



## Museum Expansion: A Whole New Start

A splendid new home is in the works for the excellent collection reflecting Bruce County's past.

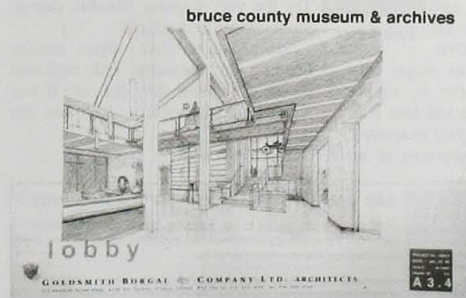
From tiny dressmakers' tools to gigantic farm implements, thousands of artifacts at the Bruce County Museum & Archives show us our heritage. Ancient fossils, First Nations beadwork, gleaming furniture, and intricate quilts all tell stories of the past. And now they will have an exciting future, as expanded display space showcases more of these treasures than the public has ever seen!

Bruce County Museum & Archives is embarking on a major reconstruction. Beyond renovations and upgrading, the project is regarded as "a whole new start" for the county-operated facility. "This will give the staff exhibition opportunities not currently available," says Mark Kraemer, chair of Bruce County Council's museum committee, and Mayor of the Town of Saugeen Shores which encompasses the Museum's Southampton location.

"It's very exciting to look forward to providing a great launching pad for creative exploration," he says. "The whole county is gaining in many areas, as the Museum becomes more user-friendly." An attraction for historians, filmmakers and family history researchers, Bruce County Museum & Archives brings visitors from all over Canada and the world to our area.

Why expansion? And why now?

The Bruce County Museum was established in 1955, largely at the prompting of Women's Institutes. Its first quarters, the former Public School in Southampton, a two-storey structure built in 1878, have become known as the museum's "largest artifact". It now houses six "permanent" galleries, a basement workshop and storage area. All of the present galleries will be dismantled, replaced in the new structure by larger, more open galleries, with an elevator



A rendering of the new Museum Lobby.

for better accessibility.

Its off-mainstreet neighbourhood includes institutional uses (churches, school, lawnbowling club, hospital) and residences, including homes overlooking picturesque Fairy

by Anne Judd



The log schoolhouse will be moved to the north of the 1878 building when the present Museum is dismantled.

Lake.

Since 1976, on the adjoining site of old Continuation School building, the Krug Wing has provided separate space for archives, reading room, offices, and a spacious hall for temporary exhibitions. "If it weren't for the Krug family, we would not be where we are today, a community museum respected for its exhibits and programs," says Museum Director/Curator Barbara Ribey.

Although museums preserve the past, they cannot remain static. They must respond to community needs, accessibility issues, and changing standards. For example, the environmental controls necessary to conserve documents and artifacts have been upgraded several times, but are below present specifications.

Municipal amalgamations in the late 1990s brought the need to preserve paper records from the County's former 31 towns, villages, and townships. At one time, such material might have gone to the Archives of Ontario, but recent direction emphasizes keeping documents in their originating locale. Where to put the hundreds of boxes of municipal records, minute books, and papers?

In 2002, Bruce County Council agreed with feasibility studies that showed the pressing need for an expanded Museum & Archives. The firm of Goldsmith, Borgal and Company Ltd., architects, has designed the new facility. They are the designers of such outstanding landmarks as the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa) and the renovated Huron County Museum (Goderich). Among their credits are more than 40 museum restorations or renovations, including some previous work at BCM & A.

### Old mingles with new

Christopher Borgal attended a recent information day at the Museum, and talked about the design. "The greatest challenge is the site," he said. "We wanted to work with the levels and shape of the property, yet not create a barrier between the street and Fairy Lake." He said the new design is meant to enhance the architectural values of the 1878 schoolhouse, by picking up themes, but not by replicating an "old" look. "We're using contemporary technology, and we're preserving some of the present elements." He pointed overhead to the massive beams in the exhibition hall: "those trusses can be cut, flipped vertically, and used in the new lobby."

Keeping and upgrading the 1878 schoolhouse, the new structure will cover 39,000 square feet in all, on approximately the same "footprint" as the current museum. That's 14,000 square feet more space than the existing