

Acquisition and Disposal Policy

Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery



Approved: Wednesday 22nd August 2012
This policy will be reviewed in August 2015

1. Museum's statement of purpose

Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery will preserve, conserve and promote access to West Dunbartonshire Council's collections, developing and celebrating them, promoting learning and creativity while ensuring access for all

2. Existing Collections

- 2.1 The collections held by West Dunbartonshire Council are extremely varied, reflecting the merger of the collections of Clydebank and Dumbarton District Councils with some items incorporated from the former Strathclyde Regional Council.

2.1.1 Clydebank Legacy Collection

The legacy collection of Clydebank District Council is largely focussed on local industry.

2.1.1.1 Sewing Machines

The collection includes a large number of sewing machines dating from the 1850s through to the 1980s. These include Singer machines as well as the company's technological and copyright archive, comprising many more early machines. The collection houses many rare and collectable models. There is also a substantial collection of instruction books and technical photographs.

2.1.1.2 John Brown/Beardmore

The shipbuilding industry is represented by ship building tools, photographs, ship models and ephemera.

2.1.1.3 Tullis

The Tullis factory is represented by laundry equipment.

2.1.1.4 Industrial Ephemera

The collection includes tools and ship models that represent other local industries and places of work.

2.1.1.5 Social History

Social history is a less substantial part of the Clydebank legacy collection. However, there are various social history objects ranging from clothing to identity cards, cameras and shampoo.

2.1.2.6 Fine Art/Silver

The Clydebank legacy collection includes several pieces of Fine Art and several trophies and launch memorabilia.

2.1.2 Dumbarton Legacy Collection

The legacy collection of Dumbarton reflects social, geological and industrial history.

2.1.2.1 Social History

Social history is well represented in the Dumbarton legacy collection and consists of everyday items dating from the late nineteenth until the late twentieth century.

2.1.2.2 Industrial History

Local industry, from ship building to glass making, is well represented in the Dumbarton legacy collection. There are several, extremely rare, glass walking sticks from local glass making factories.

2.1.2.3 Geology/Archaeology

The collection includes a substantial number of local geological samples as well as some local archaeological and biological samples. The archaeological and biological samples are placed on long term loan at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow.

2.1.2.4 Fine Art/Silver

There is a well-established Fine Art collection, comprising c. 400 pieces. There is also a substantial collection of silverware.

3. Criteria governing future acquisition policy

3.1 Sewing Machines

The Council will no longer solicit sewing machines to add to the collection due to constraints in storage space and practicalities of exhibition and interpretation. It may still be appropriate to accept sewing machines and ephemera which will fill gaps in the collection.

3.2 Shipbuilding

The Council will no longer accept shipbuilding tools into the collection as this area is well represented. However, the Council will collect social history items related to shipbuilding and the lives of ship builders and their families.

3.3 Industrial History

Due to storage and exhibition and interpretation constraints, the Council will no longer actively collect industrial equipment. Industry is already well represented within the collection.

3.4 Geological/Archaeological Objects

Geological specimens will be added to the Collection to fill gaps that may exist. Archaeological specimens will also be accepted providing there is the expertise and facility to care for these appropriately

3.5 Fine Art

The Acquisitions Panel, including the Council's museum professional, will recommend to the Executive Director of Educational Services, or the Council (dependent on levels of delegated authority) the purchase of fine art as appropriate.

3.6 Silver

Silver will not be actively sought for the collection due to conservation and storage issues. In exceptional circumstances or to fill gaps in the collection items may be acquired with the permission of the Executive Director of Educational Services or the Council's museum professional as his/her representative.

3.7 Handling Collection

A handling collection will be established in order to allow the public to touch and examine objects. This collection will be made available for use by schools, reminiscence groups and others. It is proposed that some duplicate items as well as duplicate new acquisitions will be used for this purpose.

4. Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

4.1 Due to ongoing documentation of West Dunbartonshire Council's collections, rationalisation and disposal of collections is not a priority and will be reviewed at a future date.

4.2 The exception to this general statement is our sewing machine collection. Work is ongoing to identify and assess each machine in terms of quality and function. Duplicates will be identified and assessed for disposal.

5. 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.

6. 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 museum(s):

National Maritime Museum: Denny Tank

7. Policy review procedure

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Museum Galleries Scotland 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.

8. 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.

9. Acquisition procedures

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. 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).
- 9.3. 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, 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.

- 9.4. 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.
- 9.5. 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.
- 9.6. In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the West Dunbartonshire Council, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.
- 9.7. Any exceptions to the above clauses, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, or 9.5 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.

- 9.8 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. 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.

11. Management of archives

As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body 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 The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- 12.2. 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.
- 12.3. 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.
- 12.4. 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- 12.5. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12.7-12.19 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- 12.6. 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 12.7-12.13 and 12.19 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

The disposal decision-making process

- 12.7. 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- 12.8 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 of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- 12.9 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 Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 12.10. 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.

Disposal by gift or sale

- 12.11 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.

- 12.12. 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, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- 12.13. 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.

Disposal by exchange

- 12.14. 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.
- 12.15. 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 12.1-12.4 and 12.7-12.8 will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12.16-12.19.
- 12.16. 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.
- 12.17. 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.
- 12.18. 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.

Documenting disposal

- 12.19. 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.