

Reford Gardens celebrates \$1,899,375 investment from Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

Canada Economic Development's support for Les Amis des Jardins de Métis a turning point for our organization. Last year Les Amis celebrated 25 years as an organization. Now we are looking ahead to 2026 and the 100th anniversary of the creation of the gardens by Elsie Reford with this first in a series of major investments.

We are undertaking several **large-scale projects** that will further solidify our leadership as a national leader in tourism, environment, the culinary arts, conservation and museology.

Grand Hall

The "Grand Hall" is a new facility dedicated to events, workshops, lectures and spaces for creators and coworking. In keeping with the organization's commitment to sustainable development, an existing workshop built in the 1970's will be transformed to create the Grand Hall, minimizing the environmental footprint.



Rendering of the Grand Hall by Atelier Pierre Thibault

A multidisciplinary team made up of Atelier Pierre Thibault, Rimouski-based architect Marie-Hélène Nollet, and engineering firm Tetrattech designed this new space.

“It’s both an honour and a challenge to envision the future of a place like Reford Gardens that’s so strong and so symbolic. It’s a unique gem imbued with a rich history, so it takes a great deal of care to develop it while preserving its essence. It’s a quest to find just the right balance.” - Pierre Thibault, M.Arch. and Founder of Atelier Pierre Thibault

Multi-purpose Creative Workshop: Innovation in an inspiring location where local resources take center stage

Along with the arrival of Grand Hall, a new carpentry workshop is needed. This new building will serve two purposes: a year-round workshop and communal space for workers in the summer for local residents enjoying the gardens in the winter.

The latest shop tools and technology will support users working with wood, metal, plastic, and other materials required for the installations of the International Garden Festival. The improved work space will allow us to fabricate prototypes, furniture, and custom items designed by our international network of collaborators.

The Creative Workshop is meant to be a place where employees and the wider community can make and build to their imagination's content, a *fab lab* at their fingertips. We expect this new facility to foster the culture of innovation in a healthy and inspiring environment showcasing local resources.

Atelier des jardiniers / Gardener's Workshop

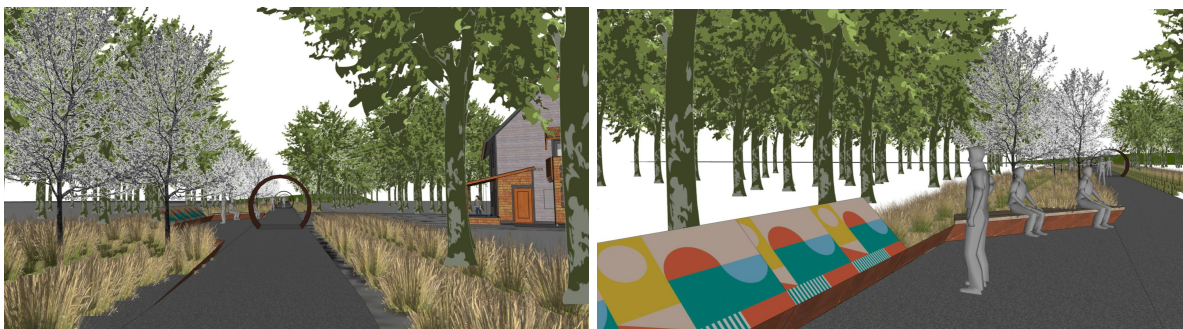
At the heart of our activities, the Gardener's Workshop will be improved and enhanced, transformed to create a hub to welcome students on field trips, host gardening workshops, and facilitate the work of our team of expert gardeners.

Museum Workshop

Contained within the four walls Grand Hall, our Museum Workshop will be a place of learning and exploration where visitors can connect with the institutions unique collections and take part in our efforts to expand our digital footprint through podcasts, virtual exhibits, holograms, and much more.

“This \$2.5 million investment will improve our visitor experience by opening up our backyard, our workshops, and our creative spaces. Thanks to the creativity and design talents of Atelier Pierre Thibault and Marie-Hélène Nollet’s passion and expertise as an architect working with local wood, the space will be both playful and elegant,” said Alexander Reford, Director of Reford Gardens.

In situ atelier d'architecture and Vlan Paysages, with whom we have collaborated for over 20 years, will complete our footpath system by creating planted walkways that integrate contemporary gestures and open views to the St. Lawrence Riiver.



Renderings by In situ atelier d'architecture and Vlan Paysages



Updating the Parc de la rivière Mitis Welcome Centre

In collaboration with MRC de La Mitis and other partners, we are also investing in improvements on the west bank of the Mitis River, positioning the new regional park as an attraction for local residents and visitors.

“Modernizing the buildings in Parc de la rivière Mitis is a strategic investment aligned with the concerted development being done by the partners in the Parc régional de la rivière Mitis, from the mouth of the river all the way up to Lac Mitis. The best is yet to come for Reford Gardens and the Parc régional, and especially for the people of the Mitis area!” said Bruno Paradis, Prefect of MRC de La Mitis

We were fortunate to have been able to host 60,000 visitors last year thanks to the many Canadians who were drawn to the Gaspésie, Lower St. Lawrence and the regions of Québec maritime. This sends a strong signal that Reford Gardens will be able to welcome even more visitors from across Quebec and Canada when we reopen May 29, when hopefully we will have collectively succeeded in overcoming the pandemic and when travel will be both safe and encouraged. Thanks to our vast outdoor spaces and wide pathways, we are the perfect destination for all those who agree that “Magic lies outside,” the theme of this year’s International Garden Festival.

“The variety of these projects is an excellent reflection of the diversity of the Gardens’s programming and identity, where historic, contemporary, touristic and natural elements are inseparable. These guide the holistic vision behind each architecture project,” said Pierre Thibault, *M.Arch. and Founder of Atelier Pierre Thibault*

“On behalf of our organization, I want to thank the Government of Canada and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions who have once again provided significant support to our initiatives through this generous financial contribution,” said Alexander Reford, Director of Reford Gardens.

About Reford Gardens

A Canadian National Historic Site and Quebec Heritage Site, Reford Gardens (Les Jardins de Métis) is a must-visit spot for everyone visiting the Gaspésie and Lower St. Lawrence regions. An open-air museum and vibrant cultural space for over 55 years, Reford Gardens remains one of the most popular attractions in Eastern Quebec by offering visitors a variety of experiences that delight all the senses. A national historic site located at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Mitis rivers, the Gardens were first imagined by Elise Reford from 1926 to 1958 and are among the top-ranked gardens in North America. Hydro-Québec has been the main sponsor of Reford Gardens since 1999.

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