

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	28 January 2013
<b>Subject:</b> The Samuel Pepys Collection (PHR): overview and recommendations	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

At the meeting of your Committee on 22 October 2012, your officers were requested to research options for the rehousing of the Samuel Pepys Collection (PHR), bought by the City Corporation from the Samuel Pepys Club in 1985.

This paper suggests a five-tier strategy to do this, with particular emphasis given to ensuring that the Collection receives the highest possible public exposure through the most appropriate and responsible guardians. The strategy also seeks to ensure that the role of the City Corporation as benefactor and as custodian of London's heritage is promoted.

In brief, the strategy suggests that where items from the Collection already reside within City Corporation collections or assets they are not rehoused; those items that do not fall under this categorisation should then be offered freely, and in turn, to City Corporation assets, the Museum of London and UK museums generally, with any unclaimed items being sold and the revenue derived being added to departmental acquisition funds.

The report also highlights the need for a swift resolution to the rehousing issue because the space required to store items is limited and could, over time, create significant issues for the on-going operations of the London Metropolitan Archives, where all items are currently stored.

#### **Recommendations**

- That Members accept the five-tier proposal for rehousing the Collection as described above and in more detail under item 18 of this report.

### Main Report

#### **Background**

1. At the meeting of your committee on 22 October 2012, recommendations were received regarding the future use of Prince Henry's Room, your Members resolving to declare the Room surplus and return it to the Property Investment Board so that it may be managed by the City Surveyor on a commercial basis.
2. At that same meeting, Members requested that the Collection previously housed in the Room and bought by the City Corporation from the Samuel Pepys Club in 1985, be audited and that options be proposed as to where it may best reside, especial consideration being given to how greatest public access to the Collection may be granted and with whom guardianship may most appropriately rest.

3. The Collection was originally acquired by members of the Samuel Pepys Club, who, for many years, used Prince Henry's Room as their Club House. There it was displayed, with the public being granted access on weekday afternoons until the Room was closed for refurbishment in 2006. It comprises artefacts relating to the diarist, including letters, paintings, prints and other ephemera as itemised in the 2010 Christie's valuation document, appendix 1.
4. While the cost of the Collection to the City Corporation at the time of purchasing was £1,000 (see appendix 2 – extract from the minutes of the City Lands and Bridge House Estates Committee meeting on 13 March 1985), Christie's suggest that the total value today is between £13,285 and £20,300. According to Guildhall Art Gallery experts, this will have not changed significantly since August 2010 when the valuation was undertaken.
5. The discrepancy between what the City Corporation paid the Samuel Pepys Club and what the Collection is worth now can probably be attributed to appreciation since the time of purchase (1985) but is also be due to the fact that all assets in Prince Henry's Room (including the light fittings and carpet) have been evaluated in the Christie's assessment. Some of these will not have been a part of the original "Collection". Whatever the case, for the purposes of this report, all items appearing on the inventory are considered to make up the "Collection".
6. In addition to the items listed on the inventory, members of the Samuel Pepys Club assert that two silver inkpots and a silver bowl presented to the Club on the tercentenary of Hoare's Bank were a part of the original Collection sold to the City Corporation. In the case of the bowl, a letter to the Chairman of the Trustees of the Pepys House Charity, written on 3 April 1985 confirming the purchase (see appendix 3) shows that it was excluded from the sale and offered for collection to the Club.
7. Despite significant research, the inkpots and a total of eight items from the Christie's inventory cannot be located (see appendix 4, list of missing items). Those with responsibility for the Collection prior to its transfer to the Department of Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL) suggest that the items probably went missing during the course of 2009/10, around the time when the Room was re-decorated. During this time the Collection was moved on a number of occasions and was split up.
8. At the time responsibility for the Collection passed to CHL (October 2011), it was stored on a temporary basis at the Fruit and Wool Exchange on Brushfield Street (a City Corporation building which closed in December 2012), with the exception of the carpet, light fittings, refectory table and a Carolean walnut armchair, all of which still reside in the Room. In March 2012, all items at the Fruit and Wool Exchange, excluding the furniture, were moved to the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), with the furniture following in December, when the Fruit and Wool Exchange closed. This now occupies all available storage space at LMA and so an early resolution as to the future of the furniture is urgently sought.
9. Prince Henry's Room is expected to be commercially let any time after 24 December 2012, when responsibility for it has passed back to the City Surveyor. While this report recommends that the light fittings and the carpet (which is bespoke to the Room and so will be of even less than its already-low-value if it

is removed) remain there, the removal of the table will be a cause for concern – not only because it will require specialist dismantling and carriage, but also because of the lack of space at Guildhall should it need to be stored while a suitable guardian is found. The proposal addresses this issue.

10. A number of items in the Collection (and itemised in the Christie's document, appendix 1) have, over the time the Collection has been owned by the City Corporation, been subsumed within existing City Corporation collections. This includes the first item on the Christie's valuation document – a painting, *The Great Fire of London*, after Waggoner – which is part of the Guildhall Art Gallery collection and features in the recently published *London: 1000 Years*, edited by the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

### **Museum of London**

11. Members may wish to note that in the original documentation from 1985 surrounding the sale of the Collection to the City Corporation, the Museum of London had “expressed an interest in certain items” and that following the sale, it was the intention of the City Lands and Bridge House Estates Committee to “re-sell certain items” to the Museum (see appendix 2). This did not happen.

### **Guildhall Library**

12. Members will be aware of the recent agreement between the Guildhall Library and the Trustees of the Samuel Pepys Award Trust and the Executive Committee of the Samuel Pepys Club, to house the Samuel Pepys Club Collection of Documents and Archives (please note this is separate from the Samuel Pepys Club Collection (PHR) which is the subject of this report). Appropriate items from the PHR Collection would give added value to these archives and so this is considered within the proposal.

### **Current position**

13. The Collection comprises all items listed on the Christie's valuation report except the eight items listed in appendix 4 and the inkpots that the Samuel Pepys Club assert were part of the original inventory, none of which can be located.
14. The Collection is stored at the LMA with the exception of the furniture and fittings listed in item 8 which are stored in Prince Henry's Room. A swift execution in housing all items appropriately is strongly desired because of the much-needed space they are occupying and because there is no further space available to store the items residing in the Room, once this has been commercially let.
15. As previously indicated, some items are already published as belonging within the City Corporation's own collections where they enhance the value of that collection. Their removal would require updating of the works in which they are cited and weaken the appeal of those collections.
16. A five-tier strategy for rehousing the Collection that brings rewards and recognition for the City Corporation and enhances the value of City Corporation assets is proposed. Inevitably, this will see the Collection being split up but, in any circumstance, it is unlikely that all parts of the Collection would be gratefully received by one organisation as, in its entirety, it has no historic or intellectual

coherence and items are linked only in that some have a loose connection with Pepys or that they were together in the same room for a number of years.

17. It should also be noted that identifying a single, appropriate home for all items could be a timely process whereas the proposal offered can be begun immediately, saving on time and removal arrangements.

### **Options**

18. The strategy proposed is as follows:
  - I. Collection items already indexed within existing City Corporation collections to remain where they are;
  - II. Low-value items currently stored within Prince Henry's Room, such as the light fittings and carpet, to remain where they are and to be a part of the fixtures and fittings when the Room is commercially let, noting that it is unlikely that a home could be found for them were they removed; the higher value items, such as the table and Carloean chair to be considered under the following tiers;
  - III. The curators of the Guildhall Art Gallery, Keats' House, the Guildhall Library and the London Metropolitan Archives to assess all other items within the Collection and identify those that they deem appropriate for their archives and displays – these items will then be retained by said assets adding value to existing City Corporation collections and promoting the City Corporation's role as a custodian of London's heritage;
  - IV. The Museum of London to be offered (for free but meeting removal costs) all items not sought by the above City Corporation assets (this is most likely to include all items of furniture) – items identified by the Museum as having value for them should be donated to the Museum with the caveat that the City Corporation is credited as benefactor when items are displayed, deriving recognition and credit for the City Corporation as a custodian of London's heritage and as a philanthropist;
  - V. CHL to dispose of all remaining items by gift or sale (these are likely to have a very low value) – with any beneficiary (eg a UK museum) wishing to add them to their collections meeting the cost of removal and crediting the City Corporation as the benefactor, and any revenue raised through the sale of items being added to departmental acquisition funds (it is not anticipated that this will be more than a few hundred pounds).
19. Members may wish to agree to omit any tier or tiers of the above strategy, resulting in the process jumping to the next tier upon which they are agreed.

### **Proposals**

20. The five-tier strategy described in item 18 provides a comprehensive filter for rehousing the Samuel Pepys Collection, ensuring that items of most value remain with the City Corporation. That value may be monetary or because of

the item's ability to enhance an existing collection or the visitor's experience of that collection (eg candlesticks as dressing at Keats' House or benches to seat visitors at Guildhall Art Gallery).

21. Furthermore, in all cases, it ensures that the role of the City Corporation as a custodian of London's heritage and a good philanthropist is promoted; tier V providing some small financial support in our execution of this role.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

22. The proposal is aligned with one of three strands of the City Corporation's Communications Strategy 2012/15 in that it promotes the role of the City of London Corporation as a provider of valued services to London and the nation as a whole, and is a key priority for 2012/13 within that strategy in that it illustrates our commitment to looking after London's heritage.
23. That items from the Collection are freely offered to London and national organisations aligns the proposal with the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2012/16, because it helps "maximise the benefits afforded by our role as a good neighbour and major sponsor of culture and the arts".
24. Furthermore, the proposal works in support of the *Animating the Heritage* theme with the City Corporation's Cultural Strategy 2012/17 and both the *Product Development* and *Support and Recognition* themes within the forthcoming City Destination Development Strategy (visitor strategy) 2013/18.

### **Consultation**

25. The Chamberlain and the City Surveyor have been consulted in the writing of this report and their comments are incorporated.

### **Conclusion**

26. The Samuel Pepys Collection has sat in storage for too long. Your Committee's recent decision regarding the future of Prince Henry's Room has excited interest in it and has kick-started a process that will ensure greater access to its artefacts and ephemera while ensuring the City Corporation's role as custodian of London's heritage and as a philanthropist is promoted. The proposal offered seeks to maximise impact on all these points.

### **Background Papers:**

1. Prince Henry's Room: evaluation of potential use, report to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, 18 November 2011
2. Prince Henry's Room: proposals for public access, report to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, 22 October 2012

### **Appendices**

- APPENDIX 1: Christie's Valuation Report, 3 August 2010
- APPENDIX 2: Extract from minutes of the City Lands and Bridge House Estates Committee meeting on 13 March 1985

- APPENDIX 3: Letter to the Chairman of the Trustees of the Pepys House Charity, 3 April 1985
- APPENDIX 4: List of missing items

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