



## Collections development policy

**Name of governing body: Pontypridd Town Council**

**A copy of this policy can be made available on request in person or in writing.**

**MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Division will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

### **1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**

#### **1.1 Museum's statement of purpose**

**Our Vision** is to promote, nurture and share Pontypridd's heritage, culture and identity with our communities and wider audiences.

**Our Mission** in achieving this will be to challenge perceptions of Pontypridd, encourage discussion and foster inclusion, through events, exhibitions, research, and public participation.

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

**1.3** By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

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

**1.5** The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

**1.6** The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

**1.7** In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where

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disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection.
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit).
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.
- extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken.
- the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection.

## **2. History of the collection**

The museum's collections relate to the local area covered by Pontypridd Town Council, since the building of the old bridge in 1756. As the Museum was one of the earlier collections in the wider area, its geographical scope was once much larger, taking in parts of the Rhondda and Cynon Valleys in the north and west, Senghenydd in the east and as far down as Taff's Well in the South. The development of the collection has largely been orchestrated by the efforts of the previous curator, who set out post-1756 priorities for the collection.

Key subjects covered in the collection include:

- The construction of the bridge by William Edwards, focusing on its significance as the first in Europe to exceed the span of the Rialto in Venice. The museum holds a number of key works of art depicting the bridge as well as a collection of contemporary bridge memorabilia. The most significant of these is a ceramic known as 'the Swansea Vase'.
- The Glamorganshire canal and its importance in the industrial development of the Taff valley.
- The town's iron industry, particularly Brown Lenox, leading manufacturers of ships' anchor chain, and the Treforest tinplate works.
- The Taff Vale Railway, engineered by Brunel to carry the products of the iron industry down the valley to Cardiff docks.
- Coal-mining, which became the major local employer after 1880, and the cost in human lives of the wealth that this industry created.
- The growth of Pontypridd as the market town for the mining valleys of the centre of the coalfield.
- The home life of the working population, illustrated by domestic artefacts.
- The military history of the town, which was the recruiting centre for the valleys.
- The sporting and musical culture of a town which has produced a significant number of remarkable singers and sportspeople. Not least is the position that Pontypridd holds as the birthplace of the Welsh national anthem, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* (*Land of My Fathers*)

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

The museum's collections relate to the industrial, social and cultural history of Pontypridd over the last 250 years.

**Subjects covered include:**

William Edwards' bridge

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The Glamorganshire canal  
The iron industry (chain-making and tinsplate)  
The Taff Vale Railway  
Coal-mining  
Retailing and the market  
Domestic life  
Military history  
Sport  
Recreation and music  
Religious history

**Collections include:**

Fine Art  
Personalia  
Paper Ephemera  
Social history  
Industry  
Transport  
Decorative and applied arts  
Costume and textiles  
Musical instruments  
Agriculture  
Photography  
Document archives and oral history

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

The museum's collections relate mainly to the geographical area covered by Pontypridd Town Council. In its present stage of development the museum interprets the history of this area since the building of William Edwards' bridge in 1756.

Gaps in the existing collections which require active collection include:

- Pre-1756 objects including archaeological material.
- popular entertainment – jazz bands, music halls, cinemas, athletics, local politics.
- contemporary collecting representing women, politics and minority groups in the Pontypridd community.
- Existing themes will be built upon to create collections of greater significance, for example:
  - the lives of Evan and James James
  - fine artwork relating to the area
  - our industrial and social history collections relating to iron-working and coal-mining

**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.

The museum's object collections are reviewed from time to time in order to transfer appropriate objects to other accredited museums. Following an audit of the collection in 2015 onwards, it was identified that as a result of the Museums wider geographical scope mentioned in section 2, there are a number of objects which should be offered to neighbouring organisations in agreement with the Regeneration and Management committee.

The main reasons for considering disposal are made in accordance with the Museum Association's Disposal Toolkit:

- improved care for the item
- improved access to the item; increased enjoyment of and engagement with the item by the public
- improved context for the item
- continued retention of the item within public museum collections or the wider public domain
- removal of any hazard posed by an item (e.g. through contamination).

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

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

## **7. Collecting policies of other museums**

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

**7.2** Specific reference is made to the following museums:

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

Cynon Valley Museum and Gallery

Rhondda Cynon Taf Heritage Service and The Welsh Mining Experience

Oriel y Bont (University of South Wales, Treforest)

Museum of Cardiff

## **8. Archival holdings**

The museum has significant archival holdings, either which hold local importance or which are associated with other 3D items that have been donated to the Museum. These are mostly in the form of photographs and official documents. The archival collection is not a collecting priority for the museum, and will also be subject to the rationalisation process cited in section 5.2. The museum works proactively with the local studies library in Pontypridd and Glamorgan Archives, to identify the suitability of the museum for particular archival items. In its assessment of the archival collection, the Museum staff will consider the application of the Archive Service Accreditation Scheme as guidance.

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## **9. Acquisition**

### **9.1** The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

If both the Curator and Assistant Curator deem an item or collection of appropriate historical, cultural or other value or significance within the limits of the collections development policy, they will be authorised to agree to its acquisition. If the costs of acquiring an item (either due to price, or other expenses such as conservation work) appear prohibitive, the final decision on acquisition will rest with the Museum Curator and the Regeneration and Museum Committee.

**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.

**9.4** At present owing to the lack of storage and the significant backlog of objects requiring proper care, including assessment for disposal, there is a temporary moratorium on collecting all but the most significant material for the Museum collection

## **10. Human Remains**

**10.1** The Museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## **11. Biological Material**

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

## **12. Archaeological Material**

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

**12.2** In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

### **13. Exceptions**

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

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

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

### **14. Spoliation**

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

### **15. Repatriation of human remains**

**15.1** The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

**15.2** 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'.

### **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 (if appropriate).

**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 MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Division Wales.

**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 (if appropriate).

**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.