

# Fort Edward National Historic Site is ‘an incredibly rich resource’ | SaltWire

 Web Clip

Atlantic Canada > News

## Fort Edward National Historic Site is ‘an incredibly rich resource’

**Hants County site has untapped tourism potential, says archaeologist**

**Carole Morris-Underhill · Journalist** | Posted: March 15, 2022, 2:47 p.m. |

Updated: March 15, 2022, 3:50 p.m. | 7 Min Read



- 1757: soldiers' huts; officer's stable; bullock houses; forge; pond
- 1760s: unidentified building
- 1779: unidentified buildings
- Windsor Agricultural Fair buildings

Jonathan Fowler, of Northeast Archeological Research, provided this map to show where buildings of interest could be located underground at, and near, Fort Edward National Historic Site in Windsor. - Contributed

**STORY CONTINUES BELOW THESE SALTWIRE VIDEOS**



NOW  
PLAYING

### SaltWire Today -...

Daily newscast for Friday, March 25, 2022

[More](#)



### Five things we've...

Earlier this week I reached out to speak with Dr. Stan... [More](#)



### Snow crab...

At seafood processing factories across Atlantic Canada... [More](#)



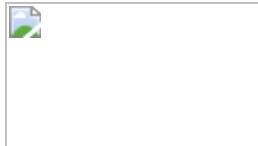
### Halifax first...

This week, a group of 24 Halifax firefighters, Halifax Regional... [More](#)



### Saltwire regional...

Saltwire regional weather outlook for March 25, 2022 [More](#)



### SaltWire Today -...

Daily newscast for Thursday, March 24, 2021 [More](#)



### Making...

Nova Scotia's legislative session



### Saltwire regional...

Saltwire regional weather outlook for

**WINDSOR, N.S. — West Hants sits on a relatively underutilized and underappreciated national historic site that could become a major tourism destination if the community steps up to lead the charge.**

**That's the message relayed to council after Jonathan Fowler of Northeast Archaeological Research presented the results of a Phase 1 archaeological resource impact assessment to committee of the whole on March 8.**

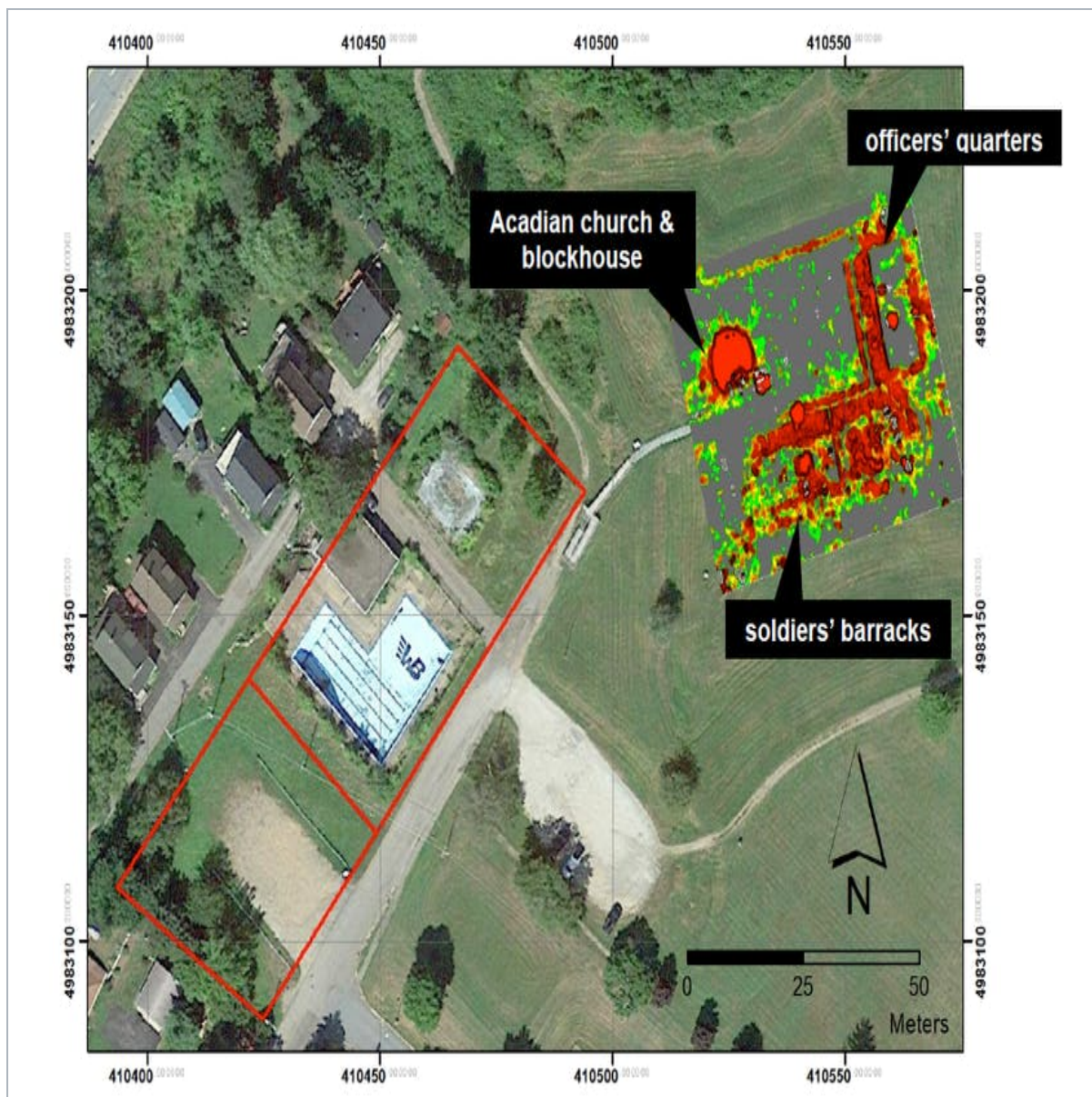
**His 53-page report identifies and examines what is known and unknown about Fort Edward National Historic Site, focusing on adjacent lands owned by the municipality that they're looking to sell.**

**Before becoming a military base, Fort Edward Hill served as a pre-deportation Acadian religious site. The Acadian parish church of Notre-Dame-de-L'Assomption was destroyed in 1750, with the historic military blockhouse built on top of its ruins. Acadians were also held there as prisoners during the expulsion of 1755.**

**The area was also a Mi'kmaq treaty site and featured a truck house.**

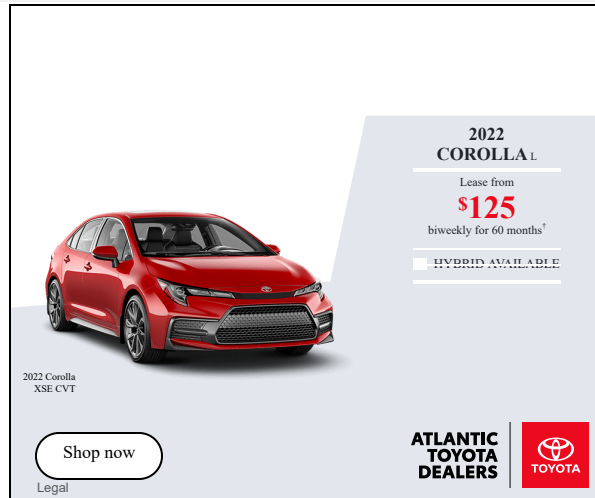
**“The Fort Edward truck house borders the study area to the northwest and is one of six such posts established in the region as part of the British Crown’s commitments to the Mi'kmaq through the Treaties of Peace and Friendship of 1760-61. None of these other sites is commemorated,” Fowler’s report notes.**





Jonathan Fowler, of Northeast Archaeological Research, provided this magnetic susceptibility map to council in order to show the vanished soldiers' barracks, officers' quarters and what could be the remains of the Acadian parish church of Notre-Dame-de-L'Assomption. - Contributed

The study area also encompasses land on which Canada's oldest agricultural fair began in 1765.



**“The market and agricultural fair grew out of the pre-existing commercial relationships between the British, Acadians, and Mi’kmaq at Fort Edward Hill. Abundant evidence places 19th and early 20th century fair infrastructure in the study area,” Fowler notes in the report.**

**His presentation featured numerous maps and said based on the evidence collected to date, the construction of the swimming pool in the 1960s — the property council now wants to sell to a developer — didn’t impact any of the anticipated archaeological features underneath or located nearby.**

**He encouraged council to conduct a Phase 2 assessment if they proceed with rezoning and selling the former swimming pool site on Fort Edward Street.**

**Additionally, any future construction “should respect Fort Edward’s view plane of the Avon River, which Parks Canada identifies as essential to maintaining the site’s sense of historic place and commemorative integrity.”**

---

[Read more](#)

[Fort Edward important ‘piece of the puzzle’ for Acadian history in Nova Scotia](#)



**Preserving history: Residents lobbying West Hants council to halt sale, rezoning of property near Fort Edward**



If construction is approved, and archaeological evidence is discovered, he recommended work be paused and the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage be contacted.

“Taken in its entirety, the evidence gathered to date shows that the study area, though it may be legally defined as two distinct and separate properties, remains nevertheless part of the archaeological landscape and heritage environment of Fort Edward National Historic Site of Canada.”

2022 COROLLA L

Lease from  
**\$125**  
biweekly for 60 months\*

HYBRID AVAILABLE

2022 Corolla  
XSE CVT

Shop now

Legal

ATLANTIC  
TOYOTA  
DEALERS

TOYOTA

## Tourism destination

Although visitation to Fort Edward has dropped off significantly in recent years, Coun. Jim Ivey asked if there is still tourism potential.



**"I think that we have an incredibly rich resource here with Fort Edward," said Fowler.**

**"This report has allowed me to feel, I have to say, a little bit frustrated just with how we've let Fort Edward languish a little bit too much."**

**He said from a narrative richness standpoint, the site has been involved with the Acadian expulsion, treaty relations with Nova Scotia's Indigenous community and served as the training grounds for several wars. It's connected to a variety of global events that helped shape the world we know.**

**The potential is there to draw tourists to Windsor.**

**"If it's not invested in and mobilized, then I don't think any one of us should be surprised that visitation continues to decline. You can't even go to the bathroom at Fort Edward right now. Perhaps, at least, not legally," Fowler said.**

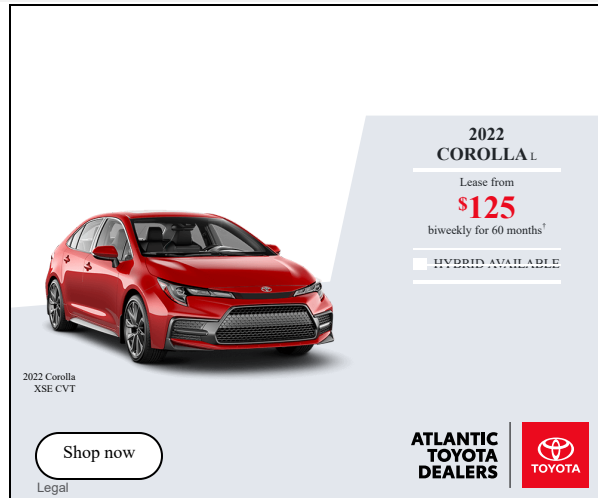
---

**"The rise or fall of the heritage economy depends to some extent on the vision and creativity of the citizens."**

**-Jonathan Fowler**

---

**Liz Galbraith, a Windsor resident who launched a Facebook page after learning about West Hants' plans to sell Windsor's former Centennial Swimming Pool site to a developer, thought Fowler's presentation provided professional insight into what the region has to offer.**



Galbraith said she doesn't believe people realize how much historical significance is located in Windsor and would like to see more education.

“Not everything that happened up there is something to be celebrated. There were prisoners up there; people died up there... The Acadians were deported from that site. Those are stories that need to be told,” she said.

And creating a museum or facility instead of an apartment complex could do just that.

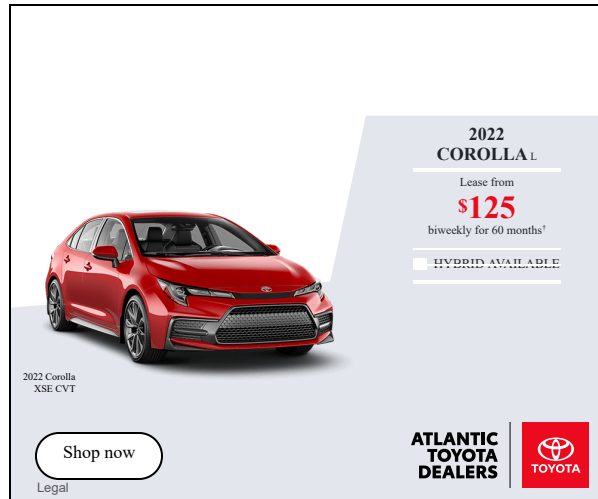
“If we are somehow successful in staving off the developer's backhoe on this property, that's not the end of the conversation. What it means is then it'll be up to the community to step up and fulfil the promise that that property has in terms of offering something to the community,” she said.

Galbraith is hoping council sees the value and potential the site has and that the community will get behind a new project — something that will increase tourism to the region.

“To some extent, the rise or fall of the heritage economy depends to some extent on the vision and creativity of the citizens,” Fowler told council.

'Enormously rich and multifaceted history'

Sites like Fort Anne in Annapolis Royal and Grand Pré — now a world heritage site — wouldn't be the tourism destinations they are today without community involvement and investment.



“All of these sites were developed through significant private citizen investment,” Fowler said.

Fort Anne, for example, “was nearly doomed by local businessmen who wanted to level... (the) fort’s ramparts for commercial development.”

West Hants Historical Society has requested council not sell the land so they may pursue options to develop an interpretation centre.

Fowler’s report indicates that as a cultural asset, Fort Edward “represents a potentially very significant heritage resource for the West Hants Regional Municipality. This potential is perhaps not widely recognized because the site’s enormously rich and multifaceted history is not very well-known. Nor has this site found the kinds of champions who have advanced the cause of heritage development elsewhere along the floor of the Annapolis Valley.”

Fowler’s report recommended council take a “period of reflection” and have “meaningful dialogue” with various partner organizations, including

**Parks Canada and the Mi'kmaq and Acadian communities, to determine the best course of action concerning the properties.**

**Mayor Abraham Zebian recommended council hold another meeting to further discuss the former pool site property and the archaeological report. It's anticipated representatives from Parks Canada will attend as well.**

**The special council meeting is tentatively set for March 16 at 7 p.m.**

**Share story:**

4

## **Related Stories**

---



**Fort Edward  
important 'piece of  
the puzzle' for  
Acadian history in  
Nova Scotia**

**UPDATED MAR. 15, 2022 | 7  
MIN READ**



**Preserving history:  
Residents lobbying  
West Hants council to  
halt sale, rezoning of  
property near Fort  
Edward**

**UPDATED JAN. 18, 2022 | 11  
MIN READ**



**Here's why Windsor  
residents want to  
delay a land sale near  
Fort Edward National  
Historic site**

**UPDATED DEC. 3, 2021 | 10  
MIN READ**

