

**Heritage Interpreter Training Program**  
**Britannia National Historic Site**  
**Request for Proposals**

**Project Purpose:** to develop and deliver a training program that incorporates best practice for the interpretation of Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site.

**Background:** Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site (Britannia Shipyards) is one of six heritage sites owned by the City of Richmond in Steveston. Britannia Shipyards' vision and mission are:

***Vision Statement** - Britannia Shipyards is an outstanding national historic site that inspires a lasting connection to Canada's west coast maritime heritage.*

***Mission Statement** - Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site preserves west coast maritime heritage with an emphasis on local wooden boat building traditions and the cultural mosaic and living conditions of the people who worked on the Steveston waterfront. This unique heritage park provides engaging interpretation and innovative programs that respond to changing community needs.*

Britannia Shipyards is part of a 3km stretch of shoreline known collectively as Cannery Channel, extending from Garry Point in the west to London Farm in the east. The main Britannia Shipyard building was constructed in 1889 as the Britannia Cannery. Owned by the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd (ABC), it was among fifteen canneries operating along Cannery Channel in addition to hundreds of other industrial structures associated with canning, fishing and boatbuilding.

In the early days of salmon canning, canneries employed an ethnically diverse labour force, with different groups often working and living separately. The Britannia workforce included European, Japanese, Chinese and Indigenous workers, many of whom were housed on the site. Indigenous people came from along the BC coast to work for the canneries.

Beginning in 1901, the salmon output of canneries along the Fraser River went into a slow decline. This decrease was due to overfishing, greater competition from other canneries, and a devastating rockslide in 1912. In 1917-18, Britannia was converted into a shipyard and maritime repair facility for the ABC Packing Co. Ltd.'s fleet of fishing boats. During the 1930s, other significant boat building facilities were added to the site including the Murakami Boat Works and the Richmond Boat Builders run by Saeji Kishi. Both of these operations changed ownership in 1942 during Japanese Internment and Dispossession.

After the Second World War, many site buildings were torn down or relocated. Britannia Shipyards focused instead on fishing gear storage and vessels under repair. In 1969, the Canadian Fishing Company purchased the Britannia Shipyard. Ten years later, BC Packers purchased the property and officially shut down operations by 1980. After sitting empty for a number of years, the site was donated to the City of Richmond and designated a national historic site with the purpose of sharing Steveston's fishing industry heritage with the public.

**Operations:** Today, Britannia Shipyards has a sampling of industrial and residential heritage buildings joined together by a wooden boardwalk that parallels the Fraser River. The site is porous, allowing visitors to enter without admission from a number of locations. Many casual visitors enjoy walking through the site and engaging with available interpretation at a cursory level, while others choose to enter each building and fully immerse themselves in the site's experience. For more details visit: <https://britanniashipyards.ca>

Britannia Shipyards is open daily in the summer months, and most days throughout the rest of the year. Annual visitation to the site is over 80,000 visitors including tourists from regional, national and international points of origin. Visitors are of varying ages and varying degrees of proficiency in English.

Heritage Interpreters support the public to learn about Britannia's complex history. At peak season, the site has over 20 Heritage Interpreter staff with as many as six on site per day. The range of in-person interpretation offered at Britannia Shipyards by Heritage Interpreters includes:

- providing building or zone interpretation to drop-in visitors year round;
- leading a ticketed 1-hour tour of the site for the general public;
- leading a 2-hour river boat tour during the summer months; and
- offering heritage demonstrations and cultural activities relevant to the site during high season and special events.

The Steveston Heritage Sites Interpretive Framework (found [HERE](#)) guides the interpretation of four City-operated sites in Steveston, including Britannia Shipyards. The plan outlines interpretive themes and target audiences for the sites and drives the development of stories and interpretative strategies aimed at improving inclusivity and the visitor experience.

### **Goals for the Heritage Interpreter Training Program**

- Develop interpreters who can effectively engage with diverse audiences;
- Develop interpreters who can confidently and effectively deploy a variety of interpretive techniques to navigate complex histories;
- Enable interpreters to foster visitor connections to, and exploration of, Britannia's interpretive themes; and
- Encourage best practices for heritage interpretation.

### **Outcomes for the Heritage Interpreter Training Program**

Upon successful completion of this training program, Interpreters will demonstrate:

An understanding of:

- the purpose and principles of heritage interpretation;
- Britannia Shipyards complex cultural history; and,
- diverse ways of learning and its impact on the visitor experience.

The ability to:

- effectively engage with a wide variety of audiences;
- use and adapt a variety of interpretative methods to fit the needs of the visitor;
- employ public speaking techniques;
- manage group dynamics; and

- navigate sensitive historical subjects with confidence.

## **Deliverables**

Develop a training program to support the delivery of the heritage programming currently offered at Britannia Shipyards as described above. This program will include the following:

1. Produce a comprehensive training package which can be used on an on-going basis to train Heritage Interpreters. This includes two rounds of review with Britannia staff.
2. Develop a training program including agendas, lesson plans, and training materials.
3. Using the new training package, facilitate a training program for two cohorts of heritage interpreters 1) current staff, and 2) new staff. At least one training session must be delivered in-person for each cohort.
4. Develop and deliver an evaluation program that sets goals and standards for training program success. This includes two rounds of review with Britannia staff.
5. Complete individual evaluations for up to 25 interpreters and provide an in-person debrief with Britannia leadership staff.

## **Timeline**

Typically, the City does an intake of new Heritage Interpreters each April with extensive training taking place in May. We expect that new Heritage Interpreters be able to provide basic interpretive services independently by July that same year. Depending on their skill level at the time of hiring, some may be ready to deliver more complex tours and programs by this time.

To support this hiring, the following training timeline is preferred:

- Final resource materials to be developed by March 8, 2024
- Training of cohort 1 to take place between March 25 and April 19, 2024
- Training of cohort 2 to take place between April 22 and May 17, 2024
- Final evaluation materials to be developed by June 7, 2024
- Evaluation and debrief to take place between June 10 and June 28, 2024

## **Submission Package**

The Request for Proposal (RFP) package should include the following items:

- Cover letter
- CV with professional experience
- A short narrative describing the project approach
- Key elements of the proposed training program
- Detailed work plan
- Detailed project budget specifying consultant fees, travel, supplies, etc.

**Deadline:** January 7, 2024

## **Project Contact:**

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