

A tall, cylindrical lighthouse tower made of white, textured stone blocks stands prominently in the center. At the base, there are several buildings with white siding and bright red roofs. A small tree with reddish-purple leaves is in the foreground. The sky is blue with light clouds.

BLUE
RHINO
DESIGN

October 18, 2021

POINT CLARK
LIGHTHOUSE
MUSEUM
REVITALIZATION
PLAN

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Background	2
The Point Clark Lighthouse Story.....	2
The Lightkeeper Museum – Current State.....	3
Summary.....	3
Approach and Grounds.....	3
Buildings.....	4
Museum Exhibits.....	6
Museum Recommendations	8
Themes and Stories.....	8
The Lives of Lightkeepers.....	8
Lighthouses, Lamps, and Lenses.....	9
Tales of Ships Lost.....	9
Ancient Pathways.....	9
Reimagining Spaces	10
Themed Exhibit Rooms.....	10
Reading and Activity Room.....	12
Community Gallery.....	13
Outdoor Spaces.....	14
Collections Management	15
Activities & Programming	15
Building & Infrastructure	16
Project Recommendations	17
Timing.....	17
Resourcing.....	18
Museum Revitalization - Next Steps	19
Design & Content Process & Stages.....	19
What is an Interpretive Plan?.....	19
What is Exhibit Design?.....	19
What is Content Development?.....	20
First Phase Recommendation.....	20
Phase 1 – Development & Initial design.....	21
Phase 1 - Workflow Recommendations.....	22
Subsequent Phases.....	22
Resources	23



INTRODUCTION

Blue Rhino Design is pleased to present this high-level Revitalization Plan to reimagine and develop the exhibits for the Point Clark Lighthouse Museum (PCLM). The purpose of this plan is four-fold—

1. To assess the current state of PCLM and make recommendations for revitalizing the museum
2. To guide PCLM staff in best practices for managing the development of new exhibits and spaces
3. To make recommendations for decision-making, planning, and executing PCLM's redesign
4. To present a high-level vision for showcasing PCLM's history, people, and objects in new and exciting ways

Our observations and recommendations here are based on information and photos supplied by PCLM, virtual meetings and communications with staff, our own online research, and a site visit and tour.

BACKGROUND

THE POINT CLARK LIGHTHOUSE STORY

The Point Clark Lighthouse is a National Historic Site owned by Parks Canada Agency (PCA) and leased to the Township of Huron-Kinloss. The museum and tourism aspect of the lighthouse are operated by the township. The lighthouse is operated as a navigational aid by the Canadian Coast Guard. Also present on the property is the former fuel-storage building and animal shelter, formerly used by the township as a visitor information centre.

The Point Clark Lighthouse story spans almost 170 years, from the lighthouse's construction in 1855 through the tower's renovation in 2011-15 and its continued use today.

Throughout this historical narrative are woven the stories of generations of lighthouse keepers and their families; of ships warned and ships lost; and of the modernization of lighting technologies which eventually spelled the end of the lighthouse keeper era.

These stories are wrapped up in the broader histories of Point Clark, its lakeshore and geology, and the Indigenous culture that left its mark in the waters long before colonization. Together, all of these stories underpin the exhibits and tours currently offered at the Point Clark Lighthouse and Museum.

BACKGROUND

THE LIGHTKEEPER MUSEUM – CURRENT STATE

SUMMARY

The museum occupies the ground floor of a 2-storey keepers' cottage. From a distance, the outside appears well-maintained with a coat of white paint and a bright red roof to match the lighthouse. But close observation reveals that the paint is peeling off the building. Inside, the ground floor is broken into five main rooms and several smaller alcoves and spaces. The interior is in poor shape, suffering from water damage and an overall lack of maintenance. Upstairs is closed to the public but serves as storage.

The museum offers a range of intriguing themes and stories, all supported by a treasure-trove of objects—some interesting in their own right and others simply embodying the day-to-day life of a lighthouse keeper. However, the threads of these stories and the relevance of the objects are lost in a confusing mix of outdated displays and interpretation, irrelevant objects, lack of labels, and the quasi-recreation of a lighthouse keeper dwelling.

APPROACH AND GROUNDS

The approach to the museum and lighthouse through Point Clark is well marked from quite a few kilometres away. Once near town, navigating to the lighthouse and museum can be done easily without the aid of a GPS. Point Clark is a quiet treed community of winding streets, colourful gardens, and small well-maintained cottages and homes. It is apparent that the community takes pride in itself and in the lighthouse. Residents mirror the lighthouse theme and red-and-white colour scheme in such items as mailboxes, free mini-library boxes, garden ornaments, flags, and, in some cases, even in the colour of their homes.

Parks Canada owns the grounds around the lighthouse and cottage. There is a well-kept lawn maintained by the township. It has picnic tables, benches, and some basic interpretive signage developed by the now defunct, Bruce Coast Lighthouses group. There is direct access to the lake (but not a beach) behind the cottage. The site is adjacent to a public beach and parking, public washrooms, a playground, and a boat launch.

The main constraint in using the grounds for exhibits or programming is lead and mercury soil contamination from the fuel used for the lighthouse prior to electric light. As well, the ground near the former fuel storage building contains higher than acceptable levels of hydrocarbons (diesel fuel). Until the contamination is remediated, it has been recommended that the unpaved areas not be used for programs that encourage sitting on the ground or for anything involving food.

That said, the museum does host an outdoors children's day program during the summer and local residents and tourists freely use the grounds.

BACKGROUND

THE LIGHTKEEPER MUSEUM – CURRENT STATE

BUILDINGS

Our visit to the museum took place in summer 2021, after the museum had been closed for nearly two years. This, and restrictions imposed by the pandemic, may explain some of the conditions we encountered.

THE LIGHTKEEPER COTTAGE MUSEUM

Entry to the museum is through an unusually short door that leads to a small (9 ft x 7 ft) unadorned “welcome room” with a low sloped roof. The welcome room has a boarded-up door to the rear as well. Within the museum, the rooms are small and traffic-flow is constricted both by the layout of the rooms and by the preponderance of furniture and objects in the collection.

Floors are covered in well-worn industrial grade carpet, presumably over original wide-plank floors, but we were unable to verify that. There are windows with pull-down shades in most of the rooms. Walls and ceilings are wainscot or drywall and most are painted off-white. Because of a leak in the roof several years ago, the paint is peeling off the walls in some areas and the ceiling shows water damage.

The building is wired for electric and ethernet and Wi-Fi is made available to the public. Each room has a centre ceiling light and the exhibits are lit by large incandescent track floodlighting. Switches and outlets are not readily apparent. A number of extension cords run out from behind exhibit cases. Lights are turned off and on via the breaker panel. There are emergency floodlights and motion-activated alarms in each room.

The museum is closed in winter. Heat is provided by an oil boiler (to be upgraded to natural gas) and baseboard units. A Wi-Fi thermostat provides remote monitoring and temperature control. There is running water and a staff washroom.



BACKGROUND

THE LIGHTKEEPER MUSEUM – CURRENT STATE

BUILDINGS

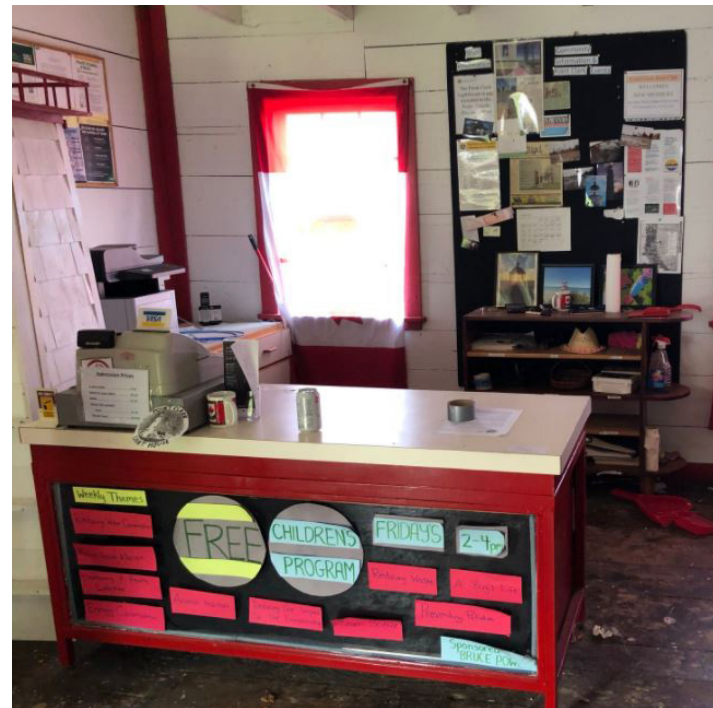
THE LIGHTHOUSE

The climb to the top of the lighthouse is steep and difficult. The return trip down is treacherous. In either direction, visitors must carefully watch their step, use the handrails, and maintain pace so as not to block others during their tour. The lantern room at the top of the lighthouse affords a spectacular 360 view but there is little space to maneuver.

For these reasons we feel that the interior of the lighthouse is not an appropriate place for interpretive messages or museum objects. We recommend that the objects and signage on the windowsills be removed. They currently add little value in those locations.

FUEL STORAGE SHED

There is another building on the site—the former fuel storage building, once used to store diesel fuel for the light and for housing animals. The Township normally uses this building as a visitor information centre. As such, we have not considered it as a potential exhibit space for the purposes of this revitalization plan.



BACKGROUND

MUSEUM EXHIBITS

Again, a reminder that the museum had been closed for two years at the time of our visit. We understand that some regular cleaning and maintenance would have occurred had the museum been open.

RECREATING LIGHTKEEPERS LIVES

An effort has been made to depict the lightkeepers' living spaces. This is done using the traditional "velvet rope" method of staging rooms that visitors view from behind a barricade strung across the doorway. The time period reflected in the rooms is a somewhat arbitrary choice. Most of the staging items on loan from Bruce County are from the 1890s through 1910s. However, these items are mixed with older and more contemporary objects.

This is understandable given that the lightkeeper's house was used as a residence for almost 100 years by as many as ten lightkeepers and their families. It can probably be assumed that some furniture and fixtures endured through a number of keepers, but most items would have been replaced over time—worn items discarded, tools and technology updated, and personal items taken home. For these reasons, a keeper's dwelling in 1860 would have looked very different from a keeper's dwelling in 1960. This leads to a conundrum when trying to accurately depict the keepers' living spaces—the museum must either recreate a specific moment in time or find a way to reflect the changes that came with the passage of time. At the moment, it seems a mixture of both.

OBJECTS

The museum can be congratulated for acquiring so many treasured and interesting objects over the years. Those on display are a mix of items that are considered an "original" part of the keepers' house, historical images, items donated by community members, and items on loan from Bruce County Museum. Objects range in size from a pair of cufflinks to an iron cooking stove.

A large majority of the loaned objects are dressing — items used to lend an air of authenticity to the lightkeepers' living spaces. They include over 150 items encompassing clothing, books, tools, furniture, wall-hangings, kitchenware, and knick-knacks. As well, community members have contributed to this staging collection, entrusting the museum with their personal family items.

Other objects relate to the natural and cultural history of the region, but not specifically to the lighthouse—rocks and fossils, driftwood, and items found washed up on the shore. And finally, there are objects that appear unrelated to the lighthouse or the region at all—boxes of ocean seashells, ship models with no identity, random photos. The overall effect of this disparate collection is one of confusion and clutter.

BACKGROUND

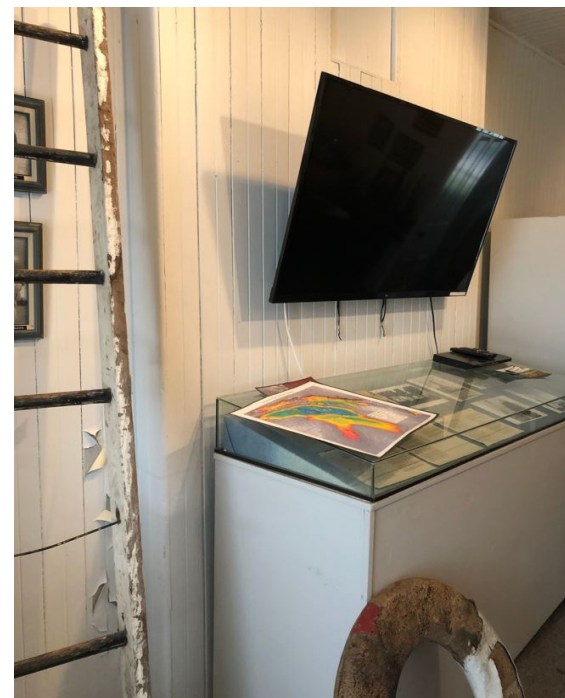
MUSEUM EXHIBITS

DISPLAYS

The condition of the exhibits and displays is poor, suffering neglect for a number of reasons—primarily lack of dedicated knowledgeable staff to do regular exhibit maintenance and lack of funding for regular exhibit upgrades.

An attempt has been made to put as many items as possible on display, distributing them across furniture surfaces, walls, floors, racks, windowsills, shelves, and display cases. Several display cases are locked and the whereabouts of the keys is unknown. One was sealed shut when it was constructed and, as far as anyone knows, has not been opened since. This means items and interpretation inside these cases have never been maintained or updated.

Many items in the museum have no labels. Of those that do, the labels are homemade, tattered, and outdated. There is almost no interpretation which makes the relevance of many of the objects unclear. There is a set of four portable interpretive panels that give a brief overview of the Storm of 1913 and highlight some of the ships lost in that storm. While the storm makes for an exciting tale, the panels deliver only superficial information.



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

We have developed the following recommendations to help PCLM become a place where people experience the lighthouse stories in two ways – through a classic museum experience (exhibits, objects, and interpretation) and through activities (programs, workshops, self-study).

The first four recommendations address museum design and exhibit development. These includes defining the themes and stories, reimagining the museum spaces, curating the objects to be displayed, and thinking about programming. The last recommendation addresses building infrastructure.

Themes and Stories

Through our conversations and research, we have identified three main themes associated with the Point Clark Lighthouse and lightkeeper cottage and one regional story that we feel is worth pursuing.

THE LIVES OF LIGHTKEEPERS

Over the course of 100 years, the lightkeeper cottage was home to as many as ten keepers and, in some cases, their families. Who were these men? How were they selected? What does a lightkeeper’s job entail? What tools does he use? Did anything significant happen on his watch? What was life like for his wife and children? Do their descendants still live nearby? The cottage was also home to caretakers who cared for the lighthouse after it was automated. What was their job? How were their lives different from that of lightkeepers?

These are just some of the questions that might be answered in a contemporary exhibit about the keepers of the Point Clark Lighthouse. Expanded beyond mere portraits on the wall, a well-interpreted and carefully curated exhibit will bring these men and their families to life through storytelling, images, and objects.

LIGHTHOUSES, LAMPS, AND LENSES

The Point Clark Lighthouse is one of dozens of lighthouses that continue to play an important role in protecting ships on the Great Lakes. This theme provides an entry point to talk about the specific history of the Point Clark Lighthouse, including the 2011-15 restoration. But it also tells a broader story.

Lighting technology has changed since the lighthouses were first built. With those advancements came a shift in the keepers’ responsibilities until eventually automated lights rendered the lightkeeper’s job obsolete. But that obsolescence has not gone without resistance. As recently as 2017, the last Canadian lightkeepers were still trying to protect their livelihoods against the march of automation and budget cuts.

MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

So, how do lighthouses actually work? How have they changed since the first days of the Point Clark Lighthouse? How did that affect the keepers' work? Do the new lights provide more protection for ships? Do they require any maintenance? Who does that? Are they computerized? Have any of the lights ever failed? If so, what happened? And finally, what does the future hold for lighthouses? Will modern navigation aids such as GPS, dynamic nautical charts, and radar beacons render them as irrelevant as the lightkeepers themselves?

All of these questions open up intriguing possibilities for exhibits that teach about the advancement of lighthouse technology while challenging people to think about the broader effects of technological changes and the future of safe navigation on the Great Lakes.

TALES OF SHIPS LOST

People love a good shipwreck story. While invariably tragic, people want to know what happened on that fateful day. They want to hear about the warnings, the heroes, and the mistakes that were made. They want to know what the weather was and how many souls were lost. They want to see maps dotted with wrecks and marvel at the numbers. They want to find salvaged items on the beach, during a dive, or see them in the museum.

Forever poets, songwriters, authors, and artists have memorialized shipwrecks in ways that make us feel the fear and remember the lost. Done well, an exhibit about shipwrecks can do all of these things and more. The current "Lost in Lake Huron" panels provide quick top-line information about some of these wrecks associated with the Storm of 1913, but visitors are left with more questions than answers. We see ample opportunity to showcase these stories in a more engaging and memorable way.

ANCIENT PATHWAYS

Some 9,000 years ago, caribou hunters carefully stacked boulders along a ridge of land to create a "drive lane" to guide migrating caribou into a natural dead-end where it was easy for hunters to spear them. But as the ice age came to an end, water levels rose, eventually submerging the ridge. In the early 2000s, underwater archeologists discovered the drive lane and other signs of human activity more than 70 metres below the surface of Lake Huron.

Who were these hunters? Why did they build here? Where did they go? Are their descendants alive today? How did archeologists find the drive lane? How do they know that's what they found? How does this discovery change what we know about the formation of Lake Huron? Or about the people of that time?

Many visitors to the museum have expressed interest in learning more about these ancient signs of human habitation on the Alpena-Amberley ridge. There are ample ways to tell this story and bring to life those ancient people and the scientists who discovered their work.

MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

REIMAGINING SPACES

How the museum spaces are used will make all the difference in how well the PCLM themes and stories are conveyed to visitors. Given the limited space within the museum, we recommend eliminating the “velvet rope” approach and instead opening all rooms to visitors.

We recommend that the majority of the space be dedicated to well curated exhibits within the specific themes identified above. In addition, we also imagine spaces dedicated to group and individual activities and other spaces that can be easily converted for temporary exhibits, workshops, talks, or demonstrations.

THEMED EXHIBIT ROOMS

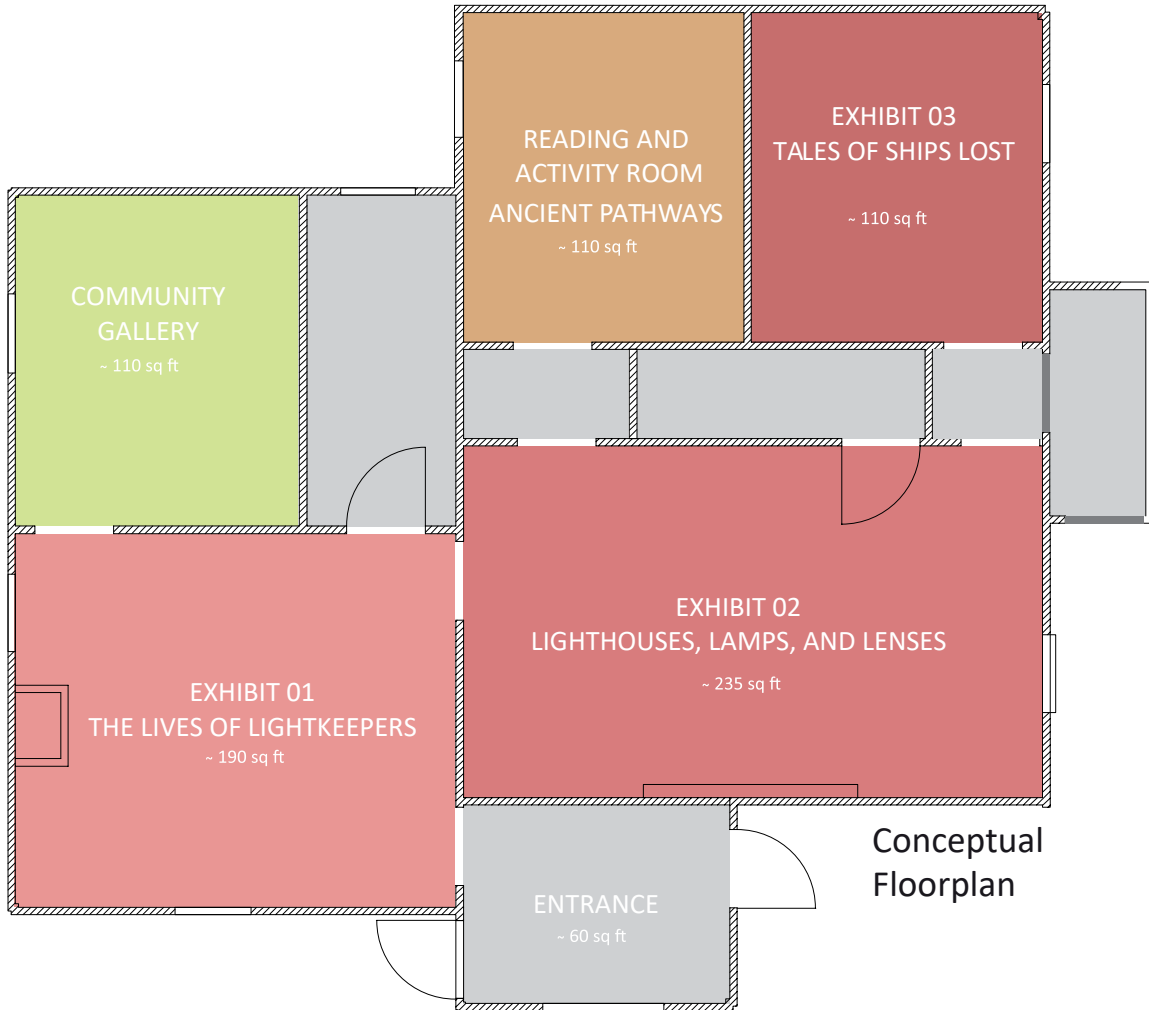
Looking at the room sizes and traffic flow, we recommend using the two front rooms to tell the key stories of Point Clark Lighthouse – “The Lives of Lightkeepers” and “Lighthouses, Lamps, and Lenses” — and that “Tales of Ships Lost” be located in, what is now, the parlour. In our opinion, “Ancient Pathways” would work best in the Reading and Activity Room (see below).

In terms of traffic flow, we like the idea of visitors being greeted by the lighthouse keepers when they enter the building. It will serve as a reminder that this was the keepers’ home, even if it looks more like a museum today. It will also serve to bring a human face to the museum from the moment visitors come through the door.

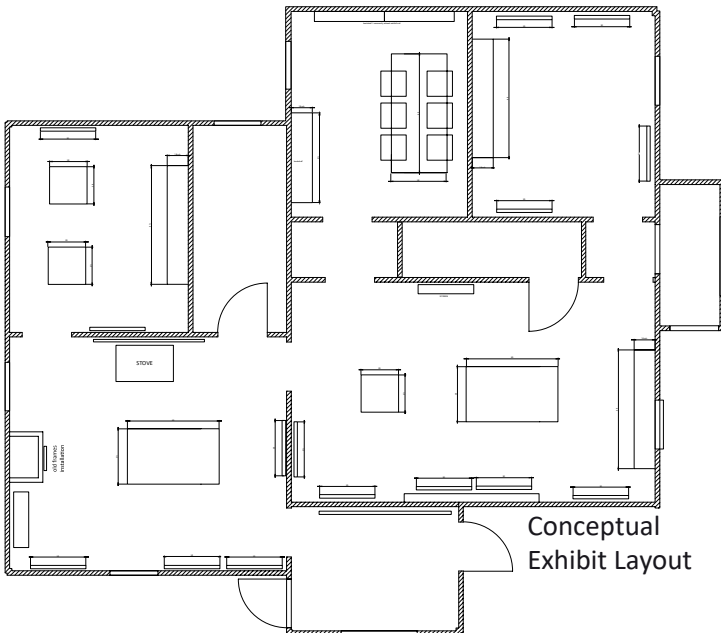


MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

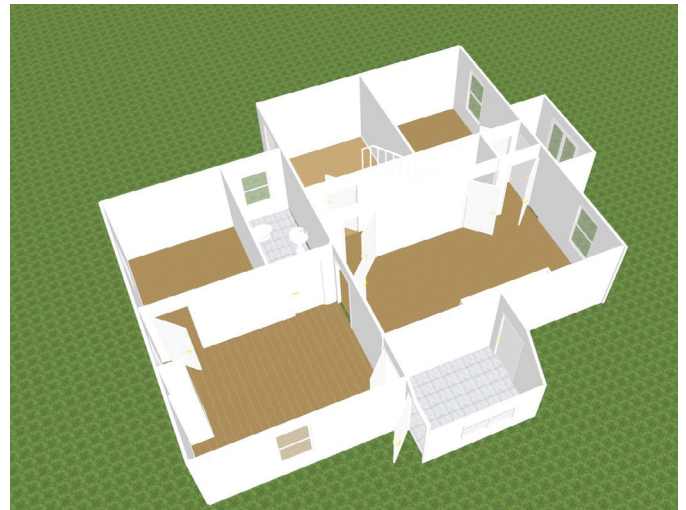
REIMAGINING SPACES



Conceptual Floorplan



Conceptual Exhibit Layout



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

READING AND ACTIVITY ROOM

As a low-cost, high-value improvement, we suggest converting one of the “bedrooms” into a Reading and Activity room. We imagine a large reading/work table, several comfortable chairs, a bookcase, and appropriate professionally framed wall hangings – maps, portraits, paintings, photos, etc. A few carefully selected historical objects might be displayed here too, with simple labels or a small amount of interpretation. Décor in this room would remain true to the general theme of lighthouses (in particular, Point Clark), but rather than a “frozen in time” collection of objects and furniture, it would centre on useability of the space.

A curated book collection would provide relevant reading materials for all ages – historical accounts, research material, map folios, photo albums, children’s books, and anything else related to Point Clark and lighthouses. Many of these could be acquired through donations from the community or the library or from used bookstores.

The room would also serve as an indoor space to host children’s programs (arts & crafts, story time, etc.) and as a place for parents and caregivers to bring children. Other items here could include jigsaw puzzles, colouring sheets, activity books, small toys and LEGOs (or similar), board games, and other indoor activities related to the lighthouse theme. With children in mind, some historical objects on display here might reflect the lives of the children who lived in the lightkeepers’ house. It may also provide space to display children’s works.



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY GALLERY

Another low-cost improvement would be to convert the theatre room into a community gallery. We envision a clean, largely empty well-lit room with art-display hardware and cases that are easily moved and reconfigured to accommodate various arts, crafts, and collections. The room might also include a small amount of seating.

This would be a community space, not a fine arts gallery. Community members could sign up to exhibit one or more pieces for fixed periods of time (say, one month). Items might include paintings, photography, fabric art, stained glass, historical objects, antiques, ship models, or small “hobby collections” of items related to PCLM themes.

Another option would be to rent the entire space to individual artists or to an artist collective to host exhibits. In either case, PCLM would have to create guidelines for the gallery to ensure exhibits and items are appropriate to the museum’s mission.

When not in use by the community, the room could house temporary exhibits curated by the museum, exhibits on loan from other museums or galleries, or even be used to host photography or art contests. With moveable exhibit structures and the addition of a projection screen, it could also serve as a venue for talks and presentations.



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

OUTDOOR SPACES

The museum grounds present an opportunity to expand the museum's reach beyond its walls. We imagine a few well-placed interpretive panels that would give visitors (especially those who come in the off-season) a good overview of the lighthouse and its stories. These would be designed in keeping with the surrounding landscape and would be placed so as not to interfere with the scenic photo opportunities presented by the lighthouse and keeper cottage.

Interpretation might be located in conjunction with artfully designed sitting areas and/or picnic tables. These areas would also provide space for outdoor programming.



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Another low-cost, high impact improvement would be to appropriately curate, cull, and catalog the museum’s collection. Small community museums often become repositories for objects donated by community members. While some may be relevant to the region’s history or to the museum’s focus, the influx of donated objects frequently presents challenges to a small museum when it comes to displaying, storing, and caring for them.

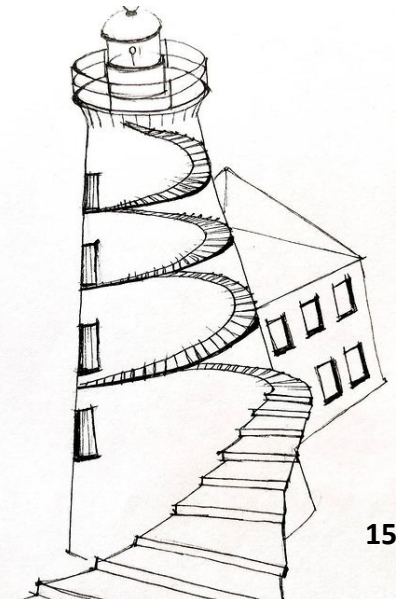
This has certainly been true for PCLM. For this reason, PCLM needs tools for managing the collections and clear guidelines when it comes to accepting objects that meet museum’s goals and mission. To assist in that work, we have listed the steps that PCLM can take to manage the collection and control the influx of donations. Those guidelines appear in the First Phase Recommendation below.

ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMING

With proper staffing and/or subject-matter expertise, PCLM has opportunity to expand their programming and possibly generate income. We envision using both indoor and outdoor spaces to deliver theme-appropriate programs to all ages and interest groups. Participants might be found through senior centres, book clubs, daycares, schools, churches, art collectives, or other community groups.

Some examples include—

- Workshops: ship model-building, build a model lighthouse (kids), painting, photography
- Living history experiences: re-enactments, costumed interpreters, readings from journals
- Private after-hours or off-season lighthouse tours
- Curricula-focused student experiences
- Presentations: author visits, book launches, “ask the expert” talks
- Outdoor Experiences: The Light at Night (telescopes, stargazing, celestial navigation, stories)
- Summer Break: day programs, children’s story time, arts and crafts



MUSEUM RECOMMENDATIONS

BUILDING & INFRASTRUCTURE

While tangential to our role as exhibit developers, we think it's important to address some of the cosmetic and structural improvements necessary to bring the Point Clark Museum up to professional standards. This work is advised, not only for appearance, but also for the protection of museum objects, visitors, and staff.

Objects need to be sheltered from sunlight, humidity, mould, water, fire, extreme temperatures, vermin, accidental damage, and theft. While expensive display cases can provide some of that protection, the building itself should provide the first barrier to these potential risks.

The need for protection extends to staff and visitors as well. Poorly-lit crowded rooms, trailing extension cords, musty carpet, and peeling paint present health and safety hazards. Health concerns are especially relevant in light of the pandemic which has ushered in a wave of recommendations for museums seeking to safely host visitors. COVID has also caused people to rethink how they operate in public spaces—who they're near, what they touch, the air they breathe. While the pandemic will certainly pass, the cautions will remain with us.

And finally, the poor condition of the building reflects negatively on the township as a whole. It leaves visitors and local community members wondering how much the township really values the museum and the treasures it holds.

Structural renovation would include, but not be limited to the following:

- Exterior paint and repair
- Replacing carpet with wood or other washable hard flooring
- Repair and painting all walls, ceilings, doors, trim
- Changing the entry to make the building physically accessible
- Removing swinging doors and/or widening openings to improve traffic flow and aid accessibility
- Upgrade ambient and exhibit lighting
- Add UV protection to windows

We strongly recommend that any infrastructure improvements be planned in collaboration with interior and exhibit design professionals so that exhibits and visitor experiences are prioritized when deciding on things like finishes, lighting, or potential structural changes.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our meetings with PCLM staff and a thorough review of the photos, the collection inventory, floorplans, and other material, we have put together a series of recommendations intended to guide PCLM through the process of upgrading and reimagining the museum to be more cohesive, contemporary, and in line with heritage conservation standards.

In our experience, it's entirely possible for a small museum to create beautiful and engaging exhibits and spaces within the limitations presented by intermittent funding, few paid staff, and lack of exhibit space. Success is largely a matter of careful incisive curation, doing the work in stages, balancing fabrication costs with quality, and effectively distributing the work among in-house personnel and outside experts.

TIMING

We feel it's important to begin this project as soon as possible for several reasons. First, the condition of the museum and objects within it are in need of immediate attention if they are to be properly preserved.

Second, the work must begin now if PCLM plans to open the museum next summer. Being closed for the winter presents the perfect opportunity to complete infrastructure upgrades and do the necessary exhibit development work in time to get exhibits fabricated and installed before opening day.

Also, if PCLM plans to recruit interns or co-op students, this needs to be coordinated with schools and the school calendar as soon as possible. For instance, PCLM may be able to find a collections technician intern to help with inventory during the upcoming term. In addition, there may be government funding to pay interns, but applying for that would need to start early.

And finally, PCLM needs to get ahead of decisions being made on its behalf. For instance, we understand that Bruce County Museum may be seeking to leave their objects on "permanent loan" – meaning they won't take them back and that the PCLM may not dispose of them. As well, any planned building infrastructure renovation should take into account the specific needs of the museum as an exhibit space before work begins.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOURCING

Like most small museums, PCLM doesn't have a dedicated museum team at their disposal. But one or two in-house staff, supported by interns or volunteers and the community-at-large, can effectively improve a museum if they work under the guidance of a small professional exhibit team.

Volunteers / Interns / Co-op Students

While it's sufficient to train general summer help to occupy children, take tickets and give basic tours, it's important to recruit more interested and dedicated students to help with museum development. Eager students may be recruited from university and college programs such as museum studies, Canadian history, art history, or heritage conservation. As well, students in childhood development, early education or other programs might be recruited to develop meaningful summer programs or workshops for children. See the Resources section for more information.

Community Participation

Museum fundraising sources often weigh the museum's relationship with the community—how well loved the museum is, how involved the museum is with the community, the amount of outreach the museum puts towards the community, and so forth.

For this reason, it's important that PCLM make a concerted effort to maintain the support of the local community. One way to do this is to "shop local" — recruit help and contributions from local residents and hire local tradespeople. This not only builds community connections, but may result in the contribution of time and/or materials to museum projects. For instance —

- Local tradespeople (carpenters, cabinetmakers, plasterers, etc.)
- Community members to provide local images, stories, and specific objects of interest
- Local subject-matter experts to provide background, research, reference material
- Individuals with an attachment to the lighthouse for philanthropic donations or sponsorships

Exhibit Design Professionals

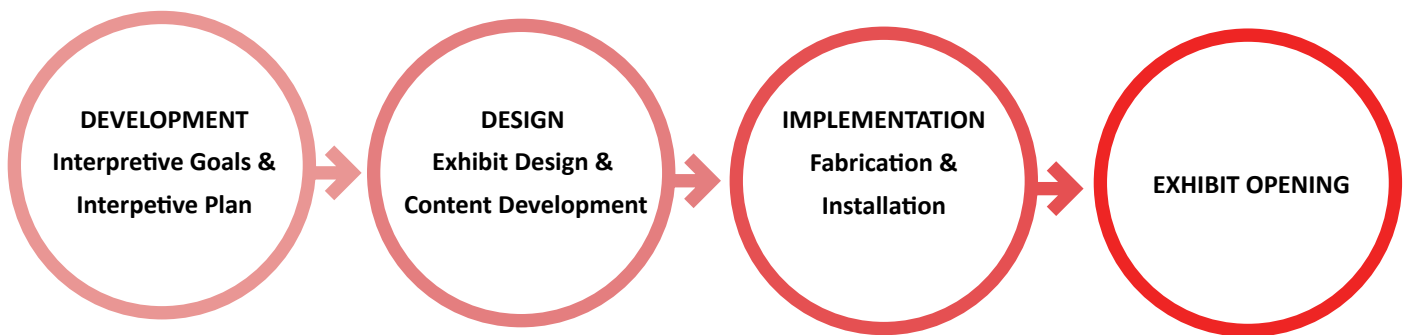
Exhibit design professionals bring both exhibit development expertise and project expertise to the table. Because PCLM doesn't have staff dedicated to the museum, engaging museum professionals will be necessary if the museum wants to develop high-quality exhibits that will have a lasting impact. However, because the budget is limited and funding may be sporadic, it's important to decide how much of the work (if any) can be done by museum staff, interns, volunteers, or community members without stalling the project. Correctly managed, a careful division of labour can go a long way towards conserving funds for the exhibits while still meeting next year's launch deadline.

MUSEUM REVITALIZATION - NEXT STEPS

DESIGN & CONTENT PROCESS & STAGES

Museum revitalization and exhibit development follow a predictable implementation pathway. These steps can be complex in a major revitalization project, but for small museums like PCLM, they can be streamlined and simplified without compromising the quality of the exhibits.

The key to any successful museum revitalization is interpretive planning. This necessary first step sets the tone for the whole museum. Once the interpretive plan is complete, exhibits can be rolled out in phases as funding and resources become available.



WHAT IS AN INTERPRETIVE PLAN?

An interpretive plan is a framework that guides the museum and exhibit developers toward the fulfillment of interpretive goals. It identifies project stakeholders and target audiences; defines exhibit goals and objectives; establishes themes and interpretive hierarchy; and provides a road map for launching the new exhibits. Done correctly, the interpretive plan will serve as a reference, underpinning all design and content decisions going forward.

WHAT IS EXHIBIT DESIGN?

Exhibit design covers two main components—

- Physical space: how the rooms should be arranged, where each story will be told, how traffic will flow, where lighting and other infrastructure goes, and other design of the physical space.
- Exhibits: designing the look and feel of the exhibits themselves including all graphic design.

Exhibit design results in one or more design packages. These may include bubble diagrams, floor plans, renderings, elevations, graphic layouts, and other drawings. The final design package includes the final script, design details, and graphic layouts in a production-ready biddable package.

MUSEUM REVITALIZATION - NEXT STEPS

WHAT IS CONTENT DEVELOPMENT?

Content development determines which stories will be told and describes exactly how they will be told through written interpretation, objects, graphics, activities, or other means. Research for content develop requires a deep dive into the museum's stories, ideally through consultation with subject-matter experts.

Content development results in one or more of the following products:

- Content Briefs: An overview of each exhibit and its main messages; identifies subthemes and interpretive strategies, such as interactives and media elements.
- Content Outline: Breaks content into sections and subsections, and identifies key objects, images, quotes, and other elements to be included.
- Exhibit Script: Weaves content into a narrative form, incorporating object labels, image captions, and credits. May be combined with the Content Outline.

FIRST PHASE RECOMMENDATION

We understand that PCLM may consider other design firms for future development work. Since services provided by other firms may differ in scope, timing, and/or applicable skill sets, we are making the following recommendations based on the experience and availability of our team.

We recommend a first phase that would result in two concrete deliverables between now and June, 2022:

1. The Interpretive Plan
2. The completion of one entire exhibit room

Costs for these steps will depend on a number of factors including whether or not PCLM receives the grant to acquire exhibit cases and, if so, how many. Costs will also depend on how the work and purchases (for instance, lighting) are distributed among PCLM, the township, and the exhibit design firm.

MUSEUM REVITALIZATION - NEXT STEPS

PHASE 1 – DEVELOPMENT & INITIAL DESIGN

Design Firm – Development, Design, Implementation

- Create Interpretive Plan for the entire museum
- Fully develop the Lightkeeper Room (first main room)
 - o Research & develop detailed storylines
 - o Design room, traffic flow, exhibit layout
 - o Design graphic treatments and exhibit panels
 - o Write object labels, interpretive text
- Fabrication & Installation
 - o Produce graphic panels, labels
 - o Select and purchase display cases (if not already purchased)
 - o Installation of exhibits, objects
- Provide guidance to PCLM to:
 - o Define the museum’s core mission and interpretive goals
 - o Agree on which stories the museum should focus on
 - o Curate the collection with those stories and goals in mind

PCLM - Infrastructure Improvements

Exhibit design services generally do not include building structural repair, cleaning, repainting, lighting, flooring, or any other infrastructure work. We strongly recommend that infrastructure upgrades and repair take place as soon as possible to ready the museum for exhibits.

PCLM - Collections Management

While we do require the involvement of PCLM during the development of the Interpretive Plan and exhibits, we also strongly recommend that PCLM devotes time to collections management as soon as possible. This would include the following tasks—

- Develop an object donation policy and procedure and clear guidelines for the public
- Inventory all items and determine their relevance to the museum’s mission & goals
- Appropriately deaccession, return, or dispose of items that don’t meet those goals
- Perform appropriate maintenance and cleaning on all remaining objects
- Attach clear identifying labels to all remaining objects
- Safely store all objects upstairs (or other safe area) pending building renovation
- Scan (hi-res) all images, photos, maps, documents; clearly label digital files & upload to safe online storage
- Safely archive all original photos, maps and documents

If PCLM does not have the staff or time to undertake the above tasks, the design firm may be able to can provide these services.

MUSEUM REVITALIZATION - NEXT STEPS

PHASE 1 - WORKFLOW RECOMMENDATIONS

This rough timeline is based on the starting point that we consider the latest possible date that will allow for a mid-June 2022 opening. We strongly recommend starting sooner if possible.

2022	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Design Firm	Interpretive Plan		Exhibit 1 – Design & Development		Fabrication		Install Exhibits
PCLM	Mission & Theme Dev	Collections Management		Pre-prod Sign-offs	Staffing & Programming	Install Exhibits	Open!
Township	Building Renovation					Install Exhibits	

Notes

- The timing between developing the interpretive plan and beginning design and development is blurry. There will be some overlap there.
- The same is true for fabrication. If we are able to determine exactly which display cases are needed, they can be fabricated while exhibit panels are still being designed.
- We have allowed two weeks for exhibit installation. Typically, the work only takes a few days, but it involves scheduling electricians (for lighting), exhibit installers, museum and facilities staff, and the design team.

SUBSEQUENT PHASES

Once the first phase is complete, we recommend rolling out the exhibits room-by-room as funding is acquired. We anticipate that each room will take between three and four months (6-8 weeks for design & development; 6-8 weeks for fabrication and installation). Actual time will depend on the amount of exhibit content, the number of display cases and exhibit panels, and the availability of museum staff during the development phase.

RESOURCES

We have put together a list of resources to help guide PCLM in decision-making and in performing some of the work we have outlined.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Sample Donations Policies

- The RCRM Museum - Artefacts-Donations
<http://www.thercrmuseum.ca/en-ca/Collection/Artefact-Donations>
- Canoe Museum - Artifact Donation
<https://canoemuseum.ca/donate-an-artifact/>
- Huronia Museum - Collection Policies
<https://huroniamuseum.com/about-2/huronia-museum-policies/collections-policy-for-huronia-museum/>

Collections – Inventory

- Video (5 mins) — Introduction to museum collections documentation standards -
<https://www.canada.ca/en/heritage-information-network/services/collections-documentation-standards/video-introduction-museum-collections.html>
- Museums Association of Saskatchewan - Conducting (and Maintaining!) a Collection Inventory:
Part 1: Introduction to Inventories - (also see part 2)
<https://saskmuseums.org/blog/entry/conducting-and-maintaining-a-collection-inventorypart-1-introduction-to-inv>
- CMA Deaccessioning Guidelines - Flowchart:
https://museums.ca/uploaded/web/NEW_Website_Images/CMA_Deaccessioning_Guidelines_Flowchart.pdf

Displaying Community Artwork and Objects

- Huron County Library – Guidelines for community exhibits and displays:
<https://www.huroncounty.ca/library/about/policies/community-information-and-displays-policy/>
- Toronto Public Library - Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy:
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/library-policies/use-of-library-space-for-art-exhibits-policy.jsp>

STAFFING

Museum Interns, Co-op students, Recent Grads

- College and University Programs:
<https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/programs/arts-and-culture/museum>
- Young Canada Works - Building Careers in Heritage (grads):
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/young-canada-works/students-graduates/careers-heritage-graduates.html>
- U of T – Host a Masters in Museum Studies Internship:
<https://ischool.utoronto.ca/employers/host-an-mmst-internship/>
- Young Canada Works – Job Search:
<https://young-canada-works.canada.ca/Opportunity/PublicApprovedOpportunities>
- Work in Culture Job Board:
<https://www.workinculture.ca/jobboard>

RESOURCES

FUNDING

Guidelines

- Small Museums Guide to Successful Fundraising Campaigns:

<https://www.museumnext.com/article/small-museums-guide-to-successful-fundraising-campaigns/>

Sources

- Canada Museum Assistance Program:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/museums-assistance.html>

- Digital Museums Canada – Funding for online projects:

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

Private Sponsorships - Examples

- The Whale Museum – Sponsorship Opportunities:

<https://whalemuseum.org/pages/sponsorship-opportunities>

- The Canadian Canoe Museum – Adopt an Artifact:

<https://canoemuseum.ca/adopt-an-artefact/>

- Muskoka Heritage Place – Adopt an Artifact:

<https://www.muskokaheritageplace.ca/en/discover-the-museum/adopt-an-artifact.aspx>

HEALTH, SAFETY & COVID

- Ontario Museum Association – Webinar: Reopening Museums Safely with the Public Services Health and Safety Association -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZAmw2DxIVg>

SCHOOL CURRICULA RESOURCES

- US Lighthouse Society – Educational Materials:

<https://uslhs.org/education/educational-materials>

- Maine Dept of Education - Lighthouses across the Curriculum:

<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/education/burnt-island/documents/2019lighthoussyllabus.pdf>

- Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites – School Programs:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/bc/fortroddhill/activ/edu>

A tall, cylindrical lighthouse tower made of white, textured stone blocks stands as the central focus. At the base, there are several buildings with white siding and bright red roofs and trim. A small tree with reddish-purple leaves is in the foreground. The sky is blue with light, wispy clouds.

BLUE
RHINO
DESIGN

October 18, 2021

POINT CLARK
LIGHTHOUSE
MUSEUM
REVITALIZATION
PLAN