

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 Purpose of the Study

The Art Gallery of Peterborough is a well-established public art gallery that serves the community of Peterborough and the surrounding region. It is an anchor for the arts in its community and serves the public by offering a wide variety of exhibitions, educational programs, and events. Since 1974, the Gallery has been dedicated to exhibiting and collecting contemporary works of visual art from Peterborough and across Canada. The Gallery's vision going into the 21st Century is to be 'a gathering place that engages the community and promotes the arts as a cornerstone of community creativity, and development.' The Art Gallery of Peterborough has a significant collection comprising approximately 1,500 historical and contemporary art works.

The purpose of the Functional Analysis and Plan is to test community consensus with the Art Gallery of Peterborough's long-term vision (as expressed in the Strategic Plan) and to develop the programmatic and facility requirements for its achievement. In addition to the recently developed Strategic Plan it will be a key source document for community consultation. The Gallery has also undertaken a building audit that will facilitate the functional analysis of facility needs. The objectives of the study are to determine the adequacy of the facility for current and future needs within a framework of art gallery best practice, and to develop the facility needs that will support the Gallery's vision for the next 25 years. This Functional Analysis and Plan is therefore based on an inclusive planning process and research on art gallery planning and precedents, to ensure that the facility space needs meet the community and program objectives.

2.0 Consultation Objectives and Methodology

In June 2011, consulting team member Jenny Ginder consulted with artists, program partners, educators, local government officials, members, volunteers, Board, and staff, as an important first step in the process of understanding the potential opportunities for, and uses of, the AGP. This consultation list was prepared by AGP and 50 individuals participated in the roundtable discussions and focus groups. This consultation process was followed by a public survey developed by the consultant in consultation with the AGP Steering Committee. The survey was in the field for approximately five weeks, from mid-July to mid-August, and promoted through the City and AGP web-sites, via e-mail to the AGP database, verbally at events and meetings, in addition to hard copy surveys available to Gallery visitors.

Summary of Findings

Operational Findings:

Consultation indicated a demand for exhibitions from the collection and by local artists, whereas the survey favoured touring exhibitions of work by Canadian artists. Painting is the preferred medium. Those familiar with the collection suggest that digitizing the collection will facilitate curatorial research and practice, and open the doors to more outreach and education opportunities. There is a demand for adult lecture programs and demand for more children/youth programs is indicated (although the survey sample is small). The gallery shop should continue to focus on work by local artists in a location that attracts more traffic.

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Facility Findings:

Consultation indicated that the building is not fully accessible and that the circulation is not coherent. There are many technical deficiencies including poor acoustics in the gallery and inadequate HVAC systems. Use of the ramps for exhibitions received mixed reviews, but there was general recognition that this is a compromise.

Comments were received on the limited amount of exhibition space and the lack of appropriate space for media based exhibitions. Inadequate space was also noted for collections, preparation, offices, and shipping/receiving.

Consultation highlighted the inadequate nature of programming spaces – too small, poorly lit and equipped, and serving as circulation routes. Comments were also received on the absence of adequate areas for receptions, openings, and rentals.

3.0 Research Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the comparative analysis of other art gallery facilities is to provide a broad view of what kind of art gallery facilities and visual arts programs are available in other comparably sized cities. Of particular interest was the scope of exhibitions and programs offered, as well as the type and size of collections, and the scale of facility used. The first component of the research was developed as a statistical comparison of galleries in regionally scaled cities in Canada. A second component of research identified some of the different architectural approaches to art gallery facilities to enable the Art Gallery of Peterborough Staff and Board to further articulate its objectives for the future facility image and identity. Finally a third component of the research looked at three qualitative aspects of comparable galleries: (a) galleries that are creative in relating to and involving their creative communities, (b) galleries that have devised creative ways of generating revenue, and (c) recent gallery expansions that have been judged successful.

Summary of Findings of Comparative Analysis of Other Gallery Facilities

Art Gallery of Peterborough Significantly Undersized Compared to Other Galleries Studied;
Particularly Size of Exhibition Gallery.

In comparison to other galleries in comparably sized cities or regional centres across Canada, the Art Gallery of Peterborough is doing as much as possible to offer a similar level of services and programs. Many of the galleries reviewed have a very similar intention of being a cultural centre for the visual arts in their region, and offer a similar range of programs and services such as exhibitions, children's programs, lectures, films, courses, and resources for artists and for post secondary students in visual arts related programs. The majority of the galleries in the sample group were also working with a similar collection scope and mandate (Regional, Canadian, and Contemporary) and were designated as Category A institutions.

Although many of these galleries are in the process of developing improved facilities, of the galleries in the sample group, the Art Gallery of Peterborough is working with one of the smallest facilities, and specifically the smallest size of exhibition gallery space. It is only logical that the limited facility also limits the extent to which the Gallery can develop its programs and services, and the number of visitors that can participate in these.

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Approach to Facility Improvement and Expansion Will Impact Gallery Image and Identity; Many Recent Gallery Facility Improvements Have Simultaneously Raised Public Profile of Art Gallery

Factors that affect the image and identity of an art gallery facility include both the approach to the facility and the orientation and setting of the building.

The Southern Alberta Art Gallery, the MacLaren Art Centre, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art are all examples of recent facility expansion and upgrade projects that have had a positive impact on facility operations and the public profile of the organization.

Regional Art Galleries are Increasingly Creative in Broadening Their Base Communities and Generating Independent Revenue Sources

Increasingly, regionally scaled art galleries in comparably sized Canadian cities are developing new and creative ways of being local cultural centres for the visual arts and providing opportunities for creative development to diverse communities. The increased level of services offered by these Galleries is matched with creative initiatives to develop independent sources of financial revenue that reflect an increased and dedicated community base for the gallery.

4.0 Functional Analysis

The purpose of the functional analysis of the existing building is to provide an understanding of the ability of the Art Gallery of Peterborough's building to meet the operational needs of the Gallery. The Gallery's operational needs may be classified broadly in three categories: spatial needs (quantity of space), qualitative functional needs (suitability of space for a particular kind of activity), and technical needs (building envelop or systems performance according the required standards for a particular activity).

Summary of Findings – Facility Deficiencies and Limitations

While there are some qualitative aspects of the Art Gallery of Peterborough building that are appreciated, such as its location in a park, the height of the exhibition gallery space, and the view of Little Lake from the Gallery lounge, the building has several critical deficiencies that put the Gallery's collection at risk, frustrate current operations, and severely limit improvement or development of what the Gallery can offer to the public.

The Gallery organization has maximized the use of the building to every extent possible and this approach has reached its limit. Inspection and analysis shows that while the Gallery facility offers approximately 5500 square feet of usable functional space, the current organization makes use of considerably more area for its programs and services, by improvised use of circulation and marginal spaces.

Collections and Exhibition Preparation

The Gallery's collection facilities (storage, preparation, and exhibition spaces) are not large enough nor adequately serviced to appropriately reduce the risk of damage to its art collection from over-crowding, temperature and humidity fluctuations, flooding, fire, and security. Additionally, the exterior loading dock lacks overhead weather protection.

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These issues are of specific concern for an art gallery facility with a Category 'A' designation from Canadian Heritage. Failure to work progressively towards improvement of these facilities may put the Art Gallery of Peterborough at risk of losing this designation, which would prohibit it from issuing receipts for certain tax incentives to collection donors, and from applying for certain types of grants and loans.

Exhibitions

The exhibition space is undersized and inadequately serviced. Meeting specific technical requirements in the exhibition gallery space is part of the AGP's responsibility as a Category A institution and can be an impediment to receiving loans and exhibitions from other galleries. The lack of enough exhibition space limits the AGP's ability to exhibit travelling shows from other institutions, multi-media exhibitions, and a larger proportion of its permanent collection. The capacity to offer a more diverse range of exhibitions would be a significant cultural benefit to the citizens of Peterborough and the region.

Programs

The size, configuration, and inadequate servicing of public program spaces prohibit the Gallery from creating accessible art programs for standard school group capacities (30 and 60 children) and sustainable adult programs including courses, lectures, and events. The lack of quality program spaces prevents the AGP from fulfilling its objective to be a leader in community arts education.

Visitor Services

The reception lobby and visitor amenities, including the gift shop, are not well configured or large enough to accommodate either a standard school class, an adult group tour, or more than three to four families at any given time. Additional space that meets the diverse needs and expectations of today's society are required to make the Gallery a welcoming and memorable place.

Technical Issues

According to a recent building audit, the heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is in need of replacement, and Gallery staff understand that the system is not adequate for its current visitor numbers and does not meet current gallery standards. Lighting systems in the building have been identified as outdated and energy inefficient. There is no overhead sprinkler system to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, and the security system also requires assessment. Flooding along the east wall of the Gallery is a concern in extreme weather.

Building Orientation in Immediate Context

The Art Gallery of Peterborough is not well integrated in its local context as a public destination in one of the City's major outdoor amenities.

These building deficiencies will ultimately limit the extent to which the Gallery can achieve the roles and initiatives for exhibitions, education, community leadership, and socio-economic development that it has targeted in its recent Three Year Strategic Plan.

5.0 Facility Needs Assessment

One of the primary outcomes of this Study is an understanding of the scale and nature of the accommodation that is needed to allow the Art Gallery of Peterborough to fulfill its mandate. The preceding parts of the Study provide the indicators for what is needed. The consultation process both highlights the deficiencies of the current building and provides guidance for future priorities. Comparison with other galleries points out that the AGP facility is among the smallest for comparable cities and identifies interesting examples of what small regional galleries are doing to engage with their communities. The functional analysis provides a clear, detailed understanding of how the building falls short in meeting the needs, but also identifies positive attributes where they exist.

Overriding objectives for the future AGP facility include:

- Achieve a strong visual image for the AGP that signals 'public art gallery' as a prominent presence in the community.
- Create a gallery building that is welcoming and accessible, with amenities and character that make it a comfortable destination.
- Include public gallery spaces that support and enhance the widest range of media and installation formats, and facilitate efficient exhibition turnovers.
- Plan for a main lobby that begins a coherent visitor experience with good orientation and access to all the public destinations, and contributes to special events and uses.
- Rationalize all movement of visitors, staff, and art, while respecting security and efficiency considerations.
- Build a suite of back-of-house spaces that supports the safe and efficient movement of art, facilitates preparation of exhibitions, and provides for processing, access, and storage of collections.
- Meet generally accepted professional museological standards in all aspects of the facility, and, in particular, meet the expectations of the Category A designation as well as the requirements of other institutions for loans and exhibitions.

Space Requirements

Based on the consultation, functional analysis, and comparative studies, a statement of space requirements is presented in this section. The following comments describe how the primary space sizes were determined.

A. Visitor Services

Spaces in this group are scaled to a reasonable expectation of visitor flow. The lobby at 900 sf is sufficient to handle arrival of a tour or school group and permit orientation and circulation to all of the public destinations. It is also sufficient for smaller openings and events. The gift shop is sized to permit a variety of art media from local artists to be advantageously displayed.

A restaurant or café was mentioned as desirable in the consultation inputs. Experience in smaller Canadian galleries is generally that it is very difficult to make food service operations financially sustainable. For this reason, a dedicated food service operation has not been included at this time. This can be reconsidered in the future, particularly if the location changes.

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B. Exhibition Galleries

The size of the changing exhibition gallery at 3,000 sf is a minimum threshold for medium size travelling exhibitions and, when combined with the other galleries, will accommodate large shows. The permanent collection gallery at 2,000 sf will permit the ongoing representation of the collection in curated shows or a larger portion of the collection 'salon style.' The solo gallery/project room at 1,200 sf will accommodate one-person shows, and installations involving audio-visual media. Together, the gallery space would bring the AGP into a comparable position with other galleries studied.

C. Programming Space

The studio program is supported by two interconnected studios of 600 sf each. These studios can accommodate two school groups (one school bus) simultaneously, or adult classes of 20.

A lecture/ film/ events space has been included at 1,275 sf. This space will accommodate 100 persons for a film or lecture, 64 for a sit-down dinner, or about 150 for a reception. Combined with the lobby, the capacity for openings will be over 200. A library/meeting room of 400 sf can function as a lounge/library during the day.

D. Collection Storage

Three separate vaults have been provided to allow for the different media to have appropriate environments and storage fixtures. The quantity of space should allow relief of over-crowding, removal of art storage from other spaces, and accommodation of growth. A workroom is provided to avoid excessive staff presence in the vaults. A further detailed collection assessment should be undertaken to verify the space allocations.

E. Exhibition Preparation

A dedicated shipping/receiving space is provided to facilitate incoming and outgoing exhibitions without encroachment on other spaces. A workshop is provided for matting and framing. Spaces are also provided for quarantine and registration.

F. Administration and Building Services

These spaces are provided and sized according to prevailing practice.

The total net space requirement is 17,450 sf. This applies regardless of whether the existing building is renovated and expanded or a new facility is developed. This represents a 94% increase over the existing space usage.

Please Note: Area figures express net functional area: true net space devoted to each function measured to inside face of defining partitions or boundaries. Internal circulation within exhibition spaces and aisles / manoeuvring space in collection storage spaces are counted as part of the functional area. Otherwise no circulation, building structure, or building service space is counted as functional area.

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Space Group		Existing Occupied Area		Required Area	
	Space Name	sf	sm	sf	sm
A	Visitor Services	985	91.5	2,000	185.8
B	Exhibition Galleries	3,643	338.4	6,380	592.7
C	Programming	1,320	122.6	3,480	323.3
D	Collection Storage	764	71.0	1,900	176.5
E	Exhibition Preparation	812	75.4	1,380	128.2
F	Administration / Services	1,488	138.3	2,310	214.6
TOTAL NET AREA		9,012	837.2	17,450	1,621.1

Functional and Technical Requirements

The report identifies extensive functional and technical requirements which should be taken into account in future accommodation planning. See sections 5.2, 5.4, and 5.5 for specifics.

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6.0 Recommendations

Facility Improvement Needed

Based on the findings from consultation, comparison with other galleries, and analysis of the existing facilities – it is evident that the current facilities do not meet the needs of the community. The building is too small, limiting the public programs and services the Gallery is able to offer. The inadequate space and technical deficiencies compromise the safety of the collection and make it virtually inaccessible. The building is a significant impediment for the Gallery to fulfill its mandate and develop the full potential of its relationship with and service to its community.

The recommendation of this study is that the City of Peterborough, in cooperation with the Art Gallery of Peterborough, seek improved accommodation for the Gallery – either through renovation and expansion on its current site, or at another location.

Facility Requirements Articulated

The scale of the needed accommodation is in the order of 17,450 square feet (1,620 square meters) of net useable space. To achieve this net area would require a building with a gross area of about 25,000 square feet (2,400 square meters).

The accommodation must meet the functional criteria as well as the technical requirements presented in this report. The technical considerations are important in order that the AGP can maintain its Class 'A' designation, as well as meet the requirements of other institutions for loans and travelling exhibitions.

Feasibility Study Needed

The current study is primarily a needs assessment. Neither study of the potential of renovating and expanding the present building, nor investigation of other sites, was within the current terms of reference. A detailed feasibility study is required to determine the potentials, limitations, technical issues, and cost of expansion/renovation. Similar investigation would be required for other sites for comparative purposes.