



# Accreditation

## Collections Development Policy

### Tameside Museums and Galleries



**Name of museum:** *Tameside Museums and Galleries*

**Name of governing body:** *Tameside MBC*

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *Insert date*

**Policy review procedure:** *This Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted below. 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 existing collections.*

**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:** *May 2024*

**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:

*"A dynamic, engaging and responsive Museum Service that celebrates the people and places of Tameside, ensuring a meaningful and enjoyable experience for all."*

Tameside Museums and Galleries are owned and governed by the local authority, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. The Museum Service was established in 1974. Prior to that date there was only one art gallery in the Borough, the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery. All services are operated directly by Tameside MBC. The Council are also custodians of the collection held in trust by the Trustees of the Manchester Regiment in relation to the loan agreement established in 1987.

Tameside Museums and Galleries Service comprises the following sites:

- Portland Basin Museum (Ashton-under-Lyne)
- The Museum of the Manchester Regiment (Ashton-under-Lyne) – this site is currently closed pending refurbishment
- Astley Cheetham Art Gallery (Stalybridge)

The Museums Manager is the Chief Officer of the Museums and Galleries Service and reports to the head of Cultural and Customer Services who in turn reports to the Assistant Director for Operations and Neighbourhoods who in turn reports to the Director for Operations and Neighbourhoods who in turn reports to the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council.

This reporting structure also includes a range of elected members who sit within the Executive Cabinet and are responsible for areas such as Economic Growth, Employment and Housing, Lifelong Learning, and Neighbourhood Services. Finally, this structure includes reporting to third parties such as the Manchester Regiment Advisory Committee and other bodies as deemed appropriate.

This policy sets out the collecting policy of Tameside Museums and Galleries, including an overview of what is already held in the collection and areas for future collecting. It sits alongside the Museum's Forward Plan, the Documentation Plan, the Documentation Procedural Manual and the Care and Conservation Policy.

- 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 5.0 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

2.1 The collections of Tameside Museums and Galleries Service fall into several categories:

### 2.2 ***Astley Cheetham Collection:***

Astley Cheetham Art Gallery opened in 1932, following a donation of money for the building of a library and art gallery in 1910 by the Cheetham family of Stalybridge. The gallery displayed the art collection bequeathed to the Stalybridge Corporation by J.F Cheetham and his wife Beatrice Emma Astley. The collection was bequeathed with certain conditions attached, preventing any artworks being sold. The collection consists of many well-known Victorian artists and also a number of works by early European masters. The collection has since been added to and now comprises over 1000 paintings, drawings and sculptures. The collection continues to be displayed at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery in a changing programme of exhibitions.

### 2.3 ***Harry Rutherford Collection:***

Alongside the Astley Cheetham Collection, Tameside also cares for 150 paintings and sketches by Harry Rutherford. Rutherford was a local artist and a contemporary and friend of LS Lowry. The collection has been acquired through donations from family members and also a local collector, who has loaned and donated several paintings from his collection.

The collection was displayed as part of temporary exhibitions at Central Art Gallery throughout the 1990s and 2000s before being housed in its own gallery inside Hyde Library between 2008 and 2012. Following the relocation of Hyde Library in 2012, one of the exhibition rooms at Central Art Gallery was given over to a permanent display of Rutherford works. Central Art Gallery closed in February 2019 and the Rutherford collection is currently in storage. The plan is for a new permanent Rutherford Gallery to be established as part of the new Museum of the Manchester Regiment when it reopens.

### 2.4 ***Social and Industrial History Collection:***

The social history collection began life at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery during the 1930s. The gallery took in donations of collections from local collectors, such as the Radcliffe collection of around 140 Ancient Egyptian, Roman and Greek items. These had been purchased at auctions by a local mill manager, Norman Bramley Radcliffe, and donated to the gallery by his widow in the 1930s.

Another notable donation was a set of six Chippendale chairs which came via the Art Fund in the 1950s following the dispersal of items from the home of Mr Ernest Edward Cook, grandson of travel agent founder Thomas Cook. The contents of his home were shared among galleries around the country as part of his bequest.

The borough's collection of civic silver is included in this collection. It consists of candelabra, historic mayoral chains, cups and trophies, ceremonial trowels and other items brought together from the nine towns of Tameside when the borough was formed in 1974.

The majority of items in the social history collection have 1978 accession numbers, meaning that a bulk accessioning of existing items took place during this year. The provenance and date of donation for some of the objects is unknown.

The collection was expanded in the 1970s when the idea to create Portland Basin Museum was conceived, and again in the 1990s when the museum was redeveloped. Large items of machinery from local companies were actively collected, as were items to fill the museum's 1920s street.

### 2.5 ***Natural History Collection:***

This collection also started life at Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, with a donation of 3,300 shells from the family of local collector Charles Moore. Added to the collection in 1951 were 2,680 pressed plants collected by W. Whitehead and J.E. Sutherland. A geology collection of around 500 locally found rocks and fossils was donated to the gallery by the family of collector Robert Jackson in 1933. 180 mosses collected by Jethro Tinker in the mid-1800s were originally stored at a museum that used to be situated in Eastwood Park but documentation shows that these were found in a poor condition and were transferred to the council's collection at an unknown date. There is also a small collection of birds' eggs and butterflies.

### 2.6 ***Manchester Regiment Collection:***

The collection was brought together from Regimental property (chattels) and donations in 1934 in Ladysmith Barracks, Ashton-under-Lyne, which was a serving Army Barracks and the Regimental Headquarters and Depot of the Manchester Regiment. The original purpose of the collection was to instil a sense of 'esprit-de-corps' or 'sense of identity' in the

Regiment's new recruits. When the barracks were closed in the 1960s, the museum's collection was loaned to Manchester City Art Galleries and displayed /stored in Queen Park, Harpurhey, Manchester.

The Regiment's archive collection was deposited with Manchester Central Library. In 1987 both collections came back to Tameside and the museum opened in the Town Hall, Ashton-under-Lyne. The Archive was then held in Stalybridge Library and in 2005 it was moved to a purpose built Local Studies and Archives Centre in Ashton-under-Lyne. Captain Bob Bonner, Chairman of the Regimental Advisory Committee, was instrumental in bringing the collections to Tameside and he remained a key figure in the museum until his retirement in 2015. His position has now been filled by Colonel Chris Marley who meets regularly with the Museum Manager for updates on the collection, its management and development.

The Manchester Regiment collection has been on loan to Tameside Council since 1987 from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and so any new donation forms part of this loan.

### **3. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COLLECTIONS**

3.1 The current collections fit within the statement of purpose of collecting the cultural heritage and visual arts of the borough.

3.2 ***Astley Cheetham collection:***

This is an area of strength within Tameside's collections and it is widely acknowledged as being one of the finest collections in the Northwest. Collection highlights include very early paintings of Italian, Flemish and Spanish schools from the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth century. There are also important paintings by David Cox, J. Danby, William Collins, G.F. Watts and J.M.W. Turner and watercolours by Edward Burne-Jones, Samuel Prout, Edward Duncan and Richard Bonnington.

3.3 ***Harry Rutherford collection:***

There are 150 works by Rutherford in the collection, including paintings, drawing and sketches. Rutherford painted everyday life in his hometown of Hyde and the majority of his works depict local people, places and industries. The key artworks from this collection (Mill Girls and Northern Saturday) have been on public display between 2008 and 2018.

3.4 ***Social and Industrial collection:***

The collection consists of objects that reflect the life and work of people living in Tameside, mostly from the past 200 years. Domestic items include costume, sport related objects, childhood toys, furniture, religious items, commemorative items and kitchenware. There are also objects related to local building plus archaeological finds. The industrial collection includes items such as locally made Jones sewing machines, items from cotton mills and coal mines, memorabilia connected to Robertsons Jam, bottles from local breweries, and printing machinery, to name but a few. Several large items of machinery are on display at Portland Basin Museum, including a National Gas engine, nail making machines and machines used in the hatting industry. There is also an important collection of donkey stone making equipment from Ashton based company Eli Whalley, which was the last manufacturer of donkey stones in the country. Two key items in the collection are the Chartist Bell, which was rung in Hyde in 1848 to bring together a meeting of local Chartists, and the Cotton Queen dress, which was worn by the North West's first Cotton Queen in 1930.

The collection totals around 18,000 objects including natural history. There are approximately 2,000 items with temporary numbers still to be processed. In addition to this there are some archaeological collections that have been bulk accessioned, including finds from Denton Hall, Dukinfield Hall, Haughton Green glassworks and Buckton Castle. In

2018-19, the Museum Service received support from Museum Development North West's 'Banish the Backlog' programme in devising a plan of action to tackle the backlog.

3.5 **Natural History collection:**

The collection consists of 3,300 shells, 2680 plants and mosses, 150 birds' eggs, 120 butterflies and 500 rocks and fossils. The only addition to this collection has been a collection of shells donated in 2003. Offers of natural history with a local connection would be considered, within the parameters of this collecting policy.

3.6 **Manchester Regiment collection:**

The collection has over 12,800 objects, including 400 items of uniform and over 800 medal groups, including six Victoria Crosses. Additionally, the collection incorporates silverware, paintings, firearms, edged weapons, musical instruments and other items of military equipment such as personal carrying equipment and campaign furniture. Of the 12,800 objects, 4,000 have temporary numbers listed on an Access database. In 2018-19, the Museum Service has received support from Museum Development North West's 'Banish the Backlog' programme in devising a plan of action to tackle the documentation backlog.

## 4. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COLLECTING

4.1. Three collecting themes have been prioritised:

- *Celebrating Tameside and its people* - collecting material representing Tameside's history, achievements and encouraging pride in the borough and by acquiring works of art from local contemporary artists to recognise creativity in the borough.
- *Celebrating cultural diversity and increasing cultural representation* – acquiring material that is representative of, relevant and/or of interest to the diverse communities living within the borough, including from black and minority ethnic groups, to ensure that their contribution to the heritage within the borough is recorded.
- *Develop the depth, breadth and significance of the collections* -
  1. Acquiring important examples of fine art which relate to the current fine art collections.
  2. Acquiring items for the social history collection that cover geographical areas currently under-represented in the collection specifically Audenshaw, Mottram-in-Longdendale, Mossley and Droylsden.
  3. Acquiring items relating to contemporary local industry.
  4. Contemporary collecting of social history.
  5. Acquiring items which relate to the history of the Manchester Regiment in areas that are currently under-represented (pre 1881 and post 1945 items; materials relating to Service Battalions and Territorial Battalions during the course of their history; material relating to Home Guard Units affiliated to the Manchester Regiment; material that portrays the experiences of women and children associated with the Manchester Regiment; material that portrays the experiences of Tameside personnel associated with the King's Regiment and the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.)

4.2. Objects continue to be offered on a regular basis, in particular social history items and items for the Manchester Regiment collection. For the past decade, collecting has been passive and almost entirely in response to items offered. The ambition is to take a more active approach to collecting, especially with regards to the industrial history collection, There are many local companies, historical and contemporary, that are unrepresented in the collection.

## **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 Over the next five years, the Museum Service wishes to undertake a collections review of the social and industrial history collections. For example, there are 50 boxes of bottles, many of which are duplicated or have no provenance. The aims are to reduce the number of duplicate items without provenance, identify items with no local connection and identify areas to develop through active collecting. This process will also help identify items for conservation. The museum will be looking for funding and advice to support this aim.
- 5.4 As part of the 'Banish The Backlog' documentation work an inventory is being carried out of two particular off-site storage areas containing social and industrial history items. This also includes highlighting potential items for disposal.
- 5.5 The recommendations of a furniture review carried out in 2013 remain to be acted upon so this will be a priority for action.

## **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):
  - Members of the Greater Manchester Museums Group (GMMG)
  - Members of the Manchester Museums consortium
  - Members of the Army Museums Ogilby Trust
- 7.3 Museum staff will not accept material for transfer to other collections. Where material is deemed more relevant to another collection the donor will be informed of the most appropriate museum or other repository by curatorial staff.

## **8 ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS**

- 8.1 The museum does not hold or collect any archival items relating to local history. Archival items relating to local history and to the Manchester Regiment are collected and cared for by Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre, also run by Tameside MBC, and offers of new donations are directed there.

## **9 ACQUISITION**

### 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Offers of objects are directed to the Curator or Assistant Curator and are discussed within the museum team. A decision is made whether to accept the items or decline them, in line with Section 4 of this policy. Items offered for sale are generally declined, unless funding can be sought to cover the cost of the purchase. Donations with conditions attached would be considered on a case by case basis and, if necessary, legal advice would be sought. 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.

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 SPOILIATION**

- 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 5.0 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 5.0 procedures on deaccession and disposal.

***Disposal by exchange***

- 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.
- 16.14 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.
- 16.15 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.

- 16.16 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).
- 16.17 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.

***Disposal by destruction***

- 16.18 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.19 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.
- 16.20 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.
- 16.21 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.
- 16.22 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.