

Acquisition & Disposal Policy

Name of Museum:

West Berkshire Museum

Name of governing body:

West Berkshire Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

5 May 2011

Date at which this policy is due for review:

Three years after above, ie **5 May 2014**

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1 Statement of Purpose

The Museum is part of the West Berkshire Heritage & Tourism Service which was established to facilitate greater access - physical, intellectual and experiential - to the District's rich cultural and natural heritage for residents and visitors alike, with the aim of promoting understanding and appreciation of this unique resource.

The Heritage & Tourism Service's mission statement is:

To work with the community in caring for and interpreting their cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations

The Museum also supports some of the Council's aims to *facilitate a thriving local community and good quality of life in West Berkshire, now and for the future*, by contributing to corporate priorities. The Council believes that the long-term care and well being of these valuable cultural resources depends on the public's recognition of their heritage and the history that lies behind it.

The Museum has three priority aims with respect to its users and potential users:

- to work with the community to develop a Sense of Place
- to enthuse people about culture and heritage
- to work in an integrated way within the Council and in partnership with community organisations

2 Existing Collections

The majority of the collections is of local or regional significance but there are some items of national significance such as the Bronze Age material within archaeology; Civil War material within archaeology; Egyptology from the Earl of Carnarvon; some of the local history material, particularly the Kennet & Avon Canal material; the world collections material is also of national significance because it was assembled by Harold Peake, one of the Museum's first curators, to illustrate his theory of comparative archaeology. The collections of international significance include: Mesolithic material in archaeology and material relating to the Greenham Common peace camps.

Historically (between 1904 and 1974) the Museum concentrated on Newbury and its environs, as well as parishes that regarded Newbury as their main town. Accordingly the existing collections do not include much material from parishes that looked to Reading as their main town.

2.1 Natural Sciences

Reflecting the interests of members of the Newbury and District Field Club (certainly in the first half of the 20th century) the Museum has a medium sized natural history collection, exemplified particularly by collections of butterflies, moths and beetles.

2.1.1 Mammals

The Museum has a small collection of some 30 mammals, most of which are mounted specimens.

2.1.2 Birds

The Museum has a small collection of birds, of which there are around 90 mounted specimens and over 60 skins. There are also collections of birds' eggs (mainly local but some from coastal species, collected 1897-1911) and nests. It includes rare but locally important species such as a Stone Curlew, a Golden Eagle found locally in the 19th century, and a Bittern.

2.1.3 Fish

The Museum has a very small collection of around 10 fish acquired between 1916 and 1953, many caught in the River Kennet.

2.1.4 Insects, Butterflies, Moths, & Beetles

The Museum has had a comparatively large collection; approximately 18,000 specimens existed in this category but the collection has been severely affected by insect infestation and many specimens have been destroyed.

There are also smaller collections of exotic entomology and some local non marine molluscs.

2.2 Geology

There is a general collection of geology arranged in three collections. Most of the collection is from the first two decades of the 20th century, many of the specimens probably bought from dealers or exchanged with other museums; much has no provenance but there is some useful locally provenanced material.

- Rocks - approximately 200 specimens
- Minerals - approximately 150 specimens
- Fossils - approximately 360 specimens

2.3 Archaeology

The Museum possesses a large collection (around 6,500 objects or groups) of archaeological material from all periods from the Palaeolithic to the Post Medieval, and is representative of the area. Local archaeology is important especially in the prehistoric period. The collection has grown significantly in recent years owing to the increase in developer-funded and other rescue excavations, and large scale research projects. This has been particularly important in filling gaps in older collections such as Medieval and later material from urban excavations in Newbury.

2.3.1 Local Archaeology

A large collection of objects from the Palaeolithic period to the Post Medieval period in West Berkshire, although a quantity come from parts of pre-1974 Berkshire which are now in South Oxfordshire, as well as from sites in North Hampshire and West Wiltshire (parishes abutting West Berkshire's boundaries). The collection includes human remains.

Material of importance includes:

- Mesolithic - material from Thatcham and the Kennet Valley is of international significance. Mesolithic sites in the area are some of the key sites which must be looked at in any research into the Mesolithic period. It is amongst the earliest dated post glacial sites in Europe
- Bronze Age - material is of regional significance with elements of national significance, owing to the density of sites and material in the area. There is evidence from a site at Hartshill of some of the earliest known iron working in the country. Bronze Age material includes the Crow Down and Yattendon hoards.
- Anglo Saxon - finds from the early cemetery at East Shefford excavated by Peake in 1912, first discovered in 1890
- English Civil War - although the collection of material is not large it is of national significance
- Barnes collection - early systematic field walking in the late 19th century; some artefacts were found during the building of the Lambourn Valley Railway
- Newbury town centre - excavations in 1970s; mainly medieval
- Kennet Valley – 1970s to 1990s survey; all periods
- Maddle Farm – 1980s survey; all periods, with a focus on a Roman Villa Estate.

Since 1998 the Museum been the approved repository for archaeological archives resulting from fieldwork carried out by authorised and/or approved archaeological fieldworkers in West Berkshire. The archives comprise finds and textual reports, usually with photographic evidence.

2.3.2 Other British Archaeology

A small collection of objects acquired primarily in the first half of the 20th century, including items from Wiltshire, Hampshire and what is now south Oxfordshire. A number of items were acquired from other parts of the British Isles eg Neolithic pottery sherds, Bronze Age axes and Iron Age currency bars for comparative purposes.

2.3.3 Coins

The Museum has a good collection of coins and medals including items from the Iron Age, Roman, Medieval, and Civil War periods as well as general collections. Material of importance includes:

- Aldworth Hoard – Roman, 1st and 2nd century AD (NEBYM:1985.47.1 & 1988.137)
- Compton Downs Hoard – Roman (NEBYM:1982.55 & 1985.71))
- Curridge Hoard – Roman (NEBYM:1990.40)
- Hamstead Marshall Hoard – Roman (NEBYM:1999.26)
- Streatley Hoard - 47 Medieval silver coins and fragments (NEBYM:1982.1)
- Lambourn Civil War (Woodlands St Mary) Hoard - 23 gold coins James I and Charles I (NEBYM:1950.3)
- Snelsmore Common Hoard - 17th/18th century (NEBYM:1985.49)

2.3.4 World Archaeology

The Museum has a large collection of what may be termed 'world collections'. There are examples of archaeology (mainly pottery fragments) from the ancient world, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern together with more recent items from the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The world collection also includes some glass, bone artefacts, textiles and some contemporary comparative material from throughout the world.

2.3.5 Egyptology

There are a small number of items of Egyptology in the collection mainly objects acquired in the early 20th Century from the 5th Earl of Carnarvon and other eminent Egyptologists. The majority of these objects are of national significance as they are a forerunner to Carnarvon's involvement with the tomb of Tutankhamen.

2.4 Social & Local History

The Museum has good collections of civic, commercial and industrial material, especially for the Newbury area. Domestic, leisure and other non-work activities are not well represented. Material of importance includes:

- English Civil War period items
- Newbury Coat (1991 replica) and material associated with the original Newbury Coat (1811)
- Material connected with the Kennet Navigation and Kennet & Avon Canal, including some larger objects.
- Greenham Common Airbase
- Newbury Bypass
- Elliott's of Newbury - relating to the furniture and joinery firm established by Samuel Elliott in 1860 and which closed in the 1970s.
- Newbury Diesel Co
- Plenty Group

2.4.1 Archive & Ephemera

The Museum holds approximately 2,000 items. Some archives were at various times deposited with the former Newbury Borough Archives. In 1979/80 the Borough Archives were transferred on deposit to Berkshire Record Office (BRO). Other archives were deposited by the Museum directly with the BRO. A small quantity of archive material remains with the Museum for display, exhibition, research, documentation and digitisation, as well as to maintain intact named collections which comprise more than one type of collection. Important material includes:

- Elliott's of Newbury - ledgers, catalogues, photographs etc.
- Newbury Diesel Co - Photographs, catalogues, etc. (NEBYM:1989.9-15)
- Toomer & Greet - Photographs, correspondence, cards, posters, journals etc relating to the Toomer and Greet families of Newbury. (NEBYM:2004.39)
- John Brown - legal papers, correspondence, deed boxes, etc relating to the family and firm of John Brown & Son of Thatcham. (NEBYM:2005.81)
- Greenham Common Airbase - relating to Greenham Common peace camps and the USAF base, reflecting both sides of the argument; this has significance for national and international politics

2.4.2 Textiles

The Museum has a small collection of samplers and lace.

2.4.3 Clocks & Watches

The Museum has 31 clocks and watches. The collection comprises 23 pocket watches, two wall-mounted clocks and six longcase clocks. The collection includes:

- Hutton-Stott Collection (NEBYM:1971.24)
- Walnut and marquetry longcase clock; the movement by Bartholomew Flagett of Newbury, ca 1710. (NEBYM:1989.141)
- Oak longcase clock with brass and silvered dial engraved with leaf scrolls; 30 hour birdcage movement; by Antony Lynch of Newbury ca 1760. (NEBYM:1990.28)
- Pair-cased watch, mid-18th century, verge movement inscribed "Jethro Tull, Newbury 312". (NEBYM:1994.48)
- Longcase clock with a silvered single-sheet brass dial engraved with a cottage, a rising sun, and leaf scrolls; signed Church Brown, Newtown. (NEBYM:2004.21)
- Longcase clock by Henry Walsh of Northbrook Street and Speenhamland. (NEBYM:2007.10)

2.4.4 Cameras

As a result of a temporary exhibition and a relationship with a collector the Museum has a large collection of cameras and associated photographic equipment dating from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. Relatively few of the objects have a strong local connection. The collection includes a good range of 20th century cameras representing the development of popular photography circa 1945-1965 including examples of:

- Roll-film folding cameras
- Non-reflex 35mm and other miniature cameras
- Single and twin reflex cameras

2.5 Fine Art

The Museum has a medium sized collection of oils, watercolours and prints including a number of sketchbooks, mainly of local scenes or by local artists. There are a few works by artists who have more than a local reputation eg Fred Hall. The collection of approximately 750 items including:

- oils (52)
- watercolours (163)
- drawings (53)
- prints (284)
- miniatures (4)
- silhouettes (2)
- sketchbooks (135)

2.5.1 Local Artists

The Museum has several works (of local and non-local subject matter) by local artists of local, regional or national renown, including the following artists:

- Campbell-Cooper, A J (d ca 1968)
- Collison-Morley, Harold Duke (d 1915)
- Corden, Victor Milton (1860-1939)
- Everett, Frances (ca 1813-1870)
- Fredericks, Eric (fl 1960s)
- Gore, Henry William (1857-1942)

- Hall, Christopher (b. 1930)
- Hall, Fred (1860-1948)
- Heather, Marjorie Kate (1904-1989)
- Ormrod, Frank (1896-1988)
- Roberts, Kathleen (née Butler) (ca 1888 – ca 1975)
- Robinson, Helen (fl 1920-1970)
- Schlee, Nick (b.1931)
- Southby, Ellen Mabel (1871-1965)
- Toomer, Joseph (1760-1853)

2.5.2 Local Subjects

The majority of pictures in the Fine Art Collection are of local views, and several of the oils and watercolours are also by local artists. The Museum also has a large number of prints from 18th and 19th century publications, many of them depicting local country houses.

2.6 Decorative Art

The collection of approximately 1,200 objects is grouped into the following collections:

- Ceramics
- Metalwork
- Woodwork & Furniture
- Jewellery
- Other (eg glass, ivory/bone)

2.6.1 Ceramics

There is a collection of about 200 ceramic items dating from the 17th century onwards. Items include good pieces of Chinese ceramics (some from the Isher collection), including Newbury Borough crested and others with local connections, church china, and commemoratives. Also pieces produced by the Aldermaston Pottery.

2.6.2 Metalwork

The Museum has approximately 500 objects. Many objects are pewter (approx. 150 pieces), although silver and brass is also represented. Important material includes:

- Southby Collection - approximately 90 objects, including mugs, plates and measures, collected by Miss Ellen Mabel Southby (1871-1965) in the Newbury area. (NEBYM:1964.25)
- Yattendon Jug - Arts and Crafts copper vase, or jug designed by Elizabeth Waterhouse (fl 1885-1918) of Yattendon Manor.(NEBYM:2000.31)
- Isher Collection – items from Miss Gladys Mabel Isher, including brass candlesticks and pewter items

2.6.3 Wooden Items

The Museum has approximately 20 objects of decorative woodwork and furniture, including a small collection of items made by George Lailey (1869-1958) of Bucklebury.

2.6.4 Jewellery

The Museum has approximately 200 pieces of jewellery of late 19th to mid 20th century, including 90 pieces donated by Anne Hull Grundy (d 1984).

2.7 Costume

There is a large collection of costume (about 1,500 pieces), the majority 19th/early 20th century date and predominantly women's fashion with little male fashion or work wear. There are however some good early pieces, including:

- Pair of 18th century cream satin shoes with silk embroidery and paste buckles. (NEBYM:1952.11.1)
- 18th century sack dress comprising an embroidered and padded cream silk brocade overdress and underskirt. (NEBYM:1954.4.1)
- 17th century gentleman's undress cap of undyed linen embroidered with blackwork and gold thread. (NEBYM:1996.70.1)
- Two 18th century Hollie point bonnets.

The Museum also has a good selection of early and mid-20th century fashionable wear, including ready-to-wear, dress-maker made and homemade items.

The Museum has two significant, albeit small, collections:

- Craven Collection - fashion garments and accessories worn by Cornelia, Countess of Craven.
- Bucklebury Players Collection - 51 objects comprising accessories (footwear, gloves, handbags, headwear); part of the costume collection of the Bucklebury Players drama group which closed in the 1990s.

2.8 Photographs

There is a comprehensive and large collection of photographic images (approx. 12,500 images) of Newbury and West Berkshire in print, on slide, on glass plate or in albums, including:

- Paper prints (approx 7,500)
- 35mm slides (approx 3,000)
- Plastic negatives
- Glass plates
- Albums (52)

The photographs cover a wide range of subjects, including topography (landscape, townscape, etc, buildings, eg churches, inns, shops (including architectural detail), people (including group photographs), trade & industry, transport (including K&A Canal), sports, schools, military & other uniformed services, and aerial photographs ; views of Newbury are particularly well represented.

Material of importance includes:

- Borough Archives Collection - Approx 420 prints. (NEBYM:1979.72)
- Newbury Library Collection - Approx 350 prints. (NEBYM:2000.20)
- Glass Lantern Slide Collection - The majority of images depict local scenes dating from the 1870s. Approx 100 plates. (NEBYM:1996.111)

- Robert Brown Collection – Bequest from owner of John Brown & Sons, wood turners of Thatcham. Slides and photographs of business, home, town and family from 20th century. Approx 450 images. (NEBYM:2005.81)

2.9 Local Studies Resources

The Museum holds material both accessioned and non-accessioned that is used to support research and study by staff and users.

2.9.1 Books

There is a small library of reference books. In addition there are some older books, dating back to the 17th century, with local connections (especially Newbury) or subjects, as well as copies of Peake's written works.

There is a good range of reference works, trade and other directories, village information and journals of local societies, etc, including Newbury & District Field Club, Berkshire Archaeological Society.

2.9.2 Maps

The Museum has a large number of 20th century small scale OS maps. There are some earlier OS and other maps of local significance. Material of importance includes:

- Survey of Manor of Shaw and Speen by William Godson, 1729/1730
- Berkshire by John Rocque, 1761
- Ten Miles around Newbury by Davis, 1839
- Ordnance Survey First Edition 6" maps; Berkshire sheets mounted together on linen, 1878 (NEBYM:1979.23)

2.10 Handling Material

The Museum has handling material for the purposes of enhancing the experience of users. The handling material is used at events and exhibitions at the Museum and at other venues in the District and at other times will be available for use by groups visiting the Museum.

3 Criteria Governing Future Acquisition Policy

The Museum collects material that supports the Sense of Place theme for audience development, exhibitions, outreach, and collection development; enabling community engagement and dialogue to reflect local communities in displays and explore individual and community identities. Acquisitions should help communities to understand what West Berkshire has been, is now and will be in the future.

The Museum seeks to acquire material offered as donations, but may acquire items of merit by purchase subject to agreement by the Council's relevant portfolio holder where the value exceeds delegated officer authority. The museum will not accept material on loan except for time limited use in temporary exhibitions or permanent displays.

3.1 Natural Sciences

The Museum collects specimens from the defined area.

The Museum will not seek to acquire natural history material until an audit of the existing collection has been completed.

3.2 Geology

The Museum collects rocks, minerals and fossils from the defined area that help to illustrate the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire.

The Museum will not seek to acquire geological specimens until an audit of the existing collection has been completed.

3.3 Archaeology

3.3.1 Local Archaeology

The Museum seeks to acquire archaeological material from all periods from the defined area that illustrates the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire.

The Museum will continue to be the appropriate place of deposit for archaeological archives derived from fieldwork undertaken by contracted units or archaeological bodies, including local societies and voluntary groups within West Berkshire. Acquisition will be in accordance with the Museum's current procedures for the transfer of archaeological archives.¹

3.3.2 Other British Archaeology

The Museum will not acquire material from outside West Berkshire unless exceptionally it adds to material already in the collection (ie a single specific site).

3.3.3 Coins

The Museum will acquire coins from all periods from the defined area that illustrates the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire.

3.3.4 World Archaeology

The Museum will not acquire archaeological material that originates from overseas.

3.3.5 Egyptology

The Museum will not acquire further Egyptology material.

¹ See 'Procedures for the Transfer of Archaeological Archives' available from West Berkshire Museum.

3.4 Social & Local History

The Museum collects material relating to the social, economic, cultural, domestic, community and recreational activities of the communities of West Berkshire, including:

- Agriculture & Rural Life
- Banking & Commerce
- Brewing & Malting
- Brick, Tile & Terracotta Industries
- Charities & Community Organisations
- Civic Organisations (eg local authorities, police, health, courts)
- Cloth Trade
- Crafts & Artistic Activities
- Defence & Military
- Home Life
- Horse Racing
- Local Businesses & Manufacturers
- Local Estates & Families
- Printing & Publishing
- Sport, Leisure & Pastimes
- Technology & Communications
- Transport

3.4.1 Archive & Ephemera

The Museum will not normally acquire archive material, unless this is part of a collection of other material and/or complements existing collections, subject to liaison with Berkshire Record Office. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

The Museum seeks to acquire ephemera, (eg posters, pamphlets, catalogues, cards), related to local individuals, organisations, places, events and activities and to objects in the collections, subject to liaison with Berkshire Record Office. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

3.4.2 Clocks & Watches

The Museum seeks to acquire a representative collection of clocks and watches made within the defined area, as well as a representative collection of watch/clockmaker's tools.

3.5 Fine Art

The Museum collects paintings, prints and drawings - topographical and biographical. Alongside works of art, the Museum also collects objects and information associated with its 'makers', whether they be artists, engravers, printers, publishers, etc.

The Museum seeks to acquire pictures of local views within the defined area, of local people and of activities closely connected with local events and activities. Acquisition will concentrate upon scenes not represented in the collection and particularly material that illustrates the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire.

The Museum seeks to acquire material associated with local artists, especially sketchbooks, photographs, catalogues, cuttings, equipment (eg palette, brush, easel), publications, unpublished material and – where appropriate – costume, eg work-wear.

3.6 Decorative Art

The Museum will not acquire decorative art except as part of the Social & Local History Collection, including objects and information associated with local craftspeople, eg potters, clockmakers, jewellers, silversmiths.

Ceramics - eg commemoratives, especially those relating to local events.

Metalwork - eg metalwork bearing the mark of local makers, or of local crests.

Woodwork & Furniture -, eg locally manufactured furniture.

Jewellery - eg pieces depicting local scenes (cameo, enamel tie-pin, etc), or the material has a very strong local connection.

3.6.1 Costume

The Museum will not acquire costume unless it has strong local connections and/or fills significant gaps, eg uniform, work-wear, men's clothing.

3.6.2 Textile

The Museum seeks to acquire kersies or other cloths manufactured in Newbury during the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as any materials, equipment and associated information with the Cloth Trade for which Newbury was renowned at that period.

Silk manufacture was a short-lived local industry in the 18th century; Opportunities to acquire well-provenanced items and information about this industry will be sought.

3.7 Photographs

The Museum seeks to acquire photographic images of local views within the defined area, of local people and of activities closely connected with local events and activities. Acquisition will concentrate upon scenes not represented in the collection and particularly material that illustrates the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire, subject to liaison with Berkshire Record Office. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

Every effort will be made to acquire copyright and/or publication rights at the same time.

The Museum also seeks to acquire material associated with local photographers.

3.8 Local Studies Resources

3.8.1 Maps

The Museum seeks to acquire maps that illustrate the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire, subject to liaison with Berkshire Record Office. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

3.8.2 Books

The Museum seeks to acquire reference or locally important books that illustrate the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire, subject to liaison with Berkshire Record Office. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

3.8.3 Audio Visual Material

The Museum seeks to acquire audio visual material that illustrates the cultural, economic, social or environmental development of West Berkshire, including born-digital material, subject to liaison with Wessex Film & Sound Archive. Maintaining the integrity of collections will be a significant factor in determining acquisition.

The Museum will acquire digital material in accordance with best practice for retention and updating of such material.

3.9 Handling Material

The Museum will acquire material that can support education, lifelong learning, outreach and other activities and events, subject to its robustness and relevance to West Berkshire and the Sense of Place theme. This may include items that are duplicates of those already held within the collections.

The Museum collects material for use by staff and members of the general public in handling situations, eg learning sessions (schools and family friendly activities), reminiscence sessions, other outreach events and activities, and training.

3.10 Geographical Area to which Collecting Relates

The area in which the Museum collects items or information will be the area of West Berkshire Council, which covers the following 63 parishes:



Aldermaston	Cold Ash	Hungerford	Sulham
Aldworth	Combe	Inkpen	Sulhamstead
Ashampstead	Compton	Kintbury	Thatcham
Basildon	East Garston	Lambourn	Theale
Beech Hill	East Ilsley	Leckhampstead	Tidmarsh
Beedon	Enborne	Midgham	Tilehurst
Beenham	Englefield	Newbury	Ufton Nervet
Boxford	Farnborough	Padworth	Wasing
Bradfield	Fawley	Pangbourne	Welford
Brightwalton	Frilsham	Peasemore	West Ilsley
Brimpton	Great Shefford	Purley	West Woodhay
Bucklebury	Greenham	Shaw-cum-Donnington	Winterbourne
Burghfield	Hamstead Marshall	Speen	Wokefield
Catmore	Hampstead Norreys	Stanford Dingley	Woolhampton
Chaddleworth	Hermitage	Stratfield Mortimer	Yattendon
Chieveley	Holybrook	Streatley	

4 Limitations on Collecting

The Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

5 Collecting Policies of Other Museums

The Museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums and organisations:

- Abingdon Museum
- Berkshire Medical History Centre Museum, Reading
- Berkshire Record Office, Reading
- Didcot Railway Centre
- Hampshire Museums and Archives Service
- Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
- Museum of Reading
- National Trust, Basildon
- Oxfordshire Museums Service
- Royal Berkshire Yeomanry Cavalry Museum, Windsor
- Swindon Museum & Art Gallery

- Thames Valley Police Museum, Sulhamstead
- The Rifles (Berkshire and Wiltshire) Museum, Salisbury
- University of Reading, Museum of English Rural Life
- Vale and Downland Museum, Wantage
- Wallingford Museum
- Wessex Film & Sound Archive, Winchester
- Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes

6 Policy Review Procedure

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

The MLA [or its successor body, ie Arts Council England] will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

7 Acquisitions Not Covered By the Policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums. The responsible officer(s) will consult the relevant Portfolio Member.

8 Acquisition Procedures

8a. The Museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

8b. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

8c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body or responsible officer will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

8d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

8e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated

ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

The procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

8f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the Museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

8g. As the Museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the “Guidance for the care of human remains in museums” issued by DCMS in 2005.

9 Spoliation

The Museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

10 The Repatriation & Restitution of Objects and Human Remains

The Museum’s governing body², acting on the advice of the Museum’s professional staff may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the “Guidance for the care of human remains in museums” issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 12a-12d, 12g and 12s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the “Guidance for the care of human remains in museums” (DCMS, 2005).

11 Management of Archives

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its

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governing body and responsible officers will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

12 Disposal Procedures

12.1 Disposal Preliminaries

12a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

12b. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.

12c. The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

12d. When disposal of a Museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

12.2 Motivation for Disposal and Method of Disposal

12e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 12g-12m and 12s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection,
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit),
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

12.3 The Disposal Decision-Making Process

12g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the Museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and

others served by the Museum will also be sought.

12.4 Responsibility for Disposal Decision-Making

12h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body³ of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of any member of staff acting alone.

12.5 Use of Proceeds of Sale

12i. Any monies received by the Museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MLA [or its successor body, ie Arts Council England].

12j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

12.6 Disposal by Gift or Sale

12k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

12l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, in other specialist journals where appropriate and via relevant subject specialist and/or regional networks (eg Berkshire Museums Network).

12m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

12.7 Disposal by Exchange

12n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the Museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The

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governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

12o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 12a-12d and 12g-12h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12p-12s.

12p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

12q. If the exchange is proposed with a non- Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the Museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

12r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

12.8 Documenting Disposal

12s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

13 Bibliography & Supporting Documents

Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2005) Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums DCMS
Halahan Associates (2009) West Berkshire Museum Conservation Management Plan; Museum Collections, West Berkshire Council
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Museums Association (2008) Disposal Toolkit: Guidelines for Museums MA
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Standing Conference on Archives & Museum (2002) Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd edition) SCAM
West Berkshire Museum (2009) Procedures for the Transfer of Archaeological Archives West Berkshire Council