

Royal BC Museum Modernization

Royal British Columbia Museum
Modernization

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Museum Project

Appendix K – Ten Guiding Principles

December 2021

NOTES

Royal BC Museum Modernization – Ten Principles

Although these are proposed as guiding principles for the modernization program, each of these make a number of different points under their broad heading.

At one level the museum of the future can be described as an interpretive center, interpreting British Columbia in a richly layered narrative. On the other, it is a place of healing – offering an experience of reconciliation and living cultures; a third dimension is the museum as a place of science where biodiversity past and present is explored, researched and monitored.

Principle 1: The museum is a place of learning with a commitment to serve the public. Learning is center-stage at the Royal BC Museum. The museum was founded as an educational museum and the Museum Act 2003 mandates us to ‘serve as an educational organization’.

Today, learning is integral to all our programs. Educators and those involved in learning think differently to curators and scientists. Their training and previous experience teaches them to have an audience perspective. They act as the audience advocate. The use of educational theory and audience research underpins their work ensuring we create experiences with a variety of approaches to collections and ensure maximum accessibility, both physical and intellectual.

The Head of Learning is a member of the concept team for modernization and educators will form part of each exhibit team as the project develops.

An expanded museum will help visitors move from first hand experiences of the collections and archives to learning spaces such as the auditorium, lecture spaces and seminar rooms. Our target audience is families, independent learners and school groups, Indigenous and ethnic groups. What visitors in these groups learn is of interest to us.

Principle 2: The Museum has the ability to present and conserve an incomparable collection. Museum masterpieces and star objects should be permanently accessible to the public that want to see them. This is mandated by the Museum Act.

The Museum requires space for conservation of collections.

Principle 3: The Museum is committed and mandated to collecting. The Royal BC Museum is not a ‘closed’ collection museum. Its collecting is guided by the Collections Policy.

The chronic inadequacy in the amount of space available to store and care for the collection has created a mediocre quality in each collecting area. Some spaces are well organized if inaccessible others are over-stuffed with drawers and shelving. In some places, the space between shelves is less than half a meter.

Principle 4: The museum reflects the diversity of the province by maintaining the broadest public dimension for our work.

This includes procurement.

Principle 5: Museum work is underpinned by scholarly and inclusive research. Research and expertise facilitates the platform for our programs, exhibitions and publications. Our work includes research strength in the following areas; archives, archaeology, palaeontology, food safety, biodiversity, repatriation and history.

The museum is a voice on global issues such as species extinction and biodiversity, impact of climate change and indigenous repatriation.

The expanded museum will ensure that the physical division that exists between the back of house and the front of house can be broken to allow the public to better appreciate the work of the museum.

Principle 6: The museum privileges the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of many cultures and their world-views. We do not shy from celebrating the positive or reflecting on the negative aspects of the diverse experiences of the people living here.

Indigenous peoples are recognized as the stewards of the Indigenous collections. We follow the recommendations of the TRC and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Principle 7: The museum is a platform for dialogue and discussion. The new museum will be a forum for debate about issues as they are evolving. Its new galleries will be created to allow flexibility of approaches and change.

The museum is excited by the opportunities of harnessing technology across the full spectrum of its activities.

Principle 8: The museum believes the whole province should have the chance to enjoy our collections and become involved in our work. We want to reach communities where we traditionally have not been visible.

The museum is drawing up a framework for relationship building. It is in active collaboration with a wide spectrum of portfolio organizations who contribute to our public dimension.

We will require more community spaces.

Principle 9: The museum adheres to the highest ethical standards and nurtures an environment of excellence especially in areas of key strength; repatriation, conservation, archaeology, monitoring biodiversity and archives.

The Association of Canadian Archivists and the ICOM Code of Ethics articulate the ethical and professional commitments and responsibilities of the museum and archive professions. They are founded on and affirm the core values and commitments of the profession and outline responsibilities related to contemporary museum and archival practice.

Principle 10: The museum is guided by principles of sustainability ensuring the sustainability of our environment.

We are currently great consumers of energy. In our expanded museum we need to bring down energy costs.

We welcome Premier Horgan's unwavering commitment to sustainable forestry and wood innovation.

The museum needs to consider financial sustainability and maximise revenue opportunities.

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