

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Councillor Harold Steves

**Richmond Museum Requirements;**

DATE: Jan. 19. 2005

In the long term list of priorities a museum was to be constructed after the Gateway Theatre. The museum has been a priority in Richmond longer than the field house proposed for the Olympic Oval, new fire halls or a new police station.

**1989 report**

After other sports and recreational facilities and the Gateway Theatre had been constructed Richmond Council approved the construction an 8,000 sq. ft. Richmond Museum in the new Cultural Centre at a cost of \$2 million. Construction of the museum was postponed when the \$12 million Arts Centre went \$2 million over budget. That was 15 years ago.

**1991 report**

In 1991 city staff implored that there was an “urgent need for 5,700 sq. ft. of space”. Important artifacts were being turned down, some artifacts transferred to other museums, and some artifacts were outdoors under plastic tarps at Works Yard.

**1992 report**

In 1992 staff reiterated the need stating that an 8,000 sq. ft. resource centre was required in addition to the 1800 sq. ft. provided at the Art Centre.

“Staff are not acquiring or seeking acquisitions as there is no space.” There remains significant gaps in the collection of Richmond’s history as staff have not had the time nor the space to secure the required artefacts.” The collection gaps include ... textiles...agriculture...food processing. ...furniture....transportation...industrial objects, etc.

The “resource centre” would be the “hub of activity for museum services”, volunteer training, meeting space, exhibit space and “open” storage open for viewing, exhibit preparation, etc.

**2005**

In 2005 the need is far greater than it was in 1989 and the area needed is much greater than 8,000 sq. ft.. Staffing has been restructured to better curate the collection and preserve the artifacts. Donations have increased and there are substantial fishing industry artifacts from BC Packers. Presently the Richmond Museum is in storage with little opportunity for the public to ever see items in the collection on display, even once, over the next 25 years.

To: Mayor and Councillors

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I recently attended two workshops at the Gulf Of Georgia Cannery, planning for the future. It is becoming increasingly clear that we must get on with the job of completing the Britannia Shipyard site for a combined heritage destination. That includes a site for a Richmond Museum.

Previous estimates for a museum in Richmond were aimed at a 60,000 sq. ft. "destination" museum where people come to Richmond to see major international travelling exhibits. That is contrary to the concept of interactive, open air, museums on local and BC history that are already underway at Britannia, London Farm and Gulf of Georgia.

When I asked for the cost of putting fill under the Phoenix Gillnet Loft I was considering the use of the building for a 20,000 sq. ft. "City Museum". When I suggested museum use several years ago concern was expressed by staff that a museum should not be over water. In my opinion, there is little in the city museum collection that can't be displayed in a building over water..... Do we need fill to have a museum over water?

If we don't have to put fill under the building we don't have to re-apply to FLNRO as Option C "Interpretive Centre" covers it.

While 20,000 sq. ft. is the smallest museum size recommended by staff, it would compliment adjacent museum sites and total over 60,000 sq. ft. Should more than 20,000 sq. ft. be desired the lean-to addition that was added on the west side in WWII could be put back. Since the lean-to was demolished we have kept logs on that area to keep it from being put in the red zone. \$4.2 million in the restoration fund for the Phoenix Gillnet Loft came from the sale of property at the foot of No 2 Rd that was supposed to be for an artists market. The lean-to could provide additional space to accommodate that use.

A replica is better than no building at all. The Murakami Boat Shop is a replica. We tried to restore it but it fell apart in the process. However maintaining it as a true heritage building is important..... Can we restore the Phoenix Gillnet Loft without tearing it down?

I am concerned with the conservation of the building and replacing siding because of lead paint. When we restored the Seine Net Loft we didn't worry about the fact the building was sheeted in asbestos. We simply painted over it, presumably with a special paint that is available for painting asbestos. The staff report calls for an expensive abatement process and doesn't answer my question. The four still houses at Britannia were all painted with paint over lead based paint. Also the London Farm House, Steveston Court House, Steveston Museum, Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Minoru Chapel, Branscombe House, McKinney House, Ida Steeves House and Vermillion House, were all painted over lead paint without "abatement". ....Why can't we paint the building like we did with all of the others?

The 2015 Conservation Review apparently missed the most important fact, the integrity of Cannery Row. When BC Packers was rezoned the city had the option of saving the Imperial Cannery, which was my choice, or the Phoenix Gillnet Loft. The Phoenix Gillnet Loft was chosen and donated by BC Packers to maintain and interpret a small section of Cannery Row. As we have lost most of Cannery Row it is important to retain the building and retain it's existing size to match the sister building.

In 2019 it was estimated that a 60,000 sq. ft. destination museum would cost \$56,520,000. At \$35,440,000 we save \$21,000,000 which could be used to finish the Britannia Shipyard site and London Farm, projects totalling more than 60,000 sq. ft. After 31 years, it is also the only option of getting a museum in the near future.