

Point Clark Lighthouse Museum Interpretive Plan



Developed by Blue Rhino Design and Huron-Kloss Township
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INTRODUCTION

This interpretive plan is a framework to help guide the museum and exhibit developers toward the fulfillment of interpretive goals. It identifies the target audiences; defines the museum's goals; establishes themes and interpretive hierarchy; and identifies the key stories, objects, and images that will help visitors connect with the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum. While details of this plan may change, its intent is to serve as a reference that will underpin design and content decisions going forward.

This plan does not include non-interpretive spaces and material such as activity rooms, programming, wayfinding, or other public messaging. Some of these items may be included in the overall revitalization project and, as such, will be developed and designed in ways that complement the interpretive material.

WHAT ARE WE MAKING?

The Point Clark Lighthouse Museum is undergoing a revitalization with the development of four new exhibits centred on the story of the Point Clark Lighthouse. These will showcase the human and natural history of the Point Clark area, the lighthouse and its lightkeepers, the development of lighthouse technology and navigational aids, and shipwrecks of Lake Huron.

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

- To celebrate the history of Point Clark, the lighthouse, and the marine history of Lake Huron
- To increase tourism
- To provide a fun and educational experience for all visitors

WHO IS THIS FOR?

The museum will be designed and developed to ensure that visitors of all ages, genders, cultures, and abilities feel welcome. Content will target both those who have familiarity with the lighthouse and Point Clark and those for whom this is new information. Specific audiences being targeted are:

- Primary Audience: tourists, families, retirees
- Secondary Audience: local residents, cottagers, families, retirees

WHAT IS THE STORY?

The Point Clark Lighthouse story spans almost 170 years, from the construction of the lighthouse beginning in 1855 and the addition of the keepers' house in 1857 through to the tower restoration in 2011-15 and the continued importance of the lighthouse today.

Throughout this historical narrative are woven the stories of generations of lighthouse keepers and their families; of ships warned and ships lost; and of the modernization of lighting technologies which eventually spelled the end of the lighthouse keeper era. These stories are wrapped up in the broader histories of Point Clark, its lakeshore and geology, and the Indigenous culture that left its mark in the waters long before colonization.

HOW WILL WE TELL IT?

Content Organization

Content will be organized into 4 main themes and their subthemes, each linked in some way to the Point Clark Lighthouse.



LIVES OF THE LIGHTKEEPERS

Subthemes:

- The keepers and their families
- A day in the life of a keeper
- A keeper's tool kit



LIGHTHOUSES, LAMPS, & LENSES

Subthemes:

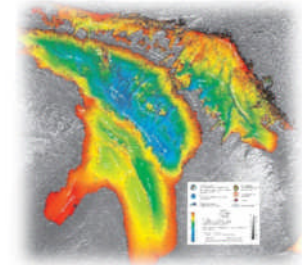
- Point Clark Lighthouse
- Lighthouse Lamp Technology
- Navigation Technology



TALES OF SHIPS LOST

Subthemes:

- The ships
- Things that washed ashore



OUR LONG HISTORY

Subthemes:

- Natural history
- Human history

Interpretive Media

The stories within each theme will be told through a variety of interpretive media including:

- Thematic Introductions
- People: voices, quotes, and personal stories
- Objects & Historical documents
- Visual media: photos, artwork, drawings
- Audio and Video

Interpretive Text Hierarchy

Each exhibit space will include the following interpretive hierarchies:

- Theme Introduction – to orient the visitor in the room and set the stage for each exhibit theme.
- Subtheme Introductions – to help visitors understand the relationship among nearby stories.
- Stories – to teach, amaze, inspire, and intrigue visitors
- Labels – to identify objects and encourage visitors to look more closely at them.

THEMES AND STORIES



The Lives of Lightkeepers

Theme Summary

Over the course of 100 years, the lightkeeper cottage was home to as many as ten keepers and, in some cases, their families. Who were these men? How were they selected? What does a lightkeeper's job entail? What tools does he use? Did anything significant happen on his watch? What was life like for his wife and children? Do their descendants still live nearby? The cottage was also home to caretakers who cared for the lighthouse after it was automated. What was their job? How were their lives different from that of lightkeepers?

Subthemes

- The keepers and their families
- A day in the life of a keeper
- A keeper's tool kit (told through objects)

Key Stories

	Subtheme	Topic	Brief Summary
1	The Keepers	Meet the keepers	Overview and introduction to the PCL keepers; supported by photos, quotes
2	The Keepers	Family Memories	Stories, interviews, info from living (or recently deceased) descendants of lightkeepers, supported by photos, quotes
3	The Keepers	Family Life	Stories about families who stayed at PCL; family life
4	A Day in the Life	(Keeper 1)	A representative keeper from earliest times; introduction and overview of their life, duties, etc.
5	A Day in the Life	(Keeper 2)	A representative keeper from middle times; introduction and overview of their life, duties, etc.
6	A Day in the Life	(Keeper 3)	A representative keeper (or caretaker) from most recent times; introduction and overview of their life, duties, etc.
7	Toolkit	Intro to keepers' tools	Short intro explaining how keepers' tools changed over time; paired with objects, images

Key Objects

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	The Keepers	Document	First-hand account- Marlene MacKenzie. Write up about their year at the lighthouse. They were the first caretakers and the last family to live here.
2	The Keepers	Document	First-hand Account- Eulene Antoniak (nee Ruttle) - Small write up about her time as a kid/teenager at the lighthouse
3	The Keepers	Woodstove	Original part of the house
4	The Keepers	Renown Kitchen Stove	Used by the keepers.

5	A Day in the Life	Lightkeeper's Diary	Brief daily description of weather, oil used in the light etc (handwritten and original)
6	Toolkit	Lion head	Lion head cast used to drain condensation in lamp
7	Toolkit	Handheld lantern	Various lanterns from H.L. Piper to choose from
8	Toolkit	Fog horn	Manual fog horn. Not confirmed if used here but a tool of a lightkeeper

Key Images

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	The Keepers	Lightkeeper Portraits	Images of each lightkeeper and their families



Lighthouses, Lamps, and Lenses

Theme Summary

The Point Clark Lighthouse is one of dozens of lighthouses that continue to play an important role in protecting ships on the Great Lakes. This theme provides an entry point to talk about the specific history of the Point Clark Lighthouse, including the 2011-15 restoration. But it also tells a broader story.

Lighting technology has changed since the lighthouses were first built. With those advancements came a shift in the keepers' responsibilities until eventually automated lights rendered the lightkeeper's job obsolete. But as recently as 2017, the last Canadian lightkeepers were still trying to protect their livelihoods.

So, how do lighthouses actually work? How have they changed since the first days of the Point Clark Lighthouse? How did that affect the keepers' work? What does the future hold for lighthouses? Will modern navigation aids such as GPS, dynamic nautical charts, and radar beacons render them as irrelevant as the lightkeepers themselves?

Subthemes

- The Point Clark Lighthouse
- Lighthouse Lamp Technology
- Navigation Technology

Key Stories

	Subtheme	Topic	Brief Summary
1	PC Lighthouse	Meet the PC Lighthouse	Introduce visitors to the lighthouse and its history; how it works today.
2	PC Lighthouse	Experience the Lighthouse	Lighthouse “experience” (for people who can’t climb it)
3	PC Lighthouse	The Restoration	Background and interesting facts around the big reno; supported by images, objects, possibly video
4	Lamp Tech	Lamp tech history	The history of lighthouse lamp technology - from fires on the beach to computer-controlled LEDs
5	Lamp Tech	Effects on keepers	Effects of tech change on light-keeping as a profession; how the work changed; what happened to lightkeepers
6	Navigation	Indigenous navigation	Indigenous lake navigation techniques. If possible, specific to this region.
7	Navigation	History and Tools	The history of marine navigation and its tools; supported by objects

Key Objects

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	PC Lighthouse	Lion head	Cast of lion heads from top of lighthouse, made during restorations
2	Lamp Tech	Oil vapour light	Partial mechanism of one of the earlier lighting technologies at the lighthouse
3	Lamp Tech	Yellow lamp	Lamp used from 1963 to 2007. Interesting story in how it ended up in museum
4	Lamp Tech	Searchlight	Supposedly used at Soo Locks during WWII
5	Navigation	Azimuth mirror	Old form of navigation

6	Navigation	Ship log	Used to measure distance travelled and speed
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Key Images

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	PC Lighthouse	Video	Lighthouse restoration video
2	PC Lighthouse	Photos	Lighthouse photos (1917-19)
3	PC Lighthouse	Photos	Contemporary photos
4	PC Lighthouse	Artwork	Any paintings, other art depicting the lighthouse
5	PC Lighthouse	Drawings	Architect or Engineering drawing of the lighthouse
6	Lamp tech	Images/drawings	Oil vapour light in entirety/ plans for its various lights over the years



Tales of Ships Lost

Theme Summary

People love a good shipwreck story. While invariably tragic, people want to know what happened on that fateful day. They want to hear about the warnings, the heroes, and the mistakes that were made. They want to know what the weather was and how many souls were lost. They want to see maps dotted with wrecks and marvel at the numbers. They want to find salvaged items on the beach, during a dive, or see them in the museum.

Potential subthemes

- The ships
- Things that washed ashore (told through objects)

Key Stories

	Subtheme	Topic	Brief Summary
1	The Ships	The Great Storm of 1913	The story of this famous storm and its connections to Point Clark and the lighthouse; supported by first-hand stories
2	The Ships	Shipwrecks of Lake Huron	A summary or list of ships (or illustrated by a map)

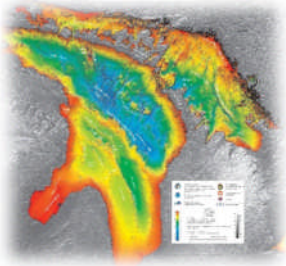
3	The Ships	Survivors & Witnesses	Stories by/about people who have survived a shipwreck or witnessed the storm, aftermath; supported by quotes
4	Things that washed ashore	Salvage laws	Can I keep what I find? Brief summary of salvage laws on the Great Lakes
5	Things that washed ashore	Treasure Ships	Ships carrying expensive items that washed ashore, were salvaged, or are still at the bottom of the lakes

Key Objects

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	Things that washed ashore	Ladder	Believed to have washed ashore in the late 1920s from the SS Robert Paisley
2	Things washed ashore	Life ring	

Key Images

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	The Ships	Ship Photos	“Portraits” of ships that sank in the Great Storm
2	The Ships	Sunken Ship photos	Underwater photos of salvage / discovery of sunken ships
3	The Ships	Shipwreck Map	In PCLM collection



Our Long History

Theme Summary

Point Clark and the surrounding region have a long history that predates the lighthouse and European settlement. The region’s broad geological history shaped human habitation as long as 9,000 years ago. Its natural history has been deeply intertwined with the lives and traditions of Indigenous Peoples who have lived on this land for millennia. Since colonization, human habitation here has shifted and changed the way the land and waters are used.

Subthemes:

- Natural History
- Human History

Key Stories

	Subtheme	Topic	Brief Summary
1	Natural History	Geological History	A high-level account of the geological history of the region; ice age, lake water levels, etc.
2	Natural History	The Land and Waters	A brief introduction to the natural history of this region and how it’s changed over time.

3	Human History	Ancient Pathways	The story of the drive lanes.
4	Human History	Indigenous History (pre-colonial)	The human history of the people of the area, pre-colonization
5	Human History	Colonization	The history of the region's colonization; effect on Indigenous Peoples
6	Human History	Point Clark Today	Who lives in the region now? What do they do?

Key Objects

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	Human History	Audio file	Elden Lowry interview (just audio) about his life growing up in the area.

Key Images

	Subtheme	Item	Brief Description
1	Human History	Photos	Photos associated with the Drive Lanes research
2	Human History	Bathymetric Map of lake bottom	NOAA image. Public domain. This clearly shows the ridge. We can add "you are here" to it for relevance.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

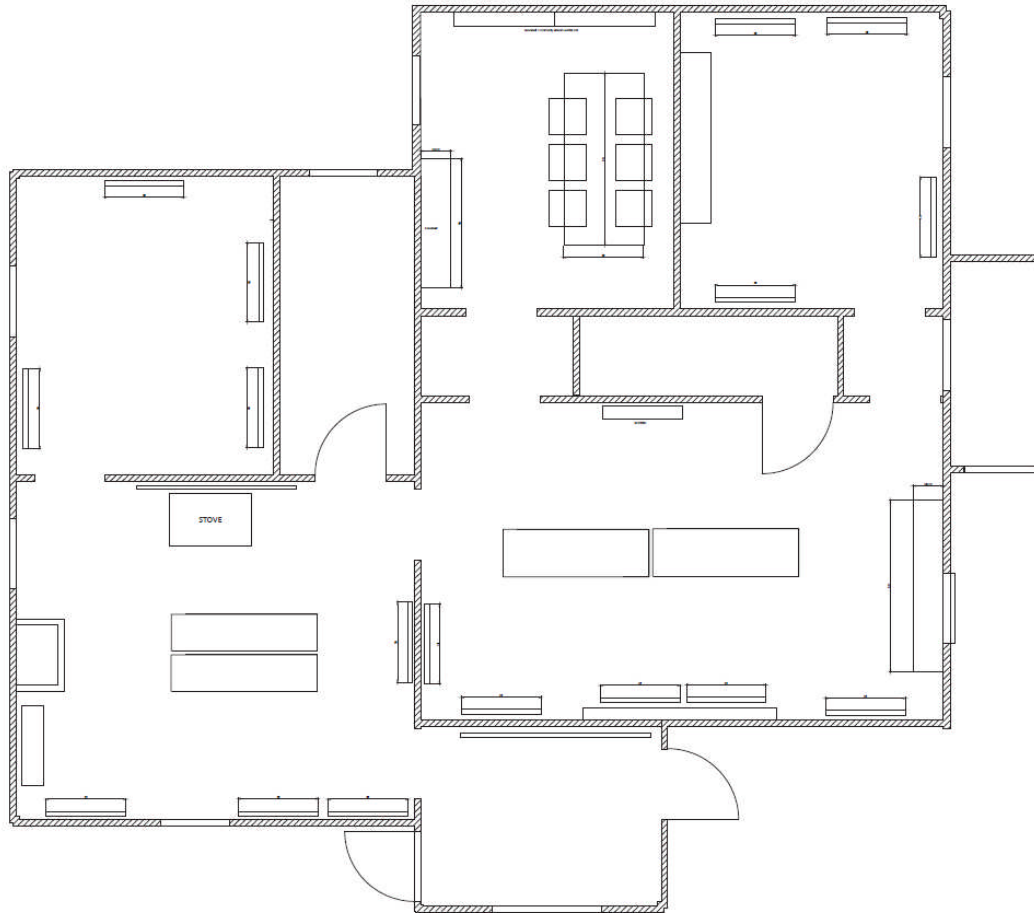
Floorplan

Unless the museum makes substantial changes, this floorplan accurately represents the use of space within the museum.



Conceptual Exhibit Design

This layout is merely conceptual and will be refined as exhibit development progresses.



Accessible and Responsible Design

The museum will be designed and developed to ensure that visitors of all ages, genders, cultures, and abilities feel welcome. Spaces will be designed to be as physically accessible as possible within the constraints of the building structure itself. Exhibits will be developed based on universal design principals to ensure they are accessible to the broadest possible audience.

Where possible (within budget and availability constraints), exhibits will be developed and fabricated with sustainability in mind. Considerations include material choices and sources, exhibit longevity, and long-term maintenance needs.

Exhibits and spaces will also be developed with human health and safety in mind. Considerations include selecting materials that are easily sanitized and arranging spaces to allow for comfortable traffic flow.