

Guelph Museums Collection Management Policy

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1.0 Introduction

Guelph Museums' collection management policy sets forth the goals of *Guelph Museums* with respect to managing its collections. The policy outlines responsibilities and sets standards for all collection related activities at both the *Guelph Civic Museum* and *McCrae House*.

1.1 Legal Authority

Guelph Museums is the repository for a collection that is representative of Guelph's history, under the trusteeship of the Guelph Museums' Advisory Committee which is appointed by Guelph City Council. The collection is held and managed in the public trust.

2.0 Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers

The Director of Guelph Museums is ultimately responsible for the collection and with the Curator ensures that collection management policies, guidelines, procedures and standards are developed and implemented. The Curator is responsible for ensuring that anyone who works with the collection is aware of policies and procedures. Staff and volunteers must follow these procedures and standards in a consistent manner.

Staff and volunteers will strive to maintain artifacts and collection records in an environment conducive to preservation. The Curator will ensure that the collection is inspected regularly for evidence of damage or deterioration. Any staff member or volunteer who discovers a preservation problem or damage to an artifact must document and report it immediately to the Curator or Assistant Curator.

All staff is responsible for maintaining the security of the collection. This includes loss or breaches in security. Staff and volunteers must document and report immediately any confirmed loss to the Curator who will report to the Director. In some cases (e.g. firearms) legal considerations may require that the police are also notified.

The Curator will ensure that artifacts having the potential to be hazardous to the public, staff, volunteers, the environment or the collection, will be properly handled and stored. All safety regulations (WHMIS) must be followed.

The Curator and Assistant Curator will ensure that staff and volunteers who have physical access to the collection are trained in and use appropriate care and handling procedures.

2.1 Ethics

Guelph Museums acquires artifacts and/or collections only if it has adequate resources (human, financial, temporal, spatial) to document, preserve, store, research, exhibit and

interpret the artifact/collection being considered.

Guelph Museums does not acquire material:

- i. which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any provincial or national statute;
- ii. which has questionable, undetermined or unethical history of ownership;
- iii. which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (or any similar statutes) as ratified by Canada on June 28, 1978;
- iv. if, in addition to or beyond the preceding clauses, there is any reason to believe that the object's recovery involved recent unscientific handling and/or intentional destruction or damage of archaeological/historical sites or illegal/clandestine excavations;
- v. which may constitute a conflict of interest related to the issue of personal collecting. Personal collecting is defined as the acquisition by Guelph Museums' employees and Advisory Committee members of an object similar to or related to that which Guelph Museums collects or intends to acquire. All staff and Advisory Committee Members are required to declare a conflict of interest when such a situation arises. Staff and Advisory Committee members are required to offer Guelph Museums the opportunity to acquire the artifact(s) in question. See *Conflict of Interest & Ethical Guidelines Policy: Guelph Museums October 1993*.

3.0 Collection Development

1. The development of Guelph Museums' collection follows the focus established by the mission statement.
2. Development of the collection will meet both the immediate and long-term objectives of Guelph Museums.
3. Development will build on strengths and address weaknesses of the collection as determined by curatorial staff and will take into account current and future projects and needs.
4. It is recognized the priorities will change over time and according to storage capabilities, future exhibitions and the recognition of deficiencies in the collection. The purchase and/or conservation of objects acquired to address gaps in the collection are financially supported by the Moon-MacKeigan Artifact Fund.
5. The responsibility for the development of the permanent collection resides with the Director, Curator and Assistant Curator. Each assumes an active role in the

community with regard to maintaining contacts with potential donors, an awareness of auction contents, the closure of businesses and institutions, etc.

6. The responsibility for the development of the education collection resides with the Coordinator of Public Programs and Program Assistant.

4.0 Acquisition

Guelph Museums collects objects, photographs, printed and audio-visual material pertaining to the history of Guelph, in accordance with its mission statement. The collection is for the purpose of documentation, preservation, research, exhibition and interpretation for all generations.

A budget line is provided in the annual operating budget for the acquisition of objects, their cataloguing, storage and care.

4.1 Criteria for Acquisition

Guelph Museums will strive to acquire artifacts that generally are complete and in good condition and for which provenance is well documented. The decision to acquire an artifact will be based upon the following considerations:

- Constitute an exemplary sample of an aspect of Guelph history currently not represented in the collection
- Are in danger of loss or destruction
- Are directly relevant to current research, exhibit or interpretation programs
- Are well documented
- Are in good to excellent condition

Guelph Museums collects according to the following criteria:

Guelph Civic Museum:

1. artifacts which are specific to Guelph:
 - i. artifacts produced in Guelph;
 - ii. artifacts related to historically important people, places and events in Guelph.
2. artifacts which are typical of Guelph as a community in Ontario, Canada and the international arena:
 - i artifacts sold in Guelph;
 - ii artifacts used in Guelph and/or owned by Guelph residents.

McCrae House:

1. artifacts owned and used by Col. John McCrae and/or pertaining to the life of Col. John McCrae;
2. artifacts pertaining to the McCrae family;
3. artifacts which were typical of the experience with the
 - i World War I
 - ii Boer War
4. artifacts pertaining to McCrae House;
5. artifacts pertaining to the Lt. Col. McCrae Birthplace Society.

4.2 Approval Process for Acquisition

Acquisitions are ultimately the responsibility of the Director. The responsibility is delegated to the Curator. The decision to acquire an artifact will be made by the Acquisitions Committee which includes the Director, Curator and Assistant Curator.

The prospective donor or vendor must be issued a *Temporary Custody Receipt* when artifacts are received by Guelph Museums.

If the artifact is rejected, the owner will be notified and given thirty days to retrieve the object. If the owner does not retrieve the object within thirty days it will be disposed of in accordance with Guelph Museums' guidelines and procedures.

A *Deed of Gift* or invoice must be signed to prove the transfer of ownership if the artifact is accepted. The owner has six months to return the signed Deed of Gift to Guelph Museums. If the owner does not return the signed Deed of Gift in that time period, the artifact is returned.

4.3 Methods of Acquisition

Objects are acquired through gift or bequest, purchase, exchange and transfer; some are also found in the collection.

Gift or Bequest

A gift or bequest may be accepted from any source, including a staff member.

Purchase

Artifacts may be purchased by the Director and Curatorial Staff from any source. Purchases over \$100 must be approved by the Director

Exchange

The exchange of artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving a collection. Exchanges may be arranged by the Curator with approval of the Director.

Exchanges may be made provided that:

- Both parties are in full agreement with the terms and conditions.
- Both the acquisition and the disposal of artifacts are documented for the permanent records.
- The removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process.

Transfer

Guelph Museums may acquire artifacts from other institutions. The transfer must be supported with documentation.

Found in the Collection

Unaccessioned objects that have been treated as artifacts over time but for which acquisition documentation cannot be found are designated “found in the collection.” These objects will be accessioned and numbered with an X if approved through the acquisition process.

4.4 Income Tax Receipts and Appraisals

Once a year income tax receipts for artifacts are issued to all donors. The receipt will reflect fair market value at the time of acquisition determined by appraisal.

Guelph Museums will not issue a tax receipt before a Deed of Gift agreement is signed. The appraisal will not be undertaken before a Deed of Gift is signed.

All tax receipts are issued by the City of Guelph.

The appraisal is undertaken by an appraiser acting at arm’s length from Guelph Museums and the donor. However, if an appraiser is used that is not selected by Guelph Museums; two letters of reference must be received by the museum before the appraisal can be completed.

The cost of an outside appraisal for income tax purposes will generally be paid by Guelph Museums. Donors asking for tax receipts for artifacts that have not been appraised will pay for the appraiser’s fee.

Museum staff will not recommend to the public a specific dealer, appraiser or auctioneer, but may provide information with the understanding that this does not constitute an endorsement.

Application for certification as Cultural Property for income tax purposes may be made for artifacts that appear to be of outstanding significance and national importance. The process is initiated by the Curator. All applications and correspondence will be submitted to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board by the Director.

Tax receipts are *not* issued for artifacts donated to the Education Collection, unless the artifact is deemed of utmost importance by professional staff.

5.0 Documentation

Guelph Museums must accurately and thoroughly document the collection to realize its value and significance. Documentation is essential for collection development, research, preservation and interpretation. Documentation is the responsibility of the Curator and other staff as appropriate

Documentation will include information in written, electronic, audio visual or graphic form pertaining to the identity, locality, provenance and transfer of legal title of artifacts in the collection and other related information regarding significance, function, description and condition.

When being integrated into the collection, each artifact must be described in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration. Any change in condition or treatment to an artifact will also be documented.

Temporary or permanent change in the status of an artifact such as an outgoing loan, on exhibit or deaccessioned must be thoroughly documented.

Guelph Museums will use accepted and consistent standards, methods and procedures to document the collection. Documentation must be maintained as a permanent record. Normally documentation itself is not considered part of the collection.

Legal documents dealing with acquisitions must be kept in hard-copy form with a duplicate set stored in an off-site location. Copies of electronic records must be maintained and stored off-site. Documentation should be maintained in a secure and stable environment.

6.0 Preservation

Guelph Museums has a responsibility to preserve its collection in perpetuity, with the exception of objects designated as the Education Collection. This includes artifacts in storage, on exhibit, used for research, on loan and in transit. All staff and volunteers will be trained in proper and current methods of care and handling of the collection, as it pertains to their area of work. In all of these activities, staff of Guelph Museums will comply with Guelph Museums *Conservation Policy*.

The preservation of the collection is the direct responsibility of the Curator and other staff as appropriate. All staff and volunteers however, must share the responsibility.

7.0 Use

Guelph Museums is committed to long-term preservation of artifacts. A balance must be

struck however between the preservation of the collection and its use for research, exhibition, and educational, promotional and commercial purpose. Guelph Museums acknowledges that access to and use of the collection by staff and public increases the risk to artifacts and requires appropriate controls.

Access to the collection is provided through exhibitions, programs, events, publications, searchable database online, collection records, research files, visual resources and consultation with curatorial staff. The Freedom of Information pursuant to the Municipal Act and Protection of Privacy and Copyright legislation restricts access to some information.

Guelph Museums also respects the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Wild Animals and Plant Protection Regulation of the International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRITA)

Access to and handling of firearms is restricted under federal legislation.

The collection must be organized and managed in such a way that it is readily accessible for all purposes consistent with the Goals of the Strategic Plan for Guelph Museums.

7.1 Staff Access to the Collection

The level of staff access to the collection is determined by the Curator. Staff and volunteers who handle artifacts must be appropriately trained and supervised.

7.2 Public Use of the Collection

Guelph Museums allows limited use of its collection by the public for commercial and non-commercial purposes. This may involve physical or intellectual access to the collection.

Physical access to artifacts is provided through exhibitions, programs, events and tours. Other requests for physical access will be considered individually (Loans, individual requests and fee-for-use situations).

Intellectual access to the collection through records, images, and other information may be requested for publication, research, web sites, electronic media, display, promotional materials, personal use, media, films and advertising.

Access to and use of the collection is at the discretion of the Curator and Assistant Curator and is generally provided to any person who can demonstrate a need.

Determining factors include:

- Condition of the artifact
- Risk to the artifact

- Location
- Security
- Health and safety risks
- Copyright
- Intended use
- Expertise of the researcher
- Human and financial resources available

Access and the fee structure for use of the collection for commercial purposes are governed by Guelph Museums' Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Guelph Museums must be credited for any use of its collection with "Courtesy of Guelph Museums."

7.3 Education Collection

Guelph Museums recognizes the importance of experiential learning for its visitors. In fulfilment of this need and to ensure the integrity of the permanent collection, Guelph Museums collects and manages objects separate from the permanent collection to be used for the purpose of enhancing the learning experience during a museum visit, school program, outreach activities or travelling exhibition. To fulfil this need, Guelph Museums has established an Education Collection.

To be accepted into the Education Collection the items should reflect the following:

- be in good to excellent condition,
- be either original or reproduction,
- reflect the programming needs of Guelph Museum
- be safe to use
- not contravene any legislation

Guelph Museums may transfer artifacts that are deaccessioned from the permanent collection into the Education Collection for program use. The reason for this change of status must be documented. The decision to designate an artifact to the Education Collection will be made by the Curator, Assistant Curator and Director with approval from the Advisory Committee.

All material (artifacts, videos, slides, printed materials, etc.) that form the Education Collection are managed according to Guelph Museums' collection management procedures and professional standards.

Tax receipts are not issued for artifacts donated to the Education Collection, unless the artifact is deemed of utmost importance for the education collection, by professional staff.

When an artifact in the Education Collection is no longer needed, useful or in poor condition it does not undergo a formal deaccession process. Items are disposed of as deemed necessary by education staff.

7.4 Research Collection

Guelph Museums recognizes the value of using artifacts in exhibitions and for research. (Exhibit Prop & Guelph Photographers) These objects can be handled by staff, volunteers and the public and ultimately may be expendable. Artifacts can be deaccessioned from the collection and added to the Research Collection.

8.0 Loans

8.1 Loans to Guelph Museums

Guelph Museums borrows artifacts for exhibition, study or other purposes consistent with the mandate of Guelph Museums for a specified time period.

Loans are made to Guelph Museums by institutions and individuals. A loan agreement specifying intended use must be completed for such material and the transaction must be approved by the Curator or Assistant Curator.

Guelph Museums will provide the same standard of care and security for the objects on loan as it does for those in its collection. Treatment will not be undertaken on borrowed objects without prior written consent from the owner. Any treatments must be documented.

When Guelph Museums borrows material and exhibits from another institution, it will follow the procedures prescribed by the lending institution. When Guelph Museums borrows material from individuals or from institutions with no lending procedures or forms, it will follow the procedures of Guelph Museums.

Incoming loans must be fully documented. The documentation will include one copy of the signed loan form and information relating to value and condition. This record becomes a permanent record.

8.2 Loans from Guelph Museums

Guelph Museums lends artifacts to other institutions. Loans are not normally made to individuals. The purpose of the loan must be consistent with the interests of Guelph Museums and not pose undue risk to the artifact. Loans are made for a specified time period.

The Curator is responsible for ensuring that those who borrow or otherwise use material for any purpose are able to provide necessary care. Individuals within both the

borrowing and lending institutions taking responsibility for the transaction must be authorized to do so. All loans from Guelph Museums must be approved by the Curator.

Outgoing loans must be fully documented. The documentation will include one copy of the signed loan form and information relating to value and condition. This record becomes a permanent record.

Guelph Museums reserves the right not to lend artifacts or other materials.

9.0 Insurance

Through the City of Guelph, Guelph Museums provides insurance for its collection and for loans to and from Guelph Museums. The Director is responsible for the insurance of the collection at fair market value and acquiring additional coverage when necessary. The Curator is responsible for providing valuations for insurance purposes.

10.0 Deaccessioning

Deaccessioning refers to the permanent removal of one or more artifacts from the permanent collection. In order to maintain a growing and relevant collection in accordance with the Mission Statement and current professional standards, occasionally it is necessary to deaccession an artifact. Deaccessioning must be undertaken in accordance with the highest professional standards and ethics. Reasons must be ethical, defensible and objective. Approval is required from Guelph Museums' Advisory Committee.

10.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning

The Curator or Assistant Curator initiating a proposal must be able to demonstrate clearly the need for deaccessioning in accordance with one or more of the following criteria:

- An artifact constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to staff or public;
- An artifact does not fall within Guelph Museums mandate and collection development objectives;
- Guelph Museums is incapable of providing the conditions necessary for minimum curatorial care;
- An artifact has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it does not serve a useful purpose or poses a preservation threat to other elements of the collection;
- An artifact is a duplicate. Provenance and other documentation must be taken into account when determining duplicate status;
- An artifact has unethical or illegal provenance;
- An artifact has been misidentified or is found to be a fake, forgery or copy with no definable purpose;

- An artifact may be removed from the collection as a result of a request for repatriation

10.2 Conditions for Deaccessioning

When an artifact is deaccessioned Guelph Museums must ensure that:

- It has clear title to the object or in the case of poorly or undocumented material, be able to demonstrate that it has made a serious, diligent and documented investigation to determine ownership;
- There are no legal restrictions that prohibit deaccessioning the artifact;
- The reasons for removal of the object from the collection must be thoroughly documented in accordance to professional standards and documentation;
- If an artifact is undocumented Guelph Museums must make serious and documented effort to learn more about it before considering deaccessioning.

10.3 Process of Deaccessioning

The process for deaccessioning must be initiated with a written proposal supported by appropriate documentation and recommend means of disposition. The proposal must be brought forward for review at a Curatorial Meeting and the Director of the Museum forwards the proposal to Guelph Museums' Advisory Committee for approval.

10.4 Methods of Disposition

A demonstrative effort must be made to keep a deaccessioned artifact in the public domain and in Canada by offering it to other museums or public institutions as a gift or for exchange.

A member of the Guelph Museums' Advisory Committee, staff or volunteers and their family members may not acquire through any means any artifact deaccessioned by Guelph Museums.

When Guelph Museums chooses to deaccession an artifact staff may consider notifying the original donor as a courtesy.

The following methods may be considered for disposition of an artifact:

- a) Internal transfer to the Education Collection, Working Collection or non-collection use
- b) Gift to another museum or public institution
- c) Exchange with another museum or public institution
- d) Sale through a publicly advertised auction sale or by reputable and established dealers. Funds from these sales are deposited into the Moon-MacKeigan Artifact fund for future artifact acquisitions.

e) Destruction

- if the object is hazardous or poses a danger to staff, public or the collection
- if the object has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it does not serve a definable purpose
- if all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of the object through other methods

Two witnesses must be present to observe the destruction.

11.0 Repatriation

Guelph Museums may repatriate artifacts in accordance with the principles and guidelines stated in the Canadian Museums Association Ethics Guidelines.

All requests for repatriation must be approached with respect and sensitivity.

Guelph Museums recognizes that requests for repatriation can only be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

12.0 Cooperation with Institutions

Guelph Museums cooperates with other museums, galleries, cultural and educational institutions, organizations and agencies, in order to avoid duplication and achieve an integrated plan for documentation, preservation and interpretation of artifacts and local history.

13.0 Policy Review

Guelph Museums' Collection Management Policy is approved by the Guelph Museums Advisory Committee.

The Collection Management Policy is reviewed on a regular basis, or any time that changes are deemed necessary. The Director and the Curator will conduct the review, in conjunction with other professional staff. The reviewed version will be submitted to the Guelph Museums Advisory Committee for approval.

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