



Culture Coventry Trust

Collections Development Policy

2024 – 2027

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
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Executive Summary

Culture Coventry manages Coventry's accredited museums: The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry Transport Museum and the Lunt Roman Fort. Additionally, Culture Coventry now manages the Grade 1 listed Old Grammar School and is also responsible for Coventry's archives and local studies through Coventry Archives at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum.

Culture Coventry's museums and galleries celebrate, promote and conserve Coventry's unique cultural and heritage story. Working in partnerships across the museum, arts and heritage sector regionally, nationally and internationally, Culture Coventry uses its collections and programmes to engage and interact with audiences. Our Creative & Digital Media team, Herbert Media, is an accredited vocational learning centre specialising in working with excluded and marginalised young people and adults, particularly young people with learning disabilities.

Culture Coventry is an independent Charitable Trust managed by a Board of Trustees. It was created in 2013 from the merger of Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust and the Museum of British Road Transport Trust. Through a service level agreement the Trust is responsible for the care, management, development and access of Coventry City Council's arts and cultural assets. Culture Coventry Trust, along with Coventry Sports Foundation has operated as CV Life since 2021.

The collections held by Culture Coventry Trust are unique and distinctive in their range and variety, and we want them to remain so. This policy describes how we actively develop our combined museum, archive and art collections, and ensures both acquisition and disposals are carried out openly and with transparency.

In accordance with our overall charitable mission, we have a long-term purpose and hold collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to our stated objectives. The Board of Trustees is committed to the principle that sound curatorial practice must underpin acquisition and disposal, and that limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and collection care arrangements will be taken into account.

This policy will be reviewed and published at least once every three years, which will next be on or before March 2027. The National Archives and Arts Council England will be notified of any significant changes and the implications of any such changes for the future of our collections. In May 2024 Culture Coventry launched a one-year display called Collecting Coventry showcasing the depth and breath of collecting in the city. We intend using the exhibitions as an opportunity to consult with stakeholders, including local residents about the significance and relevance of our collecting practices and use this to inform further changes to the Collections Development Policy. Therefore it is expected that a more detailed review will take place before 2029.

In addition, work is underway to create a new National Collections Centre in Coventry's former Ikea building. In preparation for the re-location of collections from two off site stores in the city, the team is carrying out a collections review and rationalisation process which will also impact of future collecting policies. Work is due to be completed in late 2026.

Introduction

This is a framework policy for collection development and care, outlining how Culture Coventry fulfils its responsibilities under the Museum and Galleries Act 1992, guided by our mission statement and vision.

The policy outlines our approach to the development, care and access of the cultural assets of Coventry City Council, in both physical and digital format. It confirms that Culture Coventry will adhere to appropriate national and international guidelines and codes of ethics, whilst clarifying that all decisions will be based on assessment of risk and available resource. It emphasises consistent, high standards of professional judgement in the collective provision of a level of care appropriate to each circumstance.

The policy is underpinned by the Museum's Code of Ethics.

1 Scope of the Policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to art, museum, archive and local history collections held at Coventry Archives (within the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum), Coventry Transport Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, and the Lunt Roman Fort.
- 1.2 The Priory Visitor Centre is no longer within the scope of the Trust's management, however the collections remain under the care of the Trust. The scope of the policy includes these items as the Trust remains responsible for their care, management and development. (Appendix A)

Name of museums: Coventry Transport Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and Lunt Roman Fort.

1.3 Name of governing body: Coventry City Council in Collections Management Agreement with Culture Coventry Trust.

1.4 Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

1.5 Culture Coventry Board: 24th May 2024

1.6 Coventry City Council: 17 April 2025

1.7 Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2027

2 Relationships to other policies/plans of the organisation

2.1 CV Life – Purpose; Mission; Vision; and Values

The CV Life purpose, mission, vision and values seek to ensure that a collaboration of sectors, services and organisations have a positive impact upon the lives of communities, households and people within the city.

2.1.1 Purpose:

- 2.1.2 Bring about meaningful and lasting quality of life improvements for the diverse communities of Coventry
- 2.1.3 Build the confidence, health, happiness and wellbeing of individuals, increasing pride in themselves, their community and their city

2.2.1 Mission:

- 2.2.2 Connect with and understand people and their communities, so that facilities and services can be specifically shaped to be relevant to their needs and to enrich their lives
- 2.2.3 Continue to challenge the accepted norms about engagement and be driven as much by the impact upon people's lives as by the numbers of people reached
- 2.2.4 Understand complexity, to be persistent, and not be deterred or shy away from being innovative in pursuit of our goals

2.3.1 Values:

- 2.3.2 Serve and reflect the full diversity of Coventry's population through pioneering outreach work, imaginative programmes, high quality venues, flexible pricing, and sensitive customer service
- 2.3.3 Make positive changes to lives, by recognising the layered and complex inequalities that persist in some of our communities, and then offering innovative and tailored approaches
- 2.3.4 Always strive to widen the reach of our work and deepen the impact upon the lives of people and their communities
- 2.3.5 Attract residents, and visitors from further afield in our destination venues, in ever-growing numbers, by exceeding customer expectations and by implementing measures to continually widen access.
- 2.3.6 Play a leading role in the regeneration of Coventry, increasing pride in the city amongst its people, and contributing to inward investment with consequent city-wide benefits
- 2.3.7 To create and maintain consistency of governance, policy and business strategies across CV Life and its partner companies that deliver business efficiencies and innovative business solutions
- 2.3.8 Be relevant and appealing to all individuals across diverse communities
- 2.3.9 Value each other and build a collective spirit and ethos
- 2.3.10 Display a 'can do' attitude – be quick to learn, quick to act, and quick to change direction if necessary
- 2.3.11 Empower each other – leadership and responsibility are encouraged at all levels
- 2.3.12 Be innovative – be bold and brave, welcoming to new ideas, and risk-taking

2.4 Alongside this, Culture Coventry's Organisational Aims are stated as follows:

2.4.1 To be recognised as dynamic and innovative museums that give visitors a fresh perspective on the story of Coventry, and create ambassadors on a local, national and international level. Its objectives are to:

- Portray, with pride, the story of Coventry locally, nationally and internationally, so that visitors to the city gain a full appreciation of how Coventry's innovative spirit echoes throughout history, and continues to influence the world in which we live
- Care for and display the City's collections in engaging ways that inspire visitors to further connect with Coventry's rich history and its ambitions for the future
- Ensure opportunities for learning are woven into the fabric of everything we do as an organisation
- Ensure that staff, stakeholders, visitors, investors, volunteers and the local community are given every opportunity to contribute to the life of the museums, and their future success
- Create opportunities for economic growth and to maximise funding opportunities, so the museums are financially sustainable and contribute to the regeneration of the city
- Be recognised as a dynamic organisation that seizes opportunities with an entrepreneurial spirit and actively contributes to the development of the museum sector

2.4.2 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

2.4.3 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.

2.4.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

2.5 The Trust 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.

2.6 The Trust 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.

2.7 In exceptional cases, disposal by sale may be undertaken as a last resort once all other methods of disposal have been explored and exhausted. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal by sale is identified, 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 methods of disposal 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

3 History of the collections

3.1 Trust Overview

3.1.1 Collections are a tangible link between the past, present and future. Museums, Archives and local history centres create a sense of pride for the residents of the city creating safe spaces to learn, create and belong. They balance the interests of a wide spectrum of people by safeguarding collections and making sure that they are well managed, sustainable and accessible. The key purpose of the Coventry City Council Collection is to help the people of Coventry and visitors to the city to explore and celebrate the creativity and cultural heritage of all its communities.

3.1.2 The Trust's collections of close to 300,000 objects and artefacts are at the heart of the organisation and play a central role to the activities undertaken by the museums, such as Exhibitions and Events, Learning and Engagement, Corporate Hire, Marketing and Promotion. They are its unique selling point and its 'raison d-etre'. Appropriate care and management of the collections underpin every aspect of museum activity and are essential to maximise their full potential.

3.2. Coventry Transport Museum

3.2.1 The Transport Museum opened in 1980's when the road transport collection outgrew its then home, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum. The museum is dedicated to collecting and exhibiting the products of a city that changed the transport world and focuses on the skills and innovation of its people; the majority of the collection is Coventry-built or has a strong connection with the city.

3.2.2 The museum aims to educate and inspire visitors through the history and development of vehicle manufacturing in Coventry over the last 150-years: highlighting Coventry's transport heritage and its central place in the British car industry. The museum has 14 exhibition spaces that tell the stories of the people that lived and worked in the city through the road transport vehicles they produced.

3.2.3 The founding collection began with large cycle deposits and quickly began to include a vast array of motor vehicles. As the full story of Coventry's manufacturing past began to grow through the collections a shift in focus began to move away from

technical and general Road Transport to a core collections relating directly to Coventry.

3.2.4. In June 2015, a £9.5 million redevelopment of Coventry Transport Museum was completed, which has transformed 13 of its 14 exhibition spaces, including a new permanent World Land Speed Record Exhibition. The redevelopment also included the creation of expanded and redeveloped learning spaces and conference spaces, a temporary exhibition gallery, plus a new front entrance and retail site. Coventry Transport Museum's internationally recognised and Designated Collection has been redisplayed within a radically redefined and redesigned layout.

3.3. The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

3.3.1. The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum is named after Sir Alfred Herbert, a local industrialist who founded what was at one time the world's largest machine tool making company. In 1938, Sir Alfred donated £100,000 to the City of Coventry to pay for the construction of an Art Gallery and Museum. Building work had started in 1939 but by the end of the war Coventry lay in ruins and work on the gallery was put on hold, although the basement was converted to a temporary art gallery in 1949. In 1954 Sir Alfred was finally able to lay the foundation stone of the new building, but sadly did not live to see its completion which finally opened on 9th March 1960.

3.3.2. The Herbert collections reflect the rich cultural heritage of Coventry, exploring the history of the people, places and events that constitute the city today. It has significant archaeology, social and industrial history, natural sciences and visual art collections.

3.3.3. The site also contains Coventry City archives collections; which includes a large photographic collection and oral history recordings.

3.3.4. A £20 million transformation and extension were completed in October 2008, jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund Renaissance West Midlands, the Department for Culture Media and Sport, Wolfson Foundation Fund, Advantage West Midlands, English Heritage and Coventry City Council.

3.4. The Lunt Roman Fort

3.4.1. The Lunt Roman Fort was established in AD 60 is located in Baginton, about 3 miles from Coventry City centre. The Lunt Roman Fort was originally built in response to the Boudican Revolt but was only occupied for 20 years.

3.4.2. Archaeological exploration of the site began in the 1930s and by the 1960s it was decided to partially reconstruct the Fort. The Royal Engineers rebuilt the Eastern Gateway, the Gyrus and one of the granaries, before it was opened to the public in the 1970s.

3.4.3. Since the 1970s, a wealth of artefacts has been uncovered including bronze and iron work, pieces of armour and pottery and an extremely rare finial bowl. It is the only partially reconstructed wooden fort in Britain today. It is also home to the Gyrus, the only known horse training ring in the Roman Empire.

3.5. Coventry City Archives

3.5.1 Coventry Archives moved to the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in 2008 when the resources of Coventry Record Office and the local studies collection held at Central Library were brought together under one roof.

3.5.2 It houses a wide range of primary and secondary source material providing insights into the history of the city and its citizens from medieval times – the earliest record is dated 1182 - to the present day.

4 An overview of current collections

4.1. Coventry Transport Museum

4.1.1 The collection was granted designation status in 1998 elevating the collections status to be of national significance.

4.1.2 All of the museum collections listed below are managed by Coventry Transport Museum and comprise the following subject areas:

4.1.3. Vehicles

The Motor Car collection of approximately 212 motor cars ranges from one of the earliest built Coventry cars of 1897, to one of the last of the Peugeot 206 cars to leave the Ryton Factory production line in December 2006. 90% of the vehicles were made in Coventry or have a very strong Coventry connection. There are a small number of vehicles without a direct Coventry connection that were collected before a tightening of the museum's collecting policy or are significant vehicles which tell the wider story of the British Motor Industry.

The commercial vehicle collection of 46 items, including buses, lorries, vans, tractors, military vehicles and emergency vehicles, illustrates the involvement of Coventry companies in the manufacture of such vehicles and their everyday use in the city.

4.1.4. Motorcycles

The Motorcycle collections consists of 120 motorcycles ranging from early tri-cycles to the modern Triumph models and also includes bikes from around the world.

4.1.5. Cycles

This collection of over 400 items is one of the most significant collections of cycles in the country. It spans the period from 1818 to the present. It strongly reflects the involvement of the city in the manufacture of cycles in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. The collection also contains a number of more up to date cycles, sports and trade cycles.

4.1.6. Transport Objects

This collection comprises an unidentified number of items directly related to vehicles i.e. head lamps, radiator grills, engine parts, wheels, saddles etc. It also contains items related to the use of vehicles i.e. club badges, petrol pumps, garage equipment, street furniture, competition trophies etc.

4.1.7. Technical Collection

The technical collection comprises of 10,000 technical manuals, etc.

4.1.8. Running Collection

There are 15 cycles, motorcycles and vehicles that are used for educational, outreach and promotional activities. These vehicles are maintained in an operational condition so they can be seen at events, shows and promotional activities which promote closer engagement with physical collections.

4.2. The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

4.2.1. All of the museum collections listed below are managed by Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and comprise the following subject areas:

4.2.2. Social and Industrial History

The Social History collection currently contains approximately 35,000 items, relating to the history of the city and the lives of its people, including the city's industrial history. The most significant sections of the collection are:

Aero industry - The manufacture of aircraft, aero engines and other components was a significant industry in the twentieth century. The collection includes nine engines, one prototype missile and some smaller components, testing equipment, photographs and ephemera. The total number of items is around 200 items.

Civic and political items - These relate to the government of the city and number approximately 200 items, including banners. Related to this are items under a Peace and Reconciliation theme.

Contemporary collecting from communities - A number of projects in recent years have meant the Herbert now has a significant collection of items relating to minority communities in the city. This includes items relating to culture, social and working life and immigration. There are also a significant number of photographs and oral / video history recordings attached to this collection. Although this collection is small, it is growing in size.

Costume - This collection of approximately 8000 items spans some 400 years, but its particular strength is nineteenth and early twentieth century women's costume. This charts the main changes in women's fashion during this period.

Domestic life - This includes a collection of radios, televisions and sewing machines, many made in Coventry, as well as domestic cleaning and cooking items. The collection numbers approximately 500 items.

Education - These are mainly schools equipment and learning material.

Electrical Industries - The manufacture of electrical consumer goods and telecommunications equipment was another significant industry in the twentieth century. The collection includes around 20 good examples of early radios and televisions made in Coventry, together with around 250 photographs and ephemera.

Ephemera - This collection relates to all aspects of personal, domestic, community and working life and numbers approximately 3000 items.

George Eliot - The collection consists of approximately 30 items relating to Eliot and the time she spent living in Coventry, including her circle of friends and contacts, which influenced her intellectual development. These include costume, furniture and personal items. There are also a number of paintings and drawings which are catalogued under the visual arts collection.

Godiva Story - Approximately 300 items relating to the Godiva story, both the legend and the procession. This includes ephemera, costume and many items bearing imagery of Godiva and the associated stories.

Machine Tool Industry - The machine tool industry was a major industry in Coventry throughout the twentieth century. Alfred Herbert Ltd was reputed to be the largest machine tool manufacturer in the world. The collection consists of around 12 machine tools; 200 photographs; 600 items of ephemera including machine tool catalogues and operator's handbooks; and around 200 engineering hand tools and gauges.

Numismatics - This includes a strong collection of local trade tokens and totals approx. 1500 items.

Other working life - The Herbert has small collections relating to other industries and to other manufacturing and working life. These include office equipment, art metalwork, coal mining, the chemical and artificial fibre industries, retail, public transport, blacksmithing and leather work. This collection numbers around 1500 items.

Ribbon Weaving - This collection relates to Coventry's ribbon and other narrow fabrics industry. The industry began at the end of the seventeenth century and was Coventry's main industry until 1860. It continued to be an important industry after that and some production still takes place today. The collection consists of around 250 sample books; several thousand individual ribbons; around 1500 silk pictures and bookmarks (including one of the largest collections of Stevengraphs in the world); a nineteenth century jacquard loom and about 30 examples of weaving

machinery and equipment). There are also around 200 items of ephemera and around 100 photographs.

Toys and Games - This collection of approximately 1000 items includes a strong collection of nineteenth century dolls and a wide range of toys including popular favourites such as Lego, toy trains, Action Man and a space hopper. The collection comes more up to date with a range of toys from the 1990s and early 2000s.

Watchmaking - Watch making was Coventry's second industry for much of the nineteenth century and for a few years was its main industry. The collection consists of around 140 pocket watches, around 30 clocks and around 300 individual watch-making tools and equipment. The highlights include two clocks made in the late seventeenth century by Samuel Watson, several prestigious watches and the contents of a watchcase-making workshop. There are also around 50 photographs and ephemera.

World War Two items - Coventry suffered a number of bombing raids in World War 2. The worst of these was the 'Blitz' of 14th November 1940 during which the Cathedral was destroyed. The collection of approximately 500 items reflects the experiences of ordinary people on the Home Front during the War. It includes an Anderson air raid shelter, gas masks, ration books, Civil Defence uniforms, medals, utility furniture and much more.

4.2.3. Archaeology

This collection mainly relates to archaeological material and associated documentation from excavated sites within Coventry and on Coventry City Council owned land nearby, i.e. The Lunt Roman Fort, Baginton and Coombe Abby. Acquisition of this material is subject to procedural guidelines laid out in 'Depositing Archaeological Archives' (internal document, 2017). The following categories comprise in total around 15,000 accessioned objects.

Prehistoric - This collection includes hand axes, arrowheads, hammers, microliths and cores, some of which are as old as the Palaeolithic period. There are also ceramics from the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Roman - This collection consists mainly of the material excavated from the Lunt Roman Fort at Baginton and dates from 60 to 80 AD. A small number of Roman objects and archaeology have also been recovered from the city and date between the first and the fourth centuries AD. However, most items are recovered from post-Roman stratigraphy. Material includes ceramics, military bronzes, coins and personal objects.

Anglo-Saxon - The collection comprises excavated material from the sixth century cemetery at Baginton and a quantity of late Saxon ceramic finds from various city centre sites. A small number of Viking-related objects are also included. From the Benedictine Priory, there is a small collection of late Saxon glazed wall tiles that are of national significance. An archaeological archive also exists for the Anglo-Saxon

site at Ryton-on-Dunsmore which lies outside the city boundary. Its inclusion in The Herbert collections relates to the fact that the site was excavated by an amateur society with strong Coventry connections.

Medieval - At its peak in the late fourteenth and in the fifteenth century, Coventry was the fourth largest city in Britain outside London and the most important in the Midlands. The wool and cloth trades, markets and religious activity led to the growth of Coventry as a commercial hub. The collections include pottery, tiles, coins, painted window glass and building materials. A significant leather collection contains shoes, boots, a mask, a book cover, and archery equipment. There is also a collection of over one thousand architectural stones from the destroyed site of the Benedictine Priory, with the finely painted Apocalypse stones being of particular note. This is a particularly rich collection, which provides evidence for the city during what is considered to have been its 'golden age', and is the subject of a current Designation application.

Post Medieval - This collection comprises personal objects, building materials and ceramics from the Tudor period through to the nineteenth century. Some of this material overlaps with the social history collection.

Foreign Archaeology - Antiquarians who had strong links to Coventry contributed to many of the items in this collection. There is archaeological material from Egypt, Cyprus and Italy and also some representation of Aztec, African and Aboriginal cultures. Objects include pottery lamps, Egyptian funerary figures ('ushabties'), stone tools and jewellery.

The Shelton Collection - From the 1930s until his death in 1958, J.B. Shelton OBE collected objects associated with Coventry's past. His small museum formed the basis of current archaeology collections. The collection includes a wide range of items including a notable fourteenth century vessel – the Coventry Face Jug.

Bulk finds - In addition to the small finds collections described above, there is also a large quantity of material from excavations from sites in Coventry dating back to the mid-twentieth century. This collection is currently being assessed for with a view to improving how it is stored and the information associated with it. Parts of the collection will also be considered for rationalisation.

4.2.4. Natural Sciences

The collection currently holds nearly 200,000 specimens in the following categories:

Bird eggs - There are about 13,000 specimens. This collection is the ninth largest of its kind in Britain. Most breeding British species are represented and there are also a smaller number of exotic species. The Ground, Beddall-Smith and Belgrove collections are important and have significant supporting documentation.

Fossils - There are about 4,000 specimens of mainly regional origin, particularly for the Carboniferous and Jurassic periods. There are very few large items and little

dinosaur material. Of note are polished fossil wood specimens, an aurochs skull, an ichthyosaur head and jaw, and a cycad.

Insects - There are over 150,000 specimens. All British insect families are represented, with particularly significant collections of Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, Diptera, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera and the Peter Cooke collection which comprises several thousand insects-primarily beetles including several significant specimens now extinct in the UK.

Some type specimens are present in the Daltry and Saunt collections (mainly Hymenoptera: Parasitica). The majority of insect material is British in origin and much has been collected from the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Somerset, Staffordshire and Warwickshire with many Red Data Book species present, some of which are now extinct in the UK. The exotic insect collection includes the Greenwood collection bequeathed in 1990 which comprises about 10,000 butterfly specimens.

Molluscs - There are about 21,000 shells, mostly marine and originating from the indo-pacific regions. British terrestrial and freshwater shells are particularly well documented and there is a significant collection of freshwater pearl mussels from the USA.

Rocks and minerals - There are 1,300 specimens with a good variety of 'species'. Notable are a large polished Labradorite specimen, Landscape Limestone from the Cotham area, Green Fluorite from Weardale, a large dolomite specimen, large examples of septarian nodules and a specimen representing 100th of the Barwell Meteorite (412g in weight) which fell in Leicestershire in 1965.

Skeletal - This is a varied but small collection which includes Moa leg bones, skulls of Rhino (black and white and horns), Indian Elephant, Tiger, Hyena, Dolphins and a good selection of British mammals and some birds.

Taxidermy (uncased)

- **Birds:** There are about 1,000 specimens, mostly British. The more notable species include the UK's eleventh Northern Oriole specimen and other local rarities like hoopoe, storm petrel, bittern and red-necked grebe. A small quantity of exotic material includes Kiwis.
- **Mammals:** There are about 200 specimens, mostly British. Most of the British smaller mammals are represented but there are no marine mammals and Muntjac is the only deer species present. Otters, pine marten and coypu are also represented.

Taxidermy (cased) - A small collection but includes some important material. There are some large glass case presentations of fish produced by the Spicer Company, examples of Roland Ward (Peregrines) and one, possibly two Hutchings (of Aberystwyth) presentation cases.

Miscellaneous - Material includes wasp nests, corals, spirit-preservation material, freeze-dried plant material (invertebrate galls), seedpods, insect pests and examples of the damage they cause, sediment samples and models. A fine microscope slide collection in an old wooden cabinet appears to be Victorian. Also included in this category is a large selection of items seized by Customs & Excise at Gatwick airports and other terminals into the UK. These include leopard and serval (African wild cat) skins, ivory accessories, skin handbags and briefcases and carved hippo and elephant tusks.

4.2.5. Visual Art

British Life & Landscape Collection - This collection, consisting of approximately 150 works, is particularly distinctive and significant to the Herbert and was the focus for the collecting activities of the first Art Director in the 1950s and 1960s. Of particular importance are works by Stanley Spencer and LS Lowry.

Modern and Contemporary Art Collection - Approximately 500 works of which The Iliffe Collection of Graham Sutherland's studies for Coventry Cathedral tapestry are particularly important. Also notable are works by David Bomberg, William Roberts, John Piper, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Susan Hiller, Cornelia Parker and Mona Hatoum.

Pre-1900 artworks collection - This collection includes items acquired by the City Council before the opening of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. There are approximately 700 works, including European Old Master paintings, portraits, views of the city, sculptures, prints, British and non-British Still-life, Landscape, Seascapes, History and Genre paintings, Asian artistic crafts, civic gifts from other cities and work by local artists. This collection contains many of the greatest treasures held at The Herbert, such as 'Bacchus and Ariadne', (1677) by Luca Giordano.

Figure Drawings Collection - There are approximately 150 works. Drawings by Fuseli, Henry Moore and Richard Hamilton are particularly important.

Topographical views - There are approximately 2,000 works, the majority of which are of Coventry. There is also a collection of approximately 200 Watercolours of Warwickshire collection

Works by Local Artists - The Herbert has a collection of approximately 2,500 works by local artists, including artists who were born, trained or lived in Coventry.

Peace and Reconciliation collection - The Herbert has a significant collection of art works on the themes of conflict, peace and reconciliation, many of which have been acquired within the last few years. This reflects the experiences of Coventry and Coventry people, including the Blitz, as well as national and international events.

Godiva collection - The Herbert has a collection of approximately 60 art works which represent the story of Lady Godiva, including paintings, sculpture, prints, and

drawings. It includes some items of international significance: of note are paintings by Collier and Landseer.

Crafts Collections - There are approximately 250 works that include ceramics and bronzes from China, Korea, Japan, the Middle East, and also studio and folk ceramics.

4.3. [The Lunt Roman Fort](#)

4.3.1 The collections listed below are managed by the team of curators based at the Herbert and comprise the following subject areas:

4.3.2. [Archaeology](#)

This collection consists mainly of the material excavated from the Lunt Roman Fort at Baginton and dates from 60 to 80 AD. A small number of Roman objects and archaeology have also been recovered from the city and date between the first and the fourth centuries AD. However, most items are recovered from post-Roman stratigraphy. Material includes ceramics, military bronzes, coins and personal objects.

4.4. [Coventry City Archives](#)

4.4.1. The City Council through Culture Coventry recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its archive collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of British Standard 5454, the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Manorial and Tithe Documents Rules and the Parochial Registers and Record Measures. The City Council also recognises through the Trust its statutory responsibilities in relation to archives which are derived from the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and the Local Government Act 1972. The City Council through the Trust is obliged under the Local Government Act 1972 'to make proper arrangements with respect to any documents which belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of its officers'.

4.4.2 Coventry Archives hold a unique richness of original archive material, charting the history of Coventry. Highlights include:

- Medieval Borough archive 1182-1555
- Coventry city council records including development, education, and leisure 1890s-2010s
- Audio Visual collection 1920s-1990s
- Private accessions 1920s-current including the Rolls Royce Heritage Trust ref PA1716
- Building plans and regulations 1910s-2000s
- Manufacturing records relating to Coventry based companies, including a large archive of Rootes material including company record, marketing material and photography archive.

5 Themes and priorities for future collecting

5.1 Coventry Transport Museum

The transport collection faces challenges of capturing the evolving technical advances that will transform the transport sector within the next few decades. The speed of technical advance is immense; as a result the transport museum needs to position itself as a place of current dialogue for innovation in order to remain relevant to the subject matter and ensure we capture the current story of transport manufacture in Coventry.

Donations from the public will remain one of the most important methods of collecting. However targeted active collecting projects and strategic partnerships will be used, particularly in the priority areas outlined below. Items will be considered for purchase in exceptional circumstances.

5.1.1 Vehicle Collection

The collecting of historical vehicles remains focused on key individual models and marks of vehicles that have been identified as absent from the Coventry story and will be looked at in a passive collecting capacity. However in contrast a more active collecting attitude will be taken in capturing current innovation to ensure the collection remains relevant to the local story.

5.1.2 Cycles

The cycle collection, although extensive has significant gaps in the representation of the smaller lesser known makes such as the Hazlewood. Other gaps include examples of technical advances from the 1970s onwards such as trends for larger, wider tyres. These identified gaps will be looked at in a passive collecting capacity.

5.1.3 Transport Objects

The Transport Museum will focus on contemporary and future accessories to reflect how usage of vehicles and the experience of being a passenger has changed and is changing since the 1970s.

5.2 The Herbert Art Gallery

5.2.1 Social and Industrial History

The Herbert will collect material that illustrates and represents the social and industrial history and development of Coventry, and the lives and experiences of its people, past and present. This includes their living conditions, housing, politics, education, religion, work, leisure, health, family life, birth, and death. This area of collecting is ongoing and 'live' in order to remain relevant to the people of Coventry and its ever changing story. The Herbert's Contemporary collecting needs to consider social, political and industrial trends for future prosperity.

Donations from the public will remain one of the most important methods of collecting. However targeted active collecting projects will be used, particularly in the priority areas outlined below. Items will be considered for purchase in exceptional circumstances.

Collecting shall be restricted to items which have been used in Coventry, made in Coventry, designed in Coventry or have belonged to Coventry people. For this purpose, 'Coventry' is defined by the current city boundary.

The only exception to this is coal mining. Items relating to the Warwickshire coalfield outside Coventry will normally be collected by Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery. However if Nuneaton is unable to accept an item it will liaise with The Herbert and, if the item fits into this collecting policy, The Herbert may acquire it.

Priorities include:

Life and work from 1970s to present day – contemporary collecting that reflects the life and times of Coventry from the 1970s is currently under-represented, in particular current social, political and technical trends. Themes of collecting will remain in line with current themes as outlined above.

Representation from minority communities – The Herbert will place particular emphasis on collecting items and histories relating to minority communities in Coventry (including BAME communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ groups, etc). Coventry is a city with a wealth of cultures and communities and The Herbert's collections need to represent and reflect this more strongly.

Experiences of women - The Herbert will place particular emphasis on collecting items relating to the experiences of women in society, including in education, public life, at work, etc. An area of particular interest is George Eliot. The Herbert will seek to expand its collection relating to George Eliot where the item relates to her time in the city of Coventry. Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery will have first refusal of George Eliot material outside of our collecting policy.

Exclusions:

Due to having already having a good representative collection of the following items, The Herbert will not seek to add to these in the future, other than in exceptional circumstances: -

- Photographic equipment (except contemporary)
- Furniture made before 1970
- Firearms

The Herbert will not collect any further items relating to the aero industries, as these items are covered by the Acquisition and Disposal policy of the Midland Air Museum.

5.2.2 Archaeology

The Herbert will collect excavated archaeological material, related paper archives and research data associated with sites within the present city boundary of Coventry and on Coventry City Council owned land nearby, i.e. The Lunt Roman Fort, Baginton and Coombe Abbey. These collections represent the historical development of Coventry as reflected in the material remains of the city's previous inhabitants. Items to be collected include; Manufactured items; Natural items adapted for human use;

Natural flora and fauna originating from an archaeological or historical environment; Excavation archive: reports, drawings, plans, and photographic and digital media records.

The majority of acquisitions occur through archaeological excavation by field units or specialist groups in accordance with procedural guidelines laid out in 'Depositing Archaeological Archives' (internal document, 2019). Some material also comes through chance finds or excavations by individuals or amateur groups. Raising the awareness of the archaeology collections may encourage more donations from this latter source.

Collecting is restricted to sites and individual finds within the present city boundary of Coventry or items with a strong association with Coventry's archaeological heritage. These may include items made available under the process of the Treasure Act 1996. The Herbert will also collect any material from future excavations of the Lunt Roman Fort at Baginton and Coombe Abbey, as both sites are owned by Coventry City Council.

Priorities include:

Excavated Material - Collections of site material received from archaeological field units are accepted subject to procedural guidelines laid out in 'Depositing Archaeological Archives' (internal document, 2019). The museum works closely with archaeology field units to agree the material appropriate for retention.

The following exceptions to this are:

- There is a presumption against acquiring further architectural fragments unless they are of exceptional quality or historical interest.
- There is a presumption against collecting post-1800 material unless in exceptional circumstances, eg it contributes substantially to the history of a particular site or is of significant research value.

Public donations - Acceptance of objects from the public and acquisition of items offered through the Treasure Act 1996 will be judged by the following criteria:

- Rarity of object type within Coventry and the level of representation of the period
- Information available on the circumstances of the find
- Potential use of the object for research and / or display
- Completeness of object

Additional limitations on collecting in this area:

Although there is a presumption against retention of human skeletal remains, each case will be considered on its merits given its archaeological context and scientific value. If there is no option for re-burial the archaeological material will be retained using guidelines in *Guidance for Care of Human Remains in Museums*, (DCMS, 2005).

5.2.3 Natural Science

The Herbert will collect examples of Natural Sciences species of the region and nationally, to increase awareness and appreciation of nature through interpretation, education and research, including; Taxidermy (mounts only), Bird Eggs, Skeletal, Molluscs, Entomology, Fossils, Rocks and minerals, HM Customs & Excise Material.

Acquisition of Natural Sciences specimens and collections can be achieved through the usual routes of donation, bequest or purchase. Active collecting through fieldwork is not currently pursued as the museum lacks appropriate expertise and capacity, but should resume if this situation changes.

The Natural Sciences collections reflect not only the fauna of the region, but of Great Britain as a whole. Although future collecting in this area should prioritise fauna of local or regional origin and collections bequeathed or donated by local or regional natural historians, this should not preclude specimens of national or international origin that fulfil other collecting criteria. The Museum's holdings of insects, for example, are nationally important. Accurate identification of species often requires comparison with a full set of material representing a much wider geographical region. In its acquisition of regional and national natural history material, The Herbert will liaise closely with neighbouring museums holding natural history collections.

Priorities include:

Research - Specimens that will enhance significant research collections. The Natural Sciences collection strengths are in bird eggs, entomology and molluscs.

- **Birds Eggs**

The Herbert will only accept egg collections in future where these are significant in size and/or content and they are accompanied by sufficient data to prove that they were collected before legislation came into being. The use of the bird eggs collection could be construed as promoting egg collecting in the wild, which is illegal. With supporting data, however, the specimens can be an invaluable research tool. Future use of this collection in the public domain will be with a view to informing people about the illegal nature of egg collecting and/or highlighting exciting research initiatives that rely on Museum collections as a resource. Virtual access to this collection exists in CD-Rom format.

- **Entomology**

The entomology collection is regularly used as a research tool by local, national and international entomologists and environmental science/ecology students. Its strength lies in its size, the data that it holds, the storage and presentation and in the accuracy of species identification. Future collecting of entomology should focus on regional fauna, but should also actively acquire any material of broader national origin.

Public Interest - Specimens that will promote public interest in Natural Sciences. Specimens that are popular with the public or that are of local, regional or national significance and that may inform future displays, events and exhibitions should be

collected. Such examples might include popular dinosaur material or legally obtained specimens of British rarities with full data.

Additional limitations on collecting in this area:

Specimens obtained illegally - We will not collect the following specimens:

- CITES-protected species (except those legitimately donated by HM Customs & Excise that enhance this increasingly important collection)
- Species for which collection, disturbance or handling breaches UK law
- Natural Sciences specimens or geological samples captured, collected or procured by illegal or unethical means, or:
- Any bird eggs or egg collections that appear to have been taken from the wild in contravention of the Protection of Birds Act 1954 and The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Botanical specimens - The herbarium (plants, mosses and fungi) collection was transferred to Warwickshire Museum in 2003 because this accredited Museum has significant expertise and collection strength in this area. The Herbert no longer accepts botanical specimens. Exceptionally rare offers of donation of such material are passed to Warwick.

Spirit collection - Due to the difficulty in maintaining the spirit collection and the fact that demand for it is extremely low, material will no longer be collected that requires immersion and preservation in spirit.

5.2.4 Visual Art

The Herbert will collect a broad spectrum of work by British and non-British artists to develop the current collections in order to better reflect the narrative of a culturally rich city. The Herbert will seek to acquire art that builds on the themes of conflict, peace and reconciliation within the context of the city's status of city of refuge in order to develop a regionally significant collection that reflects the unique status of the city. It will continue to collect art that has a specific connection to Coventry.

As part of the corresponding business plan the Herbert will look to research and develop ways of working with and collecting from artists who produce work digitally. We will do this within the themes and priorities set out below.

Acquisition of Visual Arts items and collections can be achieved through donation, bequest, collection or purchase. The Herbert will seek to develop ongoing partnerships with organisations such as CAS, Art Fund, Arts Council, in order to fund further purchases. In recent years we have acquired artworks through the CAS Rapid Response Fund, through partnership in the National Gallery Artist in Residence scheme and through participation in the 20/20 project led by the Decolonising Arts Institute at UAL. In certain circumstances we will also consider long term loans from other organisations and individuals, where this would result in the acquisition of an item which will significantly enhance the Visual Art displays.

The Visual Arts collections reflect visual culture as a whole. It is also recognised that the cultural heritage of many people in Coventry lies outside Britain. The Herbert will continue to maintain its chief focus on British art, including new media and other art forms, but will also, where appropriate, collect items from outside Britain.

Priorities include:

Conflict, Peace and Reconciliation – we will collect art which reflects the significance to Coventry of themes of Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation. This collection is intended to be a survey of the themes of war, conflict, peace and reconciliation through a wide range of artistic approaches to the subject. It will reflect movements, activities and events internationally and nationally, as well as in Coventry or involving Coventry people and organisations.

Creative Case for Diversity - the current collection has gaps in art that is made by artists who are female, identified from the LGBTQIA+ community, from ethnic minorities or disabled and as such the collection is not representative of these communities. The Herbert will actively continue to collect to bridge these gaps in line with the overall themes of the collecting policy.

Local Artists - To collect works by artists who were born or trained in Coventry and who have developed a significant profile in exhibition and collections nationally and internationally. Priorities will include the work of George Shaw and examples of Art & Language, recognising the international importance of this locally based group of artists.

British Life and Landscapes - build upon the principal strength of the existing collection of British Life and Landscape. The aim would be to expand this body of work to include works created from the late 19th century to the 1940s and from the 1970s to the 21st century.

As a subset of the British Life and Landscape collection the Herbert will continue to acquire selected works which depict scenes of Coventry Life and Landscape, including:

- Topographical Art - the Herbert will endeavour to collect local topographical art where this adds significantly to the existing collection.
- Art relating to themes of significance to Coventry, including Lady Godiva; and Post World War II reconstruction

5.3 [The Lunt Roman Fort](#)

The Lunt Roman Fort operates as a museum of learning. The collections on display are developed and cared for by the Herbert Curatorial Team and fall under the collecting theme of Archaeology.

5.4 Coventry Archives

Coventry Archives will collect material that it has a statutory duty to acquire but also items that reflect the City of Coventry and the lives and experiences of its people, past and present. These include the subjects of living conditions, housing, politics, education, religion, work, leisure, health, family life, birth and death. This collecting will aim to represent all the citizens of Coventry.

Donations from the public will remain one of the most important methods of collecting. However targeted active collecting projects will be used, particularly in the priority areas outlined below. Items will be considered for purchase in exceptional circumstances.

Collecting shall be restricted to items related to Coventry, made in Coventry, designed in Coventry or have belonged to Coventry people. For this purpose, 'Coventry' is defined by the current city boundary.

Priorities include:

Statuary - The principal statutory basis for Coventry Archives derives from the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and the Local Government Act 1972. As a statutory requirement, the following will remain priority collecting areas:

- As a principal council, Coventry City Council is obliged under the Local Government Act 1972 'to make proper arrangements with respect to any documents which belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of its officers'. The City Council will continue to fulfil this obligation through the Coventry History Centre and the City Council's records management service.
- Coventry Archives is subject to approval as a designated place for the deposit of public records under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. These records include those of Quarter Sessions, coroners, magistrate's courts and health authorities.

Diverse Communities – build on collecting oral histories from the diverse communities of Coventry in order to represent the voice of Coventry's residents; documenting the lives and experiences of all its citizens. Utilising this activity as a way of building on archive material in support of family history for communities from ethnic backgrounds.

Photographic – working in partnership to understand the extent of the photographic collection and ensure it is representative of the changing face of Coventry.

Industry – to actively seek out archival material relating to all recognisable trades of Coventry's past and presence in particular watch making, tailoring, weaving etc.

UK City of Culture – Capturing the narrative of the UK City of Culture through the documentation of events and projects outputs during and in the run up to City of Culture.

6 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.1.2 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.

6.3. Coventry Transport Museum

In the last two years the Transport Collection has undergone a significance review in line with collecting policy of 2014-2018 and as a result several items have been identified for disposal within the scope of this policy.

With the merging of services a review of shared collections have identified areas of significant crossover such as collections relating to the themes of social history, fine art and archives. A full review of these collections will be conducted and the consolidations of collections undertaken to avoid the Trust holding duplicated items which are no longer suitable for retention within the collections

6.4. Herbert Art Gallery

Social and Industrial History - rationalisation including photographic equipment, tools from trades such as woodworking, furniture and music recordings on vinyl (78s). In each of these areas there is a number of duplications and obscure items, which are unlikely to be displayed in their entirety in the future.

Textiles - there is some duplication across the costume and textiles collection which will be addressed under this policy. In particular women's underwear and children's clothing are overrepresented and some items have no particular Coventry connections.

Archaeology - bulk finds are also under active consideration for rationalisation. There is a lot of material excavated in the mid-20th century which was not properly recorded, so much of the associated data regarding context has been lost. This makes it unlikely to be of any value for research purposes. There is also a large amount of duplication across the collection and some it is stored in unsuitable storage boxes which are over-packed. We are consulting with relevant colleagues and sector bodies over the most appropriate approach to take with this collection.

Collections suitable for rationalisation were identified as part of a collection survey undertaken by the collection team in 2009-10.

7 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

7.1. The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

8 Collecting policies of other museums

8.1. 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.

8.2. Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

- Birmingham Museums, Birmingham
- Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, Surrey
- Science Museum Group
- London Transport Museum, London
- West Midlands Police Museum
- Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, Somerset
- The British Motor Museum, Gaydon
- Jaguar Heritage Trust, Coventry
- Lakeland Motor Museum, Cark in Cartmel, Lake District
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum
- Mead Art Gallery, University of Warwick
- Midland Air Museum, Baginton
- National Motor Museum, Beaulieu
- National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham
- Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery
- Rugby Museum and Art Gallery
- Warwickshire Museum Service

8.3. Joint acquisition agreements are in place with the following museums:

- Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery – George Eliot Collection
- Warwickshire Museum Service – Archaeology Collection where boundaries changed in the 1970s.

9 Acquisition

- 9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:
Culture Coventry Trust 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 Loans

- 10.1.1 Culture Coventry Trust is responsible for managing loans on behalf of Coventry City Council. We hold collections in trust for the public and aim to make them available (loans out) to the widest possible audience whilst maintaining high standards of care to ensure their long-term survival and integrity.
- 10.1.2 We also request loans (loans in) from heritage organisations, private individuals and community groups for the purpose of increasing access to collections, providing learning opportunities and enhancing our exhibitions/displays- ensuring the stories we tell are meaningful, relevant and representative of the communities we serve.

11 Human remains

- 11.1 As the museum holds human remains, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

12 Biological and geological material

- 12.1 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.

13 Archaeological material

- 13.1.1 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.
- 13.1.2 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).

14 Exceptions

- 14.1 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.

15 Spoliation

- 15.1. Culture Coventry Trust 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.

16 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains.

- 16.1. The Trust'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.

16.2 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'.

17 Disposal procedures

17.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal and the Museums Association's Disposal Toolkit.

17.2 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.

17.3 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.

17.4 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.

17.5 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.

17.6 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.

17.7 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.

17.8 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).

17.9 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.

17.10 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.

17.11 The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced 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.

17.12 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

17.13 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.

17.13.1 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.

17.13.2 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.

17.13.3 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 (if appropriate).

17.14 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

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

17.16 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.

17.17 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 when the risk can't be removed or would be unsafe to do so or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

17.18 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.

17.19 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by a manager from the collections team. 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.

End