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Sustainable Heritage Case Study
Class Presentation
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Industrial Tourism

Industrial Tourism: Repurposing the Abandoned Village of Val-Jalbert

Val-Jalbert, Saint-Georges Street,
Chambord, Quebec



Val-Jalbert. *Industrial mill and Ouatichouan waterfall at Val-Jalbert, Chambord, Quebec.* [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.valjalbert.com/en/images-of-val-jalbert/belvederes-and-waterfalls>

Description

- Located within the regional county municipality of Le Domaine-du-Roy in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec, Canada.
- The village strategically borders the Ouatrouan River to harness hydraulic energy from the strong water currents for processing.
- The ministry of culture and communications identified a total of 94 buildings and ruins including a few homes, the hotel, the general store, the school and the pulp and paper mill.
- The village is recognized for its impressive urban planning practices.
- In 1962, the village underwent many changes for its conversion into a tourist destination.



Google maps. (2019). *Industrial village of Val-Jalbert, Chambord, Quebec*. [Map]. Retrieved from

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Val-Jalbert,+Chambord,+QC+G8G+1M7/@48.4446581,-72.1818926,3698m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x4cc1f06e9fb277eb:0x6f21bafa130f4d0a!8m2!3d48.44466!4d-72.164383?hl=en>

Timeline

- 1901 - the industrial village of Val-Jalbert is established with the creation of Ouiatchouan Pulp Company by Damase Jalbert
- 1904 – financial hardships led to the ownership of American shareholders
- 1907 – the development of the village was costly, the owners sold the company to Chicoutimi Pulp Company
- 1915 – a new plan for the village was commissioned by the Quebec government
- 1922 – Price Brothers bought half the bonds issued by the Chicoutimi Pulp company
- 1926 – Quebec Pulp and Paper Mill Ltd owned the property
- 1927 – the company declared bankruptcy as it never paid its share to the Quebec government for the development of a reservoir at Lake Kenogami
- 1963 – the abandoned industrial village opens its door to the public as a tourist attraction
- 2011 – Val-Jalbert wins a Canadian tourism award for touristic experience of the year
- 2012 – three more Canadian tourism awards were given to Val-Jalbert for personality of the year, 50 000 visitors and best website
- 2013 – the construction of a hydroelectric generating system is underway

Stakeholders

Organizations: A few organizations that had a toll in the village's conversion include the Quebec City Tourism and Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec (SÉPAQ). Others that had an influence on the construction of the hydroelectric generating system include: Société de l'énergie communautaire du Lac-Saint-Jean, the regional county municipality of Le Domaine-du-Roy and Maria-Chapdelaine.

Owners/ users: the regional county municipality of Le Domaine-du-Roy in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec became the sole proprietor of the tourist destination in 2009. The users include staff members, maintenance crew, and visitors of course.

Consultants: Consultants might include the heritage council, Conseil du Patrimoine Culturel du Québec (CPCQ), who defended the integrity of the Ouatouchouan waterfall's natural appearance during the debate of the construction of a hydroelectric generating system.

Natural/Cultural Heritage

Natural heritage

- Located against the Ouiatchouan river and waterfall.
- Surrounded by the forestry sector which provided a generous supply of natural resources for the processing of pulp and paper products.

Cultural heritage

- Buildings and structures that were erected for the treatment of coal mines and textile factories were considered by conservationists as redundant and uneconomical.
- A new perspective on industrial heritage was required to allow the heritage field to expand its focus from medieval architecture to other styles and age.
- The once thriving village experienced economic hardships but it has found a new income-generated use for the site.
- The industrial village of Val-Jalbert made an effort to portray the lifestyles of the citizens and the urban context through consultants, such as René Bélanger, an engineer that moved to Val-Jalbert in 1927.



Shelley Cameron-McCarron. [2019]. *Industrial village of Val-Jalbert, Chambord, Quebec*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://blog.viarail.ca/2019/09/19/spend-night-val-jalbert-canadas-best-preserved-ghost-village/>



View of Saint-Georges street, Chambord, Quebec. [Photograph]. (1974). Retrieved from http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/fr/article-499/Val-Jalbert_la_valorisation_touristique_d'un_patrimoine_du_XXe_siecle.html#4

Sustainability

Environmental sustainability

- The Quebec government authorized construction of the power plant with a revised flow rate, as per the heritage council's request, of 0.7m^3 per second during periods of visit and 0.3m^3 per second during the off season.
- The renewable energy produced from hydroelectricity is sustainable in that it aims at minimizing climate change through mitigation.

Socio-cultural sustainability

- The construction of a hydroelectric generating system will provide electricity for neighboring towns.
- Hydroelectric production of electricity speaks to the landscape of the province of Quebec and helps to form a provincial identity.

Economic sustainability

- while the village was quickly declining as a result of the mill's closure, the village turned to tourism for economic support.
- The village is receiving compensation for the hydroelectric generating system.



Val-Jalbert. Hydroelectric generating system. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.valjalbert.com/en/mini-hydroelectric-power-plant>

Lessons

- In the twentieth century, the province of Quebec prospered in the pulpwood industry and became recognized worldwide for its resources.
- The industrial village of Val-Jalbert, established in 1901, produces pulp and paper products responding to the high demand for newsprint paper, particularly in the American and British markets.
- After the demise of the village, the abandoned site stood vacant for a few years before being purchased by the Quebec City Tourism in 1960.
- Since then, the village attracts tourists to its location, offering a variety of activities, such as: animation, guided tours, expositions, nature hikes, etc.
- Regardless of the harmful consequences related to the operation of various industries, it would be equally harmful to demolish the existing industrial building stock rather than recycling.

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