
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Feb. 23, 2023

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Contract awarded for RBCM collections, research building

VICTORIA – Construction will begin this summer on the Royal BC Museum’s (RBCM) collections and research building as part of a long-term plan to protect the Province’s collections that include more than seven million artifacts and the BC Archives.

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

“Our government is committed to protecting our province’s history today and for future generations,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “I am confident that this is the right step to take in securing our province’s invaluable history and ensuring more access for people. We look forward to working with Maple Reinders, the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, and the City of Colwood on this historic new building.”

The new 15,200-square-metre (163,611 square feet) building will be a state-of-the-art facility using mass timber that safely houses the Province’s collections, BC Archives and research departments. It will also provide dedicated research labs and learning spaces, as well as improving access to the collections for British Columbians. Currently, less than 1% of the Province’s vast collection is accessible to the public.

“Alongside the safe and modern storage of the collections and provincial records, the CRB will be a dynamic and welcoming community space,” said Alicia Dubois, CEO, Royal BC Museum. “We are thrilled with the design Maple Reinders has proposed and the alignment of our organizational values. We hope to inspire future paleontologists, entomologists, botanists and historians through greater learning opportunities by enhancing public access to our work.”

Some of the items are at risk from flooding. They include: archival books and manuscripts; rare and priceless artworks, including watercolours from the 1700s; several paintings by Emily Carr; and early provincial maps.

Maple Reinders Constructors Ltd. is recognized for its expertise in delivering complex and sustainable projects across Canada for more than 55 years. The company has a long-standing commitment to building in partnership with local communities, and is partnered with Michael Green Architecture Inc., a British Columbia firm experienced in creating spaces that are sustainably built.

It is expected that ground will be broken in summer 2023 with an expected public opening in summer 2026.

Quotes:**Chief Ron Sam, Songhees First Nation –**

“The Songhees Nation looks forward to partnering with the Royal BC Museum and the Province in the development of the new collections and research building project on lək̓ʷəŋən Territory. As one of the host Nations for this important public building, we look forward to providing guidance and direction in the design, workers and contractors for the construction. This project will be a valuable resource for many generations to come, and highlights the need for collaboration while building respectful relationships between Indigenous communities and museums.”

Doug Kobayashi, mayor, Colwood –

“Colwood is honoured to be the location for the Royal BC Museum’s new collections and research building, where the history of our Province will be protected and shared. Overlooking the shore of the Salish Sea, the location in Colwood acknowledges the rich and significant cultural history of this area, dating back thousands of years.”

Learn More:

Royal BC Museum modernization: <https://www.royalbcmuseummodernization.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

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BACKGROUND

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Facts about building costs

The capital project cost for the collections and research building is \$270 million, representing a \$45.6-million increase from the June 2021 budget estimate.

- The new budget reflects the hot construction market during the pandemic, along with global inflation, which has caused significant pressures to projects around the world, including the escalating costs of materials and labour.
- The budget increase is primarily a reflection of:
 - escalation on the design-build contract; and
 - extended project schedule, increasing planning, procurement and implementation costs.
- Building a new, separate facility will ensure the collections are properly stored and safeguarded and meet international best practices and standards.
- It is estimated the building will support economic recovery by creating approximately 1,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction, while creating demand for sustainable building materials, such as mass timber.

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