



POLICY BRIEF



What Role Should Cultural Heritage Professionals Play in Monument Removal?
Policy Recommendations for Cultural Heritage Professionals and International Heritage Organizations

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November 2022 | No. 12



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The views expressed in this policy paper are the personal ones of the authors and do not represent any official position of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian Institution, or any other organization.

ABOUT THE THINK TANK

The Antiquities Coalition unites a diverse group of experts in the global fight against cultural racketeering: the illicit trade in art and antiquities. This plunder for profit funds crime, armed conflict, and violent extremist organizations around the world—erasing our past and threatening our future. Through innovative and practical solutions, we tackle this challenge head on, empowering communities and countries in crisis.

In 2016, as part of this mission, we launched the Antiquities Coalition Think Tank, joining forces with international experts, including leaders in the fields of preservation, business, law, security, and technology. Together, we are bringing high-quality and results-oriented research to the world's decision makers, especially those in the government and private sectors. Our goal is to strengthen policymakers' understanding of the challenges facing our shared heritage and more importantly, help them develop better solutions to protect it. However, the views expressed in these policy briefs are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Antiquities Coalition.

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Executive Summary

There has been and continues to be global interest in the removal of public monuments, particularly pieces erected during prior regimes. Yet how these works of art have been removed, and what has been done with the remains, as well as the sites of the former monuments, have been a patchwork of efforts, and in some cases, have eroded public trust in the process. Thus far, heritage and preservation professionals have not taken an organized role in removals. This paper, however, recommends that heritage professionals *should* take an active part in advising and documenting the entire process of public monument or statue removal.

The practice of removing monuments should be considered a form of community deaccessioning, analogous to deaccessioning within the museum space.

To frame removal as a deliberative process, rather than a retaliatory act, this policy paper argues that the practice of removing monuments should be considered a form of community deaccessioning, analogous to deaccessioning within the museum space. By understanding monument removal as a form of deaccessioning, the need for cultural heritage practitioners to guide the process is essential. By offering the lessons learned from the museum space to their communities, heritage professionals are in the position to advise on the practicalities and repercussions of removal, as well as on alternatives to this. To be clear, this paper offers no opinion on whether monuments should be removed. In the museum space, deaccessioning guidelines are not understood to encourage overly zealous deaccessioning; instead, the guidelines simply support the museum professionals engaged in the process. Similarly, this paper advocates for the development of written policies to support heritage professionals who are navigating the process of monument deaccessioning in real time.

The recommendations we offer here are not comprehensive, but should structure how the process is considered. In this paper we suggest that the guidelines developed for public monument deaccessioning should include, at minimum, three steps: *planning*; *removal*; and *implementation*. The *planning* phase should outline a step-by-step course of action that covers the entire transition of the monument and its locus through to the post-removal end state. *Planning* should cover all the decisions through the *implementation* phase. *Removal* is the safe physical deconstruction of the statue from its location, which we advocate should be done with professionalism and transparency. Finally, the monument is deaccessioned and the former location is re-contextualized in the *implementation* phase. Moreover, appropriate documentation is necessary throughout the process. The documentation role is non-delegatory; heritage professionals should not rely on citizen activists or journalists to do the job for them.

To support heritage professionals, we advocate that national and international heritage organizations develop written policies or best practices for monument deaccessioning derived from relevant guidelines on museum deaccessioning. By implementing professional guidelines for monument deaccessioning, and by remaining engaged in the process, heritage workers will achieve what we care about most: the preservation and documentation of history.



Monument re-contextualization or removal has been a longstanding practice worldwide as part of momentous social or political changes, such as the toppling of a Saddam Hussein statue in Iraq.

USG, Public Domain.

Introduction

Monument re-contextualization or removal has been a longstanding practice worldwide as part of momentous social or political change. The famous image of the toppling of a Saddam Hussein statue in Iraq symbolized the toppling of the regime,¹ though the details and legacy of that single event continue to be reevaluated.² After Hungary’s revolution in 1989 and as part of confronting the country’s Communist past, Soviet memorials were removed from urban spaces to a rural statue park,³ an idea taken from Russia itself.⁴ Similarly, in the aftermath of Chiang Kai-Shek’s rule, certain statues of the former authoritarian were moved from places of prominence into statue parks, although thousands remain *in situ* across the island of Taiwan.⁵ In Latin America and Africa, arbitrating monuments has been a part of a wider reckoning with colonialism.^{6,7} In the United States, efforts to remove Confederate monuments took on urgency beginning in 2015.⁸ This movement accelerated following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, when social justice protests brought heightened global attention, questions, and action to the issue of monument removal.⁹ Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, triggered new or renewed interest across Europe in removing or reframing Soviet monuments.¹⁰

As part of the fabric of a shared landscape, monuments form a public collection of cultural heritage, analogous to a museum collection.

What role should cultural heritage professionals play in the process of public monument or statue removal?

The question we seek to answer here is, what role should cultural heritage professionals play in the process of public monument or statue removal? The first dilemma that must be overcome in answering this question is any doubt that heritage professionals have a role in the first place. As part of the fabric of a shared landscape, monuments form a public collection of cultural heritage, analogous to a museum collection. Of the various parties who have come forward in the discussions surrounding monument removal, including politicians, journalists, and organized groups of the general public, only heritage practitioners are trained in the curation, preservation, and pedagogy of collections management, making them critical voices in these discussions. This policy paper argues that the practice of removing monuments should be considered a form of community deaccessioning, analogous to deaccessioning within the museum space. As defined by the International Council of Museums,



“deaccessioning is the process of permanently removing objects from the museum register and collections.”¹¹ Museum deaccessions—removals—only take place after careful reflection and deliberation; “deaccessions...must be guided by well defined, written collecting goals and acquisition and deaccession principles, procedures, and processes approved by a museum’s board of trustees or governing body.”¹² By understanding monument removal as a form of deaccessioning, the need for cultural heritage practitioners to guide the deliberative process is essential, a perspective that frames the policy recommendations put forward here.

By necessity, these policies are aimed at heritage professionals and at heritage organizational bodies, since both groups have reciprocal parts to play in the development of new professional standards. We recommend that heritage professionals take an active role in advising and documenting the entire process of public monument or statue removal. This role is non-delegatory; heritage professionals should not rely on citizen activists or journalists to do the job for them.

To support heritage professionals, we advocate that national and international heritage organizations develop written policies or best practices for monument deaccessioning derived from relevant guidelines on museum deaccessioning. As global consortia of heritage workers, heritage professionals rely on heritage organizations to develop new best practices through their ability to create working groups, draft policies, and research outcomes. By implementing these new standards, heritage professionals are relying on the fact that written guidelines have been approved by a general consensus of their peers. Moving forward together as an international community of experts in heritage is particularly important in the face of issues as fraught as monumental removal. The policy recommendations that follow should be considered a call for action for both heritage workers and their executive organizational bodies.

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The Problem

Heritage organizations do not want to be seen as prioritizing the fact that heritage belongs to everyone over and above a local community’s rights of self-determination, ownership, and expression of civic or ethnic identity, most especially if these rights are under threat. An organization’s international legitimacy may be called into question if that institution appears to adopt a position in which the group advocates for, or is even tolerant of, widespread or large-scale removal of monuments.

Beyond a desire to avoid adopting a position seemingly at odds with local communities, in terms of professional standards, heritage practitioners may hold certain values that are in conflict with the issue of removing monuments. On a material level, heritage practitioners are trained to preserve and conserve, meaning that in the context of day-to-day duties, heritage professionals typically default to preservation over destruction. More importantly, at the level of



interpretation of monuments, heritage professionals are trained to research and understand overlapping narratives. At the heart of the debate around many of the contested monuments around the world is a backlash against the single defining narrative that these works impose. From the perspective of cultural heritage practitioners, neither the original purpose of these works, nor the desire to simply “erase” the monument, and, by proxy, the narrative that the monument imposes, are actual solutions to the unresolved problems of history. Removal, in the sense of erasure, is a black and white solution to a complex issue

It is not within the remit of heritage practice to police the meaning of monuments; heritage professionals are stewards and educators, not enforcers.

On the other hand, it is not within the remit of heritage practice to police the meaning of monuments; heritage professionals are stewards and educators, not enforcers. Even more confusingly, on a personal level, many heritage professionals may agree with the general outcry that public art reifying enslavers and oppressors are out-of-step with humanistic ideals, a position in which personal beliefs are brought into conflict with professional standards. Heritage professionals may also be wondering: were these monuments even intended to be left standing in place *forever*? The interment of time capsules buried within the foundations of certain sculptures suggests that even the monument builders themselves understood that public artworks have a finite lifespan.¹³ Yet without the guidance of heritage organizations, heritage professionals are on their own in the face of monument removal. Since heritage professionals have no ability to speak to best practices for monument removal from the perspective of the discipline, they are left in the position of only being able to speak out from a personal perspective. Taken as a whole, these prerogatives appear irreconcilable, and have led heritage organizations and heritage workers themselves to adopt a de facto policy of saying little, if anything, about monument removal.

From the United States, to Senegal, to Latvia, citizens and their governments continue to reevaluate the legacy of monuments in public spaces.

Meanwhile, communities have been left to their own devices in terms of handling every aspect of the process of monument removal, with the resulting removals being a hodgepodge of efforts.¹⁴ From the United States,¹⁵ to Senegal,¹⁶ to Latvia,¹⁷ citizens and their governments continue to reevaluate the legacy of monuments in public spaces. With such politically and geographically diverse stories of public action, it should not be surprising that how communities around the world have implemented these removals have also varied.

The solutions that communities have enacted stem from the fact that they have been independently negotiating cultural and political roles of memory and forgetting while exploring the boundaries of the legal rights of ownership,¹⁸ which, for the most part, these groups generally have little experience with reconciling. Interested stakeholders may be talking past each other as some parties are more focused on the legal frameworks of removal, while others are oriented towards confronting historical paradigms and the enduring legacies of systemic injustice.¹⁹ There can be stark differences of opinion about the nature of the problem of certain monuments and the appropriate rectifying actions to be taken.

For some, the problem with a monument is that it drives social division, meaning that the act of removal from public access alone resolves the problem;



where the statue remains are housed afterwards is not a concern as long as they remain inaccessible.²⁰ To this end, communities have even removed sculptures in the middle of the night, reinforcing the point that simply moving monuments out of sight is considered sufficient.²¹ By contrast, some situate monument removal within a wider process of healing, wherein the monument is not, in and of itself, the disease, but merely a symptom of wider moral failing. Removal of the monument, therefore, does not restore the body politic to moral health; instead, access to the *ex situ*²² sculpture for display or refashioning is a necessary step for social improvement.²³ More widely, there are indicators that the general public is very interested in the afterlife of monuments; the number of “where are they now?” news articles showcases how these monuments might be gone but are not forgotten.²⁴

Complicating the problem is the fact that the full extent of decisions to be made about monument removal are sometimes not evident to decision makers until after the process has been initiated.²⁵ Discussions on the individual monument are often so focused on the sculpture in isolation in its present location—a vantage point that looks exclusively backwards in time—that little attention is paid to how monuments fit within the larger cultural landscape that has both geographic and temporal parameters. This point is significant because once a monument is taken down it is not as if it disappears, and yet the discussion of what to do with the remains of an artwork, as well as the space it once occupied, sometimes happens only *after* its removal.²⁶ In fact, even when disparate groups agree that a monument should be removed, what to do with the remains, as well as with the “hole” left in the landscape, trigger further disagreement.²⁷

A lack of involvement in the documentation process is a major oversight of the heritage preservation community.

The *ad hoc* nature of monument removal is also reflected in the piecemeal efforts at documenting removal events. A lack of involvement in the documentation process is a major oversight of the heritage preservation community, which otherwise places an emphasis on such documentation in other contexts. The result is that there is often no complete documentary record, but merely piecemeal notes, articles, photographs, and videos, published across a wide swath of news outlets or shared within various sub-communities on social media.²⁸ Moreover, recorders in the general public or press typically only have a bystander’s view, with no access to any closed door meetings or even the physical monument itself. It goes without saying that they would greatly benefit from outside expertise to document the state of the monument as an artifact as a conservator or historic preservationist would.

Without organization and guidance, it is unreasonable to hope that communities will spontaneously figure out on their own whether and how to take down monuments in the spirit of transparency and good faith. The fact of the matter is, whether or not cultural heritage professionals are involved in the process of monument removal, clearly, monument removals will continue. An effort at World Heritage USA (formerly US/ICOMOS) was announced in 2021 to produce advocacy materials and decision guides, but the products released thus far and the proposed future smartphone app do not emphasize heritage professional engagement on the ground. The materials seem to be geared



We advocate that heritage professionals should hold two roles during monument removal. The first is to offer guidance on the process, and the second is to document removal if it happens.

To support heritage professionals on the ground, the need for action on the part of national and international heritage organizations is clear.

One example of action comes from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, who put out a [Statement](#) and [FAQ](#) on Confederate Monuments clarifying their organizational stance in a transparent manner.

towards decision makers working through the process on their own, without any professional heritage practitioner guidance whatsoever.²⁹

In contrast to this approach, we argue that the need has never been greater for heritage professionals to participate in the process. Heritage practitioners should reach out to their communities when they are interested in arbitrating monuments, with the onus on the heritage professionals to provide deaccessioning support. It should be evident that only by being actively involved in the entire process of monument deaccessioning can cultural heritage professionals be in a position to document the removal. The act of deaccessioning is a historical moment in-and-of-itself, meaning that cultural heritage professionals should be recording and archiving the end of the use-life of the monument for posterity as a means of preserving evidence for the future. We advocate that heritage professionals should hold two roles during monument removal. The first is to offer guidance on the process, and the second is to document removal if it happens. Both roles should be circumscribed by the responsibilities and considerations outlined in written organizational deaccessioning guidelines.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Cultural heritage practitioners have extensive experience and expertise drawn from the responsibilities caring for museum and other collections of artifacts and art which are pertinent in the context of monument removal. From the perspective of curating a museum's collection, decisions about accessioning and deaccessioning are made for the purpose of understanding the past, educating the present, and preserving for the future, as expressed through the museum's mission statement. Museums are "living institutions" in the sense that the purpose and health of their collections are regularly re-evaluated against the ethical demands of long term sustainability and relevancy. Adaptive planning is a critical tool of self-reflection, so that when circumstances call for it, deaccessioning is both necessary and beneficial.

The possible deaccessioning of public monuments should be considered in a similar light. Deaccessioning guidelines in the museum space are explicit: "Deaccessioning must be governed by the museum's written policy rather than by exigencies of the moment."³⁰ In cases where deaccessioning is not legal or not sought, museums are still expected to produce deaccessioning policies for the record, meaning the policy predates the act.³¹ Adapting these views to monument removal presents an urgent case for deaccessioning policies for public art as monuments continue to be removed without professional standards or guidance. To support heritage professionals on the ground, the need for action on the part of national and international heritage organizations is clear. We call on these groups to develop policies or best practices for community deaccessioning of monuments by adapting perspectives, concerns, and processes drawn from museum deaccessioning guidelines.



When a community decides to remove a monument, cultural heritage workers should encourage an orderly and thoughtful process. We suggest that there are three phases of removal that should be adopted into the policies for monument deaccessioning. We argue that each of these steps are necessary and sequential, that is, no removal should stop before the completion of the third phase. Practically speaking, distinguishing three phases of the removal process helps facilitate the development of points to consider along the way, which will be of use in future monument deaccessioning.

The planning phase should cover the entire process of monument change.

The first stage is *planning*. The planning phase should be initiated when there is a call to answer the desire to significantly or permanently change or remove a local monument. The *planning* stage is absolutely critical to the overall success of the eventual deaccessioning, since the thoroughness and transparency of the planning will set the tone for how the subsequent *removal* and *implementation* phases are perceived. In museums, governing bodies make informed decisions on deaccessioning based on the written proposals of, and continued communication with, museum curatorial staff, who provide expertise on the history and significance of the object while also contextualizing the place of the object within the wider collection.³² Such an approach should be similarly applied by local cultural heritage practitioners as the status of a monument is negotiated in the public and by local decision-making bodies. The *planning* phase should cover the entire process of monument change, including nominating a specific monument, holding a period of public comment, deciding on the exact physical parameters of change/removal, negotiating the how and when of the physical removal, and outlining a course of action for the removed materials as well as the original context of the monument.

The wide swath of options of what could be done with a monument that has been nominated for removal should also be discussed at the planning stage.

Alongside these contextualizations, planning a monument's deaccessioning must include an educational campaign on the nature of the deaccessioning process itself, its purpose, ethical considerations, and procedural concerns. This is especially vital in light of the fact that many public monuments have already been taken down in ways that were not transparent, and so communities may be primed to imagine that deaccessioning will heighten secrecy rather than the opposite. Explaining to the public how the process of the monument's removal will be documented and archived is an opportunity to show that deaccessioning is not erasure. Such education and proactive transparency is already an important component in museum deaccessioning recommendations, as it is recognized that deaccessioning brings about difficult conversations with the public whom these museums serve.³³

The wide swath of options of what could be done with a monument that has been nominated for removal should also be discussed at the *planning* stage. Deaccessioning, in the sense of removing from the collection, should be framed as only one out of a number of tools at a community's disposal; *planning* for removal does not have to always and irrevocably lead to actual removal. From the perspective of curating the public collection, cultural heritage professionals should advise their communities that there are a spectrum of options for what to do with monuments that may no longer espouse social ideals.



The context of an object's display can be, and often is, reimagined.

To this end, museum spaces should be considered testing labs in which various solutions for the reinterpretation of art have been implemented. Objects and artworks themselves are regularly physically modified or refashioned as part of curation strategies. In the world of contemporary art, artworks are not always considered “finished”; artists can revisit their works even as their art continues to be displayed. “Frankenstein’s monster” pottery vessels are fashioned from assemblages of miscellaneous archaeological fragments, so that the general public can see and appreciate the physicality of the vessel. In the context of art restoration, substantive changes to a painting, including both removing newer insertions and also restoring older elements, are undertaken. At the same time, the context of an object’s display can be, and often is, reimagined. Within the museum space, not every artifact or work of art is on display. Other pieces are stored, studied by researchers, used in classrooms, and are even permanently loaned out. Museums even have experience re-contextualizing artworks whose legitimacy and public worth have been substantially downgraded, most notably when jewels of a museum’s collection are later discovered to be fakes. For example, after deaccessioning the “Amarna Princess”, a work of fraud for which the Bolton Museum originally paid £440,000,³⁴ the Museum later hosted a temporary exhibition, “Fakes and Forgeries”, which included the statue, even though the sculpture no longer belonged to the museum. One local official explained: “rather than glamourising crime, [the exhibit] will hopefully show that even the most artful of forgers is eventually brought to justice.”³⁵



After deaccessioning the “Amarna Princess”, a work of fraud for which the Bolton Museum originally paid £440,000, the Museum later hosted a temporary exhibition, “Fakes and Forgeries”.

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The recent life history of Ukraine’s “People’s Friendship Arch,” now called the “Arch of Freedom of the Ukrainian People” is an example of how public art can be left *in situ*, while also being substantially modified and reinterpreted as new social truths emerge.



Overarching these curatorial decisions is the idea that transformations in our understanding of an object that result in a shift in how the object is physically or contextually presented are worth undertaking when these shifts support the ethical and educational principles set out in a museum’s mission.

The recent life history of Ukraine’s “People’s Friendship Arch” is an example of how public art can be left *in situ*, while also being substantially modified and reinterpreted as new social truths emerge. The removal of the sculptures below the arch in April 2022 was not the first major change to the monument; instead, in 2018, activists painted a large crack at the top of the arch in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The 2022 removal of the statuary was accompanied by a name change, now known as the “Arch of Freedom of the Ukrainian People”, and the illumination of the site with blue and yellow lights. The decision to change the name was made by an executive body, which included heritage professionals, who were tasked with reviewing the status of forty “totalitarian” monuments.³⁶ Presumably, decisions to remove the sculptures, rename, and illuminate the “Arch of Freedom” were made after a deliberation of whether the monument should be wholly taken down, which is what the *planning* phase is for. Case studies like these, where monuments are reimagined, should be within the list of options that heritage professionals present to their communities during the *planning* phase.

Regardless of whether a monument is eventually wholly deaccessioned, the work of documentation must also begin in the *planning* phase. The notes from all planning meetings should be archived. The documentation of all deliberations, decisions, and actions taken form a critical part of deaccessioning in existing museum recommendations and practice, as the Oklahoma Museums Association’s 2008 technical bulletin notes: “Good record-keeping should be mandatory in any deaccession process; document, document, document.”³⁷ Similarly, heritage professionals should take the opportunity during the *planning* process to make various scans and surveys of the monument and its environs, as well as record the requisite measurements, drawings, photographs, and videos that are a normal part of a preservationist’s record keeping and inventorying.

The documentation of all deliberations, decisions, and actions taken form a critical part of deaccessioning in existing museum recommendations and practice.



Once the details of the physical removal and the post-removal phases have been sufficiently *planned*, the second step is *removal* (if indeed a community decides to remove the monument). *Removal* entails the entire physical handling of the artifact as it is brought down and moved offsite. This step should not be carried out until step one, *planning*, is complete. Since the *removal* phase generates a lot of public interest, *removal* is an opportunity to educate the community on the history of the site, inform them about where the monument remains will end up, and explain the future design for the space once the monument is gone (*situs sine monumento*).

Monuments should *not* be taken down in the spirit of a retaliatory toppling. Neither do we advise that monuments be removed in the middle of the night. Instead, heritage practitioners should bring the same professionalism, transparency, and care that museum staff take whenever they are uninstalling pieces. The safety concerns for all those involved should always be a top priority. On the physical side, conservators and preservationists should advise on how to suitably secure, disassemble, and transport the remains. Further documentation of the condition of the monument as an artifact should take place at this time. The *removal* phase can also be an opportunity for preservationists to study aspects of the monument and the site that were formerly inaccessible, like its construction history, and these newly uncovered details are further opportunities for public engagement.³⁸ The *removal* phase is not complete until the *situs sine monumento* is safely secured and the monument remains have been transported offsite.

It is important to note that the *removal* phase is not the end of the deaccessioning process; instead, *removal* is a pivot point that must lead to the next step, *implementation*. During *implementation*, both the *planning* for the monument remains and the rehabilitation of its former location from building site to public space are carried out. Careful *planning* prior to *removal* and *implementation* should prevent unforeseen problems regarding the afterlife of monuments as well as the spaces they once inhabited.

In the museum space, deaccessioned objects are permanently removed in a variety of ways, including exchanging one object for another, transferring the object to another institution, selling the piece, returning the object to the artist or donor, or destroying it.³⁹ In the context of public monuments, all of these options are viable,⁴⁰ and in fact more than one option can be pursued. For example, by combining the decisions to destroy and exchange the old monument, a community could choose to scrap the original sculpture for its raw materials and commission a new piece of public art created with the remains of the old. The *implementation* phase should also prioritize the remaking of the *situs sine monumento*. Again, there are opportunities for education and preservation within the former monument space, as well as for re-orientation towards different social values. Returning the space to full public access should be a priority in the *implementation* phase. Equally important in the *implementation* phase is the finalization of all the documentation and its submission to the relevant archival repository. The documentary record should be recognized as public property, and

Careful planning prior to removal and implementation should prevent unforeseen problems regarding the afterlife of monuments as well as the spaces they once inhabited.



not classified or state protected in such a way that the community is barred from accessing the information.

Conclusion

It should be clear that we are not advocating for monument removal. Neither are we arguing for international heritage organizations to position themselves as being in favor of monument removal. In the museum space, having deaccessioning policies is not considered to encourage overly enthusiastic deaccessioning, but just the opposite: deaccessioning events are rare and serious enough to require written guidelines that museum professionals rely on while they navigate the process in real time.

This policy paper reiterates the fact that cultural heritage professionals have a critical role in the deaccessioning of public art and should insist on being at the table when monument removals are being discussed. By offering the lessons learned from the museum space to their communities, heritage professionals are in the position to advise on the practicalities and repercussions of removal, as well as on alternative solutions. Heritage professionals are also responsible for documenting the deaccessioning. To carry out these duties, heritage practitioners need to be supported by national and international heritage organizations. Written guidelines for the deaccessioning of public monuments are badly needed, and it is up to heritage organizations to take this on.

In this paper we suggest that monument deaccessioning should be broken down into three required steps: *plan*; *remove*; *implement*. The recommendations we give here are not comprehensive, but should structure how the process is considered. We argue that deaccessioning must include all three phases; moreover, appropriate documentation is necessary throughout the process. The *planning* phase should outline a step-by-step course of action that covers the entire transition of the monument and its locus through to the post-removal end state. *Removal* is the safe physical deconstruction of the statue from its location, which we advocate should be done with professionalism and transparency. Finally, the monument is deaccessioned and the former location is re-contextualized in the *implementation* phase. *Planning* should cover all the decisions through the *implementation* phase. Ideally, these decisions should be allowed to take time, in which several iterations of a monument and its contextual space may be explored.

Negotiating radical monument modification or full deaccessioning is a deeply reflective process and there are no easy answers. Heritage professionals are neither peacemakers nor hostage negotiators, nor should they attempt to be. Instead, by implementing professional guidelines for monument deaccessioning, and by remaining engaged in the process, heritage workers will achieve what we care about most: the preservation and documentation of history.

Negotiating radical monument modification or full deaccessioning is a deeply reflective process and there are no easy answers.



Endnotes

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