

ORFORD MUSEUM COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Governing Body: The Trustees of Orford Museum

APPROVED by the Trustees on 15 November 2016

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: July 2021

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 museum's statement of purpose is:

- (i) Identify, acquire, catalogue, digitise and display artefacts, graphics and archive material relating to the Area of Interest whenever they become available.
- (ii) Conserve and care for the Museum's collection.
- (iii) Provide access to museum collection in Orford Castle, Orford Church and Museum store. And to provide adults and children with opportunities to engage with Museum archives and artefacts in a practical way.
- (iv) To maintain a secure financial position and to keep Trustees informed of museum activities a minimum of twice yearly.
- (v) To agree a Succession Policy to ensure that the future of the museum is secure as far as possible.

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. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2. History of the collections

(Extract taken from Orford Museum – a long gestation period written by Hon Curator Margaret Poulter, dated 9 August 1997)

“It is not known when the idea for an Orford Museum was first mooted. It is known that Major John Steuart Gratton came to Quay House, Orford in 1950, having retired from the Indian Army, and spent the next 30 years researching and collecting items relating to the history of Orford and at least from 1970 promoting the idea (with the support of the Town Trust) of a museum to house the borough regalia. Plans were produced as early as 1974 (and again in 1980 when a Museum Sub-Committee of Orford Town Trust was established and outline planning permission obtained) for a museum building behind the Town Hall. An alternative considered in 1976 was to convert the old warehouse on the quay, subsequently discarded on the grounds of costs. AMSSEE (now SEMS, South Eastern Museums Service) became involved with the museum project in 1979. The history of Orford Museum seems to have been one of coming to the brink of success and being thwarted at the last moment. Major Steuart Gratton left Orford in the 1980s and died a few years ago, sadly not having seen his ‘grand scheme’ come to fruition. In 1994 the cause was taken up by a local councilor, Charlie Underwood, which resulted in a museum being opened at the end of July 1994 in temporary accommodation, the old stables behind the Crown and Castle Hotel, opposite the Castle. In 1995 the museum opened for the whole season from May to the end of September, manned by the Friends of Orford Museum”.

Under the auspices of the first curator, Margaret Poulter, and the Chairman Michael Flint, the museum was moved from the Crown and Castle to temporary storage whilst a new home could be found. This materialised in 2005 when it was established in its present location in the Upper Hall of Orford Castle with the support and agreement of English Heritage. In 2009 the museum attained its first Accreditation standard. The collection is based on the Orford Town Trust’s Regalia, archives and artefacts dating from the 16th Century (OrfMus: 1993.1-145). Many of these archives are now housed in the Suffolk Record Office with copies kept at the museum, the artefacts are held by the Town Trust, with some smaller items in the museum (Case 2). The collection has broadened over the years with the result that the six cases in the Castle are divided into themes; Case 1 Orford

Castle; Case 2 The Borough; Case 3 Archaeology. This collection has been made possible with the help of a local land owner, Sir Edward Greenwell and a local metal detectorist, Alan Calver; Case 4: The Bronze Age. The Butley hoard of Bronze Age Axe Heads is on long term loan from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, they were found near Butley and excavated by Basil Brown (OrfMus: 2010.40); Case 5 is a mixed small items display, coins, buttons and jewelry; Case 6 River, Land and Sea – a title which allows the display to be changed when a particular theme arises. The present display shows some of the museum's WWI artefacts relating to those lost during the war. It also houses items relating to Orford Ness, particularly the Orfordness Lighthouse and the MOD's secret research during WWI through to WWII/Cold War. It can therefore be seen that the history of the Castle, the Sudbourne Estate, the Orford Town Trust, Trinity House (and the sea) and Ministry of Defence have had a very strong influence on the museum's collection. There is also a small museum store in which the larger artefacts are kept, together with all the paper archives. Please see our website <http://www.orfordmuseum.org.uk> and click on the Virtual Museum button to view the museum cases.

3. An overview of current collections

The collection held by the museum covers the period from pre-history to the present day, with a wide variety of items which have been donated by the local community. For example, a Stone Age flint, Swedish Plate money dated 1716 found on Orford Ness in 1913, to a twentieth century textile collection – the latter being donated by a family who have lived in Orford for three generations. It is clear that this museum mirrors very much the lives of local people, as well as outside influences; this has been recognised as being of importance to the community who have shown they are interested in learning about their own history. This is therefore a strength. The area, and also the collection, are of national importance with links to the Wallace Collection, Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Defence and Trinity House to name a few. The museum only collects items relevant to its area of interest and therefore fulfils the criteria for its Statement of Purpose.

The collection consists of artefacts and archives; a large proportion has been photographed, the remainder is currently in a planned digitisation programme - please see Forward Plan. As part of the museum's education commitment, there is an unaccessioned collection of items available to use with school children. These are not accessioned as they are already represented in the collection or do not fulfil the collection criteria. The links the museum has with local schools is considered to be a strength.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The priority remains the same, collecting items relevant to the museum's area of interest. Exhibitions, given past experience, often spur the local community to look into their own archives and artefacts which can then be shared at an exhibition. Some of these may well be donated to the museum after the exhibition. It also encourages some of the local community to research the exhibition subject in depth, because of a particular interest or it relates to their family. The museum's Bulletin gains from this by receiving new research

material for articles. All of which also benefit the museum's collection particularly as a research resource.

The museum is restricted in its ability to collect large artefacts given the small size of its store, and the limited number of cases in Orford Castle. However, where it is not possible to house a large item, we would ask for a photograph together with written information.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The museum follows its own Statement of Purpose and Documentation Policy thus negating the need for rationalisation. Please see Documentation Procedural Manual, 5. Object Exit. The museum can confirm that disposal is not a priority for this current period.

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.

There is no active disposal or rationalisation planned for this current period.

5.3 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

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 or 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):
Ipswich Museum.**

8 Archival holdings

The museum's policy, where relevant, is to copy original documents for the museum's archive and lodge the originals with the Suffolk Record Office unless expressly asked not to by the donors. Please see the Documentation Procedural Manual.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

On entry each item should be assessed for the following:

- (i) whether it falls within the scope of Orford Museum's collecting policy and has a clear provenance.
- (ii) condition and conservation requirements
- (iii) if archival, the collection is sorted, packaged in archival material and, if appropriate, with the donor's permission, deposited in the Suffolk Record Office, with Orford Museum keeping a scanned or photographic copy, or photocopy in the museum archive. If the donor wishes the archives to be retained by the museum, then it remains in-house. (For example: OrfMus 2013.1 The Townlands Trust archive is retained by the Museum at the request of their Trustees).

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

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.

14.2 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'.

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

Not applicable.

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.

16.12 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.

Disposal by exchange

16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

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, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.