

The site of Fort Senneville is an important part of Montreal's cultural and natural heritage for several reasons.

The property was part of a *fief* ceded to Dugué de Boisbriant in 1672 by the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice. He subsequently relinquished it to two of the most significant figures in the history of New France, Jacques LeBer and Charles Lemoyne, in payment of a debt; they used the site as a fur-trading post. In 1703 Jacques LeBer de Senneville constructed a large stone house and fort in order to improve and protect the fur-trading operations. In 1776 Fort Senneville was destroyed by American troops under the command of Benedict Arnold. In 1865 the property was purchased by John Joseph Caldwell Abbott, former prime minister of Canada and Mayor of Montreal, as a summer residence. In 1898, Sir Edward Seabourne Clouston purchased the domain from Abbott's estate. It presently belongs to four great-grandchildren of Sir Edward Clouston, who was the first general director of the Bank of Montreal.

Although Fort Senneville has been a ruin since 1776, its vestiges have been maintained by the Clouston, Todd, and Hackney families. In November 2003, Minister of Culture and Communications Line Beauchamp recognized its historical significance by classifying it a "Site historique".

The Ministry of Culture and Communications has also recognized the importance of Fort Senneville by commissioning studies on the history of ownership of the fort, and the exceptional historic and prehistoric archaeological potential of the ruin and its surroundings. The Ministry has also funded archaeological research and repairs to consolidate the structure of the ruin.

The historic value of the site is complemented by its ecological and environmental significance. The shoreline is part of the habitat for the rare map turtle. The approximately ten-acre site is a point jutting into the Lake of Two Mountains. It is between the Lake and the Senneville Forest ecoterritory described in Montreal's recently adopted Natural Spaces Policy. Therefore, it could be considered part of the wildlife corridor ("lien faunique") between the lake and the Forest. The shoreline is in a semi-natural state.

I wish to bring it to the attention of the commissioners that although up till now the owners have been most generous in allowing visitors to the site, it remains a private property and may change hands one day. Ideally, the site would be accessible to all citizens for their pleasure and enrichment. To ensure this, public assistance of some kind is required. One idea would be for the City to acquire the site, or purchase an easement, and assist a private company in the development of the site as a paying attraction, similar to, for example, Les Jardins de Metis.