

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Name of museum: London Canal Museum

Name of governing body: The Council of Management.

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 12/8/14

Date at which policy due for review: August, 2014.

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: August 2019

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.

The Collections Development Policy will be available on the museum's website and copy on paper will be supplied to any person who wishes to receive it at no greater charge than is sufficient to cover the expenses of stationary and postage in doing so.

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to be a guide for museum staff, supporters, and the public, to the professional standards the museum will observe towards the objects in its care. It seeks to reassure the public that the museum is operating within an ethical framework and is publicly accountable.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organization:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Our object is the education of the public in the history of the canals, and in particular those of London. We aim to be the leading regional canal museum in the UK. We will inspire interest in and enthusiasm for the waterways and the ice trade.

The London Canal Museum's mission is set out above and in the Constitution of the Canal Museum Trust and the museum's Forward Plan. The museum's collections exist to support the mission, to preserve and interpret the history of London's canals and the ice trade. They include social historical objects, industrial objects, archives, photographs and records on other media.

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

The London Canal Museum was opened in 1992. At that time the collection was sparse. The narrowboat *Coronis* was acquired and displayed as the centrepiece of the ground floor and its cabin was reconstructed. In the years since 1992 there has been slow but steady progress in collecting objects, photographs, and archival documents that are either displayed or that may be part of a future permanent exhibition. Some objects have been donated and others purchased. Donations of special note were the 19th century model of an ice cart and horse, of a type used to deliver ice from what is now the museum building, the working tug Bantam IV, and more recently a collection of early 20th Century photographs of the Regent's Canal.

In recent years several important artefacts have been purchased. We acquired an early canal boat diesel engine, now displayed, and a London canal tractor dating from 1960 that is an important part of the history of canals in London. An original ice cream making machine dating from around 1900 was purchased in 2014, illustrating the uses of ice that was transported by canal boat.

Many smaller purchases have been completed, adding archival documents and objects to the collection. The museum has acquired these by seizing opportunities that have arisen. Some of the smaller items have been identified for sale online.

3. An overview of current collections

The Museum tells the story of the canals, their people, and trade. Our remit is to promote public awareness and knowledge of London Waterways and to provide education opportunities for young people at the museum. We are preserving objects of historical interest for public benefit.

The museum's collection includes around 400 objects. Most items are from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and are related to canals, canal equipment, canal art, social history, and industry. Some are related to the ice trade, the use of ice before refrigeration, horses and their care and use for transport, cargo handling and weighing equipment..

The physical object collection includes heavy metal tools and equipment, timber objects, glass and ceramic objects, and leather horse tack.

The museum also holds archives that contain glass slides, papers, maps, photographs, and books, audio and video tapes. Some photographs are held in digital format. Most photographs are held in original media and also digitally.

The collection supports the museum's objectives by providing objects for exhibition, by helping to meet the needs of internal and external researchers, and by providing resources for the future development of the exhibitions.

The museum does not consider any accessioned objects in the collection to be irrelevant to the museum's purposes.

The museum holds a range of replica items including costume, decorated utensils, and an ice-cream making machine that are used for public education purposes and for handling. It is not considered appropriate to accession modern replicas that themselves have no historic value.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 Future collecting will concentrate on enhancing the visitor experience, and providing resources for future exhibitions and research. The museum will continue to acquire material by donation, bequest, or purchase.

4.2 Where appropriate, objects and archives relating to items specific to the history of the museum's building and the family of Carlo Gatti, and items

related to the ice trade and ice cream will be collected irrespective of geography.

- 4.3 The main focus will be on collecting items that were used in or are otherwise connected with the greater London area and surrounding counties. However, the museum will not forbear to collect items from other areas that are representative of items of a type used throughout the country, or that help to illuminate the general context of the history of inland waterways in the London area.
- 4.4 Items related exclusively to the river Thames will only be collected if they illustrate a general point or the interchange between canal and river navigation.
- 4.5 The museum will take due account of the collecting policies of other museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields and will consult with such organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 4.6 The museum may acquire modern objects that help to interpret, illustrate or encourage audience engagement, including by working with artists and communities.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 5.3 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
- 5.4 The museum will not accept all artefacts that may be offered to it. In particular offers of artefacts will be declined in following circumstance:
 - Where the proposed gift is encumbered by conditions considered unacceptable.

- Where the item is infested with pests or disease, unless it can be treated or the item is rare and the cost or difficulty of treating it is judged worthwhile.
- If the museum cannot provide long term care for the artefact.
- If the museum has insufficient storage space or other resources needed to accept the item.
- If accepting the item would be prejudicial to the health and safety of museum staff or visitors.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

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

7 Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

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

National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port
 The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne
 Foxton Canal Museum
 Kennet and Avon Canal Museum
 Museum of London
 River and Rowing Museum, Henley
 Museum of London Docklands

8. Archival holdings

The museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera. Its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002), and also aims to meet the standards outlined in the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts' Standards for Record Repositories.

The museum shall maintain a catalogue of its archive collection on a computer database, and update it as possible subject to resources being available.

The policy contained in this document is generally applicable to the archive collection. In respect of archive materials the museum will not be constrained by geographical considerations in accepting material offered to it where this is of potential value to persons conducting research who may wish to use the archive collection.

9. Acquisition

9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

- a) The museum will collect artefacts that can be used to preserve and interpret the history of London's canals and the ice trade. This may include objects, archives, photographs and other media related to:
 - the lives and culture of the canal community
 - inland waterway trades
 - inland waterway construction and operation
 - the ice trade, including ice cream
 - London canals and related waterways including the Lee and Stort navigations.
 - canal boats, their construction and maintenance
 - canal and ice trade horses, and other motive power
 - the building at 12-13 New Wharf Road in which the museum is housed.
- b) The museum may acquire artefacts by means of gift, purchase, or bequest. It may also accept loans (See section 13, below)
- c) In cases of doubt the decision for or against the acceptance of any artefact which is offered will be made by the Collections Management Committee or the Council of Management, whichever can consider the matter first. In so deciding consideration will be given to the value which the object could potentially offer to future generations. If an urgent decision is necessary it may be made by any member of the Council of Management who will consult other members to the extent that is practicable in the circumstances.
- d) Generally the museum will not actively seek to acquire duplicate artefacts. However duplicates are considered of value and are actively collected where there is scope for them to be offered for temporary loan to other museums etc., or where the value of the items is enhanced by the holding or display of several such items together. In the case of printed ephemera that are potentially vulnerable duplicate copies will be collected where available.

- e) The museum may acquire certain items that are not intended to be retained for the permanent collections. These items may be used if appropriate for educational or promotional purposes, including loans to schools and other educational groups. The museum may also acquire consumable and other spare parts for boats or industrial equipment in its collection.
 - f) The museum may acquire items as spare parts or consumables for its working tug or other industrial machinery or canal related equipment that it owns, or acquires. Such items will be recorded separately outside the main accession record and shall not be treated as part of the permanent collection since their intended use implies that preservation cannot be guaranteed. If such items are donated the donor will be made aware of the intended use of the item(s) at the time of donation.
 - g) The museum will only acquire models if they are considered to reasonably accurate or demonstrative representations of the original or are themselves of historical interest. If of historic interest they will be accessioned. Models can be of value in conveying information and understanding more vividly than other means, and they allow representation of large objects which could not be displayed.
 - h) The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
 - i) Any new acquisitions must refer to and conform to a standard set by The Council of Management and Collections Manager with regard to condition and documentation. Any potential acquisitions must demonstrate a clear use within teaching, research and public engagement.
 - j) Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by board of Trustees and Collections Manage, having regard to the interests of other museums.
- 9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

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

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12 Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

13 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

- 14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 Not applicable

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore

be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.12 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.12.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited

museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.

- 16.12.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.12.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 16.12.4 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.13 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.14 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.15 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.16 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.17 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.