

Developing a Collection Strategy

(Do we need to collect and keep everything?)

Zagreb

Claude Faubert

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Contents of the presentation

- This talk is not about what to collect.
- It is about how to collect objects and what to do with them.
- What is a Collection Strategy, why a museum needs one and what does it contain?
- The acquisition process
- The de-accessioning process
- How to “rationalise” a collection – the CSTM’s Collection Rationalisation Project
- New Collection Storage Facility at the Canada Science and Technology Museum



Collection Strategy

It is a document or a series of documents that provide a framework for the research and collecting activities of a museum.

Principal objectives:

- address the future scope and direction of collection and research;
- identify and prioritize issues, ideas, subject areas or themes requiring research and development attention;
- provide physical and intellectual access to the collection.

It provides an intellectual framework, arising from the legal mandate, upon which collection development and research activities can be based and resources allocated.



Collection Strategy

What does it provide?

Direction and Priorities for Research

General Procedures and Guidelines

Standards

Practices for the Management of the
collection

Information for annual work plans



Collection Strategy

It guides the various processes and procedures:

Terms of reference for committees

Guidelines for Acquisition

Guidelines for De-accession/Disposal

Guidelines for Conservation and Restoration

Guidelines for different aspects of the collection –
artwork, toys, spare parts



The Canada Science and Technology Museum

- Opened in 1967 – the 100th anniversary of the creation of Canada.
- The CSTM is the largest and most comprehensive S+T museum in Canada.
- Responsible for preserving Canada's scientific and technological heritage, while also promoting, celebrating and sharing knowledge of that heritage.

Collection Development Strategy of the CSTM

- Put in place in 1989
- Modelled after the one used by the Henry Ford Museum
- Based on the Transformation of Canada theme





The Transformation of Canada Framework

- Focuses on the role and contribution of science and technology to the transformation of Canada.
- An intellectual framework to guide research, collection, exhibitions and programs.
- Four sub-themes:
 - Canadian Context
 - Finding New Ways – telling stories of Canadian achievements
 - How "Things" Work
 - People, Science and Technology -- Choosing stories, issues and examples from the lives of Canadians

Collection Development Strategy – Why have one?

- Until 1989, collecting was based on curatorial preferences
- Prevent individual curators from just getting what they like
- Provide criteria to force people to be selective and objective in their collecting
- Active, not passive, collecting
- Living collection – objects move in and out of the collection



The Canada Science and Technology Museum

A museum with a very broad mandate.

“To foster scientific and technological literacy throughout Canada by establishing, maintaining and developing a collection of scientific and technological objects, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, and by demonstrating the products and processes of science and technology and their economic, social and cultural relationships with society”.



Collection Development Strategy

Be **very selective** in the collecting of objects that relate to the history of science and technology in Canada.

Importance of « **provenance** » in collecting objects that have to be representative of the diversity and vastness of Canada.

(Defined as: The full history and ownership of an item from the time of its discovery or creation to the present day, through which authenticity and ownership are determined.)

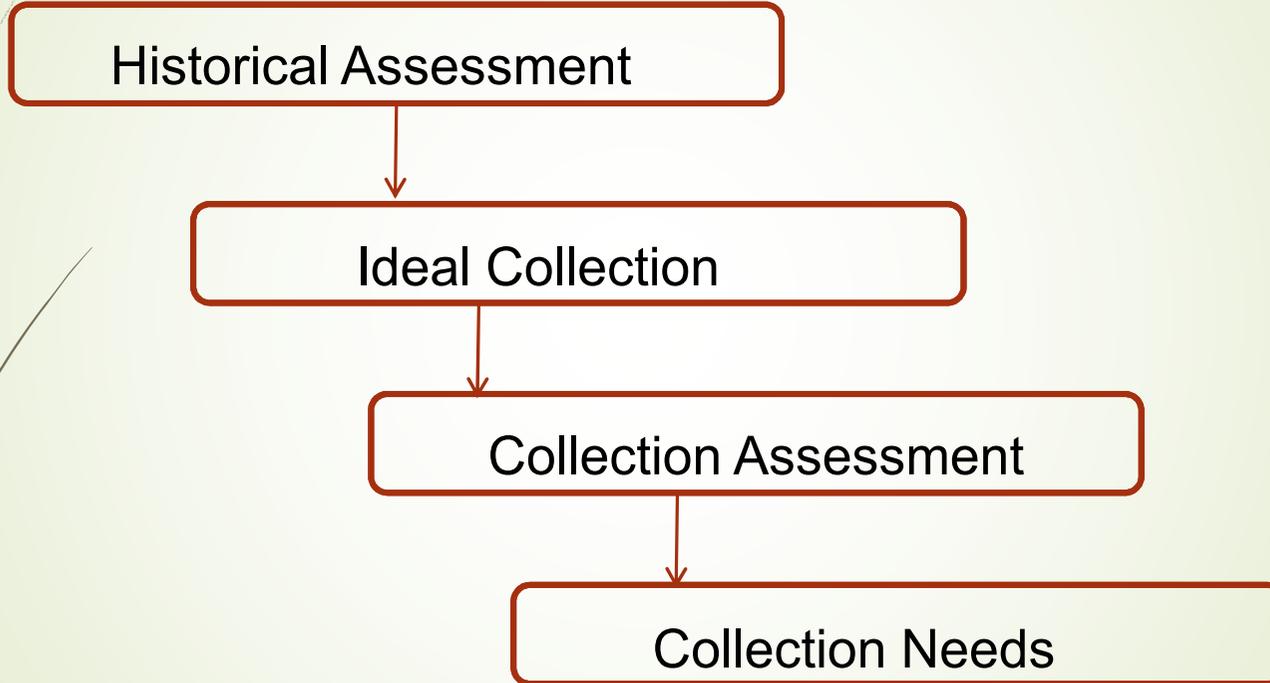
Collection Development Strategy

Historical Assessment

Ideal Collection

Collection Assessment

Collection Needs





Collection Development Strategy

Historical Assessment

Presents the development of a particular science or technology within a specific time period and even a specific geographical region of Canada.

Looks at the societal dimensions

Lists the key objects that illustrate as completely as possible this development.

Major research project

Peer reviewed – external and internal readers

Approved by the Collection Development Committee



Collection Development Strategy

Ideal Collection

Most, if not all, of the key objects needed to illustrate the development of a particular science or technology in the Canadian context.



Collection Development Strategy

Collection assessment

Compares the museum's existing collection with the Ideal Collection.

The result is a **Collection Profile**.

Which in turn identifies the **Collection Needs**.

Can be objects that are not in the collection and should be or objects that are and should not be.

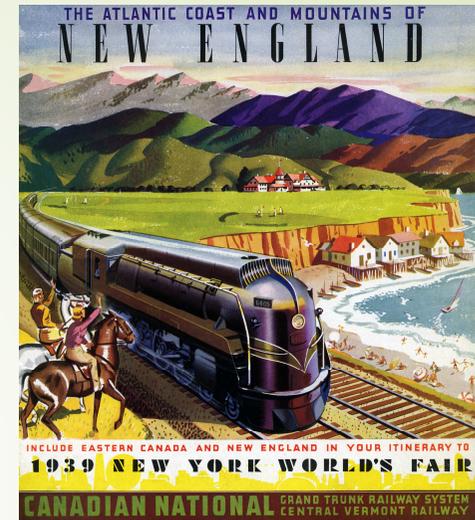
Acquisition Process at the CSTM

Based on:

- Collection Development Strategy
- Transformation of Canada theme
 - Canadian context
 - Finding new ways
 - How things work
 - People, Science and technology

What it collects?

- Objects
- Photo collections
- Archives
- Trade literature
- Library materials



How to decide to acquire an object?

- Link to the Transformation of Canada theme and sub-themes
- Condition of the object – completeness, original parts
- What is in the collection already?
- Rarity and representativeness
- Provenance
 - Significant history
 - Use in Canada
 - Design
 - Association with person or event
 - Technical advance or science discovery

A Rolls Royce in the collection.
Why?



Sources of acquisitions

- Donations from individuals – collectors or citizens
- Corporations
- Institutions
- Government agencies
- Public auctions
- Dealers
- Purchase

Acquisition Process

- Individual curators
 - Under \$ 1000
 - Under a cubic metre (many objects are much bigger)

- Acquisition Committee – Peer review process
 - Acquisition proposals
 - De-accession proposals

Acquisition Committee

Internal committee that meets every month to review and approve:

acquisition proposals, loans and de-accessions of artifacts, archival materials, rare books, and trade literature



Acquisition Committee

- Curators
- Assistant Curators;
- Archivist;
- Director, Conservation and Collection Services;
- Manager, Conservation Services;
- Director, Knowledge and Information Management;
- Directors General of the 3 museums;
- Chaired by the Vice-President, Collection & Research, CSTMC (only votes in the event of a tie).



Gift Agreement

The museum does not acquire objects with conditions.

In the case of a donation, transfer of ownership is formalized by a gift agreement, which states:

I, the undersigned donor, hereby give absolutely to the Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation the object(s) listed herein and, in so doing, I understand and agree that the object(s) may be retained, displayed, loaned, disposed of, or otherwise dealt with in such a manner as the Corporation may deem to be in its best interest.

Northern Dancer





De-accessioning Process

- All de-accessions go through the Acquisition Committee.
- Large de-accessions go through the Board of Trustees (Board of Directors).
- First, a de-accessioned object is offered to other museums.
- Then it can be disposed of through Crown Assets, sale, auction.
- Process must be transparent, ethical and legal.
- Some objects can be used in a teaching collection or for spare part to repair objects

Collection Rationalisation Project

- ▶ Storage was at 130% of capacity.
- ▶ Curators were not acquiring important objects because of lack of space.
- ▶ Many objects had never been looked at.





Collection Rationalisation Project

- The word “Rationalisation” is important
- Wanted to see if objects should be kept in the collection or disposed of
- Took 5 storage bays of objects acquired before 1989 and went through each object to confirm provenance, condition, completeness, importance



Collection Rationalisation Project

Found out that about 10-15% of the objects did not belong in the collection:

- missing too many parts
- no (good) provenance
- another better example in the collection
- containing hazardous materials
- no connection to the theme of the Transformation of Canada



Collection Rationalisation Project

- Putting targets in individual work plans (looking at a set number of objects per year)
- Using volunteers to do the basic work
- Blitzes – one day, 2 times a year, with everyone taking part
- Making sure that everything related to an object was updated: physical location, database, archives



Collection Rationalisation Project

- Recorded the process and the decisions
- Communicated the process to staff (The museum was not selling its collection.)
- Ready to answer questions from the media
- Difficult part was to dispose of the de-accessioned objects – hard to find another museum, careful if selling

Current Collection Storage Facilities

Rented warehouses
Don't meet museum storage standards.
Expensive to operate.
Are not seismic compliant.



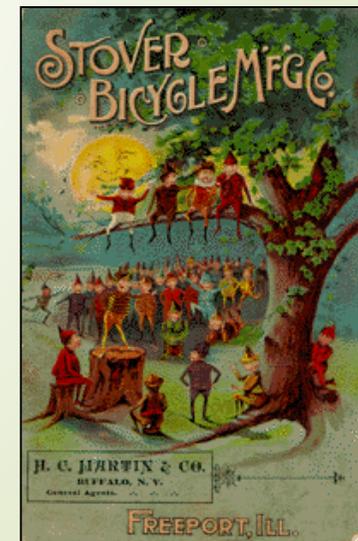
Current Collection Storage Facilities

130% of capacity:

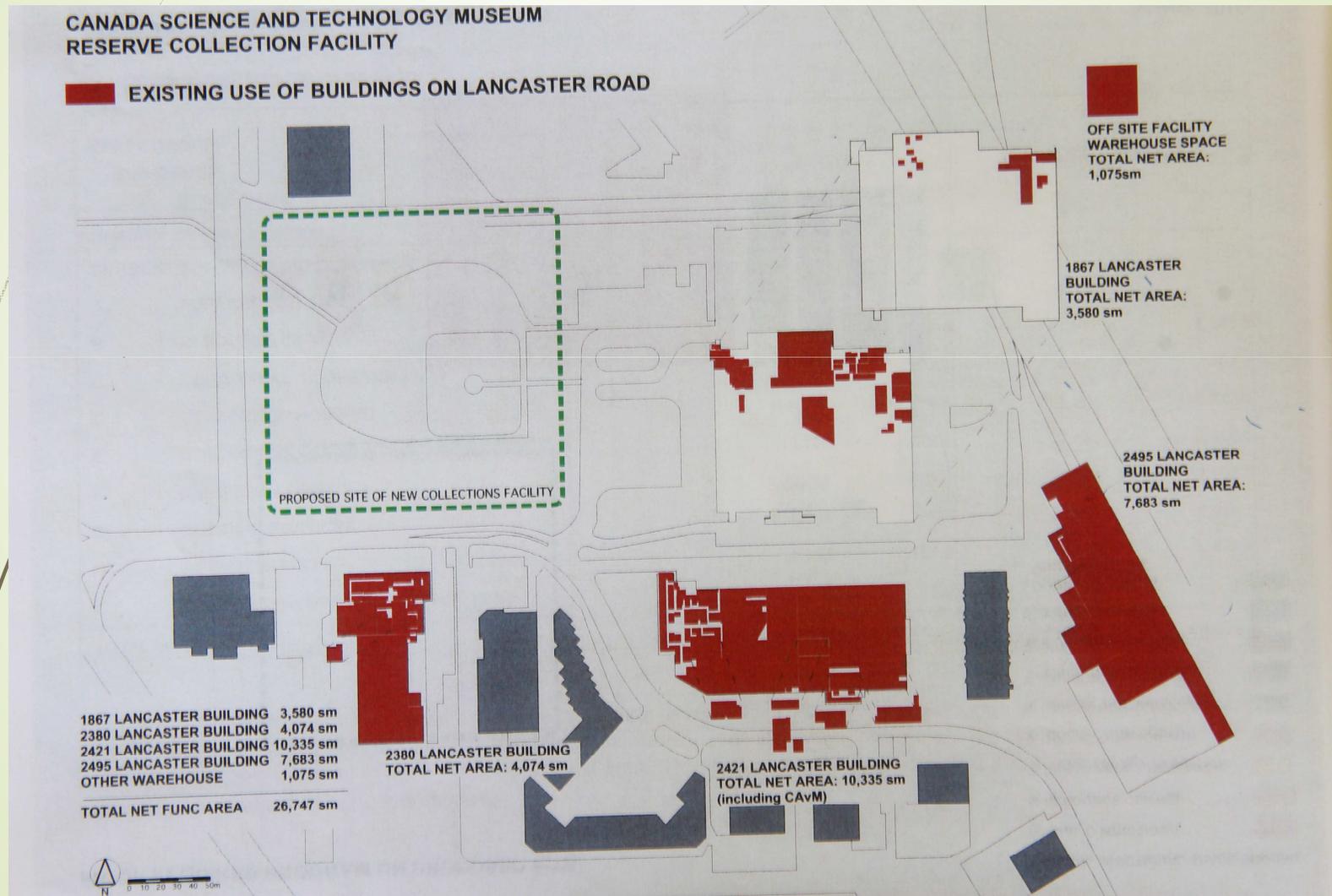
- a safety concern for employees as well as for the objects;
- access to individual artefacts requires multiple handling;
- reduced ability to acquire large artefacts of significance to Canada's science and technology history

Diversity of CSTMC Collection

- 45,976 artefacts, 37,297 engineering drawings, 44,824 photographs, 47,027 pieces of trade literature.
- Size ranges from radio tubes to large locomotives.
- Variety of materials: wood, leather, metals, textiles, ivory, anatomical wax models, plastics, glass, paints, hazardous materials



Where is the collection?



Calculating Growth

CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM RESERVE COLLECTION FACILITY COLLECTION STORAGE HISTORY

SPACE GROUP SUB-GROUP		Lundholm Associates 2002 Coll. Survey		Lundholm Associates 2002 Coll. Survey	Lundholm Associates 2009 Survey (update of 2002)	CSTM Funlional Program 2009 for Existing Collection	Efficiency Factor due to Separation by Size		Collection Growth		Total Requirement
		Existing		sm	sm		%	Adjusted Requirement Existing	Rate/ Year	Increase in 20 Years	
SPACE NAME		sf	sm	sm	sm	sm					sm
D: COLLECTION HOUSING											
D. 1	CSTM Collection Storage- w/o growth										
	Collection Storage - 2380 Lancaster	24,073.5	2,236.5	5,599.1	5,599.1						
	Collection Storage - 2421 Lancaster*	48,587.2	4,513.9	8,120.2	10,138.5						
	Collection Storage - 2421 CAvM + Other		N/A	N/A	in above						
	Collection Storage - 2495 Lancaster	64,783.7	6,018.6	10,566.6	10,566.6						
	Collection Storage - 1887 St Laurent	17,732.5	1,847.4	1,222.0	1,222.0						
	Collection Storage - Exterior		not included		Not Included						
D. 1. 1	A. CSTM - Rolling Stock Coll.					2,997.3	100.0%	2,997.3	1.0%	599.5	3,596.8
D. 1. 2	B. CSTM - XL Artifact Coll.					1,230.5	100.0%	1,230.5	1.0%	246.1	1,476.6
D. 1. 3	C. CSTM - Oversized Movable Coll.					10,097.5	95.0%	9,592.6	1.5%	2,877.8	12,470.4
D. 1. 4	D. CSTM - Large Movable Coll.					10,138.1	95.0%	9,631.2	1.5%	2,889.4	12,520.6
D. 1. 5	E. CSTM - Small Movable Coll.					2,680.1	95.0%	2,546.1	1.5%	763.8	3,309.9
D. 1. 6	F. CSTM - Textiles Coll.					12.5	100.0%	12.5	1.5%	3.8	16.3
D. 1. 7	G1. CSTM - Paper Artifacts					8.0	100.0%	8.0	1.5%	2.4	10.4
D. 1. 8	G2. CSTM - Coll. Related Paper					183.4	100.0%	183.4	1.5%	55.0	238.4
D. 1. 9	H. CSTM - Risk - Associated Coll.					21.3	100.0%	21.3	1.5%	6.4	27.7
D. 1. 10	I. CSTM - Non-Archive Media					16.0	100.0%	16.0	1.5%	4.8	20.8
subtotal	C.1 CSTM Collection Storage Zones	155,176.8	14,416.4								
	Total area all Collection Storage	196,704.0	18,274.4	25,507.9	27,526.2	27,384.7		26,238.9		7,448.9	33,687.8
LAA Collection Survey 2002 had a net total requirement of 25,507.9 adjusted storage space (w/o growth). Area for Outside Storage is not included in this figure. This number has been increased to 27,526.2 due to the 2009 inclusion of CAvM collections and the current CSTM collection backlog.											

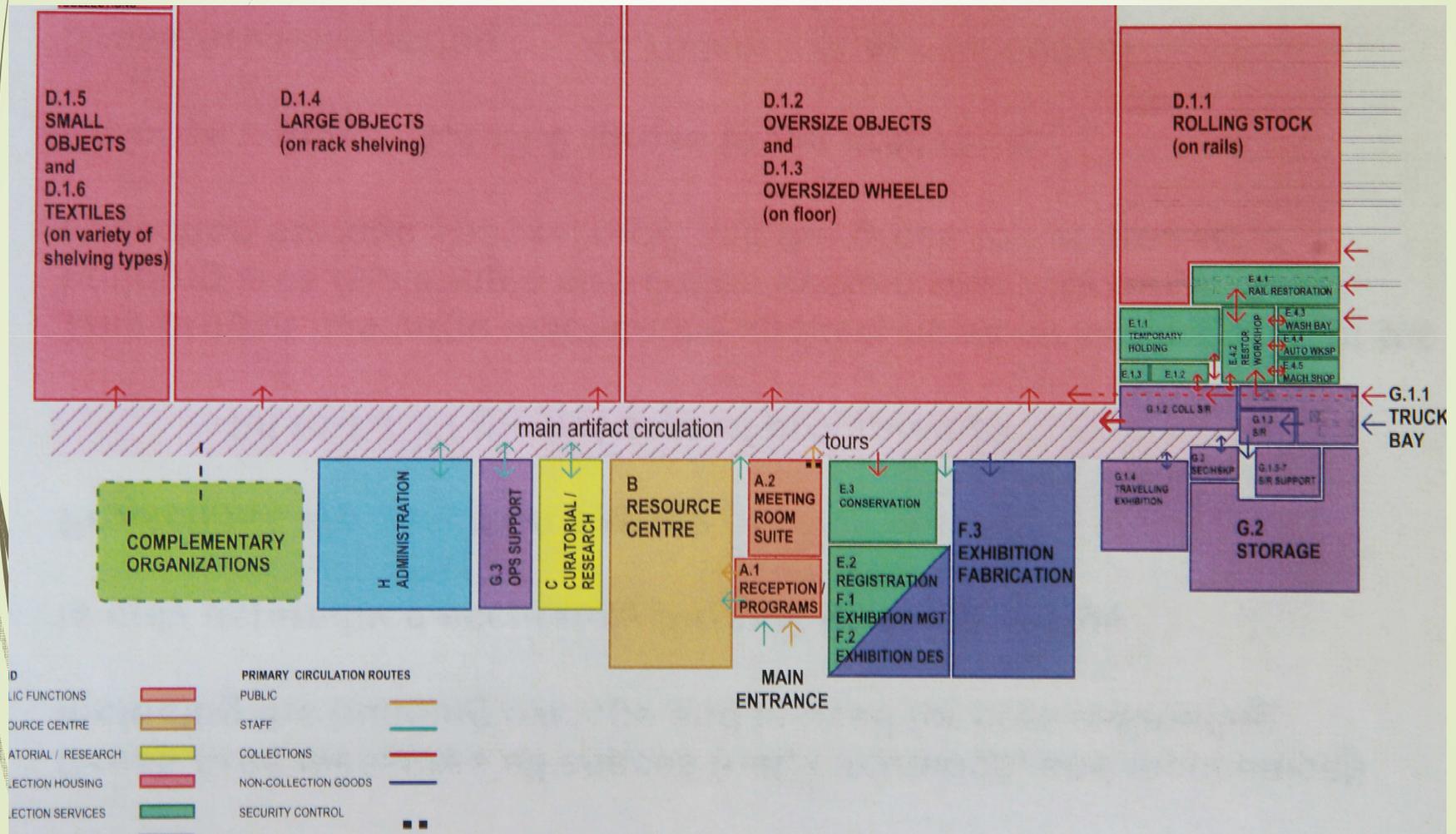
Different Materials

CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM RESERVE COLLECTION FACILITY

COLLECTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR MUSEUM BUILDINGS

THREAT	PASSIVE MEASURES	ACTIVE MEASURES	MISUNDERSTANDINGS	MISTAKES
LIGHT intensity, duration, ultraviolet content	avoid windows, skylights / use shades, shutters / use UV free source, filters / adjust source to requirement / use only when needed	multiple lighting systems with separate programs / localized switching	filtering UV solves the entire lighting problem	bright areas to dark areas transition
RELATIVE HUMIDITY variation, extremes	inherent buffering by building envelope / low transfer divisions between zones	reliable HVAC systems designed to deliver optimal levels / zoning to suit different requirements and loads / back up systems / redundancy / back up power	ASHRAE generalizations / outdated standards / borrowed standards / temperature oriented controls	sophisticated no back up / conservation poor commis
TEMPERATURE variation, extremes	inherent buffering by building envelope / low transfer divisions between zones / avoid window loads / take care with lighting	reliable HVAC systems designed to deliver optimal levels / zoning to suit different requirements and loads / back up systems redundancy / back up power	ASHRAE generalizations / outdated standards / borrowed standards / temperature oriented controls	sophisticated no back up / conservation poor commis
INSECTS / ANIMALS moths, wood-boring insects, rodents	prevent entry / avoid creating habitats / isolate sources e.g. food, garbage / segregate HVAC systems	make cleanable spaces / provide for pest control measures / provide quarantine room	segregate food services but not garbage handling / loss of control to outside caterers	poor sealing penetrations inadequate treatments
CONTAMINATION various airborne and contact pollutant sources	locate air intakes properly / segregate source areas including HVAC / use materials that do not contribute contaminants	select correct filtration / make filtration easy to maintain / monitor air quality	ASHRAE generalizations / failure to test ambient air and design accordingly	offgassing fr materials, furnishings
WATER rain, snow, and ground	use reliable roof, skylight, foundation design / avoid horizontal, sloped glazing,	provide floor drains / create dams around water using equipment / provide alarms /	sprinklers present so other piping okay /	inadequate control

Space Allocation

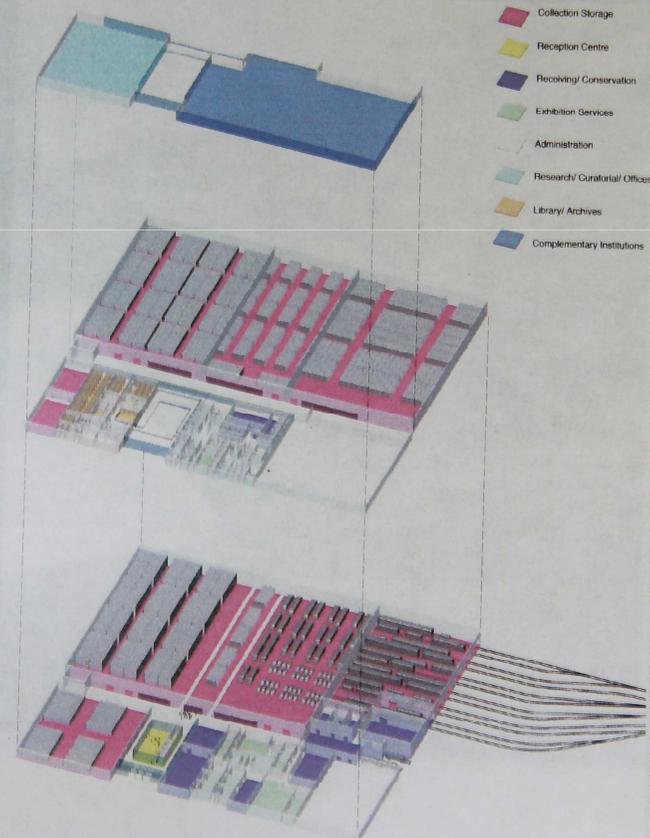


It all fits!

CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM RESERVE COLLECTION FACILITY

EARLY STUDY MODEL TO TEST FIT OF PROGRAM ON PROPOSED SITE

- **LEVEL 1:**
**RECEIVING AND CONSERVATION,
EXHIBITION PRODUCTION,
OVERSIZE COLLECTIONS,
RECEPTION CENTRE**
- **LEVEL 2:**
**SMALLER COLLECTIONS,
LIBRARY/ARCHIVES,
CONSERVATION,
EXHIBITION PRODUCTION,
ADMINISTRATION**
- **LEVEL 3:**
**RESEARCH OFFICES,
COMPLEMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS**





Collection Strategy

- It's more than about adding to the collection
- It's about
 - Being organised
 - Having objects that really belong in the collection
 - Having the space and resources to look after it well
 - Having proper information about the objects
 - Knowing where the objects are and their condition
 - Having clear procedures and guidelines for acquiring, disposing and accessing



National Museums Scotland

- Research Framework
- Research Ethics Policy
- Research Themes Policy
- Collection Development Strategy
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Collections Information and Access Policy
- Human Remains in Collections Policy



Collection Strategy

- Involve the different groups in the museum
 - Start with the mandate and the mission
 - Why we collect? What we collect? What do we do with what we collect?
 - Identify why you need a Collection Strategy
- 



Collection Strategy

- Identify what should be in the Collection Strategy: policies, procedures, guidelines, committees
- Touch on all aspects: research, collecting, care, uses
- Define clear procedures and guidelines for all activities related to research and collecting
- Look at the ethical and legal aspects
- Make it realistic and to be reviewed every few years



Disposing of objects

- One of the most important roles of a curator
- Also one role that carries a lot of emotion and worry
- We don't like to get rid of things
- But it is an essential activity

Particularly if you are moving the collection.
You do not want to move objects twice.



Disposing of objects

- It can be made easier with a few rules and procedures
- Having a collection strategy helps a lot
- The reasons for disposing of an object are very much the opposite of the reasons for acquiring one in the first place.

Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing
the significance of Collections
Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth

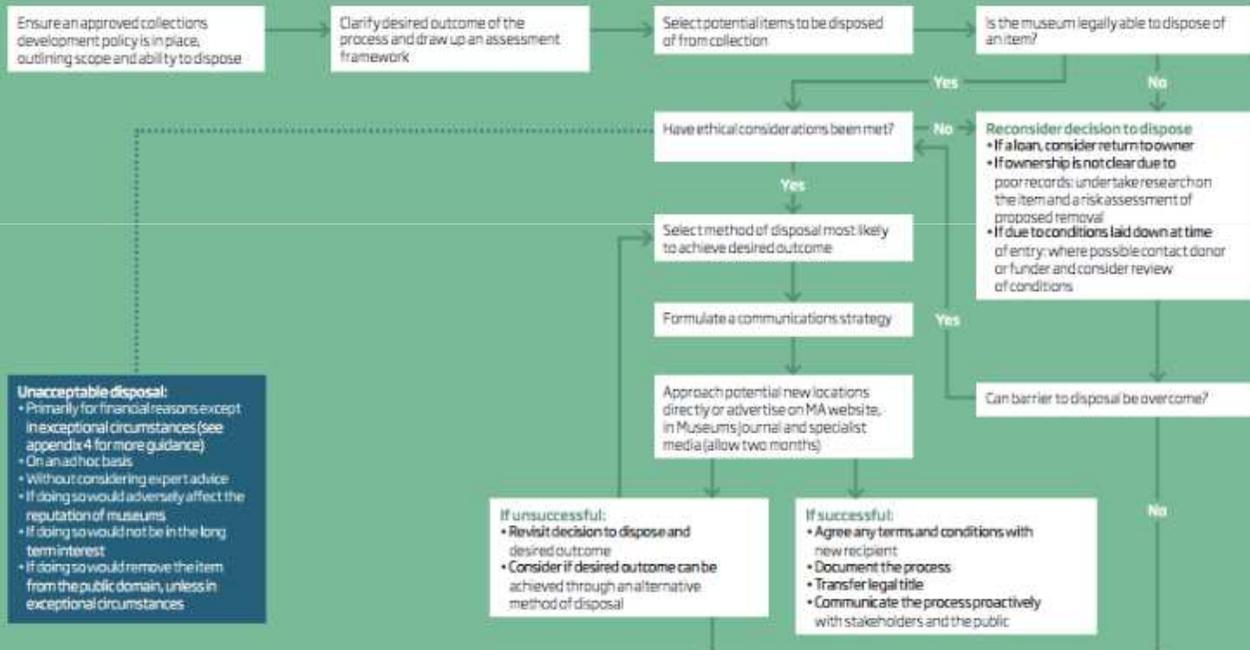




Thank you

Questions? Comments?

Disposal Flowchart





The CSTM uses **KE Emu**, an electronic museum management system.

Artifact Catalogue Number:

Article:

Sub-category Category

Type:

Model:

Manufacturer Date

Images:

Conservation Notes: Operable?

Supplementary Information:

Dimensions:

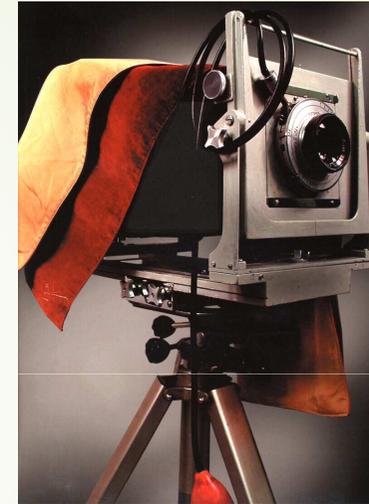
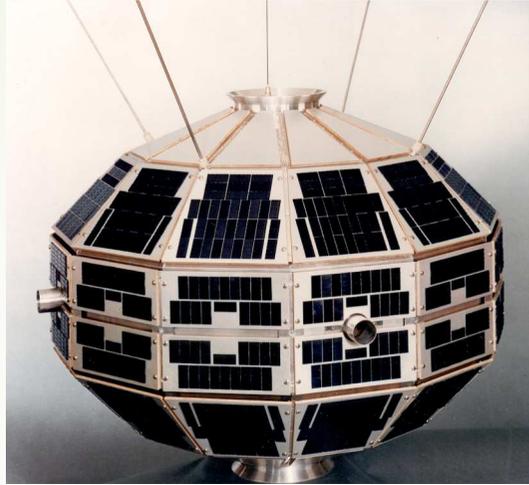
Significance to Canada:

Significance to Technology:

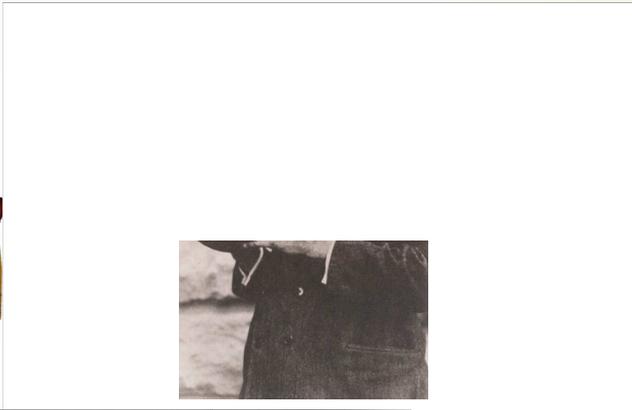
Missing Parts:

Materials General:

Objects of national importance



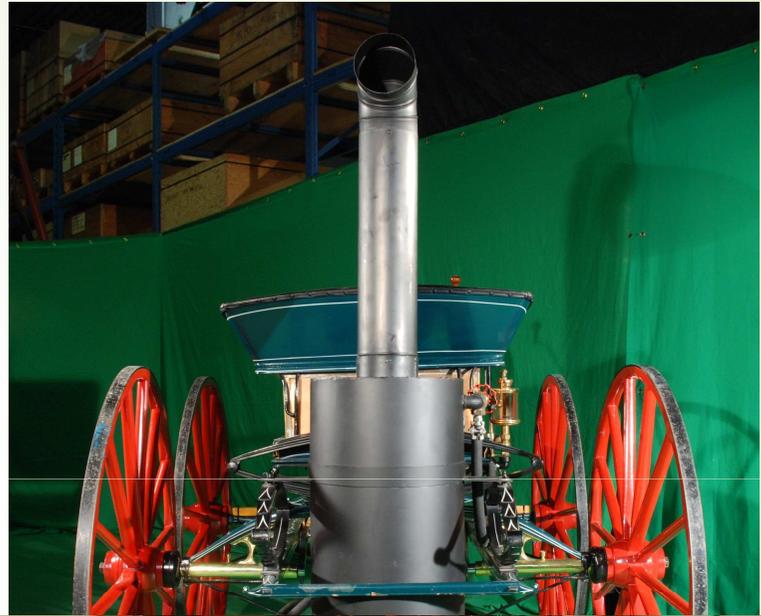
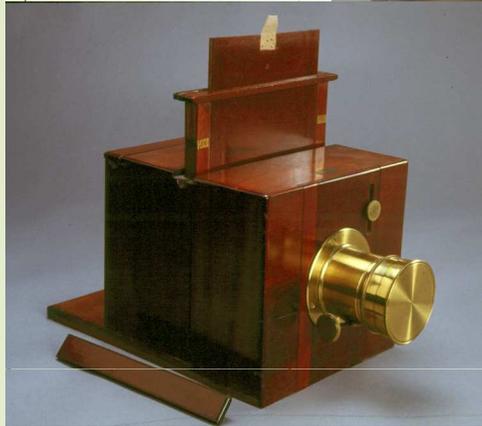


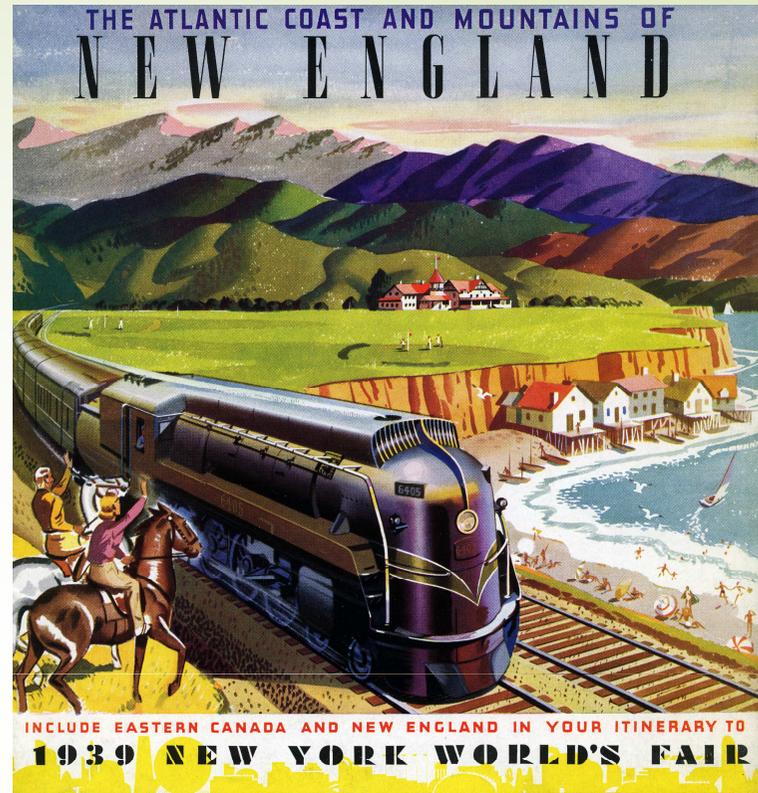


Netball



Plastic Garbage Bag







兽面纹罍耳铜壶 (复制)
罍 约公元前16—前11世纪
Beast Ware Container with Beast Pattern (reproduction)
Shang Dynasty
c.16th to 11th Century B.C.

Diversity of CSTMC Collection

