

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA

SYSTEM PLAN

COMMEMORATING CANADIAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS





Identification of images on the front cover photo montage:

1. The Richelieu River
2. Toronto City Hall
3. The Reverend Josiah Henson
4. Mary Ann Shadd Cary
5. Plan of Montréal
6. Brilliant Suspension Bridge

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada is the statutory body responsible for advising the Minister of Canadian Heritage and, through the minister, to the Government of Canada on the commemoration of nationally significant aspects of Canada's history.

The Board encourages public support and involvement to enhance Canadians' awareness of the patterns of the past that have shaped our nation. Almost 80 percent of the subjects considered by the board are proposed by the public.

You can help in the effort to expand public awareness of this important theme by submitting settlement patterns for the consideration of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Submissions, along with requests for more information on the national historic sites program, can be sent to the following address:

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FOREWORD

Canadians take great pride in the places, people and events that shape our history and define our country.

These defining moments of Canadian history are our inheritance and the legacy we hold in trust for future generations.

In honouring the milestones of Canadian history, we need to make sure that we recognize the full range of human beings and full range of significant achievements and actions that have shaped our nation.

There are still stories and voices and accomplishments and marvels from Canada's past that are not well enough known by those of us alive today. We need to tell those stories and hear those voices and mark those accomplishments — for our own sake and for the sake of future generations. The truth is that Canada's heritage connects us to our roots, connects us to our future and connects us to each other.

This booklet is one in a new series that introduces chapters of Canada's history that have not received the national recognition which they merit.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and I are determined to recognize with pride the contributions made by all who came before us in shaping our remarkable and cherished country of Canada.

Sheila Copps
Minister of Canadian Heritage



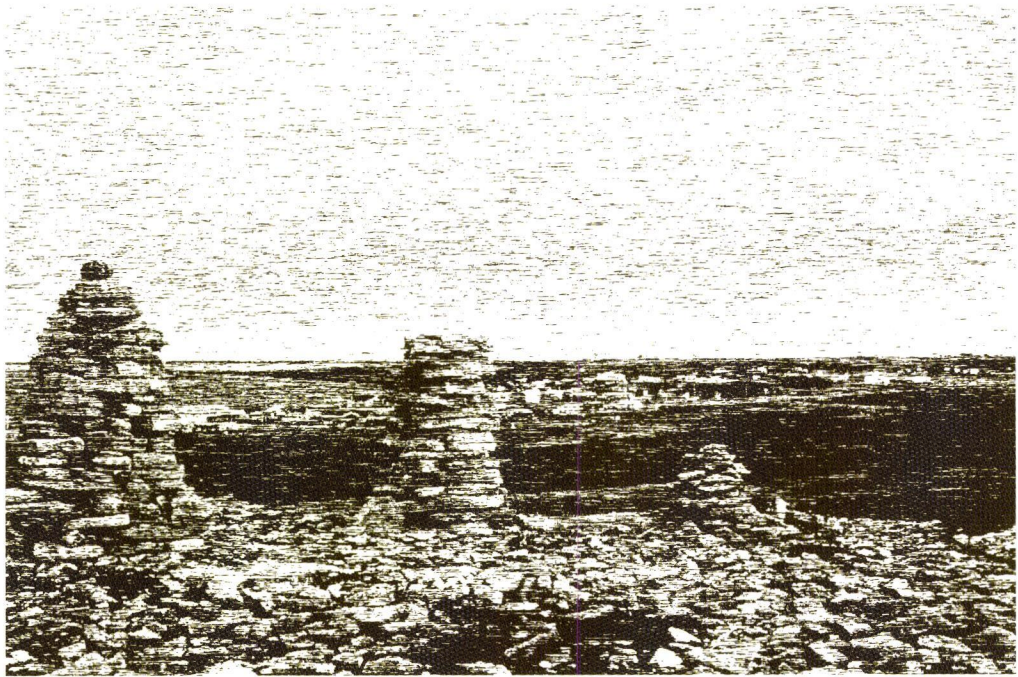


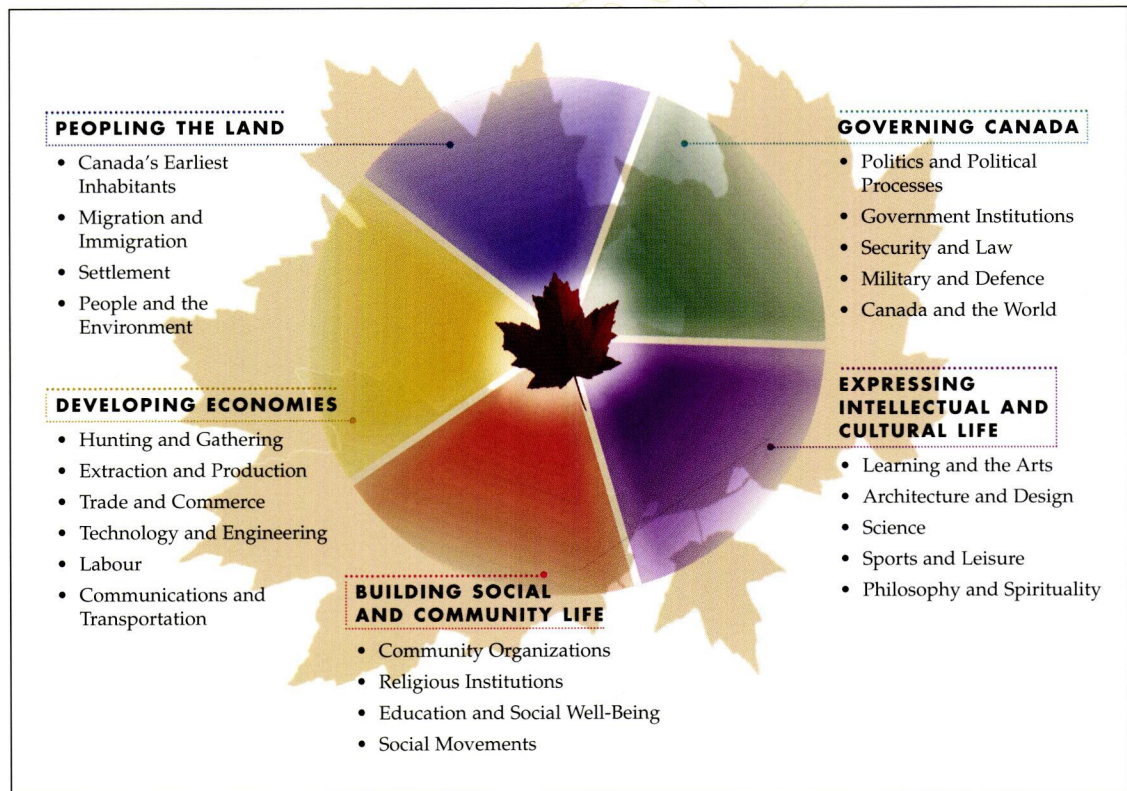



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THE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES SYSTEM PLAN AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

The system of National Historic Sites of Canada cannot be considered either finite or complete. The federal government is working with others to create a more representative system — one that truly reflects the rich history and heritage that define Canada. *Settlement Patterns* reflects research carried out by Parks Canada on the topic of settlement patterns and forms, a subject which is currently regarded as under-represented within the system. The Thematic Framework organizes Canadian history into five broad, inter-related themes, each of which has a number of sub-themes. *Settlement Patterns* relates primarily to the theme of Peopling The Land and its sub-theme of Settlement.





COMMEMORATING CANADIAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Coleman, Alberta

Flying over Canada's vast and diverse regions, air travellers can't help but marvel at the wonders of its natural geography and at the rich diversity of textures and patterns that reflect human associations with the land. Small hamlets set in coves on the Atlantic coast reveal the nature of settlement associated with the fishery in that region. The long, narrow field patterns of the St. Lawrence River valley are enduring legacies of the French seigneurial system. On the prairies, vast farming regions are defined by the rigid geometry of the Dominion Land Survey. These are some of the most familiar patterns of land occupation in Canada. If we had the opportunity to linger in the skies and probe closely, an amazing array of patterns, some conspicuous, others faint or perhaps cryptic in form, would reward our gaze. By learning to decode and understand this tapestry, we could gain a clearer understanding of the distinctive qualities that define the essence of Canada as a nation.

A Newfoundland outpost



In time we would come to recognize a layering of patterns as one form of human activity displaced another in particular places or regions. For example, a 19th-century balloonist's view of a farming region dominated by a newly imposed grid of townships, uniform single-family farms and regularly placed towns and villages might be replaced by a 20th-century air-traveller's view of paved turnpikes and sprawling urban development. In each case, the current landscape has been superimposed over an earlier one, though key elements might be retained. The major trunk road of the 19th-century agricultural settlement might follow the time-worn path of an ancient First Nations trading route established long before the coming of European settlement. That route might, in turn, define the route of a modern turnpike, just as the road patterns of rural townships and villages can form the skeletal framework for recent suburban or urban developments.

Although the cultural importance of settlement patterns is widely acknowledged, their elusive qualities can present significant challenges from a commemorative standpoint. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada is mandated to recommend commemoration of noteworthy settlement patterns on the basis of their national historical significance. The Board wishes to encourage public support and involvement in this initiative to enhance Canadians' awareness of patterns that reflect the shaping of our nation. This brochure presents a brief overview of the subject, including a set of terms used to define and clarify the scope of the theme. It also contains a classification framework that has been developed to understand the characteristics of settlement patterns, and a structure for identifying and assessing the inherent qualities of settlement patterns that might be of national historical significance. It is our hope that this information will encourage interest and proposals for further commemorations of this important aspect of Canadian heritage.

Seal Cove, Grand Manan
Island, New Brunswick



TERMINOLOGY (SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND THEIR RELATIVES)

The term *settlement pattern* has been widely applied by various academic disciplines, yet it remains a difficult one to define with great precision. Some scholars use the term to describe the spatial distribution of human populations over broad regions of land. Others employ *settlement patterns* to represent the visible impact of human settlement upon the landscape. Both applications have equal validity, and reflect the basic definitional split of the root word, *settlement*, which can be treated either as a place of human habitation or as the process of human occupation of the land.

From a definitional standpoint, *settlement* should be applicable to all forms of human habitation or occupation of the land. To link the term exclusively with the activities of a specific process such as European colonization reflects an unnecessarily narrow cultural bias that is being increasingly challenged within and outside the academic community. This reevaluation confirms the need to reexamine the attributes we convey when we refer to the settlement process. These attributes must be broadened to accommodate the various types of land occupation practiced by nomadic, migratory and sedentary peoples.

A *pattern* may be defined as "a regular or logical form, order, or arrangement of parts." By implication, pattern refers to spatial relationships between elements rather than to those elements themselves. When applied to *settlement*, a *pattern* can be regarded as a recognizable spatial arrangement or distribution of human occupation upon the land. To be mean-



Kilborn's Mills, Stanstead, Lower Canada ..., c. 1827, by J. Bouchette

ingful, the term must be linked to an imprint that is established in association with a specific set of circumstances.

By implication, *pattern* does not refer to human structural elements (buildings, roads, fences, ditches, etc.) but to the spatial arrangement or distribution of those elements. This distinction is of particular importance in establishing the relationship between *settlement patterns* and other elements that collectively define a *cultural landscape*. *Settlement patterns* are imprints that may endure long after the original structural elements have disappeared or have been replaced. For example, the imprints of original

survey plans, road or field systems, may endure although other landscape features have been totally transformed; similarly, the spatial arrangement of buildings in a rural enclave or urban community may remain, although the buildings themselves have been altered or replaced by new ones on the same sites. In such cases the initial *settlement pattern* may persist, although the land use pattern has changed. In other cases, broad patterns of ancient land occupation may be based on symbolic or fragmented evidence of human occupation rather than on the basis of tangible structural remains.

The *settlement pattern* associated with a specific group or activity may be repeated throughout the area or region in which that particular group settled. Survey plans associated with a specific phase of agricultural settlement, or with a particular style of urban design, may be repeated in various places. Patterns associated with seasonal or nomadic land occupation focus less on the spatial arrangement of structural elements within a specific place than on the distribution of numerous habitation sites. Consequently, a pattern is rarely definable as an entity confined exclusively to a specific place or locale. More typically, the term *pattern* is applied to the broad distribution of spatial forms sharing a common origin throughout a landscape or region, while individual manifestations of that pattern are described as *settlement forms*. As an example, the *settlement pattern* associated with Ukrainian settlement in western

Canada has been commemorated through the *settlement form* displayed near Gardenton, Manitoba. The widespread influence of the British imperial gridiron town plan is similarly recognized through the commemoration of the well-preserved examples at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and Saint Andrews, New Brunswick.

The enduring importance of historical settlement patterns can be defined and commemorated through reference to specific places where their qualities are clearly visible. Alternatively, patterns with less tangible evidence can be recognized through reference to the regional landscape in which a specific pattern of land occupation occurred. In each case, the identification and commemoration of these patterns offer us a means of giving recognition to a vital piece in the fabric of Canada's cultural landscape. Each of these pieces represents a tangible step in increasing our understanding of the peoples, cultures and activities that collectively shaped the land in which we live.

The following definitions are offered in order to establish clear parameters for the topic:

SETTLEMENT

- i) Any form of human habitation, either dispersed or nucleated in form, associated with both shelter and the pursuit of economic and/or social activities.
- ii) The process of establishing a temporary or permanent place of habitation.
- iii) The occupation of a region by either nomadic or sedentary groups.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The spatial imprint and distribution of human settlement upon the landscape. Settlement patterns encompass all manner of rural and urban settlement, incorporating the spatial organization of settlements and the inter-relationships of all components of these distinctive places. A settlement pattern reflects the impact of a specific set of human activities as expressed through the spatial arrangements and/or the distribution of settlements within a given area or region. A pattern's historical significance may be ascribed to its association with one or more cultural activities of enduring significance and/or its enduring role in defining the spatial qualities of a human landscape.

SETTLEMENT FORM

The spatial characteristics of an individual settlement, whether nucleated or dispersed; the spatial interrelationship of the built environment that evokes the characteristics and definable features of a settlement pattern.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

It is important to establish a distinction between settlement patterns and cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes encompass the continuous evolution of human interaction with a specific place, whereas the time frame associated with settlement patterns is determined by the duration of the set of human activities that gave rise to them in the first place. The evolution of a settlement pattern is confined to this time frame.

A transformation of human activities within a given place may give rise to the establishment of a new settlement pattern that is superimposed upon a preceding pattern. This is perhaps most vividly demonstrated by the imposition of patterns associated with European settlement upon landscapes that bore the imprints of preceding periods of Native occupation. A cultural landscape can conceivably contain the imprints of successive settlement patterns which can be read as layers of human occupation.



Four Corners, Korol and Denyshchuk farms, Gardenton, Manitoba

A CLASSIFICATION OF CANADIAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The task of identifying and understanding the characteristics of *settlement patterns* is made easier by the use of a framework consisting of two major categories: 1. Macro patterns of settlement/settlement landscapes, and 2. Settlement forms. The latter category contains three subgroups which accommodate all primary settlement units.

Macro Patterns of Settlement/ Settlement Landscapes

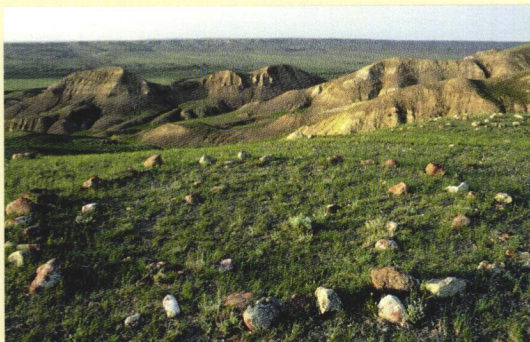
This category includes broad patterns based on the spatial distribution of settlement forms associated with specific regions, cultural groups or types of land occupation. The scale of the territorial range can vary from a compact locale to vast regions. These patterns encompass the repetition of related settlement forms or the distribution of habitation sites over a broad area rather than the spatial arrangement of land occupation within individual component sites.

This model accommodates the distinctive perceptions of land occupation held by Aboriginal peoples, in which spiritual associations and seasonal rounds form integral aspects of a people's link to the land. Nationally recognized examples include Wanuskewin, Saskatchewan, an archaeological site containing tipi rings,

camp sites and spiritual elements associated with thousands of years of seasonal land occupation by First Nations Peoples of the Plains. Another compelling example is comprised of the Grizzly Bear Mountain and Scented Grass Hills regions of the Northwest Territories, which have been commemorated on the basis of the seasonal village sites and spiritual values associated with the Dene people. Yet another example consists of a series of ancient habitation sites on Igloodik Island, Nunavut that bear evidence of land occupation with the Thule and Inuit peoples.

The settlement landscape model also accommodates the distribution of varied elements of settlement — individual dispersed farmsteads, villages and towns, and mixtures of all types — throughout a region. It can also be used to depict patterns of land occupation associated with the

Tipi rings, Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan



Igloodik Island, Nunavut



The Richelieu River,
near Saint-Ours, Quebec

sequential establishment of nucleated settlements on the basis of a specific set of human activities. The establishment of missions and fur-trade outposts at strategic sites along river systems and the emergence of strip settlements along colonization roads and northern highways represent examples on this theme.

Settlement Forms

Settlement forms are individual units or manifestations of a pattern of settlement. Geographers generally divide them into two major categories: dispersed and nucleated. Dispersed forms consist of individual units such as family farmsteads that are dispersed throughout an area. Nucleated forms are comprised of clusters of buildings of varying sizes. Small nucleated units range from hamlet to village size, while

larger nucleated units extend from towns to large urban areas. In each case, a settlement form can be linked to a broader pattern or an archetype.

1) DISPERSED AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Individual (dispersed) farmsteads comprise the largest single type of rural settlement across Canada. In most regions, this type of land occupation was accompanied by institutionally imposed cadastral surveys that predetermined the scale of individual land holdings and consequently exerted a profound influence over spatial organization. The various rural surveys created templates that usually made provision for the establishment of rural service centres at prescribed intervals. Thus, the rural landscapes of many regions are characterized

by the interconnection of dispersed individual farmsteads and nucleated hamlets, villages or towns. This is especially apparent in several regions of Canada. In the East, it remains visible in the reclaimed marshland settlements of the Acadians. Regions of French agricultural settlement are characterized by the narrow river lot *rang* system found throughout the St. Lawrence River valley, and in areas of Métis settlement on the Prairies. Parts of Canada where rural settlement took place under British colonial authority continue to display the characteristic checkerboard pattern of the township and county survey system. This pattern is particularly evident in parts of the Maritimes, the Quebec's Eastern Townships and many parts of Ontario. On the Prairies, this subdivision system reappeared in modified form as the Dominion Land Survey and created a rigid grid based on the quarter-section family farm unit.

**II) SMALL NUCLEATED SETTLEMENT:
HAMLETS AND VILLAGES**

This category includes all *settlement forms* ranging from clusters of two or more habitations to village size. Villages are difficult to define on the basis of population alone, as terminologies have varied over time and from province to province. Current scholarship suggests that villages are, in essence, groups of buildings set along one or more streets that provide a more intensive degree of habitation than the surrounding countryside. For classification purposes, the critical factor is the clarity of features associated

with such places, including population size and the range of economic and social activities occurring within them. Hamlets and villages do not generally develop infrastructures beyond the fundamental ones associated with human habitation and the primary economic activities that gave rise to their initial establishment. The hamlet-village category includes agricultural communities, service centres, settlements associated with specific ethno-cultural groups, and small single-industry settlements.

**III) LARGE NUCLEATED SETTLEMENT:
TOWNS, CITIES, URBAN DISTRICTS
AND SUBURBS**

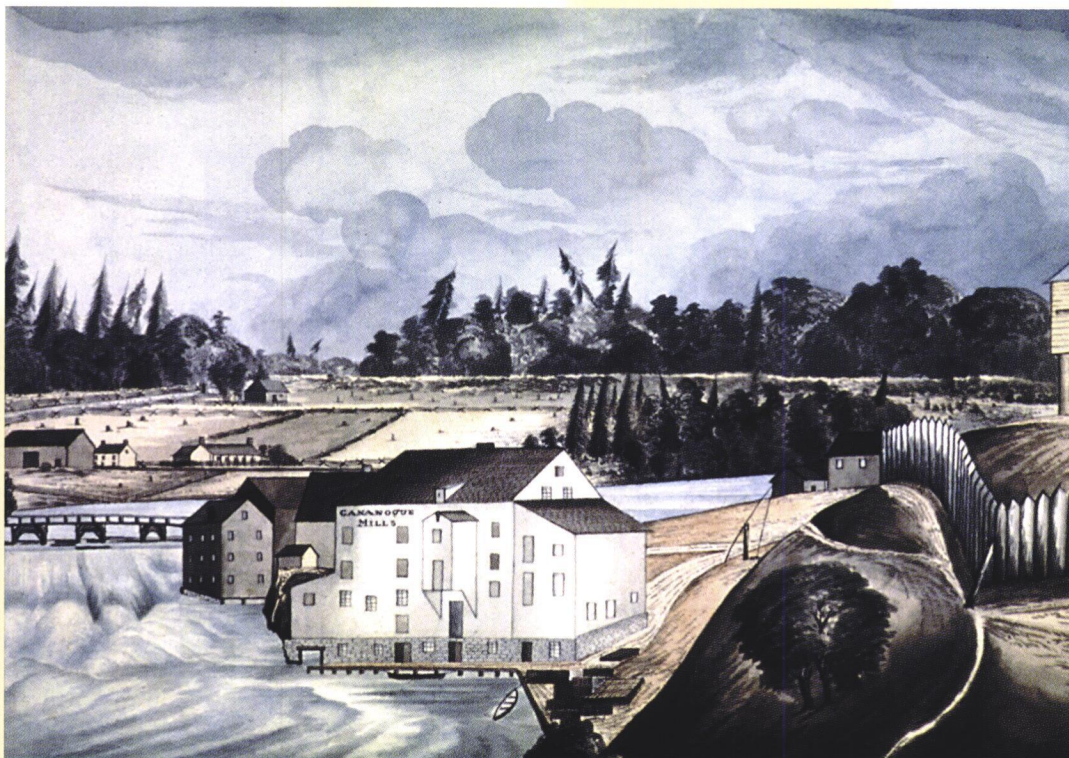
This category accommodates all nucleated settlements larger than the village unit. Numerous subsets can be developed within it, based less on scale than on discernable patterns that can be linked to specific sets of cultural, political and economic determinants. Studies abound on the spatial evolution of major cities across Canada. While the origins of cities can usually be traced back to the cadastral plans or surveys that created a preliminary organizational framework, subsequent growth was accompanied by successive surveys that created new districts and suburbs with spatial qualities of their own. The interplay between institutional authority and urban inhabitants differs from that found in rural settlement patterns. In towns and cities, individuals' abilities to manipulate spatial arrangements tend to be restricted by the size of their individual land holdings. As a result, the influence of the cadastral plan and the

decisions of civic authorities (i.e., zoning) have exerted a greater impact over the nature of land organization.

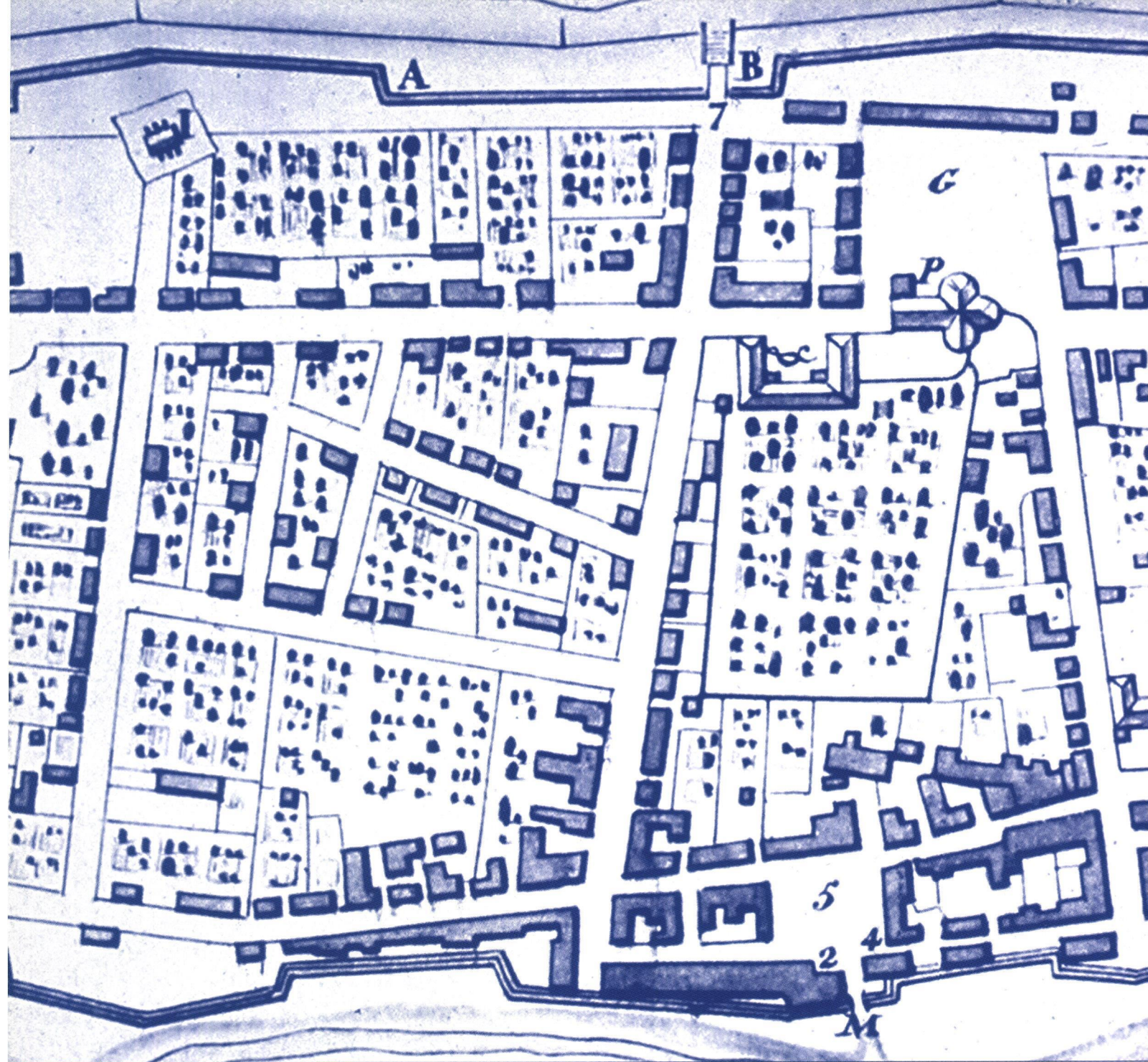
The sheer complexity of large urban places, and the means by which people have interacted with them, challenge the effective application of the *settlement pattern* term. This probably accounts for its infrequent application to towns and cities, for which “land use pattern” appears to be a more appropriate analytical term. The *settlement pattern* term is nevertheless suited to the depiction of definitive imprints associated with the origins of urban places, regardless of the scale and complexity of their subsequent growth. It is also applicable to urban places (or districts within larger urban places) where a distinct set of associative elements exists.

A variety of potential applications within this category is suggested by recent scholarship. In some instances, urban spatial organization can be linked to specific design genres or design traditions. The 18th-century plan of Louisbourg can be traced to the theories of French military engineer Sébastien Vauban. The initial configuration of Ville-Marie, the original core of Montréal, presented a modified grid centred upon the institutional authority embodied in the parish church of Notre-Dame, in the tradition of continental European town planning.

Similarly, the spatial configuration of numerous town sites in the Maritimes and southern Ontario can be directly attributed to the ubiquitous gridiron plan prescribed by British colonial administrators of the 18th and 19th centuries. The rigid formality



Gananoque Mills [Ontario],
1839, by H.F. Ainslie



of initial 18th-century plans (including those of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Saint Andrews, New Brunswick and Lunenburg, Nova Scotia) was repeated a century later in colonial British Columbia (New Westminster), and underwent a simplification in the pioneer settlement environment of 19th-century Ontario, exemplified by the towns of Richmond, Cobourg and Goderich.

In turn, the simplified gridiron plan influenced the subsequent urban forms of hundreds of Prairie communities. The scores of small towns established at regular intervals along railway networks as local centres for grain shipment represent urban correlates to the dispersed homestead pattern imposed on the Prairies' rural landscape by the Dominion Land Survey. The uniformity



Plan of Montréal in New France (detail), 1729, by G.-J. Chaussegros de Léry

settlement type. All were established in association with the extraction, processing and transportation of primary resources (mining, forestry, fishing, agriculture). Single-resource towns of the late 19th century displayed varying degrees of formal planning. The core of present-day Nanaimo, B.C. continues to be defined by a radial spider-web plan prepared by the local coal company's London-based financiers. Other 19th-century examples such as Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Marysville, New Brunswick and Cumberland, B.C. reflect more pragmatic approaches to operational efficiency in the pre-automobile era. This phase was followed by a progression towards increasingly "planned" single-industry communities that corresponded with increased private capital investment in resource-based industries in remote locations. Urban historians and geographers have focused considerable attention on the later stages of this evolution, particularly on the "holistic" variations known as single-resource towns. These communities were developed according to master plans based directly or indirectly upon "Garden City" or "City Beautiful" town planning precepts during the 1910s and 1920s, and upon subsequent "comprehensive" models during the 1940s and 1950s.

The influence of British and American town planning theory was similarly directed towards suburban residential development and recreation-based resort communities during the early decades of the 20th century.

of their plans conveys the sense of a distinctive archetypal pattern that is readily discerned in numerous examples found along the routes of railway lines through northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and northern British Columbia.

Resource towns have similarly lent themselves to analysis as a distinctive

FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Attaching historical importance to *settlement patterns* is admittedly a subjective exercise. Clearly, any macro pattern or associated *settlement form* possesses special attributes that are of relative value. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify broad patterns that clearly reflect important aspects of Canada's cultural geography, and to determine specific locations where the defining qualities of these patterns are clearly displayed. The following three steps should be used as a checklist for identifying and assessing the potential importance of specific examples. The first step appraises the significance of the archetypal pattern on the basis of the human activities with which it is associated; the second identifies the unique spatial qualities associated with that pattern; and the third assesses the value and integrity of those spatial qualities as found in specific locales.

Historical associations

An archetypal *settlement pattern* derives its special qualities from a specific combination of human activities (cultural, social, institutional and economic) which gave rise to the establishment and development of distinctive spatial arrangements of settlement. These spatial arrangements are manifested through an enduring imprint which defined and shaped the nature of human occupation within an area or region during the period of time in which that specific set of human activities persisted.

A preliminary step in assessing the significance of a *settlement pattern* lies in assessing its value relative to the following set of historical determinants. In some cases, the primary value associated with a historical determinant may be found to lie in its expression through a *settlement pattern*.

1. culture/ethnicity
2. hunting/gathering
3. transportation
4. agriculture
5. fishing
6. trade/commerce
7. industry
8. institutional/administration
9. religion/spirituality
10. military

Representative characteristics

This criterion assesses the spatial qualities that define the distinctive characteristics of a major *settlement pattern*. These spatial qualities determine the physical characteristics associated with a pattern's enduring imprint upon the land. This criterion provides a basis for assessing the significance of specific examples relative to the characteristics associated with the overall pattern.

Representative characteristics of settlement patterns can be assessed within the context of the categorical framework described above, in combination with the following subtypes adapted from the UNESCO typology for the identification of cultural landscapes:

1. Designed patterns comprising patterns which have been created and designed intentionally by specific groups or individuals and which have determined the enduring spatial organization of such places.

2. Organically evolved patterns resulting from the interaction between social, economic, administrative and/or religious imperatives and the initiatives of groups and individuals.
3. Associative patterns in which land occupation is expressed through powerful symbolic associations rather than through evidence of material culture.

Coleman, Alberta



Resource integrity and completeness

A significant concentration, linkage, and/or continuity of spatial relationships between and among elements of human occupation, which collectively comprises an outstanding expression of a *settlement pattern* of national significance.

This criterion addresses the expression of an outstanding *settlement pattern* through the manifestation of associable *settlement forms* in specific places, or symbolic association with land occupancy through cultural traditions and through enduring cultural associations with the landscape. The integrity of spatial relationships is determined by a comparison between existing spatial elements in specific locales and the intrinsic qualities that convey the significance of the archetypal *settlement pattern*.

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