




MAIDENHEAD HERITAGE CENTRE

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

(Developed in line with the ACE Collections Development Policy template 2014)

2016-2020

Approved by..... 

Position.....Trustee.....

Date.....13 October 2016

On behalf of Maidenhead Heritage Trust

Name of museum: Maidenhead Heritage Centre

Name of governing body: Maidenhead Heritage Trust

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 8 October 2016

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 8 October 2020

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.

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

- 1.1. The purpose of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre is to advance the formal and informal education of the public in the history of Maidenhead and district, by the collection, preservation, interpretation of, and provision of intellectual access to, relevant objects, images and archives.
- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.

1.7 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

2. History of the collections

The Maidenhead Heritage Trust was formed in 1995 to assume responsibility for the preservation, development and interpretation of collections from Maidenhead and District gathered together by the Maidenhead Civic Society and Maidenhead Historical and Archaeological Society for display in a Heritage Centre in 1993. After occupying a number of temporary premises, the current Maidenhead Heritage Centre building was purchased in 2006 and opened in 2008. Interpretation centres on a 'timeline' exhibition, supported by a changing exhibition programme, education provision and outreach.

In 1999 the internationally important Air Transport Auxiliary Association (ATA) object collection and archive, formerly on loan to Bristol Museum, was acquired. This Second World War aircraft ferry organization had its headquarters at nearby White Waltham. Its story is interpreted in a separate exhibition gallery and research facility.

The geographical collecting area ('Maidenhead and District') was redefined in 2011, following the opening of the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum, to consist of the former Maidenhead Municipal Borough area (Maidenhead Court, North Town, Furze Platt, Pinkneys Green, Highway, Tittle Row, Boyn Hill, Fishery and Bray Wick; together with the parishes of Cox Green and Altwood in Cox Green parish, Woodlands Park in White Waltham parish, and part of Bray Wick in Bray parish), together with Bray, Holyport, Taplow, and the former Cookham Rural District Council area (Cookham Village, Cookham Rise and Cookham Dean).

3. An overview of current collections

3.1. The collections comprise over 6,000 accessioned objects. Approximately half are paper-based, including printed books, periodicals, documents, archives, ephemera, prints, photographs and postcards. Nearly a quarter are related to the Air Transport Auxiliary, including a majority of the c.250 pieces of costume and the c.30 works of fine art. The remaining quarter consists of mostly late 19th and 20th century social history objects, and excavated and casual finds donated via the Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society.

3.2. Archaeological Collection – donations from Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society, including material from nine local excavations and casual finds, covering Palaeolithic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and Post Medieval periods.

- 3.3. Social History Collections – generally passively collected 19th to 21st Century objects, including:
- products, equipment, promotional material and paper ephemera relating to local companies, industry & traders (e.g. Vandervell/Vanwall, Hacker/Dynatron, Taylowe, Taplow Mill, Woolley Hall, Blair Films, Peakes, Fairey Aviation, Skindles Hotel, Mountfield lawnmowers, Bray Studios)
 - bottles, promotional material and paper ephemera relating to local breweries and dairies (e.g. Nicholsons)
 - promotional material, photographs and paper ephemera relating to the River Thames (e.g. regattas, Thames Conservancy, pleasure boats)
 - works of art depicting Maidenhead & district buildings, events, personalities etc.
 - uniform, photographs and paper ephemera relating to local schools
 - archives (e.g. Maidenhead Constitutional Club, Benton & Allen, Odney Pottery)
 - uniform, medals, equipment and paper ephemera relating to the two world wars (e.g. Home Guard, ARP, Berkshire Regiment & Yeomanry, Canadian Red Cross Hospital, RAF)
 - local sporting event trophies
 - small objects, illustrations and paper ephemera relating to the Great Western Railway, and Maidenhead's bridges
 - Maidenhead & District commemoratives, and Royal commemoratives (e.g. spoons, brochures, postcards, china)
 - small objects and paper ephemera relating to law and order and paramilitary organizations (e.g. handcuffs, pocket pistol, medals, scouting manuals)
- 3.4. Second World War Air Transport Auxiliary Collection – core object, archive & image collection donated by ATA Association in 1999, augmented by actively collected provenanced uniform, flying equipment and personal papers. Internationally important, and supported by ongoing research and database of digitized material held by other organizations and individuals. Highlights include: uniform, flying equipment and log books etc of Ann Wood Kelly (one of 168 ATA women pilots), a searchable database of 100+ logbooks, 500+ identified portrait photographs, 40+ video interviews and audio recordings collected for Giles Whittell's book 'Spitfire Women'.
- 3.5. Learning/Handling collection – non-accessioned surrogate, duplicated or unprovenanced items supporting learning provision, (e.g. Paleolithic and Roman archaeological finds, war time).

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 4.1. Future collecting will be undertaken with reference to the Forward Plan, supporting the key themes of the 'permanent' galleries (coaching, river & railway, ATA), the priorities of the changing exhibition programme, and the learning and outreach provisions.
- 4.2. Lists of objects targeted for pro-active collecting will be generated in line with ongoing initiatives, as outlined in the Forward Plan (e.g. 'Maidenhead in 100 Objects'), and added to this document as appendices.
- 4.3. Objects collected in support of the learning and outreach provision, and all those used for 'handling' activities, will be retained as catalogued non-accessioned stock.
- 4.4. Surrogates of local topographical images, ATA images, logbooks and associated ephemera will be collected, with copyright as appropriate, for exhibition and research purposes. These will be retained as catalogued non-accessioned stock.

- 4.5. Larger objects, for incorporation in the proposed developed MHC, will be considered subject to the ability of the MHC to house or store them in the interim. These include: Vanwall racing car; GWK car, Fairey Gannet aeroplane, Gunsmith Light Tractor, horsedrawn coaches and wagons with local provenance, commercial and pleasure craft with a Thames provenance. These may be represented by scale models which will be retained as catalogued non-accessioned stock.
- 4.6. Passive future collecting only of local excavations and casual finds, due to availability of regional archaeological objects on loan from Reading Museum, and the former Maidenhead Museum collection from the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum.
- 4.7. Archaeological archives will not be accepted.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. De-accessioning, and potential disposal, will be considered by the MHT for items within one or more of the following categories:
- 5.3.1. Items that fall outside the core collection as defined by the Collections Development Policy.
- 5.3.2. Items which may be better placed elsewhere (e.g. Berkshire Records Office)
- 5.3.3. Items for which the museum is unable to provide adequate care or curation.
- 5.3.4. Items that are damaged or deteriorated (e.g. by spoliation or infestation) beyond the museum's ability to repair.
- 5.3.5. Duplicate items.
- 5.3.6. Items without relevant provenance or context.
- 5.3.7. Items to be replaced by duplicate acquisitions with more appropriate context and/or provenance and/or completeness and/or condition.
- 5.3.8. Items that pose a threat to health and safety (e.g. containing asbestos, mercury, radioactive material).
- 5.3.9. Surrogates.
- 5.3.10. Objects for which legal title is in doubt.
- 5.3.11. Any disposal arising from 5.3., 5.4., 5.5. or 5.6. will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Museums Association Disposals Toolkit 2014 (see attached).

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

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

7. Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1. 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 to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2. Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

- Windsor & Royal Borough Museum
- Reading Museum Service
- Museum of Berkshire Aviation
- Buckingham County Museum
- Berkshire Record Office
- Royal Air Force Museum
- Imperial War Museums
- Brooklands Museum
- Maidenhead Local Studies
- Wessex Film and Sound Archive
- Yorkshire Air Museum

8. Archival holdings

The Museum holds and intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera. As such we will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002). Details of the types of archival material we collect and intend to collect are contained in sections 3 and 4 above.

9. Acquisition

9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

9.1.1. Objects offered for acquisition are assessed by the Curator with reference to:

- the statement of purpose
- requirements of the Forward Plan
- existing collections
- existing collections and collecting policies of organization listed under 7.2 and 8. (above)
- provenance
- condition
- cost & ability to collect, preserve and interpret
- associated hazards
- clear title

9.1.2. Formal proposal for acquisition is made by the Curator for agreement at the next monthly Management Team meeting.

9.1.3. A report on new acquisitions is presented at the Trustees' meeting.

9.2. 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).

- 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, 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.

10. Human remains

- 10.1 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.

11 Biological and geological material

- 11.1 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.

12 Archaeological material

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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).

13 Exceptions

- 13.1 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.

14 Spoliation

- 14.1 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.

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 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.
- 15.2 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'.

16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 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.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 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.
- 16.5 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.
- 16.6 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.
- 16.7 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.
- 16.8 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).

- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 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.
- 16.11 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.
- 16.12 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.
- 16.13 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.
- 16.13.1 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 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2 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.
- 16.13.3 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).

- 16.13.4. 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.
- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.
- 16.17 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.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

