



# Accreditation

## Collections development policy Template



**Name of museum:** *Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London Heritage Gallery & London's Roman Amphitheatre, hereafter referred to as "the Gallery"*

**Name of governing body:** *City of London Corporation – Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee*

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *24.10.2016*

**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:** *24.10.2021*

**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:**

To educate, entertain and engage audiences using our collections and assets to best advantage, and to contribute to the City's profile as a leading cultural and visitor destination.

**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

In 1670, the Court of Aldermen commissioned twenty-two paintings to hang in their newly restored Guildhall. These were portraits of the Fire Judges; men who had been appointed to assess compensation claims after the Great Fire of London in 1666. The City Corporation continued to commission and purchase early portraits of royalty and individual benefactors of the City of London. The collections have since been shaped by bequests from individuals, as well as acquisitions of new material. The Gallery's first Director, the dynamic Sir Alfred Temple, developed its popular collection of Victorian paintings. After the Second World War, the Gallery concentrated on expanding its unique collection of London pictures.

Significant bequests include:

### *The Boydell Collection*

Alderman John Boydell, former Lord Mayor and a successful publisher, presented the City of London Corporation with 28 paintings in the 1790s. These included portraits of military commanders and paintings of naval battles, historical subjects and allegorical scenes.

### *The William Dunnett Collection*

This collection is a small group of Old Master paintings surviving from the bequest made in 1888 by William Dunnett, a City businessman. The paintings include a 1655 still life by the Dutch artist Pieter van de Venne and the torso of St Sebastian, which has been attributed to both Francesco Furini and Simone Pignoni.

### *The Charles Gassiot Bequest*

The paintings given to the City of London by Charles Gassiot, a City wine merchant, and his wife Georgiana, form the core of the Victorian collections, featuring works by Alma Tadema, John Constable and John Everett Millais.

### *The Wakefield Collection*

Charles Cheers Wakefield, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1915, supported the Guildhall Art Gallery from 1911 onwards through subscriptions and commissions. Works acquired by the Gallery with his help include paintings by Holman Hunt and Millais and Joshua Reynolds and J. M. W. Turner. Wakefield also donated a number of London paintings, including the Gallery's collection of London watercolours by William Alister Macdonald.

### *The Sir Matthew Smith Studio Collection*

The Studio Collection of Sir Matthew Smith was presented to the City of London Corporation in 1974 by Mary Keene, Smith's model, close friend and heir. It includes over 1,000 of Smith's paintings, watercolours, pastels, drawings and sketches, and offers a unique insight into his creative process.

London's Roman Amphitheatre holds no collections; City of London Heritage Gallery is a small display room for a rotating programme of exhibits from the City of London Corporation's London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). The LMA's collections are not part of the Gallery's collections and so do not form a part of this application.

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

Guildhall Art Gallery cares for the City of London Corporation's permanent collection of works of art which comprises some 4,000 oil paintings, sculptures and works on paper. The Gallery also manages the archaeological remains of London's Roman Amphitheatre which lie underneath the exhibition floors.

The Permanent Collection comprises principally:

- Topographical subjects and other paintings, drawings and watercolours relating to London, 17th century to the present;
- State and civic portraits from the 17th century to the present and ceremonial subjects relating to London;
- Portraits of 18th century naval and military heroes and other paintings presented in the 1790s by Alderman John Boydell;
- Victorian paintings including Pre-Raphaelite works, landscape and genre subjects, the majority being the Charles Gassiot Bequest of 1902;
- The Sir Matthew Smith studio collection, presented in 1974 by Mary Keene and comprising 175 oil paintings and more than 1,000 watercolours and drawings;
- Large-scale sculptures commissioned by the City of London Corporation and permanently located in the Great Hall at Guildhall, Mansion House, and Old Bailey;
- The Harold Samuel Collection of 17th century Dutch and Flemish paintings, bequeathed in 1987 by Lord Samuel for permanent display at the Mansion House; and
- 'Plenty and Progress' - the Guildhall Art Gallery's contemporary acquisition programme exploring the themes associated with the City of London, such as money, power, boom and bust, trade and commerce, and justice, with particular reference to the financial services.

### **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

The acquisition policy of the Gallery is restricted to works of art (oil paintings, watercolours, drawings, prints and sculptures) of direct relevance to London, whether in relation to the artist or to the subject of the work. Within this, the Gallery endeavours to acquire works of art with particular relevance to the City of London and subjects associated with the locality, such as money, power, boom and bust, trade and commerce, and justice, with particular reference to financial services.

### **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

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

Disposals will only be undertaken for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons (for example, spoliation, infestation, repatriation).

### **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):**

Museum of London

## **8 Acquisition**

**8.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

Donations and acquisitions with a value up to £10K are discussed by the Gallery Curatorial and Conservation Teams and may be approved by the Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre (hereafter referred to as "the Head") provided that appropriate internal or external funding is available. Acquisitions over £10K must be approved by the departmental Director, and any acquisitions over £50K must also be referred to the City Corporation's Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee for approval. Funding for expensive acquisitions beyond the available Gallery local risk budget may be sought from the central funds of the City of London Corporation, and/or from external sources, with decisions taken on a case-by-case basis as appropriate.

**8.2 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).**

**8.3 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.**

## **9 Human remains**

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

## **10 Biological and geological material**

**10.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.**

## **11 Archaeological material**

**11.1 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.**

**11.2 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).**

## **12 Exceptions**

**12.1 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.**

## **13 Spoliation**

**13.1 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 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

**14.1 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 15.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.**

## **15 Disposal procedures**

**15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.**

**15.2 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.**

**15.3 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.**

- 15.4** 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.
- 15.5** 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.
- 15.6** 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.
- 15.7** 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.
- 15.8** 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.
- 15.9** 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.
- 15.10** 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.

- 15.11** 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.
- 15.12** 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*

- 15.13** 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.
- 15.13.1** 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 15.1-5 will apply.
- 15.13.2** 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.
- 15.13.3** 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.
- 15.13.4** 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*

- 15.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 15.15** 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.



- 15.16 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.**
- 15.17 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.**
- 15.18 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.**