



Preserving our past.
Enriching our future.

GLENGARRY PIONEER MUSEUM

SUBJECT: Conservation Policy

APPROVED: 02 April 2014

UPDATED:

REPLACES: 2004 Policy for Preserving the Collection

X REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS: Collections Management, Physical Plant & Risk Management

THE GLENGARRY PIONEER MUSEUM (2013)

CONSERVATION POLICY

VISION: The Glengarry Pioneer Museum (2013), hereafter referred to as the Museum, is a steward of the history and heritage of Glengarry County and is committed to communicating the unique stories of this area in an inclusive, engaging and professional manner.

PURPOSE: The artifacts in the Museum's collection are a tangible representation of the community's heritage and as such are irreplaceable. These artifacts are held in perpetual trust for the community and are the basis of the Museum's existence. The Museum 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 will be applied when conserving, restoring or otherwise intervening directly (physical changes) or indirectly (environmental changes) with the artifacts and historical structures that make up the Museum.

SCOPE: This policy pertains to all staff, Board members, and volunteers working at or for the Museum, be they permanent, part time, summer seasonal, contract workers, interns, students, researchers or volunteers.

DEFINITIONS:

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

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

Conservation Treatments involve the removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic or historical values.

POLICY:

1.0 PRIORITIES

Preventative conservation provides the most effective use of resources for preservation of the collection. The application of preventative conservation will take precedence over conservation treatments. Conservation treatments will take precedence over full restoration.

1.1 Preventative Conservation

The Museum will strive to achieve optimum environmental standards for the preservation of the collections, be they on exhibit or in storage. It is understood that the Museum's facilities include a range of museum environments, including heated buildings with exhibit cases and unheated buildings such as barns and log structures. The Museum will strive to meet accepted environmental conditions of humidity, light, temperature and air cleanliness as best as possible for each particular space. (As set in the Standards for Community Museums by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation.)

The Museum will provide storage areas sufficient and appropriate to house existing and future collections. Storage areas will have limited access.

The Museum will provide training for all staff and volunteers in the care and handling of artifacts and ensure that preventative maintenance is carried out.

The Museum will ensure that all outgoing loans will be protected from damage in transit and provided with environmental conditions at the borrowing institution at least consistent with those provided by the Museum.

Incoming loans will be afforded the same protection as the permanent collection and treated with the same level of care.

1.2 Conservation Treatments

The Museum will ensure that only the properly trained Curator/Administrator in consultation with a professional conservator will determine the need for and carry out treatments of artifacts in the collection.

The Curator/Administrator is given the responsibility to prioritize the treatment of objects in the following order:

- Objects requiring emergency treatment or stabilization;
- Objects of particular historic significance;
- Objects required for exhibition;
- Objects required for programming;
- All other objects owned by the Museum.

All conservation treatments, whether to an artifact or building, will be based on sufficient research to identify and safeguard the historical values concerned.

Contributions from all periods of the item's existence will be taken into account when deciding the appropriate level of physical intervention. Any conservation treatment will be fully documented, including the reason for it, what the intervention was, who performed it and when it was carried out.

2.0 BUILDINGS

Historic buildings are the largest artifacts within the collection and will be given the same consideration as outlined above. Every reasonable effort will be made during conservation, restoration and maintenance to retain original components and features of the buildings, while attempting to maintain a museum-quality environment for the artifacts housed within them. Maintenance will be carried out in a cyclical manner, identifying and correcting problems in building fabric due to deterioration.

3.0 GENERAL

The Museum shall consult with qualified experts in the field of conservation before taking any course of action which may affect the physical state of the artifacts.

The Museum will establish an Emergency Management Plan which includes procedures to follow in the case of physical emergencies such as fire, flood, accident, etc.

4.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Conservation Policy will be reviewed by the Museum Board every three years. Amendments may be required at other times and must be approved by the appropriate committees and staff.