



Elgin County Museum Policy Manual
Subject: Collections Management Policy
Approved: September 11, 2006
Date of Last Revision: June 11, 2024

Purpose

The mandate and activities of the Elgin County Museum are governed by By-Law No. 21-38. The principle objective of the Museum is to acquire, preserve, display, and interpret artifacts which relate to the history and development of the County of Elgin.

The Elgin County Museum exists to promote Elgin County's rich historical heritage to the community by acquiring, documenting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting artifacts pertaining to the history of the County of Elgin; and to provide leadership and support to County museums in the promotion of a heritage partnership.

Elgin County Museum is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in its collection management policies and procedures. In particular, the museum is committed to policies and actions that address the value of Indigenous collections and the importance of historical research for purposes that may include Truth and Reconciliation, healing, self-awareness, land acknowledgement and treaty rights. The museum is committed to making existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous collections fully available for research and understanding with appropriate descriptive language that considers Indigenous and diverse traditions and methods of communication. The museum is committed to repatriating existing Indigenous collections wherever feasible. Furthermore, the museum is committed to the provision of museum services for Indigenous people that include plans or policies to partner with Indigenous people and their communities.

The Elgin County Museum collection is held and managed on behalf of the County of Elgin in the public trust.

This policy outlines the following Collections procedures:

- A. Acquisitions
- B. Collections Management
- C. Loans
- D. De-accessions

PART A: ACQUISITIONS

The Elgin County Museum collects objects and material culture relating to the heritage of the community, as defined in the Statement of Purpose. The collections are made for the purpose of documentation, research, preservation, exhibition, and interpretation for the community.

Elgin County Museum adheres to its collecting practice according to the following criteria:

1. Objects which are specific to the County of Elgin;
2. Objects produced in the County of Elgin;
3. Objects which are unique to the County of Elgin;
4. Objects exemplary of an aspect of Elgin County's history currently not represented in the collection;
5. Objects with a good record of provenance and authenticated where appropriate;
6. Objects directly relevant to current research, exhibition or interpretation programs;
7. Objects in excellent condition.
8. There must be adequate storage space to accommodate the object(s).

Elgin County Museum must be satisfied that any object to be acquired whether by donation, exchange, or purchase, is not stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected. The museum will not acquire any objects of undetermined or unethical history of ownership. Material will not be acquired if there is reason to believe the object had been recovered through unscientific handling and/or intentional damage or destruction of an archaeological/historical site or excavation. The museum will not accept objects that have contravened international and national conventions on cultural property.

Objects may be acquired by donation, purchase, tax receipt or exchange.

Donations:

Donations are either solicited or unsolicited. For an object to be donated to the Elgin County Museum, it must be accompanied by Deed of Gift or other statement by the owner transferring ownership and copyright to the Elgin County Museum. Appropriate donation documentation and procedures are outlined in Section B.

Purchases:

If an object meets the Collections Management Policy criteria, the object may be purchased for the collection. For an object to be purchased by the Elgin County Museum it must be appropriately appraised and authenticated and accompanied by a bill of sale.

Tax Receipt:

If an object meets the Collections Management Policy criteria, a tax receipt may be issued to the donor as a condition of donation through a Deed of Gift. Such tax receipts may proceed as a charitable donation or through a cultural property tax receipt under relevant Canadian and international law. An appraisal report from a certified appraiser is generally required as a condition on a deed of gift for any tax receipt to be issued. The Curator and Director of Community and Cultural Services reserve the right to determine if the process for a tax receipt is warranted on a case-by-case basis and under the terms of any other policy developed by the museum or the County of Elgin.

Exchange:

Elgin County Museum is committed to acquiring artifacts pertaining directly to the history of the County of Elgin and/or its citizens. All acquisitions must follow the guidelines for transfer of ownership and/or responsibility accompanied by a signed gift agreement or other proof of legal title to the object, such as a bill of sale.

PART B: COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Elgin County Museum will allocate a budget for funding the continuing care and preservation of objects in its collections. Proper storage and exhibition facilities with adequate environmental-control systems must be in place.

Processing acquisitions will proceed with the following steps:

1. When an artifact is being considered for donation to Elgin County Museum, the potential donor signs a temporary gift receipt;
2. The artifact is housed in a curatorial workspace along with its accompanying documentation;
3. If the artifact is assessed as not pertinent to the collection, the owner is contacted to retrieve the object along with a form signed as 'artifact returned' including the date;
4. If the artifact is assessed as pertinent to the collection, a deed-of-gift is sent to the donor. The donor must sign the gift form for transfer of ownership and responsibility. A deed of gift form may be issued without need of a temporary gift receipt in cases where the object(s)' value to the collection is clear or when there is reason to suspect that there will be issues with contacting the donor in the future.
5. If the owner does not return the form in the allocated time (three months) from the date the gift form was sent, the artifact must be returned to the owner. Without a signed gift form conferring ownership to the museum, the artifact will not be stored, accessioned nor put on display. Two attempts will be made to contact the donor after the expiration of three months, after which the item may be discarded.
6. Once the deed-of-gift and any other required documentation is returned, artifact is assigned an accession number through the register and tagged. Accession number is also noted on the Museum's copy of the deed-of-gift;

7. When the gift form is returned and an accession number is assigned, the artifact is marked with the accession number and a record is made in the Museum's database, including objects provenance, condition, and a photograph;
8. Upon the artifact being catalogued, it is stored in a permanent storage area and its location is noted in the donor file and in the Museum's online database;
9. Artifacts acquired by purchase, tax receipt or exchange are processed following steps 6 through 8.

Management of artifacts will proceed with the following steps:

1. artifacts are to be stored and handled according to professional standards;
2. records are to be maintained and updated according to professional standards;
3. artifacts are researched, interpreted and exhibited according to professional standards;
4. comprehensive inventory is maintained.

Appraisals of artifacts:

All artifacts must have a signed gift form and be part of the collection before an appraisal is completed.

When completing appraisals, Elgin County Museum will select the appraiser most suitable for the type of artifacts being appraised.

PART C: LOANS

Loans of artifacts shall only be considered for the purposes of augmenting temporary exhibits, particularly between established museums, and are otherwise prohibited.

1. All incoming loans and out-going loans for exhibition purposes are listed on loan agreement forms, signed for by the Curator, date of arrival/departure and date of return are noted on the form.
2. All in-coming material is governed by the County's insurance coverage for the Museum.
3. Elgin County Museum is responsible for all in-coming material, which is handled and managed according to the Museum's professional procedures and standards.
4. All out-going material is insured by the borrowing institution.
5. The borrowing institution is responsible for the on-loan material, guaranteeing its handling, safety, exhibit and return according to professional standards.

PART D: DE-ACCESSIONS

In order to maintain a relevant and growing collection in accordance with the Mission Statement and professional standards, it is necessary to de-accession artifacts. An item can be deaccessioned for reasons which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. It does not have appropriate or authenticated documentation, including donor information, deed of gift, bill of sale, or any record of provenance to the County of Elgin;
2. It is not unique to the museum's collection, and there is a more appropriate and well documented example;
3. It has failed to retain its integrity and authenticity;
4. It cannot be properly preserved, stored, or used;
5. It no longer supports the Elgin County Museum's mandate;
6. It is more appropriately housed at another museum or cultural institution.
7. The cost of storing, conserving or displaying the artifact is beyond the museum's capacity.

In order to process an artifact for de-accessioning, these procedures must be followed:

1. its record and provenance are studied;
2. the collection is reviewed to determine whether or not the artifact is unique, original, a duplicate, or representative of Elgin County's history;
3. the artifact is assessed on its physical condition;
4. the recommendation is made to the Director of Community and Cultural Services.

The following standards must be adhered to:

1. The artifact was not obtained with the intention of eventual de-accession.
2. Criteria for de-accessioning includes: poor condition, lack of provenance, duplication, lack of significance to Elgin County's history, the possibility/act of upgrading the collection by means of exchange or other transaction, cannot be properly preserved, stored, or used.
3. Elgin County Museum will de-accession an artifact/s for the purpose of repatriation, when it is legally proven that another body, organization, people, and/or government has the legal and ethical right to said artifact/s.

Method of Disposal

1. The catalogue number and any other related markings are removed from the de-accessioned object.
2. The catalogue record notes the change of status to 'de-accessioned', and the date of de-accession. Method of deaccession (transfer, auction, disposal) is recorded in the record but is added as a note, which is only accessible to Museum staff from the employee end of the database.
3. It is offered to another tax-exempt, non-profit educational/cultural institution, as a gift or for exchange purposes.
4. It may be sent to disposal through a legitimate public auction service in accordance with the County's Purchasing Policy. If taken to auction, it will be taken to a public auction outside of the Elgin County Museum's immediate location without the listing of the Elgin County Museum's name, and any associated museum identifiers, including tags and accession numbers will be removed from the

object(s). Any monies earned by the sale of the de-accessioned artifact/s at the auction will be used on behalf of the Museum.

5. The item may be transferred to the Elgin County Museum's Education collection.
6. Physical destruction. If the artifact is in such poor condition, does not have any documentation related to its authenticity, origin or history, Elgin County Museum may decide to physically destroy the artifact, as it is of not monetary value or historical significance, not important to another institution. The following steps must be taken:
 1. catalogue number and any other related markings must be removed.
 2. the artifact is smashed into small pieces.
 3. the museum record notes date of destruction.
 4. it is wrapped in the appropriate coloured garbage bag and deposited into a garbage bin.

Insofar as possible, deaccessioned objects should be disposed of in a manner that keeps them in the public domain. A deaccessioned object may be destroyed if it is not salvageable or no longer of interest to any party.

No member of the Museum Advisory Committee, Elgin County employee or volunteer, or their representative or immediate families may be given, sold, or otherwise knowingly obtain deaccessioned objects. Deaccessioned objects may not be directly sold to private individuals and corporations.

Policy Review and Approval

The Collections Management Policy is reviewed on a five-year basis, or any time that changes are deemed necessary. The Curator and Director of Community and Cultural Services will conduct the review, in conjunction with other professional staff. The reviewed version will be submitted to Elgin County Council for approval.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Deed of Gift Form

ACCESSION #: _____

ELGIN COUNTY MUSEUM

Elgin County Cultural Services
450 Sunset Drive
St. Thomas, ON N5R 5V1



DEED OF GIFT

DATE

NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT OF DONOR (hereafter referred to as the Donor):

Phone:

Email:

The following item(s) is/are offered are:

PERMISSION TO PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGE DONATION? Yes ___ No ___

Be it known that the Donor is the sole and rightful owner of the items described above and has full right to transfer ownership of same. The Donor hereby gives and transfers unto the Elgin County Museum full and unencumbered title to the items and assigns to the Elgin County Museum the copyright for all items in the donation previously held by the Donor. Ownership of the items is assigned unto the Elgin County Museum, its successors, administrators and assigns absolutely.

In entering into this agreement, the Donor understands and agrees that the Elgin County Museum is free to display, loan, retain, alter, or dispose of as it sees fit in accordance with the By-Laws that govern the Elgin County Museum.

The Donor has read, understood, and agreed to the foregoing, acknowledging same by undersigning and dating this Deed.

Signature of Donor

Date

The Elgin County Museum gratefully acknowledges this donation, having satisfied the criteria established in the Museum Collections Management Policy and Elgin County Museum's governing By-Law.

Signature of Curator

Date

Information collected in the agreement is governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and shall not be released without the consent of the donor.

Appendix B: Temporary Receipt

ELGIN COUNTY MUSEUM

Elgin County Cultural Services
450 Sunset Drive
St. Thomas, ON N5R 5V1



TEMPORARY RECEIPT

DATE:

NAME AND ADDRESS OF DONOR (hereafter referred to as the Donor):

PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL:

The following item(s) is/are offered are:
(DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY)

Be it known that the Donor is the sole and rightful owner of the items described above and has full right to deposit same with the Elgin County Museum for the purposes of a complete inspection and appraisal according to the Museum Collections Management Policy as approved by Elgin County Council under the terms of the Elgin County Museum's governing By-Law. The museum is hereby permitted to handle the material to permit this inspection.

The museum may accept some or all of the objects listed above or decline its acceptance outright. Should the Museum wish to acquire the material, a Deed of Gift form will be issued requesting transfer of ownership to the Museum. The Museum cannot guarantee that the original state of the material will be maintained upon its return, although every attempt will be made to minimize any impact resulting from the museum inspection.

The Donor has read, understood, and agreed to the foregoing, acknowledging same by undersigning, and dating this Receipt.

Signature of Donor

Date

The Elgin County Museum gratefully acknowledges this deposit.

Staff Signature

Date

Information collected in the agreement is governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and shall not be released without the consent of the donor.

(519) 631-1480 ext 160

Additional History:

Circumstances surrounding discovery or acquisition:
Original Owner or Maker:
Original Use:
Who else has owned or used this material and when?
Any biographical details, background information or stories associated with this material?
Other pertinent details:
Other persons who may have ADDITIONAL information to share?

Appendix C: Transfer Form



450 Sunset Drive.
St. Thomas, ON,
N5R 5V1
519-631-1480 ext. 193

TRANSFER AGREEMENT

The following article(s) are being transferred from the Elgin County Museum to _____ for the following reason(s):

The object(s) is no longer consistent with the mission or collecting goals of the Museum; another institution could more appropriately care for the object(s).

The Elgin County Museum hereby gives and bequeaths to the above institution the objects listed herein, and in so doing, understand that they, from this day forward, become the sole property of the above institution and may be displayed, loaned, retained or dealt with in such manner as they judge appropriate.

The above institution has understood and agreed to the foregoing, acknowledging by undersigning and dating this Transfer Agreement.

(Signature from Institution Representative)

(Date)

Description of Object(s):

Transfer to:

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Elgin County Museum Staff)

Please enclose original with transfer and retain copy for file.