

Local Community Museum Architecture: Planning and Designing for Community

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**Abstract**

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Museology

This study examined how the architecture of local community museums represented and reflected community identity. Over the past two decades, there has been a worldwide proliferation of new and renovated museums that has affected museum architecture. Both the architecture and museum studies fields realized the important role of architecture in defining and representing the museum experience and in reflecting the formation of community identity. Yet little research had directly addressed how local community museum architecture reflected and represented community identity. This research focused on three local community museums in Seattle: the Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience, the Nordic Heritage Museum and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art.

The findings suggested that local community museums contributed to the local community identity through their public accessibility, their prominent location in neighborhoods

and their function as culture centers. During design processes, they used community identity strategies, such as community meetings, engagement of multi-groups and hiring locally to involve community voice and input. Special design elements such as sustainable materials, transparent façades and public spaces for community use were incorporated in the architecture to help reflect and represent community identity and goals.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The goal of this research is to examine how the architecture of local community museums represents and reflects community identity.

Recent decades have witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of museums: “the metastases (controlled or otherwise) of an apparently contagious and planetary pathology typified by a relentless and sometimes indiscriminating thirst for culture at all costs.”<sup>1</sup> In the United States, recent figures suggest that between 1993 and 2007 “investment in construction of privately funded museums grew at over 15 percent per year”<sup>2</sup> and that by the middle of the first decade of the new millennium, 50 percent of museums in the United States were involved in building construction, renovation or expansion.<sup>3</sup> According to its current five-year plan, China was to have 3,500 museums by 2015, a target it achieved three years early. In 2012, a record 451 new museums opened, pushing the total by the end of 2012 to 3,866.<sup>4</sup> As Michaela Gielbelhausen indicates, “architecture *is* the museum”<sup>5</sup>. Architecture is playing an increasingly important role in attracting the public. It shapes the museum-going experience, as well as the institution's identity and its ties to the community. Site, scale, space and place-making are all integral aspects in creating the ideal museum building, representing both anticipation and memory related to its location and community.<sup>6</sup>

The term ‘local community museum’ (in French *musée proximité*), as defined by Manuel

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<sup>1</sup> Yves Nacher, “From medium to message: museum architecture today,” *Museum International* 196(1997): 4.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Crimm, M. Morris and L.C. Wharton, *Planning Successful Museum Building Projects*, (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> “China: Mad about museums,” *The Economist*, December 21, 2013, accessed January 1, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591710-china-building-thousands-new-museums-how-will-it-fill-them-mad-about-museums>.

<sup>5</sup> Gielbelhausen, Michaela, “The architecture is the museum,” in *New museum theory and practice: an introduction*, ed. J. Marstine. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Susanna Sirefman, “Formed and forming: Contemporary museum architecture,” *Daedalus*, 128(1999): 298.

Tardits in “The local-community museum: an architectural challenge,” would appear to possess two connotations. One is spatial in its scope. The other reflects an intention for “greater public access.”<sup>7</sup> They transcend “the somewhat vague criteria used to define them” and “crystallize through their sheer variety a whole range of uncertainties regarding the role and the very definition of culture in our present-day societies.”<sup>8</sup> As the challenge addressed by Elizabeth Crooke in “Museums and Community,” there is rarely qualification of what the term “community” means and how community is identified.<sup>9</sup> The term of “local community museum” is also prevalently and indiscriminately used in museum policy and planning.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this study, local community museum means both spatially closely related and intentionally accessible to ethnic groups, as well as local neighborhood.

As the research of Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” has shown that the formation of ‘local’ architecture could be established as a consequence of the incorporation of certain images, behaviors, values, etc., and the lifestyle of the community functions as a determining factor for the formation of architecture.<sup>11</sup> While previous research and literature focused mostly on general museum architectural history and theory, recent research and literature also include the study of museum architecture on the visitor. Little has been done to understand how the architecture of local community museums represent and reflect community identity. In addition, it seems that little is known of the process for conceptualizing architecture for local community museums in contemporary ethnic community or local neighborhoods.

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<sup>7</sup> Manuel Tardits, The local-community museum: an architectural challenge, *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 36.

<sup>8</sup> Manuel Tardits, The local-community museum: an architectural challenge, *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 41.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Crooke, “Museums and Community,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald et al., (UK: Blackwell, 2006), 172.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements*, 73 (2006): 140.

The goal of this research is to examine how the architecture of local community museums represents and reflects community identity. This study seeks to answer three main questions:

1. What distinguishes local community museums?
2. How do distinctions of local community museum affect the design of their museum architecture?
3. How do museum professionals and architects cooperate in the process of conceptualizing and designing architecture for local community museums in order to represent and reflect community identity?

By addressing these three questions, the hope is to identify the strategic actions and best practices that museum staff and designers employ to create a museum building that represents and reflects a local community's identity.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review seeks to explore the resources that are available concerning local community museum architecture. The first section of this literature review describes the general history and theory of museum architecture, in which various museum types were studied and discussed. The second section synthesizes the findings about museum commercial and propaganda effects and the influence of architecture on visitor experience from museum theory. The third section synthesizes the relationship between community identity and architecture. The final section refers to resources for the Wing Luke Museum and Nordic Heritage Museum as sample museum sites to study in this research.

### Museum and the Architecture

In her essay “The Architecture is the Museum,”<sup>12</sup> Michaela Giebelhausen traces the history of museum architecture. As her title attests, the history of museum architecture can be divided into four periods: 1) arcadia and antiquity (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century); metropolis and modernity (mid to late nineteenth century); a new century, a new aesthetic (early to mid twentieth century); and fragmentation, contradiction, expression (late twentieth and early twenty-first century). Giebelhausen argues that museum architecture is a highly symbolic building type that defines the institution. It is both sacred and modern, utopian and educational, and clearly represents the collections inside.<sup>13</sup> In his chapter “Architecture” in *The art museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, Andrew McClellan also traces the history of museum architecture, but in contrast to Giebelhausen, he focuses more on the relationship between art and museum

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<sup>12</sup> Michaela Giebelhausen, “The architecture is the museum,” in *New museum theory and practice: an introduction*, ed. Janet Marstine. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 41-60.

<sup>13</sup> Michaela Giebelhausen, “The architecture is the museum,” in *New museum theory and practice: an introduction*, ed. Janet Marstine. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 41.

architecture.<sup>14</sup> Starting from Frank Gehry's new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, McCellen points out that museums have arguably become the most exciting building type of our time where people go not only to see art, but to experience the museum architecture. McCellen's thesis is that "the history of museum architecture is one of the attempts to accommodate both viewpoints and the pressures that tip the balance one way or the other."<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, he reminds that we should see the trend in recent museum architecture "not as a betrayal of some priori principles, but as a renewal of the struggle of conflicting ideals that are both deeply embedded in the history of the building type."<sup>16</sup>

In *Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture*, Susanna Sirefman also discusses the relation between the institution and its architecture. She points out that all built form is representative of cultural ideologies and cultural status. The narrative that a museum embodies is inseparable from its physical condition – its architecture. According to Sirefman, architecture represents the museum's public image, defines the institution's relationship to its setting, and constructs the framework of the visitor's experience. Museum architecture provides connection to a local neighborhood and relevance to a specific community. Similarly, the contemporary, post-urban museum must present an architecture that is substantive and welcoming. The ideal museum building should cultivate both anticipation and memory while relating to its location and community.<sup>17</sup>

In *Museum Architecture: A New Biography*, Suzanne MacLeod sets out to explore the nature of museum architecture and the multiple ways in which it is made. The book draws on a

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew McClellan, "Architecture," in *The art museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 53-106.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew McClellan, "Architecture," in *The art museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 56.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Susanna Sirefman, "Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture," in *Daedalus*, 128 (1999): 297-320.

particular body of architectural theory that acknowledges architecture as implicated in such diverse aspects of social experience as politics, power, shared social meaning and individual identity formation.<sup>18</sup> Each chapter develops a detailed reading of particular episodes in the life of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, in order to contribute to the understanding of what museum architecture is, how it operates and how and why it is made.<sup>19</sup> In the end, MacLeod suggests that “perhaps it is the right moment to begin to try and differentiate between the mass of new museums and identify the pockets of activity that can provide museums and galleries with a more meaningful vision of museum architecture, one that is socially, as well as economically and environmentally, and sustainable.”<sup>20</sup>

Victoria Newhouse’s *Towards A New Museum*, as Jerome Skolnick indicates, seems to aim “somewhere in between the chronicle and the treatise, the coffee-table tome and the academic survey”.<sup>21</sup> Newhouse manages to work in a general historical background for the development of museums from tombs, crypts, and treasure houses, through Wunderkammer, Kunsthallen, and private picture galleries to public culture palace, blockbuster entertainment venue, new town center, and linchpin of massive urban renewal.<sup>22</sup> She ends her book by pointing to the revolution in electronic technology and marveling at how it will further transform the museum experience. All of the museum types in Newhouse’s book are art museums: she indicates that “of all building types, the art museum remains the most resistant to a common denominator and consequently allows architects unusual freedom to reflect their period”.<sup>23</sup> She also offers some examples of buildings retrofitted to become museums. Retrofitted buildings can be seen as new both in the way they link the preservation of architectural heritage to new creative expression and in how

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<sup>18</sup> Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 21.

<sup>19</sup> Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 23.

<sup>20</sup> Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 384.

<sup>21</sup> Jerome H. Skolnick, “Towards A New Museum (Book Review),” in *Curator*, 42 (1999): 59.

<sup>22</sup> Victoria Newhouse, *Towards A New Museum* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> Victoria Newhouse, *Towards A New Museum* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), 12.

they are used to disseminate art into the natural life of the community. Shaoqiang Wang also provides several examples of transformed museum architecture from old buildings in his book, *Transformer: Reuse, Renewal, and Renovation in Contemporary Architecture*, including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art by Steven Holl in Kansas City, the Museum of Tolerance Renovation in Los Angeles and the Wing Luke Asian Museum Renovation in Seattle.<sup>24</sup>

As a lecturer in the Museum Studies department at the University of Leicester in Leicester, United Kingdom, Suzanne MacLeod's book, *Reshaping Museum Space*,<sup>25</sup> includes seven essays by museum professionals, architects, exhibit designers, and academics covering topics ranging from the effect of vertical circulation in art museums to "the social agency of museum space." The museum space is now recognized as a space with a history of its own, a space active in the making of meaning and a space open to change. Many museums are undergoing shifts of creating spaces for "lifelong learning and mutuality."<sup>26</sup> MacLeod also brings up a recurring issue, the tension between iconic architecture, and access and inclusion that might form the central principle of modern museums. The discussion leaps over the formal aesthetic analysis to include current thinking about museums, how they work, and how they can best serve their communities.<sup>27</sup>

In "Towards a new museum architecture: Narrative and representation," Lee H. Skolnick explores the role that narrative can play in the conceptualization, planning and design of the overall museum experience, including its potential to encompass and integrate site, architecture and exhibition.<sup>28</sup> By referring to historical and contemporary examples, Skolnick makes a

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<sup>24</sup> Shaoqiang Wang, *Transformer: Reuse, Renewal, and Renovation in Contemporary Architecture* (Berkeley, CA: Ginko Press, 2012), 178-182.

<sup>25</sup> Suzanne Macleod, *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Suzanne Macleod, *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Macleod, *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 22.

<sup>28</sup> Lee H. Skolnick, "Towards a new museum architecture," in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne MacLeod (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 118-130.

strategic and qualitative distinction between the concepts of ‘Embodiment’ and ‘Representation’ as they refer to architectural design in general. The author further points out that the problem with many of the good, even great, museum buildings is simply that they don’t allow their narrative enough of a role in defining the experiences they offer. “They miss the full opportunity to infuse their core mission, themes and concepts into all aspects of their sites, buildings and exhibits, thereby instilling a sense of specificity, an organic rightness unique to their situations. In other words, they don’t venture past ‘representing’ these ideas to the more fertile ground of ‘embodying’ them.”<sup>29</sup>

Giebelhausen, McClellan, Sirefman, MacLeod, Skolnick and Newhouse discussed the relationships between museum as an institution and museum as architecture by referencing museum architectural history with large number of historical and contemporary examples. These authors agree on that museum architecture is a highly symbolic building type that not only defines and embody the institution, but also reflect the architectural ideals of their historical periods.

### Museum Architecture Effect

While the previous literature sources emphasized the history of the museum building and commented more on the architectonic level, the economic effect of museum architecture is stressed in both Clans Kapplinger’s and Joan Ockman’s essays. In Kapplinger’s “Architecture and the marketing of the museum,” he thinks the museum is a commercial product, and that the architect is an international star.<sup>30</sup> He also describes how contemporary museum architecture has

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<sup>29</sup> Lee H. Skolnick, “Towards a new museum architecture,” in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne MacLeod (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 123.

<sup>30</sup> Clans Kapplinger, “Architecture and the marketing of the museum,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 6-9.

contributed to the dramatic change in the public perception of the museum.<sup>31</sup> In addition, he argues that “the change of emphasis and perception that has occurred is reflected in the diversity and more relaxed attitudes of modern museum visitors, who have lost all their complexes over contact with museums and the art.”<sup>32</sup> Today, it is the architecture rather than the art collection that cause the media and tourists to travel beyond their national borders since museum architecture has become the central symbol, representing the site and the image of the museum according to Kapplinger. At the same time, Kapplinger brings up the limits of museum commercialization by indicating that the market may “triumph over art and architecture which are regarded as having no values in their own right.”<sup>33</sup>

The same concern is expressed by Joan Ockman in “New Politics of the Spectacle: ‘Bilbao’ and the Global Imagination,” using the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry as a representative example of a museum’s connection to globalization and tourism. She points out that the iconic images and florid descriptions of the photogenic building, endlessly circulated in tourist brochures, the popular press and the critical literature, hardly convey its complex urban reality adequately, even if the medias have mediated its reception and contributed to the general mythography. On the other hand, she also argues that “The assimilation of foreign tendencies within a local situation is in this sense not just, or not necessarily, a hegemonic process, but sometimes, as at Bilbao, one of voluntary adaptation and a consciously or unconsciously acknowledged need for change.”<sup>34</sup>

Apart from commercial and propaganda effects, museum architecture also has influence on the visiting experience of the audience. In *The Museum Experience*, according to authors John

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<sup>31</sup> Clans Kapplinger, “Architecture and the marketing of the museum,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 8-9.

<sup>32</sup> Clans Kapplinger, “Architecture and the marketing of the museum,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Joan Ockman, (2004). “New Politics of the Spectacle: ‘Bilbao’ and the Global Imagination,” in *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance, and place*, ed. D. Medina Lasansky and B. McLaren. (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2004), 232.

H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, physical context is one of the elements influencing visitors' behaviors and "extremely important in shaping the museum experience" including the phenomenon of "museum fatigue".<sup>35</sup> The location of an exhibit and size of a museum can also influence visitor behavior.<sup>36</sup> In 2000, Falk put forth a new model of visitor experience, called the "museum visitor experience model," which was built upon Falk and Dierking's contextual model of learning and emphasized the motivations individuals have for visiting museums.<sup>37</sup> It addresses how motivation affects all aspects of visitor experience. Falk then divides motivations into five categories based on visitor "identity", which was derived from studies he and his colleagues conducted in a variety of institutions.<sup>38</sup> To summarize, Falk offers suggestions for applying museum visitor experience models to practices of museum professionals that increase the social value of museums.

Sophia Psarra, in "Spatial culture, way-finding and the educational message: the impact of layout on the spatial, social and educational experiences of visitors to museums and galleries," explores the ways visitors navigate museum space and how architectural decisions affect visitors' responses. Psarra has developed computer models to document and analyze visitor movement. Her goal is to improve the "functioning of these buildings in terms of legibility of the layout and the distribution of visitors through their spaces."<sup>39</sup> She has found that "the contribution of architectural space in shaping the viewer's experience...has largely gone unstudied."<sup>40</sup> Elaine

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<sup>35</sup> John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The museum experience* (Washington, D.C.: Whalesback Books, 1992), 55.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The museum experience* (Washington, D.C.: Whalesback Books, 1992), 57-61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Sophia Psarra, "Spatial culture, way-finding and the educational message: the impact of layout on the spatial, social and educational experiences of visitors to museums and galleries," in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne M. (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 79.

<sup>40</sup> Sophia Psarra, "Spatial culture, way-finding and the educational message: the impact of layout on the spatial, social and educational experiences of visitors to museums and galleries," in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne M. (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 83.

Heumann Gurian also focuses on the visitor side, but her approach is more direct than academic. In the chapter “Threshold fear” in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, she notes that many museums “do not really wish to be more inclusionary,”<sup>41</sup> by which she means that they put other priorities ahead of welcoming visitors. Gurian finds architects, in particular, responsible for creating buildings that do not welcome visitors: “Museums remain one of the important congregant spaces in any community. To encourage use by all citizens we need to be more sensitive to the space requirements that make it clear the visitor is welcome.”<sup>42</sup>

Narrative also has a particularly significant place in the making and experiencing of both architecture and the museums, as indicated by Leslie Bedford in *Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums*. “Storytelling is an ideal strategy for realizing the constructivist museum, an environment where visitors of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to create their own meaning and find that place, the intersection between the familiar and the unknown where genuine learning occurs.”<sup>43</sup>

As Kapplinger and Ockman agreed on the commercial and propaganda effect of museum architecture, Faulk, Dierking, Psarra, Leslie and Gurian agreed that museum architecture could also have impact on visitor experience and behaviors because of its special symbolic and physical features.

### Community and Architecture Identity

According to John Puddifoot in “Dimensions of Community Identity,” the notion of community identity is not easy to pin down to its exact meaning, or to measure. It is a concept

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<sup>41</sup> Elaine Heumann Gurian, “Threshold fear,” in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne M. (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 212.

<sup>42</sup> Elaine Heumann Gurian, “Threshold fear,” in *Reshaping museum space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, ed. Suzanne M. (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 213.

<sup>43</sup> Leslie Bedford, “Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums,” *Curator* 44(2001): 28.

prevalent in museum policy and planning. There is rarely qualification of what the term means and how ‘community’ is identified.<sup>44</sup> According to Elizabeth Crooke in “Museums and Community,” the range of meanings associated with the word ‘community’ is the first challenge for those embarking on community studies.<sup>45</sup>

As emphasized by Gerard Delanty in *Community*, “Communities have been based on ethnicity, religion, class or politics; they may be large or small; “thin” or “thick” attachments may underlie them; they may be locally based and globally organized; affirmative or subversive in their relation to the established order; they may be traditional, modern and even postmodern; reactionary and progressive.”<sup>46</sup> The essays in *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments* by Vered Amit provide examples of how groups across the UK, Norway, Canada, and Central Europe have used and drawn on the concept of community. Many of these examples share the same strategies on developing a sense of place, building social networks, and recognizing and acknowledging common history, religion, sport, or employment. These shared features are the valued marks of community identity.<sup>47</sup> In the conclusion of her essay, Elizabeth Crooke emphasizes that community involvement through museum services has been promoted as a means to reverse the “once grand and imposing structure”<sup>48</sup> that is the traditional museum and that the interest that community groups have shown in developing their own independent museums and exhibitions is a demonstration of their desire for self-

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<sup>44</sup> John E. Puddifoot, “Dimensions of Community Identity,” in *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1995): 359.

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Crooke, “Museums and Community,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald et al., (UK: Blackwell, 2006), 172.

<sup>46</sup> Gerard Delanty, *Community* (London: Routledge, 2003), 2.

<sup>47</sup> Vered Amit, *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3-20.

<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Crooke, “Museums and Community,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald et al., (UK: Blackwell, 2006), 183.

representation.<sup>49</sup> Self-representation of one's own history as a form of group capacity building and empowerment and "engagement with the concept of 'community' is prompting the museum sector to revisit the museum space and question its identity, role and social worth."<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Crooke points out that "as museum professionals begin to engage in forms of community development activity, they have to ask themselves whether the community they are engaging with is representative, whether the community leaders are accepted by the members and how the balance of authority between the community and museum expert is best struck."<sup>51</sup>

As John Puddifoot, in "Dimensions of Community Identity," points out, community is a term "that has recently regained currency in British political life, and has returned to the political agenda, not just as something that is perceived to have been lost, but more positively as something that should be actively re-kindled."<sup>52</sup> Based on previous research activity on community identity, Puddifoot identifies six broad elements, within which are contained fourteen dimensions, as illustrated by Figure 1.<sup>53</sup> This construct provides a way to arrive at an operational definition of community identity in order to advance the possibility of measuring community identity through comparative analysis.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Crooke, "Museums and Community," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald et al., (UK: Blackwell, 2006), 184.

<sup>52</sup> John E. Puddifoot, "Dimensions of Community Identity," in *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1995): 357.

<sup>53</sup> John E. Puddifoot, "Dimensions of Community Identity," in *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1995): 367.

Table 1. Elements and dimensions of community identity

	Territorial	Social/cultural relations
<b>E1 Locus</b>	<b>D1</b> Residents' own perception of boundaries, and key topographical/built features of their community.	<b>D2</b> Residents' own perceptions of key social/cultural characteristics of their community.
<b>E2 Distinctiveness</b>	<b>D3</b> Residents' own perceptions of the degree of physical distinctiveness of their community.	<b>D4</b> Residents' own perception of the degree of distinctiveness of key social/cultural characteristics of their community.
<b>E3 Identification</b>	<b>D5</b> Residents' own perceptions of the special character of the community. <b>D6</b> Residents' perceptions of their own affiliation/belonging/emotional connectedness to location.	<b>D7</b> Residents' perceptions of their own affiliation/belonging/emotional connectedness to social/cultural groupings/forms. <b>D9</b> Residents' perceptions of others' affiliation/belonging/emotional connectedness to social/cultural groupings/forms.
<b>E4 Orientation</b>	<b>D8</b> Residents' perceptions of others' affiliation/belonging/emotional connectedness to location. <b>D10</b> Residents' own reasons for identification (or not) with the community. <b>D11</b> Residents' own orientation to their community. Personal investment Attraction to community Future in community Emotional safety Personal involvement Alienation	
<b>E5 Evaluation of quality of community life</b>		
<b>D12</b> Residents' own evaluation of quality of community life. Community spirit Friendliness Sense of mutuality Cooperativeness Extent of social interaction Commitment to community Extent of Neighbouring	<b>D13</b> Residents' perception of others' evaluation of quality of community life. Community spirit Friendliness Sense of mutuality Cooperativeness Extent of social interaction Commitment to community Extent of Neighbouring	<b>E6 Evaluation of community functioning</b> <b>D14</b> Residents' own evaluation of community functioning. Community services Leisure services Health services Commercial services Opportunities Material quality of life Quality of environment Quality of community decision-making Ability to influence decisions

Dimensions of community identity 367

**Figure 1. Elements and dimensions of community identity listed by John Puddifoot**

Meltem Yilmaz, in “Architectural identity and local community,” defines community as the same group of individuals sharing a set of cultural features belonging to that locality and that “local” has something to do with a particular place, locality or community with its own features. The local community, which constitutes a linkage between the individual and the state, also contributes to the strengthening of the integration of identities concerning different levels of analysis.<sup>54</sup>

In her book, *Cultural Citizenship and Immigrant Community Identity: Constructing a Multi-ethnic Asian American Community*, Hye-Kyung Kang explores immigrant cultural citizenship by investigating the discursive construction of a multi-ethnic Asian American community. Applying poststructural and postcolonial theoretical frameworks, she investigates

<sup>54</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements*, 73 (2006): 144.

the particular social, political, and historical contexts within which the discourse of a multi-ethnic Asian American community arose by using the example of the International District located in Seattle.<sup>55</sup> Paul Gilroy, in “Urban social movements, ‘race’ and community,” states that the notion of community identity provides community groups with a sense of solidarity without requiring that they unify all contradictory and plural meanings.<sup>56</sup> He also shows that the subjectivity of a community is indeed shaped by specific historical contexts and the immigrant community exercises its cultural citizenship in its process of strategically negotiating, contesting and re-defining its identity.<sup>57</sup>

Puddifoot, Delanty, Amit, Kang, Gilroy and Yilmaz discussed community identity, which tends to be difficult to pin down with a single definition according to these authors. They provide definitions and interpretations on community identity from the perspectives of their own related fields such as architecture, museum studies and immigrant culture study. They all agree on that community identity is shaped by community’s shared sense of locality, ethnic or cultural features such as history and religion.

Although not many scholars discuss the influence of local community museum architecture, many realize that buildings could affect individuals and communities emotionally.<sup>58</sup> Architecture’s influence on people’s identity and memory also draws attention from scholars in the architecture field. “How they provide people with a sense of joy, identity, and place, there is

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<sup>55</sup> Hye-Kyung S. Kang, *Cultural Citizenship and Immigrant Community Identity: Constructing a Multi-ethnic Asian American Community* (El Paso: LFB Scholarly Pub., 2010).

<sup>56</sup> Paul Gilroy, “Urban social movements, ‘race’ and community,” in *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory: A reader*, ed. P. Williams and L. Chrismanin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>57</sup> Paul Gilroy, “Urban social movements, ‘race’ and community,” in *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory: A reader*, ed. P. Williams and L. Chrismanin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 416.

<sup>58</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements*, 73 (2006): 141.

no way to distinguish architecture from any everyday act of construction.”<sup>59</sup>

Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore, in their book *Body, Memory, and Architecture*, believe that the most essential and memorable sense of three-dimensionality originates in the body experience and that this sense may constitute a basis for understanding spatial feeling in our experience of buildings. The authors compare architectural design to “choreography of collision.”<sup>60</sup> They believe choreography is a more useful term than composition, because of its much clearer implication of the human body and the body’s habitation and experience of place. What’s more, the same orientations and sensibilities that function in a house must also exist in a city if it is to have a human identity. Both require the feeling of being bounded, possessed, and centered. Finally, the authors indicate that no matter how spectacular the forms of buildings within the city may be, the meanings and feelings that the buildings give will be diminished if those buildings cannot be “possessed”.<sup>61</sup>

As Meltem Yilmaz, in “Architectural identity and local community,” notes, the formation of “local” architecture could be established as a consequence of the incorporation of certain images, behaviors, values, etc., and the lifestyle of the community functions as a determining factor for the formation of architecture. Accordingly, as indicated by Yilmaz, culture plays a determinant role in architectural identity. She specifically emphasizes the definition of the “identification” issue. According to Yilmaz, human identification means relating meaningfully to a world of “construction” that is composed of sensations. “Works of architecture are objects of human identification because they embody existential meanings, making the world stand forth as

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<sup>59</sup> Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), ix.

<sup>60</sup> Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 106.

<sup>61</sup> Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 55.

it is. Through identification man possesses a world, and thus an identity.”<sup>62</sup> She further points out that the social environment plays an important role in individual identity, while place-identity is a sub-structure identity of the person’s memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values and experience that relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings and architectural identity is closely related to place identity. The author identifies four elements through which humans’ sense of place becomes meaningful:

- a sense of individual identity, of who we are;
- a sense of community, of being part of a larger group, whether a family or neighborhood;
- a sense of a past and a future, of a place behind us and a place ahead of us and,
- a sense of being at home, of being comfortable.<sup>63</sup>

Yilmaz emphasizes that we need to ensure respect for local community through increased public awareness of the intrinsic value of the built heritage, settings, and historic traditions and uses.<sup>64</sup>

In the book, *The New Urbanism*, Peter Katz defines the New Urbanism as a movement that addresses many of the ills of current sprawl development while returning to a cherished American icon: that of a compact, close-knit community. It borrows heavily from traditional city planning concepts. According to Katz, if the New Urbanism can indeed be shown to deliver a higher, more sustainable quality of life to a majority of this nation’s citizens, we can hope that it will be embraced as the next paradigm for the shaping of America’s communities.<sup>65</sup> With regards to community architecture, Vincent Scully, in *The Architecture of Community*, states that architecture functions as a shelter for human beings and mediates between the individual and the natural world by creating the physical reality of the human community and by which the

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<sup>62</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements* 73 (2006): 140.

<sup>63</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements* 73 (2006): 142.

<sup>64</sup> Meltem Yilmaz, “Architectural identity and local community,” in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements* 73 (2006): 146.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Katz et al., *The New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

individual is linked to the rest of humanity. Scully notes the yearning to rebuild community in recent decades, reflected by the contemporary preservation movement, through which “the first time in the modern period, a popular mass movement has discovered the means and the political clout to force architects and civic officials alike to do what the informed public wants them to do...”<sup>66</sup> The yearning to rebuild community is precisely what the canonical Modern architecture and the planning of the middle years of twentieth century were unable to provide according to Scully. He thinks the modern architects of “the heroic period” (represented by Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and their followers) despised “traditional city – the finest achievement of Western architecture, put together piece by piece over the centuries”<sup>67</sup> and “determined to replaced it with their own personal, utopian, idiosyncratic schemes.”<sup>68</sup> Secondly, those architects wanted to be free from the restraints of the urban situation as a whole: from the city, from the community, by ripping the old urbanism apart or to outrage it. “They could not under any circumstances be inflected toward their surrounding by Classical or vernacular details or stylistic references of any kind.”<sup>69</sup> The author demonstrates that the revivals of the Classical and vernacular traditions of architecture “have always dealt with questions of community and environment, and their reintegration into the mainstream of Modern architecture.”<sup>70</sup>

As Scully raised the general issue of the conflict between Modern period architecture and community, Bloomer, Moore, Yilmaz, and Katz agreed on that architecture is able to affect individual and community’s emotion and memory, and it is a part of the non-verbal system of symbols that influence community identity.

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<sup>66</sup> Vincent Scully, “The Architecture of Community,” in *The New Urbanism*, ed. Peter Katz et al. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 223.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Vincent Scully, “The Architecture of Community,” in *The New Urbanism*, ed. Peter Katz et al. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 224.

## Community Museum Architecture

Although research and architectural literature related to local community museums by scholars in the museum field is not very extensive, there is an emerging body of literature within the fields of architecture, art history and cultural Studies focused on the relationship between the local community museum and its architecture.

“The local-community museum: an architectural challenge,” written by architect Manuel Tardits, invites us to take a closer look at a recent phenomenon – the so-called local-community museum. The local-community museum calls into question a host of assumptions as to what a museum is and what it does.<sup>71</sup> Tardits speculates that “the widespread international enthusiasm for museums, and their proliferation during 1980s, resulted in the creation of new types of establishments. Do the so-called local-community museums offer new principles of organization? Does their role differ from that of their predecessors?”<sup>72</sup> In the essay, Tardits provides local community architecture examples from all over the world to illustrate the regionality and uniqueness of this museum architecture type and reminds readers to rethink the exhibit form in these museums. Tardits states that for local community museums, “success often depends largely if not primarily upon securing a proper adaptation to the site and to what in most cases is a modest budget.”<sup>73</sup> He further points out at the end of his essay that whether local museums “intended for the citizen, the tourist or the consumer, or elitist, enclosed in their ivory towers, critical of today’s all-pervading commercialism, or vulgar, prosaic or frankly

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<sup>71</sup> Manuel Tardits, “The local-community museum: an architectural challenge,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 36-41.

<sup>72</sup> Manuel Tardits, “The local-community museum: an architectural challenge,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 36.

<sup>73</sup> Manuel Tardits, “The local-community museum: an architectural challenge,” in *Museum International*, 49 (1997): 38.

exhibitionistic, or discreetly and sensitively integrated into urban or natural environment, local community museums, transcending the somewhat vague criteria used to define them, crystallize through their sheer variety a whole range of uncertainties regarding the role and the very definition of culture in our present-day societies.”<sup>74</sup>

*Building Museums: A handbook for small and midsize organizations* is intended as a guide for small and midsize historical organizations that undertake construction projects – new buildings as well as renovations. The genesis of this book originates with the experience of the authors, staff and former staff of the Minnesota Historical Society, to provide their experience and advice on the construction process, from needs assessment and project planning to design development, budgeting, construction and settling into new space as best practices reference.<sup>75</sup>

As a specific case study, Joan R. Acland in *The Native Artistic Subject and National Identity: a cultural analysis of the architecture of Canadian Museum of Civilization, designed by Douglas J. Cardinal*, studied the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) and wrote a chapter of iconographic analysis of the architecture of the CMC tracing its source to the symbolism of shamanism. Acland’s purpose is to “elicit a narrative which interprets the iconographic sources of the architecture within the context of Native sources, which would be appropriate to Cardinal’s inflection of the Museum architecture.”<sup>76</sup> The architecture, as Acland points out, in its form and significance works as a resistance to a totalizing history of the people, and puts forward another heritage, one which has a different relationship with the land than the dominant society.

Dr. Anne Marshall’s dissertation, *Indigenous Architecture: Envisioning, Designing, and Building*

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Herskovitz, Timothy Glines and David Grabitske, *Building Museums: A Handbook for Small and Midsize Organizations* (Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012).

<sup>76</sup> Joan R. Acland, “The Native Artistic Subject and National Identity: a cultural analysis of the architecture of Canadian Museum of Civilization, designed by Douglas J. Cardinal” (PhD Dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database, 1994, 188.

*the Museum at Warm Springs*, focused on understanding what critical activities Tribal members, designers, and others did to create a museum whose architecture serves its community. The study considered how people did things to honor indigenous traditions. Through the interviews with tribal members, designers and other sources, her study revealed several key strategic actions such as “selected and supported the right general contractor,” “architects and contractors worked collaboratively,” “design continued throughout construction,” and “high level of craft” that the Confederated Tribes did to position themselves to build the museum.<sup>77</sup>

While Herskovitz, Glines and Grabitske concludes best practices and advices for designing and constructing small and midsize organization architecture, Tardits and Marshall discuss and interpret specific local community museum and tribal architecture examples from architects’ perspectives and Acland uses iconography study on a local community museum architecture, they all agree on that local community museums should reflect community’s voice and represent community’s tradition, culture and history.

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<sup>77</sup> Anne L. Marshall, “Indigenous Architecture: Envisioning, Designing, and Building the Museum at Warm Springs” (PhD Dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database, 2012.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The goal of this research is to examine how the architecture of local community museums represents and reflects community identity. This study seeks to address three main questions/issues:

1. What distinguishes local community museums?
2. How does the nature of a local community museum affect the design of its architecture?
3. How do museum professionals and architects cooperate in the process of designing the architecture for local community museums in order to represent and reflect community identity?

### Methods

The method used for this research was semi-structured interviews at three museum sites. This method was chosen because it yields qualitative, descriptive data. Besides interviews, some quotes from architects and museum staff in online articles and websites will be added in the Results and Discussion chapter.

### Overview of Sample Museum Sites

Three museums were selected for this study based on the following criteria:

1. The museum was easily accessible for the purpose of onsite interviews.
2. Its mission was related to or represented the historical and cultural heritage of its community.
3. The architecture of the museum was planned and designed by architects.

The three museums selected were the Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience, the Nordic Heritage Museum, and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA).

As a National Park Service Affiliated Area and the first Smithsonian affiliate in the Pacific Northwest, the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, located in the International District Chinatown in Seattle, offers an authentic perspective on a unique version of the American story.<sup>78</sup> Nationally recognized for creating dynamic, community-driven exhibitions and programs, its mission is to “connect everyone to the rich history, dynamic cultures and art of the Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences.”<sup>79</sup> The 60,000 square foot facility offers three floors “to tell communities’ stories, with contemporary galleries showcasing both temporary and permanent exhibitions as well as preserved historic spaces accessible through daily guided tours”<sup>80</sup>. In 2002, the Wing Luke Museum raised \$23.2 million to rehabilitate the historic East Kong Yick Building built in 1910.<sup>81</sup> The historic building was redesigned and renovated by Rick Sundberg, FAIA LEED AP of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects in 2008, has received awards in two major national design competitions: a Great Places Award given by the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Places: Forum of Design for the Public Realm, and Metropolis magazine; and the International Interior Design Associations (IIDA) prestigious 36th Annual Interior Design Competition.<sup>82</sup>

The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, a landmark and community resource for quality arts education and lifelong learning, is an educational institution whose mission is to “engage a diverse population with the art and craft of our region and our time.”<sup>83</sup> Located on Bainbridge

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<sup>78</sup> “Wing Luke Museum About Us,” accessed May 4, 2014, <http://www.wingluke.org/about-us/>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> “Wing Luke Museum – Building and Architecture,” accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.wingluke.org/building-architecture>.

<sup>82</sup> “e-architect,” accessed May 4, 2014, <http://www.e-architect.co.uk/seattle/wing-luke-asian-museum>.

<sup>83</sup> “Bainbridge Island Museum of Art- Building the Museum,” accessed on May 4, 2014,

Island, this museum is a collecting museum with a focus on artists and collections from the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas, as well as the broader Puget Sound region. The 20,000 square foot building, opened on June 14, 2013, and was designed by Matthew Coates of Coates Design Architects.<sup>84</sup> The art museum is targeted for “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold status and sustainable features include geothermal energy, day lighting controlled louvers, solar power, recycled materials including denim insulation, and green-labeled certified carpets and paints.”<sup>85</sup> According to its financial report, the total budget for building the new museum building was \$13.6 million.<sup>86</sup>

The Nordic Heritage Museum, the mission of which is to “share Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences, and serving as a community gathering place”<sup>87</sup>, completed the purchase of a building site on Market Street between 26th Ave NW and 28th Ave NW in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood in 2009. In June 2012, the Board approved the plans for a \$45 million museum to be built on the site on Market Street. The plan features 53,000 sq. ft. of new purpose-built construction, which will include interactive and immersive core exhibitions, dedicated areas for classrooms and a craft studio, and a state-of-the art auditorium, ideal for presentations and performances. Temporary exhibitions will be presented in a dynamic 4,000 sq. ft. gallery, designed to accommodate world-class exhibitions from the national galleries of the Nordic countries. An additional 4,000 sq. ft. of climate-controlled storage will allow for

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<http://www.biartmuseum.org/about/building/>.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> “Bainbridge Island Museum of Art – City of Bainbridge Island Lodging Tax Grant Report,” 1.

<sup>87</sup> “Nordic Heritage Museum,” accessed May 4, 2014, <https://www.nordicmuseum.org/>.

appropriate stewardship of an important and expanding collection of art and objects.<sup>88</sup> Till December 31, 2013, donors had committed \$27,628,263 in cash and pledges to the Nordic Heritage Museum's Capital Campaign.<sup>89</sup>

Although the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle is not one of the sample museum sites, its former creative director was one of the six interview subjects. MOHAI moved to its new museum building on December 29, "the 50,000-square-foot space, which offers 50 percent more public and exhibit space than the old location—will be shipshape, thanks to extensive renovations."<sup>90</sup>

### Instrument

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with museum staff from the Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience and the Nordic Heritage Museum, architects who were responsible for designing the architecture of the Wing Luke Museum and Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, a project manager who participated in the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art project and a museum design and planning consultant, who was also the creative director for the Museum of History and Industry during the designing and planning process of its new building.

Semi-structured interviews were used as they allow one the freedom to pursue questions and topics as they arise during the interview, thus provide richer and deeper data for analysis. All the interviews were conducted in person. Participants were identified by searching staff contact lists on the websites of the case study museums. Architects and designers, I contacted with case study museum staff. Participants varied in age, race, gender, etc., but all were involved in the

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<sup>88</sup> "Nordic Heritage Museum," accessed May 4, 2014, <https://www.nordicmuseum.org/>.

<sup>89</sup> Jan W. Colbrese and Christy. O. Field, "The Time is Now," in *Nordic Kultur* (2014): 13.

<sup>90</sup> Brangien Davis, "The New MOHAI," in *Seattle Magazine*, November, 2012, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.seattlemag.com/article/new-mohai>

designing and planning process of the museum new building for one of the case study museums.

Interview questions fell under the following categories:

- What distinguishes the nature of community museums from other kinds of museums;
- What roles did museum staff, designers and community members play during the design process;
- What challenges were experienced during the design and construction processes among designers, museum staff and community members;
- What were the intended goals for the design of the museum architecture;
- What were the expectations for the visitor experience.

The interview instrument with specific questions can be found in Appendix A.

### Data Analysis

All data recording, transcribing, coding, and analysis was completed by the author of this study. The interviews were audio recorded and through iterative rounds of listening, segments of the interview relevant to the research questions were transcribed. Transcriptions were analyzed and coded into categories based on the research questions. Each category was further coded into sub-categories according to the patterns or trends found in the interview responses. Responses with similar implications were grouped together.

## **Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis**

Through iterative rounds of listening, transcribing and coding, all relevant interview responses were coded into four categories: “nature of local community museum,” “architecture designing process and strategies,” “design element,” and “successes and challenges”. These categories were coded according to the major three questions in this research. Category one answered the questions “What distinguishes local community museums?” Category two and three were based on the research question “How do distinctions of local community museum affect the design of their museum architecture?” The third research question “How do museum professionals and architects cooperate in the process of conceptualizing and designing architecture for local community museums in order to represent and reflect community identity?” was integrated into category two. In addition, in category four, the challenges and successes for museum professionals and architects during designing process were also addressed. In each category, example quotes from the three sample museums, the Nordic Heritage Museum (NHM), Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience (WING LUKE), Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA) were juxtaposed for cross-sites analysis and discussion. Quotes from the former creative director at MOHAI were not presented in the tables, but were included in data analysis, findings and discussions.

Nature of Local Community Museum

<b>Table 1 Nature of Community Museum</b>				
<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>NHM</b>	<b>WING LUKE</b>	<b>BIMA</b>
<b>Cultural center</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed the function of the museum as cultural center, cultural campus or community center.	<i>“The museum is an interesting mix between a cultural center and a museum... we’ve got everything from the Norwegian Male Chorus to the Scandinavian Language Institute, woodcarving classes, and painting.”</i>	<i>“We really wanted to be a community center, which was more important than a museum that collected artifacts.”</i>	<i>“We want to will serve as a cultural campus with daily activities focused on the arts.”</i>
<b>Stories and experiences</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned stories or experiences for community.	<i>“We have the exhibitions that really look at the immigration experiences of the Pacific North West as well as contemporary art and culture of the Scandinavian countries.”</i>	<i>“Our mission really focuses on people and their stories and their experiences, so we try to get out what is the spirit and soul of the people we work with and the community we serve.”</i>	
<b>Multiple generations</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned multiple generations of the community.	<i>“So we do exhibitions that relates to contemporary culture as well as historical context.”</i>	<i>“I do think, in that light of thinking about the building, the generations during the war and the new community that comes in. In the space, there is a blending of the two.”</i>	

<b>Welcoming and inviting community members</b>	Content was coded for this if it expressed the willingness for inviting, embracing, welcoming, or providing access to the community.	<i>“...I think that notion somehow permits the idea that we might extend to how we design the building and welcoming the community.”</i>	<i>“The visitor experience statement lays out some strong values for us that then continue to seed throughout things like wanting to be welcoming, inter-generational, community voice and story.”</i>	<i>“The mandate behind it was to provide access to regional art to the community.”</i>  <i>“The intent was to embrace the community, to invite the community. Therefore the form of language comes out of the intent to connect the community and to respond well to this particular site.”</i>
<b>Location</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned location of the site.	<i>“The facility located on market street will also be more convenient for folks and with no question based on the business modeling we have done, our visitation will go up dramatically, not just because of the new museum but the accessibility and location will be tremendous benefit, so we’ll be able to draw more people and the experience will be very exciting.”</i>	<i>“So even we were deciding our location, should we stay in the Chinatown International District or should we move out? We had focus groups for that with our longtime stakeholders who said that ‘we need to stay in the Chinatown International District.’”</i>	<i>“Its location is a very prominent location at the main intersection as a door step on the island so it really serves as a reminder of how modern artwork is to the community.”</i>

During the six interviews with museum staff and architects of the three sample museums, responses were coded under the first category of the “Nature of Community Museum” when the interviewee mentioned or discussed the unique nature of local community museum which may distinguish a local community museum from other kinds of museums. These responses were further broken down into four sub-categories: stories and experiences, old and contemporary

generations, location and welcoming and inviting community members.

Six out of the six interviewees emphasized the prominence and accessibility of the museum's "location" as an important element for the nature of community museum. Illustrated by the table above, all the three museum staff considered their institutions to function as cultural centers for education activities or community events. In addition, all six interviewees mentioned "welcoming/embracing and inviting community members" as an important characteristic of local community museums. Both the Wing Luke Museum and Nordic Heritage Museum staff expressed that catering to multi-generational history and experience and sharing the community's stories were considerable for local community museums. Three of the six interviewees, museum staff from the Wing Luke and NHM and the former creative director at MOHAI stressed sharing and telling the stories of immigrant experience from previous and contemporary generations as the most important mission or nature for community museums and that community museums should cater to and connect inter-generational history, stories and visitors. Neither of the architects mentioned inter-generational culture, experience or history during the interviews.

### Architecture Designing Process and Strategies

For the "architecture design" category, sub-categories were similar between museum staff and architects. However, some of sub-categories were labeled differently based on interviewees' different roles played during designing process as the following table shows.

**Table 2 Architecture designing process and strategies**

<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>NHM</b>	<b>WING LUKE</b>	<b>BIMA</b>
<b>Community meetings</b>	Meetings with community members in the forms of focus groups, workshops, or open houses	<i>“So we brought together focus groups, not just community members from the Scandinavian community, but also from the greater Ballard community, academics, some funders as well to talk about some of the possible story lines and the enhancement.”</i>	<i>“...we brought together, ended up being 60 community members in four groups, and we asked them ‘what do you want to see at the new museum?’ ‘What type of programs do you want?’ ‘What about exhibits?’”</i>	<i>“We have a total of about 20 community meetings. But those were design oriented and planning oriented. In those meetings, the public was invited and the project was discussed.”</i>
<b>Community Feedbacks and Requests</b>	Listen to feedbacks and various requests from community members in forms like comment cards, meeting discussions and conveyed by museum staff.	<i>“There were number of them from making sure the landscapes f to both indigenous plants in Scandinavia as well as here in the Pacific Northwest to a sense of homeliness in the new facility to making sure that it was contemporary reflected converse in Scandinavian values, green and efficient. There were request for social community sense aspects classrooms, auditoriums. There was a desire to be able to host major dinner parties and events. There was also a desire to making sure that contemporary Scandinavian stories are told as well as those in 19<sup>th</sup> century.”</i>	<i>“The number one gathering space they wanted is a large gathering space, they called “Wedding Worthy” because before, the only place we could gather that size of group to share and experience was a gymnasium. So they wanted something higher. Something more refined...Secondarily, they would love to have a theatre space, a small intimate theatre.”</i>	<i>“We took all of that information and collected the feedbacks. About 300 people participated and we took coded them all and organized them. I read through the written materials and things that were heard at the meeting and incorporated those into the final design.”</i>



<p><b>Engagement of multi-professional groups</b></p>	<p>Content was coded for this if it stressed the involvement of other groups of people in the designing process, such as curators, museum staff, special consultants, or historians.</p>	<p><i>“Museum staff has been involved throughout the whole process as part of the focus groups and especially curatorial staff has been very closely aligned with the process as some of our senior administrators that are looking at the details of the contracts with the architects...”</i></p>	<p><i>“Initially, the community members said they really wanted a teahouse in the new building, but due to the concerns from our collection manager and in fact we’ve already got more than seventy restaurants and cafés in this area... so we didn’t end up with a teahouse.”</i></p>	<p><i>“We engaged people who were designers, curators, administrators and even management of the facility, who happened to be in the community, we used them as advisors. Additionally, we did hire a museum design consultant, who has worked on many museum projects over the country such as the Jewish Museum and the Smithsonian.”</i></p>
<p><b>Reference to other museums</b></p>	<p>Content was coded for this if it mentions reference to other museum in forms of fieldtrip, tours, meetings, or past working experience.</p>		<p><i>“At the same time, there wasn’t just about meetings because we wanted them to be integrated into creating a new museum. We would go to field trips together to other museums. We had our little evaluation questionnaire and reflected and learned together.”</i></p>	<p><i>“We also had conference with people at Seattle Art Museum who gave us tours of their and their operational process so that we could. We also engaged them later on in the process to help with things like lighting and other microclimate advices.”</i></p>
<p><b>Opinions from stakeholders (Museum staff)</b></p>	<p>Content was coded for this if it mentions opinions, voice or influence from stakeholders or board members.</p>		<p><i>“We did a fair amount of planning with our stakeholders. So even we were deciding our location, should we stay in the Chinatown International District or should we move out. We had focus groups for that with our longtime stakeholders who said that we needed to stay in the Chinatown International District. Even before we did that program we had what we called visitor experience statement. So we brought together stakeholders and that dialogue was on the way for a long time, years and years to build that.”</i></p>	<p><i>“The personality and desires of those first stakeholders are really important of our project, rolls out our project. The stakeholder group formed the seed of the idea and then started to envision a building that we would go there and all of that was without the community.”</i></p>

<p><b>Hiring architects and designers</b> <b>(Museum staff)</b></p>	<p>Content was coded for this if it mentions bringing in and hiring architects.</p>	<p><i>“We initially listed 30 architecture firms they felt might be appropriate for the project, and a committee of architects and museum board members narrowed this group to 5 that were invited to be interviewed. We are fortunate to have not only Mithun team working with us, who are very comfortable in the Pacific Northwest environment, but also Juhani Pallasmaa, a Finnish architect who did the Scandinavian embassy missions, to blend his work to this context.”</i></p>	<p><i>“We had the layout when we were seeking an architect and even had gone through a process ahead of time to do our community based work and planning. We were upfront in our requests qualifications of architects that we had this community process and we wanted that to be integrated in our architectural design process.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Most of the architect I know liked to build their own monuments for themselves. It was a phenomenal opportunity for any architect, and certainly for young architect like Matthew. We have to give him enough leash to do something that is really cool, but still has to be functional.”</i></p>
<p><b>Local Labor</b> <b>(Museum staff)</b></p>	<p>Content was coded for this if it mentioned labor force involvement within local community.</p>	<p><i>“There are also some members on that committee that are professional contractors that have been involved in the project.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Our general contractor was not only local to Seattle but also to our neighborhood and also to our communities, very much integrated in long time supported the communities with deep history and roots as well. They took incredible care when they came to this place, this project. As they were going through, they were finding pieces of photos and they would save those, put them aside so that we could add to our collection. The historic space was very challenging to preserve and to recreate...they really took on the hard part of this project from the stewardship, the responsibility to community and they embraced it.”</i></p>	<p><i>“We wanted to hire locally. We worked hard to find contractors on Bainbridge, Puget Sound that area.”</i></p>

<b>Audience consideration (Architects)</b>	Content was coded for this if it stresses concern for potential audience/visitors before or during designing process.	<i>“ I intend for the museum’s design to speak to the Scandinavian immigrant experience (the focus of the current museum’s Dream of America permanent exhibition), as well as to the parallel story of Scandinavians who chose to remain in their native lands.”</i>	<i>“I started to think that how important the immigrant story is to people. That then feeds all back into how the design was created. I have a Scandinavian in my second generation. My immigrant story obviously caused some thought thinking about how people would care about...”</i>	
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Responses were coded into the category of “architecture design process and strategies” if the designers and museum staff mentioned particular activities, strategies or process utilized during the museum building designing process. These responses were further broken down into sub-categories: “community meetings,” “community feedback and requests,” “engagement of multi professional groups,” and “reference to other museums.”

Six of six interviewees emphasized meetings with community members in forms of open house events, focus group meetings or presentations of architects during designing process. Similarly, all of the six interviewees expressed that they incorporated community members’ feedbacks and requests in the designing and decision making process.

Five of the six interviewees, museum staff from NHM, Wing Luke and BIMA, architect of BIMA and the former creative director at MOHAI mentioned that they incorporated participations, assistance and advices from multi group professionals working on museum sites into the designing process.

Three out of three designers mentioned the reference to other museums, while only one of three interviewees working as museum staff mentioned filed trip experience to other museums.

In addition, two out of three designers addressed their consideration for potential audience.

In contrast, three out of three museum staff mentioned the opinions from stakeholders during interview, while only one of the three designers brought up the influence of board members, who worked as a creative consultant rather than an architect. All the three museum staff talked about their criteria for selecting architects and their intention to hire local labors during construction stage.

Design Elements

<b>Table 3 Design Elements</b>				
<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>NHM</b>	<b>WING LUKE</b>	<b>BIMA</b>
<b>Building itself</b>	Content was coded for this if it stresses that the building itself is a representation or symbol for the community or history.	<i>“So the building itself is meant to be a station of immigrant culture and stories.”</i>	<i>“...even when we are thinking about this building and its long-rooted role and meaning within China town and the Chinese American community and the Asian American communities overall, even the building itself has its own soul and spirit.”</i>	
<b>Preservation</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed preservation of the original architecture and materials.		<i>“We obviously have the preserved historic spaces with the Luke places, the apartment, the hotel rooms, the social gathering places of the family associations.”</i>	

<b>Cultural Element</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed incorporating elements related to the community culture and history into the design.	<i>“Also we want to make sure that the building is using Nordic design elements, and some of the sustainability elements you will find in Scandinavia, from the materials to design, they all relate directly to the museum’s mission...the landscape design, optimized for ecological function for storm water treatment, will feature native plantings and a cleaner outflow to the Puget Sound watershed.”</i>	<i>“Our architects worked hand-in-hand with several Asian American artists to do public art installations throughout the space. When you first enter, with Saya Moriyasu’s the Sweet Hello which has ceramic faces of different Asian Americans and then she drew upon Chinese cultural symbols and even numerology in her piece. And there’s letter cloud with the voices of the community members reading stories in Asian languages.”</i>	
<b>Sustainability</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed sustainable strategies or materials in building design.	<i>“The new museum facility will reduce green-house gas emissions using strategies of a high-performing building envelope, bioclimatic building response from sun and wind, and efficient lighting and climate control systems.”</i>	<i>“This re-use and recycling play an important role in the building’s sustainable strategies. Windows and doors were repaired and reinstalled, fir joists were recycled as stair treads, and fire doors and other no longer ‘functional’ objects served as inspiration for furniture and works of art.”</i>	<i>“We chose materials, production technologies approaches to the buildings that is very sustainable because it reflects the stakeholders will and the community.”</i>
<b>Public space</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned public space served for community events or classes.	<i>“There were request for social community sense aspects classrooms, auditoriums. There was a desire to be able to host major dinner parties and events.”</i>	<i>“The number one gathering space they wanted is a large gathering space, they called “Wedding Worthy” because before, the only place we could gather that size of group to share and experience was a gymnasium. So they wanted something higher. Something more refined. So that was the number one priority. Secondly, we would love to have a theatre space, a small intimate theatre.”</i>	<i>“This building was specifically designed with hidden doors for the community group to use one part of it and multiple groups to use it at the same time. We built a theatre for parties and public events and two classrooms for drawing classes and board meetings.”</i>

<b>Freedom of visiting routes</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed the freedom of visiting routes for museum audience.		<i>“There isn’t one story line through the whole building. I do think in some sense that is a different model, different challenge for visitors to go through. We decided not to go that route. Because the inherent diversity and multiplicity and layering of generations and community voices that we decided to, instead, create platforms so those voices can continue to come out.”</i>	<i>“We distinctly decided not to have a particularly prescribed path. I want the viewer to have their own path and decide their own experience. So once you enter the museum, you have several choices to make. The users have to make decisions which way to go rather than being manipulated and there is no right way or wrong way.”</i>
<b>Transparency</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed transparency for building design.		<i>“They really wanted the museum to be continuously integrated into the neighborhood, so they wanted that fluidity and transparency...under our front façade on the North, a lot of windows enable the idea to share inside activities out to the outside.”</i>	<i>“The museum is a reflection of the values of the community. That is evidenced by the transparency and the effort to connect with the artwork in the community members...this museum sits on the prominent street corner, so the building not only reaches out the street corner and also the transparent façade and the curve of the western façade is the invitation to enter.”</i>
<b>Location</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed geographic location of museum buildings.	<i>“The new location of the Museum will allow us to be part of commerce in Ballard. The current building is lovely and has a lot of charm, but the new location on market Street would draw people in.”</i>	<i>“So even we were deciding our location, should we stay in the Chinatown International District or should we move out? We had focus groups for that with our longtime stakeholders who said that ‘we need to stay in the Chinatown International District.’”</i>	<i>“Its location is a very prominent location at the main intersection as a door step on the island so it really serves as a reminder of how modern artwork is to the community.”</i>

<b>Natural light</b>	Content was coded for this if it tries to include natural light or day light in the building design.	<i>“The final design will function on an elemental level of materials, of structural honesty, of simplicity of form and perhaps most importantly— a very serious consideration of daylight.”</i>	<i>“Daylight from the lightwells guides people up and into the building. As one begins to move through the museum, it becomes quiet and the spaces are more intimate.”</i>	<i>“Matthew created curved wood louvers to wrap around the outside of the glass in order to block direct sunlight and provide ample shade for the artwork.”</i>
<b>Materials</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned materials	<i>“We want to make sure that the building is using Nordic design elements, and some of the sustainability elements you will find in Scandinavia, from the materials to design, they all relate directly to the museum’s mission.”</i>	<i>“So whenever we took something out, we took out as much as we can without losing the spirit of it. Whenever we put something back, it was always new materials and we wanted it to be clear that it was a new material. So the new material would be steel or MDF or drywall.”</i>	<i>“For one, it becomes an example because it is very energy efficient. It sets an example also because it’s built flat with solid material, built very well with steel and concrete structure.”</i>
<b>Modernism/ Simplicity of form</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned Modernism or the simplicity of design form.	<i>“Our design will be a ‘warm Modernism’ take on ‘contemporary Nordic architecture’... will function on an ‘elemental level of materials, of structural honesty, of simplicity of form’ and perhaps most importantly— ‘a very serious consideration of daylight.’”</i>	<i>“It’s very modern and clean, modern in my mind, but reflecting the region they (museum staff) work in as well. The Wing Luke, if you notice, what we put in is very new.”</i>	<i>“I don’t intend that the building subscribe to any specific style. Although I think if there is a style, there are more parallel to Modernism than any other style, as evidenced by the structure and the relationship of the inside and outside walls and the way in which materials are combined, the simplicity of the form, I think led itself towards Modernism, but I really didn’t design with that in mind or have any intent to subscribe to any particular style.”</i>

<b>Layering</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed the contrast or progress of space in layers in the building.		<i>“At the Wing Luke, our thought process here was a vertical rather than a horizontal. So the way we arranged the rooms or stacking of the programs was the street level was very vibrated and very active space. As you move further up, we have more the museum the galleries more contemplative on a lot quieter space. So you have a lot more engagement in the activities at the beginning at the street level and as you move up through and into the lightwell you’ll come into a lot smaller gallery spaces that you could have a lot more personal experiences and quiet time.”</i>	<i>“Upon entering the museum, visitors leave the everyday behind. And the other idea is that the building was also open up from the inside in a way that there was another layer of invitation to explore.”</i>
<b>Functionality</b>	Content was coded for this if it stressed functionality.		<i>“At the design studio, a signature design was a very important thing to do...working with museums, who would look at what the education programs, what the visitors respond to, where you need a comfortable seat. The tools of communication and functionality weigh more.”</i>	<i>“Generally, form follows function. The building functions as a museum before appreciated as a piece of art. The function comes first.”</i>
<b>Narrative/ Story-telling</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned that the space was designed to be narrative or storytelling.	<i>“The design is quite interesting, there’s a large atrium that separates the major galleries and the atrium, really represents the immigration which would go back and forth between the stories that relate to immigrant experience and the new world and the culture of the old.”</i>	<i>“But at the same time, we do identify according to our individual ethnic groups. So why don’t we have a series of small galleries where we can tell those single stories in total too.”</i>	

Table 3 illustrates responses from the three case study museums coded into the category of design element. These responses demonstrate the elements that were taken into the interviewees' thoughts and practices when designing their museum buildings.

Four of the six interviewees thought that the building itself could be a symbol for community history and stories, including both the museum staff from Wing Luke and NHM, the architect of Wing Luke and the creative director at MOHAI.

Preservation and recycling played an important role in the Wing Luke Museum's building strategies, which was not mentioned by interviewees from other case study sites. Both the museum staff and architect of Wing Luke stressed the preservation of the original building.

Four of the six interviewees from NHM, MOHAI and the Wing Luke stated that they did or would incorporate special design elements from the community's culture and history into their architecture.

Five of six interviewees stressed "sustainability" as a design consideration, including the museum staff and architects from all the three sample museums. Furthermore, the five interviewees also mentioned their intentions to design public space for community events.

Both the architects from the Wing Luke and BIMA emphasized that they would like to give visitors freedom to choose path without prescribing visiting routes, and so did the museum staff from the Wing Luke. In addition, both the architects from the Wing Luke and BIMA stressed the importance of "functionality" in their building design.

Four of the six interviewees mentioned "transparency" in their museum buildings with large area of glass windows. They are the architects and museum staff from the Wing Luke and BIMA.

ALL six interviewees stressed the accessible location of their museum buildings in the

local communities.

All three architects mentioned the incorporation of natural light in their museum buildings.

Five of the six interviewees mentioned material consideration during design process, including both museum staff and architects from the three museum samples.

When discussing architectural style, both the architects of the Wing Luke and BIMA and the museum staff from NHM stressed “Modernism” and the simplicity of form for their museum buildings. Both the architects from Wing Luke and BIMA mentioned “functionality” in their building design.

Three of six interviewees mentioned the intention to creating layering structure in the museum space, including the two architects from the Wing Luke and NHM and the museum staff from the Wing Luke.

Four of six interviewees from Wing Luke and NHM intended to create narrative space that is able to tell stories and experience from their community members.

Successes and Challenges

<b>Table 4 Successes and Challenges</b>				
<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>NHM</b>	<b>WING LUKE</b>	<b>BIMA</b>
<b>Successes</b>				
<b>Positive impact on community outside the museum</b>	Content was coded for this if it referred to positive impact from building the new museum on community economy, partnership or environment.	<i>“The Museum will also provide a gathering place for regional Nordic organizations, which will build partnerships and collaboration within the Nordic-American community.”</i>	<i>“So we are operationally able to connect our visitors to the neighborhood, help them to support the small family owned businesses as well. Excitedly, that comes true. 85% of our visitors also go to the nearby restaurant. 75% buy something in a nearby store. And programmatically, we furthered that as well through neighborhood walking tours.”</i>	<i>“There is a park straight across the road of this museum. When we started to build the museum. That was a polluted service station covered with weeds and because the museum was close there, we organized to clean up that corner and now this area is much better.”</i>
<b>Ownership by community members</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned ownership sense of community members.		<i>“The proudest thing when I walk through the galleries now is to hear people call this our museum. They have taken on the ownership and from my heart I couldn’t wish anything more.”</i>	<i>“The idea was for the stakeholders to create the building and then effectively transfer the perception of ownership to the community.”</i>
<b>Reflection of community</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned reflection of community values or features.	<i>“There’s a real desire to make sure the new museum reflects the values of the current museum as far as having a real community base and comfortable feel, really very home-like,”</i>	<i>“As soon as we completed the building, during our opening reception, people came to me and said ‘This is it. This is exactly what I was talking about.’ I could feel their needs and requests were really reflected.”</i>	<i>“I do think the museum is the reflection of the community particularly at this scale of a museum. A museum if it doesn’t represent the community, it at least creates the dialogue about these ideals. It is a supposition to which we can respond ‘does it’ ‘doesn’t it’ or ‘how does it’ relate to the community.”</i>

<b>Challenges</b>				
<b>Lack of understanding and vision</b>	Content was coded for this if it mentioned or indicated the lack of understanding or vision from community members, or stakeholders.	<i>“Many of the stakeholders and community members are not museum professionals and they don’t have a great deal of experiences and awareness of best practices or what other institutions are doing or how we might be able to tell stories, and more compelling fact the museum has been doing for the last 30 to 35 years. So many of our patrons feel very comfortable with the museum that exists today and the core exhibition and the facility itself.”</i>		<i>“We had oppositions. People even sued us for this project, but those people who opposed now love it. A lot of people can’t visualize what’s happening and whether it is the wrong thing for the community.”</i>
<b>Overloaded information and requests</b>	Content was coded for this if it addressed the issue of prioritizing and making decisions due to too much information or too limited source.	<i>“One of the challenges for leaderships is always being able to figure out the priorities with limited resource. Taking way the concerns and measuring the resources would be the determinate effect. If it is critical to the mission, we will put it in priorities.”</i>	<i>“It gives a very clear filter because the biggest challenge you get at a museum is what to leave out.”</i>	<i>“For the community, the challenge was to trying to make sense of so much information and trying to bring that direction out of it without letting the design be altered to the point that it was no longer had a strong gesture. To keep design from being diluted by so much input was a challenge.”</i>
<b>Decision conflicts</b>	Content was coded for this if it raised decision conflicts between different groups during the designing process.		<i>There was the whole question about whether or not we should have a case or a teahouse. Some people said yes, some people said no we don’t. That was a moment where how do you reach consensus, how do you decide.”</i>	

Table 4 illustrates coded examples of the successes and challenges concluded by interviewees.

All the three museum staff from sample museums mentioned the positive impacts on their community economy, environment or community partnership after the new buildings were planned and constructed.

Four of the six interviewees mentioned “ownership” during the interview, including the museum staff from the Wing Luke, the former creative director at MOHAI and the architect and project manager of BIMA.

All six interviewees indicated that local museum architecture planning and design should reflect the voice, characteristics and requests from the community.

Two of the three museum staff expressed that the lack of understanding and vision from stakeholders and community members.

All six interviewees considered the overload information and requests as a big challenge during the designing process, which resulted in cost of time and prioritizing issue.

Two of the six interviewees, the museum staff from Wing Luke and the former creative director at MOHAI, thought decision conflicts among different groups of people during design process posed a big challenge for them.

## Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

### Nature of Local Community Museum

Based on the analysis above, the mostly mentioned characteristic elements for local community museum are “easily accessible location” and “being welcoming and inviting.” According to Sirefman, museum architecture provides connection to a local neighborhood and relevance to a specific community and the contemporary posturban museum must present an architecture that is substantive and welcoming. The ideal museum building cultivates both anticipation and memory while relating to its location and community.<sup>91</sup> It is also noteworthy that the both the Wing Luke and NHM museum buildings is and will be located at prominent spots in the International District and Ballard, where long history of immigrant culture were originated and proliferated. Additionally, the architect of BIMA project stated that the prominent of BIMA inspired local residents’ ownership of the museum. As Pudifoot also mentioned, locus, as the first of the six elements that define community identity, is taken to denote the perception by residents of the boundaries of their community, its key physical, environmental, and built features, and the pattern of social/cultural relations that are perceived by inhabitants to characterize their community.<sup>92</sup>

Both the museum staff Wing Luke and NHM considered their institutions as cultural centers for the community. As asserted by Erikson, Ward, and Wachendorf, indigenous people see Western museums, collecting and restoring bones of their ancestors, as places of death. Tribal museums, however, are sometimes known as “cultural centers” to avoid negative association.

They house and display objects of the past and support continuity of cultural life in the present

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<sup>91</sup> Susanna Sirefman, “Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture,” in *Daedalus*, 128 (1999): 297-320.

<sup>92</sup> John E. Puddifoot, “Dimensions of Community Identity,” in *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1995): 357.

and future.<sup>93</sup> The distinction between a museum and a cultural center is delicate and vague in places, but judging from interviewees' responses and literature quote above, cultural center appears to be more dynamic and inter-generational, whereas public could easily see museums as places connected to the past and history. That is why it is noteworthy that for museums dedicated to ethnicity groups such as the Wing Luke Museum and NHM, both of the museum staff interviewees from the institutions considered sharing and telling the stories of immigrant experience from previous and contemporary generations as the most important mission or nature for community museums. While these elements were not mentioned by the architect and project manager of BIMA. As the mission of BIMA states, this museum is to “engage a diverse population with the art and craft of our region and our time,”<sup>94</sup> which is regional rather than ethnic, contemporary rather than historical. It seems that different missions of different museums could result in their different opinions when considering the characteristic nature of the institutions.

### Architecture Designing Process and Strategies

In *Building Museums: A handbook for small and midsize organizations*, the authors provide their experience and advices on the museum building designing and construction process, from needs assessment and project planning to design development, budgeting, construction and settling into new space as best practices reference.<sup>95</sup> Some strategies they provide share certain similarities with interviewees' responses. In the book, the authors stress that

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<sup>93</sup> Patricia P. Erikson, Helma Ward, and Kirk Wachendorf, *Voices of a Thousand People: the Makah Cultural and Research Center* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 174.

<sup>94</sup> “Bainbridge Island Museum of Art- Mission and Vision,” accessed on May 11, 2014, <http://www.biartmuseum.org/about/mission/>.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Herskovitz, Timothy Glines and David Grabitske, *Building Museums: A Handbook for Small and Midsize Organizations* (Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012).

“learn as much as you can about the audiences you serve” and that “public meetings or focus groups can help you learn what the community values and wants from the organization.”<sup>96</sup>

Judging from the data analysis above, all the interviewees agreed on the community or focus group meetings as an effective strategy to gain the requests and reflections from community members. For example, BIMA initially designed ten architecture models for community members to review during open house events and provided them with comment cards. According to the project manager of BIMA project, Mr. Andrew Lonseth, “we advertise a big public event and hundreds of people came. We had the ten models set out and we had opinion cards. People made comments on the cards while they walked around.” Nordic Heritage Museum and Wing Luke museum held focus group meetings and had the architects presented to community members. Museum staff played the roles as intermediary, conveying feedbacks and requests from community members to designers in both of these two museums. Attitudes towards the requests and reflections from community voice also varied. In BIMA project, the project manager expressed that “we did let the public comment influence our decisions but it absolutely wasn’t a democratic process.”

In the BIMA project, requests from community were “very environmentally conscious and they are willing to do things to support the environment even it costs them more money. Our original group of stakeholders also felt it strongly. We chose materials, production technologies approaches to the buildings that is very sustainable because it reflects the stakeholders will and the community,” according to the project manager. Likewise, one of the major requests from community for Nordic Heritage Museum also related to design quality. As the executive director at the Nordic Heritage Museum indicated, the community made various requests “everything from making sure the landscapes fits to both indigenous plants in Scandinavia as well as here in

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<sup>96</sup> Lbid, 11.

the Pacific Northwest, to a sense of homeliness in the new facility, to making sure that it was contemporarily reflected converse in Scandinavian values, green and efficient.” “One of the challenges we discover in the core exhibition of the current museum is that it really looks at the time between 1870 and 1920. From the focus groups, we realized that we needed to expand the stories both into the past and to the current times, so from that input of the community, it changes our orientation towards both the institutional vision and for the core exhibition that we had into the future.” At the Wing Luke Museum, museum staff pointed out that community requested that “the number one exhibition that we want to have is a Pan-Asian immigrant story. We wanted it to be Pan Asian Pacific American because together, we are stronger. But at the same time, we do identify according to our individual ethnic groups.” The previous creative director at Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) also talked about the requests from community during the design process of the new MOHAI building. They got reinforcement and support for telling a lot of sides of the story rather than merely sunny and proud sides; “it was taking a chance to develop a point of view that not sanctifying them.” All of the requests from community mentioned above by interviewees focused more on concept and design quality of the architecture rather than functionality, although for the Wing Luke Museum and Nordic Heritage Museum, there were also more practical and functional requests for public spaces such as “community halls,” “classrooms,” and “theatres.” In addition to community input, all of the six interviewees stressed the input and engagement of multi-groups of museum staff. As the architect of BIMA claimed, most of the requests and suggestions from museum side were more functionality concerned than design concerned.

From the data analysis, it seems that different roles of museum staff and architects played during design process lead to different considerations. While all the three designers mentioned

that reference to other museums provided inspirations for their design, the museum staff focused more on administrative issues, such as selecting architects and local labor hiring. As the architect of Wing Luke mentioned, ““I also went to New York, the Tenement Museum, which is an immersion building and I was startled, as well as inspired when I was there, during the tour through restored room in the tenement building. It was a really immersive tour, they did a lot of research on the stories and families that was there.” The former creative director at MOHAI also mentioned her previous experience at another museum, “I was very fortunate at the Holocaust museum to work with a director who comes from Israel... Here, I stole his concept to get the big idea boiled down to a few words and keep focus on that.” In view of the quote examples from museum staff when asked the question “how to balance between architects’ personal styles and community identity when designing a local community museum,” it seems that architects’ willingness to integrate community into design process and their familiarity to the community’s culture were competitive and important qualifications, although as the project manager of BIMA pointed out, “we have to give him enough leash to do something that is really cool, but still has to be functional.” Correspondingly, designers also showed their considerations for the community as audiences of the museum buildings in terms of immigrant experience, stories and aesthetics.

It is also worthy to note that all the museum staff indicated that they preferred to hire local labor during design and construction stages. As the deputy executive director at Wing Luke said, “Our general contractor was not only local to Seattle but also to our neighborhood and also to our communities, very much integrated in long time supported the communities with deep history and roots as well... they really took on the hard part of this project from the stewardship, the responsibility to community and they embraced it.”

What's more, five interviewees regarded the engagement of multi professional groups in museums as one of their strategies during design and decision-making process, ranging from collection concerns, research of the local history to administration and hardware facilities. The engagement process varied between different museums. The BIMA involved museum professionals at the later stage of design process as the project manager stated, "The whole story I've told you so far happened before we hired any executive director... About the time we got the design completed, we hired an executive director. There was a good understanding of what we would like to display and how we wanted to display. When the executive director came along, he is also a curator, he has strong ideas. The more we talk, the more ideas everybody got, including the original stakeholders. We changed the layout, we added display capacity, we improved standards for temperature control and security. All of these changes did occur after we hired the executive director." Whereas both the former creative director at MOHAI and the executive director at NHM pointed out that their museum professionals were engaged at first beginning. According to the creative director at MOHAI, "When we are doing our initial work, we included a public historian...she is about researching, finding out the interesting and unique local stories and then share them in as many ways as possible. And our library staff was responsible for document collection, photo collection and stories. Collection team worked with us on environmental standards, on lighting standards, on displays, on finding selection of artifacts..."

### Design Elements

Design elements in these three museums appeared to be varied and broad, but patterns could still be concluded from their responses. The mostly referred elements were "sustainability," "location" and "public space." All the interviewees from the three museum sites

stressed sustainability as an important concern during their designing process by using either recycled materials from the old building or new but environment friendly materials and including day lighting. In particular, the architect and project manager from BIMA emphasized that “sustainability is not just about environment, it’s also about the social and cultural aspects of a community impact of this building. I believe the impact of cultural awareness is just as important as the impact on the environment.” As Suzanne MacLeod reminds, “perhaps it is the right moment to begin to try and differentiate between the mass of new museums and identify the pockets of activity that can provide museums and galleries with a more meaningful vision of museum architecture, one that is socially, as well as economically and environmentally, and sustainable.”<sup>97</sup>

What’s more, all the six interviewees laid stress on functional “public space” for community events in the museum buildings, which also appears to be the mostly mentioned requests from community members. All six interviewees stressed accessibility of their museum location, which were also emphasized in the first category as an important feature of local community museums. These design elements also reflect museum staff and designers’ considerations on the relationship between the museum building and the community it serves.

“Transparency” was also a mainly focused element according to data analysis. The museum staff from the Wing Luke Museum said “they (community members) really wanted the museum to be continuously integrated into the neighborhood, so they wanted that fluidity and transparency.” Their neighborhood was not highly residential, which resulted in darkness and inconvenience at night. Operable windows “shares inside activities to the outside” and provides transparency both functionally and psychologically when combined with the all-day admission pass that visitors can come in and out freely. The architect of BIMA also emphasized that, “The

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<sup>97</sup> Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 384.

intent of this building is to provide and illuminate the connection between the community and the art that the community creates and appreciates. With the understanding of connectedness, the building is very transparent for a reason as to illuminate that connection.” “Through the use of lights mounted at the interior of the building’s glazing, the museum is illuminated at night, acting as a beacon that is visible from multiple vantages.” Although the architect and CEO of NHM did not mention “transparency,” judging from the overview photo of the museum building, large area of glass is used in the building façade. The transparency element leads to “natural light” issue, all three architects of the three sample museums mentioned the use of daylight in their design. While the glass windows and lightwells do not appear to pose any threats to collections at Wing Luke since they were built in non-exhibit areas, the glass façade of BIMA, as an art museum, could raise potential issues to the artworks. Recognizing the need for a solution to the heat gain that would result from a building with a skin comprised of glass, the architect of BIMA “created curved wood louvers to wrap around the outside of the glass in order to block direct sunlight and provide ample shade for the artwork.”

As for architectural styles, architects from all three case study museums referred to “Modernism” when talking about their building styles, despite that their interpretation of “Modernism” varied on a certain level. The architect of BIMA emphasized that he did not subscribe to any style intentionally, even though the structure and “simplicity of form” led his style towards “Modernism.” The architect of Nordic Heritage Museum used the phrase “warm Modernism” to take on “contemporary Nordic architecture.” In these three cases, even though the simplicity and functionality of Modernism were incorporated in architects’ design languages, they were not the only ones.

Architect and museum staff from the Wing Luke Museum believed that the old East

Kong Yick building was so long-rooted in the history of International District Chinatown through more than a hundred years that it became a symbol and signature for the community. The previous Creative Director from MOHAI also mentioned that people from the community recognized the historical building at MOHAI, which made the designers' job of dealing with the architecture much easier. Whereas the building for the Nordic Heritage Museum is newly planned and designed, the CEO from the Nordic Heritage Museum agreed that the building could tell stories. Instead of letting the building itself speak, they incorporated story lines in the building design with the supplement of core exhibitions to make it narrative. The architect of Nordic Heritage Museum, Rich Franko, said he intended for the museum's design to speak to the Scandinavian immigrant experience (the focus of the current museum's Dream of America permanent exhibition), as well as to the parallel story of Scandinavians who chose to remain in their native lands. The museum will put these two narratives in dialogue with each other.<sup>98</sup> As Leslie Bedford suggest, "storytelling is an ideal strategy for realizing the constructivist museum, an environment where visitors of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to create their own meaning and find that place, the intersection between the familiar and the unknown where genuine learning occurs."<sup>99</sup>

Both the Wing Luke and NHM expressed that they incorporated certain amount of community-related elements into the architecture. The Wing Luke Museum cooperated with Asian artists and used their art installations for the building, even though the architect claimed there were no Asian elements incorporated in the architecture design. Similarly, both the architect of the NHM and the museum staff of the Wing Luke Museum raised questions such as

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<sup>98</sup> Zach Mortice, "Mithun Selected to Design Seattle's Nordic Heritage Museum," in *AIArchitect*, April 18, 2008, accessed May 13, 2014, [http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0418/0418p\\_nordic.cfm](http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0418/0418p_nordic.cfm).

<sup>99</sup> Leslie Bedford, "Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums," *Curator* 44(2001): 28.

“what is Nordic in Seattle today”<sup>100</sup> and “what is Asian Pacific American and what is Asian American aesthetic and how does that come through?” Both of these two museums serve and cater to multi-ethnic communities with cultures, histories and immigrants from diverse countries. At the same time, interviewees from both of the museums noted that they not only wanted to include ethnic cultural elements in the architecture, but also intended to show local Seattle elements in their museum buildings. According to the deputy executive director from the Wing Luke Museum, “this building, built in 1910 by our Chinese American pioneers, is very Pacific Northwest. This building is similar in type to other, what we called ‘gold rush era’ hotel. That is very much Pacific Northwest, deep rooted in Seattle... We preserved those elements too.” The CEO from NHM, also stressed that landscape design for the new museum will “feature native plantings and a cleaner outflow to the Puget Sound watershed.”

The Wing Luke Museum and BIMA both chose to give audience freedom of selecting their own visiting routes rather than design prescribed or linear routes. Both of the architects consciously created layers in the building structure. The architect of Wing Luke Museum put emphasis on the contrast between “active” and “reflective”, “chaotic” and “quite” between the public space for temporary exhibits on the first floor and the small individual galleries for immigrant stories of individual ethnic groups in Pan Asian Pacific American community upstairs. Whereas the architect of BIMA considered the layers to serve the purpose of “invitation to explore.” It was noteworthy that the different natures and missions of different sites showed the diversity of their expectations of the visitor experience. While the architect of BIMA expected that the visitors could “leave everyday behind” upon entering the building, the architect and CEO of Nordic Heritage Museum expressed their desire to create a very “home-like” and

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<sup>100</sup> Zach Mortice, “Mithun Selected to Design Seattle’s Nordic Heritage Museum,” in *AIArchitect*, April 18, 2008, accessed May 13, 2014, [http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0418/0418p\\_nordic.cfm](http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek08/0418/0418p_nordic.cfm).

“comfortable” atmosphere to visitors.

The variety of materials also reflects different architects’ design languages as well as different institution identity. While the NHM wants to make sure that the building is using Nordic design elements, and some of the sustainability elements you will find in Scandinavia, from the materials to design, they all relate directly to the museum’s mission, the architect of the Wing Luke stated that “whenever we took something out, we took out as much as we can without losing the spirit of it. Whenever we put something back, it was always new materials and we wanted it to be clear that it was a new material. So the new material would be steel or MDF or drywall” in order to realize the intention for both preservation and breakthrough. The architect of BIMA wanted to set “an example also because it’s built flat with solid material, built very well with steel and concrete structure.”

### Successes and Challenges

Judging from the data analysis, all the three case study museums mentioned the positive impacts on their community economy, environment or community partnership after the new buildings were planned and constructed. The all-day pass admission and walking tours offered by the Wing Luke Museum enable visitors to explore the whole community, as well as create business opportunities for family restaurants and stores located in International District. The CEO from the NHM assumed that gathering place provided for regional Nordic organizations could contribute to partnerships and collaboration within the Nordic-American community. What’s more, the construction of BIMA project also improved surrounding living environment on Bainbridge Island, according to the BIMA project manager.

All the interviewees saw the reflection of community values, spirit and characteristic as a

significant success of community museum architecture. According to Vered Amit, shared features such as a sense of place, building social networks, and recognizing and acknowledging common history, religion, sport, or employment are the valued marks of community identity.<sup>101</sup> When explaining the sustainable design of BIMA project, both the architect and project manager pointed out that the community members on the island were very “environmentally conscious”; that was why they chose “materials, production technologies approaches to the buildings that is very sustainable because it reflects the stakeholders will and the community.” Both the architect and deputy director at Wing Luke Museum indicated that the historical building was rooted in Chinatown itself and its history reflected the spirit and history of Pan Asian community. The former creative director at MOHAI also stated that “I think the character of the community is reflected in that their place is where ‘we are very town and cheap, we are just a third or fourth place city, we have a kind of humility and making fun of yourself.’ So we try to reflect that characteristic and in places, it really works.”

Unlike the uniformity of successes, challenges to each museum appear to be various. The most general challenge for interviewees is overloaded information and requests from different groups during design process. As suggested by the architect of BIMA, “To keep design from being diluted by so much input was a challenge.” Decision conflict is another issue for museum staff especially since they often play the role as mediators between different groups during the design process. Meanwhile, the former creative director at MOHAI also pointed out that “Working with the board was challenging in that we tried to bring history up to today and many of them were powerful players in that history so they had very specific ideas about how it should be told and should be included. And it was a challenge to give a balance of a historical

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<sup>101</sup> Vered Amit, *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3-20.

perspective.” In addition to the overloaded input, lack of understanding and vision from the board, stakeholders and community members also resulted in challenges for museum staff and designers. When asked the solutions for these issues, five out of six interviewees mentioned patience, explanation and compromise. The deputy director from the Wing Luke Museum suggested that transparency was very helpful for gaining the trust and understanding of the community members.

As Paul Gilroy, in “Urban social movements, ‘race’ and community” states, the notion of community identity provides community groups with a sense of solidarity without requiring that they unify all contradictory and plural meanings.<sup>102</sup> For Gilroy, the project of community is not to find a fixed identity that can consolidate all differences and contradictions within it but one that can help produce a symbolic capacity that allows plural – and potentially contradictory – meanings to co-exist.<sup>103</sup> In view of the responses from interviewees, although challenges emerged through the whole design and construction period of the museum building, it was their job to seeking the balance between opinions from different groups and shared the thinking process and decision making process to the community members. As the deputy executive director at Wing Luke stated, “We were sharing with them upfront. It’s not a matter of right or wrong, and it’s not a matter of one is better than another. There will be other factors that help us decide.”

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<sup>102</sup> Paul Gilroy, “Urban social movements, ‘race’ and community,” in *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory: A reader*, ed. P. Williams and L. Chrismanin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 406-407.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The goal of this research is to examine how the architecture of local community museums represents and reflects community identity. Judging from the results of data analysis above, it appears that local community museum architecture could represent and reflect community identity.

Based on the results and discussions above, local community museums appears to be a dynamic institution, often located within an easily accessible spot within the neighborhood, inviting and welcoming the community members by sharing their stories, experience or histories. All three museums consider themselves to be closely connected to their communities with accessible location and inviting intention. Nevertheless, it seems that different missions of different museums could result in their different opinions when considering the characteristic nature of the institutions.

Local community museums seem to be successful in using strategies like holding community meetings, actively responding to community's feedbacks and requests, hiring locally and involving multi professional groups in the architectural design process of planning for new facilities and renovating old ones. When planning and designing local community museums, design elements such as sustainability, public space for community use, accessible location and simplicity of form appear to be most significant ones to consider. Besides, the prominent location and history context of the buildings could inspire community's emotional recognition to the locus.

While architects use their personal ingenuity and architectural language to design, museum staff play the roles of mediators between architects, stakeholders and community members to make sure that these museum buildings will not only become signature landmarks

for the designers themselves but also narrative spaces and spiritual centers representing and reflecting the whole community.

While the active participation and involvement of community members ensures the embodiment and reflection of community museum architecture, it also brings challenges for the designers and museum staff.

It is difficult to say whether these findings can be generalized through the field. Neither could it be certain that the designing strategies, elements, successes and challenges that were concluded from these community museum architecture design case studies would also be found in other community building planning and designing process.

Further studies may wish to focus on tribal museums and community museums in non-Western cultural context. The research subjects may include not only architects and museum staff, but also exhibit designers, community members and visitors, since they are also necessary groups who might affect or bear important opinions on community museum architectural design issues. In addition, this research provides a perspective mainly from museum studies rather than architecture, thus further studies may also wish to provide architectural perspective and examination.

The architecture of community museums included in this research appear to represent and reflect their communities' identity as indicated by their institutional nature, their strategies employed during design processes and their positive impacts on their communities. This research could contribute a new perspective from Museology to museum professionals, designers and museum architects to rethink the relations between museum studies and architecture, especially in the process of community museum planning and designing. For museum professionals, this research provides an exploratory starting point for understanding their status during the process

of designing and constructing a community museum architecture and three-way mediation between museum visitors, community members and designers. For architects and designers, this research provides them with a perspective from Museology and visitor experience perspective rather than purely tectonic perspective.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Instruments**

**Category 1:** What distinguishes local community museums?

1. What are the mission and nature of your institution?
2. How does your institution differentiate from other kinds of museums?

**Category 2:** How does the nature of a local community museum affect the design of its architecture?

1. How did these differences influence on the museum building design?
2. Could you briefly talk about the designing and construction process?
3. How did you involve your community members in the designing process?
4. What are the intended goals when designing the museum architecture project and what is the expectation of visitor experience?
5. What design elements did you use for your museum building?

**Category 3:** How do museum professionals and architects cooperate in the process of designing the architecture for local community museums in order to represent and reflect community identity?

1. What were the challenges experienced during the designing and constructing process between museum staff, designers and community members when they are cooperating?  
How did you overcome them?
2. What were the feedbacks or reflections from community members? Were they within your expectations or not?
3. How do you see the relationship between architect's personal style versus the community identity when designing the museum building?
4. What are the successes for your museum building?

## Appendix B: Museum Building Images

### Nordic Heritage Museum



**Nordic Heritage Museum Overview, Image: Mithun**

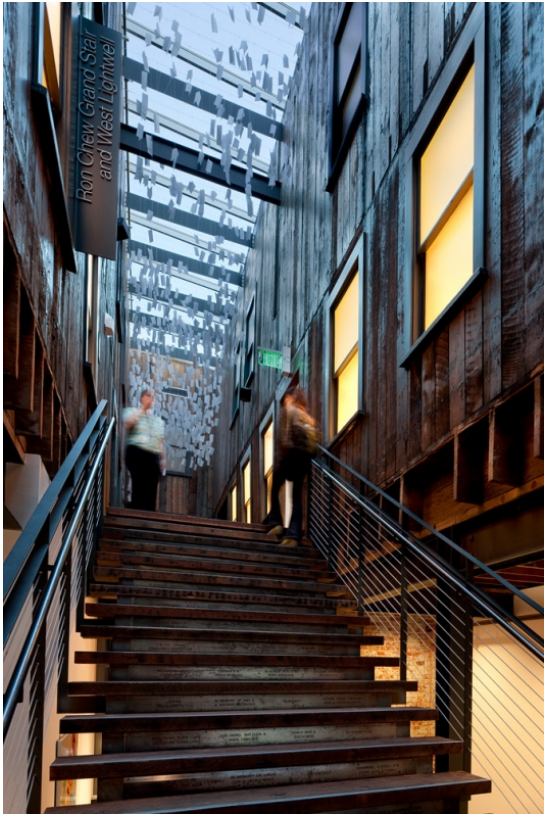


**The Nordic Heritage Museum Interior Overview, Image: Nordic Heritage Museum**

The Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience



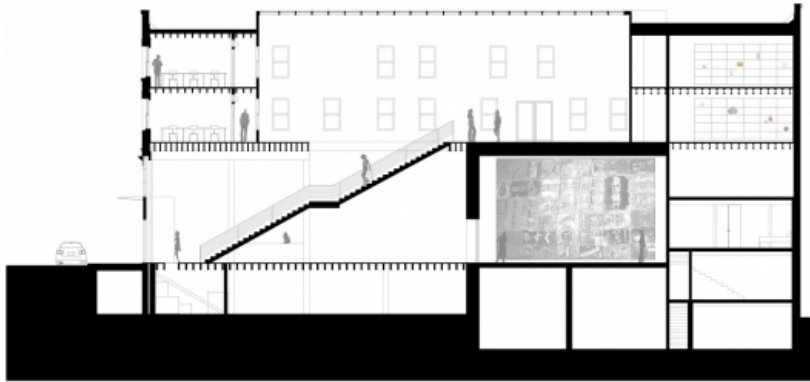
**The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience front façade, Photo: Lara Swimmer**



**Left: The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience Interior Lightwell, Photo: Lara Swimmer**

**Below: The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Community Hall, Photo: Wing Luke Museum**



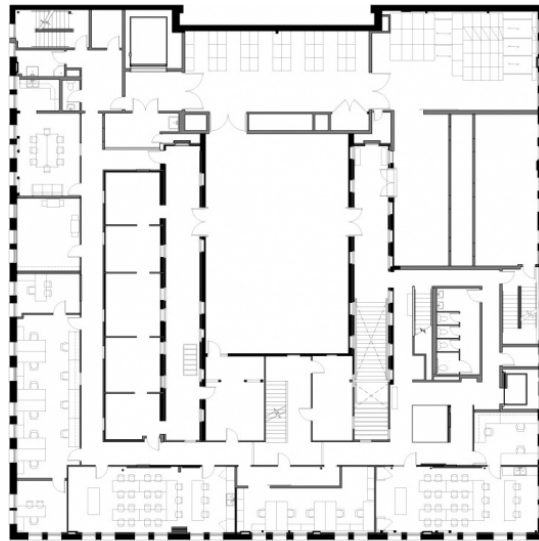
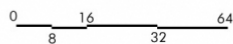


Left: The Wing Luke Museum of Asian Pacific American Experience, North-South Section.  
 Bottom Left: Floor Plan 1  
 Bottom Right: Floor Plan 2  
 Images: Olson Kundig Architects

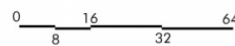
WING LUKE ASIAN MUSEUM  
 NORTH-SOUTH SECTION



WING LUKE ASIAN MUSEUM  
 FIRST FLOOR



WING LUKE ASIAN MUSEUM  
 SECOND FLOOR



The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art



**The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Overview, Image: Coates Design Architects**



**The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Exterior and Interior Photo, Photo: Asani LLC**