



## Interpretive Plan 2024 - 2027

This document provides an overview of the Greater Kent Historical Society interpretive planning principles for 2024 to 2027. It is designed to be used in concert with the GKHS Project Planning Template which outlines specific interpretive details for each project. This document should be revised every 3 – 5 years to reflect the GKHS mission/values and current museum standards and best practices.

**Mission Statement.** The Greater Kent Historical Society (GKHS) inspires the community to explore and discover their history. We educate and preserve diverse family and kinfolk storylines for future generations.

**Interpretation** refers to the way the Greater Kent Historical Society facilitates **learning** experiences, such as exhibits, programs, digital content, and print materials.

**Interpretive planning** is the intentional and rigorous process of addressing 4 essential questions to design learning experiences.

1. **Why** are we doing this project?
2. **Who** is the intended audience?
3. **What** is the format for the project?
4. **How** do we design learning experiences for the intended audience(s)?

**Why** are we doing this project?

GKHS will identify 1 – 3 specific goals for each project. (See GKHS Project Planning Template.) At least 1 of the goals should **clearly reflect the GKHS mission statement** by using the exact verbiage or obvious spirit of the statement. The other goal(s) should closely align to the Mission.

### **Who** is the intended audience?

GKHS will focus on 4 target audiences for interpretive projects:

- People of all ages who currently or previously live(d) in Kent.
- People new to living in Kent.
- K-12 students and staff of schools in Kent.
- City of Kent (government).

GKHS will identify the target audience(s) for each project. The target audience(s) will directly impact decisions made about marketing strategies and learning strategies. (See essential question #4 **How** do we design learning experiences for the intended audience(s)?)

### **What** is the format of the project?

GKHS will plan for interpretive projects in one of these formats:

- a primary, or long-duration, exhibit (more than 2 years) at Bereiter House
- a special, or short-duration, exhibit (less than 1 year) at Bereiter House
- a pop-up exhibit (less than 6 months) in any Kent location
- a one-time program
- a series of related programming
- print material (brochure, poster, pamphlet, book)
- social media content
- website content
- digital content (video, audio recording)

### **How** do we design learning experiences for the intended audience(s)?

The intentional, knowledgeable design of learning experiences is the most complex and important part of the interpretive planning process. GKHS will cultivate the expertise, resources, and community partners to design accessible, relevant, and impactful learning experiences which reflect current museum standards and best practices. Many factors contribute to effective interpretive design. GKHS will focus on 6:

1. Learning and evaluation
2. Object-based learning
3. Community collaboration and shared curation
4. Thematic design
5. Active, hands-on learning
6. Accessibility

**Learning and evaluation** are the foundations of interpretive planning. GKHS will cultivate an understanding about how to design relevant and outcomes-based learning experiences for intended audiences through a rigorous process of experimentation and evaluation of different interpretive strategies.

**Object-based learning** plays a key role in interpretation at the GKHS who will actively collect cultural materials for specific interpretive projects. The materials will have well-documented provenance and connections to Kent and the people who live and work in the area. GKHS will develop object-based learning strategies that are respectful, truthful, and relevant.

**Community collaboration and shared curation** are hallmarks of current museum best practices. GKHS will forge relationships with diverse community partners in Kent to reflect the diversity of Kent history and to broaden the interpretive themes, stories, perspectives, interests, language, activities, cultural materials, and audience(s) considered for interpretive projects.

**Thematic design** sets the stage for museum experiences that appeal to diverse audiences. GKHS will experiment with thematic design for some interpretive projects, drawing from these universal themes.

- Industry and innovation
- Cultural traditions
- Food and culinary traditions

- Diverse ethnic and racial communities
- Environmental change
- Community involvement and activism

**Active, hands-on learning experiences** are key to engaging many different museum audiences, especially people who can't engage with or don't enjoy conventional text-heavy interpretation and families with school-age children. GKHS will experiment with different types of hands-on learning experiences for people of different ages and abilities.

**Access** to interpretive experiences for all visitors is a bedrock of current museum standards and best practices. Designing interpretive experiences that provide easy access to all visitors requires a change in thinking about and designing interpretive elements. GKHS will try different ways to increase access for target audiences, including people with low or no vision, people with diverse learning preferences, people with limited physical abilities, and people who do not easily read English.