

Collections Management Policy

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	- 3 -
2. Scope of Collection	- 3 -
3. Acquisition of Artefacts	- 3 -
4. Personal Collecting	- 7 -
5. Management of Artefacts	- 7 -
6. Appraisal of Artefacts	- 8 -
7. Loan of Artefacts	- 8 -
8. Removal of Artefacts	- 9 -
9. Use	- 12 -
10. Responsibilities	- 14 -
11. Policy Review and Approval	- 14 -

1. Introduction

The artefacts in the museum's collection are a tangible representation of the community's heritage, and to retain their informational and historical value they must be properly cared for and documented. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the museum to demonstrate its stewardship and facilitate access to collections and the information they hold by maintaining a well organized, managed, researched and documented collection.

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's *Collections Management Policy* sets the guidelines of the Museum with respect to the development and maintenance of the Museum collection.

2. Scope of Collection

The term "collection" as used in this *Collections Management Policy* is understood to mean the acquisition of historically significant artefacts that contribute to an understanding of past human behaviour, customs, activities, episodes, institutions and personalities of Strathroy-Caradoc. The collection is developed for the purpose of documentation, preservation, research, exhibition and interpretation. Collections development will build on strengths and address weaknesses of the collection as assessed by appropriate curatorial staff, and will take into account current and future projects and needs. Strategies will include both planned and opportunistic approaches.

3. Acquisition of Artefacts

Methods of Acquisition

Gift or Bequest

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

A gift or

Purchase

Artefacts may be purchased from any source. However, purchase from a member of Council, Museum Advisor Committee, staff, volunteer, or research associate of the Museum, including their family members or friends, or an organization in which the individual has an interest, requires the approval by Director/Curator. In such cases the Museum will establish a purchase price that reflects fair market value, with adherence to ethical guidelines.

Exchange

The exchange of artefacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving a collection. Exchanges may be arranged by a museum staff member with the approval of Director/Curator. Exchanges may be made provided that:

- both parties are in full agreement with the terms and conditions

- both the acquisition and the disposal of artefacts are documented for the permanent records
- the removal of the object would not impair the collection in any functional way
- the removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process

Found in the Collection

Items not accessioned that have been treated as artefacts over time but for which acquisition documentation can not be found are designated 'found in the collection'. These objects will be accessioned if approved through the acquisition process.

The acquisition of artefacts into the museum's permanent collection is governed by the following principles:

- 3.1 The artefacts collected must be historically significant to the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and immediate area.
- 3.2 Priority will be given to artefacts associated with important events, periods, episodes and personalities in the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and immediate area.
- 3.3 The artefacts must be in reasonable condition so that the Museum may fulfill its goal of preservation, with as little alteration to artefacts as possible.
- 3.4 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will not collect curiosities and relics that do not contribute to a significant historical awareness for the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and immediate area.
- 3.5 The acceptability of an artefact for the Museum's collection will be determined by the Director/Curator, the Collections Committee, and the Museum Advisory Committee.
- 3.6 All acquisitions involving the transfer of ownership and/or responsibility must be accompanied by a *signed* gift agreement or other proof of legal title to the artefact, such as a transfer or title form or bill of sale.
- 3.7 The Museum does *not* acquire material:
 - 3.7.1 Which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any provincial or national statute;
 - 3.7.2 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;

- 3.7.3 Which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of the 1995 UNIDROIT *Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* (or any similar statutes);
- 3.7.4 If, in addition to or beyond the preceding clauses, there is any reason to believe that the artefact has questionable, undetermined or unethical history of ownership.
- 3.8 Artefacts collected must be useful in the Museum's display, research and interpretive activities.
- 3.9 Artefacts are collected for the sake of displaying them in historical context, not for the sake of collection. However, the display of particular artefacts is not guaranteed.
- 3.10 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will not collect duplicates unless they serve a useful purpose, such as extension program displays, travelling educational kits, etc. Any duplicate must have a specific function within the Museum's program. Any duplicate which does not have a specific function should not be collected.

Documentation

- 3.11 Artefacts collected should be well documented, such documentation to include:
 - 3.11.1 circumstances surrounding the object's discovery and acquisition (i.e. where, when and by whom);
 - 3.11.2 the original owner and manufacturer;
 - 3.11.3 the artefact's original use;
 - 3.11.4 a chronological history of the artefact;
 - 3.11.5 any other pertinent facts.

Such documentation must be capable of verification.

- 3.12 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc may collect artefacts that have incomplete documentation as long as they contribute to a clearer understanding of significant former customs, activities, episodes or personalities related to the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and immediate area.
- 3.13 The decision to accept new artefacts into the Museum's permanent collection is made by the Director/Curator and the Collections Committee comprised of a representative of the Museum Advisory Committee and members of the community.

Approval Process for Acquisition

- 3.14 This process must adhere to the following:

- 3.14.1 When an artefact is received by Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, the potential donor signs a *Temporary Custody* form;
- 3.14.2 The Director/Curator and the Collections Committee decide with respect to the Museum's *Statement of Purpose* and against the permanent collection whether to accept or decline the potential donation;
- 3.14.3 If the artefact is *not* considered to be pertinent to the collection, it is **returned to the owner** and the *Temporary Custody* form is completed as such;
- 3.14.4 If the artefact *is* considered to be pertinent to the collection, a gift form is filled out (with a potential accession number) and sent to the owner/donor;
- 3.14.5 The owner/donor is required to sign a gift form for the artefact, thus transferring ownership and responsibility to the;
- 3.14.6 The owner/donor has 60 days from the accession date to return the signed gift form to Museum Strathroy-Caradoc. If the owner does not return the signed gift form within that time period, the artefact is to be returned to him/her. Without a signed gift form, a tax receipt will *not* be issued, and the artefact will *not* enter the permanent collection;
- 3.14.7 Any artefact acquired by a purchase or exchange or any other transaction is processed into the collection following steps 3.14.2-6. If a gift form is not relevant, some form of transfer of ownership must accompany the artefact (receipt).

Orphan donations

- 3.15 Orphan donations are artefacts left at the museum without proper documentation completed (i.e. dropped off after hours). These items will be reviewed by staff, and if deemed appropriate (fit within the scope of collection) will be processed similarly to artefacts left in temporary custody. However if the artefacts do not fall within the scope of collection they will be disposed of. See 8.7.4 and 8.7.5

Other circumstances

- 3.16 In situations deemed critical by the Director/Curator, the Collections Committee may be called upon to function as the basis for refusal of a donation.

- 3.17 In some circumstances acquisitions may be taken to the Museum Advisory Committee for recommendation. These cases include significant purchase for which funds are requested, and donations or purchases of potentially controversial nature (cultural sensitivity, negative public scrutiny).

4. Personal Collecting

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to personal collecting. Personal collecting includes:

- 4.1 The acquisition by Museum employees, Collections Committee members, Museum Advisory Committee members, or municipal staff with direct responsibility for the Museum of an artefact similar to or related to that which Museum Strathroy-Caradoc collects or intends to acquire. All of the above parties are required to declare a conflict of interest when such a situation arises, and are required to offer Museum Strathroy-Caradoc the opportunity to acquire the artefact(s) in question.
- 4.2 The recommendation for acceptance or refusal of acceptance by Museum employees, Collections Committee members, Museum Advisory Committee members, or municipal staff with direct responsibility for the Museum of an artefact into the permanent collection based on personal interest. All of the above parties are required to declare a conflict of interest when such a situation arises.
- 4.3 The recommendation for removal or opposition to removal by Museum employees, Collections Committee members, Museum Advisory Committee members, or municipal staff with direct responsibility for the Museum of an artefact from the permanent collection based on personal interest. All of the above parties are required to declare a conflict of interest when such a situation arises.

5. Management of Artefacts

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to the maintenance of artefacts in the permanent collection:

- 5.1 Artefacts are to be exhibited, stored, researched, treated and conserved according to current professional standards to the full extent of available resources;
- 5.2 Records are to be maintained and updated according to current professional standards and staff resources;

- 5.3 Inventory schedules are to be followed, in order to ensure that information relative to the collection remains current for management and insurance purposes. Spot-check inventories to be conducted once every 6 months. Semi-comprehensive inventory completed every 3-5 years (can include a complete row, artefact type etc.). Complete inventory completed every 10 years.
- 5.4 In the event of accidental loss, damage or destruction, the Director/Curator is to be notified and a written report is to be submitted to the Collections Committee and Museum Advisory Committee.

6. Appraisal of Artefacts

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to the appraisal of recent acquisition to the permanent collection.

- 6.1 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will issue tax receipts to donors of artefacts that are accepted into the permanent collection, *only* upon request;
- 6.2 The Director/Curator will be responsible for appraisals up to \$1,000, as per the Tax Act. Appraisals beyond that amount are to be performed by a professional appraiser or recognized expert at the expense of the donor.
- 6.3 All artefacts must have a signed gift form and be part of the permanent collection before an appraisal is completed;

7. Loan of Artefacts

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to the loan of artefacts from and/or to other institutions.

- 7.1 Artefacts may be borrowed for temporary exhibition with specified time lengths according to the loan conditions established by the Museum Advisory Committee. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is responsible for all in-coming material, guaranteeing the handling, security, exhibit, and return of all artefacts are according to professional procedures and standards;
- 7.2 All in-coming loan material is insured by a rider governed by the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc's insurance coverage for the Museum;
- 7.3 The Museum may loan artefacts out for temporary displays or educational purposes off-site. The borrowing institution is responsible for the on-loan material, guaranteeing the handling, security, exhibit,

and return of all artefacts are according to professional procedures and standards;

- 7.4 All out-going material is insured by the borrowing institution;
- 7.5 Artefacts borrowed or loaned by the Museum on a long-term basis must be reviewed and renewed annually, if such renewal is deemed necessary.

8. Removal of Artefacts

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to the de-accessioning of artefacts. De-accessioning refers to the permanent removal of one or more artefacts from the permanent collection. In order to maintain a relevant collection in accordance with the Museum's *Statement of Purpose* and current professional standards, it is necessary to de-accession certain artefacts on occasion. The manner of disposal will be in the best interest of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, the public it serves, and the public trust placed in the Museum. Except in the case of accidental loss or destruction, every effort will be made to ensure that the de-accessioned artefact remains in the public domain.

- 8.1 In order to de-accession artefacts from the permanent collection, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc must adhere to recognized museum standards and current professional ethics. When de-accessioning any object, the Museum must ensure that:
 - 8.1.1 It is legally free to act;
 - 8.1.2 It has clear title to the objects proposed for de-accession and/or has made a conscientious and documented effort to locate the owner(s);
 - 8.1.3 There were no restrictions associated with the material when it was acquired;
 - 8.1.4 The transaction is fully approved by the governing authority;
- 8.2 The criteria for de-accessioning an artefact from the permanent collection are as follows:
 - 8.2.1 The artefact does not meet any of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's stated collections criteria;
 - 8.2.2 The artefact is of poor quality in comparison with other objects of the same type in the permanent collection;
 - 8.2.3 The artefact is redundant or a duplicate that has no value as part of a series;
 - 8.2.4 The authenticity, attribution, or genuineness of the artefact is determined to be false or fraudulent, and the artefact lacks sufficient aesthetic merit or historical importance to warrant

- retention. All forgeries will be indelibly marked as such and shall never be returned to the market;
- 8.2.5 The physical condition of the artefact is so poor that restoration is impossible or will render the artefact essentially false. Artefacts damaged beyond reasonable repair that are not of use for study or teaching purposes may be destroyed;
 - 8.2.6 The required security, storage, maintenance and preservation is beyond the Museum's ability and/or resources.
 - 8.2.7 The artefact is hazardous to the collection, staff or visitors;
 - 8.2.8 Accidental loss or irreparable damage due to fire, theft, breakage or deterioration has occurred;
 - 8.2.9 The artefact lacks documentation verifying its authenticity, and/or origins, and/or chronological history, and/or owner or donor;
 - 8.2.10 The artefact has conditions attached by the donor that the Museum cannot or chooses not to fulfill;
 - 8.2.11 The potential for improving the Museum's permanent collection by means of exchange or other transaction;
 - 8.2.12 Artefacts can be replaced by similar objects in better condition or with more complete provenance and that would significantly improve the quality of the collection;
 - 8.2.13 The potential for gaining knowledge by destructive analysis of the object justifies its loss from the collection;
- 8.3 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will de-accession an artefact(s) for the purpose of repatriation when it is legally proven that another body, organization, people, and/or government has the legal and ethical right to the said artefact(s).
- 8.4 Records are to be kept for all de-accessioned artefacts, citing the reasoning, methodology and approval of the de-accession process. The decision to remove an artefact from the permanent collection must be accompanied by appropriate documentation, and must adhere to the following procedure:
- 8.4.1 The artefact is assessed on its physical condition;
 - 8.4.2 The artefact's record and documentation are reviewed;
 - 8.4.3 The museum's permanent collection is reviewed to determine the status of the artefact within the collection;
 - 8.4.4 The Director/Curator consults with appropriate staff members, who jointly decide to forward the recommendation to the Collections Committee;
 - 8.4.5 The Collections Committee makes the recommendation to the Museum Advisory Committee;

- 8.4.6 The Museum Advisory Committee makes the recommendation to the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc Council.
- 8.4.7 The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc Council approves *any* and *all* de-accessions from the permanent collection.
- 8.5 Artefacts removed from the permanent collection will have their accession number and any other museum related markings removed. The catalogue number will not be reused, and associated registration records will be clearly marked as “de-accessioned”.
- 8.6 On no occasion will staff members at Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, members of the Community Collections Committee, members of the Museum Advisory Committee, or Municipal staff with direct responsibility for the Museum be permitted to purchase any such artefacts.
- 8.7 Except in the case of accidental loss or destruction, disposal of de-accessioned artefacts is to be accomplished in one of the following manners:
 - 8.7.1 Offered to the Museum’s education collection as an educational (or hands-on) artefact;
 - 8.7.2 Offered to another educational/cultural institution as a gift or for exchange purposes;
 - 8.7.3 Offered for disposal through a legitimate public auction (If this means of disposal is chosen, *no* member of the Museum staff, Collections Committee, Advisory Committee, volunteer staff or municipal employees with direct responsibility for the Museum will be permitted to participate in the auction).
 - 8.7.4 Offered to a non-profit organization within the community whose mandate is to support the community with profits raised from sale of items.
 - 8.7.5 Undergo intentional destruction before witnesses by designated museum personnel (This means of disposal is only permitted if the artefact is in extremely poor condition, has no documentation related to its authenticity, origin or history, or has no monetary value or historical significance to another institution. Items for disposal will not be sold on the site of the museum).
- 8.8 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will not dispose of collections by returning them to the original donor(s) as a gift; however, the Museum may allow the original donor to purchase the material at current fair market value.

- 8.9 In the event that the de-accession process involves a transfer of ownership and/or responsibility, appropriate documentation and forms are to be completed.
- 8.10 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will make public their intention to dispose of artefacts in advance, using the appropriate media.
- 8.11 The Museum will make every effort to notify relevant donors and/or living artists about the forthcoming disposal.
- 8.12 Funds resulting from a de-accession (e.g. procedures from a sale) are to be devoted to the purpose of collections management.

9. Use

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is committed to the long-term preservation of artefacts in the collection. However, a balance must be struck between the preservation of the collection and its use for research, exhibition, educational, promotional, and commercial purposes.

The Museum acknowledges that access to and use of the collection, by staff and the public, increases risk to artefacts and specimens and requires appropriate controls.

- 9.1 Access to the collection is provided through exhibitions programs, events, publications, collection records, research files, visual resources, and consultation with curatorial staff;
- 9.2 The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation restricts access to some information;
- 9.3 Access to and use of archaeological artefacts must consider cultural sensitivities.
- 9.4 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 museum

Staff Access to the Collection

- 9.5 The level of staff access to the collection is determined by the Curator/Director. Staff and volunteers who handle artefacts must be appropriately trained and supervised.

Public Use of the Collection

- 9.6 The Museum 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;
- 9.7 Physical access to artefacts is provided through exhibitions, programs, events, and tours. Other requests for physical access will be considered individually (e.g. loans, individual requests, and fee-for-use situations);
- 9.8 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;
- 9.9 Access to and use of the collection is at the discretion of the Curator/Director, and is generally provided to any person who can demonstrate a need. Determining factors include:
- condition of the artefact
 - risk to the artefact
 - location
 - security
 - health and safety risks
 - copyright
 - artist's rights
 - intended use
 - expertise of the enquirer
 - human and financial resources available
- 9.10 Any agreement involving use of the collection must be documented in writing, signed by both parties, and approved by Director/Curator. The Museum must be credited for any use of its collection.

Educational Collection

The following outlines the position of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to the development and maintenance of an education collection.

- 9.11 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc acquires material specific to education program use;
- 9.12 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc may transfer artefacts that are de-accessioned from the permanent collection into the education collection for program use, providing this action is according to policy standards;

- 9.13 All material (e.g. artefacts, videos, slides, printed materials) that form part of the education collection are managed in accordance with the Museum's *Collections Management Policy*
- 9.14 Tax receipts are *not* issued for artefacts donated to the education collection.

10. Responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of the Museum with respect to collections management. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will:

- 10.1 Ensure that the scope of collection is consistent with the museum's statement of purpose;
- 10.2 Establish priorities for collection development;
- 10.3 Demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in collection development;
- 10.4 Meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on collecting activities;
- 10.5 Ensure appropriate procedures and documentation for:
 - 10.5.1 the acquisition, use and de-accessioning of artefacts in the collection;
 - 10.5.2 incoming and outgoing loans;
 - 10.5.3 the management of collections records;
- 10.6 Demonstrate a commitment to the Museum's *Conservation Policy* in the labelling, care, and handling of artefacts;
- 10.7 Distinguish between artefacts in a research (or study) collection and artefacts in an education (or hands-on) collection;

Keep a regularly updated paper or electronic copy of the collection records off-site in a secure location

11. Policy Review and Approval

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's *Collections Management Policy* is approved by the Museum Advisory Committee.

The *Collections Management Policy* is to be reviewed on an annual basis, or at any time that changes are deemed necessary. The Director/Curator, in conjunction with the professional staff, conducts the review. The revised version is submitted to the Museum Advisory Committee for approval.

This *Collections Management Policy* may not be altered without the consent of the Museum Advisory Committee.