

Birmingham Museums Trust Collection Development Policy 2014-19

The Collection Development Policy was agreed between Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Museums Trust ('BMT'). It was approved by the Council on 27 July 2015 and by BMT's governing body, its Board of Trustees, on 24 July 2015. This policy replaces an earlier version of the policy approved by BMT's Board of Trustees on 13 November 2014.

1. Introduction

This Collection Development Policy forms part of Birmingham Museums Trust's 'Lending, Acquisition and Disposal Policy' agreed between Birmingham City Council (BCC) and Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT). It relates to the collection owned by Birmingham City Council and managed on its behalf by Birmingham Museums Trust.

The Collection Development Policy identifies Birmingham Museums Trust's collecting objectives for the five-year period 2014-19. It summarises the current collection and identifies collecting areas of particular priority across the broad collection areas of art, history and science. All collecting activity will be subject to the processes, procedures and criteria set out in this policy and in Birmingham Museums Trust's Lending, Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2014-19, to ensure that the collection continues to be managed within given resources and according to the highest professional standard (Accreditation).

A review of collecting undertaken during the life of the previous Collecting Policy (2009-13) has been carried out and its findings have informed the development of this Policy 2014-19.

2. Context

Birmingham has the finest civic collection in England, cared for on behalf of the city by Birmingham Museums Trust. It consists of around 800,000 objects, displayed and stored across nine venues. Most areas of the collection are Designated as being of national importance, with numerous collection areas of international significance including the finest collection of Pre-Raphaelite art in the world. The collection is one of the city's greatest cultural assets and a priceless resource for learning, engagement and creativity.

The collection is the property of the citizens of Birmingham, and Birmingham Museums Trust is responsible for its physical and intellectual integrity, balancing the requirements of public access in the present with the need to preserve the collection for future generations. The ongoing development of the city's museum collection is vital in order to better represent and engage visitors and users from Birmingham and beyond, to further collections knowledge and understanding, to support research and scholarship, to keep pace with change – social, demographic, scientific, technological and environmental, as well as illuminate the myriad connections between historic and contemporary objects and collections as they evolve.

3. Policy review

Our knowledge and understanding of Birmingham’s collection will continue to develop during the five year period of this policy, as new research into specific subject areas and Significance Assessments are undertaken across all collection areas. This will highlight additional collection areas for potential development. The collections development policy will be published and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it responds to new research.

A full and comprehensive review of this five year policy will be conducted by March 2019.

Any proposed changes to the policy will be agreed between Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Museums Trust’s Board of Trustees before being implemented. Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

BMT’s performance in relation to collections development will be reported to BMT’s Board of Trustees and Birmingham City Council on a quarterly and annual basis as part of the Collections reporting procedures specified in the monitoring arrangement of the Agreement and stipulated in the Lending Acquisition and Disposal Policy’s Appendix 1: internal BMT procedures governing lending, acquisitions and disposals (section 4).

4. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

4.1 Strategic Context: Birmingham Museums Trust

The Collections Development Policy must be seen in the context of BMT’s vision statement:

To reflect Birmingham to the world and the world to Birmingham

The Collections Development Policy supports BMT’s key strategic objectives:

1. Developing the collection and venues
2. Growing and diversifying audiences
3. Building a sustainable business
4. Investing in people

The collections development objectives for 2014-19 and the identification of specific priority collecting areas are also directly informed by BMT’s research agenda. In 2013 BMT began undertaking its first comprehensive survey of significance of the entire collection. The high level results of this survey will be published in 2016. This survey not only identifies collection areas of significance but also informs priority areas for future collections research and development.

As reflected in BMT’s vision, research and academic excellence will underpin the development of the collection over the coming five year period and the Collections Development Policy should also be seen in relation to BMT’s Research Strategy.

4.2 Strategic Context: Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council is the owner of the collection and this Collections Development Policy must also be seen in the context of the city council’s own strategic priorities. Birmingham City Council Leader’s Policy Statement sets out a clear vision for Birmingham to become: *An inclusive city in which many more people can play their part – a fair chance for everyone in Birmingham*

In this context the Collections Development Policy and its related programmes involving local people, will directly support three of the city council's highest level priority areas:

<u>A Fair City</u>	Wellbeing	All benefit from improved health and wellbeing
<u>A Prosperous City</u>	Employment, education and training	Young people will be in employment, education or training
<u>A Democratic City</u>	Engagement / Influence	Local people will be engaged in local democracy, and have more influence on local decisions

- 4.3** The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 4.4** By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 4.5** Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.6** The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 4.7** The museum will undertake 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.
- 4.8** In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below 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
 - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
 - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection

5 History of the collection

The collections of Birmingham Museums have been developed over the last 160 years through gift, bequest and purchase, through the generosity of donors and through the application of specialist knowledge and research. Birmingham's early museum collections were brought together to inform, to educate and to enlighten. Skillfully designed and artistically fine objects were seen as being of assistance to Birmingham artisans and the eclectic variety of the objects reflects the variety of manufacturing in the City of a thousand trades.

When opened in 1885, the Museum & Art Gallery was at the heart of a civic and cultural centre for the city, driven to completion largely through the vision, vigour and influence of the Liberal leader, Joseph Chamberlain. The collections reflected the cultural preoccupations of the time, and included those aspects of art and design that were most highly regarded. There were displays of European, especially Italian, Renaissance material, including metalwork, ceramics, and glass, architectural sculpture and furniture and large loan collections of enamels, glass and ceramics. The needs of the city's metalworking industries were catered for in extensive displays of international jewellery and metalwork, including fine groups of both historic and contemporary Scandinavian, South Asian, Chinese and Japanese material. The city's arms manufacturing tradition was reflected in the Museum of Small Arms, acquired in 1876 from the Guardians of the Gun Barrel Proof House.

The international emphasis was maintained through the presence of outstanding individual works, such as the statue of Buddha from Sultanganj, in collections of historic Pre-Columbian American ceramics, classical Attic pottery, Iranian and Syrian tiles and European textiles, as well as collections of contemporary North Indian textiles and European glass. The eclectic displays' primary purpose was as a design resource in the South Kensington tradition. This focus was largely due to the Museum's first curator, Whitworth Wallis, appointed in 1883, fresh from a curatorial post at South Kensington, and whose influence on the establishment of the collections and the future pattern of development for the Museum was enormous.

In addition to fine and decorative art, the city developed its natural science collections with the Chase bird collection and numerous specimens of zoology, entomology and herbaria. The collections were to be a stimulus to the visitor on the diversity of natural life on earth as well as what could be found in and around the city.

In the early 20th century other gifts continued to broaden the Museum's collections. The extraordinary generosity of these benefactors, coupled with the varied nature of the collections, began to lead to a more passive approach to collecting, and an associated lack of direction to the collection's growth. The collection became strong in those areas in which it received gifts; but the Museum did not address those areas in which gifts were absent.

After the Second World War, under the directorship of Trenchard Cox, and his successor Mary Woodall (initially Cox's Keeper of Art), a new confidence developed. It was during this time that the outstanding collection of European Baroque painting was largely formed. A major collection of early English furniture was established for display at Aston and Blakesley Halls. Highly important examples of silver, ceramics and sculpture were purchased to provide an overview of the development of different European and English art forms from the Renaissance to the early 19th century.

This new sense of purpose and direction inevitably led to a rationalisation of the Museum's own collections. Several groups of material, including the majority of the Museum's collections of South Asian and Far Eastern metalwork and European furniture, together with a significant group of British, mostly

Victorian, paintings were disposed of by sale during the 1950s. The collection was weakened by what, in retrospect, appears an act of irrevocable rashness.

Although archaeological and ethnographic material had been entering the collections since the earliest days, the absence of a dedicated department for archaeological collections had led to a haphazard approach to the acquisition of material. A rigorous acquisition programme was put in hand with the appointment of the first Keeper of Archaeology in 1945, providing coherence to existing material and to extend the collection into new areas. This resulted in important groups of material from excavations in the ancient cities of Jericho and Jerusalem, Nimrud and Ur, the necropolis of Saqqara, the desert city of Petra and other major sites of the ancient world entering the collection.

Much of the ethnographic collection was acquired through individual collectors, most notably Arthur Wilkins, Ida Wench and P Amaury Talbot. As the range and quality of the collections increased, so Birmingham became the beneficiary of works transferred from smaller, local museums such as Tamworth, Stoke on Trent, Gloucester, Warwickshire, Reading and Shrewsbury, whose ethnographic or foreign archaeological material was considered to be of greater relevance within a more comprehensive collection.

From the 1940s material was actively sought which reflected the city's local history and development, tracing the evolution of the town from its pre-industrial, rural past to the 20th century. The acquisition in 1965 of the Pinto collection of wooden bygones – the finest such collection in the world – brought the Museum an outstanding collection of social historical material of international range.

Birmingham's Museum of Science & Industry opened in 1951 displaying collections that had been built up since the late 19th century. Some machines, recognised at the time as important examples of manufacturing progress, were "labeled" for transfer to the Museum of Science & Industry at the end of their working life. The collections related to both the illustration of scientific principles and progress and the development of Birmingham as the prime industrial city in the country. Birmingham's pre-eminence in the car industry, metal trades, and arms manufacturing was well represented.

The turn of the century has seen a greater focus on pro-active collecting of local history, particularly contemporary material reflecting the life, work and diverse cultures of a modern multicultural and multifaith city, culminating in the Millennibrum project. This collection area was further strengthened by a postwar Birmingham history collecting programme to support the development of new Birmingham History Galleries at the Museum & Art Gallery in 2012.

In the last two decades there has also been a considerable expansion of contemporary fine and applied art thanks to two major acquisitions programmes: the Contemporary Art Society's Special Collection Scheme supported by the Friends of BM&AG; and the Art Fund International programme which enabled Birmingham Museums to develop an outstanding collection of international contemporary art jointly owned with New Art Gallery Walsall, in partnership with the Ikon gallery.

The development of the collection would not have been possible without the generosity and support of donors and in particular, external grant-giving bodies. With core funding from Birmingham City Council for the Museums Service, a modest acquisition budget has acted as seed corn for external support. The contributions of government funds administered by the Victoria & Albert Museum, Science Museum PRISM fund, Art Fund (formerly National Art Collections Fund), The National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Contemporary Art Society, Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Funds have greatly assisted collections development. The Friends of Birmingham Museums and the Public Picture Gallery Fund, have been proactive supporters of acquisitions since their foundation, alongside local and national charitable trusts.

6 An overview of current collections and priorities for future collecting

6.1 Collections Development Objectives 2014-19

The following strategic collections development objectives set a framework for collecting over the five year period and do not focus on any one specific collection area:

1. To engage with and consult audiences about collecting, encouraging personal donations
2. To develop pro-active, creative and responsive programmes of contemporary collecting.
3. To represent the way in which the city and its people have changed over time.
4. To collect material that reflects growing up, living and working in Birmingham.
5. To increase the representation of BAME artists, designers and makers.
6. To increase the representation of artists, designers and makers with a close association to Birmingham.
7. To tell the story of technological innovation, industrial design and production in Birmingham
8. To collect material that reflects Birmingham to the world, and the world to Birmingham.
9. To collect material that supports BMT's priority projects including the major 'BMAG21C' redevelopment of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, and a new masterplan for Thinktank
10. To acquire objects of pre-eminent quality which contribute to the breadth, range and quality of the collection

6.2 Collection Area Overviews and Priority Collecting Areas

Birmingham Museums Trust has a vast and diverse range of collections of local, regional, national and international significance. The collections of Art, Science and Industry, Birmingham History, Numismatics (coins and medals), and the Pinto collection of wooden objects have all been Designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as collections of national importance; whilst the collections of Archaeology, Ethnography and Natural History are currently recognised as an important regional resource within the West Midlands.

The following section gives a summary of each area of the collection and identifies specific priority collecting areas over the coming five years:

6.3 ART

6.3.1 Fine Art

26,500 items of mainly Western European art including paintings, works on paper, sculpture, digital art and photography from the 12th to the 21st centuries. Strengths include: a substantial and internationally significant collection of the Pre-Raphaelites and their contemporaries; the largest collection in the UK of the work of Birmingham-born artist David Cox; 25,000 works on paper, especially British 18th and 19th century watercolours and drawings; Italian Baroque painting (major works by Gentileschi, Guercino and Castiglione); modern and contemporary art, particularly British

art, abstract painting and printmaking, and work by over 25 international contemporary artists on the theme of the Metropolis and the urban environment.

Work by female artists is still relatively under-represented, particularly in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites. Work by BAME artists is also under-represented. Work by artists with a close association to Birmingham, including the Birmingham School is a collection strength, which will continue to be a priority for development. The generous Tessa Sidey bequest for purchasing prints has created an opportunity to extend the print collection area in particular, in consultation with colleagues at The British Museum, which builds on an existing strength. The Metropolis theme will be extended to include work by British artists to strengthen the contemporary collection further. Digital work will also be prioritised to build on the small but significant group of works acquired under the Art Fund International scheme. Contemporary sculpture has been identified as an area for development based on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection, which is strong in traditional, historic work, with outstanding examples of work by major British sculptors of the modern movement, but there is potential to bring it up to date and represent the diversity and quality of work being made today.

6.3.2 Applied Art

40,618 items of ceramics, jewellery, silver and metalwork, glass, stained glass and design archives, furniture and woodwork, textiles and dress from the medieval period to the present. Strengths include: British Arts and Crafts and the Birmingham School (complementing the fine art collection); Birmingham jewellery and metalworking, including the outstanding Matthew Boulton material; the Pinto collection of treen, Canziani collection and other items, collectively forming a nationally significant collection of British and European Folk Art; contemporary metalwork, and studio ceramics. World cultures collections also include significant groups of Chinese, Japanese, Islamic and South Asian material which position the collection within a global context of trade and cultural exchange.

Work by female and BAME artists, designers and makers remains under-represented across most areas. Work produced by artists, designers, makers and manufacturers associated with Birmingham, including the Birmingham School, is an existing strength and will be a priority for further development.

Research into mapping and assessing the significance of the Islamic and South Asian collection is ongoing. This has been identified as a priority for collection development based on over 10 years of audience development and programming, and will feed into plans for the major BMAG21C redevelopment of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery in particular.

6.3.3 Priority collecting areas for Art 2014-19:

1. To acquire work by artists, designers or makers associated with the Birmingham School
2. To acquire material relating to the British Arts & Crafts movement, which build on existing collection strengths
3. To acquire prints which strengthen the significance of the works on paper collection, supported by the Tessa Sidey bequest
4. To acquire work by female artists, designers and makers and increase the representation of female artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelites in particular

5. To acquire work by artists who draw on Islamic traditions and increase the representation of Muslim cultures
6. To increase the representation of South Asian cultures
7. To acquire work by designers and makers associated with The School of Jewellery
8. To acquire work which extends the theme of the Metropolis and urban experience
9. To acquire work by contemporary artists working in new media, and sculpture

6.4 HISTORY

6.4.1 Ancient Near East

6,700 items from the Neolithic to the period of Islamic conquest in the 7th century AD. Jordan / Palestine / Israel, ancient Mesopotamia and Persia are well represented, Anatolia and Syria-Lebanon less so. Most of the collections are from controlled excavations and therefore well provenanced. Sites in the Levant are mainly represented by objects from Jericho with additional material from Lachish, Jerusalem and Petra, covering the Neolithic, Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age. Mesopotamian material consists principally of objects from Nineveh, Ur and Nimrud, dating to the prehistoric to the post-Assyrian periods. Highlights include a plastered skull from Jericho, Nimrud ivories and Luristan bronzes.

This collection area is not a priority for collecting as we wish to make better and more use of the collections we already have, through working collaboratively with The British Museum to further research and display.

6.4.2 Ancient Egypt

8,000 ancient Egyptian artefacts spanning Egyptian history from the Predynastic period to the Graeco-Roman and Coptic eras. Includes material Egypt Exploration Society (EES) excavations, particularly Saqqara, Buhen, Qasr Ibrim, Abydos and Esna. Further material from rationalisation of regional museum collections, and a large group of material from the collection of Henry Wellcome. Strengths include a rich diversity of smaller objects illustrating daily life, such as Late Period bronzes, mummies, shabtis, Predynastic pottery and ivory work, amulets and stone vessels. Limited pharaonic material, and the collection lacks examples of papyrus or significant monumental stonework.

This collection area is not a priority for collecting. It remains a popular and important collection for formal learning and public access has been increased significantly in recent years through loans and touring exhibitions.

6.4.3 Ancient Greece, Rome and Cyprus

3,700 items from Ancient Greece and Rome, the only collection of its kind in the West Midlands. Strengths include high quality pottery, a representative collection of clay figurines, clay oil lamps, metal items and plaster casts from Ancient Greece, and pottery, clay oil lamps, clay figurines, some stone sculpture and inscriptions, glass vessels and some metalwork from Ancient Rome. The Cypriot collection consists mainly of pottery, with many complete pots dating from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period. It includes a large group of pieces from an Early Bronze Age cemetery at Vounous.

This collection area is not a priority for collecting as we wish to make better and more use of the collections we already have, through further research and interpretation. The number of items on display increased recently in 2013 with a redisplay at BMAG which targets schools in particular.

6.4.4 British Archaeology

18,750 items including prehistoric, Roman and medieval material mainly from excavations in the West Midlands. The finds from Weoley Castle dating from the 13th-16th century include high status material such as pottery, metal tools and vessels, glass and organic remains. The Anglo-Saxon holdings have been transformed by the discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard in 2009 – over 4,000 artefacts and fragments dating from the 7th century, made from gold, silver and copper alloy, decorated with garnet and fine filigree. The majority are fittings from the hilts of swords and daggers, and there are also helmet parts and Christian crosses.

This collection area is not a priority except in relation to the Staffordshire Hoard. The new Staffordshire Hoard Gallery opening Oct 2014 at BMAG has been designed to support the rotation of the Hoard and inclusion of contextual material in the future.

BMT also recognises its responsibility to be a repository for material from archaeological excavations and chance finds within the city boundaries.

6.4.5 Numismatics

37,850 items forming one of the most important collections of its kind in the UK due to its size, breadth, and capacity to demonstrate the impact that Birmingham-made coins and tokens have had on coinage world-wide. Strengths include Birmingham-made coins and tokens from the 18th-20th centuries, particularly those associated with Matthew Boulton, the Soho and Birmingham Mints. Medals date from the 16th – 21st centuries and commemorate an enormous range of subjects ranging from people, places and events, and place those made or worn in Birmingham in an international context.

Collecting in this area will build on existing strengths and support the strategic objectives, particularly (8) 'To collect material that reflects Birmingham to the world and the world to Birmingham'.

6.4.6 Birmingham history

34,696 items, a diverse collection representing the history of Birmingham and its people from prehistory to the present, and demonstrating the city's international role. Represents domestic, working and civic life, local trades and industries, personal items associated with political figures such as Joseph Chamberlain, topographical views and a significant collection of oral histories.

The Birmingham history galleries at BMAG ('Birmingham: its people, its history') have drawn on the strengths of this collection area and provided unprecedented levels of access to the collection since they opened in 2012. However, the collection is under-representative of the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the city, and contains relatively little material to represent the period from the Second World War to the present. These aspects are a particular priority for development in order to enable us to tell the story of the changing city and its diverse communities more effectively.

6.4.7 World cultures

9,160 items, including material from Oceania, Australia, Polynesia and Melanesia, Africa, North, South and Central America, and Asia. Particular strengths are weaponry, West African textiles and

Peruvian pottery. Highlights include an Oklahoma Cherokee coat, a Rarotongan god stick, and the large copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj. The collection as a whole would benefit from specialist assessment.

There is a presumption against acquiring historic material and material without provenance. Research into key collectors and the formation of certain collection areas is being carried out as part of the Honorary Research Associates programme supported by the University of Birmingham. This will include research into contemporary material for potential acquisition, to provide a context for the historic items and the cultures they derive from, and enable us to present this as a 'living' collection.

6.4.8 Priority collecting areas for History 2014-19:

1. To acquire material which strengthens the significance of the Birmingham history collection
2. To acquire material from Aston, Soho, Nechells and Ladywood on the theme of growing up, living and working in Birmingham, supported by the HLF 'Collecting Cultures' award.
3. To acquire objects and oral histories which tell the story of Birmingham in the 1950s
4. To acquire objects and oral histories which reflect the history and impact of the First World War on Birmingham people
5. To acquire objects and oral histories which reflect the history and impact of the Second World War on Birmingham people
6. To acquire items with direct relevance to the histories and context of Birmingham Museums Trust's Heritage Sites
7. To acquire material which provides context for the Staffordshire Hoard
8. To acquire finds and associated documentation from archaeological excavations within the boundaries of the city of Birmingham
9. To acquire significant chance finds of archaeological material found within the boundaries of the city of Birmingham
10. To acquire contemporary indigenous art from Pacific and North America, which connects to the historic material in the collection

6.5 SCIENCE & INDUSTRY

6.5.1 Transport and technology

40,480 items covering transport, engineering, machine tools and production machines, scientific and medical instruments, music boxes, player pianos and organs, horology, computing and mechanical devices spanning over 250 years of technological development. Products of Birmingham's historic trades and industries such as motorcars, firearms, pens and buttons are well-represented. James Watt's Smethwick Engine of 1778 is the oldest working steam engine in the world and its significance in the history of world industrialisation can hardly be overstated. The City of Birmingham steam locomotive and the Spitfire are spectacular objects.

This collection area is under-developed with no history of recent collecting activity. As with Birmingham history, the collection is not up to date and we will build on the collection's historic strengths to acquire material that reflects Birmingham's place at the cutting edge of technological and design innovation. The Spitfire Gallery (opens Thinktank March 2015) includes a contemporary collecting strand which will enhance the representation of the local significance of this aircraft, its manufacture and the social history of its production.

6.5.2 Natural science

250,000 items, covering zoology, botany, entomology, geology, mineralogy and palaeontology, the largest natural science collection in the West Midlands, and an important regional resource. Particular strengths include significant bird, egg, herbarium, mollusc, insect, gem and mineral collections. These are valuable for scientific research and include unique type specimens as well as impressive display specimens such as the Triceratops dinosaur skull, fossil crocodile and Giant Irish Deer.

This collection area is underdeveloped with no history of recent collecting activity. Research into this area is an ongoing priority, with an ACE-funded Curator of Natural Science in post since early 2013. The emphasis for development will be on acquiring specimens which have a particular impact for display, or significant value in terms of research potential, strengthening BMT's position as a regional resource.

6.5.3 Priority collecting areas for Science & Industry 2014-19:

1. To acquire material relating to the local aviation industry including the production of the Spitfire aircraft
2. To acquire material relating to technological research and development in Birmingham including medical, nanotechnology, Bio-energy
3. To acquire material relating to the development of the computing and gaming industries in Birmingham
4. To acquire specimens specifically for display e.g. mounted taxidermy, skeletons, fossils
5. To acquire regional natural science collections which have a significant research value
6. To acquire items which link to existing collections e.g. a common provenance such as the Carlier or Chase collections

7 Collection Rationalisation and disposal

7.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

7.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

- 7.3** Please see BMT's Lending, Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2014-19: Section 4 Disposal Policy for reasons for disposal, procedures and approval processes; and Appendix 1 Procedures for Governing Lending, Acquisitions and Disposals

8 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 8.1** The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

9 Collecting policies of other museums

- 9.1** 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

- 9.2** Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

Art

National Gallery
National Portrait Gallery
V&A
National Museums Liverpool
The Ashmolean
Manchester Art Gallery and Platt Hall
Bristol Museums & Art Gallery
Cambridge University Museums
Bath Costume Museum
Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry
New Art Gallery Walsall
Wolverhampton Arts & Museums
Sandwell Museums
Barber Institute of Fine Arts

History

British Museum
Royal Armouries Museum
Imperial War Museum
National Museums Liverpool
Oxford University Museums
Manchester Museum
Horniman Museum
Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
Bristol Museums
Warwickshire County Museums Service
Museums Worcestershire
Shropshire County Museums
Library of Birmingham – Archives and Heritage Services
University of Birmingham – Special Collections

Natural Science

Natural History Museum
National Museums Liverpool
Manchester Museum
Leeds City Museum
University of Birmingham - Lapworth Museum

Transport and Technology

The Science Museum, London
Imperial War Museum
Museum of Science and Industry
Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne
Centre for Life, Newcastle upon Tyne
Bristol Museums
Culture Coventry

This list is not exhaustive and other institutions to be consulted where relevant.

10 Acquisition

- 10.1** The policy and procedures for agreeing acquisitions is outlined in the Lending, Acquisition and Disposals Policy 2014-19, to which this Collection Development Policy is an appendix
- 10.2** 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).
- 10.3** 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 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.

11 Human remains

- 11.1** As the museum holds human remains, it will obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004 and any subordinate legislation from time to time in force. It will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

12 Biological and geological material

- 12.1** 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.

13 Archaeological material

13.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (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.

13.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

14 Exceptions

14.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- 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. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

15 Spoliation

15.1 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.

16 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

16.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

16.2 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'.

17 Disposal procedures

17.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

17.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

17.3 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.

- 17.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 17.5** 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 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. 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.
- 17.6** 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 body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 17.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 17.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 17.9** 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.
- 17.10** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 the Arts Council England/CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales/Museums Galleries Scotland/Northern Ireland Museums Council (*delete as appropriate*).
- 17.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

17.12 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.

18 Disposal by Exchange

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

18.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 18.1-5 will apply.

18.2 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.

18.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

18.4 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.

19 Disposal by destruction

19.1 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

19.2 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

19.3 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

19.4 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

19.5 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.