

# Peterborough Museum & Archives

## Facility Renewal Project—Phase III

By Susan Neale

**A**s an integral part of the community's collective memory, the Peterborough Museum & Archives (the Museum) preserves, presents and promotes the heritage and culture of Peterborough, and provides other significant heritage programs for the education and enjoyment of both visitors and residents alike. The Museum houses one of the oldest community collections in Ontario, and has been acquiring objects since June 22, 1897.

The Museum has developed into a model community museum and archives. It has been granted "Category A" collecting status by the Cultural Property Export Review Board of Canada. The Museum also has the distinction of hosting Fleming College's post-graduate Museum Management and Curatorship program.

The Museum collection currently comprises more than 47,000 artifacts, representing Peterborough's material culture, as well as its natural and archaeological heritage. The Archives comprise more than 2,000 different *fonds* of documentary materials, such as public records, private documents, works of art, maps, plans, rare books, and photographic negatives and prints.

### Museum Renewal Project—Phases I and II

In 2010, the Museum undertook Phase I of its Museum Renewal Project: a major facelift to its public spaces (lobby, entrance and galleries). The positive results were instantly recognized by the public, and visitation has steadily increased ever since.

While these improvements were transformative, museological advancements required healthier collection storage.

In 2012, Peterborough's City Council endorsed Phase II of the Museum Renewal Project, which included:

- construction of a 9,000-square-foot dedicated storage building;
- renovation of 3,000 square feet of the main building, including a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC); and
- the purchase and installation of custom collection-storage systems.

Phases I and II of the Museum Renewal Project successfully resolved the most pressing facility issues affecting human safety and accessibility, collections preservation and access, as well as public-programming spaces.

### Museum Renewal Project—Phase III

Canada's 150th anniversary, and the Museum's 50th anniversary coincided in 2017. The Museum planned to enter this important year with a rejuvenated and inspiring physical presence in Peterborough's heritage landscape.

The exterior cladding and windows of the Museum's main building were first identified for upgrade in 2005, to address a general lack of insulation in the exterior walls, as well as challenges inherent in the porous brick and deteriorated masonry, and the minimal R-value of existing windows and doors.

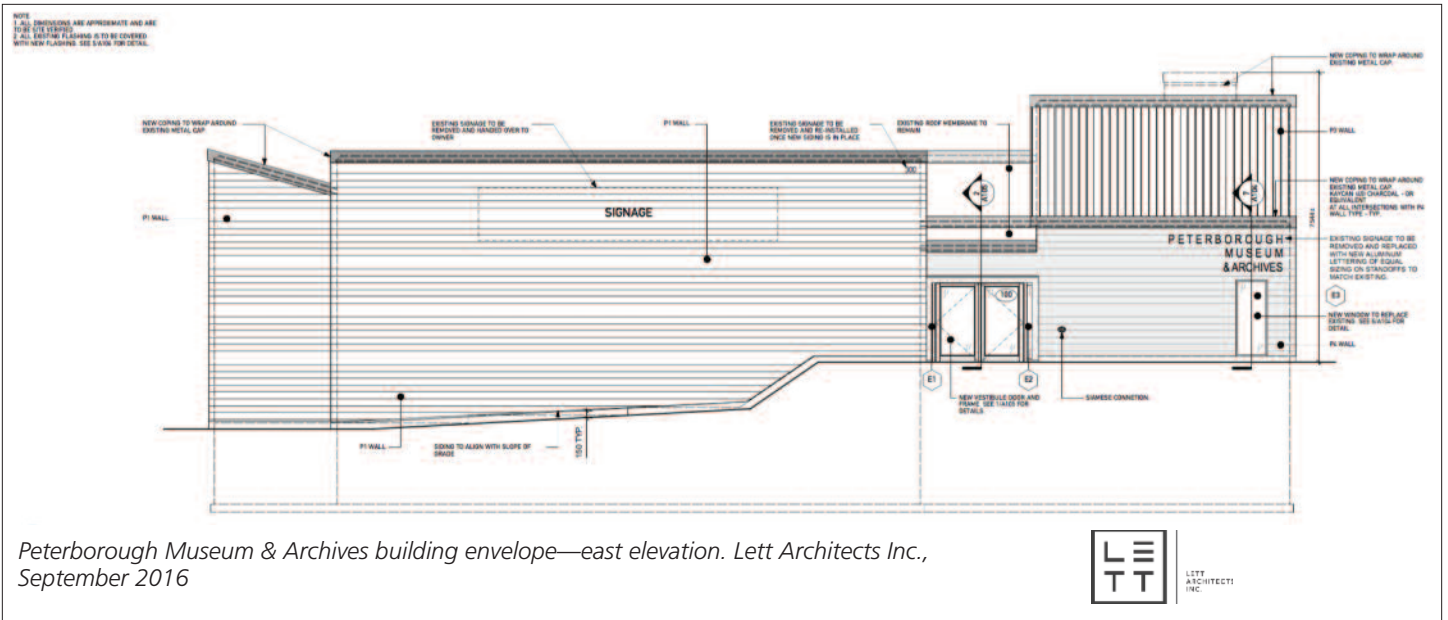
Exterior conditions were also creating periods of considerable condensation, which were most noticeable at doors,



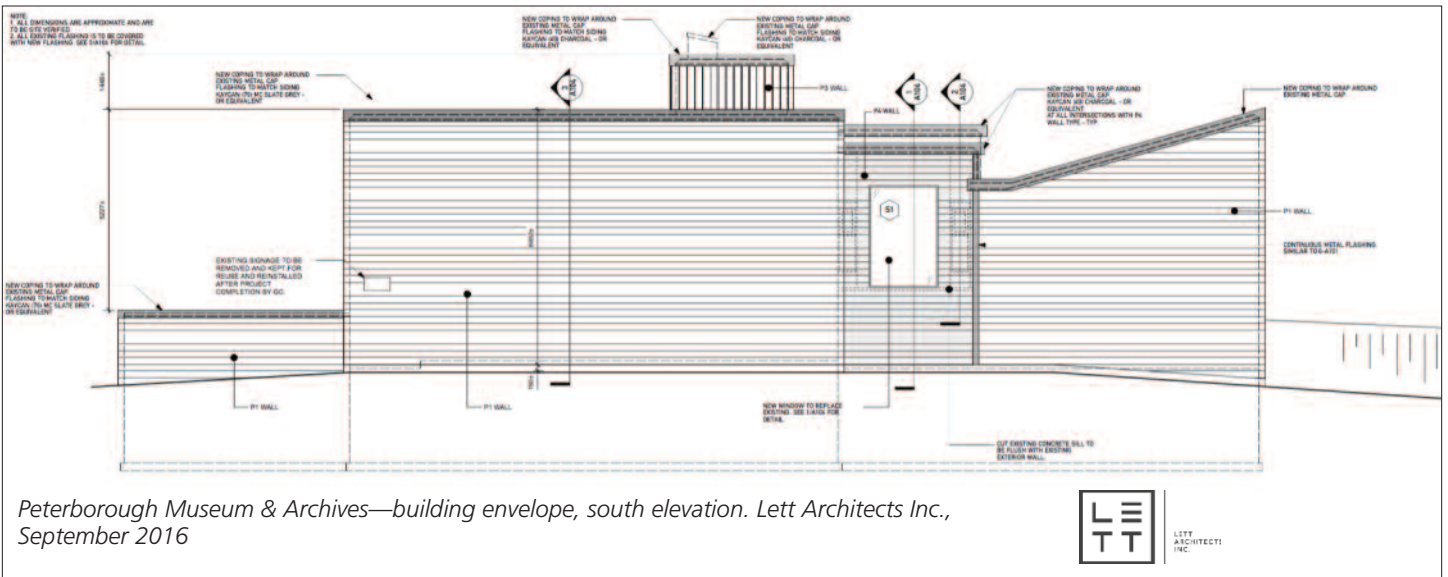
*Peterborough Museum & Archives pre-construction—east elevation, August 2016.*



*Curatorial Centre, Peterborough Museum & Archives, September 2016.*



Peterborough Museum & Archives building envelope—east elevation. Lett Architects Inc., September 2016



Peterborough Museum & Archives—building envelope, south elevation. Lett Architects Inc., September 2016



Peterborough Museum & Archives during construction—west elevation, October 2016.



Peterborough Museum & Archives during construction—east elevation, October 2016.

windows, and at the roofline of the exhibition galleries. Dripping condensation in the galleries was a risk to artifacts and archival material. In addition, the pooling of condensation at entries and exits was a risk to the safe use of emergency exits, to security systems, and to the safe transport of artifacts and archival materials from collection storage to collection research and/or exhibition spaces.

The new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system installed as part of Phase II delivered the consistent relative humidity and temperatures needed to support the long-term preservation of collections. However, the HVAC system—working hard to compensate for the lack of insulation and the low R-value of windows and doors—would also be subject to premature wear and tear.

Lett Architects Inc. designed and detailed a new exterior cladding system for the Museum, and oversaw the mechanical revisions and adjustments required for the new building enclosure. Lett Architects Inc. also contracted building-envelope consultants to analyze the condition of the existing wall assembly and the proposed new wall assembly, to ensure that the building science was correct, and that the improvements would resolve the moisture issues. Lett Architects Inc. executed and managed the construction project, which was awarded to Mortlock Construction Inc.

The facility changes completed through Phase III improved the preservation and exhibition environments for the Museum’s artifact and archival collections. In addition, these facility changes have contributed to the Museum’s sustainability and efficiency, reducing operational and maintenance costs. The current exterior is now more representative of the Museum’s role as an important municipal building.

The Museum maintained regular operations throughout all three phases of the Museum Renewal Project, delivering school and public programs, training for students from Fleming College, and ongoing public access to long-term galleries and temporary exhibitions. The one break in service was a temporary closure of the Archives while collections were stored offsite. The Museum embraced the opportunity to invite the community and visitors to share in the story of change, development and renewal.

The facilities housing the Peterborough Museum & Archives now match the scope and significance of its collections, as well as its community role. For more information, visit [www.peterboroughmuseumandarchives.ca](http://www.peterboroughmuseumandarchives.ca)

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*Peterborough Museum & Archives construction completed—west elevation, January 2017.*



*Peterborough Museum & Archives construction completed—south elevation, January 2017.*



*Peterborough Museum & Archives construction completed—east elevation, Summer 2017.*



*Peterborough Museum & Archives—east elevation, Summer 2017*