

## **Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity**

### **Note-taking guide for session rapporteurs**

#### **METADATA**

**Session title:** New Aboriginal Cultural Centres of the Haida and Huron Wendat Nations

---

**Presenters:** Ann Bérubé (Director, Huron-Wendat Museum), Dave Laveau (Cultural and Tourism Promotion Co-ordinator, Tourisme Wendake), Miles Richardson (CEO, Haida Heritage Centre)

---

**Day:** Tuesday, April 29

**Time:** 1 to 2:30 pm.

---

#### **NOTES**

##### **1. Short overview/summary of presentation**

Presentations around 2 new First Nations cultural infrastructure projects: a) the Huron-Wendat Hotel-Museum in Wendake, Québec and b) the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Linagaay in Skidegate on Graham Island, British Columbia

- Integrated, sustainable projects of social/cultural/economic nature

##### **2. Key points and significant themes of presentation**

###### **Huron-Wendat Hotel-Museum:**

- New First Nations tourism centre that combines 4-star hotel, museum and amphitheatre in Wendake (a Huron-Wendat community of 1,200 people twenty minutes from Québec City)
- Interprets the past history, culture and lifestyle of the Huron people
- Start-up funding received from local, provincial and federal governments
- Huron-Wendat First Nations contributed 50% of funds required
- Opened March 2008
- Week of April 21<sup>st</sup> – won award of excellence from l'Institut d'urbanisme de Québec
- 50% of staff complement are members of the Huron-Wendat Nation
- Hotel has 55 guest rooms, conference rooms and a gourmet restaurant serving First Nations cuisine

###### ***Wendake Tourism Background:***

- 2003 – Huron-Wendat Nation decided to revitalize Wendake
- 2006 – Creation of Tourisme Wendake
- 2007 – Wendake awarded Cultural Capital of Canada designation
- 2008 – Wendake chosen as host nation for Quebec City's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations

###### ***5 revitalization initiatives of Tourisme Wendake:***

1. Revitalization of the business area
2. Stairway to the footpath in Parc de la Falaise
3. 8 mosaicultures along the Corridor des cheminots (pedestrian and cycling pathway)
4. Illumination of Notre Dame de Lorette church
5. Huron-Wendat Hotel Museum with amphitheatre, tourism centre, integration of public art

###### ***Huron-Wendat Museum:***

- 4 main museological themes - Origin, Territories, Memories and Knowledge
- Presents Huron artifacts to community and to public
- High museology standards allow Museum to borrow artifacts from other locations in Canada and outside Canada

###### ***Tourism Office:***

Office overlooks amphitheatre

International Symposium 2008

**Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity**

April 28 - May 1, 2008

Fairmont Château Laurier, Ottawa, Canada  
www.symposium2008.ca

*Amphitheatre:*

- 350 seat site for outdoor cultural events
- Will open on June 21, 2008

*Historical frescoes:*

- Reflect traditional and contemporary history of Huron-Wendat Nation

*Programming and activities:*

- Includes (among others) June 21<sup>st</sup> – National Aboriginal Day, Theme weeks, Harvest festival
- History incorporated into all programming

**Haida Heritage Centre:**

- Development of the Haida Heritage Centre is a journey that the Haida people have chosen to embark upon
- Located at Kaay Linagaay in Skidegate (an amalgamation of 13 villages) on Graham Island, British Columbia
- Presents a living generation of an ancient people (the Haida ran into the first European on the Pacific Ocean 225 years ago)
- Haida have a history of fighting oppression
- Haida people have decided to welcome the world to their home and to present/explain their history/identity on their own terms
- Heritage Centre 30 years in development; with strong momentum, planning and movement over the last 6 or 7 years
- Centre has been operating over the past centre but will have its official, grand opening in August 2008
- By and for the youth – presenting themselves to the world
- Jason Alsop (not able to be in attendance at the conference) is in training to operate the cultural centre
- People in Skidegate tried to protect 9 ancestral villages that had no residents from looters etc.
- Instead of chasing the looters away, Haida people decided to manage them and develop the Heritage Centre as an opportunity
- Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program – Haida people moved back to old village sites in order to manage their legacy with pride
- Began to deliver tours of their ancestral villages to interested people (\$25/person)
- Natural evolution of Haida people
- With economic base diminishing, need to look at new options for survival
- Fear of tourism, however an opportunity to develop a sustainable economy

*Governance and Ownership:*

- Community very happy about the project
- Community people on board of directors
- Architects insisted that this was not their building- they considered themselves tools/technicians

*Mandate:*

- Presents Haida culture as a living culture, not an artifact
- Haida people treasure their inheritance of wisdom, ways of seeing the world, cultural legacy

*3 main institutions:*

- Haida Gwaii Museum – autonomous
- Gwai Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site – ¼ of the island that is managed as a Canadian protected area
- Gwai Haanas Management Offices

- There are 5 longhouses at the Heritage Centre built traditionally on the beach. There are 6 totem poles in front of the longhouses that represent clans/people. They were raised 4 years ago, 1 pole per day with feasting throughout.

*Elements of the Haida Heritage Centre:*

1. Welcome House – with gift shop (Trading House)
2. Carving Shed – open with a roof and with all of the amenities modern carvers require to work
3. Haida Gwaii Museum – displays and collection
4. Bill Reid Teaching Centre and Canoe House – Bill Reid, artist
5. Performance House – with a fire pit and benches around the edges – for performances, small feasts and gatherings
6. Eating House – traditional Haida meals as well as conventional family fare

### 3. Notable examples and links to websites

[www.tourismewendake.ca](http://www.tourismewendake.ca)

[www.haidaheritagecentre.com](http://www.haidaheritagecentre.com)

### 4. Interesting questions and/or comments from the audience

1. Discussion of a national gallery of aboriginal art usually slides into discussion around a “museum” context, as opposed to a “gallery” context. Is this a concern, a problem? If yes, how can it be avoided?

*There is a distinction between a gallery (focus on diffusion) and a museum (focus on preservation). Both are important.*

2. Renewal work is upcoming for a Métis historic site in Saskatchewan. How do you plan for the long term, keeping tourism and economic impact in mind?

*The most important thing for the Huron-Wendat project was that the local people and businesses participated. There was community exchange, discussion and consultation. Many people were actively involved and engaged.*

*The most important thing is to understand who you are and how you choose to present yourself. There is a need to give visitors the best experience possible; however, marketing needs to be in the hands of the community people and partners. Market segments need to be determined by local residents.*

3. When an economy becomes dry, talk often turns to hotels being partnered with cultural projects. Is there a concern among traditional people and artists that the economic drive can pervert the authenticity of the project or work? If people are presented in a way that simply meets existing visitor perceptions, can this change the actual reality of the traditional people?

*Authenticity is the key word. There is a need to be human and open in these projects. The concept of developing a museum and a hotel together in the same project was new for everybody. The importance of arts/culture cannot be diminished, or the project will fail. It is a real challenge to develop a cultural project within a larger economic project. The challenge is to ensure that quality and authenticity remain the most important. The most important tension felt within these projects related to the integrity of who a people are and whether this was interesting to visitors. It is very important to encourage local, traditional people to choose to be active participants in these kinds of projects. Bill Reid lived these tensions. The concept of dynamic living cultures creates project relevancy.*

4. If these projects are developed to be relevant to exterior communities, how do you manage to ensure that they are also relevant in your own communities?

*The only way for such a project to be relevant is if the local people are proud and able to express who they are. Mediating any tension around this is extremely important.*

5. Congratulations were expressed on these two projects. How do the physical building signify or represent the spiritual culture?

*Space and style can reinterpret the actual past. What is in the heart is the most important.*

**Note taker:** Cathy Sheperticki