

Heritage Abbotsford Collections Policy and Procedures

Submitted by Christina Reid

Statement of purpose

The Heritage Abbotsford Society, hereafter referred to as “the Society”, organized under the Societies Act of BC, Reg. # S-16269, has been created to collect, preserve, research, exhibit, and interpret all those artifacts that best serve to illustrate the culture, founding, settlement and development of the entire district now known as the City of Abbotsford from settlement up to and including artifacts older than 40 years from the current date. The mission of the Heritage Abbotsford Society is to be the memory of the community by preserving and interpreting its history. Functions of this mandate are to preserve, study and exhibit artifacts, and to educate and entertain the public.

Trethewey House has been restored to circa 1925 for the purpose of providing a sense of the lifestyle of the era. The Society will collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret “in situ” all those artifacts which are sympathetic to the restoration date. All research of the restoration, collection and exhibition will be done in harmony with the documented research of the home. The Society will fulfill its obligation to serve the residents of Abbotsford by its emphasis on special programs and exhibits on and off site. The Society will promote public awareness of the history and heritage buildings and sites of the region and work towards establishing criteria and inventories of such buildings and sites.

This statement may not be altered without the consent of the Board of Directors of the Heritage Abbotsford Society through a duly recorded motion at a Board Meeting.

Scope and Extent of Collections

The Society collection shall consist of a permanent artifact collection and an educational artifact collection. Artifacts within the permanent collection must have been made, sold, used or imported into the City of Abbotsford between settlement and 40 years before the current date. Those artifacts must be of present or future use for the study or visual demonstration of the pre-history and history of the City of Abbotsford.

The educational collection shall consist of objects which were made or used 40 years before the current date, and which can be used to interpret or provide a visual demonstration of the pre-history and history of Abbotsford, but which do not necessarily have provenance to Abbotsford. The educational collection is assembled for regular handling and teaching purposes, and therefore does not require the same duty of care as the permanent collection.

Duplicates of artifacts already held in the permanent collection shall not be collected unless there is a significant and demonstrable importance to the history of the City or Abbotsford and/or are suitable for use in the educational collection.

Acquisitions

Although the receipt of outright gifts is the simplest legal arrangement for a donation, and such an outright gift best enables the Society to ensure permanent public access to the collection, objects may also be added to the collections by means of bequests, purchases through funds from the Acquisition Fund, exchanges or any other transactions by which title to the objects pass to the Society. The Collections Manager shall have the authority to accept or refuse all artifacts offered to the collection, and may recommend material for purchase, which must be approved by the Board of Directors of the Society. If an object is being offered for sale, and a comparable object offered by gift or bequest is available, the latter will be given preference.

The Society will only accession objects for which it can provide proper care. Any object encumbered with conditions imposed by the donor regarding use or future disposition may not be accepted.

Deaccessions and Disposal

Artifacts already collected which are not within the guidelines of the Collections Policy, superfluous to the collection or of insignificant value to the collection may be removed from the Society's holdings. An object which has seriously deteriorated may also be designated educational or destroyed. Artifacts may be deaccessioned from the collection upon approval by the collections Manager and an appropriately trained member of staff. Disposal of deaccessioned material must follow the disposal instructions that were determined during acquisition. Where no disposal instructions have been specified by the donor, the Collections Manager has the authority to destroy, return, transfer, sell, repatriate or donate deaccessioned material according to this order:

- Primarily, the artifact should be offered back to the donor or evaluated for formal deaccession and transfer to the educational collection.
- Secondly, if deemed not to be applicable in this way, objects may be disposed of through sale, exchange, repatriation or donation. Preference will then be given to scholarly or cultural organization recipients rather than private individuals and commercial entities.
- The destruction of deaccessioned artifacts is always a last resort.

The deaccession procedure as outlined in the Past Perfect Museum Software 5.0 manual (currently in use) must be followed and all records compiled in the deaccession process must be treated and stored the same as a registration record. If an artifact is to be returned, transferred, sold, repatriated, or donated, all and any identifying numbers that connect the material to the Society must be removed.

There shall be no trading with individuals.

Funds received from the sale of artifacts are to be deposited in an Acquisition Fund and these funds are to be used exclusively for the purchase of artifacts for the collection. Artifacts from the collection for which the Heritage Abbotsford can no longer provide proper care and/or storage conditions to the point where the conditions become a deterrent to the preservation of the object(s) may be disposed of in a the manner determined to be most beneficial to the Society by the Collections Manager in consultation with the an appropriately trained member of staff.

Loans

No artifacts shall be accepted for long term (more than 1 year) or permanent loan without the explicit recommendation from both the Collections Manager and an appropriately trained member of staff. All loan transactions shall be for a contractually agreed upon (specified) period of time with options for renewal. The applicable procedure is outlined in the Past Perfect Museum Software 5.0 Manual, and the records compiled by the Collections Manager must be treated as if they were the same as a registration record.

Artifacts may be loaned or borrowed for specific display or study purposes for a specified period of time, not to exceed one year, and only if the owner has established a market value on the article. Artifacts may be loaned to individuals, organizations, institutions and commercial establishments if applicable environmental conditions (contractually outlined by the Collections Manager) are met and:

- They are displayed in secure, locked cases OR
- They are accompanied by a staff member or trained docent.

If unusual restrictions are placed on a proposed incoming or outgoing loan the Collections Manager and an appropriately trained member of staff must approve the loan. Items will not be loaned or taken in on loan if it is doubtful whether they can withstand travel, climate changes and/or the circumstances of exhibition. The collections manager has the responsibility to monitor a loan.

It is the duty of the Collections Manager to pack loaned and taken collections for transport. The Society does not rent out collection pieces, nor charges a fee for loans. All artifacts loaned for reproduction in print or for the enhancement of an organization or commercial establishment shall be on the basis that the Heritage Abbotsford will be acknowledged as the owner and source of the material. This acknowledgment shall, preferably, be in print.

Procedures

An adequate and ongoing cataloging program for the collection must be carried out by the Collections Manager. Staff may implement volunteer assistance only if the volunteer has been adequately trained in cataloging procedures and is under the supervision of the Collections Manager. Registration methods to be followed are outlined in the Past Perfect Museum Software 5.0 manual. A deed of gift is completed by the Collections Manager or by a trained curatorial assistant under the Collections Manager's supervision each time a donation is offered to the Society. Artifacts donated are accepted under the conditions laid out in the Past Perfect Museum Software 5.0 deed of gift form. The form includes institution name, source information, a listing of the objects offered, date received and accessioned, description of the donation, and a legal waiver. At the time of registration, donations shall be assigned an accession number, and each accepted artifact within the donation shall be assigned an object identification number, in order that the accession number links individual object identification numbers back to the donor. The donor form becomes the Society's document of ownership after it has been signed by the rightful owner of the artifact (i.e. the donor/source) and the Collections Manager. When the deed of gift is completed but for the donor's signature, the form is copied to provide a duplicate for the donor's records in addition to the copy for the Society's records. Both copies are mailed/presented to the donor for his/her signature, together with the Thank You letter instructing the donor to sign and return one copy to the Society. A duplicate copy of registration records should be made and stored outside the Society as a security precaution.

Items placed in the custody of the Society should be given an accession number in the cataloging software within three months of the time of the donation. An adequate and ongoing research program for the interpretation and exhibition of the collection must be carried out by, or under the direction of, staff. Income tax receipts for donations or artifacts shall only be issued to donors accepting the responsibility of providing an independent appraiser to determine the value of their donation.

Undocumented objects which remain so after all attempts to reconcile them with existing records within the catalogue, and/or which are without visible object identifications, shall be considered Found in Collection (hereafter referred to as FIC). The Collections Manager and/or trained staff will conduct a search for records associated with potentially undocumented objects. If documentation pertaining to the object is found, the object will revert to the status outlined in the documentation.

If an FIC object is deemed valuable to the collection, it shall be accessioned into the collection according to the Society's acquisitions policies and procedures and will be assigned an object identification number, and with the donor being designated as "FIC" within all records associated with the object.

If the FIC object does not meet the Society's acquisitions policies and procedures and/or does not adhere to the Society's mission statement, it will be evaluated for disposal on a case-by-case basis, and shall be considered abandoned property one year subsequent to the date of launching a search to

discover documentation, pursuant to Section 10 of British Columbia's Unclaimed Property Act. The same procedure shall apply to "donations" which have been left with the Society as abandoned property.

Procedures for donated non collections inventory, e.g. items within the Educational Collection, will be laid out in a separate document.

Care of Collections

The collection must be insured and adequately protected against fire, theft, vandalism and natural disaster at all times.

Policy adopted on:

Operations Manager:

Board President:

Last updated: