

FAQ's BC Archives Engagement

Where can I go to learn more about the BC Archives Engagement?

<https://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/community-engagement/bc-archives-engagement>

How do I participate in the engagement process?

There are many ways to participate in the engagement process, including:

- Attending a virtual or in-person Dialogue Session
- Signing up for an Information Session
- Emailing us your feedback at engage@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca
- Completing the online Survey, once it's live

To what extent will the feedback inform the future of BC Archives?

The feedback provided throughout the BC Archives Engagement process will help inform future operations, offerings and programs of the BC Archives. Information gathered in this process will not inform the location or the physical indoor/outdoor spaces of the archives, collections and research building.

Where are the BC Archives moving to?

The BC Archives will be moving to a new archives, research and collections building in Colwood, scheduled to open in 2026. The collections and research building is being built on *ləkwəŋən* Territory, in the area that is known today as Colwood B.C. We are grateful for our partnership with Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nation, as they generously walk with us on this important journey.

What will the new building look like?

The new 15,200 square-metre (163,611 square feet) building will be a state-of-the-art facility using mass timber construction, meet CleanBC energy efficiency standards and be LEED Gold certified. Construction started in summer 2023 and is anticipated to complete late 2025 with a public opening in 2026.

Renderings of the building are located in the appendix. For more information go to

<https://www.collectionsandresearchbuilding.ca/>.

What does CRB stand for and how do I find more information?

CRB stands for collections and research building. CRB is currently being used as a temporary name for the project. A permanent name will be assigned to the facility prior to completion.

What is the history of the BC Archives?

The provincial government has collected archival records since 1894 and in 1908 the Provincial Archives was established and mandated to collect material of provincial significance.

The current museum building opened in 1969 and the current archives building opened in 1970. Watch more on the BC Archives “new building” at <https://youtu.be/Tsmw62Qy0g4?si=euEFmznbq4djjb45> or read about the history of the provincial archives at <https://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/archives/about-us/archives-history>.

What does the BC Archives do?

The BC Archives stewards approximately 8.5 million records, including 31 linear kilometers of textual records, 181,000 maps and architectural records and over 5 million photographs. They are mandated as the provincial repository for government and private records of significance to British Columbia established in the [Museum Act](#) (2003) and [Information Management Act](#) (2015).

The BC Archives welcomes approx. 3,000 onsite visitors every year and 86,000 visitors remotely (visitors to BC Archives web pages and collections databases). Staff retrieve over 5,000 containers of records for researchers per year, respond to approx. 5,000 inquiries and copy in excess of 13,000 pages of records for reproduction requests.

What is wrong with the current BC Archives building?

The current BC Archives building located in downtown Victoria has multiple challenges with the aging infrastructure which can put the valuable Archives library and paintings, drawings and print collections at high risk.

The building has contained asbestos, has seismic structural concerns, limitations on space as well as parking and accessibility challenges. The current building was also not designed to meet increasing public needs for digitization or internet connectivity.

What features will the new BC Archives building have?

- The new archives, research and collections building is being designed to achieve gold level [Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility](#) and is planned to meet rigorous sustainability standards including LEED Gold Certification.
- Onsite accessible parking for vehicles and bikes will be available.
- The site will have camera surveillance, appropriate lighting and security guards on site.
- The building will include a new BC Archives reading room, with two smaller reading rooms available for private research or group research visits.
- New technology, equipment, furniture, fixtures and access stations will be procured for the building.
- There will be a new community digitization space or 'DigiLab', with five scanning stations available for digitization projects.
- Lockers for access to material after normal service hours will be available in the reading room.
- A reception space, coatroom, lockers for personal belongings and lobby area are situated off the building entrance.
- There will be several learning spaces within the building for groups, educators and community programming/events.
- There will be a bookable multi-purpose room for groups and the main entrance lobby is a flex space that can transform to support lectures or events, after hours.
- The building will have onsite cold and cool storage vaults for the BC Archives audio and visual materials.
- There will be multiple outdoor public spaces at the site.

What is the timeline for moving?

The move of the BC Archives reading room and collections is anticipated to begin at the end of 2025 and continue into 2026. Due to the valuable and irreplaceable items in these collections, the move will be carefully staged over time.

Presently the Royal BC Museum is planning to limit full closure of the BC Archives to five weeks. Plans for the closure timing and re-opening will be communicated to the public, visitors and partners as it becomes available. A critical access request process will be communicated in advance of closure for urgent information requests that could occur over move timeline (e.g. litigation).

Who is constructing the building and what is the estimated cost?

A \$204.8-million contract has been awarded to Maple Reinders Constructors Ltd. for the design and construction of the archives, collections and research building in Colwood, following a competitive design-build procurement process. Total capital project costs for the building are valued at more than \$270 million.

How and when will the BC Archives share what it's heard from people?

BC Archives is working alongside the Royal BC Museum's community engagement, which is currently underway and is expected to be complete by winter 2025. Information will be shared after this phase is complete.

Appendix 1: Renderings and Images



Drone photo taken January 2024
Courtesy: Maple Reinders



Exterior rendering, view from Metchosin (North)



Exterior rendering, main entry approach



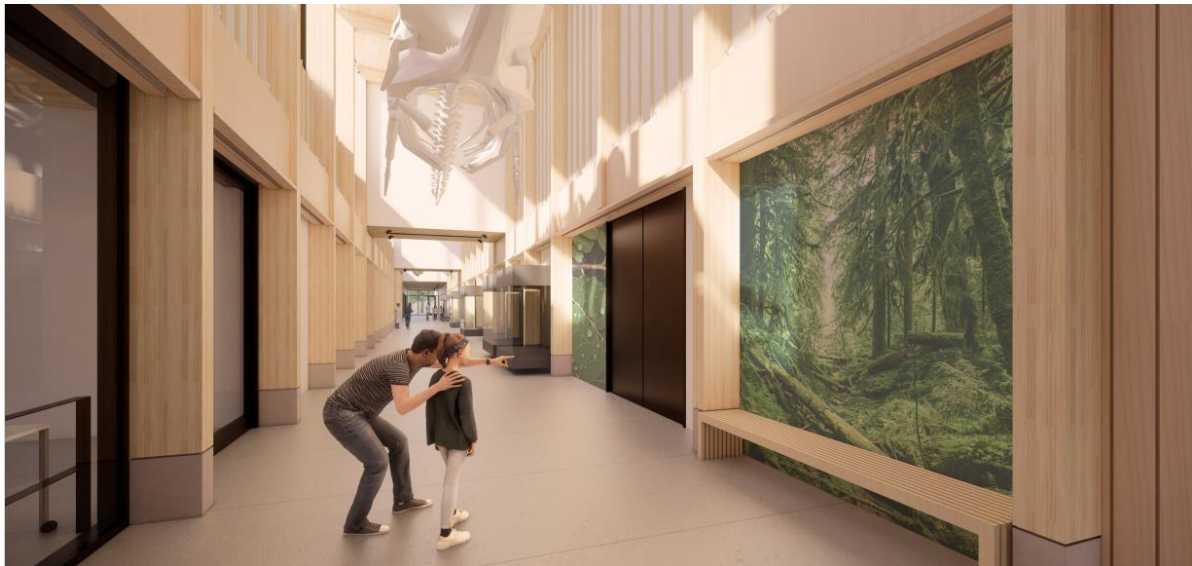
Exterior rendering, public entry plaza



Exterior rendering, integrated mural



Interior rendering, Lobby



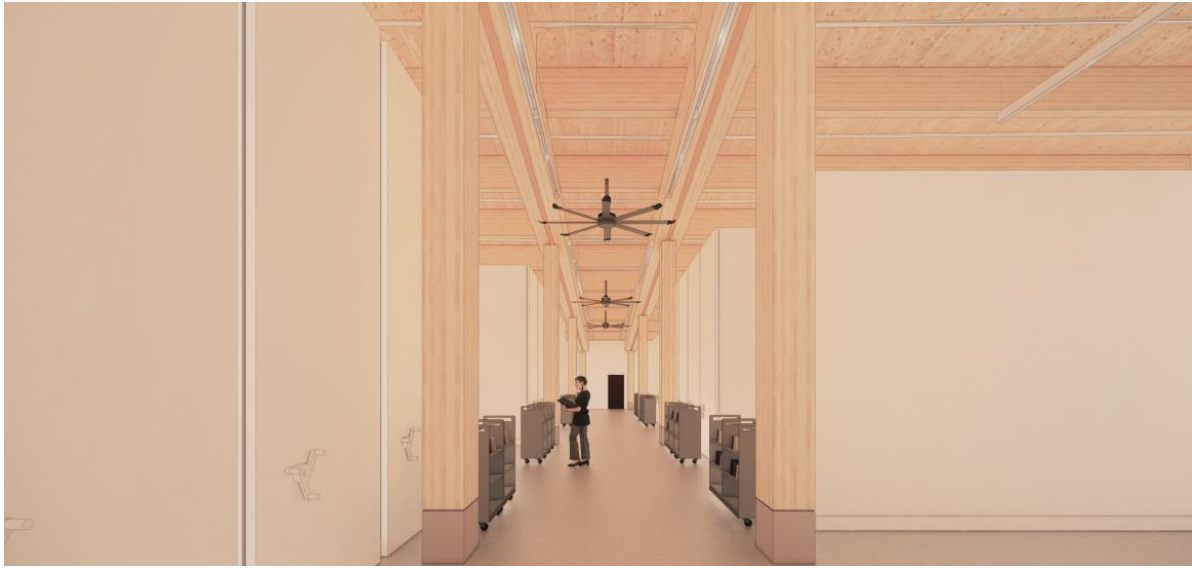
Interior rendering, visitor pathway



Interior rendering, BC Archives reading room



Interior rendering, learning lab



Interior rendering, typical collections storage



Interior rendering, typical lab

All renderings courtesy: Maple Reinders

