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Lake Shore Lodge
The Sandbanks,
Prince Edward County

Report on Condition

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Peter John Stokes
Consulting Restoration Architect

13 July 1981

Lake Shore Lodge

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Report on Condition.

The site was visited on the 8th of July, 1981, and an investigation made of its physical and structural condition to determine the advisability and practicability of retaining the building as the nucleus of a proposed resort development to serve as a tourist attraction in the County of Prince Edward.

Background:

The writer was permitted to study the excellent report prepared on the subject building by Peter Bergender in 1974. With few exceptions, and these mostly amounting to reinterpretation of evidence and minor corrections, this report can be endorsed as a thorough documentation of the building and a careful examination of its capabilities. The findings of this latest study, reported here, build upon this previous information and complement it to a great degree. Regrettably in the intervening seven years the buildings of the Lake Shore Lodge complex have not been kept secure and senseless vandalism has wrought havoc infinitely more destructive than almost a century of wear and tear. The condition of the complex therefore must be understood in the light of recent depredations and prior to detailed explanations a general description of the buildings and assessment of the problems is in order.

Historical Importance:

Lake Shore Lodge, comprising the central Lodge building, the manager's house and the cottages plus vestiges of its recreational facilities comprises a unique example of the resort hotel of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century in the Prince Edward County area. The "breed" is becoming something of a rarity as fires take their toll of the old lake resorts elsewhere and stricter code requirements necessitate improvements which obliterate, to a great extent, their original summer cottage character.

The arrangement of separate cottages and a central lodge is a common 20th century lakeland resort plan, but the lodge is generally not much more than a house, or a slightly overgrown cottage with additional space sometimes provided in an extension for communal dining and attendant kitchen facilities. Here Lake Shore Lodge also comprised a major accommodation space for guests in the

manner of the summer hotel once common in resorts on the Great Lakes as well as other inland lake districts.

Lake Shore Lodge is all the more remarkable for its imaginative if not daring structural solutions such as the creation of clear spans to lower floors. Daring too is the apparent fragility of the structure which has outlasted not only the elements for almost a century, but also the inherent weaknesses provided by its builders, not to mention the plundering and vandalism of the last decade.

Architectural Significance:

Lake Shore Lodge, particularly the lodge building, still represents the summer resort hotel type in its multi-storey frame construction and wood finish. This is particularly true of the interior where original spaces survive with the structure exposed to view. The organization of the plan into reception and communal spaces such as the dining room and other areas with clear spans formerly serving similar purposes typifies such buildings. Despite considerable rearrangement of the main or ground floor it is possible to imagine, if not eventually to determine, the original use of the spaces. The upstairs layouts reflect the typical resort hotel of Victorian and Edwardian times which persisted here until the early 1970s with relatively little alteration. The exterior has lost its main detail of the front verandah, a feature not difficult to restore.

The manager's house, so named here to denote the small late Victorian house, possibly of the late 1870s or early 80s, to the north of the main lodge, is an excellent example of its type, with fine detail, and possible to re-use. Despite vandalism and neglect the earlier sections can be restored. This building is a vital adjunct to the lodge.

The cottages are a fascinating array of separate family accommodations supplementing the facilities of the main lodge. There are a number of types, some contemporary it would appear with the last phase of the lodge construction, others more recent. The earliest appear to be late Victorian, the ell-shaped storey and a half version with corner verandah typical and a centre gable salt-box roughly contemporary. An Edwardian or possible later version with rear wing was followed by a number of one storey cabins, a single and double unit with gable roofs and the last a hip roofed design. These cottages are arranged rather uninterestingly in an almost straight line set slightly back from the cliff edge and originally fronting a board-walk to the lodge. All cottages are in relatively poor condition, without permanent foundations, much damaged by vandals and of concern only as models for possible reconstruction and as sources

of salvage for repairs to the lodge. Measurement and drawing of the various types is recommended and a survey of their present layout, complete with neighbouring trees and shoreline, is advocated.

Various site improvements to provide recreational facilities over the years should be recorded. The newer dance pavilion to the north of the lodge may still prove to be a useful structure although its design is distinctly foreign to the major features of the complex. Development of modern designs in additional complementary accommodations may make this building seem less like the lonely onion in a petunia patch.

Physical Condition:

Concerns for physical and structural condition are being separated. Although these are complementary different criteria apply and approaches to the correction of faults and deficiencies may vary, and have to be considered separately. Remarks have already been made about the condition of accessory buildings and comments here will deal with the main lodge.

Despite the increasing vandalism over the last few years and total neglect the main lodge is in remarkably good condition. However some serious deterioration is evident and immediate steps, to be described later, must be taken to ensure its survival. Such precautions may be necessary in order to avert further decay should it be decided from this report to explore the feasibility for development in a further study.

Generally framing is in good condition above the ground floor despite leaking roofs and windows open to the weather. Deformation and distortion is evident, however, obviously due to settlement and dislocation of poorly constructed foundations and decaying substructures.

Minor instances of decay in finished woodwork do occur such as at roof eaves and at the heads of openings where the pediment trim forming caps has not been flashed. Some deterioration of siding is noted at internal angles at the rear where roof water collects at the foot of valleys, its escape impeded by debris or the awkward configuration of the roof itself. Detail such as eaves brackets have been destroyed by vandals, but models survive for reproduction.

Interior paint finishes are generally in poor condition as can be expected where a building is left vacant and unheated during the winter months or abandoned as the lodge has been, for the past nine years. Where the original

stain and varnish finishes survive these are remarkably well preserved attesting to the suitability of such treatment to the seasonal use of the building.

The ground or main floor of the building and its supporting floor structure show the greatest degree of deterioration, largely due to continual neglect and ill-advised improvements, both structural and cosmetic. It is a tribute to timber frame structures and the carpenter-builders that the building has not collapsed long ago. Although some of the problems relate to the original construction some have been aggravated subsequently by poor maintenance practices.

Thus it is noted that most of the front or east sills of the building, being encased by the later concrete stoop, are decayed and will require replacement. Signs of dry rot as well as punky ends to joists and damp woodwork were noted from the crawlspaces. Similarly rot can be expected where the north stoop occurs at the old wellhead. The grade has been raised in the rear courtyard probably to help disguise the large steel septic tank: this procedure has resulted in the rear sill to the main block being largely decayed and a portion below the doorway to the extension in the north-east internal angle having rotted away completely for some five feet and the ends of joists adjacent also badly decayed. Dislocation of the rear or west foundation in the north wing extension has caused the base of the frame wall to bow out, the exterior cladding to break away and the sill beneath and bottoms of studs to decay.

The extremely poor stone foundations to the later (1893) extensions has caused distortions to the structure above. Later and more recent attempts to stabilize the floor structure of the western extension of the south wing for instance were temporary and poorly executed consisting mainly of concrete blocks bearing on earth, without footings, and propping a motley collection of reinforcing beams now dislocated by frost and loose, giving no support whatsoever. Great cracks occur in these foundations and some sections have disintegrated entirely, as at the south-west corner of the north wing. The flimsy construction of the sill (and this is a corrected version of the Bergender study) comprises a 1" x 8" board forming a base plate for the 2" x 4" sill on which the joists and studs rest. Although studs and joists are spiked together this is a rather flimsy base for a two and three storey building: a double 2" x 4" plate is the recommended modern practice. Only at the foundation wall between centre block and south wing is the sill with the 2" x 4" below and a 1" board above: here

however the studs do not coincide with joists if the 1" board props between this sill and a plate across the ends of the joist is any indication.

In several instances the decay evident in sills and joists may have affected the ends of studs. This is demonstrated in the front or east wall of the earliest section of the building namely the east part of the north wing. Here the outside walls are filled with brick nogging laid on edge and rendered with plaster between the studs. A dank, musty smell pervades the north-east ground floor room and moisture has obviously been coming through the wall particularly to the north of the second window from the corner where the interior plywood, a later finish, has delaminated. Behind, the plaster has fallen off, the lath is completely decayed and the stud is consumed with brown rot and can be picked out with the fingers. There are obvious signs of the cause - the overflowing of the eavestrough above choked with grass tussocks and now filled with brick from the collapsed chimney above. This is aggravated by the concrete stoop encasing the woodwork below and lack of cross ventilation in the section of the crawlspace underneath. Decay was also promoted by the brick filling retaining moisture and preventing drying of the timber. Other instances of similar problems, due to like causes, but probably less severe, can be expected elsewhere.

Serious distortions occur where the various sections of the building are joined together. This is analysed as being the result of frost action and foundation movement which has resulted in settlement and pulling away of the later structures. (The Bergender report suggests that the floor slopes were, to a large extent, built in, probably due to miscalculation of levels. However the considerable slope between the north wing extension and the earlier front section, most noticeable at the second floor level, follows through in the severe distortion of stud walls and plates where the two sections abut.)

The most serious internal deformation occurs towards the rear of the main block. But first it is of interest to note the structural mutilation of later times to demonstrate the capacity of the old structure to withstand abuse, perhaps auguring well for its future capabilities. The floor framing in the central block of three storeys is in a north-south direction with the partitions on either side of the stair hall originally serving as supporting structures. These were remarkably lightly framed in any event, that remaining having 2" x 3" studs at anywhere from 32" to 44" on centres, and relying mainly

on the stiffening of a 7/8" thick narrow (3 1/2" face width) tongue and groove matchboard finish on the hall side. The south side partition has been largely removed but no replacement beam is evident: building archaeology may reveal a well nailed scab reinforcement above the ceiling serving to maintain the continuity of the floor structure. Curiously very little distortion is evident and deflection is relatively minor.

However in the area of the internal washroom and dishwashing area to the rear of the main block very serious decay problems are evident in the crawlspace. The plumbing of the washroom possibly leaking due to pipe and/or connections being broken by settlement or freezing and left unrepaired, was probably the main cause, for the rot is due to moisture confined in a poorly ventilated space. Not only have joists decayed completely, but so have supporting beams thus letting down superimposed supporting structures above: the hump at the north-south corridor at the head of the stairs is very noticeable. (Some plumbing "murder" may also have occurred to the structure here where a soil pipe and waste have been installed for a later bathroom). Joists in the crawlspace are decayed in the spans on both sides of the hall corresponding with the washroom location: probably constant moisture dripped along these members over a considerable period of time.

For the main upper floor structures appear sound, although distorted in many cases as noted previously. Roof structures likewise, despite their light construction, and their curious structure, are still in good order generally. Some isolated instances of decay at end bearings due to roof leaks may necessitate reinforcement or replacement of sections of structural members.

Structural Condition:

The structural system of the Lodge is an imaginative solution to the building problem, daring in its conception and remarkably economic. The structure is a light timber frame, probably mostly of the balloon type, although this was not fully investigated, noting, however, that the third floor of the main block is framed separately from a plate at the second floor ceiling, the maximum length of studs presumably only achieving a two storey height.

Wall studs are 2" x 4" dressed, spaced at 24" on centres and finished with a tightly fitted ship-lap type siding of cove pattern. The back surface of this siding often served as the interior finish, particularly in the upstairs bedrooms, where it was lightly stained and varnished originally and later painted,

the studs remaining exposed to view. This necessitated a closer at the floor, so that the walls are, at least partially, fire-stopped, a common danger of balloon frames being the omission of this precaution.

Floor framing appears to be consistent throughout, largely correlated to wall framing so that studs and joist ends could be spiked together at walls to provide rigidity to the structure. Flooring like the walls, is a 7/8" thick or better tongued and grooved material in medium widths of 6" more or less. Ceilings were finished, like the walls, in narrow beaded matchboarding so that floor structures above the ground floor were a relatively rigid sandwich, while ground floor and top storey ceilings had the board finish to one side only. These board finishes were blind nailed at an angle through the tongue section creating a tight fit with considerable stiffness and bridging effect. Floor joists are 2" x 8" also at 24" on centres. From the crawlspace spans of up to 13'-6" occur in the main block and south wing, but without cross bridging or blocking. Presumably the same obtains for upper floors.

Ceiling joists are 2" x 6" at roughly 30" on centres overlapping the top of the wall plates as an extension to form the eaves, the rafters of 2" x 6", or 2" x 5" in one section at least, resting on the outer cantilevers and nailed to them, presumably through the upper edge of the toe. Hip rafters are generally the same size as main and jack rafters, ridge boards commonly of 1" thick material, although an older section had a 2" thick member.

The ceiling support system combined with hanging of the second floor floor structure to create open spans in the floor below is worthy of description, and admiration if not amazement. As construction advanced it is apparent that this structural technique was refined for the later section in the south-west extension is more regular and better executed than that immediately adjacent in the east section of the south wing. The principle involved forming a rudimentary if rather flimsy truss system of the ceiling joists as the lower chord, the rafters as the inclined chords and board (usually 1" x 8") braces as tension members with lower connections generally straddling the corridor below. The system has no collar tie to reduce the rafter span and relies on cut nails and spikes for fastenings. Ceiling joists forming the lower chord are butted at the centre with a 1" x 6" board scab roughly 3'-0" long to one side maintaining structural continuity. Running the length of the structures, and alongside the corridor partitions below is a single 2" x 5 1/2" ribbon. To this is toe-nailed from the side the 2" x 3" stud forming a hanger to the second floor floor joist below, presumably similarly toe nailed or through nailed to the joist alongside. This stud also forms the corridor partition and carries

the 7/8" beaded board finish to the hall side. A blocking piece is generally installed 3' - 6" or so above the floor line presumably to serve as a stiffener and backing to the boarding or to accommodate future wainscot finish to bedrooms. Generally doorways below were carefully offset so that at least one hanger was attached to a joist, exception the west end of the north wing where the cut off ends of hangers are still visible in two doorways whereas no hanger is visible in a corresponding door opposite. This may have been a slip: it would be interesting to know if any additional support to ensure structural adequacy and safety was ever constructed. A similar treatment occurs in the partitions between the three rooms in the east end of the south wing, again to provide for a clear span below and here the stud hangers are supported by short cross pieces spanning between ceiling joists. The earlier work is a hodge-podge of blocking resting on top of the ceiling joists, but later work was the continuous ribbon technique curiously interrupted in certain places hard to explain now, but presumably to some purpose originally. Where the end slopes of the hip roofs occur to wings the hanging braces are secured to the jack rafters on either side.

The nature of the framing system and its remarkable ability to flex without falling apart, and this has occurred continually probably from the time of construction, gives great hope for its rehabilitation. The light framing makes raising, re-alignment and reinforcing of the structure relatively simple. Repairs and the replacement of decayed and defective material are easier in such a structure and modern materials and methods, not substantially different from the original, can be employed to accomplish the task. Only a portion of the ground and second floors of the north-east wing are plastered and pose a greater problem, particularly with the brick infilling. The remainder is wood finish which will not be damaged easily providing the building is treated carefully while being repaired.

(An explanation of the curious wood-lined pits in the crawlspace under the north-east section of the Lodge, believed to be the first section constructed, should be noted here as a reinterpretation of the evidence mentioned in Bergender report. A small pit with clean sand floor occurs on the north side and was reached by a trap door through the floor of the rear room. The larger area reached by a short flight of steps roughly below the side stair above also once had a trapdoor into the rear room which indicates this room to have been the original kitchen. This underfloor space was supplied with shelves and a hanging frame for the same or other uses and was provided with a curious

shaft towards the west, the end of which could be closed off, presumably acting as a form of ventilation for cooling. These are probably cool spaces for the food necessary to store for such an establishment. A stone construction exists in the north-east corner of the rear extension, latterly the kitchen, and beside the water tanks above. This is also partly lined with wood and may have been used to keep food, with ice as the coolant. However, being of stone, this last space may have been a cistern originally.)

It is recognized that the stone foundations in later work are defective and seem to have been constructed in shallow trenches without being taken a few more inches to bedrock. Proper foundations of a poured concrete footing on solid undisturbed rock and either concrete block or poured concrete walls above can be constructed easily while the building is raised and temporarily supported after being repaired and re-aligned. Adequate cross ventilation must be provided in new foundations to maintain air circulation below the ground floor. All timber repairs must be done with preservative treated lumber, green where concealed, clear where exposed to view. Likewise existing timber to remain, particularly in crawlspaces should be treated. Roof boarding and structural roof repairs should be dealt with likewise.

State:

There is nothing in the physical and structural condition of the lodge which would preclude its retention and preservation, bar the expense involved. However, one other factor bearing upon the subject is the state of the fabric from the points of view of originality and alteration, as well as detail significant to the building, which might mitigate against its restoration or adaptation.

The exterior detail is characteristic of the period. Sash are in poor condition, most broken and damaged: these, however are simple and relatively inexpensive to reproduce. Doors have been stripped from the building, but unless the upper floors are to be restored and used again as accommodation, this may not be important. Patterns, moreover, survive should reproduction be necessary.

The exterior has suffered the most in the loss of the front and encircling verandahs: these could be restored from illustrations. Likewise a satisfactory restoration can be made for the main doors in the centre block. The fire escapes provided for from the ends of second floor corridors (and now converted to windows) could be reinstated should the upper floors be refurbished

or used for exhibits. The existing picture windows to the dining room area should be reconsidered for a better treatment in the adaptation of the building to continued use.

Both exterior and interior detail is of the simplest sort, not difficult to copy and all originally machine-produced as common today. Patterns exist for all detail except verandah trim and this appears to resemble some of the detail surviving on the older cottages. Hardware of the right sort can be scrounged from later Victorian buildings if need be. Even fittings and furniture will be relatively easy to come by and not inordinately expensive if a restored interior is to be considered as a special drawing card.

Changes made to the building in its more recent history are generally of a makeshift and not too sympathetic character: these can be dispensed with out-of-hand. It will be in the handling of additional facilities and later building, such as the dance hall, where ingenuity will be needed to include a consummate sense of building and site design capable of making the most of a superb setting, a fascinating monument to the pleasurable leisure of the past, and catering to future uses of a newly discovered experience.

Other practical considerations, however, must be stated. Structural sufficiency has to be investigated in a feasibility study to follow. To that effect it is noted that the wider spans of ground floors are capable, according to calculations, of sustaining a total load of 39 pounds per square foot. (Note that the code requirement for living quarters is 40 p.s.f. or roughly 45 p.s.f. including the dead load, and for dining rooms and dance floors 50 p.s.f. or some 55 with dead load added). However by placing an extra beam at mid span the load capacity is increased over three times to 145 p.s.f. - more than adequate for uses contemplated. Second floors, presuming the hanging system to be adequate and this has to be checked carefully, the load carrying capacity is roughly 59 p.s.f., more than adequate where a 40 pound live load is the code requirement. This would also depend on the capacity of the roof truss system, hangers and also fastenings. These items would require further careful checking and investigation of site conditions. Possible on-site testing by carefully controlled loading experiments would determine structural performance more accurately and make assessment of the system more reasonable. Certainly the system devised is obviously adequate, to the point that it has resisted distortion so well: mere calculation cannot quite determine its capacity.

Another question which arises, which is related to the building's state, and must be explored in greater detail in a further study, concerns the adequacy of the lodge not only in its method of construction, but also in its finish. With the amount of unprotected wood in the building it is possible that stricter modern requirements will necessitate the backing of wood finishes by a fire-resistant skin such as gypsum board or the covering of original wood finishes. This would be regrettable for the boarding is the characteristic covering. However, if a concealed fire skin is permitted, at least in the much used parts, then other improvements such as insulation can be contemplated. The removal of existing finishes would have to be done very carefully if it is to be re-used, but modern substitutes or salvage from elsewhere can make up the loss. For this reason material from the old cottages may be of use. (It is fascinating to realise, after overcoming the initial shock of vandals buzz-sawing almost an inch into studs to remove a whole section of interior boarding on the north wall of the centre block towards the front, that the internal surface of the cove siding was exposed, the studs on view and the whole lightly stained or possibly just varnished. The bearing partition opposite, and alongside the stair hall, is similarly treated). It is possible that adequate smoke detection and fire alarm systems would do much to solve the problem: this aspect would have to be explored in the feasibility study.

Other practical considerations in a future study will involve water supply and waste disposal, not addressed in the terms of this report. Protection of the site from lake erosion will also require investigation.

In Conclusion:

The physical and structural conditions noted in the Lodge combined with the state of the fabric related to its origins cannot be judged to rule out the prospect of its preservation. It is recommended, therefore, that a feasibility study be put in hand to explore the capabilities of the reconstitution of the site and its surviving buildings noted as worthwhile preserving with a view to the development of a resort area based on this historic precedent.


Lake Shore Lodge is a building now of unique historical importance to the County of Prince Edward, and of considerable architectural merit as an example of the frame resort hotel of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. Its long association with the County's history and the extended period, amounting to almost a century, of its operation as a summer resort have few parallels in

the province.

The Lodge could become a nucleus of a new development either serving as an historic display partly in active use or as a fully developed facility, depending on the feasibility of such a program including the costs involved. The small manager's house nearby is also a valuable asset. The more modern dance hall should be considered in any future study since this is a usable adjunct to the complex. Consideration should be given to using the record of the old cottages as inspiration for a collection of re-created historic examples more attractively disposed and combined with additional well-designed modern accommodation, in separate buildings or in joined units to augment these. The landscape of the site is important and mature trees must be taken into account in siting buildings and further recreational facilities. Treatment of the shoreline should be explored with a view to future protection of the site.

The feasibility study recommended will have to explore the cost of rehabilitation of the Lodge and other buildings considered worthy of preservation. Such costs should include the restoration of essential detail. It has to be recognized that such cost estimates may prompt a review of the recommendation because the retention of the Lodge may involve a premium which must be judged in the context of other benefits to the County in the preservation of its heritage.

13 July 1981


Peter John Stokes
Consulting Restoration Architect

Lake Shore Lodge,
The Sandbanks, Prince Edward County

Immediate Attentions:

To protect the site, even during the period required for further study, requires immediate measures as follows:

(1) Secure the Lodge against unauthorized entry:

- (a) Board up all ground floor openings, providing one securely padlocked doorway for entry and inspection;
- (b) Lodge all removed material now on site in ground floor;
- (c) Protect all upper window and door openings to keep out the weather;
- (d) Temporarily board in the rear section of the third floor to exclude the weather.

Preferably paint the surface white to minimize its unsightliness;

- (e) Close in all crawlspace access with secure wire mesh screens.
- (f) Temporarily repair missing tread in north-end stair;

(2) Protect the Lodge from weather.

- (a) Close up the chimney opening in the north side;
- (b) Provide temporary patches or roofing where roof coverings are holed or missing and where flashings are deficient;
- (c) (i) Clean out gutters and downspouts to ensure drainage away from building;
- (ii) Install temporary gutters and downspouts where rainwater spills on to concrete stoop or platforms.

(3) Secure house to north of lodge likewise

(4) Fill in or cover old rusting septic tank in rear courtyard of lodge; (This is a potential hazard to small children).

(5) Record cottages and site:

- (a) (i) Have various cottage types measured and drawn;
- (ii) Record in survey cottage site related to the shoreline and to the property survey which will serve as the basic site plan for future proposals;
- (b) Make out list of salvage available from cottages and applicable to Lodge and north house repairs;
- (c) Have cottages dismantled and salvage stored in secured area protected from the weather.

(6) Remove any site ornaments such as ornamental lamp posts to place of safekeeping.

(7) Record, if not done so already, location of additional site features, including recreational facilities, foundations, retaining walls, roadways, paths, service poles, lamp standard locations, and mature trees noting the size, species and condition of each specimen.

This information will be important in the development of proposals for the site.

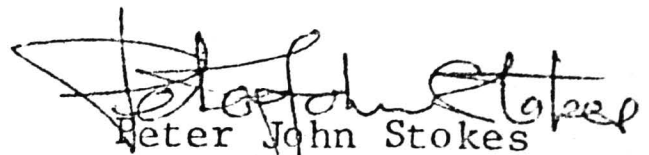
(8) Clean the site of all loose debris, placing usable building material in a secure place under cover.

Finally:

The site should be inspected regularly and the help of police sought to curb further vandalism and abuse of the property. It may be advisable to seek the cooperation of local citizens and to create local interest by carrying a story about the place and its history in the local media. It could be noted, if the decision were made to continue studying the possibilities, that such investigation will take place.

13 July 1981

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- NOTES - ① ACTION TO LIMIT ACCESS TO THE WEST POINT AREA IS CRITICAL
- ② MEDIA ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO EXPRESS A "GET TOUGH" APPROACH TO VANDALS AFTER BUILDING STABILIZED
- ③ A MAJOR SIGN FOR PLACEMENT AT THE SITE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPRESS THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR APPROACH TO VANDALS ETC.
- ④ ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE AS FREQUENT CHECKS AS POSSIBLE THROUGH OPP & PARK STAFF IN ORDER THAT REMEDIAL ACTION CAN BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY ON DAMAGE. - PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CAN ALSO BE SOUGHT IN THIS REGARD AS WELL.

J.C.M.