

A New Museum for North Vancouver

BACKGROUND

The North Vancouver Museum & Archives (NVMA), founded in 1972, is responsible for the cultural, archival and museum collections owned by the City and the District of North Vancouver. In 1976, the NVMA opened a modest facility in the Presentation House Arts Centre. Thirty years later, in 2006, the Archives moved to a beautifully restored heritage building (the Community History Centre) in Lynn Valley. The Museum, in contrast, languishes in the cramped and obsolete facility in Presentation House. Originally constructed in 1902, the building is completely inadequate to house a modern museum.

PLANNING FOR A NEW MUSEUM

Community members, NVMA Commissioners and staff members have participated in half a dozen City-funded studies over the past two decades. The most recent study, *New Museum Vision and Feasibility Study* (2010), like the ones before it, concluded North Vancouver needs a new museum. This study helped shape a new museum vision based on public value and community engagement.

A NEW VISION

The NVMA is shifting focus from being more narrowly focused on history and heritage to becoming a more broad-based a civic agency committed to making a positive difference in our community. The museum will engage, strengthen and inspire our community by exploring history, connecting people, and sharing ideas. Through our programs, services and collections, we will make history tangible, relevant, and meaningful to members of our diverse community.

NORTH VANCOUVER NEEDS A NEW MUSEUM

With the right kind of facility in the right location – a setting where community members feel welcome and are encouraged to participate – the museum will be able to realize its potential as steward of our collective past and expand engagement with residents and visitors. Our current inefficient and outmoded facility, with less than 5,000 square feet of public space in an obsolete building, inhibits the museum from connecting with the community to the fullest. The building has antiquated systems of environmental control, security and IT which prevent it from borrowing artifacts and exhibits from other museums. Its galleries are too small to exhibit more than 1% of the collections. It is not accessible to people with mobility impairments and contains no space for school programs, classrooms, lectures, public gatherings, and special events.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

You can join with other community members in an advocacy campaign to tell the Mayor and Councillors of the City of North Vancouver that you value your community's museum and want a new museum to be moved to the forefront of municipal planning decisions. After 20 years of inaction, North Vancouver is no closer to having a new facility. It is time to commit to fulfilling this longstanding civic promise. Contact information for the City's Mayor and Council can be found on the City's website (www.cnv.org). Please contact them and let them know you want a new community museum. You can also make your wishes known by participating in the new CityShaping initiative (<http://www.cnv.org/CityShaping/index.html>). The NVMA would appreciate receiving a copy of any communication you send (nvmac@dnv.org). Another way you can support the cause of a new museum is by joining the Friends of the North Vancouver Museum & Archives Society. Membership information can be found on the NVMA's website (www.northvanmuseum.ca).