



Approved by Executive Committee April 19, 2018

Signed (Executive Director) _____ Chase W. Rynd
Signed (Board Chair) _____ (James G. Davis)

**NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

I Mission Statement

The National Building Museum (the Museum) inspires curiosity about the world we design and build (adapted December 2017).

II Scope of Collections

The Museum collects material that illustrates or reflects achievements in the American built environment, the processes involved in producing the built environment, and its global impact. Material will be collected in two categories: accessioned and unaccessioned. We will only collect material that we have the staff, financial resources, and facilities to manage properly, for which we have a clear and legal title, and which is donated unconditionally. In order to obtain works for our collection, we will not remove fragments from or otherwise alter existing structures in any way.

III Vision for the Collection

- A) The Museum’s collections will:
 - 1) Through exhibitions, education, research and preservation efforts, extend the Museum’s mission as a resource for the scholarly, public and architectural communities.
 - 2) Document the processes and practices of the architectural community.

IV Acquisitions

- A) Accessioned Collection: Additions to the Accessioned Collection will be determined according to the Museum’s Collecting Plan. This collection will contain:
 - 1) Objects valuable for their aesthetic qualities, social, technological and/or historic associations, and are consistent with the Museum’s mission statement, including:
 - (i) Elements of the built environment from significant structures;
 - (ii) Models;

- (iii) Tools and equipment;
 - (iv) Toys;
 - (v) Sample kits and materials;
 - (vi) Items which document design and construction processes and products, such as:
 - (a) Architectural Drawings;
 - (b) Renderings;
 - (c) Photographs and negatives
 - (d) Digital representations, such as
 - (i) CAD and other design files
 - (ii) Video and audio files
 - (iii) Web pages
- 2) Materials that formed part of the Pension Building or that were employed or generated by its occupants.
 - 3) Materials that were owned or created by General Montgomery C. Meigs.

B) Non-accessioned Collections:

- 1) The Non-Accessioned Artifact Collection contains objects that do not meet the requirements to be accessioned but which may be useful in exhibitions or education programs. These artifacts will be reviewed annually for their relevance and discarded as necessary. This collection will contain:
 - (i) Reproductions of artifacts and images;
 - (ii) Objects not of museum quality;
 - (iii) Duplicates of accessioned collection items;
 - (iv) Undocumented objects;
 - (v) Exhibition purchases incompatible with the institutional mission statement;
 - (vi) Material samples purchased or donated for exhibition purposes;
 - (vii) Materials, tools and artifacts purchased or donated for educational purposes
- 2) The Non-accessioned Photograph Collection contains reproduction photographs, transparencies and slides of events before 1980 that are relevant to the Museum. This collection will contain:
 - (i) Photos of Montgomery Meigs, his family and his other projects
 - (ii) Photos of historic events in the history of the building, including
 - (a) Construction and use of the building
 - (b) External images
 - (c) Dedications, parties and Inaugural Balls
 - (d) Offices, workers and alterations to the building

- 3) The Beverly Willis Research Library and Postcard Collections contain commercially produced items which may be useful for research, exhibitions and documentation. This collection will contain:
 - (i) Books;
 - (ii) Periodicals;
 - (iii) Pamphlets;
 - (iv) Postcards.

- 4) The Institutional Archives contain material related to the Museum's founding and operations, as determined by the Museum's Institutional Archives Policy and Procedures document. This collection will contain:
 - (i) Founding documents;
 - (ii) Architectural drawings of the building post 1980;
 - (iii) Exhibition files;
 - (iv) Loan files;
 - (v) Development donor and membership files;
 - (vi) Publications, mailings and brochures created by the Museum;
 - (vii) Images of:
 - (a) Exhibition installations
 - (b) Educational programming and festivals

- C) Exclusions: The Museum will not collect items that do not fit our Mission and Collecting Plan, including:
 - 1) Land;
 - 2) Full structures in situ;
 - 3) Large-scale mechanical or electrical systems or their various components;
 - 4) The personal artifacts of individuals (other than Montgomery C. Meigs) that do not relate to their professional careers;
 - 5) Items of questionable provenance, including Native American material if it concerns the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) or Nazi-looted art;
 - 6) Structures or materials with the intent to dispose of it at a later date;
 - 7) Artifacts with exceptional conservation and preservation concerns.

- D) Conditions of Acceptance:
 - 1) Only unconditional gifts will be accepted. The Museum cannot accept objects on which restrictions are placed.
 - 2) All gifts are considered outright and unconditional property of the Museum.
 - 3) Only acquisitions that are to be accessioned will be under the supervision of the Collections Committee, (as specified in section IV, below).
 - 4) Donations of objects to the Museum, which meet the requirements of charitable contributions under Internal Revenue Code (Section 170) and related regulations (Section D), are tax deductible.

- 5) The Museum will make a request that the donor provide financial support for stewardship of the material he or she is donating. The acceptance of the donation will not be contingent upon such monies but the request should be made.

E) Staff Conduct:

- 1) The Museum's employees must exercise care to ensure that no conflict of interest can arise between themselves and the Museum. An employee who learns of an object available for purchase that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Museum for its collection is expected to place the interests of the Museum ahead of his or her own in acquiring the object.
- 2) It is the responsibility of each employee to discuss his or her personal collection and collecting activities with the Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections and or, where appropriate, the Executive Director, unless personal collecting activities are minimal.
- 3) If an employee desires to sell from his or her personal collection an object that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Museum for its collection, the employee is expected to give the Museum the right of first refusal for the object.
- 4) An employee may not act as a dealer in purchasing or selling objects likely to be of interest to the Museum, nor may an employee use his or her influence at the Museum for personal gain in a market where such items are dealt. An employee may not accept any commission or stipend from any collector, dealer, artist, or institution of interest to the Museum.

F) Additions to the Accessioned Collection: The Museum will maintain a Collecting Plan to prescribe the criteria for adding artifacts to the Accessioned Collection. The Collecting Plan will be generated by the Registrar with input from all members of the Museum's staff and specific requests from the Curatorial Department and Executive Director. The plan will be reviewed by the Curatorial staff and approved by the Executive Committee of the Board every five (5) years.

- 1) All additions to the Accessioned Collection will be decided with a majority vote by the collections Committee. The Committee will meet quarterly and will consist of the following voting members:
 - (i) Executive Director
 - (ii) Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections
 - (iii) Director of Exhibitions and Collections
 - (iv) All Curators and Curatorial Assistants
 - (v) Registrars and Collections staff
 - (vi) Preparators and Exhibitions staff
- 2) All offers to the Museum will be directed through the Collections Department. The Registrar will submit any offers to the Collections Committee for review. If a possible acquisition is directed to any other members of the Museum staff they should forward the inquiry to the Collections Department.
- 3) The Registrar will confirm that the Museum can acquire valid title to the object in question. The circumstances of the transaction and/or information relating to the object's provenance

must provide the Museum with the assurance that the seller, donor, or lender has valid title to convey.

- 4) If the material consists of fewer than 1,000 objects and/or is valued at less than \$10,000 the Executive Director has final approval. If the collection consists of 1,000 objects or more and/or is valued in excess of \$10,000 final approval rests with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.
- 5) If the proposed acquisition is a purchase, the Museum may seek an independent appraisal by a qualified appraiser.
- 6) If the proposed acquisition is a donation, the donor may seek his/her own independent appraisal.
- 7) The Registrar will maintain a record of each potential donation including information on the artifact, donor, votes for/against the acquisition and any questions, concerns or suggestions proposed by the Committee.
- 8) The Collections Committee will also have control over any proposed deaccession with final approval resting with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees (as outlined in Section VII).

G) Access:

- 1) Collection objects:
 - (i) Accessioned collections are available for study for scholarly purposes or for reasons related to a personal and/or professional connection to an object.
 - (ii) Research requests should be directed to the Collections Department.
 - (iii) Response to all research inquiries and orders is governed by staff availability. Every effort will be made to respond in a timely manner.
 - (iv) The Collections Department reserves the right to deny access to or reproduction of any material due to conservation or legal concerns.
- 2) Chain of command:
 - (i) The Collections Department is responsible for the care of and access to the accessioned collections and any associated records, plus the non-accessioned artifact and photograph collections. These collections will be stored in the Museum's secure collections storage areas or offices.
 - (ii) The Registrars are responsible for access to loaned objects and loan records. All loaned artifacts will be stored in the Museum's secure collections storage areas and galleries.
 - (iii) The Collections Department is responsible for the care of and access to the Beverly Willis Research Library Collection, the Postcard Collection and the Institutional Archives. Access to and care of these collections may be delegated to appropriate members of the Curatorial Department.
- 3) Safe handling and security:

- (i) Only Collections Department staff, Museum Curators, trained volunteers and interns may be in the collections storage areas unaccompanied. All other staff members, visitors and researchers must be accompanied in storage at all times.
- (ii) Only groups/tours of 15 or fewer people are allowed in collections storage at any time. A ratio of at least one (1) collections staff member to five (5) visitors must be maintained at all times.
- (iii) All researchers must be accompanied when working with the collection or loaned objects and will be given a brief synopsis of handling and security procedures, as follows:
 - (a) No permanent ink will be allowed near collection objects;
 - (b) Gloves are required unless the object is more safely handled without;
 - (c) Only trained collection personnel will handle objects.
- (iv) No materials owned by the Museum may be removed from the premises without proper documentation;
- (v) Archival researchers may handle material if supervised and trained;
- (vi) Artifacts in storage may only be photographed with the permission and supervision of the collections staff;
- (vii) Researchers must provide identification upon entry to collections and their identification and reasons for accessing the collection must be documented.

4) Databases:

- (i) The Collections Department will maintain a digital database of all accessioned artifacts in the collections and loans in the Museum's care. Access to the database and its information will accord to the following guidelines and procedures:
 - (a) Full access and editing capability of all information concerning an artifact will be limited to the Registrars;
 - (b) Collections Department staff, interns and volunteers will receive data entry training and privileges;
 - (c) Museum staff and Board members will be able to search the database for artifacts and have access to general information on each object;
 - (d) General information on highlights from the accessioned collection will be made accessible to the general public on the Museum's website;
 - (e) General information on all artifacts in the accessioned collection will be included in a searchable global database;
- (ii) The Collections Department will maintain a digital database of all material in the Beverly Willis Library. Access to the database and its information will accord to the following guidelines and procedures:
 - (a) Full access and editing capability of all information concerning an item will be limited to the Collections Department and delegated staff;
 - (b) Collections and Curatorial Department staff, interns and volunteers will receive data entry training and privileges;
 - (c) Search capabilities for general information will be available to all staff members and to the general public via a global database.

5) Sensitive information:

Information on the accessioned collection and incoming loan storage locations, appraisal and insurance values, or the donor or lender's address will only be released on a case-by-case basis and only to persons related to the donation or loan.

6) Reproductions and Copyright

(i) Reproductions

- (a) Requests by the public for permission to reproduce an image must be made in writing either via the Museum's website or sent directly to the Collections Department and must include intended use. Permission covers a one-time use only and is made on a case-by-case basis.
- (b) Requests by Museum staff for permission to reproduce an image must be cleared by the Collections Department to ensure that proper credit is given to the photographer and donor.

H) Copyright:

- 1) The Museum can grant permission to reproduce images only to the extent of its ownership of the rights relating to the request. Certain projects as well as the photographs of those projects may be protected by copyright, trademark, or related interests not owned by the Museum. The responsibility for ascertaining whether any such rights exist, and for obtaining all other necessary permissions, remains with the Collections/Registration.

I) Inventory:

- 1) A comprehensive inventory of the accessioned collection will take place every five (5) years, to include:
 - (i) Reconciliation of records to objects;
 - (ii) Reconciliation of objects to records;
 - (iii) Location;
 - (iv) Condition checking;
 - (v) Check of accession marking.
- 2) A spot-check audit will be conducted every two (2) years, to include:
 - (i) Location check;
 - (ii) Condition check.
- 3) The Collections Department will do an annual audit of loan records to reconcile and close all completed loan files. Files on closed loans will be added to the Institutional Archives.
- 4) The Collections Department will send a report to the Executive Director, Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections and the Accounting Department when all audits and inventories are completed.

J) Insurance:

- 1) All accessioned and loaned objects in the Museum's care are covered under the museum's all-inclusive fine arts insurance.
- 2) The insurance policy is renewed annually and is based on the most valuable collections owned by the Museum and on the value of loaned objects.
- 3) Changes to insurance coverage and requests for additional riders are recommended by Collections/Registration and are approved by the Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections.

K) Valuation/Appraisal/Authentication:

- 1) Valuation and Appraisal:
 - (i) No member of the Museum's staff shall, in his or her official capacity, give appraisals for the purpose of establishing the tax-deductible value of gifts to the National Building Museum or any museum.
 - (ii) Where a donor has already given artifacts and needs to have a valuation, the Museum will assist by preparing lists or making the material available for examination by an appraiser selected and employed by the donor.
 - (iii) Items for Identification or Study
 - (iv) If a member of the public requests identification of an object (no authentication or appraisal will be given), the Museum will attempt to identify items only when a curatorial staff member is available.
 - (v) No items are to be left at the Museum for identification. If a curatorial staff member is unavailable to identify the item on the spot, the owner should make an appointment to bring the item back when such a staff member is available.

V Care and Conservation

A) Internal Controls: The Collections Department will maintain internal controls for physical care, handling, security, and maintenance of the accessioned collection and all loans.

B) Standards: Minimum standards of physical care include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Control of relative humidity and temperature to 50% (+/- 5%) humidity and 70 degrees (+/-5 degrees) temperature, unless otherwise necessary for preservation of a specific object;
- 2) Light levels between 5-10 footcandles;
- 3) Alarms and security: All collections storage spaces and galleries will be alarmed at night and when not in use. Only the Registrars and the Chief Preparator will have the keys and alarm codes to collections storage areas. Visitor Services managers, Exhibitions Department staff and Collections Department staff will have the keys and alarm codes for the gallery spaces.

- C) Movement, Packing and Shipping: The Registrar and those they delegate are responsible for the movement of objects within and entering and exiting the Museum.
- 1) All objects entering and exiting the Museum will be documented.
 - 2) The Registrar and those they delegate are responsible for arranging, supervising and undertaking the packing and shipping of accessioned collection items.
 - 3) The Registrar and those they delegate are responsible for arranging, supervising and undertaking the packing and shipping of loan items.
- D) Emergency Plan: The Registrar will create and update an emergency plan and distribute it to the appropriate Museum staff. The plan will be updated every five (5) years.

VI Loans

A) Incoming Loan Policy:

- 1) The Museum will accept on-loan items which will be used for exhibitions, educational programs, identification, or examination for Museum purposes.
- 2) Objects borrowed by the Museum from other institutions or individuals are to be considered for their significance to the Museum's mission and exhibitions.
- 3) The Registrar has the authority to reject incoming loans based on condition or legal concerns. This includes objects which are perishable in nature, defective in quality, unstable in condition and/or have questionable provenance.
- 4) If there are issues involved with the loan relating to the budget the Vice President of Exhibitions and Collections will have final approval.
- 5) A properly executed Loan Agreement will be duly signed and filed in the Collections Department prior to the delivery of a loaned item. The Incoming Loan Agreement can only be signed by the owner of the loaned piece, or their representative, and by the Registrar on behalf of the Museum. The Collections Department is responsible for ensuring that the conditions for loaned objects are met- these conditions are listed on the reverse of the Incoming Loan Agreement.
- 6) All items on loan are covered under the Museum's Fine Arts Insurance policy, wall-to-wall.
- 7) A condition report form will be completed for each loaned item by the Collections Department or designated assistants and filed in the designated loan folder.

- 8) The Collections Department is responsible for managing and monitoring the loan during the loan period. The Registrar will make all arrangements for incoming shipping and will be responsible for packing and return shipping.

B) Outgoing Loan Policy:

- 1) The Museum may lend collection material to cultural, educational, or charitable institutions (The Borrower), which are judged by the Registrar to be appropriate depositories of the materials, and are capable of providing appropriate care and insurance for said materials. Use of the Museum artifacts is restricted to carefully controlled research or exhibition purposes and then only if the items are not required for display or exhibition by the Museum.
- 2) The Borrower must submit a facility report and certificate of insurance to the Museum for review.
- 3) All requests for the loan of accessioned artifacts shall be made in writing, and will be considered by the Collections Committee. No outgoing loan may be made without the approval of the Collections Committee.
- 4) It will be the responsibility of the Borrower to protect the loaned items from loss or damage caused by temperature, humidity, water, vermin, handling, theft, willful misconduct, or other such causes.
- 5) The Borrower shall be responsible for any and all loss of damage to the property of the Museum, which is on loan to the Borrower and/or is in custody and control of the Borrower.
- 6) The Museum shall determine the value of materials being loaned.
- 7) The Borrower may be responsible for supplying insurance for borrowed objects naming the Museum as additionally insured. The Borrower's insurance company must supply the Museum with a certificate of insurance as evidence that such coverage is in force.
- 8) The Museum's Outgoing Loan Agreement shall be duly signed by the Registrar and filed prior to the loan transfer. The Agreement shall state all conditions, insurance responsibilities, and exhibition specifications.

VII Deaccessioning

A) Deaccession:

- 1) Definition: Formal process used to remove objects from the accessioned collection. Deaccessioned items may be retained by the Museum for transfer to any of the non-accessioned collections (see section III B. above) or disposed of as hereinafter provided.

- 2) Purpose: The periodic review, evaluation, and deaccessioning and disposal of existing collections are intended to refine and improve the quality and relevance of the collections with respect to the Museum's mission. Objects in poor or deteriorated condition, undocumented items, reproductions and items which are readily replaceable are some of the types of items which may be chosen for deaccession. The Curators and Registrar will conduct a comprehensive review of the collections and select of artifacts for deaccession every 5 years.
- 3) Determination: Objects proposed for deaccession shall be judged in relation to the whole accessioned collection and the Museum's mission. Areas of judgment shall be condition, history, association, and value for exhibition, study and reference.
- 4) Certification: Collection/Registration shall complete an object deaccession proposal form on which will be listed the object's provenance, condition, reason for proposed deaccession and recommendation for transfer or disposal. Upon agreement of the Collections Committee, the Executive Director will recommend disposition to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, which shall review and take action thereon.

B) Disposition:

- 1) Definition: The process by which deaccessioned or non-accessioned objects are removed from the Museum through gift, transfer, exchange, sale or destruction.
- 2) Purpose: The removal or consideration of removal or deaccessioned and non-accessioned material from the Museum shall be a continuing process as the Museum continues to meet its objectives.
- 3) Method: Preferred methods of disposal are sale or transfer to, or exchange with another public institution, sale through publicly advertised auction, and sale or exchange to or through a reputable, established dealer.
 - (i) Gifts: the Museum shall consider gifts to other nonprofit cultural, educational, or charitable agencies and institutions first, realizing that in certain circumstances, the Museum can benefit from the release of deaccessioned or non-accessioned objects from exhibit or storage and, in return, the release would benefit another nonprofit agency or institution. If a non-profit institution cannot be found, a for-profit institution with a similar mission to the Museum may be considered.
 - (ii) Exchanges: The formal reciprocal transfer of deaccessioned or non-accessioned material between Museum and other nonprofit organizations often serves to advance the objectives of the Museum. Such exchanges can occur through private negotiation.
 - (iii) Sales: Deaccessioned or non-accessioned objects may be sold, subject to the following guidelines:
 - (iv) The goal of all such sales of Museum property shall be to bring the best possible price for the material.

- (a) There shall be no private sales of Museum Objects to staff members, the Board of Trustees or their agents or representatives. In the event of public sale or auction, such individuals shall be eligible, as are any other private individuals, to bid on offered items.
- (b) Method of sale shall be determined by the Collections Committee, subject to the approval of the board of Trustees.

C) Considerations:

- 1) Every reasonable effort should be taken to identify and evaluate the various advantages and yields available through different means of disposal.
- 2) In the case of an object created by a living artist or craftsman, consideration may be given to an exchange with the maker.
- 3) When a work by a living artist/craftsman is deaccessioned, the maker shall be notified.
- 4) While it is understood that the Museum must fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities and act in the Museum's best interests, the Museum should give consideration to keeping a deaccessioned work in the public domain.

D) Procedure and Record Action:

- 1) The Collections Committee shall initiate recommendation for disposition of objects from the Museum. All such recommendations shall be made in writing on a disposition form. (In the case of deaccessioned items, the deaccession form shall be used to record the disposition.)
- 2) The Collections Committee shall review the request. No disposition will be made without the approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- 3) A record of each action shall be made on the form before disposition takes place. All records or disposition shall be kept.
- 4) Disposal of collections through sale, trade or research activities is solely for the advancement of the Museum's mission. Proceeds from the sale of collections are to be used in a manner consistent with the established standards of the Museum's discipline, but in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of the Museum's collections.
- 5) Whenever possible Collections/Registration shall, as a matter of courtesy, attempt to contact the donor and inform them about the deaccession and disposal of his or her donation.