



Whistler Museum

NEW FACILITY PLAN

Your museum, your history, your voice.



December 2025



Whistler Museum and Archives Society
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A NEW WHISTLER MUSEUM

Welcome! Thank you for being curious about an envisioned New Whistler Museum.

This exhibit reflects work that has been underway for several years by the Board and Staff of the Whistler Museum & Archives Society.

That process has been enriched by guidance from the Resort Municipality of Whistler and from architects, engineers, and many other professionals. The result of that collaboration is the design and other information you'll see on these panels.

Please think of this content as a starting point – a creative, forward-thinking draft designed to spark imagination and help us dream bigger, together. We're inviting you to explore the envisioned New Whistler Museum, reflect on it, and share your thoughts through a short survey.

Your feedback will directly shape the next phase of planning and action.

The New Museum survey can
be completed online at:
www.whistlermuseum.org/newmuseum



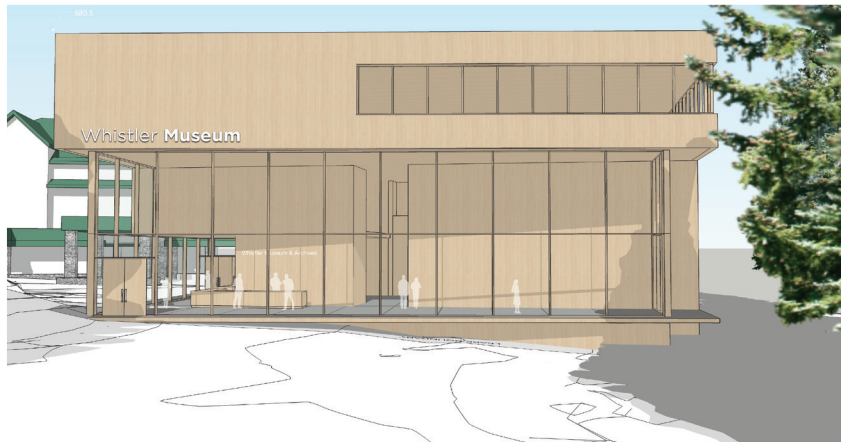
Design and Layout

The new Whistler Museum design will create an open, welcoming space that connects seamlessly to both the Village and Florence Petersen Park. Built with sustainable mass timber construction, the building will reflect Whistler's natural setting while reducing its environmental footprint.

Visitors will enter through a bright, double-height lobby with reception and gift shop, leading into expansive permanent exhibit galleries on the ground floor. This level will also include a flexible program and event space for lectures, film nights, and community gatherings.

A mezzanine gallery will overlook the main exhibits, hosting rotating temporary displays that keep the museum experience fresh with new stories and perspectives. On the upper floor, archives, collection/artefact storage, offices, and a research and meeting room will support both public access and the preservation of Whistler's history, completing the 15,375 ft² facility. A recent Class C estimate places the facility's hard costs at roughly \$16 million.

Right: View from Main Street.
Image: Hemsworth Architecture



Left: View from Main Street.
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

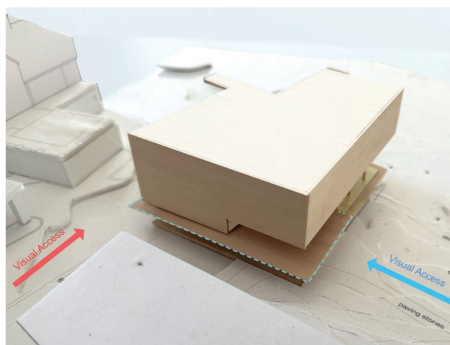


Left: The proposed design features a modern, climate-controlled collections storage area with secure shelving to ensure the long-term preservation of photographs, documents, and artefacts. It provides 700 sq. ft. of dedicated archival storage and 2,300 sq. ft. for artefact collections, essential space for safeguarding Whistler's history.
Image: University of Toronto



Left: The museum's lobby is designed to function as a flexible 1,150 sq. ft. programming and event space supporting workshops, talks, community gatherings, and special events while remaining a welcoming daily entry point for visitors.
Image: The Mirage Studio

Sustainability



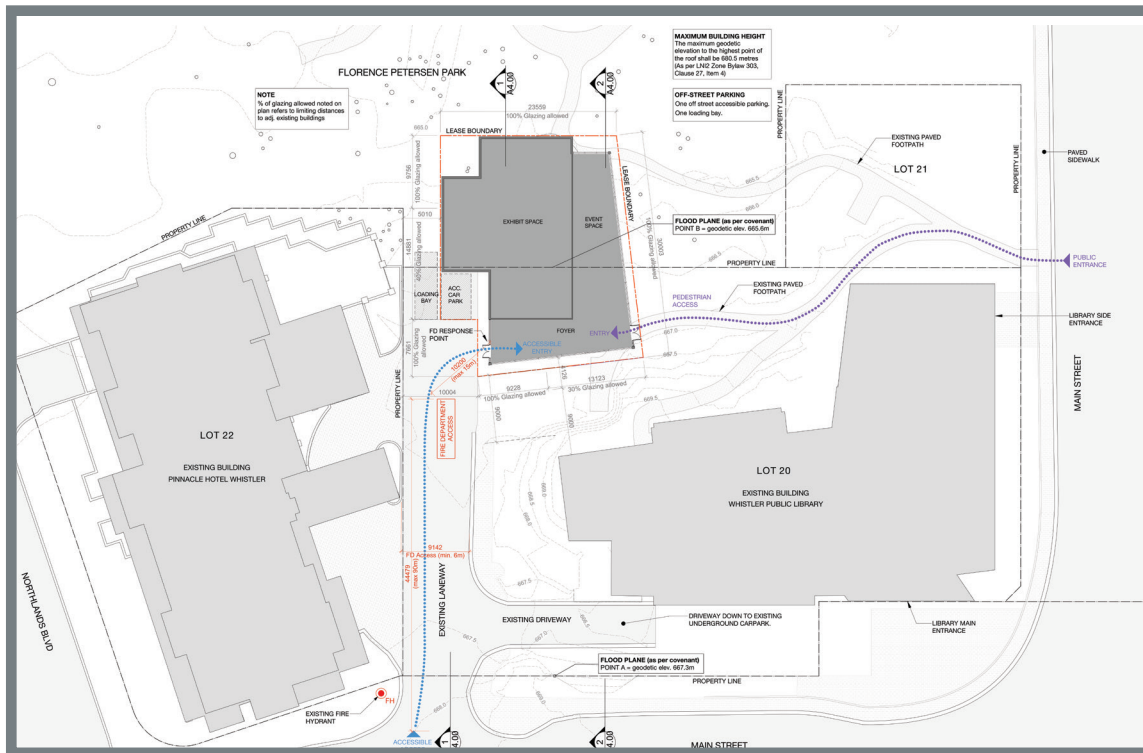
Above: Model created during the design process of the proposed museum design, created by Hemsworth Architecture. The model highlights the entrance canopy, which serves as a visual anchor, connecting the laneway and park entrances.
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

The new Whistler Museum design is about more than creating space, it's about building responsibly for the future. The design features mass timber construction, using cross laminated timber panels and glulam beams. These renewable materials lock in carbon and reduce environmental impact, lowering the building's embodied carbon by the equivalent of heating 13 homes for a year.

Energy performance is also central to the design. Careful modelling shows it will use about 20% less energy and produce nearly half the greenhouse gas emissions of a standard new building. High-performance windows, heat recovery ventilation, and air-source heat pumps will ensure the museum stays comfortable while conserving energy.

With water-saving fixtures, efficient lighting, and provisions for future solar panels, the design is built to adapt and improve over time. It reflects Whistler's values as a community that treasures its history while caring for its environment.





Above: Proposed location of the new Whistler Museum facility within Whistler Village.
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

Key Features

- Welcoming Presence:** A highly visible entrance connects directly to Florence Petersen Park and the Village, making the museum open and inviting from every approach.
- Community Space:** A flexible double-height program room overlooking the park will host events, lectures, and celebrations for up to 100 people.
- Expanded Exhibitions:** Permanent and temporary exhibition areas with generous ceiling heights will allow the museum to showcase its growing collection in dynamic and engaging ways.
- Archives and Collections Care:** Climate-controlled storage and a public research / reading room will ensure that Whistler’s archives and artifacts are preserved and made accessible for generations.
- Support for Staff:** Purpose-designed offices and work areas will allow WMAS staff to operate efficiently while remaining connected to both the archives and public spaces.
- Accessibility:** The building is being designed to meet high standards of universal accessibility, ensuring that all visitors, regardless of age or ability, can fully experience the exhibitions, events, and research resources.
- Sustainability:** Built with mass timber and high-performance systems, the facility is designed to reduce its environmental impact while enhancing the engird performance and comfort.

Content and Stories

The proposed new Whistler Museum design will bring the community's stories to life through immersive, multisensory exhibits and interactive displays. Visitors will journey through the region's natural history, from glaciers, geology, and the forces that shaped the valley to the wildlife that continues to define the local ecosystem. Indigenous perspectives from the Lílwat Nation and the Skwxwú7mesh Nation will be thoughtfully woven throughout the exhibits, to ensure First Nations histories, knowledge, and place-based stories are not treated as add-ons but embedded across themes and interpretive elements.

The exhibits will celebrate the continued layers of Whistler's lived history. Focus will be on exploring the formation of Whistler's identity: tracing pioneering early tourism to the rise of ski and counterculture communities. Artefact-rich storytelling and interactive media will foster engagement with pivotal moments in the area's history; including, but not limited to Rainbow Lodge, the development of Whistler Village, the growth of all mountain sports, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, FIS races, and the Crankworx Mountain Bike Festival.

The proposed new museum design incorporates a wide range of display approaches, including:

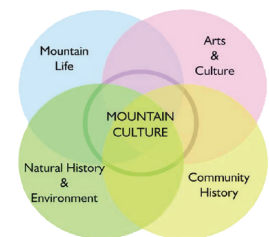
- Large-scale mountain dioramas illustrating the Coast Mountains and glacial processes.
- Natural history dioramas incorporating full-scale or small-scale models of wildlife and environmental scenes.
- Integrated artefact and panel displays, blending objects with digital and print interpretation
- Digital interactives, such as touchscreens, rotating photo archives, oral histories, and dynamic maps that let visitors explore the valley's evolution.
- Thematic structures reminiscent of log cabins, early ski huts, and other architectural features that help transport visitors into different periods of Whistler's development.

The mezzanine includes 1,100 sq. ft. of temporary exhibition space and overlooks the permanent exhibits on the ground floor. This space will host rotating exhibitions, ensuring the museum remains dynamic and continually offers something new to discover for locals and visitors.

Throughout the building, colour-coded sections, clear sightlines, interactive zones, and accessible exhibit design will create a visitor experience that is welcoming, intuitive, and engaging.

As these spaces take shape, the museum is committed to hearing from the community. Through public engagement and ongoing collaboration, the exhibits will reflect diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences, ensuring that the stories presented belong to the people who lived, shaped, and continue to shape Whistler's past, present, and future.

Thematic Focus: Four interrelated themes are incorporated into all aspects of WMAS, under an overall theme of Mountain Culture:



These overlapping themes are reflected in the exhibit concepts and programming strategies and have been since 2009.



Exhibit Types



Left: A large-scale nature diorama at The Rooms Provincial Museum in St. John's, Newfoundland, showcases the kind of immersive, habitat-based storytelling envisioned for the proposed new Whistler Museum. Detailed landscapes, specimens, and ambient sound create an experiential window into local ecology, an approach that could animate Whistler's alpine, forest, and wetland environments.

Image: The Rooms



Right: An interactive exhibit at the Richmond Olympic Experience shows how hands-on digital media and sport-themed interactives can significantly deepen visitor engagement. Similar strategies in the proposed new Whistler Museum could invite visitors to explore Whistler's stories through immersive and participatory experiences.

Image: The Richmond Olympic Experience.



Left: A gallery at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies uses thematic architectural elements to immerse visitors in the region's mountain heritage. Similar design strategies could be applied in the proposed new Whistler Museum, helping transport visitors into distinct eras of Whistler's development and strengthening the storytelling around its evolving mountain culture.

Image: The Whyte Museum

Strengthening Whistler's Cultural Connector

The proposed new Whistler Museum will deepen its role within Whistler's established Cultural Connector, the walking route that links the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, Audain Art Museum, Maury Young Arts Centre, Whistler Public Library, Lost Lake PassivHaus, and the Museum itself.

By expanding exhibition space, interpretation, programming space, and opportunities for collaborative programming, the new facility will strengthen connections, especially with the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, whose stories of the Lilwat7úl and the Skwxwú7mesh peoples anchor cultural understanding in Whistler.

Together, these institutions offer visitors and residents a richer experience of local history, Indigenous culture, arts, and mountain storytelling. The proposed new Whistler Museum will help make these connections clearer, more engaging, and more accessible as part of Whistler's vibrant cultural tourism landscape.



Above: The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre is an essential component of Whistler's Cultural Connector, and the proposed new Whistler Museum will further strengthen these links, contributing to a more coordinated and comprehensive presentation of regional culture.
Image: Tourism Whistler / Justa Jeskova.





1. Ground Floor [Left]



Above: Ground Floor
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

The ground floor includes 2,500 sq. ft. of permanent exhibits, a 1,150 sq. ft. programming and event space, and a 1,300 sq. ft. foyer with reception and gift shop. Together, these spaces create a welcoming entry and versatile areas for exhibitions, gatherings, and community events

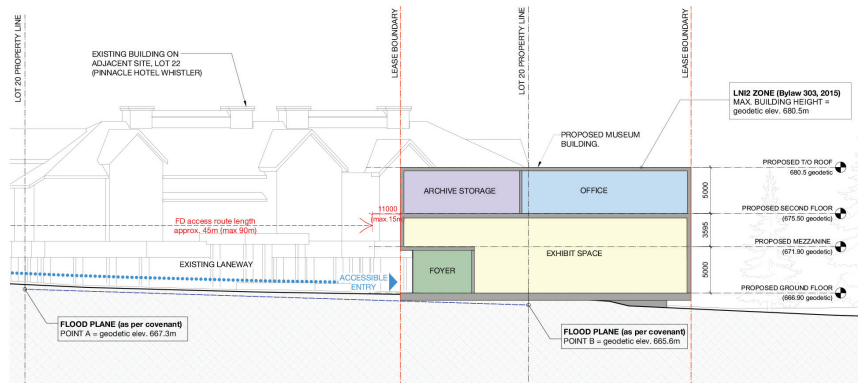
The museum's ground floor welcomes visitors from both the park and the laneway, with a shared foyer and reception desk designed for clear sightlines to entrances, the gift shop, and exhibition access. A continuous canopy links both doors and unifies exterior signage.

Entrances sit along the south edge beside the library, where the natural grade connects seamlessly to the park path and laneway. Inside, a double-height programming space overlooks the park.

At the centre is the permanent exhibition: a fully enclosed, double-height dark room designed to protect artefacts from glare and UV. Vertical circulation is centrally located for easy access throughout the building.

Service areas, loading, storage, processing, and the electrical room, are placed along the west laneway for efficient operations. One universal washroom is located on the ground floor, with additional facilities on the mezzanine.

Below: Side profile of building
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

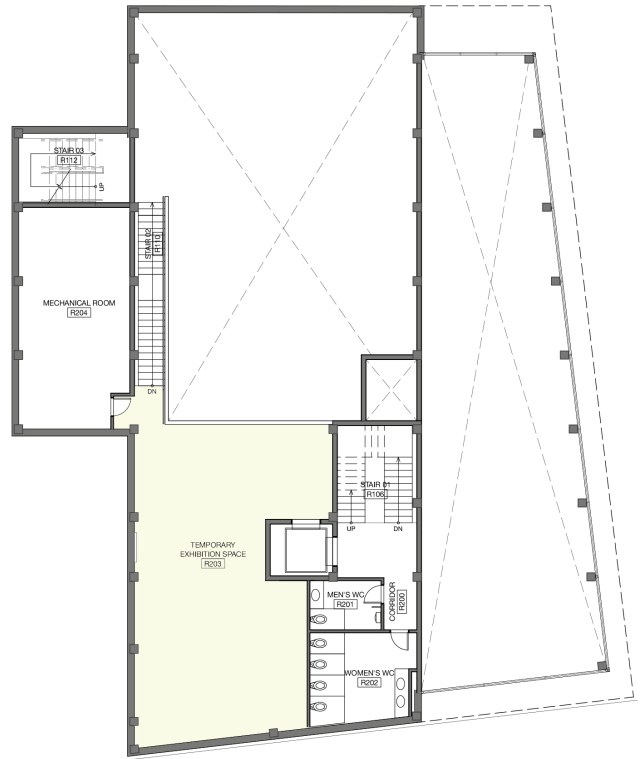


2. Mezzanine [Right]

The mezzanine includes 1,100 sq. ft. of temporary exhibition space and overlooks the permanent exhibits on the ground floor.

The mezzanine includes three key areas: the temporary exhibition space, public washrooms, and the mechanical room. The temporary gallery is accessed by stair or elevator and connects to the permanent exhibition below through a partial-height wall, giving visitors elevated views of core exhibits while offering a more intimate, lower-ceilinged space for rotating displays. Its open layout supports flexible exhibition design.

Public washrooms are easily reached from the foyer via the main stairs or elevator. The mechanical room is positioned directly above ground-floor service areas to keep building systems efficient and compact.



Above: Mezzanine
Image: Hemsworth Architecture

3. Upper Floor [Left]

The upper floor provides 700 sq. ft. of archival storage, 2,300 sq. ft. for artefact collections, and a 1,300 sq. ft. research and meeting room available to the public. Museum staff offices occupy 1,100 sq. ft. with space for seven workstations.

The second floor houses the museum's core collections and archival storage, separated from the public exhibition areas below but still directly connected to staff workspaces. Access is provided by two staircases and a freight lift, ensuring safe object movement and adequate exiting.

Alongside storage, this floor includes the main staff workspace: an open office with six workstations, an Executive Director's office, a meeting room, and a small kitchenette. Locating these spaces beside the archives enables efficient collection management and close oversight of daily activities.

Direct access to the public reading room reinforces the connection between staff operations and visitor research needs. All regularly occupied rooms feature generous glazing overlooking the park, creating a calm, light-filled working and research environment.



Above: Upper Floor
Image: Hemsworth Architecture



Artistic Renderings



Left: View from Florence Petersen Park
Image: The Mirage Studio



Right: View from Main Street.
Image: The Mirage Studio



Left: The museum's lobby is designed to function as a flexible 1,150 sq. ft. programming and event space supporting workshops, talks, community gatherings, and special events while remaining a welcoming daily entrypoint for visitors.
Image: The Mirage Studio



Note: These artistic renderings are conceptual only and not reflective of final exhibit designs, topics, or artefacts, serving instead to illustrate the scale of the new museum and show how the space could be utilized.



Above: Display space under the Mezzanine. Located near entrance in the exhibit entrance.
Image: The Mirage Studio



Above: Dynamic display.
Image: The Mirage Studio



Right: View demonstrating incorporation of mezzanine area. Image does not show entire exhibit space.
Image: The Mirage Studio



Next Steps & How to Stay Involved

The new Whistler Museum is an exciting community project and there are many ways to be part of the journey. In the months ahead, we will host public information events where you can learn more about the design, ask questions, and share your ideas. These sessions are an important opportunity to ensure the new museum reflects the voices and values of the whole community.

You can also stay up-to-date by signing up for our newsletter, which will provide regular updates on the building project, exhibit planning, and upcoming events. For those who would like to get more hands-on, there will be volunteer opportunities to help with community outreach, programs, and events.

We are preparing to launch a fundraising campaign that will invite support from both major donors and the wider community. Large gifts and partnerships will be essential, while grassroots contributions through smaller donations, local events, and community initiatives will ensure everyone has a way to take part. Every contribution, big or small, helps bring us closer to creating a museum that preserves Whistler's stories and shares them with generations to come.



Stay up-to-date on the progress of the new museum facility by signing up for the Whistler Museum Newsletter by scanning the QR code or visiting www.whistlermuseum.org

Have your Say

We want to hear your thoughts on the new facility design. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire available at the kiosk screen in this exhibit. You can also use your own device by scanning the adjacent QR code, the code posted at the kiosk, or fill out one of the supplied paper copies. Your feedback will help guide the final design and ensure the New Museum reflects our community.





The new museum will be a landmark in Whistler Village, a place where residents, visitors, and researchers can connect with the community's rich natural and cultural heritage. More than a building, it will serve as a hub of activity, education and storytelling.

Project Vision



Whistler
Museum

hemsworth
ARCHITECTURE

Renderings: Building design and renderings created by Hemsworth Architecture unless noted.

