



BRIAR HERB FACTORY MUSEUM SITE, CLYDE: STORAGE APPRAISAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Summary overview, current storage use	3
So what makes a good storage environment?	5
What are the current storage conditions at Briar Herb	6
Briar Herb Factory Office (F)	6
Goods Shed (B)	9
Notes on additional staff workspaces (A)	13
Summary recommendations for future requirements	14
Creating functional storage spaces	16

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this appraisal is to ascertain the conditions and volume of storage that the museum currently has on site, and make recommendations for improvements and development. This information will feed into the feasibility study to help form an understanding of the needs and priorities the museum requires when considering its future direction.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

At the Briar Herb Factory Museum site a survey reveals that the current functioning storage space being used is minimal. The key storage area is the former office inside the original herb factory, which now houses a significant glass plate negative collection and a small number of acetate film reels.

In the Goods Shed (B), there are a set of shelves along the west wall that house miscellaneous parts and items, predominantly metal. Also in the Goods Shed are two utility rooms, (workspaces), and an area being used for storage above one of these. In the main building, (A), there is a reception area, [workspace], that has general storage for shop and files etc.

Other than this, the rest of the museum is display- orientated.

As a reference point, Clyde Historic Museums Inc aspires to maintain their collections as follows:

“The written object files should be stored in a safe, secure fireproof enclosure and should never leave the museum.

All items, objects or collections should be appropriately stored or displayed so that such items do not deteriorate through preventable environmental conditions.

Any items requiring conservation will follow appropriate and adequate conservation procedures in accordance with contemporary best practice.”¹

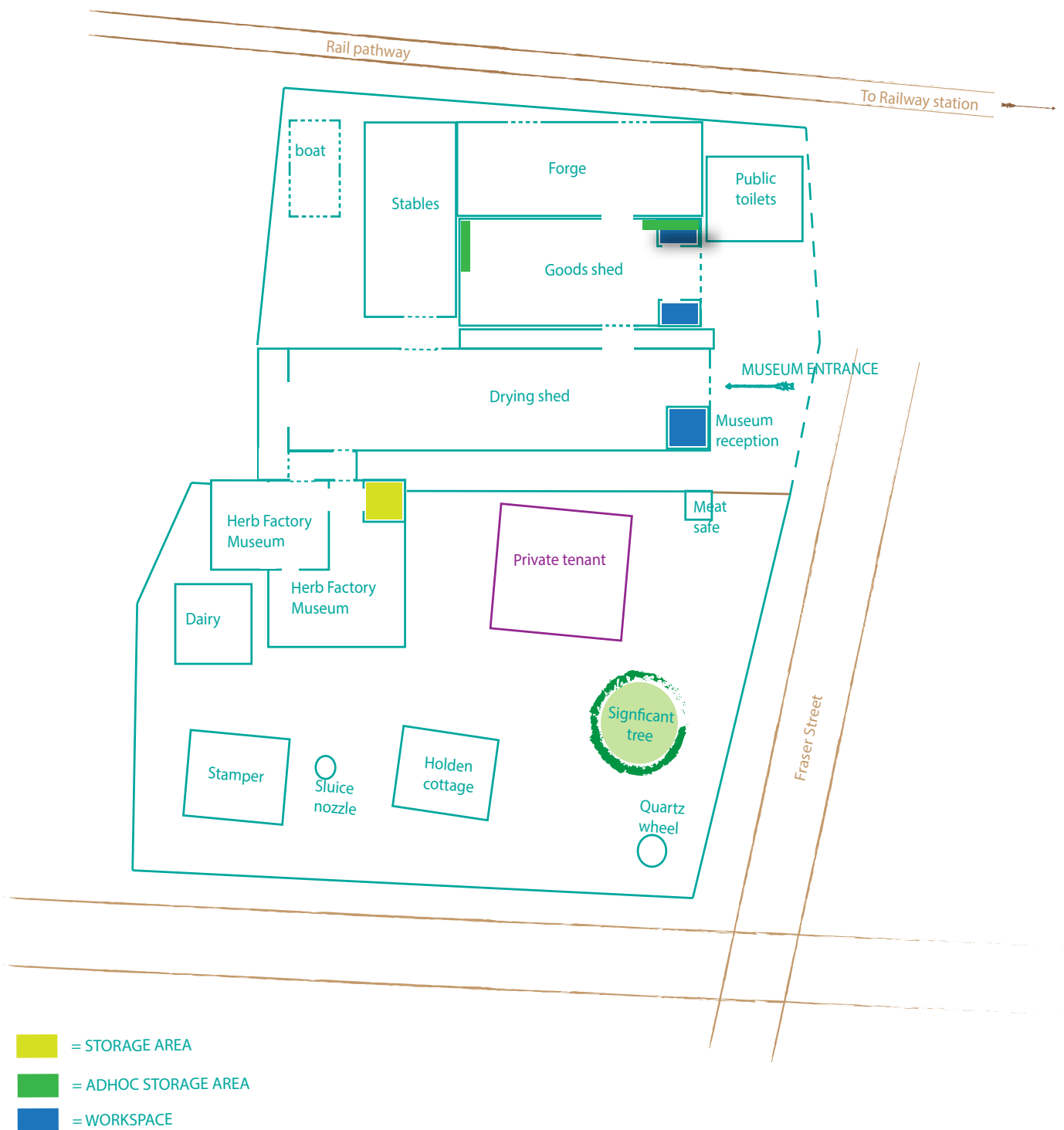
In accepting donations, CHM Inc² has a duty of care to maintain, protect and preserve the object in question. Primarily, this is effected through quality of storage it is housed in.

¹ Garbutt: 3 *How to house, care for collection*. Page 5, *Collection Policy*, Clyde Historic Museums Inc, 2017.

² Clyde Historic Museums Inc

Image: Briar Herb Factory Museum Storage Allocations

BRIAR HERB MUSEUM COMPLEX
CURRENT STORAGE AREAS



WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORAGE ENVIRONMENT?

Proper storage for museum collections needs to provide easy access to the collections while protecting the objects in a safe and secure manner. The key factors in preserving museum collections while in storage are: adequate security, proper environmental conditions, and the use of appropriate materials to house and support objects while in storage.

Storage areas should be clean and well ventilated. Temperature and humidity levels should be monitored at regular intervals. The storage area should also have appropriate fire protection and be well secured, with limited staff access. When not in use, the storage areas should have no light.

When these conditions are in place and correct, the museum collections have the best chance to be preserved and kept in good condition.

Some basics of proper storage as relates to what objects are kept in the Briar Herb Factory Museum site are:

> Photographic negatives should be stored individually enclosed in Mylar (polyester) sleeves within acid free boxes - all well indexed.

> Small objects are best stored in acid free boxes or plastic lidded storage containers that are BPA and Phthalate free.

> Powder coated steel shelving or drawers should be used to house collections on. Wooden shelving is not recommended because of chemicals and acids that can off-gas and potentially harm the collection objects that are housed on them.

> Shelving should be lined with *cell foam* where objects are on open storage³.

> Dust and light covers should cover open shelving units. Washed calico lined with black cotton fabric makes an ideal dust and light cover.

> Non-Collection items such as exhibition furniture and props, office equipment and records and publications should be kept in a separate storage area.

> Printed photographs and documents should be stored in acid free folders or envelopes. These in turn can be stored within well-indexed acid free boxes. Do not place too many pieces within a folder, as this may cause damage.

> Ensure that no objects or boxes are stored on the floor. All collections items should be at least 150mm above the storage floor to protect them from insects, moisture and damage incurred during cleaning sessions.

³not contained

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT STORAGE CONDITIONS AT BRIAR HERB FACTORY MUSEUM?

The former office inside the Briar Herb Factory building (F) houses a glass plate negative collection in boxes on wooden shelving. There are some other miscellaneous items stored along the opposite wall, under a window.

In the Goods Shed (B), there are a set of shelves along the west wall that house miscellaneous parts and items, predominantly metal. Also in the Goods Shed are two utility rooms/workspaces. In the main building, (A), there is a reception area, [workspace], with general storage for shop and files etc.

It could be argued that at present, as the site has been closed for some time, the entire site is a storage facility. A condition appraisal of the collection for the site's display areas are covered off in the Briar Herb Collection Appraisal document.

BRIAR HERB FACTORY OFFICE (F):

In terms of being an appropriate storage facility this room appears to be a stable environment, but has some issues to address:

- A number of the film canisters were stacked vertically - these should be stored horizontally to minimise long term pressure on one area [dead spot].
- Upon entry, a strong smell from the acetate films (vinegar) indicated that the films may be deteriorating.
- Access appeared good, with the outside of many boxes being labelled. However there were collection items on the high shelves that potentially put them in peril when being accessed / moved around.
- Some of the items stored in this room were possibly associated with the donor, but not stored correctly, and were amongst non-collection items.
- There was no protection in place to stop boxes falling off shelves in the event of an earthquake.
- The shelves are unsealed chipboard and are bending under the weight of the collection.
- This room has natural light, and larger negatives sit exposed in open cardboard boxes.
- The room requires a good thorough clean, especially to lessen the effects of dust and insect damage.
- There is no fire or security system in place, however the solid door was only accessible via a staff key.

- There was evidence of insect infestation, and there were no controls in place such as silverfish traps.
- The environment has not been monitored or assessed as appropriate for the specific purpose of storing glass plate negatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in silverfish traps⁴, and monitor these and the environment with a *Hobo*⁵ data logger.

Though well labelled, boxes should be swapped out for A/F⁶ boxes and enclosures. Suggest National Services Te Paerangi Helping Hands grant, or a Community Trust grant. Follow specific guidelines on handling glass plate negatives for this project.⁷

Remove old wooden shelving and replace with powder coated steel units - consider reducing the height of these.

Block out the window so that UV light doesn't enter the room, and ensure that interior lighting is good.

Relocate the films into boxed horizontal storage. Consider donating them to the NZ film archive, with negotiations to have digital copies where relevant to the museum's displays.

Relocate old museum committee archives to the top area of shelving units to free up shelving to accommodate archival items of public interest.

Affix lengths of net curtain wire across the front of each shelf unit to inhibit falling objects.

Lift items currently being stored on the floor of this room.

Initiate a regular cleaning schedule, and hang dust curtains across the shelving units.

Repackage the larger glass plate negatives that are currently housed in open-topped boxes into Mylar or A/F sleeves **vertically in lidded boxes**, following conservation handling procedures as referenced above.

⁴ available from www.conservationssupplies.co.nz

⁵www.instrumentchoice.com.au

⁶ acid free

⁷ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/moving-glass-plate.html>
and: <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/storage/glass-plate-negatives.html>



Images:

Top left: View of Factory Office as surveyed.

Top right: Film cans in open storage as surveyed.

Lower left: Inadequate shelving unit.

Lower right: Glass plate negatives in open storage as surveyed.

GOODS SHED (B)

BACK WALL

These notes specifically refer to the area of shelving units at the back of the room (the west end).

- Safety for visitors, and security of collection items, especially smaller items, needs to be considered.
- There was no protection in place to stop objects falling off shelves in the event of an earthquake.
- The shelves are painted wood. They are not raised off the floor. Some collection items were stored on the floor..
- There was significant evidence of insect infestation, with no controls in place.
- The room had dust and debris accruing on the floor and needs cleaning.
- Collection objects on some shelves were poorly located, lying exposed, and require re-organising to maximise storage space.
- The building is lit by skylights, and is unlined.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some specific recommendations to consider include:

Check that the original shelving does not have signs of insect infestation [old, or fresh]. If it is in good condition, the consider sealing it with a satin clear coat - This shelving unit ultimately will become part of the display, and is perfectly valid in situ as a crossover between open storage and display - as long as the objects are secure.

If rationalising objects ensure they are not parts of other items held in the collection. If the object is initially unidentifiable (as to what it is), find someone to identify what the object is before moving it on.

Put controls in place to minimise, and if possible eradicate, possum and rat problems.

Ensure areas are kept clean and maintained.

If stacking large heavy objects up high, ensure they are well secured and not liable to fall.

Box up or cover collection items to protect them while in storage, using dust sheets or curtaining.



Image: West wall storage shelving, as surveyed.

ABOVE THE SMOKO ROOM:

An area on top of the Smoko Room has been used to store old signs (presumably part of the collection), and other sundry items.

- The objects are stacked haphazardly and may cause damage to, or become damaged, easily.
- An attempt to protect this area with sheets of ply has failed, and sheets have become loose and some have fallen down onto the objects.
- The objects are stored amongst non-collection objects, and are unprotected from dust and potential building leakage (if weather-tightness fails).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some specific recommendations to consider include:

Remove all items in this area, sort out collection items and re-house these temporarily in another area, (suggest unused workshop room).



Image: Storage area above the smoko room, as surveyed.

SMOKO ROOM:

The Smoko Room has been used to store a mixture of collection items, operational items, and redundant display signage.

- Collection objects are stacked on the floor and may become damaged.
- Collection objects are stored amongst a food and drink area, with running water facility.
- The objects are stored amongst non-collection objects, and are unprotected from dust, pests, and dirt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some specific recommendations to consider include:

Remove all collection objects from this room, and rehouse.

Consider whether the redundant signs and other non-collection items stored here need to be retained.

Comment: In a redevelopment scenario the operational function of this room would be incorporated into an area closer to reception.



Image: Smoko Room, as surveyed.

WORKSHOP ROOM:

This room appears to be used as functional operations space. There are a few figures that may be original to the Goods Shed, such as the railway filing box affixed to the wall above the work bench. There appears to be a few items that may be part of the collection, mixed in amongst tools etc.

- Once tidied, this room has been suggested as temporary housing for some collection items, but should not be considered as a permanent storage area.
- Objects in the room are stacked haphazardly and may become damaged.
- It is not easy to clearly define whether items here are donated collection objects or operational tools and equipment.
- Collection objects are unprotected from dust and insect damage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some specific recommendations to consider include:

Remove empty containers and rubbish, and generally clean up the space.

Separate operational items from collection items and store correctly, clearly defining an area for each (operational / collection)..

Box up, or cover collection items to protect them while in storage.

Comment: Consideration needs to be given as to whether a workshop facility should be retained.



Images:

Left: Workshop room, as surveyed. Right: Railways filing box

NOTES ON ADDITIONAL STAFF WORK SPACES

Reception area (A)

The Reception room needs a degree of operational storage. Although not to collection storage standards, it should attain the following attributes:

- Secure cupboard systems, with well sealed shelving units. Wood-based materials are acceptable here, (e.g melamine joinery standard).

- Clean and insect-free monitored environment
- Climate-controlled, (including heating), well insulated, with good ambient working light.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

My recommendation is to approach addressing the storage issues across two stages. The first stage, a reorganisation, is a remedial necessity, and should be undertaken directly.

With the main focus being the glass plate negative collection, it is recommended that **it remains on site in this room, with some remedial conservation and rehousing**, until such time as an appropriate cool store unit can be attained at Blyth Street - however it's longer term destination should be down at Blyth street along with the bulk of CHM Inc's⁸ archival collections.

In the longer term, (toward a reopening), **it is recommended to adopt a bold principle not to include any collection storage space at this site**, but rather retain it as primarily a display area with existing contents, with functional operational work/storage spaces as required. This will assist CHM Inc in ensuring that future donations that are offered to them for this area will be well considered before accepting - (generally this site is focused on larger more industry-focussed objects).

In the Goods Shed, it is recommended to reconsider the current operational spaces as future display spaces, incorporating the smoko room within a new reception area elsewhere on site, and deleting the workshop room, (unless CHM Inc deems it a necessity).

This involves a reconfiguration of spaces with a 'new build' element, outlined on the illustration on pages 17-18. There is some scope in the new Building (A) to provide an opportunity to consider a functional workshop space, or a storage area, if CHM Inc feels it to be a necessity.

Finally included is a plan for a lesser scaled option should CHM Inc determine that the retention of the tenant's house is critical to their needs, (e.g if it provides income or security).

BASIC NEEDS - REMEDIAL

Initiatives to be actioned:

- Invest in collection care and conservation supplies, including acid free storage materials, insect traps, environmental monitoring units, (as outlined).
- Initiate a schedule of regular cleaning and monitoring of storage spaces, including decaying accrual of non-collection items, objects not put away in the correct storage areas, etc.

⁸ Clyde Historical Museums Incorporated

- Separate collection objects from non-collection items and rehouse as outlined.
- Replace wooden shelving units to powder coated steel units
- Install dust curtains and covers, block out light specifically in the factory office where the glass plate negatives are being stored.
- Earthquake proofing of storage shelving
- Repack the glass plate negative collection as outlined on page 5 of this document.
- **It is NOT recommended to relocate the Sheppard collection of glass plate negatives until a dedicated storage unit can be devised. This collection would need to have a controlled climatic environment, metal shelving, and protection from quake interference.**

FUTURE-PROOFING:

- Pest and vermin free site, with regular monitoring and environmental controls in place.
- A purpose-built climatically controlled storage building for the negative collection located at Blyth Street - refer to Blyth Street storage appraisal, future developments doc, page 23 <.
- Installation of a security / fire alarm system

CREATING FUNCTIONAL STORAGE SPACES:

STAGE ONE: REMEDIAL:

This configuration is based on current governance, buildings and resources, with the museum being run on a volunteer basis. It assumes that the site will remain closed.

- The current storage space in the Briar Herb Factory Office should be retained on a temporary basis to house the Sheppard collection of glass plate negatives, with the issues outlined on page 7 addressed.
- The workshop space in the Goods Shed should be turned into a temporary storage room for loose collection items [found above the smoko room, in the smoko room...]

BRIAR HERB MUSEUM COMPLEX
REMEDIAL STORAGE AREAS



Image: Briar Herb Factory Museum Complex Stage One - Remedial storage areas

STAGE TWO: RECONFIGURATION:

This reconfiguration involves removing all storage areas and workspaces from the buildings and relocating operational services into the tenant's house.

Further detail and justification for this can be found in the Briar Herb Factory Museum P&D options document.

As outlined on page 14, **there would be no collection storage space at this site**, but rather retain it as primarily a display area with existing contents, with functional operations kept minimised.

- The former Smoko Room, Workshop room in the Goods Shed (B) , and the Reception area in Building (A) that were used for storage / workspace are absorbed into display space

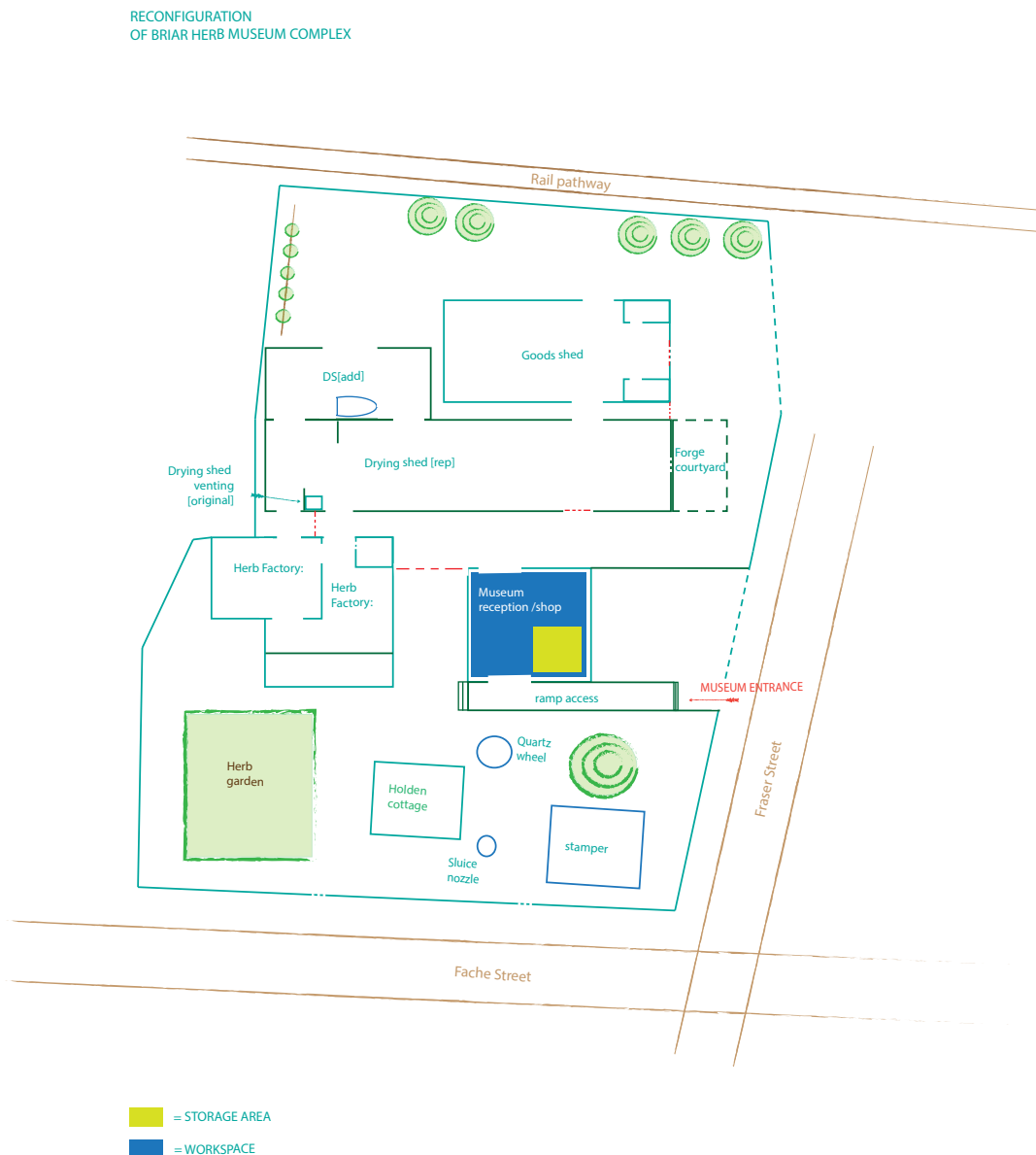


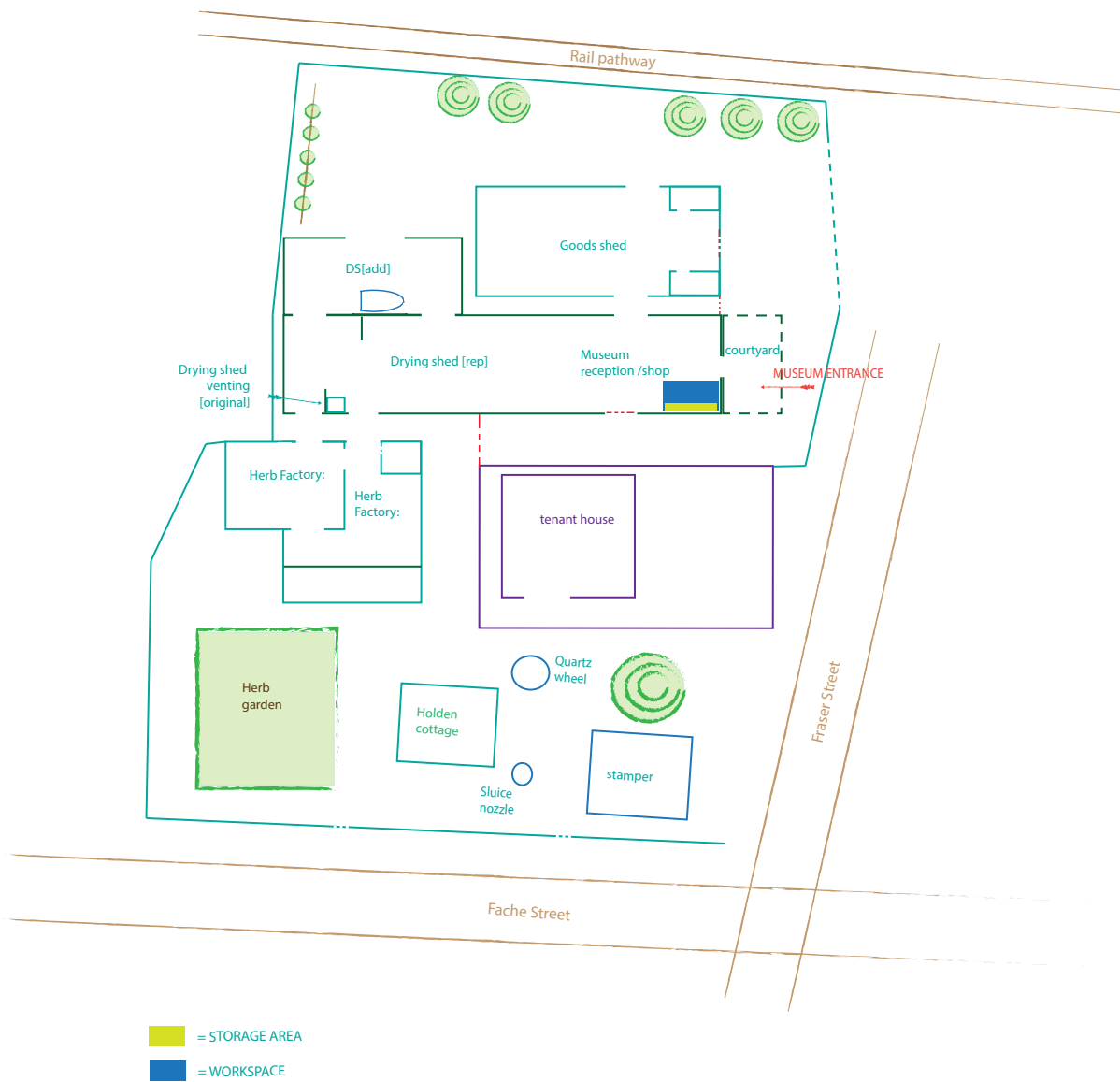
Image: Recommended reconfiguration option.

OPTION: MINOR RECONFIGURATION:

This reconfiguration involves retaining the tenant's house, (with some site improvements)⁹, and retains reception workspace with operational storage only, in Building (A).

Image: Minor reconfiguration option.

RECONFIGURATION WITH
RETENTION OF TENANTS HOUSE
- BRIAR HERB MUSEUM COMPLEX



⁹ Refer to: Briar Herb Factory Museum P&D Options document.