
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023TACS0045-001453
Sept. 13, 2023

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Construction begins on RBCM collections and research building

VICTORIA – Construction on the Royal BC Museum’s (RBCM) collections and research building (CRB) has begun.

In preparation for construction, Shaker Faith workers led a ceremonial land blessing to bless the site and workers.

“It’s an important day as we move forward on a new collections and archives building that will properly store and safeguard our province’s shared history, priceless artifacts and archives,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “I was honoured to witness the Shaker Faith workers bless and prepare the land of the CRB prior to construction. I look forward to working with the Royal BC Museum, Maple Reinders, the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, and the City of Colwood on this important new building.”

The new 15,200 square-metre building will be a state-of-the-art facility using mass timber that will safely house the Province’s collections and BC Archives. It will improve access for the public as only 1% of the Province’s vast collection is on display. It will also provide dedicated research labs and learning spaces.

“The provincial collections and archives help us to share the stories of our cultures and communities. It’s vital to ensure they’re kept safe for future generations,” said Tracey Drake, acting CEO, Royal BC Museum. “This exceptional facility will also provide a window into the world of the museum, enabling visitors to see our paleontologists, entomologists, botanists, zoologists and more, engaged in active research projects.”

Maple Reinders Constructors Ltd. was awarded a \$204.8-million contract for the design and construction of the CRB in Colwood. Total capital project costs for the CRB are estimated at \$270 million.

Government expects substantial completion in fall 2025 and anticipates a public opening in 2026.

Quotes:

Nuumtunat (Florence Dick), Indigenous liaison officer, collections and research building project –

“Following and respecting ləkʷəŋən protocol by undertaking this traditional ground blessing is what true partnership is all about. This project is an example of how all major projects with the Province should be done.”

Doug Kobayashi, mayor, City of Colwood –

“I was honoured to witness the land blessing for this new facility, an important step in starting on a foundation of shared understanding, peace and prosperity. Colwood is proud to be home to this new building on the ancestral lands of the Lekwungen-speaking people that will preserve and share the deep history of our Province in ways that inform a bright and inclusive future.”

Reuben Scholtens, vice-president of major projects, Maple Reinders Group –

"We are humbled to have been chosen to imagine, design and construct this important cultural facility. Our team is committed to delivering a world-class facility that will not only serve as a tourist attraction, but also as a symbol of the deep cultural connections between the First Nations community and the land. There is a vibrant and compelling story to be told and we are enthused at the prospect of being able to assist in its telling."

Quick Facts:

- Building a new, separate facility will ensure the collections are properly stored and safeguarded and meet international best practices and standards.
- Some of the items at risk from flooding include archival books and manuscripts, rare and priceless artworks such as watercolours from the 1700s, several paintings by Emily Carr and early provincial maps.
- It is estimated the CRB 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.

Learn More:

Information about the Royal BC Museum Modernization:

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

Contact:

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Media Relations
250 882-0918

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect