City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: **HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: MARCH 28, 2023**

FROM: **MUSEUM DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: ALL**

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

ISSUE:

Approve deaccession from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection of four Persian-style rugs (U1767, U1768, P88-4, and P88-6).

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

At a hybrid meeting on January 25, 2023, the Museum of Riverside Board, with seven members present for this vote and two absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve deaccession of four 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.

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 four 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. Further explanation of the reasoning behind this deaccession recommendation is in the Museum of Riverside Board reports included as an attachment.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with Strategic Priority No. 1, "Arts, Culture and Recreation" and in particular Goal No. 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), Goal No. 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and Goal No. 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 Special Deposits Fund, Museum Deaccessioned account 0000721-225252.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – January 25, 2023
2. Museum Board Deaccession Recommendation Report – January 25, 2023