


Accessibility Assessment:

Art Gallery of Peterborough

December 5, 2013

A photograph of a family in a kitchen. A woman is standing and looking at a pot on the stove. A young girl is standing next to her, also looking at the pot. A man is sitting in a wheelchair behind them, looking on. The kitchen has a white countertop and a stainless steel sink.

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Contents

Who We Are _____ 3

Our solutions include: _____ 3

What is an Accessibility Assessment? _____ 4

Your needs assessment _____ 5

Summary Status for your building _____ 6

Recommendation summary _____ 8

Recommendation 1: Improve Emergency Evacuation capabilities _____ 9

Recommendation 2: Install an Elevator _____ 12

Recommendation 3: Improve way finding throughout the building _____ 15

Recommendation 4: Upgrade the washrooms in the building _____ 17

Recommendation 5: Upgrade the accessibility features in the stairs _____ 19

Recommendation 6: Make improvements to the Accessible Parking _____ 21

Recommendation 7: Review of building features and staff roles _____ 24

Recommendation 8: Upgrade the shelves in the gift shop and classroom _____ 25

Disclosure _____ 26

Who We Are



Adaptability Canada is a national provider of accessible solutions to the residential, commercial, non-profit and public sectors. Partnered with companies like Aecon, Adaptability Canada is the first company in the space to offer comprehensive accessible construction solutions that meet or exceed federal, provincial and municipal standards for accessibility.

Adaptability Canada and its partners are committed to the highest standards of quality and accountability for not just the solutions we deliver but also our responsibility to the community as a social company. This stretches from the guarantee on construction/renovation work by construction partners such as Aecon, to the equipment warranties, to the customer-centric service and our Pay it Forward approach to business where we attach a charitable donation to every project. Adaptability Canada is more than words; it's a promise and commitment to our customers to go above and beyond what's expected.

Our mission is simple – To improve the quality of life for Canadians at home, at work and in the community by enabling a barrier free society.


Our solutions include:

- Comprehensive Accessible Construction Solutions
- Accessible Equipment and Installation Services
- Accessible Assessments for Built Environment and Public Spaces
- Emergency Preparedness
- Self-Service Kiosk
- Ongoing Maintenance and Support

Adaptability Canada can be your One-Stop Shop;

Currently most companies have to source both equipment and construction services independently. In many circumstances, this also excludes engineering and design services creating a high risk and costly project management situation for the customer. Adaptability Canada is creating a business model whereby we offer comprehensive solutions for each of our sectors affording them not only a more convenient and easier buying and/or customer experience, but the ability to ensure affordable quality and timely completion of every project.

What is an Accessibility Assessment?



An accessibility assessment is a review of the physical environment of your organization in a specific location or set of locations to give you an understanding of where you stand in relation to current and upcoming accessible legislation so that you can better plan your budgets into the coming years. It begins with the creation of a customer profile and needs assessment to better help us understand the nature of your organization and any specific concerns you may have regarding accessibility in your organization. It then involves an onsite visit from our trained assessors who will review the physical environment, taking measurements, making notes about specific features and taking pictures as needed in order to create this report which details our findings of the existing state of your physical environment along with our specific recommendations regarding which projects to pursue to achieve your accessibility goals for your organization and ensure you have a plan in place to achieve compliance with the appropriate AODA standards that affect your organization.

The following standards have been considered with regards to the physical environment in order to prepare this report:

- General Requirements
- Customer Service Standard
- Employment Standard
- Information and Communication Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Design of Built Environment Standard (Draft)

All information collected by our assessors is confidential and only used by Adaptability Canada to assist you. At no time will any of this information be provided to any third party without your consent.

Your needs assessment



In preparing this assessment, Adaptability Canada has taken into account the following needs of your organization as we understand them.

- 1) To conduct a full evaluation of the current level of accessibility of the physical environment of the Art Gallery of Peterborough
- 2) To make recommendations to improve the overall accessibility, usability and safety of the current building in order to assist the decision making process about future projects undertaken by the city of Peterborough with regards to the Art Gallery

Summary Status for your building



To demonstrate the current state of your building we have developed a grading system where we assign a letter from A – F based on the number and severity of the issues we observed in your building.



An 'A' grade indicates we found no issues in your building and no work is required in this area.



A 'B' grade indicates we found a few minor issues but nothing that requires major work in this area.



A 'C' grade indicates we found issues that should be addressed that represent some risk to your organization or render some areas inaccessible to those with special needs.



A 'D' grade indicates we found major issues or areas that need improvement that represent significant risk to your organization or substantial challenges for those with special needs with regards to accessibility.



An 'F' grade indicates complete non-compliance, major safety issues and/or an environment that is prohibitive to use by those with special needs with regards to accessibility.



A '?' grade indicates there was not enough information available to properly assign a rating for a particular feature or building.



Safety Status:

Any issues within the safety assessment represent the most significant and immediate risks for your organization. Most organizations will receive a high grade for their safety assessment as these are the things that are top of mind and typically there are plans in place to deal with any potential safety issues within your building.



Compliance Status:

Any compliance concerns should be prioritized according to the current versus upcoming legislation and built into an accessibility plan that will focus your efforts in the months and years to come. By acknowledging the issues and prioritizing projects to deal with the issues you will develop a culture that easily adapts to legislative changes and ensure any investments in your physical property align to the service of people of any ability.



Service Status:

This is the area most organizations will fall short due to an outdated way of approaching the subject matter. The good news is that by contacting Adaptability Canada you've already taken the first major step. This is an area which may not be covered under current or upcoming compliance standards, but may represent an opportunity for you to improve your customer service through improved accessibility. This area may open up new business opportunities within the disabled community or help to market you as a leader in the steps you take to provide inclusive services throughout your organization. As more legislation is passed in the future there may be items that are currently marked within the service section that may become compliance issues moving forward. We will be sure to keep you notified of any such changes in legislation.

Recommendation summary



Our recommendations for improving accessibility and usability at the art gallery of Peterborough were arrived at with a view to enhancing future enjoyment of the existing facility. The original building presents many challenges for accessibility now and in the future but we have tried to suggest a mixture of small projects which could be implemented in the near future to improve the facility, as well as some larger projects that should be considered as alternatives to finding a new location or rebuilding the entire facility.

Recommendations

1. Improve Emergency Evacuation Capabilities.
2. Install an Elevator.
3. Improve way finding throughout the building.
4. Upgrade the washrooms in the building.
5. Upgrade the accessibility features in the stairs.
6. Make improvements to the Accessible Parking.
7. Conduct a review of building features and staff roles.
8. Upgrade the shelving in the gift shop and classroom.

Recommendation 1: Improve Emergency Evacuation capabilities



Observation: There is no evacuation chair or other evacuation assist device to aid the safe removal of patrons from the 2nd floor classroom area.

Classification: Safety issue

Rating: D

Supporting Data

Front Stairway:

Other than the ramp, there are two main staircases. The first is located in the original section of the building (north end). This spiral wood staircase is 3'2" wide and what is unique about this staircase is that it is spiral and makes a full 180 degree turn at the halfway point in a span of 8'8". Any consideration for purchase of emergency evacuation equipment would require specific measurements to be taken to ensure that any of the emergency devices used to carry the disabled down these staircases in the event of an emergency would be able to make that turn. The turning radius may also deter the installation of devices such as a chairlift. This staircase leads from the main to the second level only.



Original Building – Spiral Wood
Staircase

Emergency/Main Stairwell:

The second staircase located just off the main entrance extends to all three levels. This is an emergency exit, is well lit, wide and in good repair. The stairwell has 5 landings and provides ample space for the manoeuvring of emergency devices to help the disabled out in case of an emergency. The stairwell has one handrail that is made of wood with steel rods for the banister.



Emergency/Main Stairwell

The stairs are commercial grade broadloom and there are no threshold impediments.

Detailed Recommendation:

The upstairs classroom area has only the ramp access as a means of accessible entry and exit from the 2nd floor. In the event of an emergency where the ramp was blocked off there would be a need for assisting those with mobility issues to exit the building via one of the two available stairwells. In order for staff to successfully assist in this process an evacuation chair needs to be purchased to ensure safe exit for all patrons on the 2nd floor. In addition, it would be helpful to purchase a portable ramp to assist with safe exit of the building via either the front or back doors from the gift shop/meeting area as both areas would require assistance for those with mobility issues to exit and a portable ramp could help decrease the time taken to exit the building in an emergency.

Recommendation 2: Install an Elevator



Observation: The central ramp system that provides access to the various levels presents a challenge for those with special needs due to the overall length of the ramp and the location of various features in the building.

Classification: Service

Rating: D

Supporting Data:

The building does not have an elevator.

The current ramp configuration takes up just over 800 square feet of area per level.



Ramp

Ramp

The ramps are concrete and span the width of the modernist wing of the AGP. The ramp and landings are 80’ long and 4’9” in width, hand rail to hand rail. The handrail is solid wood type. There is artwork exhibited on the walls of the ramp which places the pieces in very close proximity to the guests and difficult for those in wheelchairs to stop on the sloped portion to admire the works. Resting spots were noted on the ramp and the slope is 3.5 degrees. The

ramps are the only way for a disabled person in a wheelchair to get from the second level to the bathrooms on the lower level or in the office area, through the gift shop, on the main level.

The ramps have low plush commercial grade carpet which does not impede wheelchairs.

Detailed Recommendation:

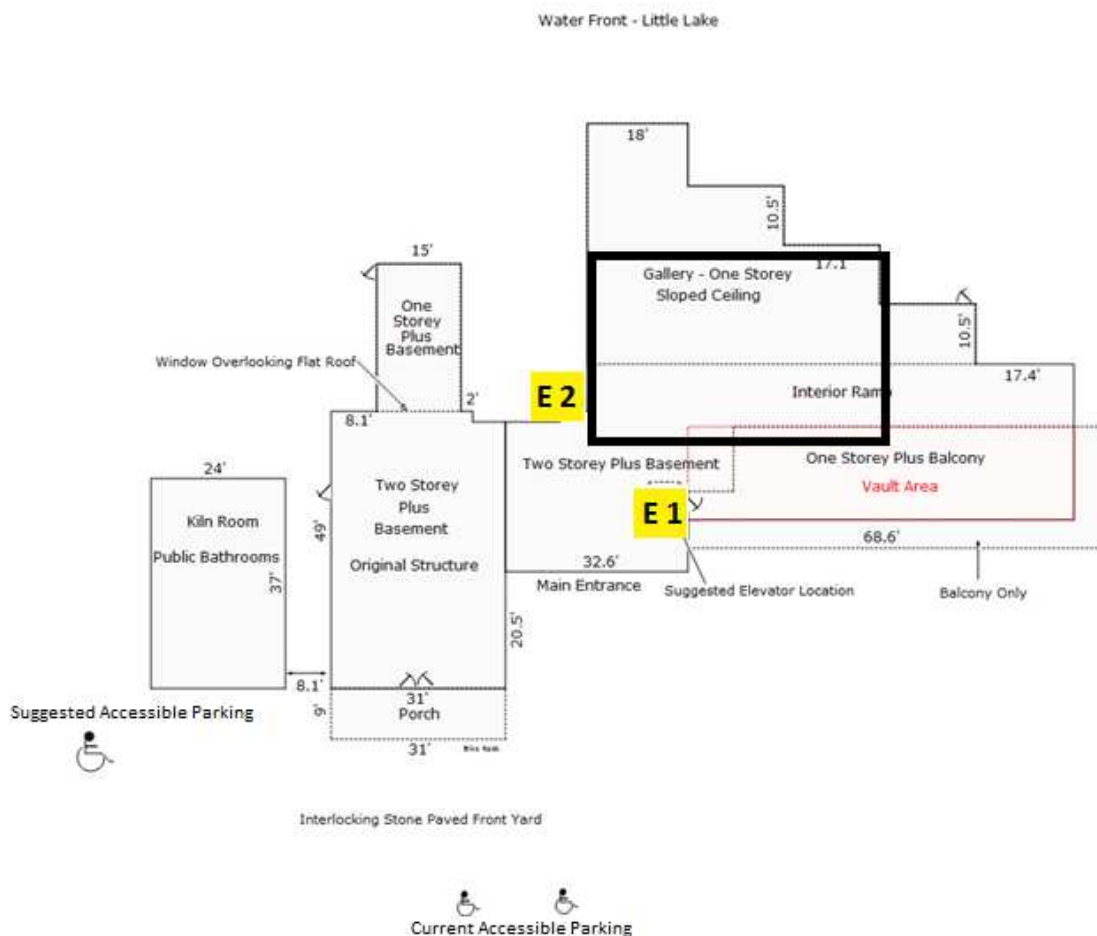
The overall length of the ramp and the placement of the washrooms on the main and lower levels of the building turn one of the best accessibility features in the building into a negative point. An individual in a wheelchair using the upstairs classroom area that needs to use the washroom could have to travel approximately 1000 feet to travel to the lower level washrooms and back to rejoin his/her class. If they were attempting to go to the main floor washrooms they would be faced with a challenge to use them since the main floor washrooms have 29" doorways. In order to improve overall access to features in the building and travel time to get to the various parts of the gallery we recommend the installation of an elevator that would access all three floors. We've identified three options to consider for this project.

See the image on the next page for clarity of these options.

Option 1 (E1): Add an internal elevator to the right of the main entrance to the building in the area where the coat rack currently exists.

Option 2 (E2): Place external mounted elevator directly across from the main entrance so you were facing it as you came through the front door. This would require attaching a new elevator shaft to the outside of the building such that it would become part of the building structure where the motorcycle artwork is currently located. This would cut off some visibility of the lake when you first come in but would maintain the site lines from the gift shop meeting area and would provide access to each of the floors without removing existing floor space from the building.

Option 3 (E3): In conjunction with either E1 or E2 an additional recommendation is to undertake a major retrofit project to remove the ramp system in favour of extending the gallery floor area. With the addition of an elevator described in the first two options the ramp system would no longer be necessary. While this project would be extensive it would open up several options for expanding the floor space available in the gallery thereby allowing for more exhibits to come through and providing more enjoyable access to the artwork currently housed along the ramp. If the option was considered to reclaim the space used by the ramp and use an elevator it would also open up the option for an architectural review of including a partial main floor gallery area by using space over top of the current gallery area and the space currently occupied by the ramp. The box on the image illustrates the potential for additional main floor gallery space if reclaiming the ramp



area as described above.

Recommendation 3: Improve way finding throughout the building



Observation 1: The descriptions of the various pieces of art are difficult to read due to small text size and poor contrast with the wall behind them. Some are also problematic due to the height they have been placed at.

Classification: Service

Rating: D

Observation 2: The placement and size of artwork along the ramp makes it difficult for people of all capabilities to properly enjoy the displays and completely prohibits comfortable viewing by those with wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, etc.

Classification: Service

Rating: C

Observation 3: The building lacks proper signage to indicate where features within the building are located.

Classification: Compliance

Rating: C

Observation 4: The ramped floor in the gift shop is a steep enough slope to require tonally contrasted edging to identify where the change in floor level occurs and this is currently lacking.

Classification: Compliance

Rating: C

Supporting Data:

The lack of proper way finding is prevalent throughout the building. To review in more detail please refer to Appendix 1 and take note of all photographs within the building.

Detailed Recommendation:

We recommend a thorough overhaul of Way Finding within the building to improve overall safety and the gallery experience. For safety, we would recommend better signage to navigate the building including finding accessible washrooms, clearly marked paths to exits, and photo-luminescent safety strips for stairs and changes in elevation within the gallery such as the ramp within the gift shop - as outlined in the proposed built environment standard. From a gallery experience perspective, we recommend changes to increase text size of art descriptions and other permanent text-based communications as well improving the contrast of signage and the background around it improve recognition and readability. Depending on the level you wish to take this to, this project could also include modern features that would allow those with assist devices to connect and get access to maps, directions and descriptions of the art via audible way-finding technology.

Recommendation 4: Upgrade the washrooms in the building



Observation: The washrooms on the lower level lack proper space, automatic door openers, and accessibility features to be considered accessible washrooms

Classification: Compliance

Rating: D

Observation 2: The washrooms on the main floor lack proper width doors to enter, are not equipped with Automatic Door Openers and require upgrades/changes to the accessibility features to be considered fully accessible washrooms

Classification: Compliance

Rating: D

Supporting Data

While at first glance efforts have been made to add accessibility features to the washrooms, there are issues with each of them that effectively render them inaccessible. The two washrooms on the main floor have doorways which are 29 inches wide which makes entering and exiting the washrooms a challenge. The lower level washrooms have very little space for maneuvering in the washroom and have challenging entries as well. A more detailed description of each washroom as well as pictures of each can be found in Appendix 1 starting on Page 15.

Detailed Recommendation:

The washrooms throughout the art gallery need to be modified to bring them up to the new built environment standard. The lower level washrooms need to be expanded in size to properly accommodate those in wheelchairs or using other assist devices. Further review is required to determine feasibility, however, our suggestion is to look at moving the janitor closet located between the two washroom areas to a different part of the building and/or expanding backwards to take over some of the basement storage area under the original building. In addition to expanding the overall space, each washroom should be accessed with an automatic door opener, sinks should either have touch free faucets or levered handles in all cases. Each washroom should have soap dispensers, towel dispensers or dryers and garbage containers that are set at proper heights to be accessible for all patrons. The upper level washrooms should be combined into one new family washroom with full accessibility features applied. A new wider door that uses an Automatic Door Opener needs to be built here. Special attention needs to be given to equipping the room with features usable by all patrons. Currently the garbage in one of these is a foot pedal operated garbage. This should be removed and replaced with a more suitable container.

Recommendation 5: Upgrade the accessibility features in the stairs



Observation: Stairs in the building only have a handrail on one side instead of on both.

Classification: Compliance

Rating: C

Supporting Data:

Emergency/Main Stairwell:

The second staircase located just off the main entrance extends to all three levels. This is an emergency exit, is well lit, wide and in good repair. The stairwell has 5 landings and provides ample space for the manoeuvring of emergency devices to help the disabled out in case of an emergency. The stairwell has one handrail that is made of wood with steel rods for the banister.



Emergency/Main Stairwell

The stairs are commercial grade broadloom

Detailed Recommendation:

As part of the proposed accessible built environment standard, stairs are required to have railings on both sides set at a minimum height of 34" and a maximum height of 38". At a minimum, the emergency exit stairs in the modern section of the building should have an extra railing added at the appropriate height. It may not be feasible to add additional railings to the stairs in the older section of the building but it may be a good idea to limit use of those stairs to attempt to ensure patrons are using the new exit stairs where you can ensure they are using proper features.

Recommendation 6: Make improvements to the Accessible Parking



Observation: At the time of the assessment the sidewalks and pathways from the designated Accessible Parking were snow and ice covered and represent a danger for anyone trying to park there and enter the building.

Classification: Service

Rating: D

Observation 2: The currently designated Accessible parking spots are not clearly marked.

Classification: Compliance

Rating: C

Supporting Data:

There is restrictive parking located immediately in front of the detached structure on the north side of the building. This parking is designated for the staff of the AGP and is not public parking.

The grounds immediately in front of the AGP consist of interlocking brick and are used for pedestrian traffic only. There are no designated accessible parking spots on the property.

There are two accessible designated parking spots on the road immediately in front of the AGP. At the time of the assessment the spots were not cleared of snow and were icy. The curb is not well marked.



Current staff parking/possible alternate Accessible parking location



Designated Accessible Street Parking

The predominant parking for the patrons of the AGP is located in a public paid parking facility immediately northwest of the AGP which has designated Accessible parking spots.

Detailed Recommendation:

We recommend one of two options for the accessible parking spots. The preferred option is to relocate the accessible parking to the area currently used for staff parking in front of the outbuilding that houses the kiln. Staff parking could either be reserved in the Del Crary Park lot or perhaps at the south end of the building by the loading dock. Proper signs and painting for these spots would be required as well as repositioning the bike rack at the front of the building to clear a direct path to the front entrance. Alternatively, the other option is to leave the accessible parking spots where they are but to move the parking spot signs closer to the road to clearly indicate the spots, paint the spots on the road so it is clear that those spots are not part of the roadway at the front but are designated parking spots and review the city and art gallery maintenance plans to ensure that the area is being cleared of snow and ice during winter months to ensure a clear path of access to the art gallery.

Recommendation 7: Review of building features and staff roles



Observation: From a staffing perspective, the offices, kitchen and other staff rooms and features are largely inaccessible including offices that have doors that are too small, no space to easily move about and shelves and cupboards that are unable to be used by those with mobility issues.

Classification: Compliance

Rating: D

Supporting Data:

The issues with accessibility for staff are prevalent throughout the building. Some examples are the kitchen area and the excessively small office entries on the second floor where some doorways are as little as 24" wide. To review in more detail please refer to Appendix 1 and take note of all photographs within the building.

Detailed Recommendation:

The building as a whole provides major challenges should you have any staff that have special needs. This may turn into a serious compliance issue for you should the situation arise. We recommend a review of the staff you currently have and their roles to determine any areas of concern within the roles where they could not conduct their job within the confines of the current building. As well, a review of the office areas, to determine which walls are structural and/or could be removed or remodeled as required to create more open concept offices with more ability to move about in them. Our view is that this building is not inherently suitable for staff with special needs, however, careful planning and accommodation could ensure that you would be able to employ individuals with all types of abilities.

Recommendation 8: Upgrade the shelves in the gift shop and classroom

Observation: The shelving for gifts and other supplies in the gift shop, the adjoining meeting room and the upstairs classroom in many places have the lower shelves right on the floor which can present challenges for many in trying to access the items on those shelves.

Classification: Service

Rating: C

Supporting Data:



Detailed Recommendation:

We recommend that any resources or merchandise on shelving units in the gift shop, meeting and classroom areas should be at accessible heights being raised off the floor a minimum of 12 to 18 inches off the ground and no higher than 48 inches to achieve optimum display and access. This would apply to art supplies, lockers, retail shelving, and media/book/magazine shelving. Furthermore, all labels or signs for resources or merchandise should align to the standards previously mentioned with regard to font size and contrast with background to ensure maximum readability.

Disclosure



The information contained in this report is for information only and is not intended to provide legal advice regarding the decisions or rulings made by the AODA and should not be relied on as such. Adaptability Canada has reviewed your physical environment as it pertains to AODA regulations and the accessibility portion of the Building Code of Ontario (section 3.8) in accordance with the needs assessment provided to us by your organization. The findings in this report are the opinions of Adaptability Canada Corporation staff and are based solely on the information found in this document under the detailed findings section and our interpretation of the regulations listed above. Any changes to your building after the date of onsite assessment render this assessment incomplete and therefore potentially inaccurate. Adaptability Canada Corporation does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information provided in this report. This assessment does not obligate you to move forward with any specific recommendation. The execution of any particular recommendation does not guarantee a particular level of compliance with any regulations. The actual level of compliance to any applicable regulations will be determined by the plans, permits, and other documentation necessary to properly complete any construction job whether based on accessibility or not. The information used to evaluate your property is based on various sources believed to be reliable but its accuracy cannot be guaranteed and is subject to change without notice. While we have attempted to assist you by categorizing areas of concern, you may not agree with our findings or you may be in possession of additional information which negates our findings. You should review the information in our Detailed Findings section to ensure you agree with the information we gathered as a means of creating this report and providing recommendations.

The execution of projects recommended in this report may constitute an “extensive renovation” as described in part 11 of the Ontario Building Code and therefore create a need for you to undertake other projects not referenced in this report in order to maintain compliance with the Building Code. Architectural drawings and building permits (where required) should be used to determine the full extent of these requirements.

Adaptability Canada and its partners are not responsible for any damages or losses arising from any use of this information.