

# Break out the redcoats: SLPC releases concepts for planned Visitor Centre

MORRISBURG— The St. Lawrence Parks Commission has unveiled the conceptual drawings for a new visitor centre it will build at Upper Canada Village — among a multi-million-dollar slate of improvements to be ready within the next couple of years.

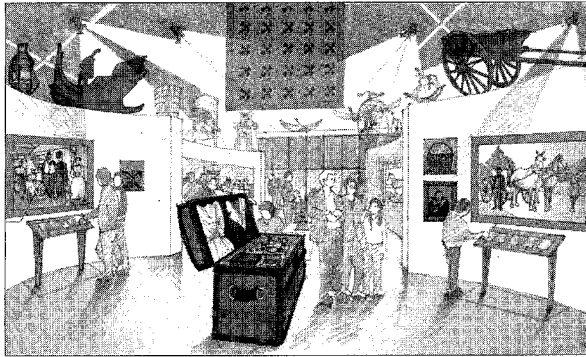
Released on March 31, the concepts are the culmination of months of research, planning and community consultations.

Although based outside Upper Canada Village, the local visitor centre will actually deal with a much broader swath of history than the narrower 1860s focus inside the Village. The War of 1812 and nearby Battle of Crysler's Farm site, for example, appear to receive extensive treatment in the new facility, according to drawings provided to *The Record*.

Also envisioned are key embellishments near the battle area itself — described as "Crysler Heritage Park" — including the construction of mock farmhouses and a soldiers' tent display.

Specific story lines have been identified for the planned visitors' centres in Morrisburg and Kingston (Fort Henry), following consultations with area heritage and community leaders. Input from the general public was also gathered during and after open house events held in January and February.

In a recent release the SLPC said commission staff and board members have consulted at length with prominent exhibit design firm, Reich + Petch, to determine the best way of highlighting the rich history of Upper Canada Village, the Battle of Crysler's Farm,



## Along the river

Reich + Petch Design International, Blue Sky Design, Hillman & Carr

"Living Along the St. Lawrence River," one of the rooms in the planned Visitors' Centre outside Upper Canada Village, will feature artifacts as well as large-framed video monitors. Recorded actors on the screens will relate stories of the people who settled in Upper Canada before Confederation.

and Fort Henry.

Outlined in the resulting reports are themes, interpretative approaches, combined with state of the art, multimedia techniques, interactive exhibits, and extensive artifact displays that visitors will experience at the new centres.

Locally, numerous artifact displays are planned, incorporating a wide array of carriages, canoes, marine related artifacts and other large objects now in storage. Also being examined is the relocation of the pier light or channel marker, originally from Dickinson's Landing, to a spot near the Village entrance as a prominent feature.

The new Visitor's Centre will be located adjacent to the Village Store, also slated for a makeover.

The Commission expects to have preliminary sketches available to show at community open houses later in April. Construction is expected to begin in mid-summer at the local site and

later this fall in Kingston.

In preparation for the flurry of activity, staff will construct a new pedestrian route into the Village, moving the current wicket building closer to the café. Hoarding will be placed around the construction site, announcing the exciting changes ahead and ensuring the minimal disruption.

The project will also see the introduction of a new miniature train engine and an expansion of the existing service route. The new run will connect the Crysler Marina and the Aultsville Train Station to the current tracks now linking the Village and Crysler Beach — providing another opportunity to tell the story of the Battle of Crysler's Farm while bringing visitors closer to the actual battle site near the marina.

The expanded route should also encourage cruise-line passengers and boaters using the marina to travel to the other Commission attractions in the vicinity.

It is anticipated that the

visitor centre at Upper Canada Village will be completed for the 2012-2013 Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Battle of Crysler's Farm — an historic milestone expected to bring large numbers of visitors to the region.

Funding for the \$23 million capital project was part of the 2009 Ontario budget. Full concept reports are available on line at [www.parks.on.ca](http://www.parks.on.ca)



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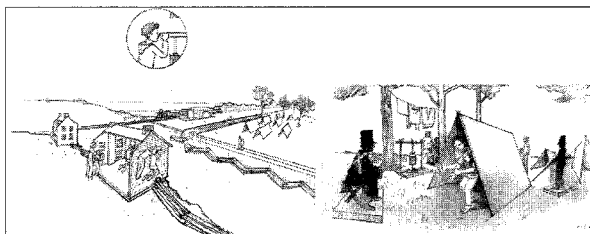
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## Crysler Heritage Park

At left, scale recreations of the historic farmhouses that stood during the Battle of Crysler's farm will be erected near the battle site, serving as tourist lookouts over a battle encampment display, at right.

## Calling all artists, animators and cartoonists!

The SD&G County Library is running a contest to develop a mascot for publicity purposes and the Library's newsletter. A library is more than just books, so let the creativity flow!

The winning entry will receive a copy of *Marvel Chronicle: a year-by-year history*.

Submissions are due April 30 in electronic format (.jpg files only), along with the artist's name, age and phone number, emailed to [kfranklin@sdglibrary.ca](mailto:kfranklin@sdglibrary.ca).

The winning entry becomes the property of the SD&G County Library, reserving the right to use the mascot(s) as submitted and/or developed.



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