

Research Policy

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC

1. Introduction

The Museum Strathroy-Caradoc *Research Policy* sets the guidelines for research conducted at Museum Strathroy-Caradoc and by Museum Strathroy-Caradoc staff and volunteers. The policy outlines the responsibilities and sets the standards for all research associated with Museum Strathroy-Caradoc.

This policy also deals with conditions of access related to the study of records, research material, and items from the permanent collection by individuals (students, academics, museum professionals, and the general public) for the purpose of research.

2. Commitment to Research

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's goal is to promote the development of heritage in the area through effective research activities at the Museum. The Museum's collection offers a reflection of the community's past, and acts as a central repository for recording and disseminating the results of research, through exhibitions, programming, and/or publication. The Museum is committed to ongoing activity in the area of research. A portion of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's budget will be allocated to research activities including maintaining research resources. Through well-researched exhibitions, interpretation, publications and educational programming, the Museum continually adds to the knowledge, self-discovery and enjoyment of the community. In addition to accommodating staff researchers, the Museum also committed to the assistance of outside researchers.

3. Research Activity

There are many aspects of research activity that the Museum is engaged in. These can be categorized in three general areas:

3.1 Subject Area

The first is in its **subject area**, such as history, science and technology, archaeology, fine and decorative arts, anthropology, or ethnology. Depending on the extent of this research, the Museum may be able to add to the body of knowledge within its discipline and keep abreast of the trends and discoveries in the field.

3.2 Museum Functions

The second type of research relates to the carrying out of specific **museum functions**. In the area of collecting, research expands knowledge of individual artifacts and of the general collection, and allows for upgrades to museum records. In the preparation of exhibits, research activity uncovers possible themes for exhibits and confirms the accuracy of information. Similarly, research establishes credibility and provides more meaningful experiences in the Museum's special events, educational programming, and interpretation of historic sites. The nature and background of an artifact must also be researched before it is given conservation treatment, in order to avoid damaging the artifact or distorting its historical significance.

3.3 Museological Research

The third type of research is **museological**, that is, the systematic study of the organization, management, and function of the museum. The Museum makes every effort to study and apply education strategies, conservation techniques, visitor surveys, exhibit design techniques, evaluation of exhibits and programming, and administrative, staff training and development, public relations and training theories.

4. Public Inquiries

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc welcomes and encourages public access to the permanent collection, records and research files for the purpose of general research inquiries. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc engages in research in response to public inquiries in the following manner:

- 4.1 Provides research assistance and facilitates public access to the Museum collection, records and research files by means of a scheduled appointment;
- 4.2 Designates a staff member or volunteer to provide research services for a nominal fee, to be determined by the amount of time and resources dedicated to research activity;

5. Access & Control

Access to records and research is subject to the provisions outlined below and the *Collections and Conservation Policy*.

- The museum's collections and archival holdings will be available to the community for research purposes. Respecting the confidential arrangements made between donors and the museum and subject to normal museum environmental and security and the Collections and Conservation Policy, reference materials will be made available to the staff, researchers and general public. Such materials may include primary and secondary sources.
- Members of the general public (including other museum professionals and academics) will have access to research materials at the discretion of the Curator or their designate.
- Such individuals will be allowed to perform research according to their demonstrated level of expertise

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will demonstrate a commitment to accessibility in providing research services. Ways of access to museum research services include in person, over phone, e-mail, or online.

Public access to the Museum collection, records and research material is governed by the following principles:

- 5.1 The Museum restricts public access to its collections storage areas. All researchers who require access to these areas must be accompanied by a Museum staff member or designated volunteer who is trained in the care and handling of artifacts;
- 5.2 Researchers may request to have items removed from the collections storage area and transferred to a study space to facilitate research. All items must be transferred by a Museum staff member or designated volunteer who is trained in the care and handling of artifacts;
- 5.3 The exact order and arrangement of materials must be maintained. All material used for the purpose of research must be returned to its proper place by a Museum staff member or a designated volunteer who is trained in the care and handling of artifacts;

5.4 The reproduction of research materials must be conducted by a Museum staff member, or a designated volunteer who is trained in the care and handling of artifacts;

6. Use of Materials

It is the responsibility of researchers to assist in the preservation of the Museum collection, records and research materials. Appropriate care must be exercised to ensure that future generations of Museum patrons will have access to these materials. Researchers who have access to the collection must therefore receive introductory training in the proper handling and care of research material. See *Care and Handling Procedures* for more information.

7. Citations & Credits

In citing archival and photographic material patrons must credit the collection to which the materials belong and the name of the institution. An example would be:

The Winston Pearson Collection
Museum Strathroy-Caradoc

8. Copyright

All items from the Museum collection, records and research material are subject to copyright. Staff will not violate relevant municipal, provincial or federal legislation or related regulations (e.g. copyright, freedom of information and privacy) nor knowingly allow researchers using museum materials to violate such legislation or regulations. Any museum reference material used directly or indirectly in the production of exhibits, publications or other materials shall be acknowledged by the researchers involved. Museum staff and volunteers will follow the best principles of fairness, courtesy and academic honesty in citations in exhibits, publications or other materials. Researchers are advised that it is their responsibility to secure permission to publish from unpublished manuscripts in which literary property rights are retained, or to publish from a work subject to copyright, from the copyright owner. Researchers must also be made aware that Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is the copyright holder for all items in the museum collection, unless otherwise noted. Permission to use or reproduce these items for the purposes of research does not constitute a transfer of copyright. The commercial use of items from the Museum collection, records and research material requires copyright negotiation.

9. Reproduction Services

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc offers reproduction services on site for a nominal fee. Any reproduction of research material is to be conducted by a Museum staff member or a designated volunteer. See Fee Schedule for more information

10. Responsibilities

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

- 10.1 Demonstrate a commitment to the pursuit of research by staff and outside researchers;
- 10.2 Ensure that the scope of research is consistent with the *Statement of Purpose*;
- 10.3 Establish priorities for research activities;
- 10.4 Demonstrate a commitment to accuracy and objectivity in the results of research;
- 10.5 Demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in research (e.g. confidentiality of records, ownership of information);

10.6 Meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on research activities and products (e.g. copyright legislation);

Policy Review and Approval

The Museum Strathroy-Caradoc *Research Policy* is approved by the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Committee and the Council of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

The *Research 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 Museum Advisory Committee, conducts the review. The revised version is reviewed and approved by the Museum Advisory Committee and submitted to the Council of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc for approval.

This *Research Policy* may not be altered without the consent of the Council of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

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Chair: Margaret Copeland-Burdick

