

Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI)

Draft Policy on the Release and Movement of Artefacts

South Georgia has a unique heritage, which includes the remains of the former whaling stations and their historic buildings, wrecks and hulks, sealing artefacts, early expeditions and sites of historic interest. There are important links to polar exploration and science, including Sir Ernest Shackleton.

We recognise the widespread interest in South Georgia's heritage. Our Strategy 2016-2020 sets out the Government's desire to make its heritage more accessible. The Grytviken museum has an important role in showcasing and communicating South Georgia's heritage and in enhancing the visitor experience. We will also encourage the return of artefacts previously removed without permission from South Georgia to the museum or GSGSSI. While the Government's presumption is that South Georgia's heritage should remain in situ, we recognise the need to bring South Georgia's heritage to people who will be unable to visit South Georgia in person. There is also interest from some parties in the ex-situ restoration of specific heritage items.

This policy document sets out the approach that the Government will take in reaching a decision on whether to release an artefact for public exhibition abroad, or to move artefacts within SGSSI, taking into account the recommendations made by GSGSSI's Heritage Advisory Panel (HAP).

Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

1. No heritage items will be released from SGSSI without the express permission of GSGSSI. As a general principle, permission for artefacts to be released from South Georgia will not be given, unless there is a very compelling case for doing so. GSGSSI will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Government's Heritage Advisory Panel in reaching a decision.
2. No heritage items will be moved from one site to another without the express permission of GSGSSI. GSGSSI will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Government's Heritage Advisory Panel in reaching a decision.
3. 'Release' will normally constitute a loan from GSGSSI for which an explicit loan agreement will need to be established between the relevant parties. If a transfer of ownership were to be considered, this would likely require agreement around a more rigorous set of conditions.
4. The Government's Heritage Advisory Panel will consider the merits of the proposal for the removal of the artefact taking account of, among other things: the benefit to the object in conservation terms; the loss of significance caused by its release; and the public benefit that might accrue from its relocation.
5. Generally, the release of the artefact, or its movement from one site to another, will be for one of more of the following reasons:
 - a. to provide for the better public appreciation and understanding of the object;

- b. to use it for public display in the Grytviken Museum or within the vicinity of the Grytviken whaling station;
 - c. for its proper conservation which cannot (or will not) be achieved in its present location;
 - d. to advance the restoration of specific cultural heritage structures, through the movement and transfer of artefacts and fittings (not whole or large parts of buildings).
6. For an artefact to be released from SGSSI the proposer will need to fulfil the following criteria:
- a. the proposer must represent a Government body, established museum, or other not-for-profit organisation and have, where possible, wider public support. Where an organisation has been established expressly for the purpose of securing the removal of an artefact, it must be of demonstrably sound and transparent constitution;
 - b. the organisation must have a clear significant link to the artefact which it seeks to remove;
 - c. the organisation must be able to demonstrate that it has, or can demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that it will have, financial commitments in place to underpin its proposed activities for the artefact including long-term financial sustainability. Long-term loans, with defined timelines, will be required to demonstrate funding for the period of the loan. Where the financial commitments required are significant the proposal may benefit from more than one source of funding. An agreement on the transfer of ownership and/or of liabilities may be required;
 - d. the purpose of the release will be for the conservation or restoration of the artefact and for its public display, when this is not going to be achieved *in situ*. This may include the release of artefacts for restoration overseas and return to South Georgia for public exhibition;
 - e. the proposer must have in place a detailed project proposal which will need to incorporate the requirement for an Environmental Assessment covering the release of the artefact and the site from which it is being removed. (An Environmental Assessment will also apply to proposals for the movement of artefacts/fittings.);
7. Any artefact released from SGSSI or moved between sites must be carefully catalogued and recorded, and a record must be provided for inclusion within the GSGSSI archive.
8. Any public exhibition of an artefact will be required to acknowledge its South Georgia heritage and recognise the role of GSGSSI. Exhibitors may be requested to engage and involve GSGSSI directly in the development of the exhibition.

Before permission will be considered for the release of any artefact from South Georgia, or movement of artefacts within the Territory, all prerequisite conditions must be met to the satisfaction of the GSGSSI, which will also take into consideration the views of the HAP, and any other key SGSSI stakeholders identified by the GSGSSI or HAP during the course of the application assessment or any wider stakeholder consultation.