



POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION	DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM	POLICY NUMBER	10-2-02
SUB-SECTION	Museum & Archives	EFFECTIVE DATE	Sept 3, 2001
SUBJECT	Collections Management		
AUTHORITY	Dufferin County Museum & Archives and Heritage Lands Board Motion # M3, July 25, 2001 County Council Motion #2001-205, September 3, 2001 Community Development & Tourism – October 26, 2023 Council – November 9, 2023		

PURPOSE

To provide an overall ethical and procedural framework outlining the means by which Museum of Dufferin (MoD) staff will carry out collections activities. Guided by this framework, MoD staff will strive to fulfil the duties associated with collections management in accordance with our statement of purpose.

Scope

The procedures listed herein apply to both the Museum and Archives collections at the MoD.

Collecting Mandate

The Museum of Dufferin will collect, preserve and document objects and archival material which illustrate Dufferin County’s development from prehistoric to modern times. The museum will collect items made, used, or associated with individuals or places related to Dufferin County. The Museum of Dufferin will strive to represent the diversity of the community by being inclusive in its collecting practices.

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Ownership

Upon signing the Deed of Gift form, ownership is transferred from the donor to the County of Dufferin. All artifacts and archival documents held by the Museum of Dufferin are regarded as assets of the County of Dufferin.

Collection Management Ethics and Accountability

The Museum will not accept items into the collection that have been acquired in an illicit, unethical or exploitive manner. The Museum will strive to adhere to ethical guidelines set out by the International Committee of Museums (ICOM), the Canadian Museum Association (CMA), the Ontario Museum Association (OMA), the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) and the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA).

Museum staff and volunteers privately collecting objects like those being actively collected by the Museum shall inform the Museum of their activities to ensure no conflict of interest.

Museum staff will not engage in the appraisal of objects.

Museum staff will endeavor to develop the Museum collection in an ethical manner, without bias or preferential treatment to any individual, group, or institution.

All aspects of collections care and management will be of the highest possible standard given time, staff, and financial resources.

The Museum respects the cultures and beliefs of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and will comply with the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action for Museums and Archives. Serious consideration to all requests from the Indigenous peoples of Canada for repatriating objects of cultural patrimony will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Museum will comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to the best of its ability.

1. Acquisition of Objects and Collections

1.1 Criteria for Acquisition

The MoD will consider the following when determining whether to accept or reject any artifacts or archival material for its permanent collection:

- a. There is proven relevance to the Statement of Purpose for the MoD and to collection development objectives as outlined in the MoD Strategic Plan.
- b. Unique historic significance, such as association with an event, person, historical period, or geographic area representation of themes, processes, activities, and cultural norms with Dufferin County significance. Lack of information about the provenance or context of items may prevent their acquisition.
- c. Availability of human and financial resources to acquire, document, preserve, store, and exhibit the artifact or specimen.
- d. Storage limitations will be considered. The MoD may not be able to accommodate large items, or collections with numerous components without compromising other objectives.
- e. Redundancy to the collection will be considered. If the potential acquisition

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- duplicates items already in the collection, it may not be accepted.
- f. The MoD will strive to acquire artifacts that generally are complete and in good condition. Acquisitions in poor condition may be rejected due to the time and expense involved in their conservation. Items may also be rejected if their presence at the MoD facility may jeopardize the health and safety of staff or other artifacts or documents in the collection (ie. cellulose nitrate, degrading plastics, lead paint, asbestos, etc.).
 - g. The MoD will consider opportunities for use, exhibition, research, and other program requirements. Acquisitions must have a value that extends beyond personal value to the donor.
 - h. Proof of ownership of rightful possession and completion of the Deed of Gift are necessary. Any proven misrepresentation of ownership will render a signed Deed of Gift null and void. At which point the donation will be returned to its legal owner(s) if they do not wish to transfer titles to the MoD. The Museum of Dufferin will not accept items if there has been notification of an ownership dispute.
 - i. Any item that comes under ethical consideration (human remains, Indigenous materials, etc.) will be subject to appropriate laws and legislation. Similarly, items affected by municipal, provincial, or federal legislations (i.e firearms, toxic, or illegal substances) will be subject to those laws.
 - j. Objects and archival records which represent current local events, groups, organizations and marginalized communities may be sourced by staff and added to the Museum of Dufferin collection. Objects being considered for donation must adhere to the collections management policy.
 - k. Where an item is offered that does not fit the mandate of the Museum, designated Museum staff will make efforts to suggest a more suitable museum or similar institution.

1.2 Approval Process for Acquisition

When an object or archival document is offered to the museum, the object/archival document will be subject to the Acquisition Matrix to facilitate an acceptance or decline decision. The object/archival document must score at least 6 points on the Acquisition Matrix to be considered for the Museum of Dufferin's Permanent Collection. If the object/archival document does not meet the minimum score of the Acquisition Matrix, it cannot be accepted into the Museum of Dufferin's Permanent Collection, and the potential donor may be directed to another institution.

If an object or archival document meets the minimum score on the Acquisition Matrix, it can move forward to the Acquisition Committee, which is comprised of the Museum Services Manager, Curator, and Archivist (or designates) to facilitate a final decision on if the object/archival document should be accepted into the Museum of Dufferin's Permanent Collection.

Where a potential donation is of a sensitive nature, of high-value and/or comprised of large objects or a large collection of objects, or when there is a potential for bias (i.e. a family member

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of a staff member wishes to donate an object or archival document), the potential donation will be subject to the Acquisition Matrix and the Acquisition Committee will meet to make a decision regarding the potential donation. In some cases, the Director of the museum may be asked to sit with the committee where there is potential bias.

Acquisition Matrix	Yes	No
Does the Museum of Dufferin have sufficient resources to care for this object consistent with Museum Standards (staff, HVAC controlled space, specialized containers, etc)?		
If "No", the object cannot be accessioned into the permanent artifact collection.		
There is proven relevance to the mandate of the MoD and to collection development objectives as outlined in the MoD Strategic Plan.		
The object has unique historic significance such as: association with an event, person, historical period, or geographic area representation of themes, processes, activities, and cultural norms with Dufferin County significance.		
The potential donation is not a duplicate of an item already part of the MoD's Permanent Collection.		
The object is complete and in good condition, and will not jeopardize the health and safety of staff or other artifacts or documents in the collection.		
The object has potential use for current or future exhibitions, research, or programming requirements.		
The object is identified, and has documentation/archival support (such as photographs, first or second person written or oral histories, etc.)		
There are no donor considerations or conditions.		
The object was manufactured or produced or designed in Dufferin County.		

1.3 Administration of Approved Donations

- a. All object acquisitions to the museum's collection are the responsibility of the Curator. All paper-based acquisitions to the archives collection are the responsibility of the Archivist.
- b. Donations must be preapproved and may not be left or abandoned on the Museum of Dufferin property without prior agreement.
- c. When an object/archival document is accepted by the MoD, a Deed of Gift will be completed. A Deed of Gift indicates the donor's irrevocable and unconditional donation of his/her right, title, and interests (including copyright if applicable) to the Museum of Dufferin. The donation may be dealt with as the Museum sees fit, including disposal. The form is signed by the donor and the Curator, Archivist or Museum Services Manager.
- d. Upon acceptance into the MoD collection, a formal donation thank-you letter will be issued to the donor. The formal donation letter indicates the donation's assigned

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- accession number and object ID numbers (where applicable).
- e. MoD staff will complete all necessary accession forms and documentation regarding donated objects.
 - f. If the artifact is listed on a temporary custody receipt (TCR) and is rejected, the owner will be notified and given 90 days to retrieve the object. If the owner does not retrieve the object within 90 days, it will be considered abandoned property and ownership will automatically be granted to the County of Dufferin. It will then be disposed of in accordance with the MOD's deaccession procedures.
 - g. Artifacts and archival records for which a tax receipt has been issued to the donor through the County of Dufferin, may not be returned to the original donor and/or family members.
 - h. Artifacts and archival records for which a deed of gift has been signed by the donor and a museum representative may not be returned to the donor and/or family members.

1.3 Methods of Acquisition

Artifacts and specimens are acquired through donation/gift, purchase, sponsorship, bequest; some are also acquired in-house, and found in the collection.

1.3.1 Donation / Gift

A donation or gift may be accepted from any source, including a staff member. The display of donations is not guaranteed.

1.3.2 Purchase

Artifacts or archival items may be purchased from any source. However, purchase from a member of the board, staff, volunteer, or their family members or friends, or an organization in which the individual has an interest, requires the approval of the Curator or Archivist.

- i. Purchase limits are set by the MoD's acquisitions budget.
- ii. All purchases must have an itemized bill of expenditure.
- iii. All purchases will be approved by the Curator or Archivist.

1.3.3 Sponsorship

Sponsorship of collection items will be arranged by the MoD Museum Services Manager, Curator or Archivist.

Items acquired through sponsorship will be reported to the MoD annual reports.

1.3.4 Bequests

Where possible, all bequests should be approved before a donor completes his/her will. Acceptance into the permanent collection needs to follow acquisition criteria and will require final approval of the Curator or Archivist. The MoD is not obligated to accept any donations listed in a bequest.

1.3.5 In-House

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Objects created or used within the MoD may be subsequently accessioned into the collection.

1.3.6 Found in Collection

Unaccessioned objects that have been treated as artifacts or specimens over a period of 10 years, but for which acquisition documentation cannot be located are designated 'found in the collection'. These objects may be accessioned.

2. Objects That Do Not Have Paperwork / Abandoned Property

2.1 Criteria for Acquisition

Items that have been left at the MoD in the following manner:

- a. Anonymous donation with staff.
- b. Drop-off on the facility grounds.
- c. Failure to pick-up a declined donation, recorded on a temporary receipt, after 90-days of notification.

It is clear through the owner's actions that they intended to donate the item to the MoD. The act of bringing the object to the site implies that the abandonment was a deliberate act. In doing so, the abandoner terminates his/her ownership and gives up all subsequent claims to the object. The MoD has no obligation to accept, use, store or care for abandoned objects. It has no obligation to attempt to identify or return them to the owner. The MoD has no obligation to hold abandoned objects for any period of time in case the abandoner wishes to reclaim them.

Abandoned objects may be disposed by the MoD. This includes donating to another public institution or destroying them.

2.2 Duplicates

Duplicates may be accepted into the MoD collection under the following conditions:

- a. The object(s) is a finer example than the one in the collection.
- b. The object(s) is better documented than the one in the collection.
- c. The object(s) contributes to the building of a research collection.
- d. The object(s) could be useful in outreach or off-site educational programs.
- e. The object(s) has a unique provenance / custodial history of significance to the museum mandate.

Any duplicate which does not fulfill one of these criteria will not be accepted into the MoD collection.

3. Education Collection

Objects may be collected for educational value and purposes. When an item is accepted for the Education Collection, it must go through the same collections procedures as other artifacts and archival material. A donor signature is required on a Deed of Gift, acknowledging that the

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object will be placed in this specific collection.

These objects will be stored in the Education Collection storage cage and should be compatible with current facility storage. Education Collection acquisitions are managed and approved by the Curator and Archivist. Once accepted and documented, the storage, care, and management of the Education Collection is the responsibility of the programming staff.

In general, education items may be handled by the public. The programming staff will determine if an item is appropriate to be handled. Should the object's condition deteriorate or if the object is no longer needed for educational purposes, the MoD will follow standard deaccession procedures.

4. Tax Benefits

Charitable tax receipts will be issued upon request by the donor. Before a tax receipt is issued:

- The Deed of Gift form must be signed and returned to the MoD.
- The item(s) must be in the custody of the MoD.
- An appraisal must be conducted by a third-party accredited appraiser.

The Corporation of the County of Dufferin may issue a tax receipt for the fair market value of the object donated after an appraisal has been performed. The MoD will not appraise objects it does not legally own. Appraisals of objects and archival records donated are to be performed by an accredited appraiser, arranged by the MoD (if expected to be under \$10,000 in value). At the time of donation, the donor will be informed of the time frame in which they may expect a tax receipt.

The donor may have the item(s) appraised by a third-party accredited appraiser of their own choosing, in this case, the donor will be responsible for incurring all associated costs. The MoD may use this appraisal to issue a tax receipt if:

- The appraisal is not older than one year at the time of donation.
- The name/company and address of the appraiser is provided.
- Proof of the appraiser's accreditation is provided.

In the instance that an item is expected to be over \$10,000 in value, the donor is responsible for acquiring an appraisal from an accredited appraiser. The donor will be responsible for incurring all associated costs.

Market value appraisals are outside the purview of the Museum of Dufferin staff. The MoD will not recommend a specific dealer, appraiser or auctioneer to the public. However, MoD staff may direct the public to a website or resource that lists various appraisers, auctioneers or auction houses that provide appraisal services.

5. Loans

The MoD accepts loans of a specified duration for the purposes of display, education, or

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research, these are referred to as incoming loans. The MoD may also loan artifacts and archival material from the collection to other institutions/organizations, these are referred to as outgoing loans.

Loans may be renewed upon the agreement of both parties. Loan agreements are signed by the lender and the Curator or Archivist. Loan records are maintained by the Curator or Archivist. A loan agreement form includes the following information:

- a. The borrower's full name and address.
- b. The duration of the loan.
- c. The object's condition, and insurance information.

5.1 Outgoing Loans

The MoD will not loan items it does not own. Off-site outgoing loans may be arranged for temporary displays, providing that the off-site location offers security (ie. lockable cases, security personnel), acceptable climate control, and appropriate lighting levels, as assessed by the Curator or Archivist.

The MoD will ask the borrower to sign a loan agreement. The borrower may also be asked to provide certificates of insurance, providing coverage for the transportation and duration of stay. The borrower is responsible for packing, shipping, insurance, and maintenance of any object listed on the Outgoing Loan Form. Private individuals may not borrow objects from the Museum of Dufferin collection. Loans are not made for personal use or for commercial purposes.

5.2 Incoming Loans

The MoD does not accept long-term loans. Loans should not exceed a period of one year. The MoD will host incoming loans from other museums and institutions, in the form of special/travelling exhibitions. The MoD will provide the level of care for the borrowed material as outlined by the lending institution.

5.3 Refusal of Loans

The acceptance or refusal of a loan shall be on the recommendation of the Curator or Archivist. Outgoing and incoming loans may be refused based on the following factors:

- a. The fragility, rarity, and/or value of the object.
- b. The security of the proposed off-site location.
- c. The purpose of borrowing the objects.
- d. The availability of MoD staff to prepare the loan materials.

6. Preservation

Responsibility to preserve its collection in perpetuity, with the exception of artifacts and specimens designated as 'education collection'. This includes artifacts and specimens in storage, on exhibit, for research and on loan. In all of these activities, the MoD will comply with the Conservation & Security Policy.

7. Access to Collections

It is fundamental to the Museum's mission to provide access to the Museum of Dufferin

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collection and promote appreciation of its significance.

Curatorial and Archival Staff may determine whether an object/archival document is appropriate to be viewed or handled by members of the public, volunteers or other museum/County of Dufferin staff.

The public may request to see objects or archival documents in person at the museum.

Curatorial or Archival Staff will determine if the object is appropriate for public viewing based on condition and/or confidentiality restrictions. Members of the public must give advance notice to Curatorial and Archival Staff (3 MoD business days) that they would like an object/archival document pulled for viewing.

The Museum shall make available to researchers and scholars materials relating to the collections unless they are confidential or would suffer physical harm if handled.

8. Deaccession

This is the process by which the item(s) is (are) removed from the Museum of Dufferin's Permanent Collection, and can be implemented only upon recommendation of the MoD Curator or Archivist, and then after approval by the Community Development and Tourism Committee. The process of deaccessioning the item(s) will be carefully documented.

The MoD has a duty to care for the objects in its collection. An important part of this stewardship includes the removal and oversight of the relocation or disposal of deaccessioned objects. The deaccession and disposal of objects, and documentation related to said objects, is a standard collections management best-practice in heritage institutions. The resources of the institution are finite, and the elimination of identified objects will allow for improved care of remaining items in the collection.

All deaccessioning processes will adhere to the museum standards and the ethical guidelines set by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Canadian Museum Association (CMA), the Ontario Museum Association (OMA), the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO), the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) and in accordance with provincial and federal legislation.

Deaccessioning an item requires careful consideration by MoD staff. In deciding an item's deaccessioning, the following criteria are assessed:

- The item's suitability relating to the Museum of Dufferin mission, mandate, strategic plan or collection policy or priorities.
- Representativeness and completeness of the artifact or archival material; in the interests of protecting the Museum of Dufferin from the obligation to store and conserve item(s) which have become redundant by the acquisition of identical or nearly identical objects in superior condition. Completeness of documentation and provenance.
- Effective use in current and future exhibitions, research, interpretation and public use.
- Correcting old accessioning mistakes. In some situations display cases, reproductions, exhibition props, library books, etc. have been assigned accession numbers. Since these were never meant to be part of the accessioned collection, they should be removed.

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- Condition of the item. Items that have reached a state of deterioration such that conservation is no longer practical or within the means of the Museum of Dufferin, or the chemical make-up or components pose a serious health risk to staff, or risk of damage to other artifacts or archival material should be deaccessioned.
- Whether the item can be properly cared for or stored, based on the Museum of Dufferin's current storage facilities, resources, etc.
- A copy, forgery, fake or incorrectly or improperly documented.
- Ethical issues related to ethnographic collections and human remains.
- Restrictions on legal title or lack of legal title.

8.1 Deaccessioning Procedure

The recommendation to deaccession an item will be made in the form of a report to the Dufferin County Community Development and Tourism Committee with the reason(s) for the recommendation.

The museum will provide evidence that it has clear title to the objects proposed for disposal. In the case of undocumented material, museum staff must make a serious, diligent and documented effort to locate owners.

Deaccessioning of collections material may be carried out by first offering to transfer it to the MoD Education Collection, museum, gallery or institution that shares the goal of exhibiting, interpreting and preserving historical objects.

Designated Museum staff are not responsible nor obligated to contact a donor or next of kin to repatriate the object prior to recommending it for deaccession.

If disposal cannot be made by the above methods, and the item retains some possible market value, a reasonable attempt may be made to recover the latter, following its deaccessioning. Funds acquired through the sales of deaccessioned items must be directed towards exhibition and collections projects. If the artifact is disposed of by an arms-length public auction, all object ID Numbers and other identification tags will be removed.

Where an item is deaccessioned due to deteriorating condition, disposal can be left to the discretion of the Curator or Archivist (as applicable), either by the above methods or by destroying and disposing of all physical remains. The destruction of deaccessioned items must be witnessed by at least two County of Dufferin employees and documented (signatures from MoD Staff and witnesses and/or photographic evidence). The destruction must be witnessed by at least one County of Dufferin employee that is not a member of the MoD staff.

The MoD will maintain the records of deaccessioned items.

Deaccessioned objects shall not be disposed of by any means to:

- a. Members of Dufferin County Council.
- b. Dufferin County staff (current or former).
- c. Museum of Dufferin volunteers.
- d. The families or representatives of any of the above.

Definitions and Terms

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COLLECTION: The term "collection" as used in this document means the acquisition of material artifacts and archival material that contribute to an understanding of the history of Dufferin County through a variety of means; its natural history, past human behaviour, customs, activities, events, episodes, institutions, and personalities. Acquisitions to the collection are made through donation, purchase, sponsorship, loan, and bequest, some are also acquired in-house, and found in the collection.

EDUCATION COLLECTION: Objects and archival material may be collected for educational value and purposes. Education items may be handled by the public. Education items may also be loaned out to schools, libraries and other public institutions in the form of education kits.