

DEACCESSIONS POLICY

MAAC10-017 - Appendix B

Note: This policy supersedes all previous deaccessioning policies and practices.

1. Standards:

The Peterborough Museum & Archives shall deaccession objects from its collection only in accordance with recognised standards and current professional ethics.

2. Intent:

The Peterborough Museum & Archives shall not acquire objects with the intention of eventual disposal for financial gain.

Deaccessioning and disposal cannot take place without formal approval by the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee. The Museum Director shall present recommendations for deaccessioning and disposal to the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee for approval by formal motion.

3. Accidental Loss:

When an artifact and/or archival material is stolen, or damaged beyond repair, the Peterborough Museum & Archives shall produce a report on the loss or damage, indicating how and when the loss occurred (if known) and what actions were taken as a result. This report shall become part of the permanent accession record for the artifact and/or archival material in question.

4. Criteria:

The criteria for deaccessioning artifacts or archival material shall include:

4.1 Lack of relevance to Peterborough Museum & Archives collection and acquisition policies.

4.2 Excessive duplication.

4.3 Poor condition or quality.

4.4 Lack of documentation verifying authenticity, provenance, history and/or previous owner(s) or donor.

4.5 Where repatriation may be appropriate, the Peterborough Museum & Archives may deaccession material for repatriation to another institution or group, when the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee is satisfied that repatriation is appropriate and ethical.

4.6 Where material has been identified as a potential health hazard or that could jeopardize the preservation of other components of the Peterborough Museum & Archives collections.

4.7 To upgrade Peterborough Museum & Archives collections by means of exchange or other transaction with another public museum, archives or related institution.

5. Procedure:

5.1 The Curator, Archivist and/or Conservator shall identify objects (of clear title) to be deaccessioned using physical inspection, examination of pertinent accession records and related documentation and shall consult with the Museum Director. The Curator, Archivist and/or Conservator may also consult with appraisers and other authorities as necessary.

Note: The objects must be of clear title or if title cannot be determined, a serious, diligent and documented effort must be made in attempts to ascertain title.

5.2 The Curator, Archivist and/or Conservator shall present recommendations for deaccessioning and preferred method(s) of disposal (pursuant to Section 6) through the appropriate committee (as applicable) or directly to the Museum & Archives Advisory Committee, in the form of a written report. Each deaccession request is to be assessed on its merits, on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 A deaccession form recording: accession number, reasons for deaccessioning, date of deaccessioning, description of deaccessioned material, method of disposal, and other pertinent information will be produced and permanently stored in the appropriate accession file.

6. Disposition of Deaccessioned Objects:

The following options for disposal of deaccessioned material do not necessarily follow a prescribed sequence:

6.1 May be offered to the Peterborough Museum & Archives Education Collection for use in Peterborough Museum & Archives programs.

6.2 May be offered to another public, not-for-profit, museum, archives or related institution as a gift or to be used for exchange purposes.

6.3 May be sold at a legitimate public auction or other public sale, with appropriate notification and advertising. The Peterborough Museum & Archives shall make every effort to ensure that deaccessioned material shall remain in the public domain, within Canada.

7. Intentional Destruction:

If the deaccessioned material is in extremely poor condition, is a potential health hazard or cannot be disposed of in accordance with Section 6, it shall be intentionally destroyed.

The Peterborough Museum & Archives shall remove accession numbers from any material to be destroyed. The Peterborough Museum & Archives shall consult with appropriate authorities on the safest and most environmentally sound method of disposal.

8. Conflict of Interest:

No Peterborough Museum & Archives employee (or relative), board or committee member, volunteer, appraiser, consultants or other person directly involved in the deaccession or disposal process, or with specific prior knowledge of the value or significance of the deaccessioned item(s) shall be eligible to purchase deaccessioned material at auction or other public sale, nor are they permitted to acquire deaccessioned material by any other means.

9. Proceeds:

All monies realized from deaccession activities, including auctions or other public sales, shall be used for the direct benefit of Peterborough Museum & Archives' collections, either for future acquisitions or improvements in collections care and/or management.

10. Records Management:

The Peterborough Museum & Archives will maintain permanent records that fully document each and every deaccession and disposal. A completed deaccession form and copy of the relevant motion from the Museum & Advisory Committee shall be included in the appropriate accession file.

If a transfer of ownership is the chosen method of disposal, the Peterborough Museum & Archives shall provide copies of appropriate documentation to the receiving institution.

Authority: Canadian Association for Conservation – Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice.
Canadian Council for Archives, Code of Ethics.
Canadian Museum Association, Ethics Guidelines.
IIC-CG and CAPC's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.
Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Standards for Community Museums.

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