

# Collections Development Policy 2016 – 2021

---

**Name of museum:** The View (Epping Forest Collection)

**Name of governing body:** Epping Forest and Commons Committee on behalf of The City of London Corporation: Conservators of Epping Forest

**This policy was approved by the governing body:** 26 January 2016 (tbc)

**This policy is due for renewal:** 25 January 2021

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

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:

The View (Epping Forest Collection) seeks to enhance the understanding of the rich history and diversity of the Forest among visitors and those interested in the Forest and its past by collecting, conserving and encouraging access to objects which help to illuminate the past and present of the Forest and surrounding area.

In doing so, it seeks to not only increase awareness, knowledge and enjoyment of Epping Forest, but also to shape the future of the area by informing conservation management.

The museum's **Vision** is:

The View (Epping Forest Collection) illuminates the past and present of Epping Forest for all.

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 View (Epping Forest Collection) is predated by over a hundred years retention of a collection of historic objects relating to the Forest accumulated largely by donation and by the City of London's management of Epping Forest. Objects were displayed at the Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and stored there, in the building that later was developed as The View (opened 2012) and across other buildings within Epping Forest. The Epping Forest Free Local Museum opened at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge on 2 November 1895. It displayed the collection of the Essex Field Club and showed objects of archaeological, natural history and historical interest. It had the approval of the Conservators of Epping Forest who owned the Hunting Lodge.

The Essex Field Club left Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge in 1974, taking part of the collection with them, and the Conservators took direct control of the museum, appointing a full-time curator to take care of the remaining collections, prepare displays and inform visitors about the Lodge.

In 1989, substantial repairs to the Hunting Lodge had to be undertaken. The Conservators decided that the focus of the Hunting Lodge would change from a traditional natural history museum to concentrating on its original use as Tudor hunting grandstand. Some objects from the natural history and archaeological sections of the collection are on display at The Temple, Wanstead Park.

In 2010, as part of the Branching Out Project (Heritage Lottery Funded), the archival material in the collection was transferred to the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) and a 9-month archival post was funded to fast-track cataloguing. The project also funded three years of promotion events both at LMA and in the Forest to promote the existence of the archive, its availability for public research at LMA and how archival information about the Forest underlies what we know of its history. Items not required by LMA (duplicates, records in excess of the 'sample' accepted by LMA of items such as Keeper's diaries) were returned to the Epping Forest Collection. These items have either been accessioned or retained as part of our Reference Collection.

The View, the new visitor centre alongside Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge – and with it Butler's Retreat and associated car parks – was formally opened on 12 July 2012 by the Duke of Gloucester. It opened to the public on 13 July 2012 and is currently open 6 days a week (closed Mondays) except Christmas Day. Museum objects are on display in The View as part of the permanent exhibition introducing the Forest. Museum objects are on a temporary basis on display at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and The Temple, our associated sites and visitor centres.

## **3. An overview of current collections**

### **3.1. Ownership of the collection**

The collection is owned by the Conservators of Epping Forest.

### **3.2. Summary of the current collection**

The View (Epping Forest Collection) is a legacy from a Victorian collection which followed no particular collecting policy apart from whether an object was historically curious or linked to Epping Forest, was accepted as a donation because offered to Epping Forest, or was retained by chance record of the management of the Forest by the City of London Corporation. During the twentieth century the museum collection was still managed along these lines.

The existing collection relates to the area of land known as Epping Forest which is owned and managed by the Conservators of Epping Forest, and its locality. It includes the following categories:

Subject	Explanation, description, examples	Estimated proportion of the total collection
<b>Archaeological material</b>	Prehistoric material from within Epping Forest boundaries and immediate locality. This includes Mesolithic finds from High Beach; excavated material from Iron Age settlements at Loughton Camp and Ambresbury Banks; excavated material from Wanstead Park, including Roman wall plaster, tiles and pottery fragments. Assorted finds from other Epping Forest locations and elsewhere, many un-provenanced. Victorian and 20 <sup>th</sup> century bottles found in Epping Forest.	20%
<b>Natural History</b>	Stuffed animals, birds and fish; bones, antlers including fossilized antlers; casts of footprints; eggs, moths, butterflies and other insects.	20%
<b>Art</b>	Images of locations within Epping Forest and of places connected with it.	5%
<b>Social History</b>	Artefacts connected with employees of the Corporation of London and the ownership and management of Epping Forest. Artefacts connected with the historic everyday life of the Forest and visitors to it. Animal traps, tools, uniforms associated with management of Epping Forest. Statuary fragments from Wanstead House.	25%
<b>Photographic images</b>	Photographic images of historic Epping Forest and people connected with it. Events and special occasions. Some glass negatives. Magic lantern slides.	10%
<b>Printed and handwritten material</b>	Leaflets, posters, maps, guidebooks and books about Epping Forest or related to its history; diaries, correspondence and documents connected with Epping Forest, its management by the Conservators and enjoyment by people.	20%

Areas of strength include excavated finds from two Iron Age camps, Loughton Camp and Ambresbury Banks, both Scheduled Monuments, and Roman remains excavated from Wanstead Park. Although excavation reports were published, the finds held by Epping Forest have not been catalogued or sorted in recent years. The collection includes finds recently collected by authorised metal detection at Gifford's Wood. The archaeological collections are partially accessioned. We are committed to working with volunteers to sort and accession in the Forward Plan.

Other archaeological objects appear to have entered the collection in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when objects of local antiquarian interest were donated through the Essex Field Club. They were re-accessioned from 2007 with minimal descriptions and a lack of provenance which undermines their significance.

Natural History collections are comparatively strong with taxidermy specimens of many common English birds including rarer specimens such as bittern and shrike. There are a few Forest mammals and a large number of antlers and bones and new and old taxidermy specimens of Fallow Deer. A large egg

collection includes eggs from the 20<sup>th</sup> century from areas both surrounding the Forest and more distantly (byelaws prohibited collection of eggs within the Forest itself). The taxidermy specimens are generally unmounted and in variable condition as many were formerly wired into cases now dismantled or displayed uncased. Their value is largely for learning and interpretation purposes. Two large stuffed fish of noted size are notable particularly in the memory of the local angling community and are amongst our more significant items. Related to the natural history specimens are a collection of animal traps formerly used in the Forest.

Social history objects relating to individual Epping Forest employees and significant supporters and visitors to the Forest are a unique part of the collection. This area of the collection includes some items of uniform, personal possessions, books, maps and correspondence belonging to individuals. An iconic object is known as the 'Willingale Billhook' which relates to a core episode in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fight to save Epping Forest.

A small but significant collection of objects relate to Forest buildings include statuary fragments from the important Palladian mansion at Wanstead Park, now within Epping Forest, and Tudor timbers and plaster panels retained from conservation work on Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge.

Generic social history objects such as a large collection of discarded glass and ceramic bottles used by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Forest day trippers and other debris such as pennies and clay pipes are useful in interpreting the recreational use of the Forest.

Photographic images, Edwardian postcards, prints and engravings are all significant for illustrating past views of Epping Forest. They are of interest to Forest users and visitors and have a value for conservation management of the Forest in their record of 'Then and Now'. We hold some original artworks in a range of media.

We hold a fairly comprehensive collection of guides, books and maps about the Forest dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Some have been accessioned, some have not and are held as reference copies. These are significant in terms of the history of the locality though not generally rare or difficult to purchase.

We hold a collection of papers, staff record diaries, accounts and receipt books which mirror in their range and type, items now held by the London Metropolitan Archive.

### **3.3. Handling Collection**

In keeping with our mission to enhance understanding of the history of the Forest, a Handling Collection will be maintained alongside the Epping Forest Collection.

This collection will consist of non-accessioned objects which help to illustrate aspects of the Forest's past and present that can be used in handling, outreach and educational sessions.

These objects may be duplicates of objects in the Epping Forest Collection or replica objects.

### **3.4. Reference Collection**

In keeping with our mission to enhance understanding of the history of the Forest, a Reference Collection will be maintained alongside the Epping Forest Collection.

This collection will consist of non-accessioned objects, in particular archival material, which help to illustrate aspects of the Forest's past and present.

This collection will provide information both for staff members and be publicly accessible upon request.

These objects may be duplicates of objects held in the Epping Forest Collection or the London Metropolitan Archives, reprints with low historical value or modern publications.

## 4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

### 4.1. Epping Forest Collection

Epping Forest Collection must continue to collect if it is to accurately record and illustrate the past and present of the Forest.

However, future collecting will move away from a concentration on natural history, as this area of the collection is already strong, and focus more on collecting items relating to other areas of the history of the Forest, particularly the social history of the area.

Objects considered for accession into Epping Forest Collection will meet the following criteria:

- a. The object will directly relate to the past or present of Epping Forest, its management, or users.
- b. The object will relate to the geographical area covered by Epping Forest Collection, which is identified as the Forest land owned and managed by the Conservators of Epping Forest. This includes land as far north as Epping and as far south as Manor Park. However, objects made, found or used outside the Forest may still be considered if they help to illustrate the past or present of the Forest.
- c. There will be no definitive restrictions on media.
- d. There will be no chronological boundaries on the material collected, although it is anticipated that the majority of objects will be from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- e. Natural history acquisitions will only be made where a need is identified for an exhibition or event that cannot be met by objects currently in the collection. In addition, natural history acquisitions will always be in good condition. Any natural history acquisitions will take into account and refer to guidance in Section 11 'Biological and Geological Material'.
- f. Unless in significantly better condition, the object will not duplicate other objects already in the collection.
- g. Copyright will usually be transferred to the Conservators of Epping Forest. Where this is not possible, a note must be made both in the electronic catalogue and the accessions register. Epping Forest Collection will respect copyright and intellectual rights where these are not transferred and seek to clarify and document permissions and restrictions where necessary.

### 4.2. Handling Collection

The Conservators of Epping Forest own items used for handling and it is intended that these will form the basis of a new handling collection.

Objects considered for the Handling Collection will usually meet the following criteria:

- a. The object will not only relate to the past or present of Epping Forest, its management or users, but should also be able to illustrate this history to the public through senses other than visual.
- b. The object may relate to topics or themes dealt with in learning and engagement programmes across the Forest.
- c. The same geographical and chronological restrictions as in 4.1. b and d will apply.

Unless already accessioned into Epping Forest Collection, items in the Handling Collection will not be accessioned as their use as handling objects may shorten their lifespan.

The condition of objects in the handling collection will naturally deteriorate more quickly than objects in Epping Forest Collection due to their constant use. While efforts will be made to care for handling

objects, it is expected that rare or unique items will be accessioned instead into the main Epping Forest Collection.

### **4.3. Reference Collection**

The Reference Collection largely consists of books, pamphlets, articles and maps.

Objects considered for the Reference Collection will usually meet the following criteria:

- a. The object will either:
  - specifically mention Epping Forest, its management or users; or
  - relate to wider Forest themes, including the history of Royal Forests or the area, the flora and fauna found in the Forest, ecology and conservation or the social history of key periods in the Forest's history and development; or
  - be authored, signed, owned or annotated by people closely associated with the Forest.
- b. The object was published or produced in the last fifty years. Items published or produced before this date will be considered for accession into the main Epping Forest Collection where the subject or history of the object is appropriate and it meets the criteria set out in 4.1.

## **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 As Epping Forest Collection currently contains many items left over from the Victorian field museum, the natural history section of the collection will be the focus of rationalisation during any inventory process.

Objects which meet the following criteria may be either added to the handling or reference collections or considered under the Epping Forest Collection disposal policy.

- a. Where there are more than two identical copies of any object.
- b. Where the object under consideration is a duplicate item and is in poor condition.
- c. Where the object does not meet the criteria set out in 4.1.

## **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 museums/organisations:

- City of London libraries, including the Guildhall Library
- London Metropolitan Archive
- Epping Forest District Museum
- Redbridge Museum Service
- Waltham Forest Museums and Galleries, including the William Morris Gallery and Vestry House Museum
- Essex Record Office
- Museum of London
- Essex Field Club

## **8 Archival holdings**

*As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, the governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom.*

## **9 The policy for agreeing acquisition is:-**

- 9.1 Acquisitions will be purchased if they meet the criteria set out in 4.1. Gifts will be accepted where they meet the criteria set out in 4.1. A list of acquisitions will be notified to the Governing Body in the annual report.
- 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:
- o acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
  - o 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.*

## **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.
- 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 de-accession 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.
- 16.13.1 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.

- 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.

### **Disposal by destruction**

- 16.13 *If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.*
- 16.14 *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.*
- 16.15 *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.*
- 16.16 *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.*
- 16.17 *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.*