



ANIMATING HISTORIC SITES

2025 Participating Sites & Descriptions

This document provides details on the participating sites: [Toronto History Museums](#) (Gibson House, Montgomery's Inn, Scarborough Museum, Spadina Museum, Todmorden Mills) and [Black Creek Pioneer Village](#).

You can apply to program only one site or museum. The proposal must clearly demonstrate why you are applying to work at a specific site, which might include personal or artistic connection to the site or the surrounding communities, interest in particular stories of the site, architectural or natural site specificity of the proposed project, etc. The compelling applications are usually those directly responding to or interpreting the site, rather than adapting existing projects to be presented at the site.

Consultation with the site staff and/or site visit are strongly recommended prior to applying.

Toronto History Museums

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Toronto History Museums](#) are a collection of 10 historic sites owned and operated by the City of Toronto with the mission to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance the understanding of Toronto's diverse stories through engaging and exciting experiences.

Our Stories

Toronto's many pasts, presents and futures meet at our museums. The histories you'll experience here are not tales penned by a select few. They are stories written and told by the many who shape them. They are as diverse as the perspectives and experiences of our people – and we are many.

See amazing and appalling things. Taste sweet and bitter flavours. Hear laughter and lament. Touch the silky and the prickly edges of our history. Meet us at the intersection of countless viewpoints. Leave us inspired about this place we call Toronto.

We invite all applicants to review the below information for inspiration and consideration when developing project proposals.

Participating sites:

Gibson House, Montgomery's Inn, Spadina Museum, Scarborough Museum, Todmorden Mills

TORONTO HISTORY MUSEUMS PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

Existing Programming

The Toronto History Museums are busy and vibrant community spaces that cumulatively attract approximately 350,000 visitors annually through varied programs and uses. High season is typically May through December with the expectation that both the outdoor grounds and indoor spaces will be animated through programs, clients, and partners at various times. Museum staff are committed to working closely with artists to ensure that both project needs, and site operational needs are met. Artists should discuss

their proposed projects with the museums' site leads prior to submitting their proposals.

Typical museum programming may include:

- Daily general public tours of the museums, both indoors and outdoors
- Daily school programs, both indoors and outdoors
- Public programs and special events, both indoors and outdoors
- Children's camp programs with dedicated spaces, both indoors and outdoors, for PA Days, March Break, and Monday through Friday throughout the summer
- Youth and public programs on Thursday evenings at specific museums
- Farmer's Market program, indoors or outdoors
- Commercial photography and filming, both indoors and outdoors
- Large-scale special events with partners occurring at various times of the year, both indoors and outdoors
- Pre-booked community theatre performances and community artist exhibitions
- Weddings and other rentals, both indoors and outdoors. Peak outdoor wedding season runs from June to September and is most frequent on the Spadina Museum grounds.

ARTIST CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable Principles

We highly encourage artists to consider the environment and ways they can promote or support sustainability within their project. From incorporating up-cycled, sustainably-sourced or salvaged materials, to using energy-efficient fabrication methods, to using only natural light in a performance, we encourage artists to use their creativity to program more sustainably while maintaining their level of artistic quality.

Space Usage

Please note that access to the City of Toronto History Museum spaces will be subject to scheduling considerations to accommodate existing programs and third-party events. Please take the following into consideration when formulating your proposal:

- **Use of outdoor and indoor space will need to take into account** season, location and activities onsite, including previously booked programs outlined above. Outdoor noise restrictions, including the prohibition of amplified sound, apply to some sites. Other outdoor restrictions may apply. The grounds of some sites may be accessed by the public after hours. Space usage will be subject to public health restrictions at the time when the project is taking place, if any.
- **Exhibition/installation:** Details of exhibitions and installations will need to be developed in consultation with the museum staff to ensure they meet health and safety and building conservation requirements.

Accessibility

The nature of the historic buildings at Toronto History Museums means that each site has a different level of accessibility. The sites have good public accessibility but there may be some areas that are not fully accessible. Please discuss a site's accessibility with site staff to understand how it will impact your project.

Additional Costs

After-hours use of space, rehearsal spaces, etc. are additional costs that are the responsibility of the artist. AV, event set-up, refreshments, etc. must all be discussed with museum staff in advance. Installations requiring daily activation (on & off) by museum staff may be subject to a charge of \$25/day. We encourage the use of approved appliance timers. Additional supervision, security or other staffing requirements of the artist will be the responsibility of the artists and must be arranged in close communication with the museum staff. Staffing charges of \$37/hour per staff person, with a minimum requirement of 2 staff on site, may

apply for use of the space outside regular museum opening hours.

Productions & Opening events

Art openings and productions at the museums are intimate and unplugged. Museum staff can consult with artists to discuss the best options based on your vision and budget, and the impact of any public health guidelines.

Features subject to fees include:

- Opening event set-up, tear down and cleaning
- Event security
- Furniture rentals
- Table linens
- Staff supervision
- Additional museum staff (to be determined with Site Lead if this is required)

TORONTO HISTORY MUSEUMS LOCATIONS

Gibson House (North York)

Return to a home you never knew you missed with a visit to Gibson House, a 19th-century farmhouse hidden between the high rises of North York. Step across the threshold and back in time to the 1850s kitchen. Feel welcomed by the warm aroma of wood smoke and beeswax. Explore how David Gibson—Scottish immigrant, land surveyor, farmer, politician and rebel—put his mark on a community, a city, and the province.

Gibson House offers visitors an opportunity to taste, smell and touch history in a way that few other museums can. Let your senses come alive in this engaging historical family home. Gibson House recognizes the complex settler colonial history and, beginning in 2022, is working with Indigenous partners and staff to tell this story through an Indigenous lens.

Historical significance

The Gibson House Museum, a two-storey red brick Georgian Revival farmhouse located on land that was acquired by the Gibson family in 1829, reflects the prominent status of the Gibson family within the local community. The wood frame house David and Eliza Gibson lived in until 1837, was burned to the ground by the militia because of David's role in the Upper Canada Rebellion, forcing the family to flee to the United States. The building that now stands was constructed in 1851 after David was pardoned and the family returned to Willowdale. David and Eliza's son Peter Silas Gibson took over the family home and lived here with his family until 1916. Gibson House is one of a small number of 19th century rural farmhouses that survived the city's expansion and urban development of North York in the 20th century.

Address: 5172 Yonge St, Toronto, ON M2N 5P6

Contact: Pailagi Pandya, Pailagi.Pandya@toronto.ca, 416-395-7432

Montgomery's Inn (Etobicoke)

Built in the 1830s to shelter travellers, Montgomery's Inn brought people together from the surrounding area and beyond, over food, drink, games, and more. More than 170 years later, it's still doing just that. This lively museum gives visitors the opportunity to see how a 19th-century Canadian inn was run from ballroom to bedrooms, with a kitchen and bar still in full working order.

Go behind the scenes and hear the diverse stories of people who traversed the grounds, from Chinese market gardeners to Joshua Glover, an employee who escaped his enslavement in the United States through the Underground Railroad.

Come for the history, stay for the pub nights, ghost stories, live music, dancing, and more. Weekly farmers markets bring neighbours together over freshly-baked bread and seasonal fruits and vegetables; while Sunday teas, hearth cooking demonstrations and community art exhibits offer a wider range of experiences that look at the past, present, and future of the neighbourhood.

Historic significance

Constructed in stages in the 1830s for the Irish immigrant Thomas Montgomery and his wife, Margaret (née Dawson), the inn operated as a hotel, tavern, and family residence during Thomas' lifetime, and was subsequently used as a farmhouse, church, and a community hall until the mid-twentieth century. The inn was an important stopping place for travellers and local patrons, providing food, drink, goods, overnight lodgings, and space for public events and meetings. Montgomery's Inn was once part of a larger property, traces of which survive on the modern landscape. The site comprises an extensive archaeological record that includes artefacts discovered during excavations in the twentieth century.

Address: 4709 Dundas St W, Toronto, ON M9A 1A8

Contact: Florencia Berinstein, Florencia.Berinstein@toronto.ca, 416-396-5454

Scarborough Museum (Scarborough)

Nestled in the heart of Thomson Memorial Park are the four heritage buildings that make up Scarborough Museum. This is where one vibrant community celebrates its diverse past, present, and future.

History and daily life come together in an engaging community space that has become the heart of the park. Hear stories, new and old, that have shaped the ever-changing community of Scarborough. Whether visiting for weekend festivals, summer evening activities, day camps, or youth programs, there is something for everyone's tastes.

Feel the warmth of the fire in an old hearth, taste freshly-baked goods, be immersed in the Indigenous garden and murals or join one of the many culinary events. Learn how Scarborough developed from land farmed by Indigenous peoples and settlers to a major suburb of North America's fourth largest city. Discover more about the city and help build another chapter in the story of this vibrant community.

Historic significance

Scarborough Museum was established in the hamlet of Bendale, part of the historic Thomson Settlement. This was the first permanent settlement in the township and is recognized as a culturally significant district by the Ontario Heritage Trust. Located within a significant natural landscape, the area has attracted many human populations over time, including nomadic Indigenous groups who inhabited the area centuries before the arrival of European settlers. The Museum is located near the historic Highland Creek and is also close to two notable Indigenous archaeological sites: Haudenosaunee Village at Birkdale Ravine to the west and Tabor Hill Ossuary to the east.

Scarborough Museums welcomes open air summer programming from any arts discipline.

Address: 1007 Brimley Rd, Toronto, ON M1P 3E8

Contact: Pailagi Pandya, Pailagi.Pandya@toronto.ca, 416-395-7432

Spadina Museum: Historic House & Gardens (Midtown)

Spadina Museum, named from an Anishinaabemowin word *ishpadina* ("highland" or "ridge"), sits atop a ravine overlooking Toronto. Today this dazzling mansion is a portal into the triumphs and tribulations of Toronto from 1900 to the 1930s. Get a glimpse into this era through the perspective of the affluent Austin family and the people who worked in service within their home.

If the lush gardens, lavish furniture, and beautiful decor could talk, they would speak of a grand life of galas and garden parties, the pain of losing loved ones to sickness and war, the harsh reality of a worker's life and the new technologies that completely transformed society during a time of great change. The splendour of Spadina Museum is as much a feast for the eyes as it is an invitation to discuss how a city and its people adapted during an era of disruption and change.

Historical significance

The first Spadina House was built by the Baldwin family in 1818. When James Austin acquired the property in 1866, the second Baldwin Spadina was demolished, leaving the foundation to be incorporated into the Austin Spadina. This house was renovated and enlarged by the second generation of Austins, who built a north addition in 1898 and a 3rd floor in 1912/1913. The property also contains an earlier Baldwin structure,

formerly the stable and gardener's cottage; a working greenhouse; and a garage which also housed the chauffeur and his family. The Austin family members were involved with Consumer's Gas, the Dominion Bank, and many cultural and social organizations including The Canadian Women's Art Association of Toronto, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Lambton Golf and Country Club.

Spadina Museum has a number of possible indoor programming spaces and features large grounds, garden, and a beautiful surrounding landscape for open air programming. Availability may be limited due to commercial bookings, so please discuss your project with us before you begin your application.

Address: 285 Spadina Rd, Toronto, ON M5R 2V5

Contact: Alexandra Kim, Alexandra.Kim@toronto.ca, 416-338-3054

Todmorden Mills Heritage Site (Don Valley)

There is a secret place hidden in the Don River Valley, between highways and subways, under bridges and behind trees; Todmorden Mills is a cross-section of Toronto, stacked century-by-century, and layer-by-layer upon itself. From an Indigenous waterway to industrial hub, from a prisoner of war camp to a modern arts and theatre venue; each community has made its mark and added another layer to explore.

The same wealth of natural resources, which brought Indigenous peoples to the Don River Valley, has been a magnet drawing settlers, industrialists, workers, artists and families for centuries. Together, they have shaped Todmorden Mills into its current role as a vibrant natural, historic, and cultural landscape. Todmorden Mills allows visitors to immerse themselves in Toronto's history through the daily lives of the working people who made the lumber, flour, beer, and bricks that built our city.

Historical significance

The site consists of four *in situ* nineteenth-century buildings, including two residences, part of a brewery, and a paper mill that was renovated in the late twentieth century to accommodate a theatre and gallery. Additional site features include the historic Don River bridge, the brick road, the wildflower preserve, and a parking lot that was previously the site of a German prisoner-of-war camp during World War II.

Todmorden Mills is located near the Don River Valley and features ample natural space, including a wildflower preserve. We welcome projects that engage with the land and surrounding landscape. Areas may be designated for land art projects, temporary outdoor installations, or other works. We welcome applications by Indigenous artists in particular.

The Papermill Gallery is accessible and accessible parking is available within 50 metres of the main building and the Brewery Building. There are grass pathways to the historic houses and, currently, one of the historic houses has a wheelchair ramp to gain access to the building.

Address: 67 Pottery Rd, Toronto, ON M4K 2B9

Contact: Lisa Randall, Lisa.Randall@toronto.ca, 416-396-2819

Black Creek Pioneer Village

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Black Creek Pioneer Village](#) (BCPV) is an open-air heritage museum and a department of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). BCPV was designed to create a sense of life in 19th century Ontario and encourage visitors to explore the past while reflecting on our present. By examining the lives of real people who lived in the Toronto Region, visitors of all ages consider history from multiple perspectives and understand that the story of the Toronto Region is a collection of many diverse stories.

Over the past few years, BCPV has been changing the site's narrative by working alongside partners to highlight underrepresented histories and bring stories of equity-deserving individuals to our programs and exhibitions. To provide a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of our history, we are re-storying the site

through art, performance, installations, exhibits, and events.

With the backdrop of 40 heritage buildings, farmyard, and heritage gardens, the site is in North York by the Black Creek, a tributary of the Humber River. BCPV interacts with its neighbours including Black Creek Community Farm, York University community, and many local schools in the Jane and Finch community.

BCPV PROGRAMMING

BCPV offers vibrant community spaces that cumulatively attract approximately 140,000 visitors annually through varied programs and uses. High season is typically May through December, with public hours from Wednesday to Sunday. The expectation is that both the outdoor grounds and indoor spaces will be animated through programs, clients, and partners at various times throughout the year. Museum staff are committed to working closely with artists to ensure that both project needs and site operational needs are met. Artists are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposed projects with the site lead prior to applying.

Typical museum programming includes:

- Self-guided tours of the museum, both indoors and outdoors, Wednesday to Sunday with peak season from May to December
- Daily school programs, both indoors and outdoors
- Public programs and special events, both indoors and outdoors
- Children's camp programs with dedicated spaces, both indoors and outdoors, Monday to Friday throughout the summer
- Commercial photography and filming, both indoors and outdoors
- Large-scale special events with partners occurring at various times of the year, both indoors and outdoors
- Recreational evening programming, June through October
- Exhibits, both temporary and long-term
- Community theatre performances and community artist exhibitions
- Weddings and other rentals, both indoors and outdoors. Peak outdoor wedding season runs from June to September

ARTIST CONSIDERATIONS

Space Usage

Combining a convenient location (adjacent to TTC and Highway 400) and a historic setting with beautiful greenspace, BCPV offers a unique opportunity to explore the city's stories through performing and visual arts. With 19th century public buildings perfect for unplugged performances, 40 heritage houses providing a unique background for art installations or smaller productions, and both intimate and large-scale outdoor spaces (some covered), BCPV is an ideal location to showcase artistic works. With a sincere willingness to introduce often overlooked and underrepresented voices, BCPV invites artists to visit the Village and view it as a "canvas" upon which they may "paint" their own story.

Please refer to the [linked document](#) outlining examples of the site's historic buildings, along with a brief history, their availability for usage, and photos.

Please note that access to the BCPV spaces will be subject to scheduling considerations to accommodate existing programs and third-party events. Please take the following into consideration when formulating

your proposal:

- **Use of outdoor and indoor space will need to consider** season, location and activities onsite, including previously booked programs outlined above. Space usage will be subject to public health restrictions at the time when the project is taking place, if any.
- **Exhibition/installation:** Details of exhibitions and installations will need to be developed in consultation with the museum staff to ensure they meet health and safety and building conservation requirements.

Additional Costs

After-hours use of space is an additional cost that is the responsibility of the artist. AV, event set-up, refreshments, etc. must all be discussed with museum staff in advance. Additional supervision or other staffing requirements of the artist will be the responsibility of the artists and must be arranged in close communication with the museum staff. For after-hours use of the space, one staff is required to supervise the site at an hourly cost of \$30/hour.

Productions & Opening Events

Art openings and productions are scalable at our site from an intimate, unplugged artist talk to a professionally staged performance or art installation in our unique venues (and everything in between). BCPV staff can consult with artists to discuss the best options based on your vision and budget. All pending public health guidelines. Features subject to fees include:

- Event set-up, tear down and cleaning
- Event security
- Furniture rentals
- Staff supervision after-hours
- Additional museum staff (to be determined with Curator if this is required)

Accessibility

The museum entrance is located through the main electronic doors of the Visitor's Centre. A drop-off circle is in front of the main doors for any drop-off or pick-up needs at the village. There are accessible parking spaces in the Black Creek parking lot, located approximately 80 metres from the Visitor's Centre. A paved slow grade sloped path leads from the parking lot to the Visitor's Centre.

Black Creek is an outdoor museum; as such, there are uneven road conditions and some distance to traverse between buildings. There are accessible pathways throughout the Village: a boardwalk in some areas and hard-packed gravel roads in others. For more detailed accessibility map please visit <https://blackcreek.ca/accessibility/>

Address: 1000 Murray Ross Parkway, Toronto, ON M3J 2P3

Contact: Allison White, Curator, Collections, allison.white@trca.ca, 647-537-9972

FOR MORE INFORMATION

In-person site tour dates and times will be announced for each site later, please see TAC website for updates and registration details or contact program manager.