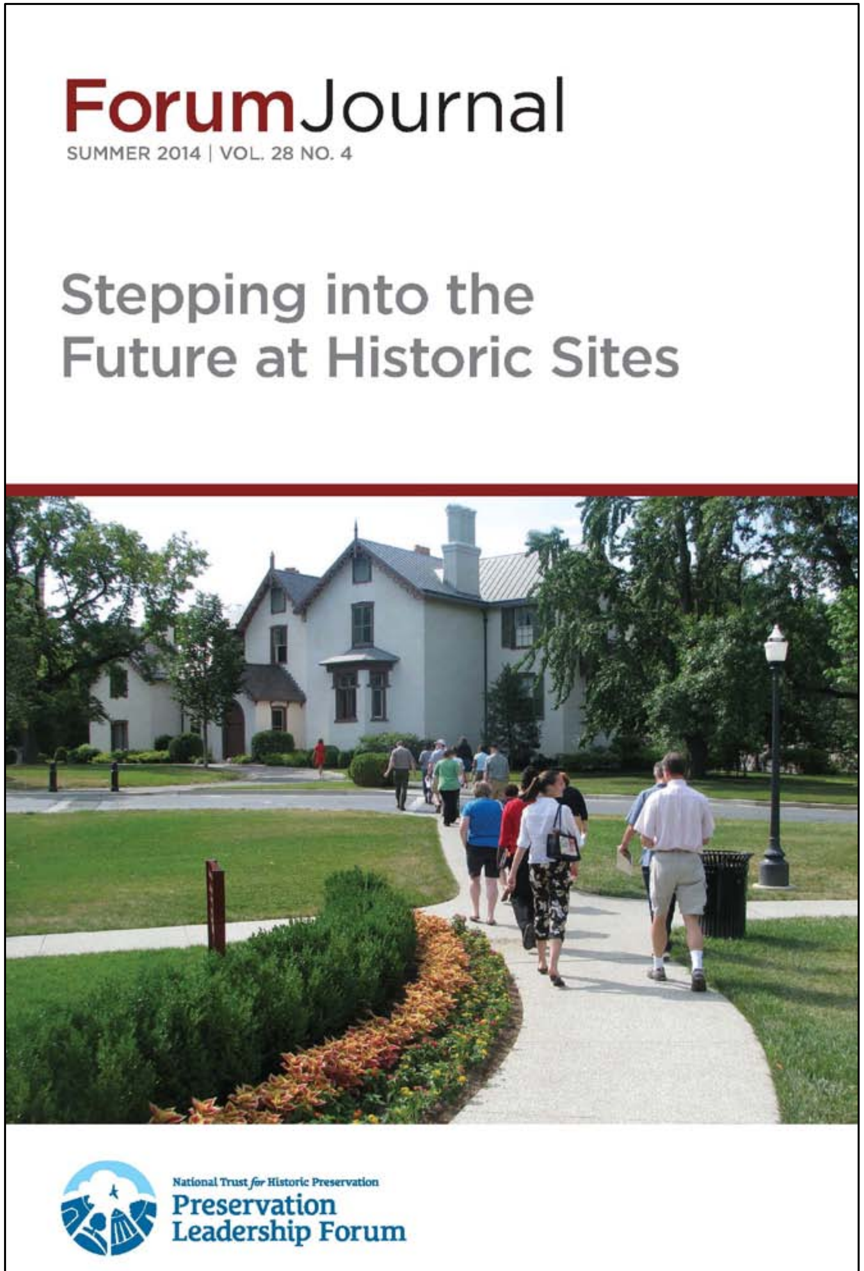

Enhanced Content: Takeaway Collections Policy

When Buildings and Landscapes Are the Collection

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Collections Management Policy

INTRODUCTION

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and its Collections. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States (hereafter the National Trust), chartered by an Act of Congress, October 26, 1949, is a private nonprofit organization empowered to acquire "sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history and culture, to preserve and administer them for the public benefit." Over its history, and in fulfillment of this purpose, the National Trust has acquired a number of significant American historic sites ("National Trust Historic Sites"), comprising structures, landscapes, and associated objects. These structures, landscapes, and objects are treated as artifacts that tell the history of these important places. Together they comprise the collections of the National Trust.

Historic Site Administration and Scope of this Policy. National Trust Historic Sites are administered under three principal governance models.

- Stewardship Sites are administered by the National Trust and staffed by National Trust employees, and they are directly subject to this Policy.

- Co-Stewardship Sites are owned by the National Trust and administered by separate nonprofit institutions (or, in one case, a state agency) under a series of agreements with the National Trust (these generally include long term leases, co-operative agreements, and collections loan agreements, although the specific form of agreements vary from site to site). National Trust owned collections at a Co-Stewardship Site are to be administered in accordance with this Policy and the relevant collections loan agreement.

- Contract Sites are owned and administered by other nonprofit organizations, under an arrangement similar to a licensing agreement. Contract Sites do not administer National Trust collections, and are not required to follow this Policy.

Co-Stewardship Sites and Contract Sites which hold their own collections are encouraged to review the policies that apply to those collections for consistency with this Policy.

DEFINITION OF COLLECTIONS

Museum Collections include structures, landscapes, and objects that are interpreted to the public (or held for that purpose). The different types of museum collections are described below.

> **Historic Structures and Landscapes Collection:** Historic structures (including both buildings and non-building structures) and historic landscapes (including individual landscape features) that are owned by the National Trust and interpreted for and accessible to the public are considered to be part of the National Trust's Museum Collections. In many cases, historic structures and landscapes are the primary artifacts at a National Trust Historic Site interpreted to the public. Not every structure or landscape at a National Trust Historic Site, however, is interpreted for and accessible to

the public and many will not be eligible for treatment as part of the Museum Collections.

Object Collection. Objects that are owned by the National Trust, used to interpret National Trust Historic Sites to the public, and that are accessioned, are part of the National Trust's Museum Collections. They may include any or all of the following, and may be subcategorized by type (i.e. "archaeological collections," "archival collections"):

- Furniture, textiles, decorative objects, fine arts objects, and other furnishings;
- Other types of historical artifacts, including utilitarian objects of all kinds (ranging from hair combs to horse carriages);
- Archaeological artifacts acquired through fieldwork conducted at a National Trust Historic Site (or a related site);
- Architectural elements that have been removed from buildings or structures at a National Trust Historic Site; and
- Documents, manuscripts, books, photographs, and other archival materials.

Non-Museum Objects and/or Collections. National Trust Historic Sites may also retain a number of objects used for educational, research, or interpretive purposes at the Historic Sites, but which are not historically significant. Those objects are not accessioned into the Museum Collections and are not generally subject to this Policy except as may specifically be provided below.

AUTHORITY/STAFFING

Statement of Authority. The Board of Trustees of the National Trust is ultimately responsible for the stewardship of National Trust Historic Sites and collections, and has delegated specific responsibilities to the Preservation and Historic Sites Committee to provide oversight of collections, as provided in this Policy. Other than as specifically retained, the Board delegates authority to implement the policies of the Board relating to historic sites and collections to the President, who re-delegates the authority to the Chief Preservation Officer and the Vice President of Historic Sites. The Board of Trustees reserves the authority to determine whether to acquire or dispose of real property to be retained by the National Trust, including real property that comprises the Historic Structures and Landscapes Collection. Routine oversight of the entire National Trust collection is delegated to the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, and supervision over collections at a specific site is delegated to that site's staff member with authority over the collections.

Collections Committee. The Collections Committee is a standing committee appointed by the Vice President of Historic Sites, who also serves as its Chair. In addition to the Chair, the Committee shall include at least five other members: the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, the Graham Gund Architect, two staff members from National Trust Historic Sites, one Historic Sites Department staff member, and one lawyer representative from the Law Division. The Vice President of Historic Sites may choose to add up to two additional members, standing or ad hoc, at his or her discretion.

The Collections Committee has a number of responsibilities relating to the Collections as further described in this Policy, including the following:

- If so requested by the Vice President of Historic Sites, the Collections Committee approves or disapproves the acquisition of any object for the Object Collection.

- The Collections Committee reviews and recommends for approval the proposed deaccessioning of any object from the Object Collection. If the Committee concurs, the proposal will be forwarded to the Chief Preservation Officer (and with his or her concurrence, to the Preservation & Historic Sites Committee of the Board of Trustees). If the Committee does not concur, the proposed deaccessioning is disapproved.
- The Collections Committee reviews and recommends for approval the proposed method of disposal of any object approved for deaccessioning. With the Committee's concurrence, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Chief Preservation Officer, and subsequently to the Preservation & Historic Sites Committee.
- The Collections Committee approves expenditures of funds from the sale of deaccessioned objects**,** although it may delegate this authority to the Senior Manager of Museum Collections in the case of routine expenditures under parameters set by the Committee.

In addition to these responsibilities, the Collections Committee may be called upon to advise on other collections issues upon the request of the Vice President of Historic Sites.

Collections Management at the Sites. In addition to this Collections Management Policy and further guidance provided by the Historic Sites Department, each National Trust Historic Site that maintains National Trust-owned collections must have in place its own Collections Plan, approved by the Senior Manager of Museum Collections and the site's Board or Council, in order to ensure the collection is aligned with the mission, vision and interpretation of the Site. Collections Plans should outline a Historic Site's vision and rationale for its collection and the scope of its collections. Each Historic Site's Collections Plan should be developed in consultation with the Senior Manager of Museum Collections. While the Collections Manager at each site does not report to the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, decisions that affect the site's collections must be made in consultation with the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, and must be made in accordance with this Policy.

DOCUMENTATION

Definition. Documentation comprises all legal, curatorial and managerial records associated with collections in temporary or permanent care of the National Trust. Documentation is an ongoing process that exists in a variety of formats including electronic databases and paper files.

Records Held at National Trust Headquarters. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections is responsible for generating and maintaining all original managerial and legal documentation concerning the Object Collection, including original acquisition, accession, deaccession, disposition, and loan records.

Records Held at Sites. Each site is responsible for maintaining all curatorial records, including those that document provenance, conservation and interpretive use. Copies of records created by a Site should be sent to the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, and copies of any records generated by National Trust Headquarters should be sent to the Site so each record file will be complete. Original Deeds of Gift should be held in the file set at National Trust Headquarters.

Collections Database Records. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections is responsible for the general oversight of the collections database, which is utilized by all National Trust Sites.

Each site is responsible for maintaining accurate records for the collections in their care. Although not recommended, if other digital recordkeeping is used at a site, it is the Collections Manager's responsibility to make sure the information in the collections database is up-to-date. Each site is responsible for entering, updating and validating curatorial information about objects.

Email. Staff at both the National Trust and Historic Sites should maintain copies of email correspondence pertaining to the Object Collection in the files. Any email correspondence regarding ownership/title, loans, conservation or insurance values/claims should be filed in the appropriate collections file.

Memorial Markers. Permanent, visible memorial markers shall not be affixed to objects; however, memorial items or information may be included in the collections records.

Access to Records. Information from the collections records may be made available to nonprofit institutions or members of the public for bona fide research or educational purposes, following a written request and under reasonable conditions determined by the Senior Manager of Museum Collections as necessary to protect the integrity of the collections records. Information deemed to be confidential, e.g. value or donor contact information, is not to be shared with the general public.

ACQUISITION AND ACCESSIONING OF OBJECTS

Background. This section (and the following section, regarding deaccessioning and disposal) applies primarily to the Object Collection within the National Trust's Museum Collections. The buildings and grounds that constitute the Historic Structures and Historic Landscapes Collection are made up of real estate. Because the National Trust's Board of Trustees has reserved the authority to determine real property that is to be retained by or disposed of by the National Trust, decisions regarding the acquisition or disposition of historic structures or landscapes are to be made by the Board. Unless the following provisions expressly apply to Historic Structures and Historic Landscapes, they only apply to the Objects Collection.

Definition. To *acquire* an object is to gain legal title to it. To *accession* an object is to formally accept and record it into the National Trust Museum Collections.

Purpose. The Trust acquires objects and accessions them into the Museum Collections to enrich site interpretation and to preserve objects associated with National Trust Historic Sites for public benefit.

Method of Acquisition. Objects may be acquired for accessioning into the Museum Collections by gift, bequest, purchase, transfer, exchange, recovery from archaeological field work, or other means where title is acquired by the National Trust.

Criteria for Acquisition and Accessioning. Objects are eligible for acquisition and accessioning into the Museum Collections if they (1) have a historical connection with a National Trust Historic Site or its previous occupants, or are representative of a particular historical period or cultural tradition represented at a National Trust Historic Site; and (2) may appropriately be used in interpreting the historical, cultural, artistic, or architectural values of that National Trust Historic Site.

Integrity of Objects Proposed for Acquisition and Accessioning. Objects proposed for acquisition and accessioning into the Museum Collections should be in a reasonable physical condition as necessary to permit their interpretive use. Objects should also be unencumbered by donor restrictions, free of title defects and copyright conflicts, and, if applicable, should be accompanied by a reasonably reliable provenance. (Although restricted gifts are prohibited under normal circumstances, exceptions may be approved by the Vice President of Historic Sites.)

Authority and Approval Process.
All acquisition and accessioning decisions must be approved by the applicable Site Director and the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, with notification provided to the Vice President of Historic Sites and the Chief Preservation Officer. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections has the discretion to determine on a case-by-case basis whether the approval of the Vice President of Historic Sites is needed to acquire an object because of questions relating to its care, cost, condition, interpretive value, or other reason. In addition, the Vice President of Historic Sites has the discretion on a case-by-case basis to elevate the decision to the Collections Committee.

Records. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections is responsible for ensuring that accession and acquisition records are complete and well maintained. When an object is received at a Site, a Temporary Custody receipt should be filled out by the site staff and signed by the prospective donor. Objects will not be formally accessioned into the collection until a signed deed of gift has been received from the donor and accepted by the National Trust by execution by an authorized representative. Once that is received, the Senior Manager of Museum Collections will assign an accession number, create an object file at National Trust headquarters and provide the site with a copy of the executed deed of gift. The site is then responsible for creating an object file at the Site, documenting the gift and its condition through a condition report and photography, entering the information in the collections database and physically applying the accession number to the object when appropriate.

Appraisals. National Trust staff will acknowledge receipt of all acquired objects. The National Trust will not provide appraisals or valuation estimates to donors or any other parties for tax or other purposes. If an appraisal or valuation estimate is requested, the staff will make every effort to provide the donor with a list of several reputable appraisers in their area without giving preference to any one appraiser.

DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL OF OBJECTS

Definition. To *deaccession* an object is to formally and permanently remove it from the National Trust's Museum Collections. To *dispose* of an object is to relinquish title and possession, by transfer or destruction.

Deaccessioning at the National Trust. Deaccessioning of any object from the National Trust's Museum Collections is not to be undertaken lightly. Although at times it may be more prudent to deaccession and dispose of items in the collection than to continue caring for them, it should be understood that the National Trust does not support deaccessioning as a means of generating revenue. A careful, thoughtful, and deliberative process is required to determine whether deaccessioning and disposal of an object is the best course of action for the Trust, the applicable National Trust Historic Site, the remaining collections, and the public.

Criteria. An object may be considered for deaccessioning if it: (1) is found to be damaged, altered, or destroyed beyond its historic or interpretive value; (2) is determined to have little or no interpretive value for a National Trust Historic Site as outlined and defined in the Site's Collections Plan; or (3) the cost of conservation and care of the object is excessive in comparison with the interpretive value of the object. An object may also be considered for deaccessioning if it has been missing for a considerable amount of time, or is known to have been stolen, and if all efforts to retrieve or locate the object have been unsuccessful.

Authority and Approval Process. A request for deaccessioning of an object may be initiated by a National Trust Site Director (or by the Senior Manager of Museum Collections in consultation with the applicable Site Director). The request, accompanied by appropriate documentation (as described below), will follow a sequential concurrence process that includes the following approvals (and may be rejected at any step in this process):

- The Senior Manager of Museum Collections;
- The Collections Committee; and
- The Chief Preservation Officer.

Following concurrence by the Chief Preservation Officer, a deaccessioning request shall be submitted for review and final approval at the Board level, specifically by a subcommittee of the Board's Preservation & Historic Sites Committee, with the members designated by the Chair of the Committee. At its discretion, the subcommittee may further elevate the decision to the full Board of Trustees.

Documentation. Any deaccessioning request should be accompanied by the following:

- A detailed description of the object proposed for deaccessioning, including photographs, measurements, a summary of its provenance, a copy of the deed of gift, and a condition report;
- A memorandum that describes the reasons for the proposed deaccessioning;
- Confirmation by the Law Division that the National Trust holds clear title to the object and is therefore free to deaccession and dispose of it;
- A professional appraisal or an opinion of value from an independent expert qualified to provide such a valuation (except that in the case of objects of obviously low value, or which are substantially damaged, this valuation requirement may be waived by the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, with an appropriate explanation included in the concurrence documentation); and
- A recommendation for the proposed method of disposal (see below).

If an object is to be deaccessioned within two years of its having been donated, the National Trust may consider notifying the donor, because there may be tax consequences. Where appropriate, a good faith effort should be made to notify donors of an approved deaccession prior to disposal of the object.

Methods of Disposal. As the decision regarding deaccessioning should be the result of a deliberative process, any decision regarding the method of disposal of a deaccessioned object should also be the result of a deliberative process. The determination as to the appropriate method of disposal should be made as a separate decision, with final review and approval by the designated subcommittee of the Board's Preservation & Historic Sites Committee (or by the full Board if so determined by the subcommittee). The method of disposal used for a deaccessioned object should be made on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as the historic, artistic or cultural value of the object, its financial value, and its condition. The methods of disposal may include the following:

Transfer to another National Trust Historic Site. An object proposed for deaccessioning at one National Trust Historic Site may have interpretative or educational value if used at another National Trust Historic Site. In that case, the object may be transferred or exchanged with the other National Trust Historic Site. The transfer to or exchange with another National Trust Historic Site must be consistent with the receiving site's Scope of Collections as defined in its Historic Site Collections Plan. If it is determined to be appropriate that another National Trust Historic Site should receive the object, it will remain in the National Trust Collection and should not be deaccessioned. The transferring site staff should make a copy of the object file and send it to the receiving site. The Collections database should also be updated to reflect the transfer.

Transfer to another public institution. When a deaccessioned object's historic, artistic or cultural value is so significant that it would be detrimental to the public interest to remove it from the public domain (for example through sale to a private individual), it may be appropriate to identify another museum or non-profit educational institution that would be interested in receiving the object. The terms of any transfer, whether by donation, exchange, or for compensation will depend on the relative historic, artistic, or cultural value of the object, its financial value, whether acquired on the open market, whether the receiving organization has resources available to purchase the object, and other relevant factors.

Public sale. In some situations a public sale through a reputable auction house or similar process open to the public may be an appropriate method of disposal, especially in cases in which (1) an object is not so unique or significant that it would be detrimental to the public interest to remove it from the public domain, or (2) the object has a high monetary value or has been the subject of a sizeable financial commitment by the National Trust. A public sale protects the interest of the National Trust by ensuring that a fair market price is obtained for the object. A private sale raises concerns about special dealing, and is not a preferred method of disposal.

Destruction. If an object proposed for deaccessioning has no financial, historic or cultural value that would justify its donation to another nonprofit institution, or is damaged or deteriorated beyond usefulness, destruction may be an appropriate method of disposal. In such cases, the destruction must be fully documented.

Regardless of the method of disposal, staff at National Trust who were in any way involved in the decision to deaccession or dispose of the objects, whether Historic Sites staff, trustees, volunteers, and their immediate families, may not acquire deaccessioned objects. Likewise, National Trust Historic Site Council or Board members involved in the decision to deaccession or dispose of the objects may not acquire any object that has been deaccessioned from that site.

Non-Museum Collections. Objects in the non-museum collections are not part of the Museum Collections, and do not need to go through the formal deaccessioning procedure. However, due to variations in the accession and deaccession, process in the past, disposal of objects from the non-museum collections must be reviewed by the site's Board or Council and the Senior Manager of Museum Collections to ensure that (1) the object in the non-museum collection should not have been accessioned into the Museum Collections, and (2) the Trust holds clear title to the objects in question and is therefore free to dispose of them. Conversely, in some instances objects that were intended for non-museum use were sometimes accessioned into the Museum Collections. In these unusual cases, the preferred method of disposal after deaccessioning may be the addition of the object to the site's non-museum collections.

Use of Funds. Following professional guidelines and standards, funds from the sale of deaccessioned objects from the Museum Collections shall be used only for the replenishment or direct care of Museum Collections at the object's originating site. Recognizing that, as stated at the outset in this Policy, the Museum Collections include both objects as well as historic structures and landscapes (those that are interpreted and accessible to the public), it is the stated policy of the National Trust that proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects from the Museum Collections at a National Trust Historic Site may be used for (1) the replenishment or care of other objects within the Museum Collections at that site, and/or (2) the preservation of historic structures or historic landscape features that are a part of the Historic Structures and Landscapes Collection of that Site. If the use of proceeds in this manner is not feasible (for example, if the originating site is no longer a museum property), any alternate disposition of proceeds must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Funds from the sale of deaccessioned objects may not be used for the creation of reproduction objects, except in highly unusual circumstances that must be approved by the Chief Preservation Officer. At his or her discretion that approval may be elevated to the designated subcommittee of the Board's Preservation & Historic Sites Committee.

In cases where a collection object was transferred from one site to another and subsequently deaccessioned, the funds will be designated for use as described in the instrument of gift. In the absence of such a document, the designation for the use of funds is at the discretion of the Collections Committee.

No decision shall be made as to the use of proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects before the deaccessioning has received final approval at the Board level as provided in this Policy.

Funds from the sale of deaccessioned objects from the Museum Collection are to be maintained and managed by the National Trust in a separate account designated for this purpose. The Collections Committee must approve any use of these funds; however, the Committee may choose to delegate to the Senior Manager of Museum Collections the authority to approve routine expenditures. Any use of proceeds for the preservation of historic structures or historic landscape features that are a part of the Historic Structures and Landscapes Collection must also be approved by the Graham Gund Architect. The Chief Preservation Officer must be notified of all proposed uses of funds from the sale of deaccessioned objects.

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

General Guidelines. Each National Trust Historic Site with National Trust-owned collections must have written policies guiding access to collections, consistent with the following guidelines.

> **Access Policies.** Access to collections is at the discretion of the National Trust. Researchers should be supervised by a qualified staff member while viewing collections objects and should be trained in the proper way of handling collections. Sites should document who has had access to the collections. Sites should establish rules for access to the collection, to be followed by researchers. The researcher should be asked to

provide the site with a copy of their finished product.

In order to ensure proper care of collections, it is prudent for sites to provide volunteers with an appropriate orientation to the collections as well as the proper ways to care for or handle collections.

Confidentiality. Certain information on objects, including but not limited to valuations, locations, donor information, and condition, should be maintained as confidential.

Access Alternatives. All sites have the right to deny researchers access to collection objects.

Special Property Uses. If a site has a program of special property use and determines it is beneficial to its mission to grant permission for special property uses such as weddings, exhibits, or other public or private events, the staff should take care to ensure the special property use will not endanger the collections or property at any time and should consider limiting access to collections and collection areas during special use.

Licensing. Licensing and reproduction of collections objects, and use of collections objects in commercial advertising, must be approved by the Vice President of Historic Sites or his designee, and in consultation with appropriate staff including the Site Director and Senior Manager of Museum Collections in order to prevent any conflicts with existing or potential licensing agreements.

LOANS OF OBJECTS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Definition. Loans are the temporary transfers of possession of objects from the Museum Collections for a specific purpose and length of time. Loans have no bearing on the ownership of an object.

Outgoing Loans. Objects from the National Trust Museum Collection may be loaned only for public exhibit, research, or other uses that support the mission of the National Trust and the Historic Site. In making a decision to recommend an outgoing loan, staff should consider such factors as the condition of the object, the ability of the borrowing organization to care for the object while on loan, its importance to the interpretation of the National Trust Historic Site, and the circumstances and purpose of the loan. Both the Site Director and the Senior Manager of Museum Collections must approve outgoing loans of National Trust collection objects.

Incoming Loans. All incoming loans must support the mission of the National Trust and the Historic Site and must be approved by the appropriate Site Director and the Senior Manager of Museum Collections. Lender restrictions and the site's ability to give proper care for the object are issues that should be considered when requesting an incoming loan.

Documentation. All loans must be documented by a loan agreement signed by the designated representatives from both institutions, and all loans (both incoming and outgoing) must be properly insured. Facility reports should be requested from the borrower for outgoing loans. Loan agreements must be reviewed with reasonable frequency to ensure that the objects are properly documented and insured. Renewals of outgoing loans should be accompanied by updated condition reports and photographs. The National Trust does not make or accept permanent loans.

Objects Placed in the Temporary Custody of the National Trust. No object will be accepted into custody of the National Trust or individual National Trust Historic Sites for loan, identification, study, attribution or use unless it has been receipted using a National Trust temporary custody receipt form that clearly defines the respective responsibilities of the owner and the National Trust.

PRESERVATION AND CARE OF COLLECTIONS

General. The preservation and care of collections is central to a historic site's stewardship and educational mission. In order to further these missions, it is the goal of the Historic Sites Department that the National Trust's Museum Collections should be properly preserved, interpreted, exhibited, stored, handled, conserved, and documented, in accordance with best practices in the field.

Priorities. In the distribution of scarce conservation or preservation resources, the National Trust's Museum Collections shall be given the highest priority, over non-museum collections.

Authority. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections must review and approve all plans or proposals for the conservation of objects in the Museum Collections.

INVENTORY

General. Inventories noting location and condition of objects are to be taken on a regular basis. The inventory process and its resulting documentation also ensures continuity in institutional knowledge, a critical element for both the individual site and the Historic Sites Department staff at National Trust headquarters.

Duties and Responsibilities. The site is responsible for conducting a regular inventory and for updating the information in the collections management database. All other documented results of the inventory must be maintained at both the site and at headquarters. The site will notify the Senior Manager of Museum Collections immediately if an inventory uncovers a potential theft or loss to the collection. The National Trust Historic Sites staff at Headquarters and the staff at individual National Trust Historic Sites will collaborate to determine appropriate inventory schedules and procedures.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

General. National Trust collections are naturally exposed to risk through exhibition, loans, storage, or handling. Through a prudent collections management program, including risk management, these threats may be reduced or avoided.

Insuring Collections. The Senior Manager of Museum Collections shall work with the appropriate risk management staff at National Trust Headquarters to ensure that National Trust collection objects are adequately insured. Any deviation from current insurance procedures must be approved by the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, in conjunction with risk management staff at National Trust Headquarters when appropriate.

Risk Management. The Collections Managers at each National Trust Historic Site, in conjunction with the Senior Manager of Museum Collections, is responsible for identifying and managing potential risks to the collection, including natural disasters, theft, vandalism, deterioration, and improper environments, as well as potential risks to staff or visitors from the collections, such as lead or arsenic contamination. Wherever possible, risks must be reduced or eliminated. Each National Trust Historic Site must have a disaster management plan that addresses risks to the collections.

IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Guidance. The National Trust may issue additional guidance to implement this Policy.

Periodic Review. This Policy is to be reviewed by the Collections Committee every three years, and any amendments or revisions to this policy must be formally approved by the Board of Trustees.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, National Trust for Historic Preservation,

June 14, 2014
DATE