

The Jewish Museum & Archives of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC



Introduction

The opening of the new Jewish Museum & Archives of British Columbia marks the realization of a dream.

The Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia (JHSBC) is devoted to collecting, preserving and making available collections relevant to BC's Jewish community. This new Museum realizes their dream as it facilitates community building, dialogue and understanding.

The design team of AldrichPears Associates, with Henriquez Partners Architects, Panther Management and Artcraft Display Graphics, worked in close collaboration with the JHSBC and members of the Jewish community. Together, we created an inspiring, memorable and visually-engaging museum that celebrates Jewish history and culture in BC.

Design Strategies

The design team used a number of strategies when creating the exhibit:

CREATING THEMES TO FOCUS THE STORY

By using the theme *deep roots and spreading branches* and the symbolic icon of a tree, we are able to highlight the common ancient practices and rituals within Jewish culture, while also illustrating how traditions continue to evolve and change. A section dedicated to "Creating Community" shows the importance of Jewish community-building throughout BC's history.

USING REAL STORIES AND VOICES

The exhibit effectively uses first-person narratives of Jewish community members in BC, and includes an audio presentation where visitors can listen to enlightening and heart-felt stories.

EMPLOYING A VARIETY OF MEDIA TO ENGAGE VISITORS

The exhibit media in the Museum are layered and multisensory; they include audio, graphics, artifacts and immersive environments. These media techniques are used to present many aspects of the community's unique history, providing fascinating personal anecdotes for interested visitors.

TELLING STORIES THROUGH PICTURES

Archival images and photographs, and large murals provide a strong sense of place bringing to life the individuals and events that helped shape BC's Jewish community.

USING COLOURS AND ICONS TO CELEBRATE JEWISH CULTURE

AldrichPears Associates uses bright colours and motifs found in Jewish art to convey the vibrancy of this community.

We mixed traditional art forms and aesthetics with today's design trends to give a modern twist to old roots—and to give the Museum a contemporary feel.

DEVELOPING SPACE FOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITS

The Museum's temporary exhibits space provides a venue for change. This space provides fresh experiences for returning visitors and allows the Museum to address current issues in the community.

ENCOURAGING VISITORS TO SHARE THEIR STORIES

Throughout the Museum, simple interactive displays provide visitors with opportunities to leave their own memories of cultural celebrations for future visitors. For example, they can also test their knowledge of aspects of Jewish culture and exchange recipes.

Conclusion

Members of the Jewish community in BC, AldrichPears and the other design team members worked collaboratively to create an engaging and memorable exhibit about the many different aspects of Jewish history and culture that have emerged in this province. We are proud to have participated in this celebration of our province's exciting and dynamic Jewish community.

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