

January 22, 2019

Significant upgrades to **Wawaditła**, an Indigenous cultural treasure located at the Royal BC Museum

VICTORIA, BC—Thanks to funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Royal BC Museum has recently installed a new cedar roof on **Wawaditła**, known to many as the Mungo Martin House.

Wawaditła was constructed by the world-renowned artist Mungo Martin, Kwakwaka'wakw Chief **Nakap'ankam**, in 1953.

"My family and I wish to thank Heritage Canada for helping to preserve Wawaditła as a place to share culture and honour Mungo Martin's work as a teacher," said Chief David Knox, **Martin's great-grandson.**

"The Royal BC Museum has always felt honoured and humbled to be the caretaker of this significant cultural treasure," said Royal BC Museum CEO **Prof. Jack Lohman.** **"We are grateful to Canadian Heritage for its support in repairing Wawaditła, a house that continues to host significant cultural ceremonies every year."**

"Museums allow us to deepen our knowledge and understanding of our collective stories and shared history," said the Honourable **Pablo Rodriguez**, Minister of Canadian Heritage and **Multiculturalism.** **"I commend the Royal BC Museum for its role in safeguarding invaluable Indigenous artifacts and making treasures like Wawaditła accessible for all to appreciate and enjoy. Our government is thrilled to support this vital cultural infrastructure project."**

Located steps from the museum, near the corner of Belleville and Douglas streets, **Wawaditła** is a cultural and architectural landmark, a favoured spot for visitor photos and, most importantly, an embodiment of the rights and privileges of **Martin's family.**

The traditional hereditary rights of **Wawaditła** are now the property of **Martin's** great-grandson **Walas Namugwis**, Chief David Knox of Fort Rupert.

Wawaditła is an Indigenous-run space that operates under the stewardship of the Royal BC Museum. It houses significant Indigenous house posts, carvings, painted curtains, a dance screen and a log drum.

The museum's Indigenous and Repatriation Department has consulted with the Knox family at every stage during the roof replacement. The Knox family is also consulted whenever Indigenous communities request to use the house for ceremonial purposes.

Canadian Heritage provided \$157,670 for the project to replace the roof, which reflected the original design from 1953.



The new roof consists of a metal roof sandwiched between two layers of wood, maintaining the cultural and aesthetic elements of the building.

To learn more about **Wawaditla**, please visit

<https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/exhibits/tbird-park/html/present/ex07/ex07.htm>

and <https://curious.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/from-generation-to-generation-a-historic-event-in-wawaditla/>.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and histories, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

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