

Making these Walls Talk

Concepts for Interpreting the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site

Prepared for the Department of Tourism,
Culture and Recreation
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1. Introduction

The Colonial Building—Newfoundland’s former legislative building—is one of the most important historic sites in the province. As the seat of Newfoundland’s legislature for more than a century, it witnessed the island’s political evolution from a colony to Dominion to province. It was the place where people from all parts of Newfoundland came together to make the laws that shaped their economy, society and culture. It was also the place where they made hard choices such as giving up democratic self-government and confederating with Canada. As the edifice where Newfoundlanders shaped their collective destiny, the Colonial Building is a touchstone for the distinct identity of Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, the significance of the Colonial Building cannot be understood just by looking at it. The impressive architecture does not reveal the dramatic stories that would be heard if only these walls could talk. Making these walls talk is the goal of this study. It outlines concepts for interpreting the history of the Colonial Building, once the site is restored and opened to the public.

This report presents an interpretive vision of the Colonial Building—outlining what stories should be conveyed, how they should be told, where they should be presented and to whom they should be targeted. This interpretive concept will be a foundation for more detailed interpretive planning, design and development in the coming years.



2. Situation Analysis

The Colonial Building has outstanding potential for interpretation. It is one of those rare places where both the site and its stories are not only significant, but also intrinsically interesting. While there are some constraints that will influence interpretive approaches, the strengths definitely outweigh the weaknesses.

Strengths

- Very high level of historical, architectural and cultural significance
- Central location
- Attractive exterior and interior
- Wealth of interpretive resources—furnishings, audio, photos, stories
- History of site is full of dramatic events, colourful characters, and surprising facts that have great public appeal—stories are much more engaging than would normally be expected at a former legislature
- Site has strong symbolic value to many Newfoundlanders, especially older ones
- Story is relevant to both province and to Canada.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to develop an important, innovative interpretation program on Newfoundland's political history—a story yet to be told
- Opportunity to start from scratch
- Opportunity to tap into tourist interest in visiting historic sites to create new year-round tourist attraction in St. John's
- Opportunity to provide educational programs linked to curriculum
- Opportunity to tap into Newfoundland's vibrant cultural sector to create innovative interpretation programs and media
- Opportunity to work with heritage groups housed in building
- Opportunities for indoor and outdoor programming.
- Opportunities for partnerships with other sites.

Weaknesses

- Universal accessibility is a challenge
- The lobby area is quite compact and will be tight for large groups
- Beautiful frescos on walls and ceilings limit opportunities for wall-based displays and wiring
- No furnishings for most rooms
- Shared use of building means there will be some competition for space; and may be some conflicting needs and values.

Threats

- Personal memories of Colonial Building are fading with time; younger people less likely to identify with pre-Confederation history
- Most non-resident visitors not aware of Newfoundland's interesting political history and may not be drawn to site
- Highly seasonal nature of tourism may mean that visitor load likely to be uneven with peaks and valleys
- There will be competition for visitors from Signal Hill, The Rooms and other sites, which have new and exciting presentations.

3. Objectives

The Management Plan for the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site includes the following objectives:

- To highlight and promote the historic importance of the site by promoting themes that have provincial significance and presenting them through the use of a variety of interpretation approaches.
- To educate and present to future generations the values of the site through on-site and off-site programming.

Overall Interpretive Objective

To provide opportunities for the public to experience the Colonial Building and to understand its significance as the historic seat of Newfoundland's legislature.

Cognitive Objectives

After experiencing the interpretation of the Colonial Building, the majority of visitors will know that:

- The Colonial Building housed Newfoundland's legislature for over a century from colonial times through to confederation and, as such, it is a place that shaped the province's history, evolution and identity.
- The Colonial Building is architecturally significant, reflecting its public role.

Affective Objectives

After experiencing the interpretation of the Colonial Building, The majority of visitors will feel:

- increased pride in the history of Newfoundland
- a sense of ownership of the building and the site

All visitors will feel

- surprised by how interesting, eventful and colourful Newfoundland's history is
- conscious that Newfoundland and its history are distinct
- satisfied that their visit was both enjoyable and informative

Behavioural Objectives

After experiencing the interpretation of the Colonial Building, the majority of visitors will demonstrate the following behaviours:

- treat the heritage resources of the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site with respect
- tell others that the Colonial Building is a worthwhile place to visit

4. Thematic Framework

Interpretive themes are tools for organizing how the significance of a heritage resource is communicated to the public. They link a tangible resource (in this case the Colonial Building) to its intangible meanings in a way that is relevant to a visitor. Themes are usually expressed as complete sentences so that their underlying meaning is clear. In a site with as long and complex a history as the Colonial Building, there are multiple themes that

could be interpreted. However, given limits of space and resources, as well as the need to respect the public's limited leisure time and general appetite for heritage experiences, choices must be made about what it is most important to communicate. The thematic framework presented below is a recommended communications/messaging framework for public programs, exhibits and educational activities.

Overall Theme

For over a century, the Colonial Building served as the seat of Newfoundland's legislature and was the place where Newfoundlanders governed themselves and debated the decisions—first as a colony, then a Dominion and finally a province—that shaped Newfoundland's political evolution and made it what it is today.

Sub-themes

1: *Political Evolution*

The Colonial Building housed Newfoundland's legislature for more than a century and witnessed its political evolution from a British colony to a Canadian province through an unusual process that forged Newfoundland's distinctive identity.

2: *Impact*

The decisions made by Newfoundlander's elected representatives, sitting in the Colonial Building, affected all of Newfoundland and shaped its society, economy, culture, and identity.

3: *Place*

The Colonial Building's impressive site, architecture, and interiors reflect its historical role as the former seat of Newfoundland's legislature.

4: *People*

The Colonial Building was a venue for public debate where Newfoundlanders acted individually and collectively to shape Newfoundland's history and development and is a place where the multiple perspectives of Newfoundlanders can be understood.

5: *Stories*

Few legislative buildings have a history as colourful as that of the Colonial Building and its stories provide insight into Newfoundland's unique character.

Sub-Theme 1: Political Evolution

The Colonial Building housed Newfoundland's legislature for more than a century and witnessed its political evolution from a British colony to a Canadian province through an unusual process that forged Newfoundland's distinctive identity.



1.1 Newfoundland's political evolution is somewhat complex but can best be understood as a gradual evolution from colony to Dominion, a step back to colonial status, and then a leap from colony to province.

- Before the Colonial Building was erected, Newfoundland experienced different forms of government including Aboriginal governance and colonial rule.
- When the Colonial Building opened as Newfoundland's legislative building in 1850, the island of Newfoundland was a Crown Colony of Britain with representative government consisting of an elected house of Assembly and an appointed Legislative Council, all under the direction of a British Governor.
- Newfoundland gained responsible government and gradually assumed more control over its affairs but continued as a British colony, and was known as such, until 1907 when the term "Dominion of Newfoundland" came into popular use and 1918 when the title "Dominion of Newfoundland" was formally adopted.
- There are differing opinions on what being a "Dominion" really meant for Newfoundland but in broad terms it means that Newfoundland governed itself while its external relations with the rest of the world were directed by Great Britain. For example, Newfoundland did not sign the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations.
- The Statute of Westminster of 1931 made Newfoundland eligible for full equality with Britain and complete autonomy over its external affairs, however, Newfoundland never passed the local legislation needed to put this act into effect and never assumed any of these rights and responsibilities.
- In 1934, due to a dire economic situation, Newfoundland voluntarily gave up democratic self-government and chose to revert to what was in effect colonial status, with government by a Commission appointed by Great Britain, until Newfoundland could support itself economically and until people demanded a return of responsible government.
- The Commission of Government, a period during which there were no elections or sittings of the legislature, was expected to be short-term but ended up lasting fifteen years largely due to the outbreak of the Second World War.

- In 1946, a National Convention of members elected from across the island was convened to discuss a future form of government for Newfoundland. After extensive discussion and debate, delegations to Canada and Britain, and two referenda, Newfoundland opted to join the Canadian confederation and become a province.
- When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 as a province, responsible and democratic government was restored, but in a form somewhat different than before, with only an elected House of Assembly and no appointed upper house.
- In the post-Confederation years, the House of Assembly addressed many critical issues around Labrador, Aboriginal people and land claims.
- For the entire time that the legislature sat in the Colonial Building, it governed what was then known as Newfoundland. The current name of Newfoundland and Labrador was adopted by the province in the 1960s and changed officially by the Canadian constitution in 2001.

1.2 The key decisions that shaped Newfoundland's political evolution were made in the chambers of the Colonial Building.

- It was in the chambers of the Colonial Building that Newfoundlanders' elected representatives gained, gave up and regained responsible government.
- The Colonial Building was home to Newfoundland's legislature through three types of government—colonial, Dominion and province.
- The Colonial Building was the place where Newfoundland fought for and gained responsible government in 1855.
- The Colonial Building was the place where Newfoundland voluntarily gave up democratic self-government—a decision that is virtually unprecedented in the western world.
- The Colonial Building was the venue for the National Convention of 1946-1948, an event which transformed Newfoundland's politics and identity and which made it the province it is today.
- The Colonial Building was the first home of the House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland, later renamed as the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

1.3 Since Newfoundland's political evolution is unusual, it can best be understood in comparison to other British colonies in British North America, Australia and New Zealand.

- When the Colonial Building opened in 1850, Newfoundland's status as a crown colony was similar to that of the other British North American colonies (British Columbia, United Province of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island) and other British-settled colonies like Australia and New Zealand.
- Of the British North American colonies, Newfoundland retained its own identity as a separate political entity by far the longest—remaining separate and distinct more than 75 years after the other BNA colonies had united into Canada.
- Generally, Newfoundland followed in the footsteps of other British colonies in terms of assuming Dominion status and asserting its rights to autonomy and never became as fully independent as Canada, Australia or New Zealand. It alone gave up self-government for a period.

1.4 The legislative bodies that met in the Colonial Building followed the British parliamentary system, with local adaptations.

- The legislature of Newfoundland is based on the British parliamentary system, follows the same rules and procedures for passing laws, and has many of the same symbols and rituals.
- Unusual features of Newfoundland's legislature when it met in the Colonial Building include the seating arrangements and the denominational apportioning of seats.
- There have also been unprecedented events such as the non-confidence motion of 1919 when the Prime Minister seconded a non-confidence vote in his own government and the 1934 decision to give up responsible government.
- Newfoundland's electoral system has evolved over time to include extending the vote to women and an expansion to include Labrador.
- Newfoundland changed from a bi-cameral to a uni-cameral system when it became a Canadian province in 1949.

Sub-Theme 2: IMPACT

The decisions made by Newfoundland's elected representatives, sitting in the Colonial Building, affected all of Newfoundland and Labrador and shaped its society, economy, culture, and way of life.



- **Landmark decisions made by the government of Newfoundland include:**

- » debates over Confederation with Canada in 1864, 1895, and 1949
- » decisions on currency and economic policy
- » decision over the railway
- » decisions over fisheries (Bait Act, Bond-Blaine Treaty, French shores)
- » decisions to send a regiment to the First World War
- » decision on votes for women
- » decision on Labrador boundaries
- » decisions on government and administration (e.g. creation of Newfoundland rangers).
- » decisions on Aboriginal people

Sub-Theme 3: PLACE

The Colonial Building's impressive site, architecture, and interiors reflect its historical role as the former seat of Newfoundland's legislature.



3.1 The Colonial Building's site symbolizes its important role as the seat of Newfoundland's legislature

- The Colonial Building is located in a line of public and institutional buildings on Military Road.
- The Colonial building was built on a height of land in open space at what was then the edge of town—giving the building stature and visibility.
- The landscape features a forecourt that could be used for public gatherings and was designed to rise up from the road to entrance, further elevating the Colonial Building visually in keeping with its public stature.
- The public spaces surrounding the Colonial Building are enhanced by nearby Bannerman Park.

3.2 The Colonial Building was one of the most impressive buildings in Newfoundland when it was built and today it remains architecturally significant for its fine neo-classical architecture.

- Designed by architect James Purcell, and built between 1847 and 1850, the Colonial Building's architecture was and is the finest example of neo-classical architecture in the province.
- The architecture evokes ancient Greek and Roman traditions and is of a style that was popular for public buildings throughout the British Empire.
- Key features to note in the architecture are the overall symmetry, the use of stone in a town that was mostly built of wood, and the imposing front façade with its massive columns.
- The Royal Coat of Arms on the pediment, and the name of the building, are reminders that Newfoundland was a British colony when this building was constructed.

3.3 The Colonial Building was purpose built to house the legislature and certain other government offices and its interiors reveal its functions and role.

- Unlike the current legislative assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Colonial Building features two chambers—one for the House of Assembly and one for the Legislative Council, a senate-like upper house reflecting the bi-cameral legislative process that existed until 1933.
- Both chambers are the same size, are two storeys high, and feature fine architectural details; the decorative artwork, by artist Alexander Pindikowsky, was not present originally but was added in 1880.
- A press gallery was added to the House of Assembly ca. 1880, giving journalists a dedicated workplace in view of their important public communications role.
- The prominent staircase leading to the public viewing galleries suggests that Newfoundlanders valued public access to their government and politicians.
- The other offices in the building had different uses over the years but were primarily used for legislative support, government administration, and for the Newfoundland Savings Bank rather than as offices for members of the Assembly or Council.

3.4 The Colonial Building has been the site of many important public events.

- As one of the grandest buildings in Newfoundland, the Colonial Building has been the site of many important public events including royal visits and proclamations, major exhibitions, significant conferences and the lying in state of distinguished Newfoundlanders.
- Large balls, with hundreds of people, were held at the Colonial Building to mark major events in 1860, 1866 and 1867.

3.5 The Colonial Building has undergone many minor architectural changes over the years but the building—both inside and out—is remarkably intact and offers an authentic experience of Newfoundland's political past.

- Changes have been made to the stone, front door, windows, roof cupola/lantern and the grounds, but the basic form and design have been the same for over 150 years.
- Much of the furniture in the Assembly Chamber is original and the vault dates back to when the colonial treasury was located here.
- When you visit the Colonial Building, you stand in the very rooms where Newfoundland's political history was shaped.
- The Colonial Building is a heritage treasure that needs to be preserved and which requires respectful behaviour when visiting.

Sub-Theme 4: PEOPLE

The Colonial Building was a venue for public debate where Newfoundlanders acted individually and collectively to shape Newfoundland's history and development



4.1 Political leaders in the House of Assembly had a great influence on Newfoundland's history.

- Pivotal leaders include:
 - » Philip Francis Little
 - » Sir Frederick Carter and Sir Ambrose Shea
 - » Charles Fox Bennett
 - » Sir William Whiteway
 - » Sir Robert Bond
 - » Sir Edward Morris
 - » Alfred P.B. Morine
 - » Sir William Coaker
 - » Sir Richard Squires
 - » Frederick Alderdice
 - » Joseph Smallwood

4.2 Protesters and activists came to the Colonial Building to seek political change through methods ranging from peaceful demonstrations to violent riots.

- Women protesting and lobbying for votes
- Unemployed marching on the House of Assembly
- Rioters and the causes of their actions

4.3 Journalists were frequent visitors to the Colonial Building and played a key role in communicating political issues and decisions to Newfoundlanders.

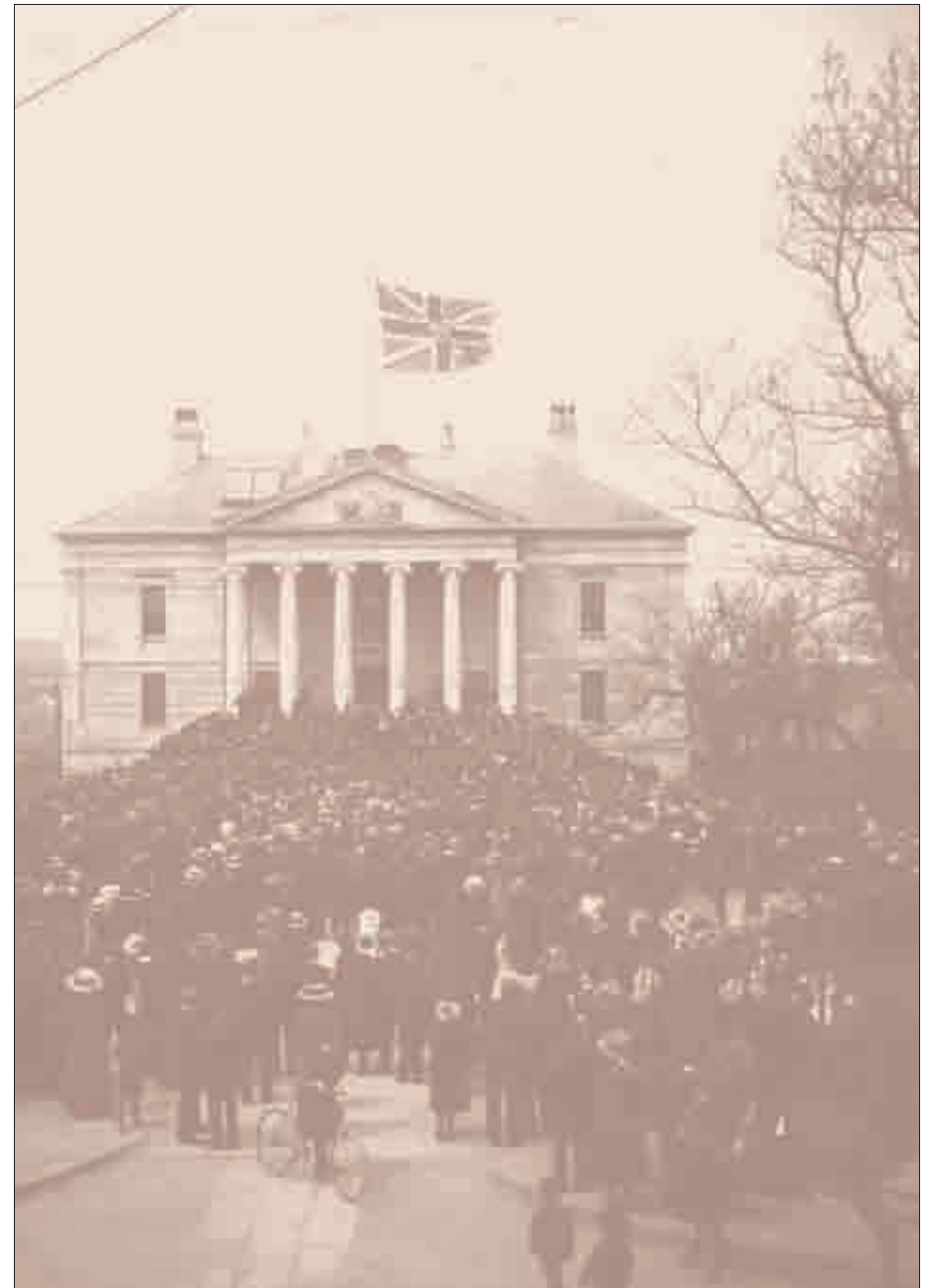
- newspaper coverage
- radio broadcasts of national convention

4.4 Many people other than politicians worked in the Colonial Building and contributed to its activities and public role.

- Civil servants had offices in the Colonial Building and implemented laws and policies affecting all Newfoundlanders.
- Staff, from caretakers to clerks, played important, behind-the-scenes roles in supporting the Colonial Building's activities

4.5 All Newfoundlanders were involved with the Colonial Building as voters and as citizens.

- Public reaction and perspectives on issues and decisions



Sub-Theme 5: STORIES

Few legislative buildings have a history as colourful as that of the Colonial Building and its stories provide insight into Newfoundland's unique character



- It is virtually unheard of in British parliamentary tradition for a prime minister to second a motion of non-confidence in his own government or an elected Assembly to vote itself out of existence, but both happened in the Colonial Building.
- While outwardly appearing like all other colonial parliaments, the House of Assembly adapted to local conditions in several ways such as the denominational apportioning of seats and the reversal of the traditional placement of government and opposition benches.
- Ironically, the first female Member of the House of Assembly was the wife of the Prime Minister who opposed votes for women.
- In keeping with the importance of fishing to Newfoundland's economy, one of the political parties was run by the fisherman's union.
- The Colonial Building had some criminal activity—a bank robbery, a forger-artist, bribery, corruption, and a missing carpet.
- The public balls that took place in the Colonial Building were much rowdier affairs than might be expected in such a formal setting.
- Violent riots protesting government actions took place at the Colonial Building in 1861, 1886 and 1932 and the latter of these not only caused severe damage to the building but was a factor in the subsequent decision to give up democratic self-government.

5. Audiences

When you tell a story, you need to know your audience. You present a story differently to a child than to an adult, to a stranger or an old friend.

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation hopes that that the Colonial Building interpretation will program serve a very wide range of audiences—of varied ages, interests, and origins. Every effort will be made to develop a conceptual approach with broad appeal and relevance. The needs and characteristics of some key target audiences are identified below in order to help with planning how to convey the site's themes and stories in a way that is appropriate to different audience segments.



5.1. Organized Groups

Organized groups tend to require different services than casual visitors. Facilities such as a cloakroom and washrooms must be planned to handle the arrival of 45 visitors (an average bus) at one time. Groups frequently prefer a guided visit or interpreter-led activity, as opposed to a self-guiding visit. The way to attract these organized groups to the Colonial Building is through the group leader, rather than the individual participants. Organized groups tend to plan visits a long time in advance and need to know exactly what is being offered.

School Groups

It is expected that school groups will be a main target audience for the Colonial Building. There are direct links between the curriculum and the Colonial Building themes in grades 5, 8 and 12—with the grade 8 programs on Newfoundland and Labrador history being particularly relevant. To serve the school audience, the interpretation program must include both on-site programs for those groups that can visit, and outreach tools for those in other parts of the province.

For on-site group visits, the interpretation program should particularly target the needs of students aged 10 to 13 (who will tend to make more field trips than those in grade 12). These students will seek interesting experiences and participatory activities that are a change from the classroom. Since field trips are hard to justify and organize, school groups may look for programs of longer duration that are directly linked to the curriculum.

Tourist Groups

Tour groups—whether motorcoach, cruise, conference or spousal programs—arrive en masse, sometimes with more than one bus. They are usually older (often over 50), highly educated and well travelled. Generally, tour groups want a short (maximum 1 hr) guided program that they can fit into a busy schedule. There can be interest in having group events in connection with a visit. It can be expected that tourists who arrive at the site will have little knowledge of the site or its significance. In fact, group visitors tend to have less knowledge than independent visitors who will have consciously made the choice to visit.



Implications re: Planning for Organized Groups

- Colonial Building visitor services need to be designed to welcome 45 people at one time.
 - Group audiences will vary considerably—from local 10-year olds to international visitors over 60.
 - Group audiences will show extreme variations in their knowledge levels—from students thoroughly prepped by their teachers to cruise ship visitors who hardly know where they are.
 - Interpretation approach should include opportunities for in-depth participatory, on-site programs for students from September to June and opportunities for shorter, guided visits and programs for groups of older adults mainly from June to September.
 - To attract tourist group organizers, the site must offer a reliable, core presentation that they can market to their customers years in advance.
 - On-site programs will need to be supplemented by outreach activities to serve school groups province wide.
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5.2. Independent Visitors

Casual visitors tend to arrive in pairs and small family groups throughout the day. It is more difficult operationally to offer guided programs to casual visitors since they can arrive at any time.

Residents of St. John's

Local residents will not only come to visit, but will also act as hosts to visitors. To keep the interest of residents and encourage them to be repeat visitors, the Colonial Building will have to offer a variety of changing programs, activities and events.

Residents will often visit in family groups. This means the Colonial Building program will need to offer programs that appeal to groups of children and adults visiting together, looking for a social experience.

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador

Residents of Newfoundland will have many of the same characteristics as residents of St. John's and may be repeat visitors, but will visit less frequently, and therefore will not need as many changing programs and activities. Special events may be a good way to attract provincial residents to the Colonial Building. There will also be a need for outreach activities to serve these audiences.

Non-Residents

Non-residents will normally visit only once, and care more about a one-time quality experience rather than changing, dynamic programs. The non-resident tourist market consists primarily of mature, affluent, highly educated people traveling in pairs.

This audience segment—which is worldly and well travelled—is often looking for unique, authentic and high quality experiences. They will seek out the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site on the basis of the reputation of its offering, so it will be important to maintain a 'permanent' presentation that meets these expectations. Non-residents will likely be highly motivated to discover Newfoundland's history, but will have little existing knowledge.

Implications re: Planning for Independent Visitors

- Need to have experiences that work for both adults and children.
 - Need to have some self-guiding, intimate experiences suitable for one or two people.
 - Non-residents look for high quality experience that is available no matter when they visit.
 - Residents will seek changing programs and events to make them return.
 - Very different knowledge levels between resident and non-resident visitors.
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5.3. Learning Preferences and Other Audience Considerations

No matter whether a visitor comes alone or in a group, is young or old, a resident or tourist, individuals vary greatly in their learning styles, motivations and interests. While it is impossible to meet the needs of everyone, interpretive planning should endeavour to serve the needs of a wide range of visitors, based on findings from visitor studies research. For example, studies show that the population is almost evenly split between those who enjoy guided experiences and those who prefer to explore on their own.

Implications for Planning for Different Learning Styles

- Programs should include guided and self-guiding experiences
 - Programs should include elements for different types of learners—readers, auditory learners, visual learners, tactile learners, and those who prefer to learn through inter-personal exchanges.
 - Need to engage people by providing elements for those who are more interested in cognitive experiences (learning facts), affective experiences (feeling emotions) and kinesthetic experiences (doing things).
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5.4. Findings from Audience Analysis

To meet the needs of this broad range of audiences, the Colonial Building interpretive program will need to include;

- a high-calibre ‘permanent’ presentation/experience for non-residents
- changing exhibits, programs, activities and events for local and provincial residents
- messaging that is layered and leveled to meet the needs different knowledge levels
- a choice of guided and self-guided experiences
- a broad range of media for those with different learning styles and experience preferences
- some areas that can accommodate large groups, while others that work for small parties
- experiences aimed at families visiting with children
- outreach experiences for provincial school groups and residents, outside the Capital.

The program also needs to recognize the seasonality of tourism in St. John’s. There will be a markedly different demand from June to September, than from October to May.



6. Approaches to Interpretation

The interpretation of the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site will follow all accepted professional practices for interpretation of a heritage site. Interpretive presentations, programs and media will provide opportunities for people of varying ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities and learning preferences to understand the meaning and significance of the site.

Within this broad framework of professional practice, there are specific recommended approaches to interpretation at the Colonial Building that will give the site a distinctive identity and programming character.



An Evolving Story—Not a Moment in Time

It is recommended that the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site not be restored to a moment in time with the interpretive focus on a particular period or event. A moment in time approach would do justice neither to the theme of political evolution nor to the overall story of the building through its century and half of history. Instead the interpretation of the Colonial Building will present its entire history. Indeed, the current use as a public building can be seen as the latest evolution of the site.

Keep it Relevant

While portraying the entire evolution of the Colonial Building's story, it is recommended that interpretation programs place more emphasis on recent times, events and stories that are relevant to visitors today. The 1940s story of the national convention and confederation is dramatic, important and relevant and is likely to be more compelling and engaging than a discussion of the early colonial period. Without leaving out the early history, more space and attention should be given to stories of relevance today.

Don't Shy Away from Complexity

The story of Newfoundland's political evolution is so complicated that there could be a tendency to over simplify. It's easier to say that Newfoundland went from a colony to an independent country then a province, than to explain the evolution of responsible government within a colonial framework, to explore the ambiguities of being a Dominion, and to deal with that messy story of the Commission of Government. However, citizens are not well served if they don't understand the true facts about why and how Newfoundland and Labrador became a province of Canada.



Interpretation should not shy away from historical and political complexity or from encouraging dialogue on what this complex history means. A bold approach stands to engage more people than a simple, safe, sanitized approach would do.

Balance Permanent Presentations with Changing Programming

The Colonial Building needs a permanent presentation that will provide a quality, core experience to visitors—particularly tourists. Creating such a signature experience requires an investment of funds and permanent infrastructure. However, the Colonial Building should not be the sort of place that people see once and then say “been there, done that”. It should feature an ongoing array of changing programs, exhibits, meetings and events that keep people coming back again and again. These two dimensions—permanent, core presentations and dynamic, changing programs are equally important and will be critical to the site’s long term success.

Embrace Political Techniques

Historically, the Colonial Building was a place of political activity and it is entirely appropriate that political techniques infuse the interpretive program. It should be a place of dialogue and debate, motions and opposition, speeches and voting. As much as possible, the interpretive presentations should use political techniques to create a unique visitor experience. For example, exhibits can often feature two points of view on stories/issues and ask visitors to vote on what they think.

Compare and Connect

Interpretation of the Colonial Building’s themes will better connect to visitors’ existing knowledge maps if comparisons and connections to other places and situations are made. For example, it is not very meaningful to mention that the Dominion of Newfoundland did not sign the Treaty of Versailles unless you explain that the Dominion of Canada was a signatory. The interpretation of Newfoundland’s political history needs to be presented as much as possible in context.

Multiple Voices

The Colonial Building was historically a place where many different voices were heard—leaders of different political stripes, elected and appointed representatives from every corner of the province, civil servants, staff, journalists, protesters and the public at large all participated in discussions at the Colonial Building. It is recommended that this tradition of multiple voices and multiple perspectives be retained in the interpretation program, rather than having all content presented in the neutral, third person museum voice.

Multiple Uses and Users

To keep the Colonial Building busy and occupied all year round (and not just in the busy summer tourist season), the facility needs to welcome many different users. While the decision to house offices in the building ensures a good level of year-round use, the Colonial Building should be seen as a place for conferences, meetings, receptions, lectures, concerts, and events of all descriptions. Not only will this programming and use by others kept the place vibrant, it will also bring revenues, reduce vandalism and build community support.

Indoors and Outdoors

Interpretation of the Colonial Building should include the entire grounds and not just the building. Use of outdoor space gives more scope for programming, makes the site more visually appealing to passers-by, and provides 24/7 information for the public.

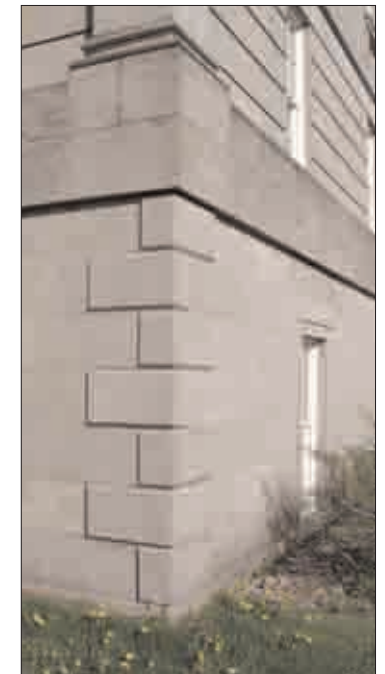
Use Anecdotes Judiciously

There are a surprising number of colourful stories and anecdotes related to the Colonial Building. While these should be used to pique visitors' interest, care must be taken not to make a mockery of the institution or to leave visitors with memories of robberies and riots, rather than Newfoundland's political milestones and achievements. To provide thought-provoking interpretation on important themes, rather than relying on crowd-pleasing stories, will require an ongoing commitment to program development and staff training.



Respect the Site and its Character

While it is strongly recommended that the interpretation program be lively, provocative and somewhat contemporary in content and conception, it is equally important that any physical interventions be sensitive to the heritage character of the building and site. Interpretive infrastructure should respect the integrity of the historic fabric of the building and should be designed in a way that is in keeping with the character of heritage features. In any room where there are painted wall frescos, for example, exhibit furniture should be kept away from the walls. Generally, it is envisaged that interpretive exhibits will be relatively light and transparent so that the authentic heritage resource of the Colonial Building itself remains visible.



7. Interpretive Vision

The Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site will be a touchstone of Newfoundland and Labrador's political heritage. It will be a place that people of all ages and backgrounds will visit for an authentic, first-hand experience of Newfoundland's historic legislature and for a better understanding of how Newfoundland and Labrador became the unique province it is today. In keeping with its significance, the site will offer services and presentations that meet national and international standards of excellence and which fully respect the heritage values of the site.

The Colonial Building will pulse with activity all year round. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to enjoy presentations and to engage in activities according to their interests. Public debate, conversation and participation, as well as looking and listening, will be encouraged. People will leave the site more interested in Newfoundland's political heritage than when they arrived.

The Colonial Building will be described by visitors as a must-see attraction and by provincial residents as a symbolic touchstone that makes them more conscious of their identity.

To achieve this vision, interpretation at the Colonial Building is conceived in two inter-locking layers.

Layer 1: Permanent Presentations

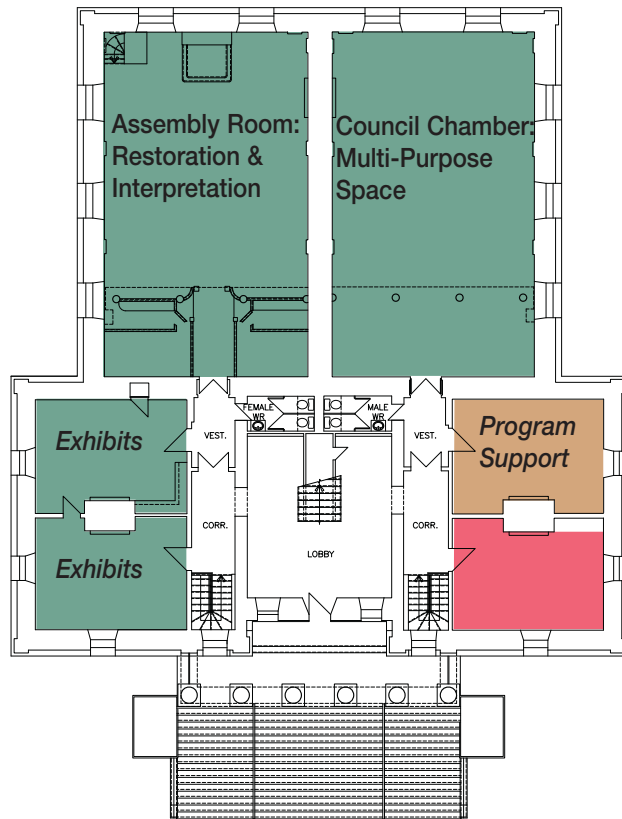
- Convey core themes and stories of significance
- Appropriate for multiple audience segments
- Always available to the public
- Aimed at one-time and tourist markets
- High quality, long-term investment
- Delivered through site restoration, exhibitions, AV experiences, print and web presence

Layer 2: Changing Presentations

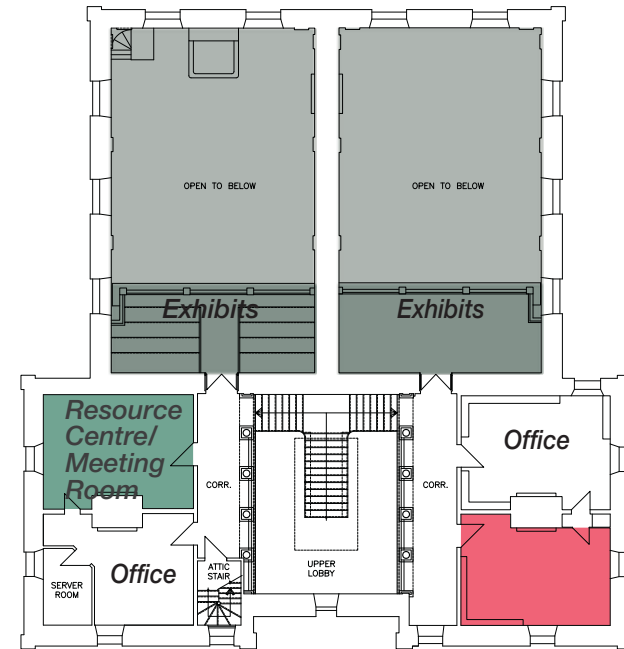
- Convey wide range of stories to provide more depth, focus and interest
- May be targeted to particular audience segments
- Only available for short periods of time, always changing and dynamic
- Aimed primarily at residents and repeat visitors
- Quality and budget vary, depending on event/activity
- Delivered through guided tours, public and school programs, changing exhibits, events and rentals

8. Interpretive Spaces

These floor plans illustrate the concept for how the two layers of interpretation will be applied in terms of allocating space in the Colonial Building,



Main Floor



Second Floor

The grounds will feature a combination of permanent and changing presentations.

9. Interpretive Concept for Permanent Presentations

9.1. Assembly Room Chamber

The Assembly Room is the historic heart of Newfoundland's democracy. It still looks the way it did when it housed Newfoundland and Labrador's House of Assembly and much of the original furnishings remain. A sense of history is palpable—and so it should be. It is less than 50 years since elected representatives sat in the room debating their province's future.



If there is one place in the Colonial Building that merits a traditional restoration treatment, it is here. The Assembly Room will be restored to the way it used to look using a combination of original furniture and replicas. If a choice has to be made about a date for restoration, we would suggest either 1959 or a date from the 1940s rather than a time from the early colonial period. However, if it were possible to restore the chamber in a way that is timeless, this would be preferred to provide maximum potential for Interpretive programming.

While the room will be carefully restored, it will not be like most period rooms that are closed off from the public with velvet ropes. As long as visitors are supervised by staff, they will be given access to the floor of the chamber and to the members desks. Visitors will be able to enter the chamber, sit down at the very desks where Newfoundland's history was shaped, and learn about its history. They will be able to imagine the triumph of responsible government, the wrenching choice to give up democracy, and the hopeful optimism of confederation.

The value and power of authentic contact with the real thing is so high that it is worth the slight risk that public access may pose to the heritage resources. Risks can be managed by staff training, good security measures, and daily monitoring of the condition of the furnishings. As well, it is recommended that any unique pieces (i.e. the Speaker's chair) either be protected from public contact or replaced with a replica.

In the Assembly Room Chamber, as well as in the Press Gallery and Public Gallery, interpretation will focus on the themes of political evolution, impact and people.

9.2. Assembly Room Press Gallery

The press gallery area will be set up with an unobtrusive presentation in the form of reporters' notebooks. There will be several notebooks relating to different dates, events and personalities as seen from journalists' perspectives. Visitors will be able to flip through the notebooks and view notes, headlines, stories, photos and political cartoons. Depending on how much original source material can be found, these notebooks could either contain reproductions of real archival material, or 'interpreted' content.

Given the location of the press gallery immediately adjacent to the Assembly Room, the visitor experience here should focus on quiet reading and viewing so as not to disrupt or distract from the experience of the restored House of Assembly.



9.3. Assembly Room Public Gallery

Upstairs in the Assembly Room's public gallery, visitors will be seated where generations of Newfoundlanders came to observe legislative sessions. Here they will be able to do two things:

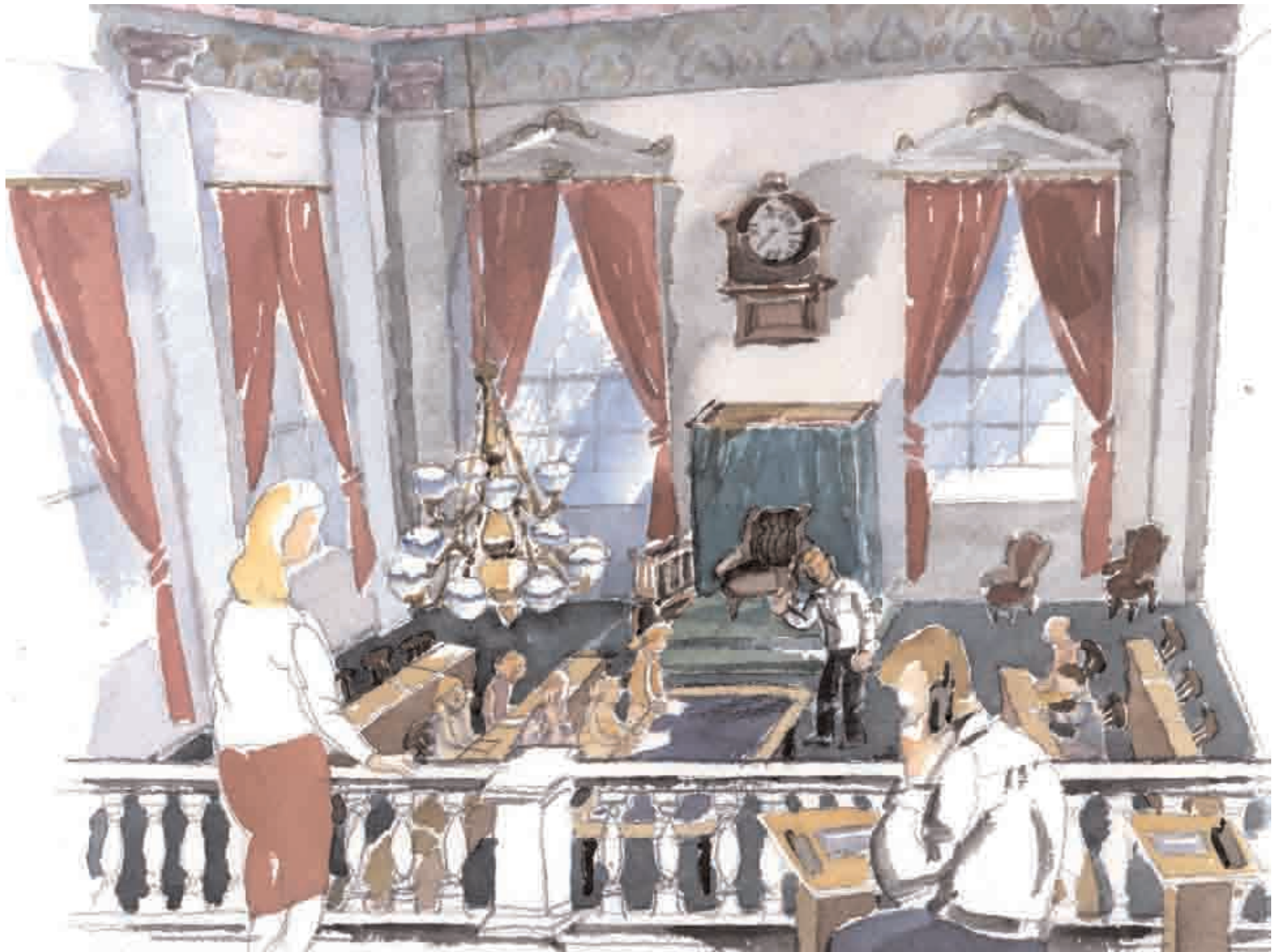
- a) discover a selection of memorable moments from the House of Assembly's history
- b) learn about how the House of Assembly worked (its setting, seating, legislative system, traditions etc.).

This content will be delivered either by audio or by short video presentations. If video, it would be ideal to shoot footage from the perspective of the visitors gallery so that the visitor's sense of involvement is enhanced. In either case, visitors will have a choice of options to listen to/view in order to be able to convey the maximum amount of content with a single device.

It is recommended that any audio be delivered through handsets (rather than speakers) to maintain the quiet ambiance of the Assembly Chamber and to allow more than one visitor to explore the stories at once, without being disturbed by the sound from another station.

The Assembly Room visitor gallery stations will be an important way to interpret the House of Assembly in the off-season when there are fewer guided tours, or at times when the Chamber is being used by a group and a small party of visitors arrives separately. These stations would normally be used by just a few visitors at a time; as large groups would be accompanied by guides who would provide personalized interpretation.

It is also worth noting that virtual projections and special media effects are not a good option for the Assembly Room due to the historic character of the space.





9.4. Council Chamber Public Gallery

In the Council Chamber public gallery, exhibits will focus on the theme of place, and particularly the building's art, architecture and evolution as well as the many public events held in its halls. Exhibits here should be traditional in flavour—with visual material, three-dimensional displays and tactile/hands-on interactives—rather than primarily media based interpretive tools. This will provide a contrast to the interpretive techniques employed in the House of Assembly—and appeal to different learning preferences.

Exhibits may include a three-dimensional model of the Colonial Building that visitors will be able to look into to see the building as it was when the Legislative Council was still in operation, and different government offices were in the building. There may be a viewing scope that visitors can peer through to see details of the decorative painting and a materials board where visitors will be able to touch samples of velvet and wood. Visitors may be challenged with trying to place in chronological sequence a series of illustrations of the building at different times (noting the changing windows, doors, and lantern) and see photos and illustrations depicting events in the building's history such as the balls, royal visits and exhibitions. There should definitely be a profile of Plndikowsky and his work.

There is so much potential content for this rather small space that it may be appropriate to create one area that can be easily changed and updated. For example, there could be a photo display with framed photos/illustrations (with the captions within the frames). One year the photo exhibit could be on colonial architecture in the British Empire, or in 2017, it might mark the 150th anniversary of Newfoundland's participation in the Paris World Exposition and the public display at the Colonial Building.

It should be noted that the Council Chamber public gallery may be inaccessible to the public at times when the Council Chamber is rented for a private function that does not encourage onlookers. It is therefore recommended that themes and messages presented here be interesting, but not essential.

9.5. Exhibit Rooms

Two connecting former offices will be used for a permanent exhibition. As can be seen from the thematic framework, there is a huge amount of content that could be explored in these exhibits. However, the rooms are not very large and cannot cover everything. It is recommended that the exhibits focus primarily on the story of Newfoundland's political evolution. The first room will provide an introduction to the site and a look at Newfoundland's political history up to 1934 as it evolved from colony to dominion. The second room will feature the period from 1934 to 1959 and the evolution from Commission of Government to province.

Room 1: From Colony to Dominion (1850 to 1934)

Given the rather complex story of Newfoundland's political evolution, and the general lack of public awareness of this history, the exhibition will feature an introductory video presentation that gives an overview of the story in 15 minutes or less. This video must be entertaining to hold visitors' attention as the topic of political history will appear dry to many people, especially children. It is recommended that the video be developed in the engaging and humorous 'news show' style which Newfoundland comedians have made famous. It might feature some historic footage (from the national convention, confederation, and early days as a province), some re-enactments of earlier times and some contemporary material. It would be appropriate to feature multiple perspectives and a fair bit of debate and a range of points of view. Developing this video with just the right tone and content will be challenging, but important. Equally challenging will be designing a way to accommodate up to 15 viewers, while still leaving room for other exhibits. It may be possible to place a flat screen above the fireplace and an inviting seating area near the hearth.

With the video as the central element of the 'colony to dominion' exhibit room, most of other components should be fairly traditional focusing on words, objects and images. Content might be presented in newspaper style panels to complement the tone of the video, or as traditional graphic panels and cases, or as a series of cut-out human figures from key dates. A combination of all three approaches could be considered. Envisage an enlarged cut-out photo of a soldier near a newspaper-style panel with stories relating to the decision to raise a regiment, the tragedy of Beaumont-Hamel and the failure to sign the Treaty of Versailles. There could be letters to the editor 'flip book' with different viewpoints and comparisons with Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Another vignette might involve a figure of a Member of the House of Assembly beside an artifact case showing stamps, currency and other symbols of nationhood. A third might be a newspaper style panel with an editorial criticizing the failure to enact legislation gaining full autonomy after the Statute of Westminster.

There would be one major interactive experience in this room; an exhibit asking people whether they think Newfoundland was an independent country before 1933. People would be presented with arguments pro and con and asked to 'vote'. They would drop tokens into clear plastic tubes so that all could see the tally. It is expected that this exhibit could provoke considerable discussion. Providing a way for visitors to write down their opinions—possibly on simple post-it notes—would be an ideal outlet.

At the room's exit(s), there should be a short but very visible message stating that Newfoundland voluntarily gave up Dominion status and self-government in 1934. This is intended to incite curiosity to move on to the second room and to avoid the misconception that Newfoundland went directly from Dominion to province.

Room 2: From Commission of Government to Province (1934-1959)

The second exhibit room will tell the story of Newfoundland's journey to provincial status. The story will be organized around three milestones in this political evolution: the 1934 decision to surrender self-government, the 1946 National Convention, and the 1949 union with Canada. Each of these three turning points would be treated in an exhibit providing the context for the decision, outlining the content of what actually happened, and discussing some of the consequences.

The stories conveyed in this room took place within living memory. Consequently, interpretation must consider the sensitivity of presenting and commenting upon the experiences and actions of living people (or friends and family members). Given the controversy and emotion that each of these milestones might evoke, it is preferable to present the content through first-hand accounts wherever possible. Quotes and video/audio clips from multiple perspectives—from participants, observers, those impacted, and from expert commentators—should be used extensively. Neutral historic site style text should be minimal and should present facts not opinions. Since space is tight, it is expected that each of the three exhibits will feature at least one computer station which will have a choice of stories as well as some computer games/quizzes and activities.

The three turning point exhibits might be located around the room's perimeter surrounding a central element which fosters dialogue and discussion. This might simply take the form of a small seating circle where two or three visitors can sit down and talk to each other, or an activity that gets people interacting and talking such as a political evolution board game or card game. Again this room should provide a place for people to leave their comments.

At the room's exit, there should be a short but visible message about the 1959 move of the House of Assembly out of the Colonial Building.

9.7. Foyer, Halls and Corridors

Some visitor signage and a welcome podium/desk will likely be needed in the foyer of the Colonial Building to welcome visitors. Any furniture in this space should be as minimal as possible, and designed to be light, transparent and movable. This will preserve the integrity of the design and to keep the floor space as free as possible to hold groups of people. The foyer is very impressive and compelling and a personal welcome would be more appropriate than signage and displays. The halls outside the two exhibit rooms lend themselves to interpretive panels on the building itself and on other provincial historic sites. There should also be accommodation for a brochure rack.



10. Interpretive Concepts for Changing Presentations

10.1 The Legislative Council: A Multipurpose Space

In order to keep the Colonial Building as a dynamic and vibrant public space, and to accommodate organized groups, the Council Chamber will be developed as a multi-purpose space.

The Chamber's walls and ceilings will be restored to provide an extraordinarily beautiful and inspiring setting for a wide range of programs and uses, some of which will be staged by staff, some by programming partners, and some by outside users.

It is expected that there will be no shortage of clients eager to rent this stunning space.

The Council Chamber will be used for a great variety of activities such as changing exhibits, school programs, demonstrations, receptions, dances, citizenship ceremonies, lectures, film presentations, concerts, private rentals, conferences and workshops. The programming potential is virtually unlimited. Imagine a panel discussion of people who participated in the National Convention, performances of music from the First World War period, events marking international women's day, citizenship courts, or demonstrations of dance styles that would have been in vogue for 19th century public balls. When large groups visit, they will be able to view the site's overview video (from the exhibit rooms) on a portable screen. At other times, the room will host

special events with a political slant such as debates, all-candidates meetings and/or a contest for 'rants' on whether Newfoundland was really an independent country. These changing roles will allow the Colonial Building to communicate a broad range of topics, serve many different audiences and provide a range of experiences. These dynamic elements and programming possibilities will be critical to keep the Colonial Building relevant to local residents.

Improved acoustics, flexible lighting, portable display systems, movable furniture, a portable stage, lectern, screen, and modern communications/IT systems would be necessary to make the Chamber functional for these activities. It might be worth exploring whether broadcasting capacity would be useful. One can imagine a series of performances: "Live from the Colonial Building". However, given the need to preserve the painted ceilings and walls, there may be restrictions on how 'wired' and equipped the space might be.

The antechamber area would contain one or two interpretive panels explaining the history of the Council Chamber, but generally the room would largely be left un-interpreted as a beautiful and evocative platform for programming.



10.2 The House of Assembly: A Stage for Programs

The restored House of Assembly Chamber will be used from time to time for various programs—primarily theatrical re-enactments or school programs. Access will always be supervised to ensure that heritage resources are not threatened.

Consideration could be given to staging a signature evening event for tourists during the summer. A re-enactment of scenes from the confederation debates in the Assembly Room could be very popular—although there may be problems with providing enough seating in the visitors' gallery.

10.3 Guided Tours

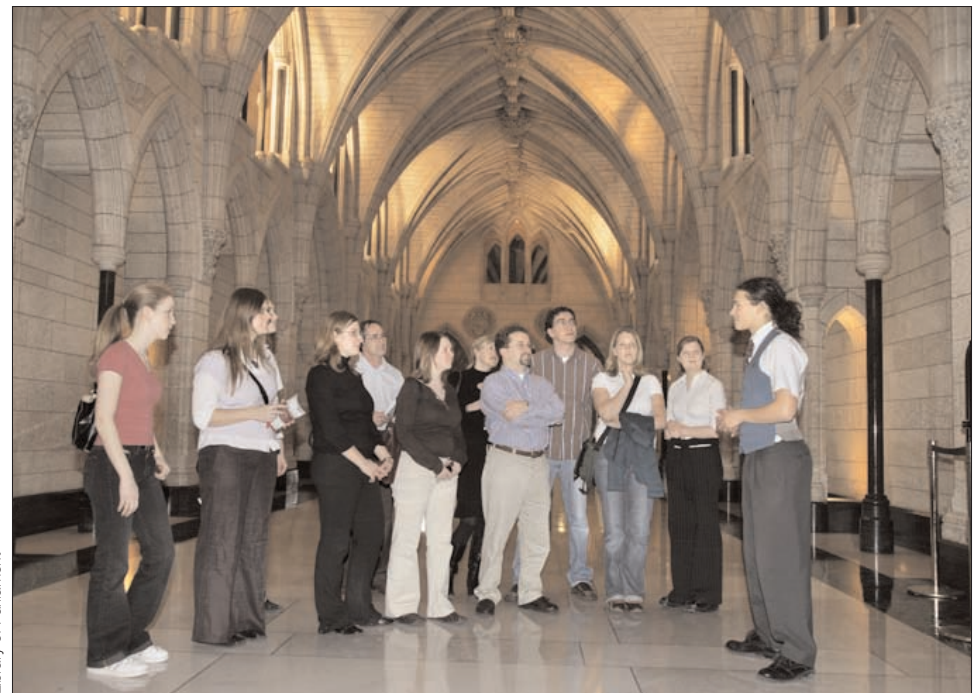
Guided tours and/or stationed interpreters will play a key role in adapting content to meet the needs of different audiences. Knowledgeable and skilled staff will be able to convey all the themes in different ways, at different times to different people. Tours should not be too tightly scripted but should rely on the talents and creativity of professional staff to determine the best way to communicate themes of significance.

Personal interpretation services, such as guided tours and or stationed interpreters, are essential not only because they can deliver changing presentations but also because of some of the constraints of the site, for example:

- there are many areas of this historic building, such as the front lobby and the Assembly Room chamber, where it would be inappropriate to introduce interpretive media due to the heritage character and ambiance of the space
- the space available for exhibits/AV is not sufficiently large to tell all the stories
- the stories are relatively complex and may need a 'guide' to explain and discuss them

- the nature of the themes and messages lend themselves to story telling, comparisons with other places, discussions over different systems of government etc. all of which are best communicated by a real person.
- visitor research shows that a significant proportion of audiences prefer personalized and animated experiences and many people learn best through inter-personal conversations, rather than by other means.

It is recommended that staff not be outfitted in period costumes except for special events and programs. Contemporary attire will help convey the point that this site is not a typical historic site from a century ago, but a building that was in active use until 50 years ago and is still very relevant today.



Library of Parliament

10.4 School Programs

There is tremendous potential for educational programs related to the Colonial Building. Imagine how students will feel being able to sit at a real Member's desk in the historic chamber of the House of Assembly and take part in a debate. They will be assigned roles, don jackets and ties, and hold a debate over a historic issue, or perhaps something more relevant (i.e. should junk food be banned in schools?). This will surely create memories that will last a lifetime.

School programs need not be limited to the history of Newfoundland's political evolution, but should also include civics and citizenship education. Newfoundland is unique in Canada in terms of having an intact and accessible historic legislative building and it is recommended that educational programming take full advantage of this opportunity. It is easier to foster understanding of the workings of a legislative assembly in a former chamber than in a working one where operational and security constraints limit access. By linking historical interpretation of the site to education programs on citizenship, democratic participation and the workings of government, the Colonial Building will become much more relevant to young people.

School programs should be developed in partnership with the Department of Education, and with the House of Assembly. It would make sense to explore opportunities for connecting with the Parliamentary Visitor Services Association—a national association of legislative assemblies—to tap into their experiences with educational programming on government themes.

One approach to developing educational programs and engaging teachers in using the Colonial Building as a learning resource would be to create a teacher professional development program similar to the Teachers Institutes on Parliamentary Democracy held in Ottawa and British Columbia. Outstanding teachers are brought



together for a week-long program where they learn about government and then work to develop learning strategies for the classroom. Lesson plans and learning resource materials are then made available on the Web.

There are many links between the Colonial Building's themes and the social studies curricula of Newfoundland and Labrador, but the most direct links are in grades 5, 8 and 12. There is particularly strong curriculum link in Grade 8 Social Studies, due to its focus on Newfoundland and Labrador History. It is recommended that the Colonial Building develop a series of programs aimed at the primary, junior, intermediate and secondary levels but that grade 8 programming be a real priority. Grade 8s are an ideal audience as 13-year old students have the intellectual capacity to deal with the complex and abstract themes of the political history and every single student must take social studies (as opposed to high school where some students may have chosen other options).

The educational program should involve classroom activities as well as on-site visits. Students will get much more out of a visit in a mock legislative debate if they are fully prepared in advance and know their roles. The experience will also be more enriching if they have follow-up activities such as writing newspaper stories or making political cartoons based on their experiences.



For students who are unable to actually visit the Colonial Building, there should be a variety of online resource materials that a teacher can use in the classroom. For the grade 8 target audience, it would be desirable to develop an educational kit with such tools as a video, photos, activity cards, and props (e.g. a replica mace for a mock parliament).

School programs could take several directions:

- mock legislative assembly debates re-enacting historic decisions and events
- mock debates on contemporary issues
- arts and crafts activities related to architecture, design and symbols (design a coat of arms, try your hand at decorative painting)
- a day in the life of a Member of the House of Assembly
- how a bill becomes law
- write about historic decisions of the House of Assembly

There are multiple examples of educational programs on legislative themes in other provinces and other countries (Australia's is particularly good). Even though most of these relate to current legislatures rather than historic ones, there is an excellent source of ideas for education.

10.5 Halls and Corridors

Halls and corridors not needed for permanent display materials could be used as a gallery for changing visual arts displays by local photographers and artists.

11. Interpretive Concept for the Grounds

The visitor experience of the Colonial Building begins outdoors. The grounds are where a visitor forms a first impression, decides whether or not to come in, and begins their experience.

The grounds of the building offer an excellent opportunity to enhance the sense of arrival, orient visitors, communicate significance and add variety to the visitor experience. The potential impact of interpretation on the grounds is very high as the grounds are accessible day and evening, 365 days a year.

While the final design and placement of interpretive elements will only be determined after the development of a landscape plan, the recommended approach to interpretation, which a combination of permanent and seasonal elements, is described below.

Interpretive elements should be sensitive to the heritage character of the site, but the landscape does not have to be restored to a particular period. To the contrary, it is important that the grounds convey that the Colonial Building is taking on a new life in the 21st century as a public heritage centre and that it is a lively, changing place.

Arrive at the Front Door

To create a proper sense of arrival, it is important to re-orient visitor arrival from the side parking lot to the front of the property. Visitors should enter the site from Military Road to see the building as it was meant to be seen—from the front. Restoring the gates, forecourt and steps will enhance the sense of arriving somewhere important and create a sense of anticipation for the visit.

Enhance the Sense of a Public Place

The Colonial Building is a very imposing building and one that might not appear to be open or friendly to visitors. It is important that the exterior setting create an impression that this is a place for visitors and that it will be an enjoyable place for all (even kids) to visit. Some elements that could be considered are:

- colourful banners on the building and/or along the entry path
- Illumination of the building and grounds
- a photo opportunity is also recommended—to be effective it should ideally involve a place for one or more people to pose with an object/sculpture that contains the name of the site as well as a view of the building.



Invite People In

There should be no doubt to the passer-by that s/he is welcome in the Colonial Building. Visitors should not have to walk up to the front door to read a discrete sign about hours of operation. There should be a prominent and inviting visitor information panel near the street edge welcoming visitors and providing basic visitor information. This panel might be designed with an unusual shape to be more intriguing and should contain an updatable component to provide information on changing exhibits and programs.

Convey the Big Idea

To orient visitors immediately to the significance of the Colonial Building a one-line explanatory slogan or tagline should be developed for all promotional material and put on visitor welcome signage. This line could be something along the lines of “The Colonial Building: Newfoundland’s Historic Legislature”, “The Colonial Building: The Historic Heart of Newfoundland’s Politics” or the “The Colonial Building: Politics and Government, Newfoundland Style. Whatever phrase is chosen should undergo public consultation and market testing before it’s finalized.

“People” the Landscape

There are two compelling reasons to create a sense of people on the grounds of the Colonial Building: the first is symbolic—to represent the Colonial Building as a house that belongs to the people of Newfoundland; the second is practical—people are drawn to other people. It is recommended that permanent sculpted human forms be placed on the grounds to represent some of the key individuals in the history of the Colonial Building. These sculptures are envisaged not as traditional bronze sculptures but rather as etched steel silhouettes that might be stylized or artistic in form. Each would bear a name, a quote, and one or two lines of text on the person’s accomplishments.



These silhouettes could be of single individuals or groups of people. One possibility would be to feature the most important political leaders (e.g. a formal “Prime Ministers” walk); another would be to portray different groups of people: such as politicians, protesters and the public. It might be possible to combine this notion of ‘peopling’ the landscape with the photo opportunity idea mentioned above.

Communicate Key Messages Outdoors

Interpreting some of the site’s themes outdoors is important for several reasons: to better orient visitors, to provide communication of the site’s significance in off-hours when the building is closed and also because some themes, such as architecture, are better understood from the outside.

It is recommended that there be an interpretive node with three to five message areas including (in order of priority)

- Overall theme: Newfoundland's oldest and longest legislature
- Place: Architecture and site evolution
- Political Evolution in a nutshell
- Place: Public Events

It is recommended that these interpretive elements be highly visual with historic photographs and illustrations. There needs to be enough information to evoke a satisfying response of "That's interesting. I didn't know that" without seeming to convey all the information (which would make a visit inside unnecessary).



A Stage for Summer Programming

During the peak summer visitor season, the grounds should come alive with programming so that all passers-by know that the Colonial Building is a place that's worth a visit, and that there is a lot to see and do. Some activities that could be considered are:

- performances/re-enactments/concerts
- an outdoor mobile interpretation unit (Discovery Cart) with props
- tea on the lawn
- festivals and events of all sorts
- a speakers corner

In the longer term, if there is a large demand for outdoor programming, a tent could be erected on the site similar to the Info-tent on Parliament Hill or the visitor services tent at Rideau Hall—both of which provide visitor information, seating, kids' activities, and simple food services.

Linking With Nearby Sites

The Colonial Building site should be linked to its thematically themed neighbours—Government House and the Commissariat Building and other related sites. This could be done in several ways:

- seasonal guided walking tours
- a self-guiding brochure and/or audio tour
- interpretive elements at each site
- distinctive streetscape treatment with lighting, banners, sidewalks, street furniture.



12. Continuing the Conversation

If a visit to the Colonial Building is effective—if the walls have been made to talk—then people will leave the site more interested in the province’s political history than when they arrived. It is important to provide visitors with opportunities to pursue this interest by providing more in-depth information for follow-up at home. A historical brochure/booklet should be produced to provide a legacy of information on the Colonial Building’s themes and stories.

Even more important than a print publication would be a website with historical and visitor information on the Colonial Building and a forum for conversations about Newfoundland’s political history. One could imagine inviting commentators to post stories on different themes, hosting on-line blogs or dialogues, and actively soliciting first-hand accounts of events and activities in the Colonial Building. There is also a great research potential. There are many people who would have attended legislative sessions, taken part in the National Convention, voted in referenda or otherwise played a role in political life before 1959. These stories should be captured before it’s too late. Pier 21 provides an excellent example of how the Internet can be used to collect stories related to a historic site.

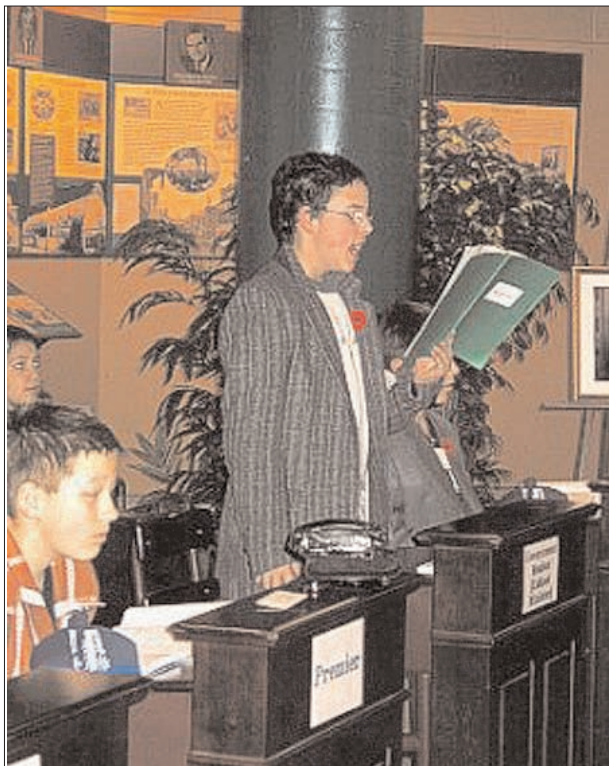
Conversations with the public should not wait till a website is up and running. As part of the next stage of interpretive development, it is highly recommended that the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation undertake some market testing of the concept and visitor research. We particularly recommend some ‘knowledge’ surveys of both local residents and of visitors to see what people already know about Newfoundland’s political heritage. We would guess that there is a very limited knowledge base but it will be essential to test what people already know and understand. An ongoing program of visitor research and evaluation should be put in place both before the site opens, and after operations begin.



National Capital Commission

13. Conclusion

This concept for the interpreting the Colonial Building is ambitious and will require a significant capital investment as well as ongoing human and financial resources. However, it is an investment worth making. No other province in Canada has a former legislative building that provides this sort of opportunity. No other place in the province is so central to Newfoundland and Labrador's political heritage and identity. Once restored, interpreted and animated with programming, the Colonial Building Provincial Historic Site will once again be a house of assembly—a house where people will come together to discover the roots of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.



14 Appendix

Colonial Building Interpretation — Capital Cost Projections

Content and Design

Historical Research	Focussed historical research including visual and AV research	15,000
Interpretive Development	Detailed interpretive plan for all exhibition elements, writing of text, storyline direction for AV and coordination of all visitor experience elements through to installation	50,000
Visitor Research and Evaluation	Front-end surveys of public knowledge and formative evaluation of plans and design.	50,000
Design	Preliminary and Final Design of Primary and Secondary Exhibits, as well as custom exhibit system for Council Chamber.	90,000
AV/Multimedia Consultant	Design AV/multimedia systems and act as Executive Producer	45,000
Sub-Total Content and Design		\$250,000

Grounds

Welcome Sign	Permanent with changeable portion indicating hours of operation. Vandal-resistant design and materials with proper foundation.	20,000
Interpretation Panels	Research, writing, design, fabrication and installation of interpretation panels with visually interesting cut-out feature or base. Based on 5 panels @ \$5000 each.	25,000
Prime Minister Figures	Stainless steel silhouettes with etched illustration and text, installed with foundation. Cost is estimated @ \$20,000 each. Cost could be reduced by grouping figures	Up to 100,000
Banners	Banners and pole system for grounds. Banners will only be used seasonally. Wind challenges mean that custom support and mounting system is needed.	30,000
Discovery Cart	Mobile interpretive cart for outdoor interpretation.	20,000
Sub-Total: Grounds		\$195,000

Building		
Primary Exhibits	Complex exhibits for two exhibition rooms and Council visitor gallery with computer, AV and hands-on elements in custom cabinetry. 1200 square feet @ \$250/square foot.	300,000
Secondary Exhibits	Simple exhibit elements such as panels, flip books, welcome desk for lobby, corridors and press gallery. No AV or computer elements. 1000 square feet @ \$85/square foot.	85,000
Exhibit Display System	Custom mobile, modular exhibit system for changing exhibits in Council Chamber.	50,000
Audio-Visual Production	Video with actors re-enacting major events interspersed with historical images/footage and modern day interpretations. One 10-15 minute overview production and 1 to 3 minute audio and AV capsules for use in visitor gallery and exhibition media.	150,000
Audio-Visual Equipment (outside exhibit rooms)	For Assembly Gallery and Legislative Council —10 Listening stations @ \$1000 per station, 2 Video stations with touch screen interactives (\$4500 each) 2 large screen Video (@ \$7500 each)	35,000
Assembly Room Restoration Consultant	Consultant to specify restoration/replica requirements and cost estimates. Restoration costs cannot be estimated without this work.	10,000
Program supplies	Clothing accessories for school re-enactments plus props and program supplies	10,000
Costumes	Costumes/uniforms for staff. 10 @ \$3000 each	30,000
Sub-Total Building		\$670,000
Outreach		
Booklet	Take-home information booklet based on 16 pages (5" x 8") x 50,000 copies. Research/writing @ \$5000, design at \$10,000 and printing @ \$15,000.	30,000
School Kit	Travelling trunk with lesson plans, videos, class activities and hands on props for school classes outside of St. John's	20,000
Web Content	Web content about Colonial Building to be integrated into existing government site. Includes visitor information, historical information, photos, games, teacher resources.	15,000
Sub-Total Outreach		65,000
Contingency	15% of \$825,000	177,000
TOTAL		\$1,357,000

Colonial Building Interpretation — Operating Cost Projections

The proposed interpretive approach for the Colonial Building will rely heavily on staff. Staff will be needed year-round for programming that will keep the Colonial Building animated and dynamic.

Staff

Permanent

- 1 Site Manager
- 1 Education and Information Officer
(develops and gives school programs/tours, gives teacher workshops, prepares outreach and communications materials)
- 1 Programming Officer
(plans and coordinates changing events and programs, coordinates changing exhibits)

Seasonal

(For peak tourist season with outdoor programming)

- Team of 5 guides
(4 staff at peak times, 3 staff at others, seven days a week)

On Call

- guides/staff who can be called in for weekend events and reserved group visits from September to June

Contract

- Service contract with exhibit/AV technician

Operations

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| • Communications/PR | \$50,000 |
| • Programming | \$50,000 |
| • Program support | \$50,000 |

Budget of \$150,000 annually

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