



City of
Peterborough

To: **Members of the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee**

From: **Susan Neale, Museum Director**

Meeting Date: **March 8, 2018**

Subject: **Report MAAC18-005**
Peterborough Museum & Archives: Deaccession and Repatriation

Purpose

A report to recommend the deaccession and repatriation of two (2) ceremonial objects from the collection of the Peterborough Museum & Archives.

Recommendations

That the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee approve the recommendations outlined in Report MAAC18-005 dated March 8, 2018, of the Museum Director, as follows:

- a) That the following two (2) objects be deaccessioned from the collection of the Peterborough Museum & Archives:
 - i) the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw ooligan feasting dish;
 - ii) the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw head ring.
- b) That the same two (2) objects be repatriated to the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Kwakwaka'wakw of North Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no immediate budget or financial implications associated with the recommendation.

Background

Peterborough Museum & Archives Deaccession Policy

As a designated Category “A” institution, the Peterborough Museum & Archives (PMA) strives to adhere to ethical guidelines for collection storage and growth. There are circumstances when the deaccessioning of objects in a museum or archives strengthens and refines the collections. Such circumstances are identified in the criteria of the PMA Deaccessions Policy (Appendix A). The Museum & Archives Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport regularly review and approve the PMA Policy Manual, including the Deaccessions Policy.

“A Matter of Ownership: First Nations and Métis Objects in the Peterborough Museum & Archives Collection”

The PMA in-house exhibition entitled “A Matter of Ownership: First Nations and Métis Objects in the Peterborough Museum & Archives Collection” (April to June 2017) was developed and installed in recognition of the call for action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. While the PMA has acted as a steward of the featured Indigenous objects for many years, “A Matter of Ownership” prompted discussions regarding repatriation, in particular, sacred and ceremonial objects.

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada emphasizes several articles under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* that have particular relevance for museums in Canada. Accordingly, the PMA “shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects ... in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned [Article 12:2]” (Appendix B).

Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Feasting Dish and Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Head Ring

The exhibition, “A Matter of Ownership: First Nations and Métis Objects in the Peterborough Museum & Archives Collection”, featured Indigenous objects from the PMA collection, including a feasting dish and a head ring.

The feasting dish and the head ring were donated to the Victoria Museum, Peterborough, in the late 1890s or early 1900s. They were collected as examples of “Indian relics [sic]” or “Indian implements [sic]”. When the Victoria Museum closed in 1950, much of its collection was returned to the donors and their families. The Peterborough Historical Society later opened the Peterborough Centennial Museum & Archives (1967), which provided a permanent home for what remained of the Victoria Museum’s collection (approximately 5% of the PMA’s current collection).



PMA records offer scant information on the feasting dish and the head ring. However, a label adhered to the bottom of the feasting dish identify it as having been “used by Indians of Blondin Harbour, British Columbia [sic]”. The label also states that the dish was purchased at the “British Columbia & Alaska Indian Bazaar in Victoria, British Columbia [sic]”.

The label on the feasting dish provided invaluable information. The team from the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre in Quathiaski Cove, British Columbia, confirmed that the feasting dish and head ring are sacred to the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw, Kwakwaka’wakw of North Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The dish is a ceremonial ooligan feasting dish and the head ring is used for the Hamat’sa dance, the most sacred dance of the Kwakwaka’wakw people.

Deaccession and Repatriation

PMA staff recommend that the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw ooligan feasting dish and the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw head ring be deaccessioned, based on repatriation (Table 1).

Table 1 Peterborough Museum & Archives: Objects Recommended for Deaccession and Repatriation (2018)

Accession Number	Object Name	Reason for Deaccession	Date of Deaccession	Method of Disposal
963.37.70	Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw ooligan feasting dish 	Repatriation	March 8, 2018	Deaccession Policy, Item 3.5, Repatriation
968.24.29	Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw head ring 	Repatriation	March 8, 2018	Deaccession Policy, Item 3.5, Repatriation

The community of the Tsulquate Reserve, both Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people, are planning the construction of a Big House to highlight the stories of the two tribes. The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw ooligan feasting dish and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw head ring will be key pieces. The Band Council may request the return of the two ceremonial objects into the care of their cultural department prior to the completion of the Big House.

All parties will consult to determine the best method for transporting the two ceremonial objects to the Tsulquate Reserve. PMA staff and the Chief of the Tsulquate Reserve agree that using a third party shipper is not appropriate.

For now, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw ooligan feasting dish and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw head ring will be deaccessioned from the Peterborough Museum & Archives' collection, but remain in the care of the PMA.

Summary

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw ooligan feasting dish and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw head ring, currently in the Peterborough Museum & Archives collection, shall be returned to the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people to ensure their right to use and to control their ceremonial objects. These two objects shall be deaccessioned and repatriated.

Submitted by,

Susan Neale,
Museum Director

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Attachments:

Appendix A - Peterborough Museum & Archives Deaccessions Policy (2018)
Appendix B – Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future, Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (excerpt: pages 297-302)