



# **OSHAWA MUSEUM**

## **Facilities Expansion**

### **Project**

1450 Simcoe Street South Lakeview Park  
Oshawa ON L1H 8S8  
[www.oshawamuseum.org](http://www.oshawamuseum.org)

# About the Oshawa Museum

The Oshawa Museum (OM) preserves and promotes awareness and appreciation of Oshawa's history for the education, enrichment and enjoyment of a diverse audience. As the only community museum in Oshawa we take great pride in showcasing the history of our city from the earliest Indigenous settlement to present day.

The OM is administered by the Oshawa Historical Society, a not for profit charitable institution, as an external agency of the City of Oshawa.



## Just the Stats

**12 000+**

Annual Visitors

**450+**

Email Subscribers

**3400+**

Social Media Followers

**25 000+**

Objects in permanent collection

**10 000+**

Photographs depicting Oshawa's past

**8** local history

publications produced

**3** OMA awards

## Impact in the Museum Community

### Committees & Boards, including:

- Abandoned Cemetery Committee
- Women's HERstory Connection, Durham Region
- Trent University Alumni Chapter President, Oshawa
- Oshawa's Cultural Leadership Council
- Trent University Durham Community Advisory Committee
- Emerging Museum Professionals

- Advisory Committee (OMA)
- Archives Association of Ontario, Board of Director, Chapter Representative
- Durham College Library and Information Technology Program Advisory Committee
- York-Durham Association of Museum and Archives

### Conference Presentations, including:

- Ontario Archaeological Society
- Ontario Museum Association
- Canadian Museum Association (CMA)
- CMA Visitor Services Symposium
- American Association of State and Local History
- Association of Canadian Archivists
- Archives Association of Ontario
- Ontario Library Association

## What's The Buzz?

"My daughters and I had an excellent time at the museum yesterday. The staff are all so friendly and helpful and my little girls enjoyed stepping back in time! Such a great treasure to have these museums here in Oshawa!"

~Facebook user

"What can I say? This is a wonderful place and well managed. Keeping it simple and accessible is what it's all about. Great place to take the kids on a day off."

~Trip Advisor

"Consistently interesting programs. A firm tie-in with an excellent museum and professional staff."

~Member, Oshawa Historical Society

"I can say with confidence, however, that for its size it has a lot to offer and the displays and exhibits are very professionally done and well worth the visit. It is a bargain and a hidden gem in Lakeview Park. The fact that the three buildings are all original to the site is rare and unique and makes them special." ~Member, OHS

# Sears & Russell Facility Study 1996

In 1996 Sears & Russell completed a Facility Study of the Oshawa Museum (OM) and produced a report outlining their findings. The study felt that the site did not have the resources at the time to meet its broad mandate.

## Study Conclusions

- ☐ Repair and establish a regular maintenance program for the historic houses;
- ☐ Provide improved environmental conditions for the display areas within the historic houses;
- ☐ Review the collection and initiate a program to deaccession objects which do not meet the collection's acquisition criteria;
- ☐ Establish a Museum precinct within Lakeview Park to make the Museum more visible and comprehensible to visitors and potential visitors;
- ☐ Develop a new visitor orientation facility that provides an archives and consolidated collection storage areas meeting accepted museum and environmental standards; and
- ☐ Develop a new orientation exhibit which tells the overall story of the history of Oshawa.

## Implementations

- ☒ A repair and maintenance schedule for the historic buildings has been established with the City of Oshawa.
- ☒ Central air conditioning was added to the historic buildings to improve the environmental conditions for the display areas, as well as archival storage areas in Guy House.
- ☒ Large scale deaccession initiatives were undertaken for both the museum and archival collections, resulting in collections that better meet the acquisition criteria.
- ☒ An exhibit on the history of Oshawa has been displayed in Guy House – this continues to be exhibited on a rotating schedule to allow for other, more subject focused exhibits, to also be displayed in Guy House.

*"The existing structures do not fully support the OSMA's [OM's] current curatorial, programming and administrative activities. The artifact and archival collections storage facilities (basements, attics, an unheated off-site storage locker etc.) are totally inadequate in terms of spatial requirements, accessibility, security and environmental conditions. Both permanent and temporary exhibits are limited by space and environmental conditions. Educations and other public programs are restricted by size and other demands on the program room in Guy House. The administrative area, also in Guy House, is overcrowded. There are no curatorial work areas, and the archival area is inadequate and inappropriate."*

~Sears & Russell Feasibility Study, p. 45



The recommendations that **have not yet been met** relate to the **expansion of the facility** through the construction of a new purpose built building.

# Sears & Russell: Seizing Opportunities

The 1996 Study identified a number of 'Weaknesses.' Over the last 20 years, OM Staff have seized these opportunities as follows:

## Lack of clarity regarding the relationship between the OHS and the OM.

- ☑ New museum signage indicates that the OM is operated by the OHS.
- ☑ All promotional material related to the OM – website, brochures, email signatures – indicate that the OM is managed by the OHS.



## Low profile within local community.

- ☑ The OM participates in a wide variety of outreach events to raise the profile of the Museum within the local community.
- ☑ Staff engage in social media avenues to raise the profile of the OM.



## Historically little community support for/interest in heritage.

- ☑ Change in community over 20 years, with efforts put forth by numerous cultural and heritage sites.
- ☑ The City of Oshawa has dedicated staff to working to support heritage in the community within Recreation and Culture Services
- ☑ Cultural Leadership Council formed, of which the OM is a stakeholder member



## Collection documentation inadequacies.

- ☑ Digitization projects have resulted in concerted focus on collection management policies and bringing records in line with this policy, last updated in 2017.
- ☑ Deaccessioning/transferring of items not related to the mandate to more appropriate facilities has become a vital part of the collections management policy and practices.





# CCI Facilities Assessment 2016

In 2016, the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) was engaged to conduct a facility assessment of the OM for the following purposes:

- to review museum facilities with emphasis on how the collection is protected in storage and on display;
- to address all preventive conservation issues that might affect the preservation of the collection;
- to suggest improvements to collections care that could be made within existing facilities; and,
- to make recommendations regarding the design of a new facility for collection storage and display in addition to visitor services and staff functions.

The report noted that the recommendations made in the 1996 study that had not yet been met – ie. new facility – are what is needed for the OM to continue to meet its mandate.

*“Recommendations: **Consolidate collections in new, purpose-designed collection spaces.***

*Lack of space is a key constraint for all Oshawa Museum activities, putting existing collections at risk of damage and restricting future collection of Oshawa’s heritage. Oshawa Museum staff have exhausted options for using historic spaces efficiently; therefore, new space is needed.”*

~CCI: Oshawa Museum Facilities Assessment Final Report, December 2016, pg. 11.

*“Many of the recommendations presented in Section 3 are best implemented in the context of new construction. Thus, **the key recommendation** of the 1996 Sears & Russell master plan **is even more pertinent today, twenty years later.**”*

~CCI: Oshawa Museum Facilities Assessment Final Report, December 2016, pg. 44 (*emphasis added*)

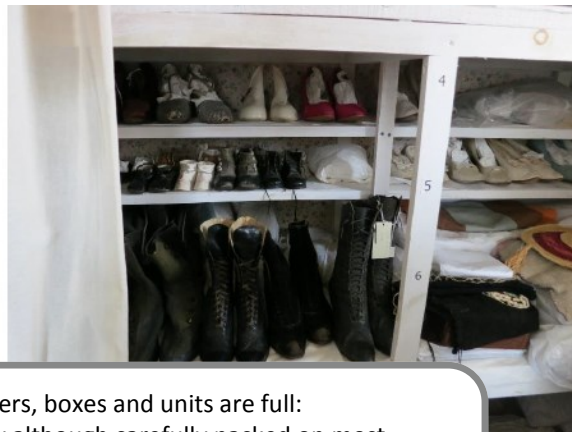
A new facility could:

- ☑ consolidate the collection in spaces large enough to facilitate access and permit growth;
- ☑ increase fire protection through fire-resistive construction and spaces protected by automatic fire suppression;
- ☑ provide spaces built using materials that facilitate preservation and good housekeeping;
- ☑ provide sufficient storage for all collections above grade outside of flood risk zones (*this issue was addressed in the 1996 Facility Study and the proposed site for a new building took into account the flood plain when it allocated the space for construction of the building*);
- ☑ provide high security collection spaces;
- ☑ provide more pest-resistant collection spaces;
- ☑ facilitate light exposure control; and,
- ☑ provide environmentally controlled collection spaces.

~CCI: Oshawa Museum Facilities Final Assessment Final Report, December 2016, pg. 45.

# CCI Facilities Assessment 2016

The 2016 report provided recommendations for short terms storage solutions to minimize risk to the collections but acknowledged that these are simply 'band-aid solutions' and do not address the over arching issue.



"Most shelves, drawers, boxes and units are full:

- items are closely although carefully packed on most shelves;
- chest of drawers are completely filled with interleaved textiles;
- items are occasionally stacked on one another"

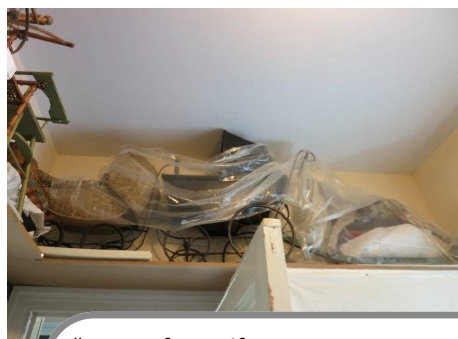


*"...heavier furniture and objects are consigned to the concrete floor of less than ideal, basement storage."*



"With space for only one table for working with records, whether for research or processing, collections processing projects often need to be moved to make room for researchers. This results in extra handling that with care and attention would rarely result in damage, but could. It is also an inefficient use of the archivist's time."

*All images & quotes: CCI: Oshawa Museum Facilities  
Final Assessment Final Report, December 2016.*



"Spaces for artifact storage are crowded, despite careful, ongoing deaccessioning and creative installations to maximize space use:

- custom shelving up almost to the ceiling to house a camera collection in chronological order across the wall of what used to be the curator's office;
- shelving fitted over doors and under stairs;
- boxes stacked on top of shelving to the ceiling and under hanging garments to the floor."

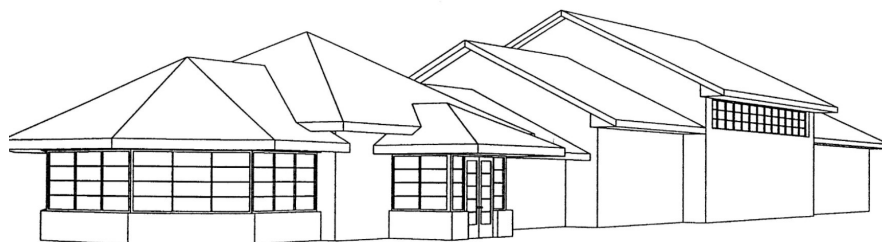
**"Museum programming also lacks adequate space to meet demand."**

Although collections staff struggle to perform functions in less than ideal museum spaces, staff delivering public programs have no dedicated on-site space for workshops, lectures or events:

- museum rooms may put to use for tours and activities; but
- small spaces limit the museum's ability to meet demand or expand offerings;
- the Henry House garden and grounds are put to use, but outdoor programs are dependent on good weather or require backup in small, indoor spaces which limit participation;
- high visitor numbers in rooms that display collection objects increases the risk of accidental damage to artifact or building components, as well as of injury."

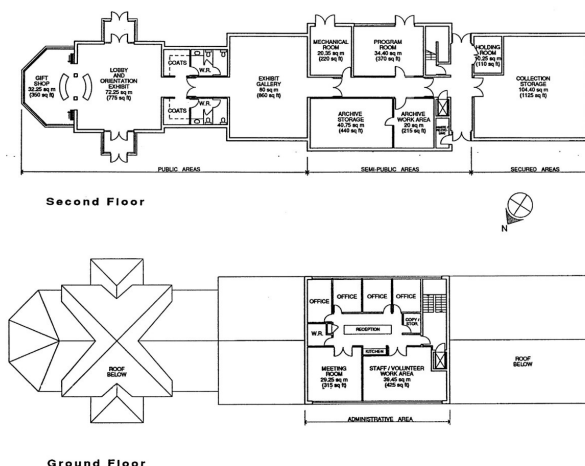
# Next Steps...

## 1996 Visitor Centre Concept



View from Parking Area (north)  
765 m<sup>2</sup> (8,235 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Sears & Russell Feasibility Study, p. 5.



# What will the future look like?

## Collections

- ☑ Improved collection care
- ☑ Improved collection storage areas
- ☑ Curatorial support areas
- ☑ Repatriation of Oshawa archival records from Archives of Ontario

## Spaces

- ☑ Improved visitor amenities
- ☑ Rental opportunities
- ☑ Improved exhibition areas
- ☑ Purpose built space allows for enhanced visitor experiences

## People

- ☑ Potential partnership opportunities include City of Oshawa: would allow a full time City presence in Lakeview Park—suitable for by-law, issuing of permits, year round washroom facilities for park visitors.
- ☑ Other heritage groups, including: Heritage Oshawa; Ontario Genealogy Society, Durham Chapter



OSHAWA  
MUSEUM

— Home to our History —



OSHAWA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

— 1957 - 2017 —

1450 Simcoe Street South

Lakeview Park

Oshawa, ON L1H 8S8

Tel: 905-436-7624

[info@oshawamuseum.org](mailto:info@oshawamuseum.org)

[www.oshawamuseum.org](http://www.oshawamuseum.org)

[www.oshawahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.oshawahistoricalsociety.org)

