

**HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (HCA)
ARTEFACT COLLECTION POLICY**

(REVIEW PENDING)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND MANDATE

In its role as a provider of regional parks and open spaces, the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) owns/and or manages several historical sites of regional and national significance. Throughout its development, in addition to possessing fine examples of built heritage, the HCA has acquired some notable artefacts. These artefacts are separate from those owned and housed at Westfield Heritage Village. They can be found in various HCA locations and are relevantly stored and filed for protection. Conservation and protection of the HCA's artefacts has led to its general collections mandate, *to preserve and promote HCA owned artefacts of significant cultural heritage for future generations.*

2.0 HCA COLLECTION MISSION STATEMENT

The HCA's commitment to preserve its artefacts for future generations necessitates that it will actively document, store and collect relevant artefacts.

3.0 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

- a) The Full Authority for the HCA is the only legal authority for the HCA Collection and is accountable for the HCA Collection.
- b) Any recommendation to The Full Authority regarding the HCA Collection will come from the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate on behalf of the HCA Collections Committee.

3.1 Collections Committee

It is recommended that in order to assist the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate in decisions relating to the HCA collection, a collections committee must be formed as a needed resource for situations requiring sufficient historical and or museological knowledge. In addition, the collections committee will also provide a democratic link to the preservation and shaping of cultural heritage. The collections committee will be appointed by HCA Full Authority. The Collections Committee will typically be formed by; the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate, one or more representatives of the HCA organization and knowledgeable members of the public. The HCA collections committee is responsible for meeting on a needed basis in addition to a scheduled meeting every three years to review and possibly revise the policy to reflect current circumstances.

4.0 DEFINITION OF COLLECTIONS

An artefact in the HCA collection is defined as any object dating prior to 1940 relating to the historical legacy of the HCA land and built heritage.

5.0 COLLECTING PLAN

The HCA Collections plan relates to all artefacts owned by the HCA. The HCA Collections development priorities are based on informed decision-making, relating to an artefact's, historical significance, geographic/regional importance, site/project, and relevant time period.

Criterion to be considered for HCA Collections is planned as follows:

- a) Hermitage/Gatehouse Museum/Dundas Valley Collection
 - Artefacts related to the Leith family
 - Artefacts connected to local families of the adjacent areas of Ancaster/Dundas
 - Artefacts similar to those of which were housed in the Hermitage
- b) Valens Collection
 - Artefacts related to the original Cook, Valens, or Robson Families.
 - Artefacts connected to local families of original homesteaders of the areas of; Beverly, Flamborough, and Freelon.
 - Artefacts similar to those of which were housed in the Log Cabin or Robson House.
- c) Griffin House Collection
 - Artefacts related to the original Griffin Family from the Griffin House.
 - Artefacts connected to local families of original homesteaders of the Dundas Valley, Dundas, and Ancaster areas.
 - Artefacts associated with early black immigrants of Canada.
 - Artefacts similar to those of which that were housed in the Griffin Homestead.
 - Artefacts from 1825-1875

Artefact time periods for each site:

- a) Hermitage/Gatehouse Museum/Woodend Collection
 - 1850-1925 (Hermitage/Gatehouse)
 - to 1940 (Woodend)
- b) Valens Collection
 - 1840-1875 Log Cabin
 - 1850-1900's Robson House
- c) Griffin House Collection
 - 1825-1875's

Condition of artefacts

- Artefacts should be in good condition, complete as possible, and not require an excessive amount of resources to preserve it.

Function of artefacts

- The function or intent of the artefacts will reflect the HCA's built or natural heritage for each site.

Use of duplicates

- Repetition of objects will be considered for each location and the entire HCA collection.

Representation

- Artefacts are representative in relation to other objects held in the collection.

Location of artefacts

- Proper conditions for storage, preservation and presentation are considered.

6.0 ETHICS

The HCA declares to uphold the highest possible museological standards and professionalism, as defined by the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, *CAPC Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice* and *CMA Ethical Guidelines*.

7.0 COLLECTION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

7.1 Documentation

Documentation of HCA artefacts is preserved in an electronic database, in addition to a paper register. Artefacts in HCA care will be given an entry number for tracking purposes. Artefacts entered into the collection will be assigned an accession number and recorded into the register on a timely basis. Information of artefacts will be collected, recorded and added to; applicable records of the register; the database; donor files; and artefact archive. HCA artefact documentation will be maintained continually, based upon HCA collection guidelines and procedures, and will be kept as a permanent records.

7.2 Acquisition

Artefacts formally accepted and accessioned into the HCA collection will be in harmony with the HCA Collections Mandate and Collecting Plans criterion. Once accepted and accessioned into the HCA collection, the artefacts are the property of the HCA. Acquisitions, in order of preference, may be obtained by: donation, field collection, exchange with another institution and by purchase. All artefacts for consideration must include provenance documentation.

Every artefact considered for acquisition will be brought to the attention of the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate. The artefact is then considered by HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate, on the advice (when available), of the HCA collections committee. The HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate, and the HCA collections committee (when in place) determine the end result of the artefact identified for the acquisition process, based upon HCA documented guidelines for acquisitions. The HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate, submits recommendations to HCA Full Authority for the final decision on whether or not to accept the artefact into the HCA collection.

7.3 Deaccession

In order to refine the collection and to move towards the HCA Collections Mandate; removal or deaccessioning of artefacts from the collection will need to be carried out, in order to make room for more relevant artefacts. In addition to providing space for more important objects, deaccessioning redistributes resources toward the collections remaining artefacts.

Every artefact considered for deaccessioning will be brought to the attention of the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate. The artefact is then considered by the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate along with the HCA collections committee (when available). The HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate and (when in place) the HCA collections committee

determines the end result of the artefact identified for the deaccessioning process based upon HCA collection guidelines and procedures. HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate must submit the recommendations to HCA Full Authority for the final decision on whether or not to deaccession the artefact from the HCA collection.

When identified and approved for deaccessioning; the process to remove the artefact will be: In order of preference:

- To approach another public museum/cultural institution and exchange the artefact/object for a relevant artefact from their collection.
- To give it to another public museum or other cultural institution.
- To sell it, with the proceeds going into an acquisition fund, collection fund or collections conservation fund. (In the event of a sale: preference will be given to public auction; and the item should not be made available for purchase by any members involved in the process of de-accessioning the item).

7.4 Access

Provisions of adequate access of artefacts to the public are essential to fulfil the HCA Collections mandate and will be made available through exhibitions and scheduled research based accessibility. The HCA will aim to present objective and accurate information for exhibition.

7.5 Loans

Loans to and from the collection are for specific exhibitions and are temporary loans only. Lenders will continue to hold legal title to the artefact. Both parties the lender or borrower, and the museum will agree on specific terms and procedures regarding the loan. Both incoming and outgoing loans will be documented accordingly and follow HCA Collection guidelines and procedures.

Incoming Loans

Artefacts on loan will be assigned an entry number and will be given the same amount of care as items from the HCA collection. Upon exit and entry, the loaned artefacts are subject to a detailed condition report. Borrowed objects will be protected by HCA insurance to cover the value of the objects.

Outgoing Loans

The HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate will decide upon the outcome of HCA artefacts requested for loan, based upon HCA Collection guidelines and procedures. All outgoing loans are to be temporary loans to public institutions that will provide comparable care and insurance coverage, covering the cost of the artefact. Prior to exit, and upon its return, detailed reports will be complete and the artefacts for loan will be subject to a detailed condition reports.

Courier Policy

Mutually agreed upon arrangements between both lending and receiving institutions will be made clear, relating to; packing, shipping, scheduling and courier requirements.

8.0 CARE AND MAINTENANCE

8.1 Conservation

Conservation of artefacts is fundamental to the continual survival of the HCA collection. The HCA will annually identify artefacts requiring protection and will attempt to stabilize them physically and chemically, based on priority. Sensitive and vulnerable artefacts are identified and recommendations are made to the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate. The HCA is responsible for providing the best possible physical environment and preventative measures to care for its collection.

8.2 Storage

Artefact storage is vital for the protection of the collection. Proper storage minimises risk to artefacts. Storage areas will be inspected quarterly to ensure that the location can adequately house HCA artefacts. Storage areas will be maintained to museum standards when possible. Extra care will be given to artefacts identified as sensitive or vulnerable.

8.3 Environment

Artefacts that are environmentally sensitive to factors such as humidity and light will be placed in areas of low environmental risk or may be exposed for limited periods of time.

8.4 Inventory

Full inventory of artefacts will be carried out annually on a scheduled basis. Spot checks will be performed, regularly. Inventory data will be recorded and maintained.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Insurance

The HCA will at minimum provide insurance to the buildings that will cover the building and its contents therein, against; fire, flood, theft and vandalism.

9.2 Integrated Pest Management

The HCA protects its heritage sites and its collection from pests and knowingly reduces the quantities of pesticides in use. This is achieved by implementing integrated pest management. By employing a variety of techniques to prevent and solve pest problems in a resourceful and environmentally stable manner without compromising the health and safety of HCA staff, visitors and the collection.

9.3 Disaster Planning

An emergency/disaster preparedness plan is active and included in HCA procedures. In the event of an emergency or disaster, the Duty Officer, Park Superintendent and the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate, will assess the situation and react accordingly to safeguard visitors, staff, and protect the collection, its historical records as well as HCA built heritage.

10.0 SECURITY

Security of visitors, staff and the collection will be integrated in its daily operations and control; stemming from a human presence, as well as the mechanical and electronic devices found at each site. The HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate will be trained in both fire/theft protection and prevention. HCA Staff involved with the collection will be familiar with HCA Procedures.

11.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate will be trained in first aide, CPR, Health and Safety for the protection of HCA staff and visitors.

12.0 MONITORING, REVISING, AND COMPLIANCE

HCA staff and volunteers with access to the HCA collection must read, understand, and uphold the HCA collection management policy and HCA procedures. On behalf of the Collections Committee (when available) and the HCA Full Authority, the HCA Director of Land Management or his/her designate will ensure that the HCA Collections Policy is adequately sanctioned and upheld.

13.0 GLOSSARY

Accession: An object acquired by a museum or any other collector as part of its permanent collection, or the act of recording and processing an addition to the permanent collection.

Acquisition: An object acquired for a museum for its permanent collection, or documenting and managing the addition of artefacts to the institutions permanent collection made possible by; donations, bequests, purchases, field collections, and exchanges.

Artefact: An object produced or shaped by human craft especially a rudimentary art form or object. More specifically for the HCA collection, any object shaped by human craft prior to 1940.

Artefact Archive: A group of files containing; photographs, public records, and historical documents of artefacts that are preserved in one location.

Collecting Plan: A method for achieving the collections goals.

Collections Committee: The HCA Collections Committee is a group that is appointed by the governing body of the HCA. The Collections Committee assembly

will typically be formed by: the HCA's Collections Officer; one or more representatives of the HCA organization; and knowledgeable members of the public. The HCA Collections Committee convenes in order to make recommendations to the HCA Full Authority regarding the HCA Collection.

Collections Officer: HCA staff member, responsible for conserving and interpreting the HCA's main heritage sites and assets.

Condition report: An accurate informative account of an artefacts physical state at that moment in time.

Conservation: Maximizing the endurance or minimising the deterioration of an object through time, with as little change to an object as possible (Lord and Lord 1991).

Full Authority: Is the HCA Board of Directors who are chosen to make executive decision of the organisation. The Full Authority consists of Hamilton city councillors, Puslinch township councillors, and citizen members.

Museological Standards: Professional principals and ethics of the museum studies discipline, relating to museum; design, organization and management.

Register: A book or system of public records relating to items in the collection.

Deaccession & Disposal: An object that is to be removed from the permanent collection by way of the items; transfer, sale, exchange, repatriation or destruction.

Donor files: Are permanent and confidential records that contain information on the artefacts donor/provenance and deed of gift contracts.

Donation: is a voluntary transfer of an object from an individual or a business, a donor, to an institution.

Entry number: Is a temporary number assigned to an artefact, in order to keep track of the object prior to accessioning it into the collection or returning it.

Exchange: Is a reciprocal payment in kind.

IPM: Stands for: Integrated Pest Management that is a scientific decision-making process that employs a variety of techniques to prevent and solve pest problems in an resourceful and environmentally stable manner without compromising the health and safety

Field Collection: Are artefacts acquired during an expedition or archaeological specimens collected from field research.

Location & Movement Control: The documentation and management of information of the current and past locations of all artefacts in the collection and care, for easy retrieval.

Object Entry: Is the management and documentation of the receipt of objects that are not currently part of the collection.

Purchase: The direct method of transfer where the title of ownership is the bill of sale. Purchases can be made at auction, through dealers or individuals.

Provenance: The background and history of an artefacts ownership.

Temporary Loans: The impermanent loan of artefact to an institution that will use it for a specific purpose and care for it until a fixed date.

14.0 SOURCES

- Collections Trust, *MDA Documentation Planning Pack*, 2006
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- International Council of Museums, *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2006
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- Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore, American Association of Museums, *The New Museum Registration Methods*, 2001