

Architectural Survey of Baptiste Lake

Hastings Highlands, Ontario

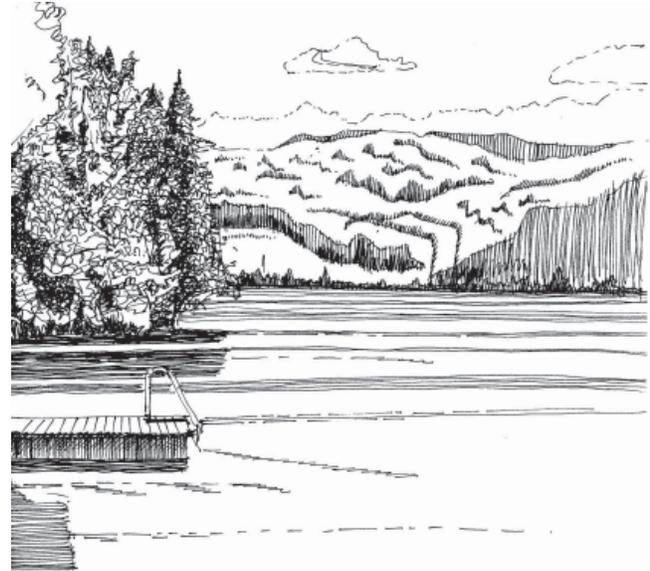
Introduction

As an architect, cottage owner and long time fan of Baptiste Lake, the opportunity to do an Architectural Survey of the lake, when presented, was both exciting and daunting. What is an Architectural Survey of a lake anyway? This was the first question to be considered. While part of a survey should include a comprehensive photo record of every cottage and built structure on the lake (you may have seen me, Ineke and Sammy floating by your shoreline taking shots and wondered what was going on), is it actually about critical analysis of cottage design? Initial thoughts might suggest that this is what an architectural survey would be, but what would the value of this be? How would this type of analysis provide any kind of clues as to how to direct future development on the lake? Design preference is such a subjective matter that to even attempt any kind of critical analysis would merely enrage rather than engage. So to be clear, this survey is not about the relative merits of the design of the many structures on the lake. The design police will not be showing up at anyone's door.

For me and for the purpose of this survey, the architecture of the lake is more about the language of the lake itself. What makes Baptiste Lake, Baptiste Lake? What about it makes it special for us, gets under our skin and becomes like no other lake; no other place on earth?

Like any community, a town, a city, a village, Baptiste lake is organized and understood by certain elements and patterns. We understand a city through landmarks, nodes, pathways and edges. These are what make cities unique unto themselves, distinctive, and memorable. These elements provide the cognitive mapping that allows us to navigate and appreciate our surroundings. Lake communities are no different. We understand Baptiste Lake through this same kind of cognitive mapping. Landmarks, shoreline, edges, pathways and nodes all work together to define the language the lake speaks to us, making it both unique and understandable. You can imagine that this kind of analysis can offer clues as to how to direct future development – how to forever protect the language of the lake while allowing the opportunities for inevitable future development.

The following discussion provides an analysis of the way in which Baptiste Lake speaks to us, followed by a brief discussion of built density and its impact, in particular, on the shoreline.



Dog Bay, Baptiste Lake

The Language of the Lake

The Arrival Experience

We all know the joy and exhilaration of arriving at the lake after a long and often traffic-burdened drive. That first view of the lake as you turn the corner or come down the hill lifts your spirit and the stress of the drive suddenly disappears.

Baptiste Lake is served by two principal roadways, North Baptiste Lake Road and South Baptiste Lake Road. These of course branch off into many roadways and for many cottage owners their first view of the lake is from their own property. Two key points of arrival to the lake that everyone would identify with are experienced along South Baptiste Lake Road. Arriving from the west, the road opens up to the view of the main lake. From the east, the road forms a causeway across Redmond Bay. The layered landforms of these arrival views are signatures of Baptiste Lake and introduce the language it speaks. Secondary arrival views such as upon arrival at Country Fare or Baptiste Lake Marina reinforce the experience.



Points of Arrival



Arrival from the East on South Baptiste Road

The Language of the Lake



Public Docks at Country Fare



View from Country Fare



arriving from the west on South Baptiste Road

How we navigate the lake

Lakes, like cities, offer a hierarchy of patterns of movement from main thoroughfares to branch routes. Baptiste Lake is no exception. The main route connects Baptiste Lake Marina in the east through the main lake to the narrows to Hay Bay. Branch routes connect this thoroughfare to the many bays that form the complete lake. The sculpted landforms provide the clues by which we understand where we are and where we are going. If these were to be irrevocably changed or disfigured, our understanding would change.



Navigation Routes



Moving westward on the Main Lake



Moving westward



Moving westward

Natural Architecture of the Lake – Rock and Shoreline

The natural architecture of Baptiste Lake provides the landmarks by which we place ourselves in the Lake. The many beautiful and rugged rock outcroppings offer an understanding of position on the lake and provide a character unique to Baptiste Lake. While treed shoreline is beautiful, it's the punctuating rock and cliffs that provide yet another signature of the Lake. Small or large, how often do you hear directional instruction being given relative to one of these landmarks: *"Just past Diving Rock and on the right"*



Natural Architecture



Natural Architecture of the Lake – Rock and Shoreline



Cottage Density

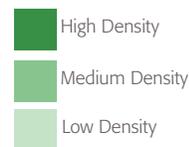
Development Density of the Lake

The density of cottages varies on the Lake from very high density, medium density to quite light in density. The difference in impact is quite remarkable. The highest density is on the south shore of the main lake from the nodal village of Baptiste, east to the marina and into Redmond Bay. On the north shore of the main lake from Irwin's point east and north along the west side of Lavalley Bay. The core of this density is coincidental with the heaviest traffic route on the lake. There is relatively little remaining natural shoreline through this area.

Medium density areas include the north shore of Dog Bay, the north shore of the main lake from the narrows into Dog Bay into West Bay, the west side and a portion of the north shore of Hay Bay, Blueberry Island and around Paradise Island in Lavalley Bay. Shorelines are more



Cottage Density



Baptiste Village

continuous and intact through these areas impacted largely by landscape decisions rather than sheer density.

Lighter density areas are typically found on the east and west shores of Dog Bay, the west shore of the main lake and the north and south shores of Lavalley Bay and Beyond Deer Island towards the Falls. This area is typically characterized by fairly subtle interventions on the shoreline – docks slipping out from the trees, some with smaller scale boathouses.



Main Lake

Impact on shoreline – size vs. shoreline – landscape vs. shoreline

The way in which a structure is placed on a lakefront property is instrumental to the impact it has on the lake. If a property is cleared of its trees and brush to allow for a building, the impact to the lake is considerable. The shoreline is interrupted both visually and physically, and the expression of the structure becomes the dominant view.

If the site remains largely intact and trees and brush are strategically removed to allow construction with minimal impact to shoreline, the best of two worlds are achieved. The shoreline remains consistent and a cottage is established. The dominant view is that of the shoreline and not the cottage. Docks and boat houses can quietly extend through the shoreline landscape without dominating it. Size of cottage and boat house can have an impact on this strategy and should be carefully considered.





Conclusions and Recommendations

01

Natural architecture of the lake should remain untouched

02

Avoid any development that substantially changes geographic or landscape profiles – the language of the lake.

03

Retain shoreline landscape in site development.

04

Re-constitute lost shoreline landscape.

05

Achieve built scale that allows landscape to remain dominant.

