

MUSÉE ACADIEN - POLICIES COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

The Musée acadien de Pubnico-Ouest (MAPO) acknowledges the inherent value of the specimens, artifacts, building structure and historical structures that make up its collection. They are material evidence of the natural and cultural environments that have existed within the community and as such are irreplaceable. The MAPO recognizes that a balance must be struck between preservation of the collection for the future, and its use for research, exhibition and educational purposes.

This policy and its spirit will be applied when conserving, restoring or otherwise intervening directly (physical changes) or indirectly (environmental changes) with the artifacts, building structure, specimens and historical structures that make up the MAPO collection.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the MAPO *Collection Management Policy*, the MAPO *Collection Management Guidelines* and *Procedures Manual*, and the MAPO *Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan*.

Definitions

Conservation is the application of science to the examination, maintenance and treatment of artifacts or specimens. Its principal aim is to stabilize artifacts and specimens in their present state. It encompasses both preventive conservation and conservation treatments.

Preventive conservation consists of non-intrusive actions taken to slow or stop deterioration and to prevent damage.

Conservation treatments involve interventions causing changes in the physical properties or structure of the objects.

Restoration involves the removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic, historical or scientific values.

Ethics

In its conservation activities the MAPO will be consistent with established professional standards and ethics as stated in *Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice for Those Involved in the Conservation of Cultural Property in Canada* (The International Institute for Conservation, Canadian Group, 1989).

Priorities

Preventive conservation provides the most effective use of resources for preservation of the collection. The application of preventive conservation measures will take precedence over conservation treatments. Conservation treatments will take precedence over restoration.

The MAPO maintains a working collection of artifacts and specimens. These may be operated or handled by staff and authorized volunteers. They may be considered expendable. In the application of conservation measures, the permanent collection will take priority over the working collection.

All physical interventions, whether to an artifact, building or site, will be based on sufficient research to identify and safeguard the historical values concerned. The history and evidence of past use of the item will be respected. Contributions from all periods of the item's existence will be taken into account when deciding the appropriate level of intervention. Any physical intervention will be fully documented, including the reason for it, what the intervention was who performed it and when it was carried out.

The historical structures within the MAPO collection require various physical interventions depending on factors such as condition, date of interpretation, modern use or program needs. These may include conservation and restoration treatments, regular building maintenance (both preventive and reactive), or greater interventions such as roof replacement or structural bracing. The priority of these activities will be set by the Division Director or designate. A long-term maintenance plan will be developed for the buildings that takes into account the cyclical nature of general maintenance.

Responsibilities

All MAPO Board and staff members have the duty to ensure the long-term preservation of the collection. Within MAPO divisions the primary responsibility lies with the Division Director. Functional responsibility for preservation activities may be delegated to Managers, Curators, Registrars or other designates. Further MAPO staff responsibilities are detailed below:

All staff is responsible for maintaining the security of the collection. This encompasses protection from damage, deterioration or loss.

- Any staff member who discovers a preservation problem must report it immediately to the appropriate curatorial staff.
- Appropriate staff members will strive to establish and maintain a high standard in conditions of storage, display, use and handling of the collection.
- Appropriate staff members will strive to provide safe and secure environments that will not contribute to deterioration of artifacts on display and in storage.

- Appropriate staff members will strive to provide safe and secure environments in and around the historical structures, which will not contribute to the deterioration of them or of the contained artifacts.
- Any staff member who has physical access to the collection must use appropriate care and handling techniques.
- Any staff member who provides physical access to the collection to a non-staff member is responsible for ensuring that the person understands and agrees to use appropriate care and handling techniques.

Standards

- Conservation and restoration treatments will follow a course of minimal intervention in the fabric of the object.
- Whenever possible, reversible techniques and materials will be used in treatments or when any physical change is made to an object, including the attachment of accession or catalogue numbers, or mounting for display.
- Restorations will be historically accurate, while not being deceptive as to originality.
- Restorations will be easily detectable, although not necessarily conspicuous.

Inquiries

The MAPO will not normally give out conservation treatment advice as a result of a public inquiry. Conservation advice for public inquiries will be limited to preventive measures. When the information is within the area of professional expertise of the adviser, exceptions may be made for the following circumstances:

- 1) It can be reasonably ascertained that the person can carry out the treatment in a competent and ethical manner.
- 2) The inquiry comes as the result of an emergency situation.

The MAPO will not carry out conservation treatments for the public.

Whenever possible, the MAPO will cooperate with other heritage institutions and levels of government in matters relating to conservation and preservation.

Referrals

the MAPO may refer an inquirer to outside agents to have a treatment carried out.

Procedures

The following subjects are detailed in the *Collections Management Policies and Procedures Manual*.

INTRODUCTION

The Musée acadien de Pubnico-Ouest (MAPO) is an institution located in West Pubnico, NS. Through its collection, research, exhibits and programs, it provides Nova Scotians and visitors to the province with an opportunity to experience and to learn about Acadian cultural and history through a museum and research system.

The primary resource used by the Museum to accomplish this mandate is material evidence of the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The Museum acquires representative artifacts and specimens to be preserved for study and reference, together with information about them. The Museum is responsible for caring for this material and making it accessible.

The MAPO, established by La Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest respect the authority of the said board of it society.

This policy as well as guidelines and procedures for composition, acquisition, preservation, use and disposal are written in order to ensure the best possible balance of care and use of the collection.

The ownership of the collection ultimately rests with La Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest.

COMPOSITION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection of the MAPO is representative of the natural history and the cultural history of the Acadian, and of those regions or subjects that are considered as significant or of interest to the people of Nova Scotia.

The MAPO will in its collecting, research and interpretation of its collection reflect the Acadian culture.

In addition to specimens and artifacts, the collection includes information about them, such as accession records, catalogue descriptions, field notes and records, tape recordings, photographs, published papers and correspondence. The Museum also assembles information about the other aspects of the natural and cultural heritage of the province.

RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

Achieving a balance between care and use of the collection is the shared responsibility of the people who work within the institution. The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the collection through the Division Director. The development and preservation of the

collection normally are delegated by the Division Director to the Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate.

Each Division develops procedures to implement the Museum's collection management policy. Each Division maintains an up-to-date collection management manual, which meets accepted curatorial standards. The principal procedures will be consistent throughout the Museum. Minor variations may be established within each Division or unit.

The acquisition, preservation and documentation of the collection are the direct and prime responsibility of the collection management sections of the MAPO

The Division Director will ensure that the collection is inspected regularly by the responsible Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate for evidence of damage or deterioration. Any staff member who discovers a preservation problem must report it immediately to the appropriate curatorial staff.

All staff is responsible for maintaining the security of the collection. This encompasses breaches of security or loss. Any loss must be documented and reported through the Division Director to the Executive Director. Staff members who have physical access to the collection must use appropriate care and handling.

Anyone responsible for a unit of the collection may delegate related tasks, but must remain fully informed of progress and completion.

Ethics

In its collection management activities the MAPO will be consistent with established professional standards and ethics as stated in The Ethical Behavior of Museum Professionals (Canadian Museum Association, 1979); and Code of Professional Ethics (International Council of Museums, 1990). Up-to-date copies of these and other related policies or guidelines will be part of each collection management manual.

In all activities relating to collection management, employees must not be in conflict of interest with the purposes or activities of the MAPO. Where a conflict develops between the interests of the individual and the Museum, those of the Museum will take precedence.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

In developing the cultural history collection the principal objectives are to acquire and care for:

- ***the artifacts and historical documents dealing with the Acadian communities of our region;***
- ***material used in Nova Scotia but made elsewhere***
- ***material not made or used in Nova Scotia, but related to Nova Scotian material, collected for special study, exhibit and education.***

Criteria

Artifacts and specimens acquired for the collection will normally be complete, in good condition, and as fully documented, as possible.

The decision to acquire an artifact or specimen is based upon a number of factors considered individually and collectively:

- consistency with the mandate of the MAPO;
- significance, such as association with an event, person, historical period or geographic area;
- representativeness to other artifacts or specimens of its kind;
- physical condition;
- availability of human and financial resources to acquire, document, preserve and store the artifact or specimen;
- opportunities for use within the collection;
- restrictions on use or disposition of the artifact or specimen;
- availability of documentation to support its study and use;
- attributes that make an artifact or specimen a threat to users or to other elements of the collection;
- association with documented primary research undertaken in Nova Scotia.

ACQUISITION

Development of the collection will meet both the immediate and the long-term objectives of the Museum, as determined in a regular program review. In some cases this development may also be opportunistic, to allow for the acquisition of specimens or artifacts and the documentation of events or phenomena when special opportunities arise that are not anticipated in the program.

In some instances information is acquired about artifacts and specimens that are not themselves acquired for the Museum's collection. These records may be considered to be part of the Museum's collection.

Acquisition Approval Process

Acquisitions including loans, exchanges and transfers are ultimately the responsibility of the Division Director. The decision to acquire an artifact or specimen will be made by an acquisition review committee of at least two people appointed by the Division Director, which will include the Manager of Collections, Curator or other staff as appropriate.

The committee will not include any individual offering an artifact or specimen to the Museum.

The prospective donor or vendor must be issued a receipt for the specimen or artifact.

Donors will be notified of the Museum's decision regarding the acceptance or non-acceptance of the artifact or specimen. If the artifact or specimen is rejected, the donor will be notified. If it is not claimed within 90 days of notification it may be disposed in a manner the Museum deems appropriate.

Methods of Acquisition

The methods of acquiring artifacts and specimens vary according to material and the circumstances. Six methods are recognized as acceptable: field collecting, gift or bequest, purchase, exchange, transfer and loan.

In all cases, except loans:

- a clear title must be transferred to the Museum with appropriate documentation; possession or transfer must not contravene any existing legislation or regulation;
- no conditions may be attached limiting the Museum's use of the material, except with the approval of the Division Director.

Field Collecting - Specimens or artifacts may be collected directly from their context in the field. This includes those acquired through the provisions of a Heritage Research Permit issued under the Special Places Protection Act.

Gift or Bequest - Gifts or bequests may be accepted from any source, including staff members.

Purchase

Artifacts or specimens may be purchased for the collection from any source. However, purchases from members of the Board of Governors or staff members of the MAPO require the approval of the Museum committee.

Exchange

The exchange of specimens or artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving collections. Exchanges may be arranged by the Manager of Collections or Curator responsible for that part of the collection, with the approval of the Division Director. Exchanges may be made provided that:

- the removal of material would not impair the collection in any functional way.
- the removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process
- both parties to the exchange are in full agreement about the nature, type, number and quality of the items to be exchanged and the terms and conditions are agreed upon in writing. Both the acquisition and disposal of artifacts or specimens exchanged will be documented for the permanent records.

Transfers to the Museum

The MAPO may acquire artifacts or specimens from other Museums. The Division Director or Designate must approve the transfer.

Loans to the Museum

The MAPO borrows artifacts and specimens for exhibition or study, consistent with the goals of the Museum and for a specified time period.

Loans are made to the MAPO normally by institutions and, as required, by individuals. The lender retains legal ownership of the artifact or specimen. A loan agreement must be made for such material and the transaction must be approved by the Division Director or Designate. All loans that are part of travelling exhibitions must also be approved by the Executive Director.

When the MAPO borrows material from another institution it will follow the procedures prescribed by the lending institution. When the MAPO borrows material from individuals, or from institutions with no lending procedures or forms, it will follow procedures prescribed by the MAPO for such transactions.

Travelling exhibitions and their contents are borrowed by the MAPO according to procedures prescribed by the lending institution consistent with the MAPO's Travelling Exhibition Policy.

Income Tax Receipts

Income tax receipts for artifacts or specimens will be offered to all donors including staff members. The receipt will reflect current market value at the time of the acquisition as determined by appraisal.

"In-house" appraisals of an artifact or specimen may not exceed the limits set by Revenue Canada. A receipt demonstrating the recent purchase of the item by the donor may be used as an indication of fair market value, provided the receipt is obtained from a credible dealer for such objects.

An appraisal in excess of the limits acceptable to Revenue Canada must whenever possible, be undertaken by appraisers acting at "arms length" from the Museum and the donor.

The cost of an outside appraisal for income tax purposes will generally be borne by the donor.

The Executive Director of the MAPO must approve all tax receipts.

The Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate initiates application for certification as Cultural Property for income tax purposes. The Executive Director of the MAPO will submit all applications and correspondence to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board.

DOCUMENTATION

Each Division Director will ensure that all artifacts or specimens in that part of the collection are as fully documented as possible. This responsibility will normally be delegated to the Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate.

Documentation is essential for collection development, research, preservation and interpretation. The Museum will use accepted and consistent standards, methods and procedures to document the collection including fossils and artifacts acquired by the MAPO through the provisions of a Heritage Research Permit issued under the Special Places Protection Act.

Documentation will include all original documents, in written, electronic or graphic form, pertaining to the identity, provenance, legal title and other related information regarding significance, function, description, details of condition, operability, usage, history of ownership and alterations.

Any change in the status of artifact or specimen, e.g. deaccessioning or transfer to the working collection, must be thoroughly documented. The reasons for the new designation must be recorded.

Legal and other significant documents dealing with acquisitions must be kept in duplicate. Delicate or perishable records should be copied for use so that the originals are preserved. Legal documents include those that give the Museum title to the artifact or specimen.

PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION

The preservation of the collection is the responsibility of the Division Director, Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate. The Conservation Policy and guidelines will be followed. The conservator is responsible for monitoring and advising of conservation guidelines and procedures. The conservator has the responsibility to report conservation concerns to the appropriate level of authority.

The conservator will have full access to all of the artifacts and specimens and historic buildings that make up the collection and all areas that contain that collection. The conservator must be informed in a timely manner of any activities that affect the condition of the collection including exhibition, loan, storage, accidents or disasters and all preservation and conservation treatments.

Artifacts or specimens having the potential to be hazardous to the public, museum staff, the environment or the collection will be properly handled and stored in accordance with existing safety regulations.

Each artifact and specimen must be described, in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration in its condition, before being integrated into the collection and before being loaned to or loaned from the MAPO. This information will be part of the accession record for the artifact or specimen.

USE OF THE COLLECTION

Organization of the Collection

In order to be used, the collection must be organized and managed in such a way that it is readily accessible for all purposes consistent with the goals of the Museum.

Access to the Collection

Access will be provided first through information about the collection.

Physical access to parts of the collection is provided through exhibitions and programs.

More specific physical access may not always be possible or always the best means of access. Physical access to artifacts and specimens will be arranged through the appropriate Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate, and is provided to:

- staff members whose program responsibilities require knowledge and use of the collection;

- any person with a reasonable request for first-hand examination of material. The Museum's human and financial resources may be restricting factors.

Working Collection

The MAPO recognizes the value of using artifacts and specimens in public and school programs. These programs require objects that can be operated or handled by staff, volunteers and the public. To fulfill this requirement the Museum has established a working collection. Museum staff will advise on the appropriate use and interpretation of these artifacts.

Criteria

The decision to designate an artifact or specimen for the working collection is based upon a number of factors taken collectively. Artifacts or specimens so designated must be considered expendable; duplicates of other artifacts or specimens within the collection, except under special circumstances; safe to use; required to fulfill a program need.

Designation of a Working Artifact or Specimen

The decision to designate an artifact or specimen as part of the working collection will be made by a review committee comprised of the Division Director, Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate responsible for the collection and other staff as appropriate.

The collection record will indicate the status of the objects, i.e., permanent collection, or working collection. The reasons for the change in status must be documented.

Artifacts or specimens accepted into the collection specifically for use in the working collection will be identified on the Gift Agreement form with the sentence: "These objects are being accepted by the Museum to be used in demonstrations and other activities and may be considered expendable."

All artifacts acquired for the working collection must be registered and catalogued in accordance with recognized museum standards.

Objects acquired as props, spare parts, or for purposes such as analysis, are not to be considered part of the collection.

Loans from the Museum

The MAPO lends material from the collection for uses consistent with the goals of the Museum and for a specified time period. Loans are approved by the Division Director or Designate. Loans are normally made to institutions. Specific individuals within both the borrowing and lending institutions take responsibility for the transaction. In the borrowing institution, this individual is normally its Director.

Loans from the collection may be made for other purposes except when their use compromises the Museum's mandate and responsibility for their preservation. Loans for commercial purposes will involve a user fee.

Loans from the working collection may be made to individuals or groups, through the Interpretation Section.

The Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate is responsible for ensuring that those who borrow or otherwise use material for any purpose are able to provide necessary care.

All loans must be documented on the appropriate MAPO form.

All travelling exhibits from the Museum will be treated as loans.

Insurance

Appropriate insurance coverage is the responsibility of the Société historique de Pubnico-Ouest.

The MAPO carries two types of insurance: fire and liability.

- a) Fire insurance covers the building and contents except the artifacts.
- b) Liability insurance covers any action for which the Museum could be considered liable

DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSITION

In order to maintain the collection in accordance with the MAPO goals and priorities it may be necessary or desirable to dispose of specimens or artifacts. Any decision to dispose of an artifact or specimen in the collection is subject to institutional review. The artifact or specimen and the process of deaccessioning and disposition will be thoroughly and uniformly documented and undertaken in accordance with the highest professional standards and ethics. These records will be retained by the Museum.

Criteria

Deaccessioning and disposal may take place whenever:

- the Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate determines a specimen or artifact has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it no longer serves a useful purpose, or poses a preservation threat to other elements of the collection, or
- the Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate determines a specimen or artifact is redundant, or otherwise is no longer considered significant to the MAPO, or its removal will not impair the collection, or
- the MAPO is incapable of providing the conditions necessary for minimum curatorial care required by a specimen or artifact, or
- there are other circumstances, as defined by the Executive Director and the Board, in consultation with the relevant Division Director and curatorial staff, or
- when the potential for gaining knowledge by destructive analysis justifies the loss of the specimen or object

The Museum will not normally deaccession artifacts or specimens at the request of the donor.

Members of the Board of Governors and staff of the MAPO may not acquire, through any means, any artifact or specimen disposed of by the MAPO.

The permanent removal of any artifact or specimen from the collection must be documented, so that the reasons for such action can be known in the future.

Approval Process

The deaccessioning of an artifact or specimen will be initiated by the Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate and must be approved by the Division Director, Executive Director and Board of Governors of the MAPO.

The artifact or specimen will be fully researched to ensure it is not subject to any condition established at the time of acquisition which may affect its disposition, to ensure the Museum has clear title, to ensure it has no other operational value within the Museum, and to ensure that its disposal does not violate any existing laws or regulations, e.g., The Income Tax Act [Section 207.3] regarding deaccessioning certified cultural property within five years of its certification.

METHODS OF DISPOSITION

The Manager of Collections, Curator or Designate will recommend to the Division Director the most appropriate means of disposal

a) Return to Donor

In recognition of its custodial responsibility and public trust the Museum will endeavor to notify donors of its intention to deaccession or dispose of an artifact or specimen with a view to returning it where appropriate. This will not be the case with an artifact or specimen for which a tax receipt was issued.

b) Transfer, Exchange or Gift to Another Institution

Any artifact or specimen will first be considered for donation, transfer or exchange to another public institution within Nova Scotia, then within Canada before going beyond to another country. Recipient institutions will normally incur all transportation costs.

c) Sale

An artifact or specimen may be sold. The sale price will reflect current fair market value. If an object has no market value it may be sold for scrap value. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned artifacts, less the cost of sale will be used for improving the collection or supporting its preservation. To insure the transaction is public and fair the arrangements for public sale of all Museum objects will be handled by La Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest.

d) Research

Deaccessioned artifacts or specimens may be retained by the Museum for research including destructive analysis or other uses, provided the potential for gaining knowledge justifies the loss of the specimen or artifact.

e) Destruction

Disposal of an artifact by destruction is the final alternative and will be permitted if:

- all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of the object through other methods, or
- the object is hazardous or poses a danger to other collections or to staff.

REPATRIATION

The Museum may deaccession artifacts or specimens for the purpose of repatriation when it can be shown that other bodies or governments have a right to the material. The Museum will proceed with the repatriation only when it has assurances that the artifacts or specimens will be preserved in accordance with acceptable Museum standards.

COOPERATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

The Museum will cooperate with other museums, institutions and agencies in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and conflict in collecting.

GLOSSARY

Certain words or phrases used in the [Collection Management Policy](#), which have developed a different or more specific meaning through museum usage, are explained as follows:

Accessioning	the act of recording or processing an addition to the collection.
Acquisition	the act of taking legal possession and ownership of an artifact or specimen to develop a collection.
Artifact	an object showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural object.
Collection Management	actions taken or coordinated toward the acquisition, care, use and disposal of a museum collection in order to meet the museum's goals. These actions include the maintenance of registration records, documenting, accessioning, cataloguing, taking regular inventory and monitoring the condition of every item in the collection, i.e. "keeping track".
Conservation	the application of science to the examination and treatment of objects. Conservation seeks to repair damages caused by the environment or to stabilize an object in a given condition.
Deaccessioning	the permanent removal of an artifact or specimen from the collection following stringent guidelines and detailed procedures.
Designate	The chief executive officer assumes overall responsibility for the collection at that site. Other staff at this museum may be delegated to carry out responsibilities and tasks related to the collection. Consequently "Designate" refers to anyone in the MAPO other than Directors, Managers of Collections, and Curators who also have collection-related responsibilities.
Disposition	The removal of an artifact or specimen from the collection after it has been deaccessioned.
Material Evidence	a physical manifestation of cultural and natural forces, i.e. any artifact or specimen, which is a source of information.
Museum	"A museum is a non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment." (International Council of Museums)
Museum Program	the allocation of money and personnel to specified activities of the museum for a certain period of time, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the museum.
Preservation	all actions taken to retard deterioration of or to prevent damage to cultural property. Preservation involves controlling the environment and conditions of use, and may include treatment in order to maintain a cultural property in an unchanging state as nearly as possible.
Specimen	<p>a natural object as distinguished from a man-made artifact. Type Specimen When a new species or subspecies of animal or plant is described, the specimens on which the original description is based are Designated as type specimens, in order to establish a basic point of reference for all future comparison or identification. The preservation of type specimens is of critical importance.</p> <p>Primary type specimens (holotypes, hypotypes, allotypes, neotypes, lectotypes) are always unique, by definition. Secondary type specimens may or may not be unique, and include paratypes, paralectotypes, syntypes, isotypes and topotypes. The Rules of the International Commissions on Zoological/Botanical Nomenclature specify the guidelines for the care and handling of type specimens in museum collections.</p>

