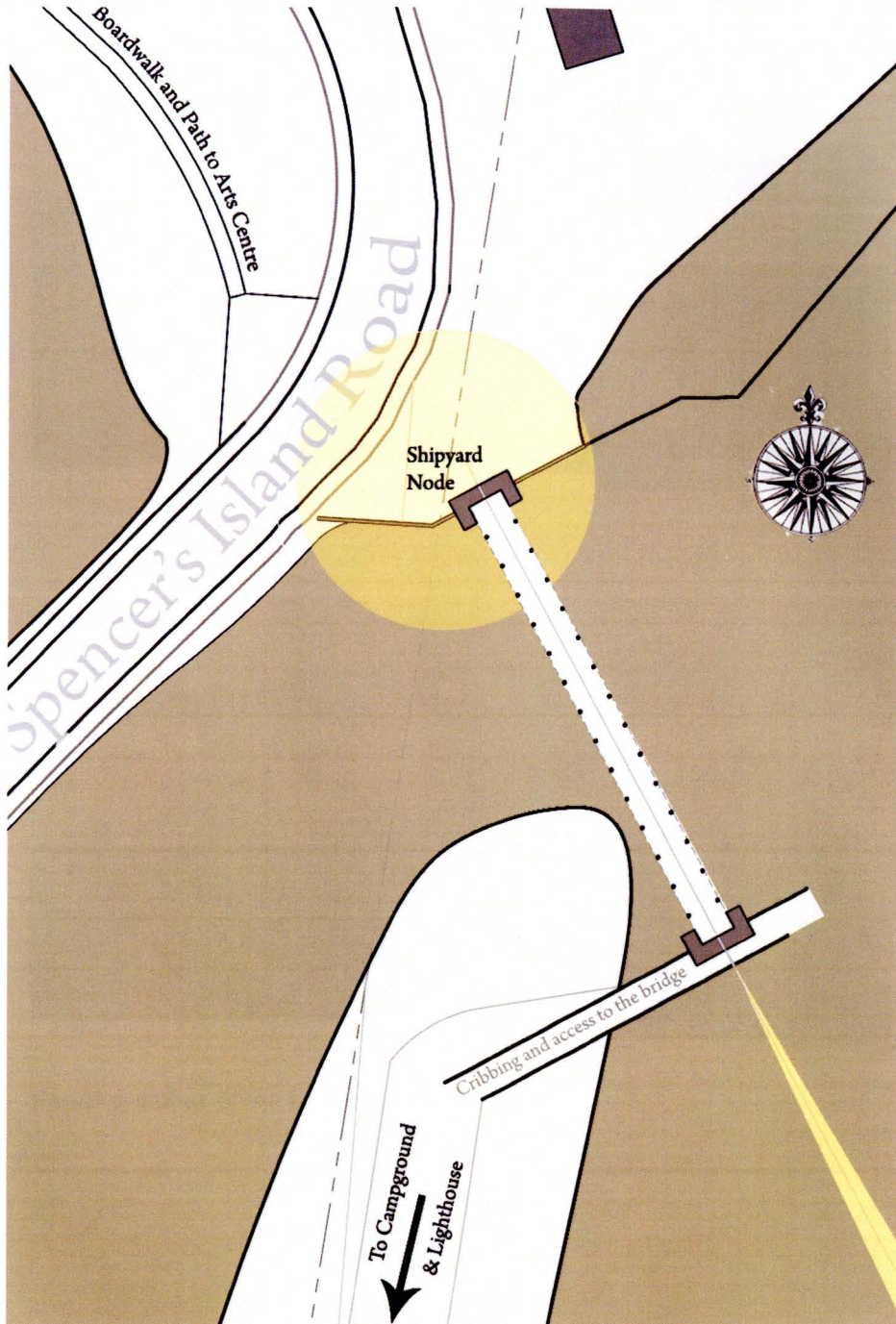
A pile driver building a train trestle.
Source: University of Washington.



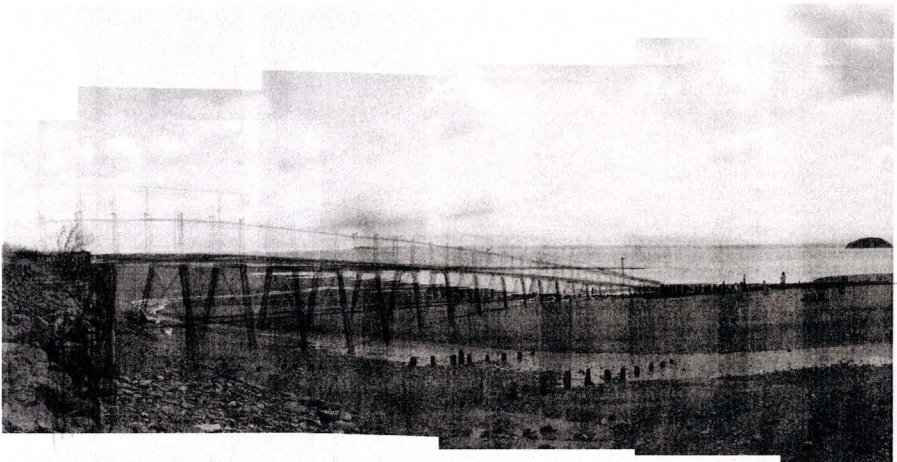
Cribbing used to moor a fishing boat
in Port Greville.



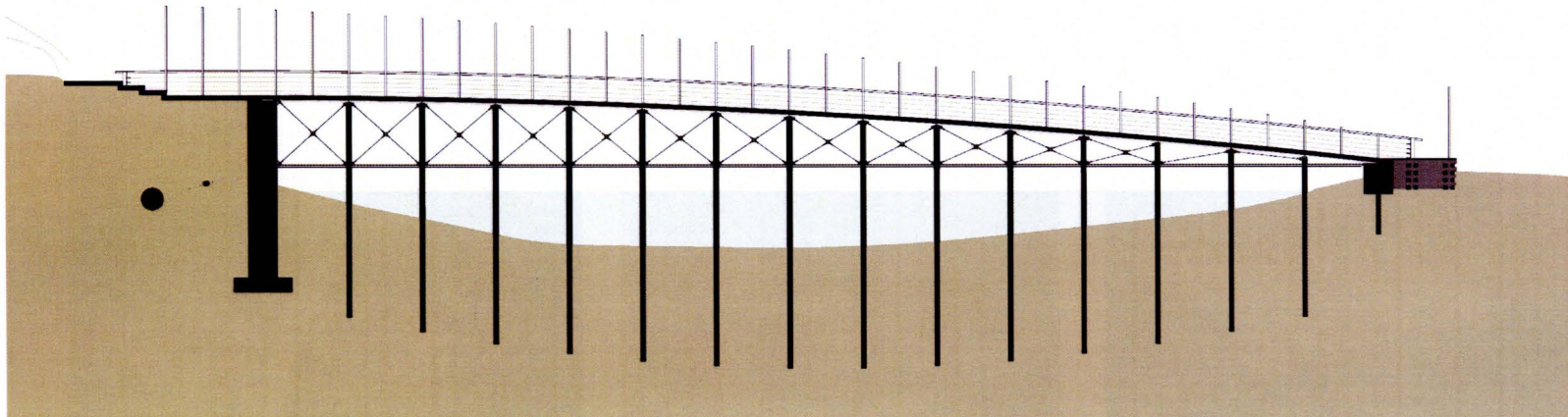
The bridge is oriented to point directly to Spencer's Island. Inset: the bridge site.



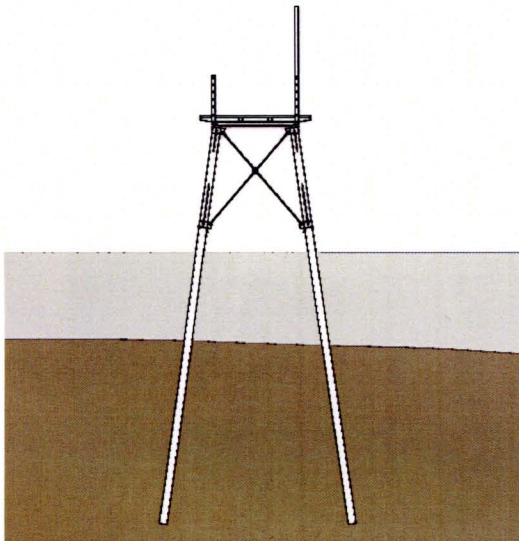
Plan of the bridge at the Shipyard node, reconnecting the beach road to Spencer's Island Road. Scale 1:500. Cribbing filled with large aggregate leads the approach to the bridge from the sandbar.



Pencil sketches of the bridge.

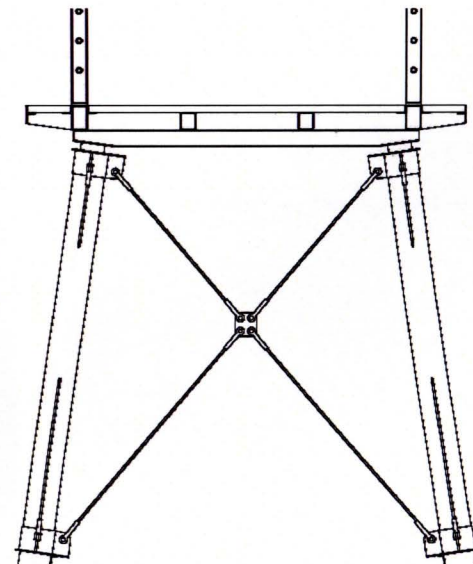


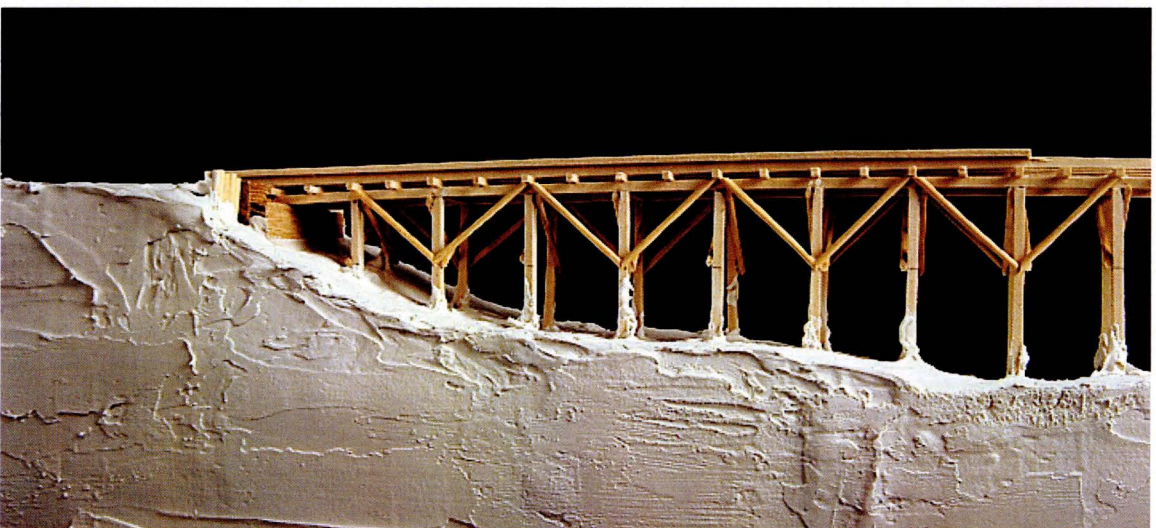
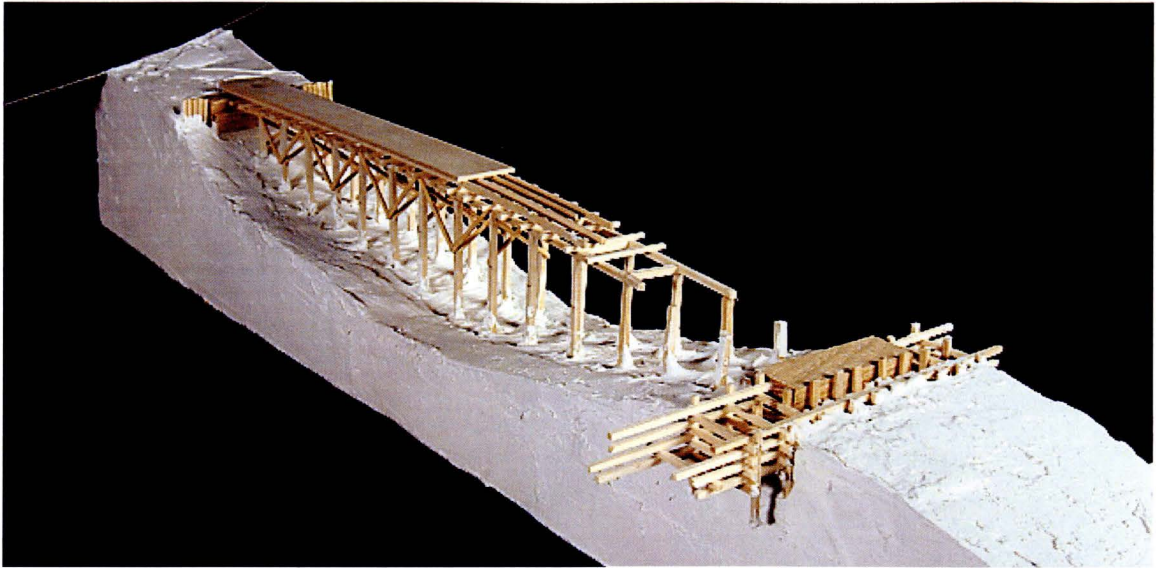
Longitudinal section. Scale 1:250



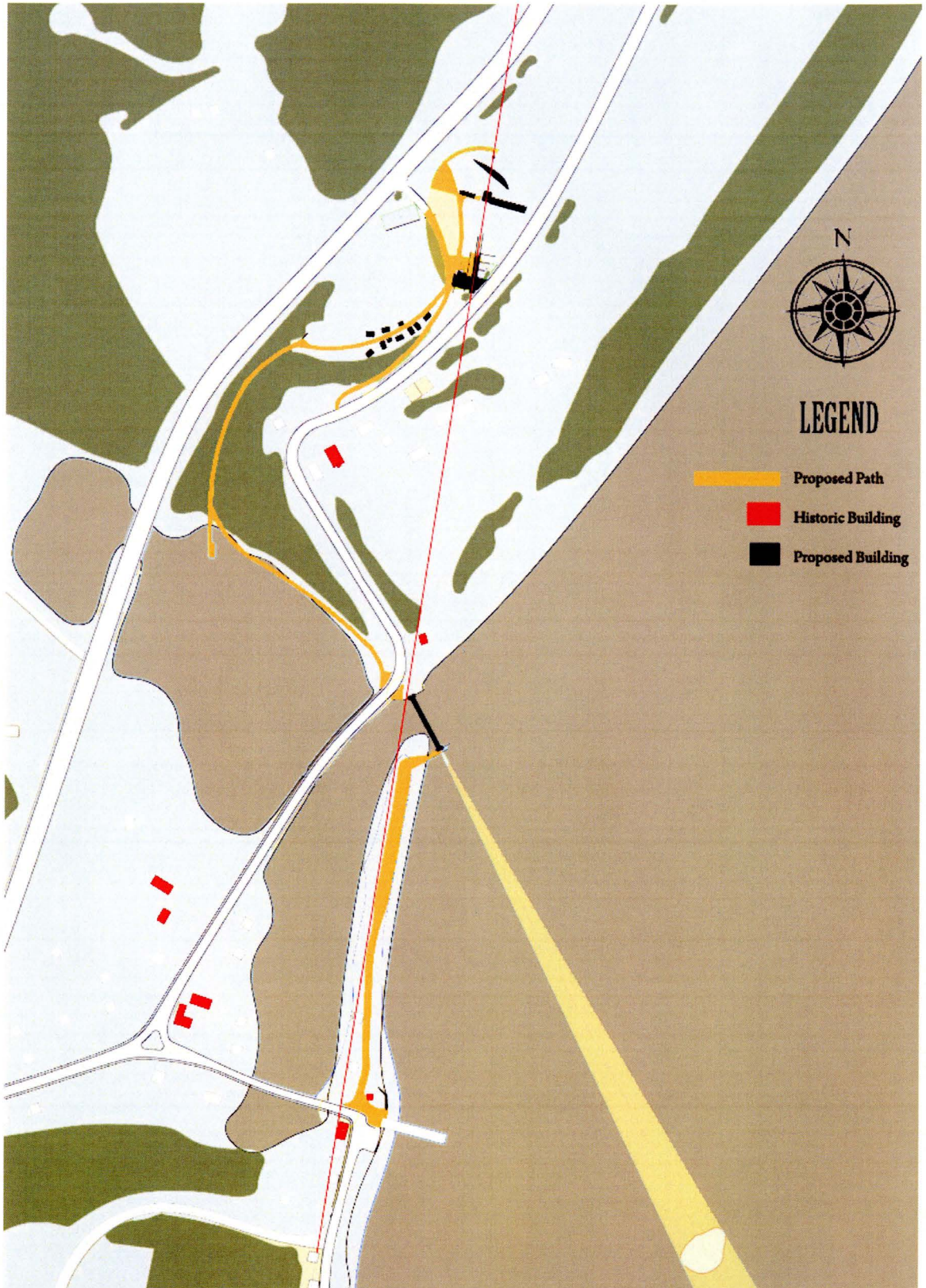
Cross section at high tide. Scale 1:200

Detail, timber piles meet steel connectors and decking.
Scale 1:50

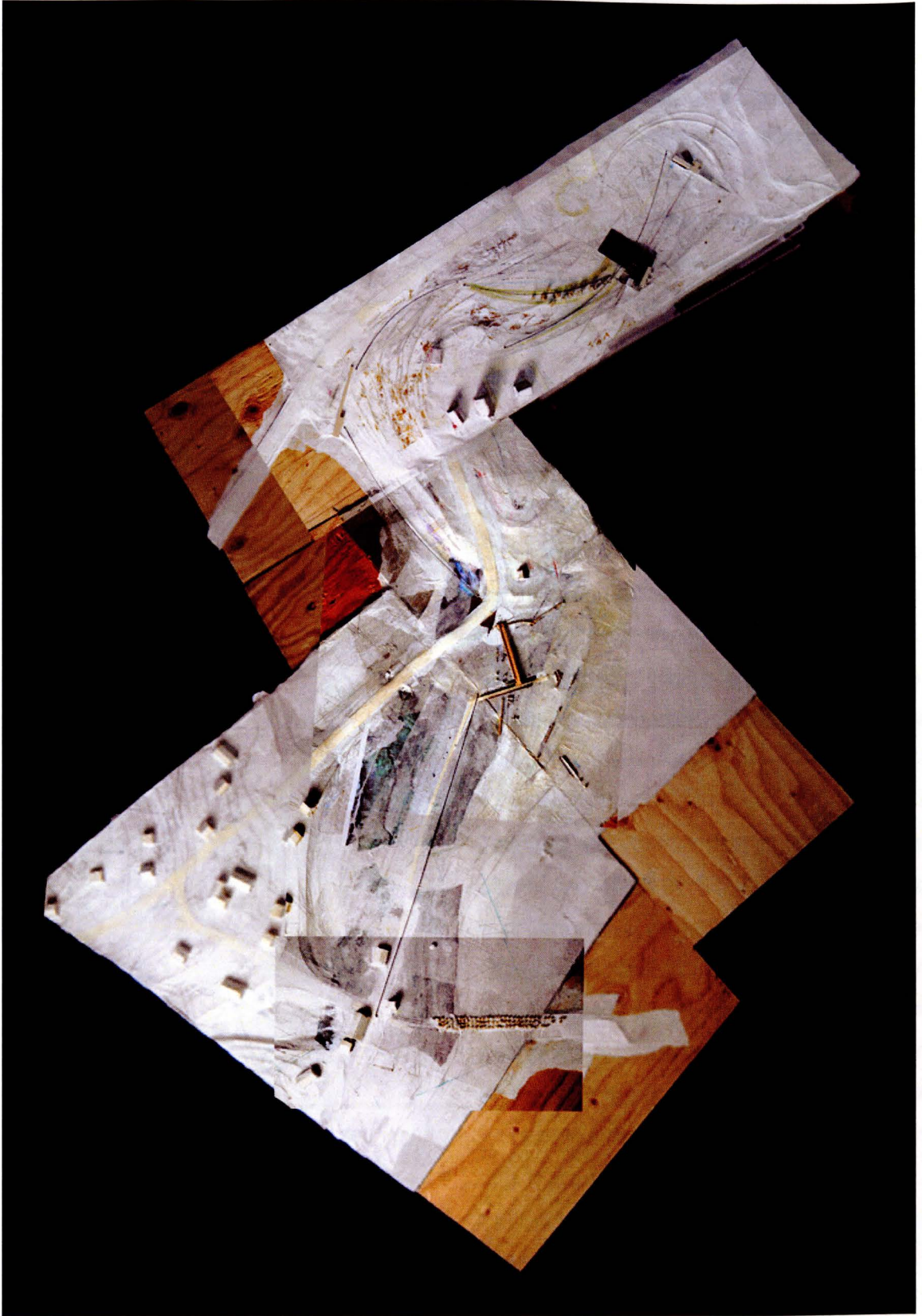




The bridge modelled mid-construction at 1:200. The cribbing structure envelops the abutment on the beach.



Village plan depicting the proposed path. From the Arts Centre it passes through the woods, along the marsh to the bridge at the Shipyard node. The existing beach road continues to the lighthouse and principal road to complete the loop.



Village model at 1:500.

SUMMARY

This thesis narrates a particular time in a collaborative community design project, attempting to record key observations for future developments of the *Mary Celeste Centre* in Spencer's Island, and for similar projects elsewhere. During this time, the real-life storyline, that is, the project as it unfolds outside of the studio with its several invested parties, each with their own interweaving, sometimes diverging aspirations, lives without regard for the cadence of the studio component. For this reason, the thesis has had two main focuses: one which exists in the real world in collaboration with the collective, and the other which lays groundwork in the form of this document for future participants to refer to and develop.

The two storylines meet at a realization of the role of an architectural designer in a collaborative project such as this. The studio work, fuelled by research, creativity and intuition, is a necessary preface to interaction with the collective. It is the duty of the architectural designer to use the tools of the profession to, first, investigate and discover potentialities, and, secondly, to communicate these concepts with their collaborators who will have diverse, yet complimentary backgrounds. Enticing ideas from the each member of the group builds a

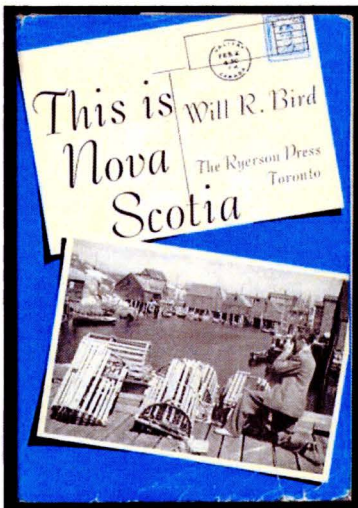
collective vision, the essential ingredient of a successful community project.

Through conscientious, playful studies of Spencer's Island, engagement on site with materials, the landscape, and most importantly, people, I have attempted to summarize some of these aspirations gathered over time, to develop them, and to leave them as a record of our progress toward defining a vision. The proposed Arts Centre is a view into the future of the existing design/build studios when the site has been developed by students to be self-supporting, and ultimately to when the site is in use throughout the year by a diverse range of disciplines. The *Foggy Lens Filmy Fest* represents the first annual activity to use the facility and to invite involvement from the arts community as well as the local community, and is anticipated to inspire new ideas and attract new participants.

Finally, the path from the lighthouse to the site of the proposed Arts Centre directs one past the ruins on the beach to a place full of potential. It becomes part of the daily lives of residents, leading them in the footsteps of their ancestors to a site of progress, where they may begin to imagine ways to make it their own. Visitors too, will discover that this nineteenth century industrial community with a glorious past also has a future.

APPENDIX I: SOME BACKGROUND ON NOVA SCOTIA'S TOURISM DILEMMA

In his article "History and the Tourist Gaze," Ian MacKay recalls Nova Scotia during the "period of commemoration, 1935-1964," during which the government consciously and deliberately shifted the socioeconomic structure of the province from resource-based industry to history-based tourism (MacKay, 1993, 105). In 1949, Premier Angus L. MacDonald created the Historic Sites Advisory Council whose mandate was to identify and "commemorate" historic property for the purpose of strengthening the "product" presented to potential tourists. The Council was led by author/bureaucrat William R. Bird and his advisor, historical fiction author Thomas Raddall, who were both passionate about the potential for Nova Scotia to treat heritage as an exchangeable good.

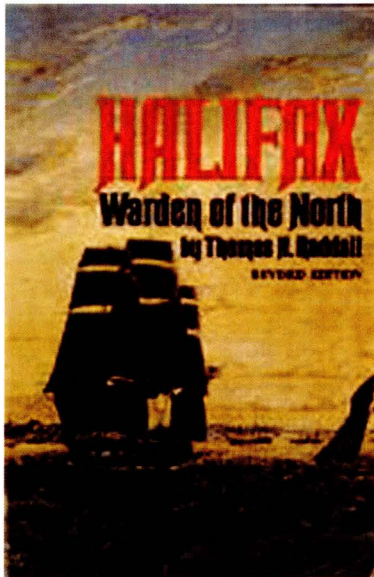


William R. Bird's
This is Nova Scotia.

They identified a "Golden Age" in Nova Scotia when wooden ships were built and sailed the world. It was a unifying narrative which had a clear beginning, middle, and end. It began in the eighteenth century with the arrival of the British patriarchy, followed by the exploits of the archetypal nineteenth century Nova Scotian, an individualistic adventurer successful in his quest for

fortune, and finally ended with the tragedy of modernization in the twentieth century (MacKay, 1993, 104).

It was a simple arrangement: communities needed only to display the heritage a potential tourist expected to see and to ensure that visitors had a good time. Progress was shunned deliberately in order to reap the profit to be made by exhibiting the province's defiance of modernization to increasingly modernized and nostalgic visitors (MacKay, 1993, 112).



Thomas H. Raddall's novel
Halifax: Warden of the North.

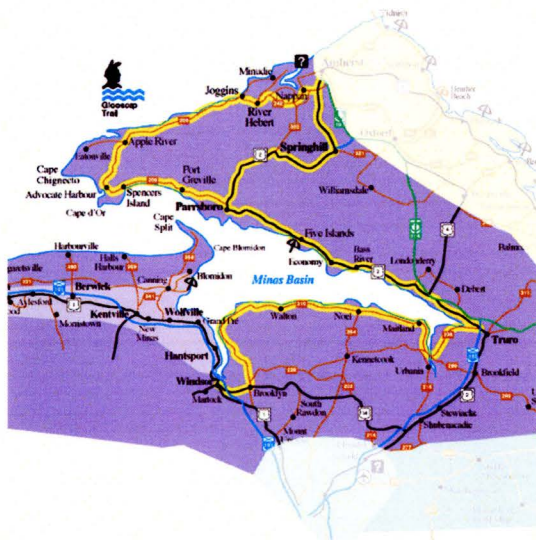
While we can be critical of Bird and Raddall's methods, their campaign is an important chapter in Nova Scotia's history. This proposal embraces the complexity of a reading of history which includes incongruous entities embodied in subjective storytelling, art, and culture.

APPENDIX II: CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ON THE GLOOSCAP TRAIL



Map of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre. Source: Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Province of Nova Scotia. Northern Glooscap Trail highlighted in orange.

Nova Scotia's proximity to major American (and Canadian) cities makes it an economical travel destination where more places can be experienced more intimately and independently by way of one's own automobile. Over the years, accessibility by automobile has been a decisive factor in the success or failure of any particular region's tourism industry. Such is the case with the northern part of the *Glooscap Trail*, the coastal highway tracing the shore of the Minas Basin (part of a marketing strategy developed by the Department of Culture and Tourism in the 1990s). The region is passed to the east by the Trans-Canada highway and is otherwise surrounded by water, making it relatively inaccessible or inconvenient when travelling to major destinations like Halifax and Lunenburg. However, a new UNESCO site at Joggins has begun to apply pressure to the underdeveloped shore.



Glooscap Trail, Scenic Travelways Map. Source: Novascotia.com. Spencer's Island is located near the western tip of the peninsula across the Minas Channel from Cape Split.

A Cultural Circuit

A short inventory of the tourist attractions on the northern Glooscap Trail will begin to illustrate the efforts of the tourist industry and their significance to the development of culture in the region. The infrastructure had

to serve the community in which it lived first, in order for that community to remain there, and the tourist who visited only seasonally, second, and so a different attitude toward tourism developed.

Ship's Company Theatre, Parrsboro

The Ship's Company Theatre is so named because the company originally performed on the deck of a dry-docked, retired ferry. The M.V. Kipawo, the last of 33 ferries which connected the Parrsboro shore with the Annapolis shore before WWII, was reclaimed from retirement in Newfoundland and "moored" inland at Parrsboro.

The first production performed on the Kipawo sold out its entire run. By 2001 the company's success had outgrown the constraints of the Kipawo and a new building was commissioned to Brian MacKay-Lyons which was to incorporate the ship into the design. The ferry now rests under the grand canopy at the entrance of the new theatre.

The building is modest and adaptable. It is a steel-framed shed sitting on piles with enormous barn doors for moving sets and props in and out. A sliver of space along the entry facade contains the administrative offices and is the only fully enclosed space. This keeps operating costs low and allows



M.V. Kipawo resting under the canopy at Ship's Company Theatre. Source: Ship's Company Theatre.

the facility to be used in tougher economic conditions.

The success of the building is not only its economy of means and flexibility, but its symbolic value to the community. The demise of the Minas Basin ferry service marked the end of the trans-basin community and the beginning of relative isolation on the Parrsboro shore. The subsequent transformation of this loss into a new institution embodies the creative spirit of the community and represents a new beginning for the region. Additionally, through the events and programmes which take place in the building, there is a season of cross-cultural exchange, a link to an international performing arts community, and an acceptance of modern influences to propel future directions.

Joggins Fossil Centre, Joggins

The fossils contained in the adjacent cliffs, exemplary specimens from the carboniferous period in earth's history, earned Joggins recognition on the UNESCO World Heritage list. This designation connects Joggins to a world-wide network of protected heritage sites.

The Joggins Fossil Centre is built on the site of the coal mine that once sustained the community. The Fossil Centre signifies



The Fossil Centre at Joggins. The cliffs (right) are accessed by a stair from the building's courtyard. Source: Joggins Fossil Centre

the arrival of a new industry. The design references the utilitarian buildings of the mining operation while incorporating several sustainable building strategies, such as green roofs and wind power. It also represents the only major architectural project in the region since the completion of the Ship's Company Theatre in 2004.

The Fossil Centre features a complex program of exhibition, research (including in-house and residency programs), education, and monitoring and protection of the natural heritage site. UNESCO insists on continual training of staff in order to provide quality interpretation to visitors. This provides an opportunity for the community to participate in the functioning and preservation of the site and solidifies its value as a cultural institution.

The Centre is not simply a tourism initiative, but is an institution that must maintain the natural site. In other words, it serves its own ends by generating necessary funds for its primary function, preservation of the fossil cliffs. The tourism component is one of the means (in addition to UNESCO funding and Canadian Federal government funding) by which the preservation activities can be sustained. The challenge lies in regulating the amount and type of tourist traffic in order to ensure preservation, and insisting to the

community the importance of these limits for long-term sustainability. As the community grows with the new institution it is vital that these values are maintained.

The Age of Sail Heritage Centre, Port Greville

The Age of Sail represents an institution in transition from the 1960s model of tourism toward a more contemporary institution offering participatory programs and events serving the community and tourists alike throughout the year. It was envisioned as an exhibition space for artifacts related to the shipbuilding industry along the Parrsboro shore, and has since become a meeting place for historians in the region to collect and share information. Through its various fundraising activities and events, it has also assumed a role of community centre.



The Age of Sail Heritage Centre.
Source: Age of Sail Heritage Centre.

The museum's exhibits, traditionally formatted to present an image of the industry in historical reconstructions and vignettes, satisfy the visitor with artifacts and images. But the collection of buildings which make up the museum form a curious assemblage. The site, though indeed once a shipyard, contains none of the original buildings. Instead, it consists of a historic schoolhouse relocated and transformed, two new but similar buildings containing a cafe and washrooms, and an authentic

blacksmith shop deposited on the lawn and connected to the main complex by a garden bridge. Even the lighthouse was moved from the shore to the parking lot. This reconfiguration of elements creates a theme park atmosphere and constructs an image of a fictitious past. The renovation of the schoolhouse is post-modern, adding stylized fenestration and columns and further distorting the reading of the buildings as an authentic place. However, the strength of the institution is evidenced in plans for its renewal: a new addition and a full calendar of diverse activities including boat-building classes and community suppers.

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