



Request for Proposals:

**Interpretation Plan, Design
and Installation for the
Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum**



Important Dates:

Date Issued: October 25, 2023

Deadline: November 30th, 2023 5:00 PM (local time)

Questions: Project-related questions may be submitted in writing to Sarah Kaufman, Managing Director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum (NOTL Museum) at:

skaufman@nhsm.ca. All questions will be answered through addenda posted on the Museum's website under [JOB OPPORTUNITIES](#). **Deadline for Questions: November 24th, 2023**

Site visit: November 9th, 2023 at 10 am at 43 Castlereagh Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S1J0. Please **RSVP** to Sarah Kaufman, skaufman@nhsm.ca.

Purpose

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum seeks proposals from qualified contractors to provide professional interpretive planning services for the redesign of indoor and outdoor museum exhibition gallery spaces as well as the design and installation of permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Background Information

Established in 1895, the Niagara Historical Society, which owns and operates the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum (NOTL Museum), began its work to foster an appreciation for the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Museum complex currently includes Ontario's first purpose-built museum, Memorial Hall (1907), and the 1875 High School building and 1975 Link building.

With a collection of over 53,000 pieces, our rich local history from early Indigenous settlement to present day relates to provincial and national history. Among other significant historical events, we were a settlement for First Nations and later, Loyalists, the first capital of Upper Canada (Ontario), the site of the first legislated abolition of slavery in British North America and thus the destination for Black refugees, the British military headquarters and site of many battles for the War of 1812 (also holding the Laura Secord Collection), and the site of Niagara Camp, a major Canadian Expeditionary Force training ground during the World Wars. More recently Niagara-on-the-Lake's unique agricultural environment sprouted a successful fruit growing industry which blossomed into one of Canada's premier wine industries. Our Museum collects and houses one of the finest collections of early Canadian artefacts and archives relating to these stories.



In 2017, we engaged Lynch + Comisso Inc. to develop architectural drawings to renovate and expand our Museum to better meet our needs and the needs of the community. The newly expanded and renovated NOTL Museum will include new exhibition galleries, programming space, a larger gift shop, increased collection storage, an elevator and accessible hallways.

Scope of Services

This Request for Proposals calls for interpretive planning, design, fabrication and installation of four exhibitions in the NOTL Museum at 43 Castlereagh Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S1J0. The exhibitions should be engaging and be designed to appeal to a broad audience including adults, youth and families. Digital interactives as well as hands-on interactives are welcome with the understanding that onsite staff must be able to maintain them in the future or that maintenance fees are nominal. There are digital projects in early development in partnership with IT departments at Brock University and Niagara College. These are to be included in the exhibitions. The exhibits should take into account visitor needs such as Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and language barriers as our tourist clientele can be international.

The project will be completed in three phases:

- i. Interpretative Plan
- ii. Design Phase
- iii. Fabrication and Installation Phase

Interpretative Plan:

The NOTL Museum will create a committee of staff and local historians or experts to assist in the content development of our exhibitions.

The NOTL Museum seeks a qualified consulting firm with professional museum services experience to:

- Develop a comprehensive interpretive plan that will address the design aesthetic, goals, objectives, and strategies of the NOTL Museum's indoor and outdoor interpretive spaces. The plan will guide the development of new interpretive efforts at the NOTL Museum, while addressing the audience and interpretive themes that can most effectively communicate Niagara-on-the-Lake's stories to visitors;
- Identify and organize interpretive themes and subthemes to create a cohesive plan detailing the history and diversity of Niagara-on-the-Lake and its villages;
- Review existing Museum resources and research related to the NOTL Museum (including but not limited to general historical information, images, past and current reports and plans);



- In consultation with Museum staff and its team of local historians and experts, develop specific objectives of interpretation including learning, behavioral and emotional objectives and make recommendations of the best ways to achieve these interpretive goals and provide desired visitor experiences within the indoor and outdoor spaces;
- The consultant will facilitate key staff and selected historian interviews or group consultations, and public consultation/participation (including a youth session) in the process, culminating in the preparation of a written interpretive plan for the NOTL Museum;
- Present final report and budget for exhibition design;
- Provide the final report, inclusive of drawings, plans and any other materials in both electronic and hard copy format (one hard copy).

Exhibition Design:

- Once approved, use the interpretative plan to design the permanent exhibitions, the temporary exhibitions and the courtyard gallery
- Consult with Staff and the museum's team of historians or experts on the content of the written materials and design
- Draft a written exhibit walkthrough, space use plan and overall design approach;
- Conceptualize and render a sample floor plan, accompanied by drawings/elevations of major exhibit components;
- Consult with Museum staff in person and via phone or web (in person at least four times – initial meeting, two draft consultations, final presentation) in all phases of project development to ensure the finished product meets organizational standards for excellence;
- Consult with architectural or audio-visual design teams if required
- Prepare and submit draft plan for review;
- Prepare and submit a second draft based on discussions and comments on initial draft report;
- Present final report and budget for installation;
- Provide the final report, inclusive of drawings, plans and any other materials in both electronic and hard copy format (one hard copy).

Fabrication and Installation:

- Once the design and budget is approved and permission has been granted to move forward, the installation of the exhibition can begin
- Installation to be coordinated with Museum staff and/or the General Contractor
- Progress meetings on site with staff
- Staff training on the maintenance of the exhibitions



Exhibition Galleries

Four separate exhibition galleries will be included in the project. Those galleries include:

Permanent Exhibition Galleries

Description: The permanent exhibition spans two spaces. It begins in the Link Building and continues to the main floor of Memorial Hall. It is imperative that the overall architecture of the Memorial Hall gallery remains and that we feature a wholesome chronological history of our community. Also on permanent display is new feature in the Museum's Addition, the Loading Wheel, which is seen from the exterior and from within the lobby. It is possible that this piece can be used for demonstration by visitors.

Link Main Floor (Existing):

859 sq ft

Memorial Hall Main Floor (Existing):

1404 sq ft

Temporary Exhibition Galleries:

Main Temporary Exhibition Gallery in the New Addition

Description: The main temporary exhibition space that will change up twice per year and be the key feature exhibition for visitors. The successful firm will develop the first opening exhibition.

Addition Temporary Gallery: 986 Sq Ft

Link Second Floor Gallery (new):

Description: A second floor access hallway that will second as a temporary exhibition space for an art gallery. Intention is to be visitor curated following it is opening. Guests will select which pieces from the collection they would like to see on display next through a digital kiosk.

410 Sq ft

Upper Memorial Hall Gallery (existing)

Description: A second floor gallery that serves as an educational space for summers students to create mini displays/exhibitions. This space normally comprises of many small exhibitions featuring artefacts or archives from the collection that do not always make it into permanent or temporary exhibitions.

Outdoor Gallery (existing)

1872 sq feet

Description: Courtyard gardens with outdoor artefacts that seconds as an outdoor community space.



Qualifications

- The consultant will have a background in history, education, museums studies or a closely related field, plus professional interpretive planning experience (5 or more years). Experience working in a museum, especially in the field of exhibit design and/or education is preferred;
- Possess knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for developing effective interpretive exhibit spaces to connect museum visitors with historic resources and create meaningful experiences, as demonstrated through examples of related projects, similar in scope to that covered by this RFP;
- Have experience developing interpretive plans for museums/galleries of similar size and collections scope and able to provide examples of past projects on which that the proposed team has worked (rather than examples of projects completed by the firm in general);
- Provide contact information for three previous clients and a short description of their services.

Evaluation Criteria

While cost will be a consideration, proposals will be judged primarily on the submitting company's past success in creating interactive history exhibits on time and within budget. However, consideration will also be given to firms that have a proven track record of outstanding history exhibit design even if they do not have extensive experience in immersive environments. In such cases these firms will need to demonstrate the expertise and resources they feel will allow them to successfully complete such projects. In all cases, preference will be given to the proposal that the Museum feels will best help it achieve the Project Outcomes and Measures of Success for the completed exhibit.

Intended Project Outcomes & Measures of Success

When completed, the permanent and temporary exhibitions are expected to result in the following:

- Creation of an immersive exhibit experience that conveys the essence of Niagara-on-the-Lake's rich and diverse history, industries, culture, communities, people, and natural environment
- Elevation of the NOTL Museum exhibits to a new level of design, resulting in greater engagement with our visitors, interest groups, stakeholders, and the community at large
- More responsiveness in our exhibits to the needs and desires of our community through the employment of "multiple intelligence" and the IPOP (Ideas, People, Objects and Physical Experiences) approaches to exhibition design as well as the universal design approach



- A stronger, active link between the NOTL Museum, its community and surrounding region
- A level of flexibility and environmental consideration to easily, cost-effectively, and
- sustainably maintain, update and/or modify exhibits
- An increase in attendance to the NOTL Museum by attracting and appealing to traditional and non-traditional museum audiences of all ages and interests
- Effectiveness in meeting the learning and interpretive objectives outlined in the exhibition interpretative plan
- Elevated support from stakeholders, donors, volunteers, and visitors
- Elevation of the NOTL Museum to a regionally and provincially recognized destination

Selection Committee: The evaluating committee is made up of Museum staff and community volunteers.

Primary Contact:

Sarah Kaufman, Managing Director,
Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum
43 Castlereagh Street, PO BOX 208
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S1J0
skaufman@nhsm.ca
905-468-3912



Proposal Requirements and How to Submit

Proposals must include the following:

- A. Summary of your firm's background, resources, and relevant experience. Max 2 pages.
- B. Examples from past projects of a similar size and scope. If possible, these should include projects carried through to actual exhibit installation. Each project's square foot costs, listing design fees separately, and time to complete should be included. If projects of a similar size and scope have not been completed, then include examples that are felt to be the most relevant in demonstrating your firm's ability to complete this project. Max 5 pages. Additional pages for visuals accepted.
- C. Statement of firm's design philosophy and capabilities. How do you view the relationship between designers, architects, and clients? What arrangements have worked out best for you on past projects? Design firms without extensive experience in large, immersive history exhibits should be sure to specify in this section why they feel they can handle this project. Max 3 pages.
- D. References from past clients of projects of a similar size and scope.
- E. Proposed schedule for completing the Interpretive Plan, Exhibition Design and Installation, including project stages, milestones, client review and sign-off points, and payments.
- F. Proposed budget for each of the following: the Interpretive Plan phase, Exhibition Design phase and Installation phase. No costs incurred before receipt of a signed contract or specified written authorization from the Contracting Authority can be charged to any resulting contract.
- G. Names and resumes of key personnel that will be directly involved in the project. Max 2 pages per person
- H. Proposals must be submitted in 8.5"x11" digital format.

Terms

- **Right to No or Partial Award** : The NOTL Museum retains the right to not award a contract for this project for any reason or to make a partial award if it deems appropriate.
- **Cancellation**: The NOTL Museum retains the right to cancel the project for any reason. Work completed at the time of cancellation will be paid according to time and materials to a maximum of \$25,000.
The NOTL Museum has the right to decide if the firm can continue to the next phase following the completion of each phase.
- **Consultant Selection and Contract Award**: The Selection Committee will direct the selection process and make a recommendation as to who will be awarded the contract. The NOTL Museum is not obligated to select the lowest cost proposal; the best qualified and best fit for the project will be a major consideration.



- One or more Bidders may be invited to present their proposals at the discretion of the Committee and at the Bidder's cost.
- **Terms of Payment to Consultant**
 - The NOTL Museum shall pay all sums due to the Consultant within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice.
 - The Consultant shall ensure that each invoice contains all appropriate references, a detailed breakdown of the services and materials supplied and is supported by any other documentation reasonably required by the NOTL Museum to substantiate the invoice.
- The NOTL Museum will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by the consultant in preparing and submitting a proposal.
- The NOTL Museum reserves the right to negotiate with the selected consultant in the event that the price exceeds available funds.

Submission Procedure:

Proposals conforming to the requirements set out within this RFP must be received by Sarah Kaufman, Managing Director (skaufman@nhsm.ca), no later than the deadline, **November 30th 2023 5 p.m. Local Time**. A digital .pdf printable copy is required. Additional hard copies accepted but not required. Evaluations of proposals will begin immediately thereafter. Proposals must state that they are valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the closing deadline.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum
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www.notlmuseum.ca