

INTERPRETATION PLAN
Originally prepared 2001
Partially revised 2005

PAHSMA

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1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY

1.1. Introduction

This is a *Secondary Plan* within the planning framework (see Appendix 3) established by the Port Arthur Historic Site Conservation Plan (Godden Mackay Context) which was adopted by the Authority in 2000. Within this planning framework, the Interpretation Plan is subsidiary to the Conservation Plan, which provides the overall conservation management and policy framework for the site.

Building on these foundations, this Plan aims to provide more specific policies and implementation strategies to guide interpretation on site for the next 5 years, 2001-2006. It also identifies a range of media appropriate to the site.

The Manager, Interpretation & Collections, and the Manager, Visitor Services, will prepare an annual *Operational Plan*. This will distill actions from the principles and options enumerated here, tailored to budgetary and staffing realities.

A series of *Tertiary Plans* will be developed to suit the various interpretive options selected. Each will cover policy and implementation for a particular medium i.e. signage, printed material etc.

1.2. Components of this Plan

This Plan follows the following scheme:

- **Section 1** introduces the Plan and locates it within the Port Arthur Historic Site Conservation Plan, (Godden Mackay Context, 2000); it also describes its aims and desired outcomes.
- **Section 2** explores the intellectual framework for the new plan and describes its planning methodology.
- **Section 3** outlines major and minor themes.
- **Section 4** identifies our audiences and their needs.
- **Section 5** describes a vision for a program that should be set in place by the end of the life of this plan in 2006. It describes how our primary interpretive themes might be delivered to our key audiences. It is an ambitious program that will be implemented progressively and will be guided in part by the level of staffing and financial support that can be made available. It will be evaluated on a regular basis and adjusted accordingly.
- **Section 6** contains detailed descriptions of particular interpretive programs proposed for implementation in the financial year 2001-2002 and in following years. These programs will be monitored and evaluated, and the results will further refine and reshape the program for 2002-2003.
- **Appendix 1** contains a summary of informally collected visitor comments from several periods between 1998-2001.
- **Appendix 2** contains the recommendations springing from the User Insite audience research.

- **Appendix 3** contains the PAHSMA planning framework from the Conservation Plan (Godden Mackay Context, 2000).
- **Appendix 4** contains the Statement of Significance from the Conservation Plan (Godden Mackay Context, 2000).

1.3. Interpretation Policy

The following policy is based on that defined in the Port Arthur Historic Site Conservation Plan, (Godden Mackay Context, 2000) – (hereafter referred to as the CP) see Appendix 4. It has been amended to suit circumstances that have altered since September 2000 when this Policy was adopted.

Amendments were felt to be necessary for two main reasons; firstly, the policy in the CP was framed as though staff would not be deeply involved in developing the Plan, and so would need to be told about it in certain ways; secondly, the policy defined a ‘primary message’ that will focus on ‘the physical evolution of the site, including conservation processes’, This seemed to be too fabric-focused and insufficiently visitor-oriented.

The amended policy is as follows:

- Interpretation of the Port Arthur Historic Site will be undertaken in accordance with this Plan.
- Interpretation programs and messages will have primary regard to the significance of the site.
- The approach to interpretation will extend beyond the Port Arthur Historic Site itself, providing an understanding of the place in its historical, geographical and social context.
- Messages to be conveyed in interpretation will be developed in consultation with all involved in developing, managing and delivering that interpretation.
- Interpretation will be based only on sound, contemporary and scholarly research.
- Interpretation programs and initiatives will be undertaken in a manner that minimises impact on the fabric of significant elements.
- Interpretation will extend to historic activities, structures, places and landscapes and will, where possible, focus on real historic elements. The introduction of new, purpose-built interpretive elements will be minimised.
- Regular evaluation will continue to inform our interpretive activities.

Note: This amended policy for Interpretation should be incorporated into the CP when that document is reviewed.

1.4. Aims & desired outcomes of interpretation on site

We will aim to communicate the following to our visitors:

- the significance of Port Arthur.
- an outline of Port Arthur's history, structured around important thematic messages.
- a connection between that history and the present.
- the practice and purpose of conservation here.

Interpretation will seek to provide:

- at least one experience that caters for each visitor's special interest.
- a meaningful experience for parents/carers to share with their children.
- an opportunity for visitors to extend their knowledge and understanding of Tasmania's and Australia's history and heritage.

Regular evaluation of new programmes will seek to assess the success of each programme against these aims.

1.5. Authorship of this Plan

Julia Clark, Manager Interpretation & Collections, was the principal author of this document. Each section was workshopped with a group of between 17 and 20 Conservation and Visitor Centre staff and guides in 6 sessions. Comments from each workshop were progressively incorporated into the Plan and circulated before the following workshop. Private written comments and conversations were also presented anonymously to each meeting for discussion.

2. BEHIND THE NEW PLAN

In the past, interpretation has not been heavily theorised. Most interpreters have paid tribute to Freeman Tilden but then in practice they have generally adopted a heavily pedagogic approach. Until recently, in Australia at least, few have embraced the challenges Tilden has thrown out. In the last few years, however, Australian interpreters have discovered the work of Sam Ham, and learning theory, particularly that developed by George Hein, is also now making a strong contribution to the discipline. A number of these theoretical approaches and ideas have been drawn together to underpin and inform this plan.

2.1. The principles of sound interpretation - planning & content (the EROT approach)

Good interpretation is based on a detailed knowledge of the needs and desires of our many audiences, a sophisticated understanding of the significance of the site and sound communication skills.

Interpretation planning for cultural as opposed to environmental heritage is a relatively new field in Australia. There are very few models of good interpretation planning available for comparison. Many are in-house documents that are not publicly available and many sites still do not develop the kind of plan need by a large, complex and historically broad and deep site like Port Arthur. It is unusual in Australia in that it has many elements and spans, philosophically at least, around 200 years of British, colonial and Australian history.

All interpreters pay homage to Freeman Tilden; we still refer constantly to his ground-breaking work. In the 1950s he expressed more succinctly than anyone else before or since the basic precepts of good interpretation. His precepts have underpinned the work of all good interpretation since, and are still taught by the current interpretation 'guru', Professor Sam Ham. Essentially Tilden defined good interpretation as **'an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships . . . rather than simply to communicate factual information.'** Obviously these will be communicated during the program, but unless they are embedded in ideas they will not be heeded or remembered.

Building on Tilden, Ham uses *four basic principles* to develop good interpretation; it must be:

- Entertaining
- Relevant
- Organised
- Themed

This is expressed by Ham as the EROT rule. Obviously these four principles are all interrelated – if something is organised and relevant it is more likely to be entertaining and vice versa. But it is helpful to consider each in isolation first.

2.1.1. Good interpretation is entertaining (E)

This does not mean that entertainment is interpretation's primary goal; it means that it is one of its essential qualities. Nor does it mean that Port Arthur's history and meanings should be trivialised for the sake of a few cheap laughs. If something is entertaining, according to various dictionary definitions, the experience is 'enjoyable', 'interesting', 'amusing', 'holds your attention', 'occupies one in an agreeable and pleasant manner' and 'provides recreation'. The stress upon entertainment is located within the inescapable fact that people come here in their recreational time. For many, if not most, of our visitors, they expect to learn while they are here, but they expect to enjoy themselves while they are doing it. This principle refers to the ways in which serious ideas and information can be best communicated to ensure that our visitors want to stay around to listen and are helped to remember what we tell them.

A number of qualities distinguish entertaining communication. Entertaining communication is informal and not reminiscent of a classroom or a textbook. It is conversational in tone, and uses the active voice, metaphors, anecdotes, analogies, examples and other strategies to clarify processes and relationships. While it may also utilise humour, music, games or art, this is not essential. Most importantly, it should be friendly and participatory.

2.1.2. Good interpretation is relevant (R)

This means that it is both meaningful and personal. To be meaningful, our visitors must be able to connect the new information/ideas with something they already know. This is the principle on which learning theory is founded. And to be personal, the new information/ideas must relate to something that the visitor cares about.

2.1.3. Good interpretation is organised (O)

Interpretation that is organised is presented in a way that is easy to follow. People don't have to work hard to understand what we are trying to tell them. It is logically arranged, connections between different elements are explicitly made and it all relates clearly to a bigger picture that has also been clearly explained (see 4. below). The relationships between the theme, and the facts presented to support and develop it, are made obvious.

2.1.4. Good interpretation is themed (T)

This is the message, the major point or points to be made in the whole interpretation. Themes are not of course a substitute for basic information, they are the way in which we organise that information to make it meaningful and memorable.

It is essential to distinguish between 'theme' and 'topic', since real confusion often exists between the two.

A topic is the subject matter, what Ham calls the ‘what’ of interpretation. For the purpose of this explanation, it might be ‘architecture’.

A theme is an idea that forms the point of your interpretation – what do you want the visitor to know about ‘architecture’? For example, in a tour covering the buildings of our site, it might be ‘The architecture of Port Arthur expresses ideas about the punishment of crime and the reform of criminals.’ With a thematic framework, we know which bits of our knowledge about architecture to present to explain that statement; we know how to organise them so that the visitor can most easily understand what we are trying to communicate. The visitor can easily organise the facts that we impart around this framework for ease of recall.

Each theme has its own set of relevant facts, concepts and main points, but they are selected because they best make the message clear, not because they are individually interesting to the writer, guide or interpreter. Their presentations must be built around the central message of the story they are telling, whether it is about architecture, daily life for officers’ families or convict workloads.

Unless these principles are followed, visitors become lost in a sea of apparently unconnected, irrelevant facts that seem to have no connection with their lives, no use, no meaning.

Drawing on several years of qualitative visitor research, the new Interpretation Plan for Old Parliament House, Canberra, describes the attitudes of their visitors (p12);

Interpretation which simply bombards the visitor with facts, figures and unrelated experiences will not hold the visitor’s attention and will be forgotten as soon as he or she leaves. Long excursions into Australian history are particularly uninteresting for all our visitors. They often see ‘history’ as dry, remote, impersonal and serious – the exact opposite of the things they are looking for in a holiday or a weekend day out, perhaps with young children. Yet many people are keenly interested in the past when it is presented as personal, accessible and relevant.

2.2. Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences

According to Howard Gardner's theory, ‘intelligence’ denotes an individual difference. While all humans possess the eight (or more) intelligences, each person has his/her own particular blend or amalgam of the intelligences. This blend shapes their experience with the world and, most importantly for interpreters, their preferred mode of learning.

The following definitions of the intelligences, adapted from the originals presented in *Frames of Mind; the theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), list occupation, professions, disciplines, areas and directions an intelligence can take. But these are by no means the

only examples; nor do any of these examples represent the use of any one intelligence to the exclusion of all others. Individuals are never endowed solely with one intelligence. Rather, all brain-unimpaired people possess all the intelligences, which they blend in various ways in the course of creating something that is meaningful or performing a meaningful role or task.

Linguistic intelligence allows individuals to communicate and make sense of the world through language. Poets exemplify this intelligence in its mature form. Students who enjoy playing with rhymes, who pun, who always have a story to tell, who quickly acquire other languages - including sign language - all exhibit linguistic intelligence.

Musical intelligence allows people to create, communicate, and understand meanings made out of sound. While composers and instrumentalists clearly exhibit this intelligence, so do the students who seem particularly attracted by the birds singing outside the classroom window or who constantly tap out intricate rhythms on the desk with their pencils.

Logical-mathematical intelligence enables individuals to use and appreciate abstract relations. Scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers all rely on this intelligence. So do the students who 'live' football statistics or who carefully analyze the components of problems - either personal or school-related - before systematically testing solutions.

Spatial intelligence makes it possible for people to perceive visual or spatial information, to transform this information, and to recreate visual images from memory. Well-developed spatial capacities are needed for the work of architects, sculptors, and engineers. The students who turn first to the graphs, charts, and pictures in their textbooks, who like to 'web' their ideas before writing a paper, and who fill the blank space around their notes with intricate patterns are also using their spatial intelligence. While usually tied to the visual modality, spatial intelligence can also be exercised to a high level by individuals who are visually impaired.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence allows individuals to use all or part of the body to create products or solve problems. Athletes, surgeons, dancers, choreographers, and crafts people all use bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. The capacity is also evident in students who relish gym class and school dances, who prefer to carry out class projects by making models rather than writing reports, and who toss crumpled paper with frequency and accuracy into wastebaskets across the room.

Interpersonal intelligence enables individuals to recognize and make distinctions about others' feelings and intentions. Teachers, parents, politicians, psychologists and salespeople rely on interpersonal intelligence. Students exhibit this intelligence when they thrive on small-group work, when they notice and react to the moods of their friends and classmates, and when they tactfully convince the teacher of their need for extra time to complete the homework assignment.

Intrapersonal intelligence helps individuals to distinguish among their own feelings, to build accurate mental models of themselves, and to draw on these models to make decisions about their lives. Although it is difficult to assess who has this capacity and to what degree, evidence can be sought in students' uses of their other intelligences - how well they seem to be capitalizing on their strengths, how cognizant they are of their weaknesses, and how thoughtful they are about the decisions and choices they make.

Naturalist intelligence allows people to distinguish among, classify, and use features of the environment. Farmers, gardeners, botanists, geologists, florists, and archaeologists all exhibit this intelligence, as do students who can name and describe the features of every make of car around them.

Our visitors will manifest all those intelligences in all sorts of combinations. Our interpretation needs to appeal to as many of those intelligences as possible, to engage all visitors with the site and with each other. The ways in which we might do this are discussed in Section 5.

2.3. Constructivist learning theory, developed by George Hein and discussed in *Learning in the Museum* (1998)

From a range of learning theories discussed in this book I have selected those that I see already being used on site, and those that I believe should be adopted to enhance our interpretation in the future.

The traditional learning theory is summarised as the 'transmission-absorption' model; people learn by absorbing knowledge that is transmitted to them. They do it in small pieces, step by step, by adding individual items to their storehouse of knowledge. The visitor is essentially *passive*. The emphasis is on the presenter and the knowledge he wishes to impart. It might be characterised as *teaching*. This is not to say that students/visitors don't learn anything, but that the process focuses on the teacher and the subject matter.

That is the model currently employed on site in tours and in signage. They tell a story that purports to be 'true' – it is the way things 'really' were. They do not suggest that this is only one interpretation of the history of this place and that there are or may be others, they are unlikely to refer the visitor to an alternative explanation for the 'facts' that they have presented and the conclusion they have drawn from them. They treat the visitor as though they know nothing and have nothing to contribute apart from their ears.

More recent education theory emphasizes the *active* participation of the mind in *learning*. Our holiday activities employ an approach that appears to use this approach. Young visitors use material to learn about aspects of life at Port Arthur, such as the signalling flags used in the semaphore system. But while it is active, in that the visitor is learning through doing and discovery, it is still about transmitting a body of knowledge that we think it is important for the visitor to understand, i.e. how the semaphore worked and the important role it played in PA history. This kind of learning is still about pre-determined

outcomes, i.e. we decide what you need to know. It is therefore still essentially teacher- and subject-based. This may be useful when the subject is technical or material-based – the semaphore did work in a particular way and that is what must be understood.

In the first Summer Archaeology Program (2001), we employed a combined approach. Our archaeologists explored and expressed a body of knowledge through an interactive question and answer format, searching for visitors' prior knowledge and particular interests before and while presenting information about what we were doing. The way in which this tapped into the energy and enthusiasm of visitors and made for a lively and enjoyable time for all was noted by those guides and other Visitor Centre staff who attended. There is no doubt that, even though the presentation contained a high degree of *teaching*, the visitors were active *learners* also. Part of the success of this presentation was the small groups that attended; as the groups grew larger, the didactic component increased and the interactive component decreased. It became much more difficult to elicit and work with visitors' prior knowledge.

This approach works well where the aim is to impart a body of knowledge. But it works less well with ideas and issues, in presentations where we want visitors to explore multiple interpretations and paths to their own understanding. The approach that seems to encourage this kind of outcome is called *constructivism*.

Constructivism recognises that we all inevitably interpret the world in different ways, according to our own prior knowledge and beliefs. We are all actively and constantly engaged in making our own meanings for ourselves. Even while we are at our most didactic, delivering a carefully researched and constructed lecture on Port Arthur history, it is probable that no two people are drawing exactly the same meanings from it. For example, some will see the Separate Prison regime as the most monstrous punishment they can imagine, others will think that it is a vast improvement on flogging and represents a humane step forward.

Unless we know what those personal views are, we will find it impossible to challenge them and to enhance visitors' understanding. We need to work with them, not pretend they don't exist, or assume that we just have to tell the visitors the 'truth' and they will change their views. In fact, research demonstrates that visitors will persist in maintaining the views they already have despite instruction to the contrary.

2.4. A suggested theoretical basis for interpretation at Port Arthur

This Plan proposes that we use an approach based on a combination of the above theories. This approach will follow the constructivist approach in ways that also fit well with Gardner and Ham.

It will utilise Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. It will use a number of sensory modes – reading, looking, listening, thinking, Q&A, doing. It may involve music, art, sounds, mathematical exercises, computer simulations or drama. Some may be simply watched or listened to, some may be participatory.

It will also follow Ham's approach. It must be *meaningful*; it will present a range of points of view, one of which at least may square with the visitor's view and encourage them to personally engage with what is being offered; it will build on the visitor's previous experience and help her/him make connections between their prior knowledge and this new knowledge; it will talk about the unfamiliar through the familiar – colonial views on child-rearing or cooking can be compared and contrasted with modern practice with which visitors are familiar.

It will be *entertaining*; visitors should feel welcomed; they should feel relaxed because they know where they are, and where they are going – this requires effective orientation; they should not be overwhelmed with new detail so that they feel stupid and ignorant; they should feel actively engaged; they should feel confident to participate in and contribute to the presentation. And part of that feeling of pleasure, of competence and confidence, is the realisation that the material being presented is *organised*, and organisation requires a *thematic approach*.

We do have a didactic purpose. We want our visitors to go home from their time at Port Arthur having grasped at least some of our themes and the information that supports them. They will not remember every fact that they have heard no matter how well we present our interpretation but with the help of themes they will remember some. And most importantly, they will be able to place them in a meaningful context. When they recall what they heard about the punishment regime, for example, they may remember that Port Arthur was the site of a gigantic social experiment. It doesn't matter if they disagree about whether it was a brutal or a humane experiment, what matters is that they now have *ideas* about Port Arthur that enable them to organise the *basic information* they recall into a meaningful body of knowledge about which they can think actively. Only then will the facts become meaningful and easy to learn and remember. All the available research in applied psychology and learning theory confirm that facts are useful and therefore memorable only if they are couched within ideas.

Finally, it must now be obvious that this is not an approach that can work to its fullest advantage in a large group, since it depends on personal engagement between presenter and visitor. If it is the approach to be adopted on site it will represent a change in the way in which interpretation is presented. This will require staffing arrangements that seek to reduce the number of visitors on each tour, and the re-organisation and re-focusing of other interpretive presentations. It will also involve a move away from heavy reliance on text, either spoken-word or printed matter, and a greater confidence in the capacity of visual art and drama to impart interpretation and not simply to entertain (or baffle!).

2.5. Other contributing ideas

2.5.1. Changing attitudes to convictism and the site

Many of our guides and visitors are aware that attitudes towards and understanding of Port Arthur have changed dramatically over the years. While once the government was

advised to pull the place down since it was a constant source of shame to current generations, today's government has provided very generous financial support and other encouragement to enable the site to position itself as the state's premier tourist attraction.

Where once leading families are said to have removed the evidence of convict ancestors from the records held in the State Archives, now most family historians are anxious to claim at least one convict ancestor. The changing fortunes of Port Arthur and convictism are charted in Dr David Young's important book *Making Crime Pay*. The question of whether or not places like Port Arthur should be preserved often arises with visitors, and should become a formal part of our presentations on site.

2.5.2. Staff 'ownership' of the Interpretation Plan

Extensive staff consultation is being and will continue to be carried out during the preparation of this Plan and its implementation. It is generally recognised by managers that staff must be involved in planning initiatives if they are to support them. It is important that staff have ample and appropriate opportunities to be involved in the preparation of this new Plan. Apart from securing their support for its implementation, it is crucial to make use of their broad and deep understandings of the site and its visitors.

Accordingly, eight workshops were held that gave the staff a forum for discussion of important issues and collected their knowledge for input into the process and the Plan. These workshops will continue to be held, the Interpretations Manager will continue to attend guides' staff meetings, and will continue to actively seek informal opportunities to consult with them about the implementation of the new Plan.

Despite this, this Plan and the incorporation of recent research and approaches may represent a considerable challenge to some existing staff. This needs to be managed in a way that respects their opinions, seeks wherever possible to accommodate their preferences and talents but still continues to work towards the realisation of the vision of the new Plan.

2.5.3. The 'New' Social History and research at Port Arthur

All future interpretive presentations will be underpinned by a series of commissioned research projects, delivered by scholars respected in their fields both for their meticulous research and for their ability to 'think outside the square' in interpreting that research. Research on the Hospital, Asylum, Separate Prison and Pauper's precinct has already been commissioned.

The vision of life in the convict period at Port Arthur that is expressed in the previous plan (Nethery 1996) is essentially a consensual one. This consensual view is based on the extensive library of photocopied official records painstakingly compiled by Ian Brand; many secondary sources are also based on these papers. While this is an invaluable

source for the administrative history of the site, it should not be the only, or even the main source, for interpretation. It is strongly class-inflected although this is not acknowledged; it is very much 'a view from the Commandant's verandah'. As a result, it focuses on the world as the hierarchy said it was and shows no awareness that life as it actually was may have departed from the ideal or the public in significant ways. In this official world, each person knew his, or more rarely her, place and was, if not happy in it, at least obedient and conformed to expectations about their role.

Through the segmentation of the precinct structure, the previous plan also tended to treat the members of each societal segment as though they existed independently of any other – we could talk about the life of the soldier and the life of the convict as though they were two separate things. Yet it is the intersections and connections between people of different functions and classes that reveal the meaning of those lives.

But as the research of many historians like Miranda Morris, Rodney Croome, Claire Anderson, Ian Duffield and Hamish Maxwell-Stuart has demonstrated, life at Port Arthur was a constant process of interpersonal negotiation and adaptation to what was, rather than what ought to have been. For example, the convict black market renegotiated work relations and living conditions between jailers and jailed, in a manner surprising to those who have viewed all convicts as powerless victims and all officers as powerful oppressors. Convict servants refused to work for masters they regarded as cruel or unreasonable. Catholic convicts rebelled against their forced attendance at Anglican services, and as a result of that rebellion a Catholic chaplain was appointed and Catholics attended separate services thereafter. Long-suffering wives of civil officers demanded decent accommodation and, finally, some got it.

There are also alternative interpretations that may be presented for visitors to talk about. The regime played out here may be seen as the product of a social experiment stemming from deep compassion for the suffering of the criminal and the peril in which his immortal soul languished, or a brutal system designed to shatter men physically and mentally and render them tractable – or both.

That individual personalities played an important role in shaping life on site also needs to be explored in the new Plan. For example, the acrimonious correspondence between the Reverend Durham and Commandant Booth, Durham's reputation as a madman, his eventual departure under a cloud and subsequent mental collapse, point to a life that most of us who have lived in small communities can recognise – a life of tension between competing interests and groups, of conflict and suffering, of reputations blackened and balance overturned.

This kind of history offers a more nuanced alternative to dichotomous stereotypes, for example, Port Arthur as a place of 'Hell on Earth' or 'Severe but Just Punishment'. It offers opportunities to enrich and make more dynamic all our programs. It will discuss the nature of the evidence and canvas alternative theories and ideas. It will invite visitors to make up their own minds, and will not expect them to agree either with each other or

with us. It will be as much about the process of making history as it will be about Port Arthur itself.

2.5.4. Audience research

This Plan is informed by audience research in a number of ways.

- Visitor comments recorded at the Visitor Centre are now being placed on a database and this makes them easier to access and to interpret. The breakdown of the comments for several periods since 1998 can be found in Appendix 1. While not a complete series or gained through any systematic research methodology, they raise matters that are of interest and can usefully be read against results from other sources. They may point to major inconsistencies that can then be explored, or can act cautiously to support results with which they are consistent, thereby extending our sample size and reach over time.
- Guides provide us with a constant stream of comments from visitors and observations of visitor responses. While these are obviously anecdotal and unverifiable, they also act as reference point that may alert us to matters about which we need to know.
- In October 2000 we began a new program of focused audience research using a methodology developed by a Canberra-based firm, User Insite Pty Ltd. This is designed to build on the demographic and marketing-focused research previously carried out. It is however qualitative rather than quantitative, and is aimed at elucidating visitors' responses to existing interpretive programs and their preferences for alternative and additional programs. It uses an anthropological framework that relies on observation and open-ended conversations rather than Q and A sessions and survey forms. The recommendations from that research are summarised below and can be found in full in Appendix 2.

Interpretive priorities were identified as follows. We need to;

1. Provide better orientation to the site and its choices
 2. Provide a further 'customised' menu of events through an electronic information board, brochures and advertisements.
 3. Co-ordinate the stages of information so that 'layers' are added as visitors progress into the site.
 4. Add specialised tours to suit different interests and capabilities.
 5. Provide more for children and families throughout the site.
 6. Consider visitor expressions of regret for the events of 1996.
- We will continue with regular evaluation throughout the life of this Plan. This should include *front-end* evaluation, to test concepts, *formative* evaluation, to trial new products, and *summative* evaluation, to test the success of each new product.

2.5.5. A broader and more flexible approach

Most interpretation at historic sites see them as ‘past’. They concentrate on imparting historical ‘facts’. But it is clear that many visitors are just as interested, and in some cases more interested, in the conservation process and the reasoning behind it. They often ask questions like ‘Why don’t you put the roof back on the church?’ and ‘What are those archaeologists doing?’ They are also interested in relating historical to contemporary issues, commenting ‘The criminals of today really have it easy don’t they?’ when viewing the Separate Prison, or ‘Where did the women go to have their babies?’, often from mothers with young children.

This kind of response to Port Arthur confirms the Tilden principle that people are searching for relevance, for connections to their own lives and concerns. We love fixing things, bringing order out of chaos, discovering hidden knowledge. We worry about law and order, and the state of our prisons; we seek some sense of personal connection with the people of the past.

Our approach needs to more visitor-focused. Visitor comments and the recommendations from our audience research contained in Appendices 1 & 2 reinforce the idea that we need to seek to cater for a range of audiences and types of interest, rather than presenting the site as a mono-linear history textbook with a strong reliance on ‘facts’ and dates. The approach needs to be more flexible, less didactic, more open-ended and discursive. It needs to speak with, not at, the visitor, about things in which the visitor is interested.

The Plan needs to focus not only on buildings that are still present, but also on spaces, roads and pathways, gardens and vanished buildings. An understanding of those elements is also essential to an understanding of the former uses of the site.

2.6. Summary of interpretive principles

Our interpretation will be:

- *Entertaining* – it will hold the visitor’s attention in a pleasurable and stimulating manner.
- *Relevant* – it will seek to make connections with the visitor’s knowledge, interests, concerns and experience.
- *Organised* – it will be structured in a way that makes it easy for the visitor to follow it.
- *Thematic* – it will be structured around a central message or messages; this will be clearly stated, preferably at the outset of the presentation.
- *Diverse* – it will attempt to stimulate learning and enjoyment through a wide range of learning styles, including art, sound, text, performance and interactive experience.
- *Open-ended* – present complex issues as points for discussion and matters for debate.
- *Best practice* – it will be based on the best contemporary research in interpretation and historical scholarship.
- *Consultative* – it will involve staff, colleagues and other stakeholders in planning and delivering interpretation in all media.

- *Visitor focused* – ongoing audience research and evaluation will contribute to planning and delivery of interpretation.

2.7. The implementation strategy

This Plan is intended to guide interpretation, refined by evaluation and periodic review, for the next 5 years. It will be reviewed in 2006. It suggests a number of interpretive strategies that address a range of audiences in different ways. All are considered to be appropriate to the site in terms of satisfying our aim to espouse best practice and to provide visitors with the best possible experience here.

However, the individual strategies that are selected for development must be shaped around available resources, and around existing and new presentations. For example, it is futile to plan for a program that will take more staff than we currently have or to continue to offer a program that is made redundant by the introduction of a new program.

Accordingly, the Interpretation Plan will provide the philosophical basis for interpretive planning, the interpretive policy and a range of strategies from which interpretation may be developed. Each year, Conservation and Visitor Services in consultation will develop an Operational Plan for the coming year's interpretation, based on evaluation, experience, current staffing resources and existing strategies. Evaluation of each year's operation should also form the basis for periodic reviews of the Plan, and perhaps for representations at budget time for additional resources to enable new interpretation to be developed and offered.

3. *THEMES AND TOPICS*

3.1 Statement of Significance

All activities on site should be informed by the Statement of Significance as presented in the Conservation Management Plan prepared by Godden Mackay Context and endorsed by the PAHSMA Board in 2000.

It will be helpful to repeat that statement here.

1. Port Arthur Historic Site is an outstanding convict place – an important foundation for Australia’s sense of identity.
2. Port Arthur is significant in a World context because it exemplifies a world-wide process of colonial settlement using labour provided by forced migration. The place symbolises an expansionist period of European history and British strategic objectives. It displays key aspects of penal philosophy and the social structure that produced it. In conjunction with other Australian Convict places, Port Arthur demonstrates aspects of the British penal system, in particular, concepts of religious instruction, secondary punishment and segregation as adopted in Australia. It is a focal point for understanding the convict history and convict-period operation of the Tasman Peninsula. The place also represents changing community attitudes to the notion of convict heritage.
3. At Port Arthur, a sense of scenic beauty is heightened by the paradox of a grim past. Topography and layers of history reflected in indigenous and introduced plantings and an array of structures combine in an evocative and picturesque cultural landscape. The Arcadian qualities of this landscape contrast with its historical role as an industrial penal site. The form and location of built elements display deliberate design and arrangement, reflecting the initial order and hierarchy of Port Arthur’s civil, military and penal settlement and subsequent post-convict history. The place retains a high degree of integrity and authenticity.
4. Port Arthur is an important element in Australian identity, invoking intense and, at times, conflicting feelings. The place has traditionally been an important centre of economic activity and work in the Tasman Peninsula and Tasmania – initially as a convict workplace, later a town and premier tourist destination.
5. For the Tasman Peninsula community, Port Arthur has strong and enduring associations and meanings as a landmark and as the symbolic centre of the community.
6. Port Arthur’s physical evidence, both above and below ground, has exceptional scientific research potential arising from the extensive resource itself, the integrity of archaeological deposits and the ability of material culture to provide valuable insight into the convict experience. In combination, the oral tradition, documentary evidence, collections, structures, archaeological features and landscape at Port Arthur have great potential for research and community education. Port Arthur is a landmark place in the history and development of Australian heritage conservation philosophy and practice.
7. Port Arthur and the Tasman Peninsula have contemporary significance for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, arising from the perceived intactness of the natural landscape and

the presence of pre-contact Aboriginal sites that connects the present-day Aboriginal community to the pre-contact past.

8. The events of 28 April 1996 make Port Arthur a symbol of continuing tragedy, suffering and gun law reform for all Australians.
9. Port Arthur is a nationally-significant symbol of Australia's convict past, a highly revered icon that symbolically represents Tasmania's place in Australian history.

(Godden MackayContext *Port Arthur Conservation Management Plan*, 2000, Final report Volume 1, p49)

In order to use this Statement to its fullest capacity in line with the precepts outlined in Section 2, this Plan suggests that themes should be developed which, while remaining consistent with the above, draw out ideas which are both more historically explicit and more relevant to contemporary experience. It is these themes that will form the core of all interpretive presentations.

3.2 Themes

Every presentation, from tours to publications, the new museum to the summer plays, is built around a theme. Some have already been developed and refined and are listed here. Each theme is followed by one or more numbers with the prefix SOS; this identifies the Statement of Significance criteria to which each theme relates. Those themes that lack a number do not find an equivalent in the Statement of Significance.

3.2.1. Orientation theme

One theme has emerged as a useful organisational spine for the **orientation tour and other interpretive activities**. It is reinforced within other activities which refer to its elements, especially the way in which the system at Point Puer was shaped around that concept of reform. This theme was introduced during the latter part of 2003. It will undergo further development and 'bedding down' among the guiding staff. More training and support will be provided during 2004.

This theme is;

Following Jeremy Bentham's prescription, Port Arthur was 'a machine for grinding rogues honest' – all Port Arthur's buildings (both extant and vanished), people, places and activities are part of that machine.

Sub-themes: there were a number of cogs in that machine.

- Education & trade training
- Religion and moral instruction
- Hard work
- Surveillance, discipline & punishment

(SOS 2, 3)

3.2.2. Specialist themes

Each specialist tour has its own theme. These refer to and extend the orientation theme above in particular directions. Few of these themes link closely to the SOS although they might be seen loosely to be a continuation/expansion of them. The first four have already begun development and implementation.

3.2.2.1. Isle of the Dead cemetery

Rigid principles of social and moral separation governed not only the lives but also the deaths of the people of Port Arthur.
(SOS 2, 3)

3.2.2.2. Harbour/dockyards & shipbuilding

Port Arthur was essentially a maritime settlement. The sea was Port Arthur's Arthur Highway; most communications and supplies came and went through Mason Cove. The harbour and surrounding waters here were once a hive of activity, with ships coming and going between different parts of the settlement and between the settlement and Hobart.
(SOS 2)

3.2.2.3. Gardens and gardeners

In the gardens of Port Arthur the machinery of the Port Arthur system continued to grind; here the principles of work and reform are expressed through plants and beds, field and orchards. But in the gardens there is also escape.
(SOS 2, 3)

3.2.2.4. Point Puer

Point Puer is the first juvenile prison constructed in the British Empire. It was a unique experiment, in which separation, punishment and reform were first combined to try to change young male criminals into boys with a future as useful citizens.

The underlined form the basis for the sub-themes;

By separating boys from the men, reformers hoped that this would stop them learning criminal habits.

Severe and timely punishment was the stick in the system, and boys were both physically punished and intimidated by authority to make them behave well.

Reform was the carrot, and boys were taught to read and write and also trade skills, to equip them for a better life.

3.2.2.5. Crime and punishment

Port Arthur exists because of debates around issues that are still fresh today, among them the desirability of capital punishment and mandatory sentencing, and the relative values of property and human life as expressed in the criminal code.
(SOS 2)

3.2.2.6. *Health and welfare*

In the areas of punishment and reform Port Arthur lagged behind Britain, but it was in the forefront of 'modern' practice in its welfare phase. Here the most 'modern' social and psychological regime of its day was instituted to manage the casualties of the system.
(SOS 2)

3.2.2.6. *For children*

Convicts could run but they could rarely hide; very few successfully escaped this way. The semaphore and its rapid communication system meant that the odds were stacked against the convict who ran. [This is an interactive session on the model semaphores, combined with stories of daring escapes.]
(SOS 2)

If you were 9 years old 150 years ago, and were caught for shoplifting, here is what would have happened to you. [a visit to Point Puer Boys' Prison with a tour to the punishment areas 'behind the scenes'.
(SOS 2)

3.2.2.7. *Keeping Port Arthur; conservation & archaeology*

Port Arthur has been an important laboratory for conservation and archaeological techniques since the early 1970s.
(SOS 6)

3.3. Topics

These themes should be explored under the following topic headings, each of which either singly or in combination with one or more others represents a possible interpretive activity. An emphasis will be laid on telling stories about people and events that will be accessible and entertaining, in all its definitions (**see Section 2.1.2**), for our visitors. This is a preliminary list and additional topic areas will undoubtedly be added as new information and thinking comes to hand. This list should provide interpreters with wide scope.

- Health and medicine
- Crime and punishment
- Work – skills, products, organisation
- Religion and reform
- The boys of Point Puer
- Daily life – food, routine, rules and regulations, social life, recreation; women, children and men, free and unfree.
- Communications, water and other infrastructure
- Natural and man-made environments – topography, bush, gardens, allotments and farms, past and present
- After the convicts - township and tourism
- Insanity – causes, definition & treatment

- Welfare – the paupers and invalids
- The military
- Architecture and town planning
- Conservation
- Archaeology
- Ideas about convicts and Port Arthur 1780s-present
- Political prisoners
- The post-convict period
- Indigenous culture at Port Arthur
- Port Arthur by night (an alternative to the Ghost Tour)

Many of the topics overlap or form obvious connections with one another; none should be seen in isolation. All should use at least one of the themes outlined above as the core of their presentation. All should wherever possible be enriched and delivered through stories about people rather than lectures filled with dates and faceless names. The stories however should demonstrate the themes; stories without context may be momentarily diverting but will fail to stimulate thought and further investigation if they are not embedded in some larger idea. In addition, without that organising theme all of the stories told on site will begin to merge into a forgettable mass.

4. AUDIENCES

4.1. Demographic profile

Survey results over recent years indicate that three major market segments accounted for nearly 73% of interstate visitors to historic houses.

4.1.1. Visible achievers

32.1% of visitors, between 30-50 years of age, 'visible success stories'. They are self-confident and satisfied, they enjoy recognition of their status, prolific consumers and smart shoppers. Their travel and recreation are outward signs of their success.

4.1.2. Socially aware

23.4% of visitors, tertiary educated executives, socially responsible and politically active, early adopters of new ideas and enjoy persuading others to their view. Tend to be high-income earners, senior executives and bureaucrats, with a strong interest in the arts and the environment.

4.1.3. Traditional family life

17.2% of visitors, over 50 but with active interests. Most own their homes, children have left, satisfied with their standard of living. Concerned about their health and holiday occasionally.

Implications for interpretation: Interstate residents form the majority of our visitors. They are often well-educated and well-traveled. They have experienced interpretation on other sites both nationally and internationally. Their leisure time is hard-won and valuable. We might infer that they expect interpretation that is excellent, respects their own knowledge and life-experience and is thought-provoking.

4.2. Pattern of visitation

The following figures are drawn from demographic surveys done over the past 5 years. 60% of visitors come to Port Arthur between December-April. Over half of the visitors to the site tend to be longer-stay visitors (i.e. staying more than a week in the state). Around 50% of Port Arthur's visitors take the guided tour.

Implications for interpretation: We need to concentrate our most intensive delivery of our widest range of programs during our busy period, but also provide sufficient variety for our quiet times. We need a self-guided tour for those who don't take the tours with guides. We need to market Port Arthur more energetically as a place to stay for more than half a day or a day, and this will be assisted through offering visitors more to see and do.

4.3. Evaluation

In order to support the recommendations of this plan, two major sources of visitor experience/opinion are currently available.

4.3.1. Visitor comment sheets/book – informal evaluation

While most visitors do not fill in the comments' sheet, many do. Appendix 1 contains a list of visitor comments, organised into two sections, problems with existing interpretation or suggestions for new initiatives. While these comments are necessarily broad, general and dispersed and the sample size is small, a number of generalisations in terms of what might be interpreted as the intent of the comments may be made.

DISPLAYS

Comments tended to revolve around enlivening the displays, giving a stronger sense of the atmosphere and human 'presence' of the past, enabling visitors to make stronger and more immediate contact with that past.

SIGNAGE

Comments focused on both the need for better directional signage and the need for more and better signage, or alternative ways of indicating the functions of buildings both visible and non-visible. In particular visitors expressed a need to understand the Memorial and the events of 26 April without having to ask a guide. Several comments requested signage in languages other than English, although some of those comments were from English speakers who were anxious that overseas visitors were not being catered for.

TOURS

This was one of the two topics (see also CONSERVATION) that attracted the largest number of comments and the greatest consensus. While most people had enjoyed their tour, they offered a fairly narrow range of suggestions for improvement. The majority wanted more information in one form or another, either on tour or by alternative media (see also publications). An audio-tour and some means by which they might take a self-guided tour were identified by the majority in this group. Several expressed the desire to have a tour that offered a more detailed and direct encounter with the buildings. While most enjoyed the Ghost Tour, a few wanted a more respectful/sensitive night experience as an alternative.

ACTIVITIES

This was another area where more visitors offered more comments. All revolved around making the site come alive with human activities that were historically appropriate – plays, reenactments, craft demonstrations, a bush walk. Many were about providing more activities to engage children

CONTENT

Few people commented directly on this area, although unhappiness with either too much or not enough information (see TOURS above) indicates that visitors see problems with content not matching visitor need and expectation. Almost all comments on content were requests for more information on specific topics.

PUBLICATIONS

A number of publication ideas were proposed, all of which were aimed at making information available in other media on site, principally signage and the Interpretation

Gallery at the Visitor Centre, available in some form that could be taken home. Several visitors recommended making signage and the Visitor Booklet available in other languages, although as in SIGNAGE (above) some of those comments were from English speakers who were anxious that overseas visitors were not being catered for.

CONSERVATION

With TOURS (see above) this area attracted the greatest number of comments. Almost every comment disparaged the ‘dilapidated’ and ‘neglected’ appearance of the buildings on site, and asked why they were not at least re-roofed, or at most ‘restored to their former glory’. Several visitors wanted better access around and between buildings.

4.3.2. User Insite survey

The recommendations from this evaluation are to be found in Appendix 2. In the following section, the findings from a series of in-depth interviews with visitors are summarised (op.cit. pp. 74-85). It is clear that for all visitors, convict history was the focus of their visit.

Strong interest in convict history

This research indicates that most people have a strong response to the site, much of which is based on satisfaction at having understood something of its historical significance, which for them was located in its convict past. Many visitors had read about the site and convict history in general to prepare them for their visit.

Frustration with too little time

Commonly, visitors regretted that they had not more time, most having planned for a visit of a day or less. They felt that marketing needed to stress that there was much to see and do here, so that people could plan a longer visit.

Not much to interest younger visitors

The Ghost Tour was the only activity offered that teens nominated as catering to their interests. Parents wanted activities for children like dress-ups and role plays.

Differences in interest

Visitors’ responses revealed how varied our audience is in terms of its pre-existing interests. Highlights included the life of convicts, the Harbour Cruise for convict shipbuilding, the Visitor Centre, the Separate Prison, Ghost Tours, Commandant’s House, the guided tour, the plays and the Museum.

Accessibility

For children and older adults this was a big issue; shorter walks were requested for orientation.

Quality of information

Generally visitors were happy with what they had heard and read, but some suggested ways in which it could be improved, generally through the offering of more specialised information. Most were very complimentary about the guides' presentation skills and knowledge. Some interviewees felt there was too much to read, that it often wasn't relevant to them and that little was suitable for children. Some wanted a booklet to guide their walk and more books to take home to read.

Suggestions for improvement

Several interviewees wanted to see things happening on site, and 'convict re-enactments', drama, dress-ups and more things to do were suggested. Many requested that buildings be re-built.

Special insights

Several visitors mentioned the site's significance to an understanding of Australian national identity. One man who had been in prison was critical of the lack of information that frankly described the darkest sides of that experience, including sexual assaults and homosexual relationships.

5. COMMUNICATION WITH OUR AUDIENCE; OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

A series of general objectives will guide the development of strategies. Many of these have come out of the material in Appendices 1 & 2, User Insite research and Visitor Comments. Others have emerged from my experience elsewhere, and discussions with colleagues, especially those who serve on the Heritage Advisory Panel. These strategies must be seen as flexible and responsive to visitor needs as identified through a program of on-going evaluation. The interpretive presentations on offer at Port Arthur must maximise available resources, staff talents and visitor satisfaction. All staff will be involved in evaluating product and planning change.

The major guiding communication objectives are:

Consistency

Presentations will be developed according to the themes identified in this document and identified as appropriate to that presentation. Guides will work with Conservation staff and researchers where appropriate, to produce the outline of a tour – route and stops - with which they are comfortable. Each tour will have an historic source document, structured around the nominated stops, from which guides will draw their content. This will be developed by the Manager of Interpretation & Collections, using reliable sources including commissioned research from outstanding scholars in the relevant field/fields.

Every guide's presentation be structured around the agreed thematic framework and source document. It will also, inevitably, develop according to their own style and interests in the stories that they choose to tell in support of the thematic message. But, most importantly, although visitors who attend more than one presentation, or who compare notes with their fellows over coffee, may experience some variations in content, they will not encounter factual inconsistencies.

In addition, in order for evaluation of audience response to succeed, we need to know exactly what visitors are hearing. If content varies wildly, as at present, from guide to guide this will be impossible.

- Quality and integrity

Only reputable historical sources will be used in preparing presentations; no unsubstantiated anecdotes, folk tales, inspired guesses, probabilities or oft-repeated but unverifiable gems will be used. Research will be sourced that is up-to-date and produced by scholars acknowledged to have some claims to an informed understanding of the subject. This does not mean that we cannot occasionally be speculative but our speculations must be founded on good historical knowledge and understanding. In addition, we must acknowledge when we are being speculative.

If any guide wishes to depart from the source document they must produce well-documented and referenced material in support of their proposed change or addition.

- Accessibility and suitability

Although the raw material of our presentations will be scholarly, care must be taken to pitch our presentations to our audience in terms suitable for that audience. We will present information differently to an audience of Grade 7s or a U3A group. Concepts, language and style will be tailored to each group.

In the following section, a number of different types of presentation are outlined that will address the general and the specialist levels on which communication needs to meet our many audiences' needs. These overlap and complement each other to a considerable degree and where necessary those areas of overlap and complementarity are indicated by cross-references other sections.

5.1. Presentations aimed at general orientation

The User Insite research stresses a need to orient visitors more effectively, both conceptually and physically, to the site.

Visitors find the site overwhelming both in terms of scale and complexity through time. They need some kind of experience that will orient them in time and space, introduce them to the main themes that our interpretation works to convey, and help them to plan their visit. This may be done in 5 main ways – a Tour, Visitor Centre Interpretation, Visit Planning, the Site Model and a Guide Book.

See also **Section 5.4.4. Computer simulation.**

5.1.1. The Orientation Tour

This tour should provide visitors with a good visual introduction to the site – what the main buildings are that they can see and the meaning of the natural and cultural landscape in which they sit. It should be embedded in a thematically-based presentation that will also orient them intellectually to the site, through the theme outlined in Section 3.

The two most effective *media* for this kind of presentation are either face-to-face with a guide, or on an Audiotour.

Guided tours

Guided tours are and will continue to be one of our key interpretation media. Both research and visitor comments indicate that this form of learning is extremely popular with many people. On average throughout the year tours are undertaken by somewhat more than half of our visitors. The percentage rises to about 65-70% in winter, and drops to about 50-55% in summer. Those who have taken them are generally very happy with them. It is anticipated that with further thematic training the level of visitor satisfaction will rise even further.

The major problem with these tours at present is in fact their excessive popularity! Guides often find themselves taking out as many as 70 people; this does not allow them

to develop a rapport with the group, essential for the new style of interpretation for which we are aiming. It is also a big strain on guides as they strive to communicate with so many, both in terms of projecting their voices and trying to keep their attention without being able to use Ham's EROT principles (see Section 2.1). It is almost inevitable that those up the back will begin to drift away, either physically or mentally.

This Plan recognises and builds upon the reality that for many visitors the orientation tour will still be the core component of their experience here. Further to this, however, this Plan will also enumerate additional strategies for orientation and other interpretive presentations; these will be designed to take some of this load off guides, reduce group size and enhance visitor experience by offering a range of alternatives to the single orientation tour offered now.

Throughout the life of this Plan we will aim to achieve the following:

An increase of 20% of those taking the guided tour

A limit of 30 people in each tour group

Audiotour (see 5.3.1.)

5.1.2. Visitor Centre Interpretation

The current Interpretation Gallery is limited in breadth and depth. It focuses on the working lives of some male convicts in the early phase of the site's life. It does not deal with penal philosophy, the free population, convict women, buildings, the gardens, the landscape or indeed, remarkably, *anything* in the period post-1836. It deals with structures that are generally now gone, and ignores the structures still extant that visitors will actually see on site. It focuses on a narrow range of often rather academic detail – for example, why is it so important for visitors to know that weavers were short? – at the expense of general themes, and so fails to provide a broad understanding of the site's history or physical manifestation through time and space.

It is essential to recognise that the Interpretation Gallery as it now stands fails to provide orientation. Realistically however, it is unlikely that major changes will be made to this installation during the first few years in which this Plan will be operational. It will be essential for the Gallery to be evaluated and reviewed when new interpretive strategies are in place, to guide any revisions that may need to be made in the future. As new strategies that redress this lack of orientation come on line it may even be that these shortcomings will cease to be seen as serious. One strategy for an immediate enhancement of the Visitor Centre's orientation ability is suggested in the next three sections concerning the relocation of the Site Model, the development of a short introductory film and installation of customised Visit Planning as suggested by User Insite.

5.1.3. The Site Model

If we feel that the Centre ought to provide an orientation for visitors, one strategy could address this without making enormous inroads into time and budget, or entailing major reworking of content – we might relocate the site model currently in the Museum into the upstairs gallery. This has important implications for the content of the current guided tour; in wet weather particularly guides make intensive use of the model at the close of their tour.

It might be argued, however, that if the model is located at the beginning of the visitor experience on site, and that if other orientation experiences are also in place, the guides might not need to spend time on physical orientation and might instead focus on thematic interpretation. By the time visitors join their guide downstairs, most will have oriented themselves physically to the site by spending some time at the model; ticketing or information staff should encourage them to take some time to do this. Many will also pass the model on their way back to the car park, and so may refresh their understanding at this point too.

The model should only be moved after careful consideration of alternative locations, consistent with the CP. Issues of access, public safety, disability and fire regulations etc must also be satisfactorily resolved.

If this upstairs space becomes a general orientation space, the judge and prisoner will be removed and relocated downstairs to the courtroom area, replacing the 2D and crudely rendered figures currently there. Some thought will also need to be given to revamping the large boards that carry objects similar to those for which people were transported. These are highly misleading, showing cheap modern objects that are equivalent in type but not in value to items stolen in the 19th century.

5.1.4. An introductory film

A short film, shown continuously in the Visitor Centre theatrette, would introduce visitors to our main theme, and address some of the deficiencies outlined above in 5.1.2. This medium offers much to the visitor who wishes to sit down quietly and absorb general information before going out on site. There are at least two options.

A standard AV presentation

This would be projected on a screen, using a lively combination of still images, recreations, costumed characters and sound; maximum length should be around 10 minutes.

A 'Pepper's Ghost'.

The principle is based on a video replay device (monitor or projector and screen, depending on size) being viewed through a half mirrored glass surface and can be used to good effect through fairly large apertures (doorways, windows, etc.). A small human

figure moves, speaks, interacts with real objects, appears and disappears in different clothes and periods. It can include video or film footage and still images. These are particularly appealing to younger visitors. Initial cost may seem high, depending on size of screen and length of production, but with the latest technology they are virtually maintenance free.

No matter which option is selected, it should introduce visitors to the buildings that they will see and their functions, the history of the site with emphasis on the post-1836 period, and to the main personalities and classes of people who once lived here. These should include the free population as well as the convicts, women and children as well as men. It may also provide an opportunity to talk about indigenous history and culture at PA.

If an AV orientation is installed, it will mean that the guides' presentation may need to change to reflect the fact that visitors have already undergone basic orientation.

5.1.5. Visit planning facilities

Currently the ticketing staff spends a lot of time explaining and re-explaining to visitors the various options for activities on site. User Insite also identified this as a problem for staff and for visitors forced to join long queues for ticketing. When we are able to introduce even more options this will become an even more onerous and ultimately frustrating task for staff, and queues will probably lengthen. It would be preferable to separate ticketing and information services, enabling visitors who need assistance to plan their visit in a more relaxed manner with staff trained for the task. There are two options, which may address the needs of different audiences.

Computerised planning

User Insite's Recommendation 2 outlines a way in which visitors could plan their orientation or other experiences to suit their needs.

A simple web interface on a touch screen would ask a few questions about their proposed length of time at the site, interests and other limitations or expectations. A listing of specialised tours and special events could then be suggested for the day, or over a period of two or three days. Visitors would then print out their day's itinerary and/or suggested tour route.

This facility could also be located on the Spirit of Tasmania, Port Arthur's website and even in tourism centres interstate.

It would probably appeal most to younger visitors.

Staffed information booth

Older visitors might prefer a more personal approach. A staffed information booth might be located upstairs inside or outside the VC, since it is at the point of arrival that visitors will want to plan their visit.

Roving staff member

Alternatively, a staff member might be located in the foyer to approach entering visitors and offer to help them to plan their visit. This seems to be less practical than a booth that could advertise itself with signage, graphic elements etc and at which visitors could queue.

5.1.6. Guide Book

Since about 50% of our visitors currently do not take a tour, but prefer to explore the site on their own, we need to provide them with a guide book that will outline the main themes, provide a clear map and appropriate interpretation of each structure/place on site using the orientation theme.

It would indicate a route suitable for general orientation along that route. Places/buildings along that route would be interpreted in numbered order, clearly indicated on the map and on signage on site. It should also offer advice for visitors with limited time and/or mobility, and indicate an alternative route that will suit their needs, using the same numbering system. For younger visitors, either a separate guidebook or a thread running through the general guidebook could answer their needs, and provide family groups with another opportunity to interact around different kinds of information.

5.1.7. Reinstatement of now-vanished elements

One of the most difficult aspects of the site's history for visitors is imagining the place as other than a quiet, bucolic, gardenesque landscape. They are often surprised to see, usually on the site model, how many items have now vanished.

Apart from vanished buildings, which would once have created a bustling prison and military encampment with elements of a town and an industrial complex, the other missing elements are fences, yards and pathways. These were critical in organising, constraining and supervising movement on site. Currently visitors can wander at will and have no sense of how the site's architecture and landscape functioned as an essential element in the mechanisms of control and surveillance of bond and free alike.

In 1999 a partial reconstruction in outline was attempted, with the reinstatement of the original roof line of one wing of the Hospital. This caused consternation among staff and visitors alike for a number of reasons, but among them was a strong feeling that reconstruction that significantly altered the appearance of the site was not appropriate. While this may be debated, there are alternatives that will go some way towards enhancing understanding of the former nature of the place without altering its appearance too significantly. This is in accord with the Conservation Management Plan; 'Missing elements of original fabric may be reconstructed where reconstruction is required for interpretation purposes and is reversible.' (Godden Mackay Context Port Arthur Historic

Site Conservation Plan, Volume 1, p70). This is provided that; ‘Built elements introduced as part of an interpretation program will convey accurate information about the history and cultural significance of the site (op. Cit. P71).

This has in fact already begun, in the reinstatement of the footprint of one Hospital wing (2000) and of the Summerhouse in Government Gardens, and the reconstruction of Government Gardens (2001). The reinstatement of the fence that once encircled Government Gardens, in particular, has turned a previously formless and meaningless lawn into a space that can now be understood as private and restricted, even feminised, recreational space. These reinstatements have been positively received by staff and visitors alike, and may be said to act as a litmus test for further such work.

In particular, the reinstatement of the muster yard in front of the Penitentiary, one of the most significance spaces historically on site, would create a new visual and intellectual understanding of the Penitentiary. Instead of floating meaninglessly on a lawn as it now does it will be re-anchored, in a manner both physically and historically appropriate, to a space that was an integral part of its function.

Reinstatement of more footprints, fence-lines and pathways would add immeasurably to the understanding of the site’s former nature. By being constrained to follow more closely historic movement patterns, visitors will gain a new understanding of the idea that all former residents were constrained from free movement in various ways.

5.1.8. Signage

For many visitors, signs are useful in answering the very basic question; ‘What was here?’ or ‘What happened here?’ But they do have limitations. They must be read while standing up, possibly in inclement weather. They will not be read by non-readers, non-English speakers, the elderly who have forgotten their bifocals or for whom the print size is too small, the bored or tired visitor, the visually impaired or most young visitors. It must also be remembered that signs, like benches, bins and paving, are necessary evils; each new element added to the site detracts from its integrity and ambiance.

In view of all of the above, two issues should be considered before new signs are installed;

Appropriate alternatives

The Conservation Management Plan states: ‘The introduction of new, purpose-built interpretive elements will be minimised’ (Godden Mackay Logan, 2000, p78). New developments may need a sign, but in light of the number of signs already on site, every new sign should be carefully considered, rather than seen as inevitable or essential. Other strategies – art, brochure, sound, text etched into replica brick or stone footings – may serve to satisfy those basic questions without adding to our tally of visually intrusive elements. Such alternative strategies may also better serve audiences whose learning

styles are not predominantly linguistic/text-based (see Section 2.2), and consideration should also be given to that issue.

Design guidelines

Currently signage follows the guidelines as laid down in the Graphic Standards Manual, (Brine Communications Design, 1997) to maintain visual consistency. However, those guidelines are built around the precincts enshrined in the previous Interpretation Plan, which has now been abandoned. A Tertiary Plan will establish new guidelines, visually sufficiently consistent with the existing signage to satisfy site aesthetics but without reproducing graphic elements that were probably always obscure to visitors and are now obsolete.

5.1.9. Other orientation strategies

The following ideas emerged during workshops and should also be considered in the Operational Plan;

A large pane of glass or perspex, positioned looking across to Settlement Hill, with the structures that might have been seen from that spot in the 1860s etched or painted on it. This will reinforce the site model but carry the orientation down onto the site, allowing a more direct connection between visitor and both present and vanished site elements.

See also 5.3.2. **Computer simulation and modelling.**

5.2. More focused and specialised presentations

Both User Insite and visitor comments identify a strong need for visitors to delve more deeply and to follow special interests. In the Summer Archaeology Programs we trialled this style of presentation with outstanding results. We have already catered for several years for groups like Garden History clubs that wish to pursue one special interest, and these work very well and are very popular. In Appendix 2 User Insite suggest some topics and modes of presentation that may form the basis for more of these tours. Some of those that seem to have most obvious relevance and applicability are taken up and further developed in Section 3.

5.2.1. The special interest tour

These tours would be taken by visitors who had already done one of the general orientation presentations on offer that day, by visitors who had previously visited the site, or by visitors who had come highly motivated to pursue a particular interest. Some tours have already been developed – the Isle of the Dead Cemetery Tour (maximum number 30), Harbour and Dockyards Tour, Point Puer Boys' Prison (maximum number 30) and the Garden Tour.

Some tours may be delivered in groups like the orientation tour, with a maximum number of 30 people. Others may cater for small booked groups or even for one or two people. The smaller groups and individual tours will cater for those with strong knowledge or interest, and/or a preference for personal service and a highly interactive experience. These tours will probably be delivered by specialists in the field, and those booking them will probably be charged at the top of the range. Group tours will be delivered by guides who have been trained in this area and who preferably have interest and good depth of knowledge.

They allow the more sophisticated visitor to explore at a level offering greater complexity than the general tour. They will be shaped around the same main themes, but in addition some minor themes specific to that subject area will be developed. It is envisaged that these tours will be developed using the topic list outlined in Section 3.3.

Some topics provide more than enough potential for a rich, dense and nuanced presentation, others may work best in combination. A small range of tours that seem to meet current visitor needs will be developed, and more may be added as and when visitor needs change. Some may be seasonal in nature i.e. gardens. They may be delivered in 4 ways:

- A. Some will be presented by trained guides using a text prepared in consultation with Conservation staff and/or researchers
- B. Others may be delivered to special groups by our professional staff with expertise in specialist areas.
- C. On occasions a tour may be delivered by a visiting scholar or other expert to a booked group.
- D. See also Section 5.3.1., the Audiotour

5.2.2. The Museum

Located in the former Town Hall/Asylum building, currently the Museum attempts to provide an orientation experience for visitors. This has always been problematic because the Museum is not located at the beginning of the visitor's encounter with the site and many visitors do not visit the Museum. The Interpretation Gallery in the Visitor Centre is now in place and expected to provide that orientation experience. In addition, the Museum is now 10 or 11 years old and looking shabby and neglected. A new role must be found for a refurbished Museum.

We hold a small but interesting collection of artefacts relating to PA history and the experience of those who lived here, only some of which are currently on display. In addition, other material held in other collections is available for loan if we can provide the appropriate standards of environmental conditions and security. There is currently nowhere else on site that this material can be viewed.

The experience of the inmates and the development of the Asylum/Town Hall complex, in which the Museum is located, are also not adequately interpreted on site. The Town

Hall/Asylum dining room, adjacent to the Museum, would be an ideal place to do this, using a series of architectural models to demonstrate its evolution, as well as ideas from the current research program about the regime practised there. This would also cover the Carnarvon and later periods.

This space also offers an important opportunity to create small, temporary and specialised exhibitions on topics related to the nature of our activities and collection/s. Depending on conservation requirements, these might run for up to 12 months, supported by research, visual materials drawn from contemporary and other media, sound etc. We might also take travelling exhibitions and art shows from local artists on topics relevant to Port Arthur or convictism. The space should be furnished in an unobtrusive manner, with a system flexible enough so that staff can easily handle it and create and install high quality exhibitions. Lighting should also be unobtrusive. Permanent interpretation of the Asylum/Town hall should be able to co-exist with this temporary function.

5.2.3. A scholarly publication

Astonishingly, no good source book exists on Port Arthur and the convict sites of the Tasman Peninsula. Publications that do exist are generally based on Ian Brand's papers, which, while an invaluable resource, offer a limited historical viewpoint. They are also generally not of a high standard in terms of production values.

We could fill this gap in the market. Considerable research has been, is and will be conducted here on site in pursuit of conservation and interpretation. To take advantage of this research we could produce a more academic but still accessible book to cater for the specialised interest of other scholars in convict and colonial history. It might also be useful to teachers at matriculation and tertiary levels. Grace Karskens' books on the Rocks are excellent examples of such publishing. We might also publish a series of occasional papers.

5.2.4. 'Living history'; animation, demonstration & participation

In Appendices 1 & 2, visitor frequently compare Port Arthur unfavourably to Sovereign Hill's lively street life involving costumed actors, coaches and horses and short dramatic presentations. Some even ask for simulated floggings and activities like the Siege of Glenrowan, similar to those they have seen at Old Sydney Town. Rather than becoming too concerned about the details and inappropriateness of such activities, it seems clear that what people are missing is some kind of action in the streets. This can be done here in a manner consonant with our underlying principles of integrity and authenticity. These presentations will also address the visitor criticism that there is not enough for children on site.

All living history will be done in a manner that stresses professional skill and presentation. It will be developed through research, competitive audition and training;

content will be based around the interpretive themes outlined in Section 3.2. As with guided tours, content and presentations will be regularly monitored and evaluated, and training will be an on-going requirement for all those involved.

Animation = the presence of costumed staff

There are three main modes or styles of presentation that might serve our interpretive needs.

A. Costumed actors delivering monologues or dialogues in front of an audience at advertised times around the site.

These should always be based on historic characters and/or incidents but might present them in imaginative ways that transgress historical realities, e.g. characters who are both real but who never met in life might discuss an issue. Others might be 'straight' e.g. a real character might present a monologue based on her/his journal or correspondence. Others might be real characters involved in a real i.e. historically documented dispute, but the dialogue will be largely imaginary since the records do not record all the details of that dispute.

The audience will be expected to treat the presentation like a theatrical performance. They will not be invited to become involved in the action, although the actors may acknowledge their presence by rhetorical questions or glances.

B. Costumed actors roaming the site or based in buildings or places, and interacting with visitors.

Each character should be based on a Port Arthur identity, an historical figure about whom we have sufficient knowledge to build a convincing and rich persona. As at Sovereign Hill, these actors will remain in character and develop conversations with visitors based around their interests in the history of Port Arthur. Intensive training in etiquette, costume, deportment and history will be required, so that the performer can answer a wide range of questions and act in an appropriate 19th century manner.

C. Plays

These have already been done three times on site and have been very much enjoyed by visitors. They are a wonderful tool in interpretation. All such presentations need to be based on events, characters or ideas associated with Port Arthur. They need to be of a professional standard. It is probably only possible, given budgetary and staffing constraints, that they be run on a seasonal or special occasion basis. Ideally, such plays should cover their costs, but experience has shown this to be extremely difficult if not impossible. If the site cannot cover costs, sponsorship may need to be sought for future productions.

Demonstration = costumed staff making/doing something

We are already doing this on occasion, with baking and ropework. Again, this can be done in two main ways. Both the two following modes of presentation will require

research into content and training in the communication skills needed to deliver an effective and enjoyable presentation.

A. Staff in costume, delivering the demonstration in character.

B. Non-costumed staff, delivering the demonstration as themselves.

Participation = getting the audience involved

This kind of presentation has been done for many years, principally as children's holiday activities. In the 2000-20001 summer, a public archaeology program was run for children. Such activity programs may also mesh with those described above, provided that health and safety issues are resolved.

Some programs may be able to be carried out independently by adult carers with young visitors, e.g. observation exercises, following trails based on stories of convicts. Others will be presented by staff e.g. using the semaphore.

These are highly enjoyable ways both to keep younger visitors meaningfully occupied on site, and to involve them actively in seeking out meanings and information that matter to them. They also offer opportunities for adult carers to become involved with their young charges as they explore aspects of the site's history together.

They do however need to be more than 'colour and movement', activity for its own sake or cheap babysitting. They need to be carefully planned and developed by people with relevant expertise; staff involved in delivery must also be well-trained. They need to have a component of learning built into them that is serious and based on our major themes, adapted for younger visitors. They need to be based on events, characters and activities that are historically documented, but they can take some liberties with this material in order to stimulate the imagination and encourage interaction.

5.2.5. Specialised AV installations

Audiovisual might also be used in more 'fine-grained' ways than overall orientation (see Section 5.1.5.).

Stereoscopic glasses

At specific sites, in a cell at the Separate prison for example, special stereoscopic glasses may give visitors a glimpse of the past, animated in video. The glasses would be mounted on a special stand. They allow the user to see through to the static scene in the room while superimposing video action over the scene. The production process is quite complex, requiring detailed geometry to be determined to ensure that the figures in the video are scaled correctly with the static scene.

A normal tape machine or laser disc works as the source; the cost of the hardware system would be in the region of \$2,500 for the glasses and stand, with additional costs for the video replay system depending on what system is selected. MPEG video replay systems have no moving parts, tape, replay heads or discs to get dusty or damaged so are virtually maintenance free and cost in the region of \$2-3,000. Production would of course be additional, between about \$10-30,000 depending on the scale of the production.

Pepper's ghost

See Section 5.1.5. for a description of this technology. These may also be used in more confined spaces or to cover more limited interpretive functions than overall orientation, but cost may militate against this.

Animatronic figures

These figures range from rudimentary static figures that 'speak' but do not move, through to elaborate figures with a wide range of movements and some facial expressions. Naturally the more elaborate the figure, the higher the cost; as of 2000 prices, an estimate of around \$70-80,000 for top of the range, plus a \$10,000 p.a. per figure maintenance contract.

They are popular with visitors, and since they can only be used indoors, might be appropriate in a confined space like a cell or a room in a house.

5.2.6. Children- and family-oriented programs

The following section deals with non-curriculum-based activities that are currently (June 2001) mainly offered to younger visitors. Port Arthur no longer offers curriculum-based Education programs on site. When the Education program is reinstated, many of these activities will be able to be incorporated into that program.

Visitors often comment through our various evaluative strategies that we do not offer enough for children. (see User Insite recommendation 6 in Appendix 2. It seems particularly important to offer activities over the summer season. These might include parents/carers and children, or be specifically aimed at children and give parents/carers a break to visit in ways that interest them. An information board at the entrance to the Visitor Centre should have a section, lower down, that is designed to communicate specifically to children what the events of the day are, and the special places and activities on site for them.

Possibilities for such activities include:

- Dress-ups/convict characters

While we currently run some dress up sessions, we need to ensure that these also are 'real' and meaningful within the context of the Plan. While not resembling classroom work they should impart important thematic messages tailored to children of various ages.

- Archaeology

The very positive responses to the recent Public Archaeology program suggest that this is an appropriate activity.

- **Cooking and laundry-based activities**

Cooking is already offered, but there is also potential for 19th and 20th century laundry activities.

- **Garden-based activities**

There may be further examples, such as gardens where children can engage in activities that interpret the past while being very ‘hands on’ in the present.

- **Drama**

Another possibility, shown to be very successful recently, is the performance of short plays. These might both be passive - plays produced for a younger audience - or active - plays in which children are assigned characters and improvise in costume.

- **Games**

Treasure hunts, mysteries and similar games would allow children to be very active but in a focused manner. Such games should involve traversing and learning about the site in various ways. Some might be done as a children’s activity through our holiday program, others might be offered to family groups as they arrive. Traditional games like skittles and croquet are currently offered under supervision through our holiday program. The jigsaw puzzle formerly at the Commandant’s house, while poorly realised and clumsy, proved popular with younger visitors and some staff. A well-made and robust version of such a puzzle might be suitable for complex buildings like the Commandant’s House and the Asylum/Town Hall.

5.3. Both orientation and special interest

Other presentations contain elements that will appeal both to the audience seeking a more general, recreational experience and to those wanting something more in-depth.

5.3.1. The Audiotour

This medium can move visitors seamlessly from an orientation experience, through layers of increasing complexity. It can use spoken word, music, ambient sounds; it can include dramatic presentations, poetry, diary entries, literary extracts, correspondence, newspaper accounts of events, places and personalities, debates and speeches. It can cater for groups currently not well catered for in current interpretive presentations – these include children, non-English speakers, non-readers, scholars and academics, and students.

If we were to adopt this mode of presentation, two important issues immediately arise:

Cost

This must be achieved without raising our entry fee, which is already a sore point with many visitors. It is however possible that, by providing a wide range of new activities on site including an excellent audiotour, those visitors who come in and complain may now

feel that they are getting good value for money and be happy to pay the fee. This will not of course mollify those who turned away at the counter because they couldn't afford it. Sponsorship might be sought to cover the cost of introducing this program.

Implications for staff who currently deliver an introductory tour

It may be argued that;

Audiotours may enhance the experience of guides and visitors on guided tours.

Taking large groups out and straining to communicate with them is not a good quality experience either for the visitors or for the guide. Some visitors may prefer the Audiotour and thus reduce the numbers on the guided tour, enhancing visitor experience for those who join the guide, and making the guides' job more enjoyable and manageable. But there will always be visitors who, when given the option, will choose a guide; these people may prefer to use the Audiotour for those other deeper layers.

Audiotours will free guides for more enjoyable and fruitful interpretation in other areas. Guides' talents might be better utilised on special interest tours for smaller groups.

They should also enjoy these tours more because of the variety of topics, and opportunities for better quality social and other interaction.

With more guides freed from the burden of endless introductory tours we could also expand our costumed program, our 'living history' program (see below) and the number of houses we have open.

5.3.2. Non-text-based and non-verbal media

These may be utilised to answer the need both for an introductory orientation and a more detailed specialist experience. Currently our interpretive style is strongly text-reliant; all of our interpretation is delivered either by written or spoken word. We also know that we have many visitors who do not wish to read, or are unable to read, or who are unable to read English fluently and comfortably. This particularly applies to younger visitors. We must also have many visitors who, while able and inclined to read and learn in English, also find other media important in making educational and experiential connections. As we recall from **Section 2.2**, on Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, there are many among our visiting audiences who do not primarily learn through text media, or who can also learn through other media and so enhance their experience. How do we cater for all those audiences?

Sound

Sound may be used either to give an impression or to impart information. Informative sound has been used in elaborate and lengthy soundscapes in the Interpretation Gallery and the Commandant's House. Unfortunately, it would appear that these run for far too long and visitors who are in transit, not provided with a seat and crowded by incoming bodies will not linger. Others compete with one another in confined spaces and may need to be rationalised.

There is also an unexplored potential to use sound in more impressionistic and imaginative ways. This may range from the 15 second soundbite in a furnished house dining room – a snatch of overheard conversation – to the 5 second ‘moment’ of sound barely heard while in a location where activities formerly took place – a saw at the former sawpit near the penitentiary. More elaborate soundscapes may be used in other buildings e.g. within the Separate Prison, which may combine both modes.

Costumed mannequins in houses

Provided that they are of excellent quality and costumed accordingly, these may be effective, particularly when combined with sound.

Visual Art

Some museums have used sculpture as an important communicative tool; this is powerfully done at the Museum of Sydney, with the evocative and affecting ‘Edge of the trees’ sculpture by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence, and at the Hyde Park Barracks with the ‘Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine’.

While it might be argued that there is no place for sculpture here, since apart from garden ornaments it did not occur on site, the site is already littered with intrusive elements, satisfying modern requirements ranging for the need for toilets to OH&S, none of which are historically appropriate. Some of these intrusive elements make little contribution to, and even militate against, visitor understanding, whereas the right visual art will enhance it. Such a piece may be realistic and literal, e.g. a bronze scale model of a now vanished precinct, located in the site, with each structure labeled, or impressionistic e.g. as in The Edge of the Trees at the Museum of Sydney, providing an experience more profoundly emotional rather than informational. Carefully managed, each piece should have little visual impact until one is close to it.

Visual art may also be used as an element in otherwise functional items. A bench or a fence-post might be carved, routed or inset with small elements, images or words that interpret the place or event in a more impressionistic, less information-based way.

It will extend learning modalities and opportunities on site and, for the first time, include those visitors who prefer non-text-based media. Such installations would enhance the visitor’s sense of discovery and surprise but would not intrude visually in the landscape or the space.

Performance

This does not include the forms of dramatic presentation outlined above in **Section 5.2.4.**, which are seen as core components of our interpretation strategy. These other performances may occur only once, or perhaps once or twice per year. They may include:

- # Musical recitals at appropriate sites e.g. a soiree at the Commandant’s House, organ music in the Separate Prison chapel or a *capella* choral music in the Church.
- # Contemporary opera, full-length plays or dance performances on themes appropriate to Port Arthur.

Irish music for a festival focussed on Irish prisoners, or for a special community day at Port Arthur.

Computer modelling & simulation

This technology can be used both to provide an orientation to the physical site as it is now, and to clarify understanding of the evolution of the site over time by providing ‘snapshots’ of key periods and demonstrating layering of physical changes. It can also build in layers of information and ideas about its former and current activities and meanings. It may be of particular advantage for visitors with limited time or mobility. Without having to gallop across the site, or be frustrated by steep pathways and longer distances than they can manage, such visitors can take a ‘virtual tour’ comfortably seated at a computer console.

This technology is increasingly in use at sites in Europe and the Middle East, where it is very popular with visitors.

5.4. The Port Arthur Memorial to the 28 April 1996 massacre

Currently a small, rather cryptic sign and a brochure, containing the transcript of the trial judge’s summing-up and available to those who ask, are the only interpretive tools available to help visitors understand what this area commemorates. This strategy has had some unfortunate consequences for both guides and visitors. Some staff may find it difficult to speak about the event and discourage visitors from asking questions. Some visitors have been distressed and offended by a guide’s response that they have considered to be brusque, intimidating or embarrassing without understanding why. Guides also report that visitors’ questions may seem to them to be crudely expressed and insensitive.

Many people all over the world and throughout Australia were personally touched by the tragic events of 28 April 1996; many others, although not directly touched, were deeply disturbed by it. All these people have struggled to come to terms with their own sense of shock, sadness and disbelief. They bring to the site their own confusion and grief, and we should respect and acknowledge this. And some people simply have no knowledge of what happened here, and ask for clarification when they see the Memorial Garden and the Broad Arrow as they would when they see the roofless Church or the ruined Penitentiary.

Staff have now indicated that they feel it is time for a new strategy that will both spare the feelings of those most closely involved while respecting the feelings of visitors and helping them to some sense of understanding and closure. In fact, now that we have the memorial, it is inescapable because it is essential that we explain what it memorialises.

After extensive staff consultation it was resolved that we would;

- Erect a simple sign at the entrance to the Memorial Garden that briefly but clearly outlines the course of events. The text will be simple and factual. As previously agreed, the perpetrator’s name will not be mentioned. This sign will be supported on a simple plinth in the same style and fabric as the walls in the Memorial. Staff

felt very strongly that they did not wish the sign and its stand to be consistent with our other signage on site, in order to distinguish it as special and different from what they saw as a 'tourism product'.

- Develop a brochure that would contain a more extensive account of the event. Again this would be simple and restrained in style, and factual in its presentation of the information. Since it can be taken away for later perusal it may help to remove the urgency some visitors currently feel to seek information and answers while they are here. Visitors who ask will be directed to the Visitor Centre to obtain one. It was not felt desirable to locate them in the Memorial itself. This was partly to control litter but more importantly staff felt that this would avoid visitors picking them up en route to the ferry and asking guides questions on board. They also felt that if people had to put in an effort to get them, fewer would idly pick one up and ask intrusive questions.

At this time, staff felt strongly that they did not want any further interpretive material made available.

5.5. Interpretive programs for the disabled

Currently we offer no such programs, although the site has great potential in this area. The special sounds, textures and scents of Port Arthur, for example, might be used to create a rich experience for visually impaired visitors. In planning such programs, three issues must be resolved:

A. Training for guides

In keeping with all our other activities on site, this should be delivered to the highest professional standards. To this end, appropriate training should be set up for guides; this should be delivered by an RTO and result in a nationally-recognised certificate of competency in this area.

B. An appropriate program

These programs should be developed in consultation with appropriate agencies and experts.

C. Safe and appropriate access

These should be resolved in ways that are consonant with the CP. All new installations should ensure that as far as possible they offer appropriate access.

5.6. SWOT analysis of each strategy

This section analyses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each medium in terms of its formal qualities and also relates these qualities to our identified visitor needs and expectations, as identified in Appendices 1 & 2.

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
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New Orientation Tour	<p>Needed by most visitors</p> <p>Can be delivered in short time</p> <p>Especially useful for visitors with limited time and/or mobility</p>	<p>Can be so general as to be boring</p> <p>Tends to rely on dates and 'facts'</p> <p>Can make visitor feel hopelessly ignorant</p>	<p>Introduction to major themes</p> <p>Active engagement of visitors here will condition their whole on-site experience</p>	<p>Belief that dates and 'facts' are essential to orientation</p> <p>Failure to engage visitors here shapes whole on-site experience</p> <p>Resistance of guides to change from current content and style of presentation.</p>
Visitor Centre Interpretation	<p>Some orientation to limited range of time, space and inhabitants</p>	<p>Only gives orientation to limited range of time, space and inhabitants</p>	<p>To offer general introduction to major places, themes, events and individuals</p>	<p>Relatively new and budget is now expended.</p> <p>Unlikely to be reviewed until other priorities met on site</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Site Model	Best physical orientation device currently available on site Popular with visitors, who find it easy to access and understand.	Current location not suitable for providing introduction to site. Does not cover the whole site.	If moved to Visitor Centre it could achieve basic physical orientation for most visitors Guides could then focus on delivering more story-based material, enhancing visitors' understanding of main themes and of site.	Would need to occupy upper gallery, entailing removal of current installation, and resolutions of traffic flow and sound issues. Resistance of guides to move and subsequent change to their presentation.
Visit planning facilities	Allows visitors to plan their day from an expanded range of options. Allows visitors to plan self-guided tours to reflect their specialised interests. A computer printout will save visitors from having to remember what they have heard in the hubbub of the ticketing counter.	Some older visitors may feel intimidated by computer technology. The computer version will need printer attached so that they can take away the results of their search = maintenance & cost issues.	Take load off ticketing staff who have to spend a lot of time explaining what's on. Establishes PA as innovative. Enhances our reputation for customer service.	Computer version will incur cost of programming, hardware & software, maintenance. Training of staff to enter daily events in computer version. Space must be found so that visitors can use it at the beginning of the visit. Additional job for staffed booth. Cost of booth.

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Audiovisual orientation	<p>Accessible means of providing orientation</p> <p>Suitable space at Visitor Centre already set up.</p> <p>Offers opportunity to sit and rest.</p> <p>Address Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, with music, spoken word, visuals etc</p> <p>Can introduce the human element and repopulate the buildings and spaces on site.</p>	<p>Needs comfortable seats in existing gallery in VC.</p> <p>Some visitors may pass by as they want to get straight out onto the site.</p> <p>Can sound like a lecture if too fact/date based.</p> <p>Can trivialise history if not based on excellent research and production values.</p>	<p>Would help visitors further with orientation, both fabric and themes.</p> <p>Can be accessed at either end of visit.</p> <p>To create a sense of drama and excitement and enhance sense of anticipation, thereby heightening visitor enjoyment of entire visit.</p> <p>To introduce visitors to results of our scholarly research program in palatable form.</p>	<p>Possible high cost of production & equipment</p> <p>Needs prompt and reliable maintenance <u>when</u> (not if!) it fails; 'out of order' signs compromise our reputation for excellence.</p>
Specialised AV installations	<p>Entertaining</p> <p>Popular with visitors</p> <p>Evocative</p> <p>May be informative/Educational</p> <p>Partly non-text-based</p>	<p>May be difficult to access in crowded periods.</p> <p>May only be used indoors</p> <p>Unless top-of-the-range, these can look amateurish.</p> <p>Sound-spill into adjacent spaces</p>	<p>Injects life into otherwise unpopulated spaces</p> <p>Also provides as sense of human scale now lacking in internal spaces</p> <p>Particularly engaging for younger visitors, a relatively neglected audience</p>	<p>Cost of development & maintenance</p> <p>No local tradesmen available quickly to repair breakdowns.</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Guide Book	Provides opportunity to develop full self-guided tour. Can produce in various languages for non-English speaking visitors. Supports existing visitors who prefer to self-guide. Can be keyed in to existing signage.	Yet more text-based interpretation May be bulky and visitors may prefer not to carry it. May get wet.	Souvenir of visit Marketing tool. Revenue-raiser through commercial sales. Educational resource for students. Can include material to cater for younger visitors' interests.	High cost if done well. Not very flexible if update required. If not done excellently – research, writing, design, printing – will compromise our reputation. High cost of producing in different languages.
Academic publication	Maximise use of research carried out for conservation & interpretation Make such research accessible to others.	Small local market	Establish Port Arthur as a location for excellence in research and publication, nationally and internationally	Cost of production will be high because print run will probably be small. Weak research & production values will compromise our reputation not enhance it. Need energetic marketing to penetrate national & international markets.

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Refurbishment of the Museum & adjacent dining room as temporary gallery	<p>Unique opportunity to exhibit original collection materials</p> <p>Provides activity for visitors kept indoors in inclement weather</p> <p>Another attraction on site.</p> <p>Appeals to more of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences.</p>	<p>Not all visitors get up to Museum</p> <p>Militates against interpreting that space in terms of its former use as Asylum</p> <p>BUT Space is rebuilt and substantially altered, so has little historical integrity</p>	<p>To get more collection material out on display with detailed stories.</p> <p>Provides venue for changing events to draw repeat visits</p> <p>Can tell stories not told in VC</p> <p>Enhance visitors' sense of 'value for money'.</p>	<p>Lack of air conditioning militates against long-term display for some items; also militates against us borrowing some vulnerable but important items from other institutions.</p>
Specialist tour	<p>Appeals to visitors' special interests, as identified in audience research.</p> <p>Adds another layer to visitor experience, providing a logical follow-on from general orientation experience.</p> <p>Allows for a more intimate and interactive experience on site.</p>	<p>May only attract small numbers, especially in low season.</p>	<p>Value-adds to interpretive presentations currently on site to enhance visitors' sense of 'value-for-money'.</p> <p>Makes recent scholarly research accessible to lay audience.</p> <p>Will broaden and deepen visitor understanding of site.</p> <p>Can offer tours designed to cater for younger visitors' interests.</p>	<p>Need guides able and willing to undertake intensive preparation in training and research.</p> <p>Will require good basis in sound research.</p> <p>If there is any additional cost we may encounter visitor resistance.</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
The Audiotour	<p>Caters for the 40% of visitors currently not taking a guided tour.</p> <p>Flexible, portable, offers a number of options for exploring the site through time and space.</p> <p>Easy to use</p> <p>Can cater for children in a focused way.</p> <p>Can easily cater for other languages.</p> <p>Can deliver an education program.</p> <p>Incorporates other media – spoken word, sound effects, literature, music, drama etc, caters for Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences.</p> <p>Meets visitor expectations that a site like this will have such a tour available.</p> <p>Makes recent research accessible to visitors.</p>	<p>Technology may initially be unfamiliar to some visitors.</p>	<p>May reduce the numbers in face-to-face tours, making them more enjoyable and productive for guides and visitors.</p> <p>Built in evaluative information.</p> <p>Positions PA in line with other similar sites where such interpretation is now expected.</p> <p>May increase visitor numbers</p> <p>Research indicates that it increases visitor spend in shop.</p> <p>Will vary guides’ duties, making their jobs more enjoyable and stimulating.</p> <p>May be able to open more houses, do more ‘living history’ and run more specialist tours if guides no longer required to deliver basic orientation.</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Need reliable maintenance, either on-site or rapid turnaround.</p> <p>May run out of equipment on busy days.</p> <p>Guide resistance to change in their duties.</p> <p>We must be involved in production to ensure that our communication objectives are met.</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
'Living history'	Entertaining Satisfies visitors' expressed need to see 'something happening' on site Another way to present information and important historical ideas (see Gardner) 'Humanises' the historical identities important to PA and makes them more accessible Non-text based	Potential to trivialise historical experience here. Potential to turn into broad farce to maximise entertainment value. Potential to offer ahistorical interpretation and therefore confuse visitors.	Enhances sense of 'value-for money' May increase repeat visitation To provide more appropriate experiences for children on site. Crafts demonstrations may provide more hands-on activities, especially for children in school holidays. Will vary guides' duties, making their jobs more enjoyable and stimulating.	Cost of training, scripting and costumes Lack of ability among existing staff, leading to need to recruit (see cost) Willingness among existing staff to submit to and follow training Needs to be based on sound research that has not yet been done.
Soundbites	Not text based Appeals to other senses (see Gardner) Does not require understanding of English language Use of human voices will add that human presence craved by visitors.	Need a delivery system that is reliable, low maintenance, unobtrusive.	Will add sense of surprise and discovery to site. Will add opportunity to understand former activities and places now vanished, that is not reliant on signage.	Cost of equipment and production Availability of a delivery system that is reliable, low maintenance, unobtrusive.

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Reinstatement of footprints of missing structures	Enhance understanding of former nature of site as densely-settled military camp/ town/ind. site rather than paddock or garden. Non-text based; will only require minimal naming/dating Low visual impact. Low cost.	Will compromise current appearance of gardenesque green sward BUT this is historically inappropriate anyway.	low visual impact but fills in major gaps of missing places and buildings. Introduces sense of discovery as some elements will not be visible until visitor is on top of them.	to be designed so that mowing and other site maintenance is unimpeded. Must be safe for disabled and not offer any hazards to visitors. Consistency of hard edging and fill across site is essential. Those currently attached to the current appearance of the site may not like such changes.
Reinstatement of missing fence-lines, enclosures & yards	Enhance understanding of former nature of site as densely-settled military camp/ town/ind. site rather than paddock or garden Non-text based	Will compromise current appearance of gardenesque green sward BUT this is historically inappropriate anyway	Site will look visually richer. Visitors can move around in 19 th century ways Connections between buildings and functional associated spaces will be reinstated, making sense of both.	Those currently attached to the current appearance of the site may not like such changes.

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Signage	<p>Answers basic questions about what was there.</p> <p>Offers opportunity for self-guided tour.</p> <p>Relatively cheap to produce.</p> <p>Already have system in place so that signs can simply be added according to established format.</p>	<p>Yet more text-based signage; not attractive or accessible to non-readers, younger visitors, visually-impaired etc.</p> <p>Each sign is an intrusive element.</p> <p>Problems with existing format.</p> <p>Text often bland and dull, too brief to satisfy our interpretive aims.</p>	<p>A comprehensive signage system might be combined with a brochure to enhance self-guiding.</p>	<p>Yet more intrusive elements.</p> <p>Site may come to look like a drawer in a museum collection, each item labeled, numbered and lifeless.</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Visual Art	<p>Appeals to other senses (see Gardner)</p> <p>Will enhance visual interest of carefully selected areas of site.</p> <p>May be used to make contact between issues common to past and present e.g. ideas/emotion associated with incarceration.</p>	<p>Not all places or themes on site will be suitable for such interpretation.</p> <p>Contemporary art is seen by many as inaccessible, pretentious and devoid of meaning.</p> <p>Those who see the site as only being about the past and resist the idea of connections with present issues may resent the presence of modern elements.</p>	<p>Will broaden our audience base to include art-lovers and therefore may increase visitor numbers.</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Work will need to be commissioned from artists selected for their track record in making work that is site-specific and sensitive.</p> <p>Briefs will have to be very carefully developed and artists may be strongly constrained.</p> <p>Work may look like it was produced by a committee!</p> <p>That work may fail to be accessible to general visitors</p> <p>That work may fail to relate sufficiently strongly to site.</p> <p>That work may be seen as intrusive and inappropriate.</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Special performances	<p>Enhance sense of ‘something happening’ on site.</p> <p>Appeals to other senses (see Gardner)</p> <p>Create sense of ‘occasion’.</p> <p>Historically appropriate, since staff and guests in 19th enjoyed musical evenings, recitations etc</p> <p>Site has some splendid venues.</p>	<p>Need to ensure superb quality</p> <p>Need to ensure that visitors who have come for either reasons are not compromised in their enjoyment of other aspects of the site.</p> <p>The above will also mean that some acts are not suitable.</p>	<p>Encourage repeat visitation</p> <p>Encourage high visitation on special days.</p> <p>Enhance our reputation for quality.</p> <p>Increase media attention; free publicity, especially TV.</p>	<p>Weather for outdoor performances can be unreliable; need contingency plans for wet weather.</p> <p>Some acts not suitable because of content or scale; need to make sure they are carefully assessed so as to enhance not compromise our reputation for quality..</p>

STRATEGY	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Computer modeling & simulation	<p>Expected by many visitors</p> <p>Enables recreation of and interaction with now-vanished structures without intrusion onto site</p> <p>Essentially non-text based although information will also be included as text to explain observable features</p> <p>Offers activity especially desired by younger visitors; sense that there is plenty for children to do on site.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Technology may be unfamiliar or intimidating to older visitors.</p> <p>Tends to be monopolised by younger visitors</p> <p>Educational value as yet not demonstrated by research; younger visitors may treat like game, ignoring text.</p> <p>Data not yet available.</p>	<p>Offer interpretive experience and understanding to visitors with limited time and mobility.</p> <p>To enhance understanding of now-vanished buildings and places, and of site as a whole.</p> <p>Can offer a multi-layered experience, allowing visitors to pursue specialist interests or just 'cruise' the site.</p>	<p>Cost of development</p> <p>Length of time required to develop</p> <p>Location of suitable venue</p> <p>Needs regular updating since technology changes so rapidly</p> <p>Reliability of technology; needs on-site or 24 hour turnaround infrastructure of staff and resources for maintenance; 'out of order' signs are worse than not having up-to-date technology!</p> <p>May be monopolised by younger visitors or by visitors exploring multi-layers; may need more than one machine (see cost).</p>

6. A SUGGESTED PROGRAM

The following table identifies broad potential audiences and includes strategies for delivery.

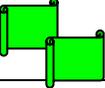
 priorities for 2001-2002

 priorities for 2002-4

 programs that have already begun.

‘O’ the activity has a broad orientation purpose

‘S’ it primarily serves a specialist audience.

STRATEGY	AUDIENCES			ORIENT./ SPEC
	General	Specialist	Younger visitors	
New Orientation Tour 				O
Relocation of Site Model 				O
Visit planning				O/S
Audiovisual orientation				O
General guide Book				O
The Museum				S
Specialist tour 				S
The Audiotour				O/S
Signage 				O
‘Living history’ 				S

Soundbites				O
Visual Art 				S
Special performances 				S
Specialised AV installations				S
Family friendly activities 				O/ S
Computer modeling				O/ S

Appendix 1; visitor comments 1998-2001

These were collected in 2 periods between January 1998 & January 1999, and between 1/09/00 – 28/02/01

It must be stressed that most visitors were ‘happy’ to ‘very happy’ with their experience on site; in particular, there were many very positive comments about our guides. The following represents a number of areas where we could explore improvements in our presentations in a range of media. This does not always mean that we simply give the visitors what they asked for, since some suggestions e.g. mock floggings, are not consistent with our commitment to the authenticity and integrity of the site. We need to examine those comments to see what it is visitors are ‘really’ asking for; in the case of requests for floggings, we may interpret this as a need to see more historically-based activities happening on site. This is a need that we can then meet in a manner that does not compromise our commitment to integrity.

In the analysis below, comments that were not identical but were very similar, or that appeared to be addressing the same need, i.e. asking separately for ‘flogging’ and ‘re-enactments’, have been grouped together as ‘re-enactments’. Comments are then grouped into topics. For all topics, comments are listed either under as identified problems or suggestions for new initiatives.

Total number of visitors who commented adversely or made suggestions on interpretation =108

Total number of comments (some visitors made more than 1) = 142

SUGGESTED NEW DISPLAYS

Need books on the table of the commandant’s house	1
Want dummies in rooms to give more sense of how the convicts lived	1
Add sound effects to models in museum	1

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING DISPLAYS

Remove glass screens in Commandant’s House	16
Too many houses/rooms closed	2

SUGGESTED NEW SIGNAGE

Need signage on Isle of the Dead at significant headstones so that text is readable	1
Need more signs identifying buildings that are no longer here	2
Need better directional sign-posting	4
Need some explanation at the Memorial	7
Each building needs a plaque to identify it	3

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING SIGNAGE

Need signage/booklet in language/s other than English	5
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Confusion re Smith O'Brien's refusal to agree/agreement not to escape, inside/outside signage	1
Need consistency on nomenclature of buildings between signs & guidebook	1

SUGGESTED NEW TOURS

Need more info, not enough given on guided tour	8
Want audio-tour	4
Need self-guided tour	6
Night tours on the Isle of the Dead	1
Need more respectful/sensitive alternative to Ghost Tour	2

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING TOURS

Couldn't hear guide on tour	2
Guide gave too much information	2
Need more info, not enough given on guided tour	8
Guides should take visitors to actual ruin, not talk about it from a distance	2
Want to be guided through the buildings as well as around them	2
Didn't like guide making jokes where people had suffered so much	1

SUGGESTED NEW ACTIVITIES

Demonstrations of traditional crafts, farming & building techniques	5
Reenactments	8
Bush walk with info on plants	1
More activities for children	4
More plays	5
Costumed staff	1

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING ACTIVITIES

None identified

SUGGESTED NEW CONTENT

Need 'sadder stories' about the convict experience	1
Info on bird identification	1
Info on cricket pitch	1
Info on plants	1
Info on what happened to convicts after they left PA	1

PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING CONTENT

Convict cards too confusing	2
More info on daily life for convicts & soldiers	1
Need info on Aboriginal occupation	2

SUGGESTED NEW PUBLICATIONS

Publish text from Commandant's House	1
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Give out info sheet on ‘your’ convict with each convict card	2
Publish booklet on ‘Lottery of life’	1
Need map of settlement at its peak in booklet	1
PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING PUBLICATIONS	
Need signage/booklet in language/s other than English (Dutch, French, German nominated)	5
PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING CONSERVATION	
Don’t like to see cars on site	1
Place looks dilapidated/neglected	4
SUGGESTED NEW CONSERVATION INITIATIVES	
Want to see buildings restored/re-roofed	18
Get rid of ‘non-original’ elements – roofing iron and pavers	2
Need paths between historic buildings	2
Wants lots of ‘fountains, streams and beautiful flowers’	1

Appendix 2: recommendations from the User Insite audience research 2000-2001

The following recommendations draw together the findings from all five stages of the research. Where there is a correspondence between findings in two or more studies, the issue is briefly discussed, with some options for solutions and creative developments. Report 'Visitor evaluation to support Interpretation', User Insite, 2001, p.86

These recommendations have been edited to include only those specifically aimed at interpretation. Some are more appropriate and desirable than others.

Provide orientation to the site and its choices

Currently the guided tours and the harbour cruise orient people to the site as a whole, and suggest different options for touring the site. Visitors found both of these excellent, as long as they were not too crowded. When they were, the experience was frustrating rather than enlightening, especially for people with young children.

There needs to be a parallel form of orientation that does not rely just on the work of guides and is not affected by the size of the crowds. Before they get to the site, visitors need a sense of its dimensions and main features. If, as recommended, a number of specialised tours are developed, there will also be a need to communicate the variety of choices very effectively, so that it reduces confusion and adds to people's engagement.

Once visitors have moved past the 'Lottery of Life' sign, the Visitor Centre offers a view of a part of the site. This space could be better used to provide visitors with a see-through 'panorama' wall which named the places that could be seen, and those beyond it out of sight. Thus, a visitor could look out at the site and read the associated labels pointing to various features of the site.

Specialist tours could be indicated as part of the same explanatory panorama wall, with icons or colours, which referred to a list of specialist tours. Brochures for each of the specialised tours could then be located nearby, for people to choose at that first point. The dimensions of the site, its variety and the need to make choices would be communicated without then being confusing or overwhelming. The same icons or colours could even be used on the ground downstairs to guide people in the right direction for the first few metres away from the building.

Provide a further 'customised' menu of events

The provision of an electronic information board near the entrance to the Visitor Centre would call for a database of places and events to be developed. Once it was composed, the database could also be used on a website, and then be further applied to a search facility and customisable menu of events on site. A simple web interface would ask a few questions about their posed length of time at the site, interests and other limitations or expectations. A listing of specialised tours and special events could then be suggested for the day, or over a period of two or three days. The facility could be installed in the Visitor Centre downstairs. Any material developed for the information board could be adapted

for the website and visa-versa. The same basic material could also be used in other promotional material such as brochures and advertisements.

Co-ordinate the stages of information so that ‘layers’ are added as visitors progress into the site.

. . . The Visitor Centre display downstairs could include a touch screen or web based interface which gives access to an online ‘customised’ tour guide. Visitors would be asked a few questions about how long they were staying, select their sex and age and nominate a few interests. They would then receive a small printout of a suggested set of activities for the day, with the location and times. Programming for this 'customised' tour would be based on a database similar to the one needed for a programmable Information Board, or for the general PAHS website.

The guided tours provide a general orientation to the site, after visitors have entered into the site. People can get directions and seek information from where they are standing. The guides should encourage further questions and directions. (They already perform this valuable function, but with a greater variety of choice, this task will become even more important) Over time, there may be less reliance on the guided tours as general orientation, and more time may be spent by guides on specialised tours.

The harbour cruise gives a general orientation, but it is very different from the walking tours because it looks from the sea and is slightly ‘removed’ from the site. It also provides a subjective experience of what it must have been like in the past, approaching Port Arthur from the sea. The possibilities this creates for a slightly different approach to orientation and interpretation should be developed further.

The icons or colours used to define specialised tours might be carried through in discrete markers at the various locations. These would be actively used by visitors to check they are ‘on track’.

Specialised Tours

As two of the visitors observed, there is a need for specialised tours. The suggestions included children and people over 80, as well as families staying for one day or two. Another possibility is suggested by the strong historical interest which draws many people to the site, and by the many themes and interpretive possibilities revealed in the Message Analysis (refer to that analysis, for a more extensive discussion of interpretive possibilities). Tours could be developed which are built around particular themes or locations. The following are some suggestions:

Maritime History Tour

The shipyard site at Port Arthur offers a fascinating insight into the ‘other’ side of Port Arthur. The notion of a ship-building industry situated in this beautiful bay has an almost romantic resonance for visitors. Given the importance of sailing and whaling as an industry at this time and the skills required to construct a whaling ship, it seems

appropriate to explore this aspect of the site more fully. This could be done in a variety of ways – through exhibition, installation, video, etc.

Garden Tour

The gardens at Port Arthur offer material on all aspects of the gardening experience. The layout of some of the gardens (for example, the Government Gardens) offers a view of gardens as a reclusive domain that contemporary garden enthusiasts might well find fascinating. The ladies took leisure there, freed from the gaze of the prisoners. The gardens offer a snapshot of the past, so that gardeners can learn about early garden design and about plants they might otherwise not see. Furthermore, the gardens construct basic understandings about the relationship between individuals and the land. Gardening research and practice are both ways in which individuals explore and express their relationship with the land – and so with notions of Australian identity.

This aspect of visitor interaction with the site could be enhanced in a number of ways: for example, publications about the garden research being undertaken at the site could be prepared, specialist gardening tours organised, a dedicated part of the web site could be created (with visitors encouraged to participate), and even a nursery set up to sell unusual plants that visitors might want to cultivate as their participation in this history. Contacts could also be made with television programs such as *Gardening Australia* and *Burke's Backyard* to advertise the gardening history activities of the site.

Penal history tour

Although it seems that the whole site is a tour of penal history, there is an opportunity to make a really informed comparison of different penal systems, using the Penitentiary and the Separate Prison as examples, as well as Pt Puer. The associated political history of the Chartists and the New Ireland prisoners could be used to explicitly address the notion of Australian identity formation.

This could be explored further in terms of how contemporary Australians of different cultural backgrounds view this part of Australia's identity – and even more interestingly, how indigenous Australians viewed the behaviour they witnessed then and how they see it as a component of white culture in Australia.

A variety of media, distributed throughout the site, could be used highlighting those places which contrast most with each other and create most reaction from visitors. Such a tour would directly address the question which visitors seem to bring with them about the 'Australian soul', especially visitors not born in Australia but who are now citizens.

There are a number of occupations which must have been conducted on site, about which specialist tours could be developed, contrasting current practices. These include:

- A Handyman's tour (looking at such things as blacksmithing, carpentry and plumbing)
- Cooking and cleaning tour
- Security Guard's tour

- Builder's tour
- Industrial history tour.

For those interested in such practical matters, a guided tour would provide a way of getting to know the site without direct reference to the penal aspect. The site is full of fascinating objects and stories around which 'practical' tours could be devised for those less interested in convicts. How, for example did they keep food fresh? Or, construct doorways; keep the prisoners under control; or make boots?

Medical Tour

The hospital and the Junior Medical Officer's House were sites of healing, dissection and haunting. Those with a personal or professional interest in medical history would be engaged by more extensive treatment than is currently possible on tours such as the Ghost Tours.

The mid 19th century was a time of intense medical experimentation and research, often using the bodies of the dead. The comparatively ready availability of 'state-owned' corpses at Port Arthur would have had a significant impact on medical research in the British Empire.

Ecclesiastical Tour

This tour could explore the development of religious diversity in Australia and the consequences of that diversity for Australian identity. At Port Arthur, the link between religion and rebellion could also be made because of the Catholic vs Protestant history. These relationships, and their (lack of) resolution are expressed very powerfully on site in the material buildings, providing an opportunity not available elsewhere to make idiosyncratic seeming material more accessible.

The role of the clergy in the administration of justice and in rehabilitating convicts is a fascinating story, raising many practical and theological questions. Such a tour would appeal to present day clergy and lay people alike.

'Reflections' Tour

The bucolic look of Port Arthur creates many questions for the contemporary visitor, whether from Australia or overseas. These questions relate not only to the nature of Australian society then and now, but also to how individuals are treated by their society.

For the interpreter of the site this visual beauty and its meanings raises a number of issues: how might the contrast between the current beauty of the site and its grim history be incorporated into an effective discussion of the site? Should the history of the site as a tourist attraction be more fully explored? Would this undercut the other historical significance of the site (as a penal colony) or would it provide a more comprehensive story about Port Arthur? If so, this might work to dispel some of the more horrific feelings that accrue to the site. This could be done visually (e.g. through artworks, photographs) and verbally (works written about this aspect of the aspect) – and then incorporated via various media into the site (e.g. readings, visual arts, video, sound).

Its effect on visitors might be noted and the contemplative state it elicits might be encouraged – if only by providing more opportunities for contemplation such as seating at key viewing places, and the siting of resting places so that they include such vistas. The ‘high road’ tour described below might overlap the ‘Reflections’ tour.

It would be good to take further the theme of Port Arthur as a place of visitation and reflection. It has now been a tourist site for longer than it has been a convict settlement. Some provision for reading about the thoughts of other visitors, and contributing ones own impressions might be made available, for example on a website or by providing deliberate ‘graffiti boards’ or visitor’s books in appropriate places.

Indigenous Tour

The absence of an indigenous presence at Port Arthur raises the question of aboriginal history at the site, what it looked like before white colonisation, and what happened to the original inhabitants. How could their history be uncovered at this stage, and who would be able to do it? These questions challenge the basis of history and interpretive work. Other forms of interpretation, as an alternative to a tour, may be appropriate.

‘High Road’ Tours’

For people with limited mobility, a beginning has been made on site with motorised transport. However, the over 80s who were interviewed for this study, including one woman with moderate to severe arthritis, prided themselves on not using the transport. Parents of young children are also limited in the amount of walking they can do during one day.

One approach may be to provide a service built around a tour (or tours) that stop, literally, at the ‘high points’ of the site and describe walking tours which are downhill. A separate tour might also be provided which links the two or three ‘high points’ so that those who cannot walk much at all don’t have to volunteer for the ‘disabled car’. Pamphlets could be designed with different explanations for different combinations of downhill ‘paths’ and one which linked all of the uphill stops. This is a kind of ‘location’ tour with an underlying purpose, rather than a thematic one. The ‘high points’ tour could include a thematic one, for example the ‘Reflections’ tour. A second could interpret the semaphore tower and ‘hills’ area of PAHS.

‘Athlete’s Tour’

At the other end of the scale, a special tour could be devised for those with the energy and the inclination to take advantage of this large site with its many ups and downs,. An athletically challenging and picturesque route would be Visitor Centre – Scorpion Rock – Irish cottage – cricket ground - Semaphore Hill – harbour – ship yard – Visitor Centre. Interpretation might include examples of some of the strenuous physical work done by soldiers and convicts.

Provide for children and families throughout the site

The Interview study, observations and Quester Testing confirmed that children are not visibly and consistently catered for on site. Some visitors have suggested dress ups or

'pop up' characters with whom children can engage. However, a preferable alternative is to design 'real' and meaningful activities. Children's very positive responses to the recent Archaeology tours suggest that this is an appropriate activity. There may be further examples, such as gardens where children can engage in activities that interpret the past while being very 'hands on' in the present.

Another possibility, shown to be very successful recently, is the performance of short plays.

It may be possible to develop simulations which take the successful 'convict cards' further, as extended role plays. There are co-operative computer games which give children choices as characters in a story interacting with each other. Space in the Visitor Centre could be used for terminals and an interactive game, where children play out some of the scenarios that are already described there. These games could also be adapted to the web so they could be used at schools in preparation for visits. The National Museum of Australia has done some preliminary work on a range of educational games for children, for a museum setting.

An information board at the entrance to the Visitor Centre should have a section, lower down, that is designed to communicate specifically to children what the events of the day are, and the special places and activities on site for them.

The research has shown that families with small children are unlikely to divide up as friendship groups do. This means that children's activities need to make provision for adults as well, and if possible, ways for parents and children to interact in relation to the material. Information on a few of the Port Arthur families, with details about the daily life of each member as points of identification, is one approach that would assist families to engage in discussions of this kind. A quiz format could be used as a follow up in car journey material, or on a website.

Consider visitor expressions of regret for the events of 1996

Some visitors come to Port Arthur with memories of the events of 1996 from news coverage, or even through personal networks. While the memorials are appreciated, and considered very appropriate, there may be a need for further discussion about ways of providing more resolution for a few visitors. The genre analysis suggests that the recurrence of what seems like an insensitive interest in the details may also be an expression of fear or of powerlessness. It would be good to address these underlying issues, rather than ignoring them on the site.

One desire that was expressed in a few interviews was to know more about the people who died. More personalised information was requested, rather than a list of names.

The tragic events were communicated into the living rooms of people throughout the world, and some visitors come to Port Arthur, wanting to express their own feelings about the events. One example may be a small ritual action through which visitors could express their own feelings and perhaps leave a token at the Port Arthur site. Examples

could include planting a tree, buying a seedling and planting it when they get home, placing a flower in the memorial, tying a prayer to a tree, throwing a coin in a well.

Appendix 3: Relationship between planning documents as outlined in the CP, 2000.

I have been unable to drop this figure in here as I had hoped, my computer won't allow me to do it for some unknown reason.

Appendix 4: Interpretation Policy as outlined in the CP, 2000.

5.14. Interpretation

- Interpretation of the Port Arthur Historic Site will be undertaken in accordance with the Interpretation Plan. (The 1996 Interpretation Plan requires revision in the light of this Conservation Plan.)
- Selection of themes and messages to be interpreted on site will have primary regard to the significance of the site.
- Messages to be conveyed in interpretation will be prioritised and communicated to all involved in the site management.
- The primary message of on-site interpretation will convey the significance of the place and the physical evolution of the site including conservation processes.
- Interpretation programs and initiatives will be undertaken in a manner which minimises impact on the fabric of significant elements.
- Opportunities will be provided for visitor interaction with cultural heritage elements of the site – consistent with physical conservation requirements.
- Interpretation will extend to historic activities, structures and landscapes and will, where possible, focus on real historic elements. The introduction of new, purpose-built interpretative elements will be minimised.
- All works undertaken on site (involving both cultural fabric and infrastructure) should be consistent with the broad aim of interpreting significance.
- The approach to interpretation will extend beyond the Port Arthur Historic Site itself, providing an understanding of the place in its historical, geographical and social context.