

## Heart Island & Its Architecture

**i. The Castle:** Like an ancient landmark of northern Europe, the castle is modeled after buildings of the 16th century, when newly revived classical details were applied to the towered, medieval forms, combining traditional elements with modern features such as large, plate glass windows and extensive verandas.

Rising six stories from the foundation level of the indoor swimming pool to the highest tower room, an elevator served over 120 rooms. Steel and concrete roofs and floors provided fireproof construction. Massive granite walls were richly ornamented with decorative details of cast terra cotta, and roofs were tiled with the same material. (They are now reclad in a similar manner.)

**ii. The Dove-Cote:** This was the first structure on the island built by the Boldts, when they were living in the old frame house, on the site of the Castle. A stone tower was topped with a pigeon house – part of the “Hennerly,” where they collected fancy fowl. It also was the first of many towers that were to rise on this and other of the nearby islands.

Between 1894 and 1896, the Power House, Alster Tower and Dove-Cote were built. The old wooden cottage was removed in 1899. A portion was relocated to Wellesley Island and is part of the golf house still in use today.

**iii. The Italian Garden:** A rocky crest of the island was extended into a level plateau by making a promenade terrace atop the stone-walled service tunnel. In contrast to a more natural character of the landscape elsewhere, this detached garden was to be geometrically formal, so high retaining walls were raised on the other sides as well, making the plan symmetrical. Marble statuary was delivered from Italy (Found half a century later, still crated, where it had sunk within an old boathouse). At the opposite extremity of the garden from the Ball Room, a fountained pool was surrounded by a curved, lower terrace, overlooking the picturesque roofscape of the Power House. Beyond, eastward down the river, is a distant horizon of water.

**iv. The Arch:** Modeled after Roman monuments, this water gate was to be the formal entry for launches, delivering guests from larger yachts anchored in deep water, friends from other islands and visitors from the mainland. Stones were cut and delivered for double rows of columns which would enclose a covered walk, extending from each side of the arch. A drawbridge within the opening was to provide a promenade on the embankment of the Swan Pond – but the ambitious project was still incomplete when all work ceased on the island.

**v. The Alster Tower (Play House):** Perhaps suggested by some old defense tower on the Alster River, flowing through Hamburg, Germany, this curious mini-castle probably was not pre-designed (for it would be nearly impossible to describe the irregular forms on paper). More likely it was improvised in a highly personal manner, evolving as it rose. Probably George Boldt himself was the real author of this imaginative and eccentric creation. His wife, Louise, shared his keen interest and great enthusiasm for these projects. (One can see here the ornate shell room, carved stair and balcony, as well as the once used two-lane bowling alley in the basement.) Unlike the main residence, this whimsical “play house” was completed and occasionally occupied by the Boldt family (parents, son and daughter), during the years when the Castle was being erected.

**vi. The Power House:** The Boldts intended to electrify the island when they acquired it, and their architects designed this facility where coal, brought by barge, would fire steam generators, within a diminutive towered chateau. An arched, stone bridge originally connected the Power House to the island, and the highest tower provided river traffic with illuminated clock faces and the music of chimes.

**vii. The Underground Passage:** The original entrance to this tunnel was at the servant’s dock on the water’s edge. Goods were to be transported from barges by way of the tunnel to storage rooms within the Castle’s foundation, thereby avoiding the main floor. The passage also houses the electrical wiring and water pipes from the Power House.

**viii. The Yacht House:** (across the water, on Wellesley Island) The family’s three yachts and enormous houseboat were accommodated, (with tall masts and rigging standing) in slips 128 feet long. The main space rises 64 feet and the high doors were so heavy that an engine was required to move them. Quarters for crews and maintenance staff were adjacent, as was a shop where racing launches were built and serviced. The Yacht House was the first of these remarkable buildings to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Boldt Castle, on Heart Island, was to be the testimony of the unsurpassed love of a man for his wife. The magnificence of the structure was to be equalled only by George Boldt’s adoration of Louise, who was the love of his life and reason for the construction of such an elaborate summer home. The finest of artists, craftsmen and materials were sought for the work which was well underway when tragedy struck. Mrs. Boldt was dead, and a telegram arrived ordering all work to stop. Three hundred workmen dropped their tools and left the island, never to return. The sculptures, Italian mantle pieces, imported tapestries and fine furniture never reached their intended places in this ill-fated, melancholy mansion. Today, visitors wander in awe through the huge, empty rooms, imagining the luxury, splendor and gaiety that might have been.

George C. Boldt came to America in the 1860’s from Prussia, the son of poor parents. A man of tremendous organizational skill, daring and imagination, he became the most successful hotel magnate in America, managing/profit sharing the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, and the Bellevue-Stratford in Philadelphia. He was the president of several companies, a trustee of Cornell University, and the director of the Hotel Association of New York. For Boldt, to dream and to do were synonymous. Boldt Castle stands as an eternal monument to the memory of the man whose dreams were no more far-reaching than his capabilities.

**BOAT TOURS** to Boldt Castle are available from both Canada and the U.S.. **PRIVATE BOAT DOCKAGE** is available at Heart Island. A shuttle from Heart Island provides access to the Boldt Yacht House on Wellesley Island.

**FOOD, GIFTS, RESTROOMS** available at concession.  
**NO SMOKING, NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES** inside Boldt Castle and other historic buildings.  
Use waste containers provided.

**NO RUNNING** in Boldt Castle or on Heart Island. No alcoholic beverages / Pet restrictions.

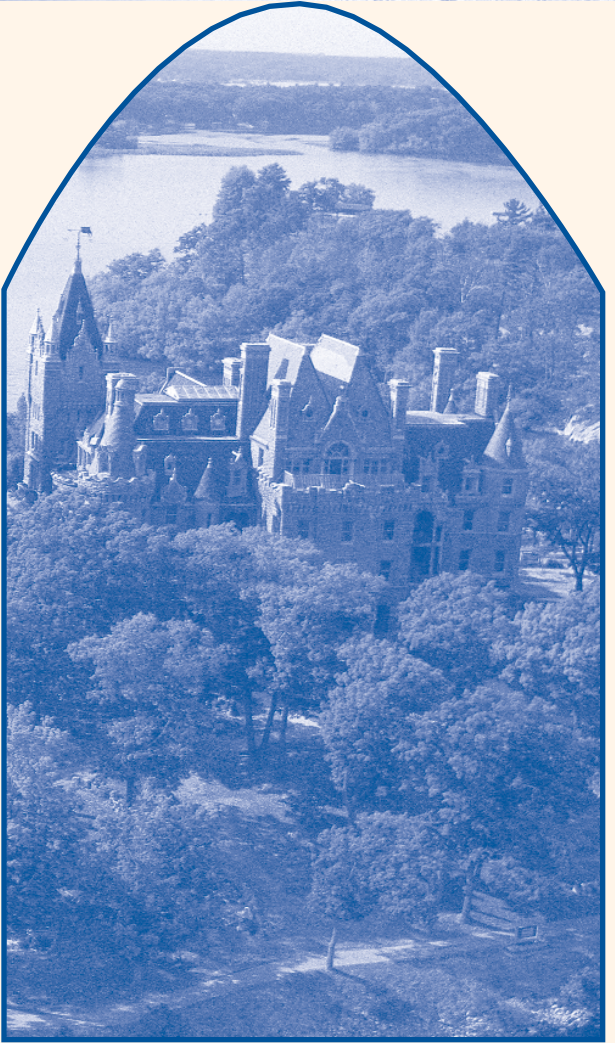
**ADMISSION: Adults \$5.75 (US); Children 6-12 \$3.50 (US)**

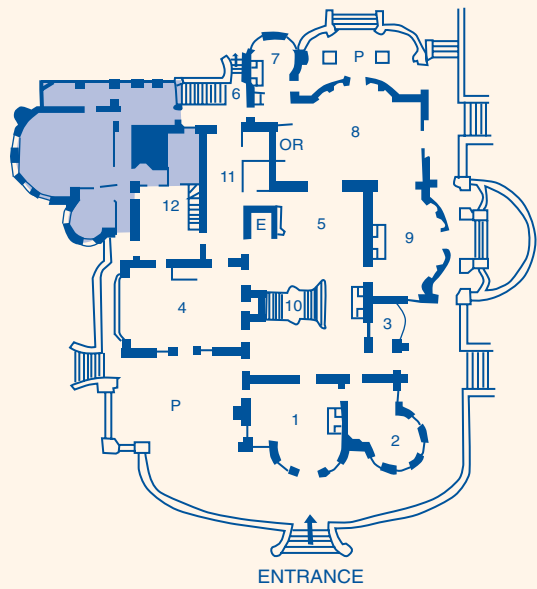
*Open daily mid May to mid October*

**Prices Subject to Change**  
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
**1000 ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL**  
**P.O. Box 400, Alexandria Bay, NY 13607**  
**1-800-8ISLAND**

Website: [www.boldtcastle.com](http://www.boldtcastle.com)

*Boldt Castle Video Offer*  
**1-800-869-2665 ask for Operator 10**  
**THOUSAND ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE**  
**US ROUTE 81 • CANADA 401**





## Ground Floor

1. Billiard Room
2. Reception Room
3. Vestibule (Original Entrance)
4. Dining Room
5. Hall
6. Porch (to Grounds)
7. Mr Boldt's Office
8. Ballroom
9. Library
10. Ground Staircase to 2nd Floor or Foundation Level
11. Public Restrooms
12. Site of Media Presentation

- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| B - Bath                      | BAL - Balcony |
| C - Closet                    | R - Roof      |
| E - Elevator Shaft            | P - Porch     |
| W - Wardrobe                  | L - Linen     |
| OR - Organ Recess             |               |
| Shaded Areas Closed to Public |               |

\$2.00

off General Adult Admission

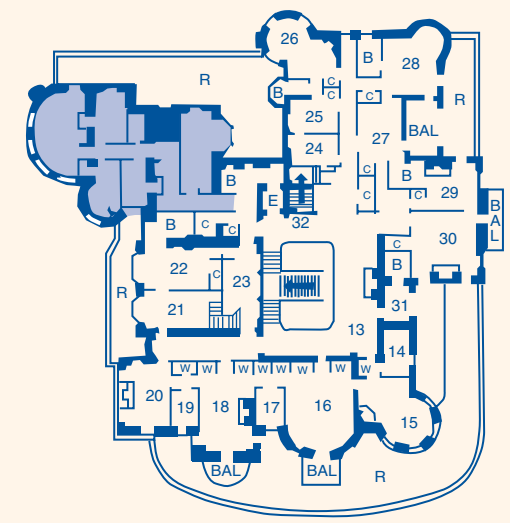
(max. 2 persons per coupon)

THE ANTIQUE BOAT

MUSEUM

Museum hours 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Daily

Open mid May - mid Oct.



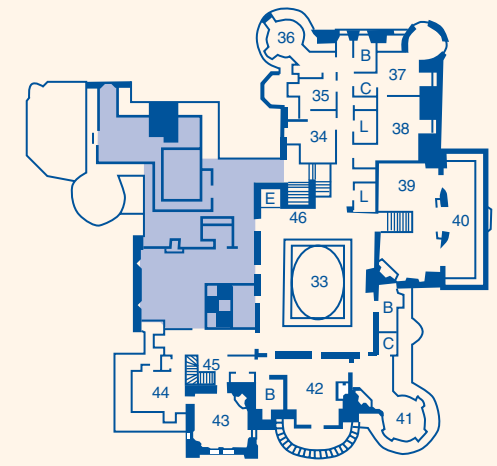
## Second Floor

13. Hall
14. Mr. Boldt's Bath
15. Mr. Boldt's Chamber
16. Mrs. Boldt's Chamber
17. Mrs. Boldt's Bath
18. Miss Boldt's Chamber
19. Miss Boldt's Bath
20. Miss Boldt's Reception Room
- 21 + 22. Guest Chambers
23. Loggia (Partly opened room or gallery)
- 24 - 30. Guest Chambers
31. Loggia (Partly opened room or gallery)
32. Stair to 3rd and 4th Floors

## Third Floor

Note: 3rd floor is similar to 2nd in layout but does not have Grand Staircase. (Original plans not available)

Original plans call for various food storage and preparation rooms, additional servants' quarters and work rooms, wine storage, a dark room and studio, etc., not open to the public at this time.



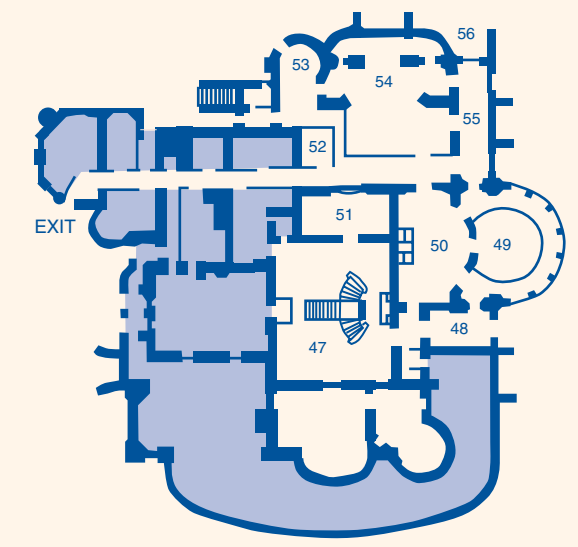
## Fourth Floor (Attic)

33. Dome of Skylight
34. Two Servants
35. One Servant
36. Servant's Room
37. Hughey (Presumably Head Butler)
38. Assistant Butler and Boy
39. Roof Parlor
40. Observation Deck
41. Guest Chamber
42. Reading Room
- 43+44. Guest Chambers
45. Stair to Tower Room (Closed)
46. Stair to Loft (Open)



## Outline Section of Loft

Here one can see use of steel girders in construction.



## Foundation

47. Hall
48. Passage
49. Swimming Pool
50. Lounge
51. Passage
52. Organ Mechanics
53. Storage
54. Boiler Room
55. Passage
56. Tunnel to Grounds (Open)



## The Future of Boldt Castle

From 1904 until 1977, Boldt Castle continued to deteriorate to a state of disrepair. The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority assumed ownership in 1977 and immediately began a rehabilitation program. The Castle and its romantic story typify an era long past; and the Bridge Authority, through the use of all net revenues from this operation, will preserve it and other structures for the enjoyment of future generations.