



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2025

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: DEACCESSION FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION, WHERE
APPLICABLE, OF FOUR (4) OBJECTS: A TABLE (O271), TWO CHAIRS
(A500-83; UNKNOWN ACCESSION NUMBER), AND A LAMP (RMA 8)

ISSUE:

Approve deaccession from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection, where applicable, of four (4) objects: a table (O271), two chairs (A500-83; unknown accession number), and a lamp (RMA 8).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approves deaccession from the permanent collection, where applicable, of four (4) objects: a table (O271), two chairs (A500-83; unknown accession number), and a lamp (RMA 8).

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

At a regular meeting on July 23, 2025, the Museum of Riverside Board, with six (6) members present for this vote and three (3) absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve deaccession from the permanent collection, where applicable, of four (4) objects: a table (O271), two chairs (A500-83; unknown accession number), and a lamp (RMA 8).

BACKGROUND:

In the 1970s, a committed volunteer group, which eventually became the Riverside Museum Associates, worked successfully to save a Queen Anne Victorian house at 8193 Magnolia Avenue. Ownership of the house was transferred to the City of Riverside under an agreement that remains current today. This house and its grounds operate today as Heritage House.

Since the house was donated to the City with the goal of operating it as a historic house museum, furnishings have been acquired over half a century to enrich the period-appropriate character of the house. Over time, decisions about the acquisition of these furnishings were not always made as current collection management standards require, nor were complete records always created or maintained. Staff surmise that records simply may not have been created at

all for objects acquired for use rather than preservation/exhibit. Accession records have not been located for all four (4) of the objects that are the subject of this report.

DISCUSSION:

The term “deaccession” refers to the procedure of formally removing an object from a museum’s permanent collection, after which the object may be considered for sale, exchange, gift, transfer to another entity, transfer to a collection other than the permanent collection, or – in the case of irretrievably deteriorated objects – disposal.

The operation of a historic house museum must balance the public’s desire to see and experience as much as possible with the collection management mandate to preserve and protect material culture. Enhancement of the visitor experience may include period furnishings that staff can use for daily needs. Use of permanent collection objects, however, is generally prohibited in order to improve preservation efforts. To resolve this conflict, historic objects that are not part of the permanent collection or have been deaccessioned from the permanent collection can be designated for daily use.

The recommendation is that the objects remain in Heritage House contributing to the historic atmosphere, but that their status change from permanent collection to Community Collection. The Museum of Riverside’s Community Collection is a level of the Museum’s collections that permits a less stringent standard of care. Community Collection objects may be exhibited where environmental or security standards are more relaxed. In the case of the current recommendation, the status change would permit the four objects to continue to be used by docents as they serve the public without the Museum being obligated to devote the degree of preservation and documentation care to them that is required of permanent collection objects, and without the Museum being out of compliance with accepted standards of care required of permanent collection objects. These objects are currently in use by docents and volunteers at the public entrance to the house.

The four objects fit one key deaccession criterion within the Museum’s Collections Management and Exhibition Policies:

1. The object/specimen was accessioned inappropriately.

Understanding that the intent was likely always that these items would serve as the admissions desk and staff seating at Heritage House, any of them that were accessioned should not have been accessioned. Further, as of the date of the preparation of this report, these objects lack documentation and historic data that tie them to the Museum’s Riverside-based mission. It is likely that they were chosen only because they were compatible with the Victorian atmosphere of Heritage House.

If this deaccession action is approved by City Council, the objects will remain where they are, used by the docents and volunteers who staff the house, and the records will reflect their change of status.



Library table, ca. 1900
O271
Manufactured by Charlotte Mfg. Co.,
Michigan
Oak; single drawer; lower shelf; reeded
legs with onion-like shape at the top



English side chair, ca. 1880
A500-83
Wood; turned legs; carved back
splat



Ladder-back side chair, ca. 1865
Unnumbered or unknown
accession number
Wood; cabriole legs; vase back-
splat; upholstered seat



Lamp, ca.1880
RMA 8
Cast metal: woman's head in several shades of
gold on a black base; originally kerosene oil lamp;
silk covered shade

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Museum Director
Reviewed by:	Ann Lovell, Manager of Operations
Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – July 23, 2025
2. Museum Board Deaccession Recommendation Report – July 23, 2025