



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE:** JANUARY 25, 2023

FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: DEACCESSION FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF FOUR (4)
PERSIAN-STYLE RUGS (U1767, U1768, P88-4, AND P88-6)

ISSUE:

To approve a recommendation to deaccession from the permanent collection four (4) Persian-style rugs (U1767, U1768, P88-4, and P88-6).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approve deaccession from the permanent collection of four (4) Persian-style rugs (U1767, U1768, P88-4, and P88-6).

BACKGROUND:

Throughout the decades that the Museum of Riverside (Museum) has operated Heritage House, 8193 Magnolia Avenue, as a historic house museum, furnishings have been acquired in a variety of ways, often with support and funding from the Riverside Museum Associates, a 501(c)(3) organization that benefits the Museum. Furnishings have been acquired both to build a period-appropriate historic atmosphere in the house and to serve as stylistically compatible and usable furnishings for docent and staff use while working in the house.

At its meeting on October 12, 2022, the Museum’s Collections Committee unanimously supported the recommendation to deaccession the four (4) rugs cited in 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.

Over the years that Heritage House has gradually been furnished, the museum field has refined its approach to defining categories of collection. While each museum has some latitude in categorizing their collections, standards now reflect recognition that an accessioned permanent

collection creates obligations for stewardship and documentation at the highest level while other collections may be formed to serve other museum needs, such as hand-on teaching collections or library collections.

The Museum is in the midst of reviewing its collections and refining their categorization to align with its Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies, adopted August 6, 2019, which define the following collections for the Museum: permanent, community, education/teaching, living, and library. An additional category of artifacts for which records are not maintained beyond inventories is exhibition props.

The four (4) Persian-style rugs do not align with the requirements for inclusion in the permanent collection. Assessed through the lens of current standards, they were accessioned in error. They were acquired for use rather than historic preservation, lack provenance, and they do not reflect the period of significance for Heritage House. At this time, they exhibit significant wear and have been in storage for years. Thus, they fit deaccession criteria within the Museum's Collections Management Policy as follows:

- [T]he object/specimen falls outside of the scope of the Museum's mission and guidelines as set by Riverside Municipal Code (Chapter 2.12), and/or the Collections Development Plan;
- The object/specimen has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or was accessioned inappropriately or on the basis of false information (for example, replicas or forgeries);
- The object/specimen has doubtful potential to be exhibited or published in the foreseeable future, or the object/specimen's accompanying data are so incomplete that the item has limited or no cultural, historical, or scientific value;

When deaccessioned, the smaller rugs (P88-4 and P88-6) will be transferred to the education collection or the inventory of exhibition props, and the larger (U1767, U1768) will be sold through an appropriate public sales outlet. Funds realized from this transaction will be retained in a restricted deaccessions proceeds account until used for an appropriate acquisition to the history collection, in accordance with the Museum's Collection and Exhibition Management Policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, "Arts, Culture and Recreation" and in particular goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

1. **Community Trust** – Responsible management of the Museum's collections to reflect accurately the community's history requires judicious disposal of items that do not reflect the community yet require resources to steward. Thoughtful deaccessioning to build a strong collection builds community trust.
2. **Equity** – Deaccessioning is pursued to refine a collection and align it more closely to the Museum's mission. This process consciously foregrounds equity across the community's many neighborhoods and eras.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Deaccession of objects determined to be out of alignment with the Museum’s mission reduces operating costs devoted to collection care.
4. **Innovation** – Steady efforts to bring the collection into alignment with the Museum’s mission can involve difficult choices that many museums choose to avoid. The Museum of Riverside models best museum practices in moving forward with these efforts.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Deaccessioning actions result in improved use of resources as well as a more accurate reflection of a community, thus sustaining it as it sees itself.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. Deaccessioned objects will be offered for public sale. Following Museum policy and museum field codes of ethics, net proceeds generated by such sales are restricted to future acquisitions for the permanent collection. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects are deposited into the Museum Deaccessioned Account 0000721-225252.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager



U1767
Label: "Karastan," USA
Fiber: wool

Photo shows rug in Heritage House guest bedroom several years ago.



U1768

Label: "Indo-Mdeb," India

Fiber: wool



P88-4

Fiber: wool

Source: Hishmeh Oriental Rugs, Riverside, CA



P88-6

Fiber: wool

Source: Hishmeh Oriental Rugs, Riverside, CA