

**WATCHUNG HISTORICAL
COMMITTEE
COLLECTIONS POLICY**

MISSION STATEMENT

In our vision, the Watchung Historical Committee (WHC) will preserve and protect the history of the Borough of Watchung. The Committee will be dedicated to the maintenance of an accurate history of the Borough and seek to document all information collected. An extensive collection of historic items will be on display for the citizens to enjoy in a permanent location. The Historical Committee will gather current items of future interest and catalog and store such items for the future. The Committee will provide a yearly summary of Borough activities to provide an ongoing and accurate history for the future. The Committee will conduct programs as necessary to educate citizens on the colorful history of this area and to encourage resident participation. The Committee will seek to maintain high interest in historic homes and sites in the Borough to preserve our heritage and culture.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The WHC serves the Borough in collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and making available records, photographs, printed materials, and other artifacts. This policy is intended to address existing and proposed donations and loan materials in the WHC collection.

DONATIONS AND LOANS

Under this policy, acquisition of materials for the WHC involves the discovery, preliminary evaluation, taking custody of, documenting title to, and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects.

Criteria

The same standards of acquisition shall be applied to both donations and loans. Donations and loans must meet all the following standards of acquisition before they can be acquired or accepted by WHC:

1. Acquired materials must have historic relevance to the Borough or one of its residents.
2. WHC must be able to store, process, make accessible, and properly care for any proposed acquisition.
3. All moral, legal, and ethical implications of the acquisition must be considered.
4. All acquisitions will have full literary rights, property rights, copyrights, and be free from any donor restrictions. The donor must have clear title to the material to be acquired. Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis and noted in the Deed of Gift or Loan Agreement.
5. When possible, provenance must be documented for the donation or loan.

Acquisition Procedure

A member of the WHC will sponsor the proposed donation or loan and present it to the Committee for consideration. The sponsor will provide specific reasons why the piece should or shouldn't be acquired citing the criteria above. For donations, a simple majority of at least a quorum of Committee at a regularly scheduled or special meeting is required for the acquisition to be approved by the Committee. For purchases in excess of \$250.00, after achieving a simple majority of a quorum, the acquisition must be approved by the Borough Council. Records of acquisitions and donations will be recorded in the minutes of the regular or special meetings.

Committee members, Borough employees and volunteers associated with WHC shall not offer appraisals of the monetary value of materials or objects. The appraised value of the donation is the responsibility of the donor. All donors desiring an income tax deduction for gifts made to WHC must obtain an independent appraisal. Upon request, WHC will refer donors to the American Society of Appraisers, www.appraisers.org or 800-272-8258.

ACCESSIONS

The WHC shall maintain a permanent record of acquisitions which shall contain all pertinent information as to the source and conveyance of each acquisition. All materials added to WHC collections shall be formally accessioned. Objects found in the collection lacking accession documentation or claims of ownership by others shall be accessioned.

DEACCESSIONS

The process of permanently removing accessioned items that do not meet the collecting objectives defined in the acquisitions criteria above may be considered for deaccessioning. WHC will not deaccession any accessioned materials that have been lost or stolen from its collections. Items found in the collection lacking accession documentation and falling outside of the WHC Collections Policy criteria shall not be accessioned. Attempts to return these items shall be made. Failing that, disposal or transfer shall be approved or determined by WHC.

Deaccessioning Criteria

The following criteria will be used when considering any object for deaccession. The material need only meet one of the criteria to be considered for deaccessioning.

1. The material is outside the scope of WHC's mission statement and acquisitions criteria.

2. The material is a duplicate.
3. WHC is unable to care for or preserve the material.
4. The material lacks physical integrity or has deteriorated beyond any usefulness.
5. The material is deemed to be a fake or forgery with no historical value.
6. WHC's possession of the material is not legitimate (e.g., the material may have been stolen or removed illegally in violation of applicable state, federal, and international law).

Deaccessioning Procedures

A member of the WHC will sponsor the deaccessioning and present it to the Committee for consideration. The sponsor will provide specific reasons why the piece should be deaccessioned citing the criteria above. A simple majority of at least a quorum of Committee at a regularly scheduled or special meeting is required to deaccession. The Borough Clerk, as the Custodian of Records, must be consulted prior to the destruction or disposal of any artifact in the possession of the WHC. Records of deaccessions will be recorded in the minutes of the regular meeting.

The means of disposal will be determined on a case by case basis, in accordance with state and federal laws and may include exchange, sale by public auction, destruction, transfer, or donation. Sales must be approved by the Borough Council. Any deaccessioned materials shall not be given, sold, or otherwise transferred, publicly or privately, to a WHC member, volunteer or employee or official of the Borough. All proceeds resulting from the deaccession of materials from the permanent collections of WHC shall be used to support the general care and maintenance of the WHC's collections. As a courtesy, WHC may notify the donor, if alive, or his or her heirs. If acceptable, the deaccessioned item may be returned to the original donor or next of kin.

Incoming Loans

WHC may take in loans for exhibit and research purposes. Terms of loan will be defined in the Loan Agreement and will include security considerations, length of the loan period and proof of insurance.

Unclaimed Loans

An unclaimed loan is an object that WHC records indicate was placed on loan with WHC for a fixed or indefinite period, and which has not been retrieved by its owner in a timely fashion.

After WHC has identified an object as an unclaimed loan, the committee will compile all information relating to the object, including all relevant documentation, and make a written record of that information. WHC will then determine whether it wants to return the object to the lender, renew the loan, acquire the loaned object, or dispose of the object through donation, sale or destruction with the approval of the Borough Council. If neither the lender nor his or her heir(s) is located, or no claim is made after actual or constructive notice has been given to the lender, WHC will amend its records to reflect that the object previously on loan has become the property of WHC as of the date of the last letter.

FINAL STATEMENT

This collections policy is approved by Resolution of the Borough Council of Watchung.

A copy of this document will be made available to any donor or prospective donor upon request. This policy shall be subject to periodic review and updates in order to remain current with any change of emphasis or reevaluation of purpose in WHC's Mission Statement.

The WHC wishes to acknowledge the Brooklyn Historical Society for their Collections Policy, which served as a template and guide.

