



Heritage Policy: Conservation

1.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to state the standards and principles that guide the conservation activities of Grey Roots: Your Heritage and Visitor Centre (Grey Roots) in fulfilling its mandate. This policy will also give direction to museum and archives staff regarding their responsibilities in performing conservation and preservation related tasks.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1** The Conservation Policy will be approved and amended in keeping with the Grey Roots mandate by the Heritage Committee.
- 2.2** The Conservator, in consultation with Grey Roots Heritage staff, leads in the development and implementation of the Conservation Policy.
- 2.3** All staff and volunteers at Grey Roots will assist in implementing the Conservation Policy as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

3.0 PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION

Preventive conservation is a fundamental responsibility through which Grey Roots ensures the continuing availability and authenticity of the artifact and archival collections that it holds in trust for present and future generations. Grey Roots recognizes that preventive conservation is an integral function to all heritage activities that will occur at the Centre, and that all staff members play a part in this function. The preventive conservation functions of Grey Roots are as follows:

3.1 STORAGE

- 3.1.1** Grey Roots has designated storage space, which is used for artifact and archival storage purposes only.

- 3.1.2** Grey Roots has a temporary holding area separate from storage and exhibition areas for the purpose of isolating and examining new acquisitions.
- 3.1.3** Storage areas should be large enough to house existing collections without crowding and to accommodate future projected acquisitions.
- 3.1.4** Storage areas are equipped with shelves, cabinets, and artifact supports that are safe and meet recognized international conservation standards.
- 3.1.5** Storage areas are to be organized by type of artifact with separate areas for artifact and archival collections.
- 3.1.6** All storage areas will be organized in such a way as to allow for easy access, egress, and handling of the collection in order to avoid unnecessary damage.
- 3.1.7** All storage areas will be monitored and maintained at appropriate environmental levels (temperature, relative humidity, light levels, atmospheric pollutants, & pest control) as set forth in international conservation standards.
- 3.1.8** The Conservator will implement a regular housekeeping schedule for the storage areas, which may only be performed by trained staff.
- 3.1.9** All artifacts and archival items will be stored in acid-free, chemically inert material and in a manner that best supports the specific requirements of the item.

3.2 EXHIBITION

- 3.2.1** Exhibits at Grey Roots will at no time subject the artifact(s) and archival items on display to deterioration beyond that which is inherent in the composition of said artifact(s) and/or archival items.
- 3.2.2** At no time will flash photography (either by camera or video camera) be allowed in the exhibit areas of Grey Roots, except for Grey Roots staff that is authorized to carry out photography for promotional or interpretive purposes.
- 3.2.3** Grey Roots Heritage staff will not select or remove artifact or archival material from the permanent collections for exhibit purposes without the approval of the Curator or Archivist or their respective designates as applicable. Approval/refusal of artifacts and/or archival material will be based on curatorial, archival, or conservation staff assessment of the condition of the materials under consideration.
- 3.2.4** All materials and supports used in exhibits will aim to meet recognized international conservation standards and will aim to offer adequate support to the items on display.
- 3.2.5** The Conservator will implement a regular housekeeping schedule for all of the exhibit galleries and period buildings, which may only be performed by trained staff.
- 3.2.6** The Conservator and Registrar will implement a regular inspection program of the artifacts on display to check for losses and damage.

- 3.2.7** All exhibit galleries will be monitored and maintained at appropriate environmental levels as set forth in international conservation standards.
- 3.2.8** Any artifact in a traveling or temporary community exhibit will not be repaired or otherwise treated without written consent from the owner of the artifact.
- 3.2.9** Reproduction photographs will be used in place of original photographs where appropriate in exhibits, so as to protect the original image from cumulative light damage.

3.3 SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- 3.3.1** Access to all storage areas will be restricted to the following staff members:
Museum storage – Curator, Registrar, Conservator, Maintenance Technician.
Archives storage – Archivist, Assistant Archivist, Conservator.
Temporary staff, volunteers, and maintenance personnel may have access to storage areas provided that they are supervised by a permanent Heritage staff member from the above list.
- 3.3.2** At no time will artifacts or archival items be permitted to leave Grey Roots without the approval of the Curator and/or Archivist. In the event that said materials do have approval, the appropriate forms must be completed.
- 3.3.3** The Conservator, Registrar, and Archivist will implement a program of regular inspections and inventories of all collections, both in storage and on exhibit, which may only be performed by trained staff.
- 3.3.4** All buildings (including period and non-collections storage buildings) at Grey Roots will be secure from theft and vandalism, and will have fire and intrusion prevention measures in place.
- 3.3.5** In the event of an emergency or disaster, procedure will follow guidelines as set forth in the Grey Roots Emergency Response Plan.
- 3.3.6** In the event of a pest (insect, rodent, mould) infestation, procedure will follow guidelines as set forth in the Grey Roots Integrated Pest Management Plan.

4.0 CONSERVATION TREATMENTS

It is the aim of Grey Roots to have conservation treatments carried out in accordance with professional standards of practice. With the approval of the respective supervisor, the following staff members will be able to perform conservation treatments: Conservator, Archival Assistant (archival material), and Museum Technician, Registrar, Conservator (artifacts and period buildings). The designated staff is expected to conduct and monitor all conservation activities in an ethical manner with full respect for the collection, and to adhere to the standard of practice set by the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property and the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators.

Artifacts and archival items will be prioritized for treatment in the following manner – highest priority will be given to material which is part of the permanent collection at Grey Roots, and for which treatment is required for an upcoming exhibit, for stabilization purposes, or to protect the remainder of the collection, i.e. an item with mould. The next level of priority will be given to items in a traveling or community exhibit. Treatments will only be carried out on these items with written consent from the owners. Copies of the treatment report and photographs will be given to the owners so that they will have documentation regarding the treatment. The lowest level of priority will be given to items in the teaching or interpretive collection at Grey Roots. These items will only be treated on an individual case basis, and only as staff time and resources permit.

4.1 MUSEUM ARTIFACTS

- 4.1.1** Designated staff will not perform any conservation treatment, which is beyond their expertise or skill, or beyond the facilities, equipment, and available finances at Grey Roots.
- 4.1.2** If a required treatment exceeds any of the factors in 4.1.1, staff may make recommendations as to where the artifact would best be treated. The Curator must first approve any outside treatment and will be the final arbiter of any such decision.
- 4.1.3** The Curator and Registrar will implement a procedure upon which artifacts will be prioritized for treatment. Likewise, the Curator and Museum Technician will implement a similar procedure for the treatment of the large artifacts and period buildings.
- 4.1.4** All conservation treatments will be fully documented through treatment reports and photographs, which will become a permanent record at Grey Roots for future reference. Please see Appendix A.
- 4.1.5** In specific instances, the Curator and/or Registrar may bring artifacts to the Conservator for treatment.
- 4.1.6** Designated staff will consult with each other and outside conservation professionals prior to starting a conservation treatment to insure that the best treatment option has been considered.

4.2 ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

- 4.2.1** Designated staff will not perform any conservation treatment, which is beyond their expertise or skill, or beyond the facilities, equipment, and available finances at Grey Roots.
- 4.2.2** If a required treatment exceeds any of the factors in 4.2.1, staff may make recommendations as to where the item would best be treated. The Archivist must first approve any outside treatment and will be the final arbiter in any such decision.
- 4.2.3** The Conservator and Archivist will implement a procedure upon which archival documents will be prioritized for treatment.

- 4.2.4 Deteriorating photographic and audio-visual items will first be treated through specific storage techniques, and if warranted, the Conservator and Archivist will develop a preservation copying program for priority items.
- 4.2.5 Any preservation copying (i.e. microfilming, prints from negatives) will be done off-site pending the approval of the Archivist.
- 4.2.6 The Conservator will implement a program in which all audio and visual cassettes will be specially stored to prevent inherent damage.
- 4.2.7 Migration of electronic records will only occur when it is deemed to be a priority by the Archivist, and any migration will be done off-site pending the approval of the Archivist.
- 4.2.8 All conservation treatments will be fully documented through treatment reports and photographs, which will become a permanent record at Grey Roots for future reference. Please see Appendix A.

4.3 PUBLIC SERVICES

- 4.3.1 Members of the public can bring artifacts and documents in for conservation treatment with the understanding that these items will not be a priority and will only be treated as time and resources permit.
- 4.3.2 This service will not be advertised in any manner, and will only be done as a special request.
- 4.3.3 The Conservator reserves the right to refuse any public request, and will endeavour to refer the request to a conservator in private practice.
- 4.3.4 Treatment requests from other museums and area institutions will not be considered due to staff and space constraints.
- 4.3.5 An hourly rate plus the cost of materials will be charged for each item treated, and an estimated cost will be agreed to in writing prior to the treatment being started. Please see Appendix B.

5.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 5.1 Grey Roots will be operated in compliance with public health and safety regulations (local, provincial, and federal), including regulations on the disposal of hazardous waste materials.
- 5.2 All chemicals and hazardous materials will be stored in proper containers and chemical cabinets in either the conservation lab or the workshop.
- 5.3 Both the conservation lab and workshop will be appropriately equipped and ventilated according to health and safety standards.
- 5.4 All conservation treatments will occur in either the conservation lab or the workshop.
- 5.5 The Conservator, Curator, and Museum Technician will be responsible for the maintenance and proper storage of all equipment under their care.
- 5.6 Material Safety Data Sheets will be made available for each chemical used in the conservation lab and workshop.

- 5.7** Personal protection equipment will be provided and the use of said equipment will be enforced as necessary.
- 5.8** Grey Roots will have first aid kits and at least two staff members trained in Standard First Aid and CPR.
- 5.9** Grey Roots will have at least two staff members trained in Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS).
- 5.10** All Grey Roots staff and volunteers will be trained in fire prevention, and know the location of all safety equipment and fire exits.

6.0 STAFF TRAINING

- 6.1** The Conservator will advise Grey Roots heritage staff and volunteers in the proper handling of artifacts and archival documents.
- 6.2** The Conservator will advise Grey Roots heritage staff in the cleaning and housekeeping of exhibit galleries and storage areas.
- 6.3** The Conservator will advise Grey Roots heritage staff on accepted environmental standards, and on the safe packing, unpacking, storage and transportation of artifacts and archival documents.
- 6.4** Grey Roots will furnish training opportunities to conservation staff to maintain or enhance their expertise continuously, and particularly in emerging areas such as electronic records. Training opportunities include allowances for self-directed training, attendance at conferences, seminars and courses, study visits, and internships where appropriate.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: CONDITION REPORT & TREATMENT PROPOSAL

Object Name:

Accession Number:

Provenance:

Maker:

Date of Object:

Work Requested:

Dimensions:

Special Considerations:

Materials:

Previous Treatments:

Photograph/Sketch:

Description/Condition Summary:

Proposed Treatment:

Photographic Documentation:

Before:

During:

After:

Treatment:

Recommendations:

Conserved By:

Total Hours:

Date:

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APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B: CONSERVATION SERVICE FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Artifact/Archival Item: _____

Work Requested: _____

Estimated length of time for treatment: _____

Cost of treatment:

Labour: \$75.00 per hour

Materials: Variable depending on market value of material

Estimated Total Cost: _____

Once the treatment is completed, a complete cost breakdown will be provided. The total amount for the treatment can be paid either by cash or cheque, and is due when the treatment is complete.

(Date)

(Signature of Client)

Received by: _____

(Signature of Conservator)

I hereby acknowledge the safe return of the material described above:

(Date)

(Signature of Client)