

Havering Museum

Collections Development Policy

April 2015

This policy was approved on behalf of the Museum's Governing Body, Havering Museum Limited, by			
Name	Peter Stewart		
Position	Chairman		
Signed	P. Stewart	Date	16.05.2015

This policy is due for review on or before this date	April 2020
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Introduction

The Collections Development Policy (April 2015) replaces the Museum's earlier Acquisitions and Disposals Policy (January 2010), which expired in January 2015, and will form part of the Museum's wider Collections Management Policy framework, along with the Collections Information and Access Policy and Collections Care and Conservation Policy, both of which are currently in development.

It has been structured according to an approved template provided by Arts Council England, to satisfy the requirements of the Accreditation Standard for Museums and Galleries in the UK (October 2011).

Arrangement of Sections

1. Statement of Purpose
2. Overview of current collections
3. Themes and priorities for future collecting
4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
5. Limitations on collecting
6. Collecting policies of other museums
7. Policy review procedure
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10. Spoliation
11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains
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13. Disposal procedures

1. Statement of Purpose

Havering Museum collects and preserves objects which record the history of the area that is now the London Borough of Havering, making them accessible to a wide audience through exhibitions, events and activities, education programmes, publications and web pages. The Museum aims to foster a strong sense of community identity and pride in the achievements of local people, providing a wide range of opportunities for engagement in its work through volunteering, research projects and other activities.

2. Overview of current collections

2.1. History of the collections

The Museum is built on three existing collections relating to the history of the London Borough of Havering. Most of this material has been acquired through donations from local individuals and organisations:

2.1.1. Local Authority Collection

A long-established collection owned by the London Borough of Havering. This includes material remaining from a museum operated by the former Borough of Romford at Bedfords House between 1935 and 1952. The remainder of the material was subsequently acquired by the local authority, mainly via the Library Service, with the aim of displaying it in a future museum. This collection was stored in various local authority buildings over many years, and no complete formal inventory existed before all the material was relocated to Havering Museum in 2010. The London Borough of Havering and Havering Museum Limited entered into a formal agreement in November 2011 to loan this material to the Museum for a 35-year period, expiring in 2045. All of the material has been accessioned into the Museum's Main Collection, and upon (or before) the expiry of the loan, the Museum may seek a permanent transfer of the material from the local authority. An audit of the Museum's collections in 2013 revealed that a small group of objects have been permanently gifted to the Museum by the local authority, although no formal transfer of title documentation was completed.

2.1.2. Havering Museum Limited Collection

A collection of objects, images, maps and printed ephemera assembled by Havering Museum Limited between 2005 and 2010. Certain items from this collection have been accessioned into the Museum's Main Collection, or added to the Handling Collection or Museum Library. The majority of the collection remains in storage either at the Museum or at the home of the Museum's former chairman, Ian Wilkes (see clause 4.1.1).

2.1.3. Passmore Edwards Museum material

16 boxes of archaeological finds from excavations in Romford Market Place in 1984/5, the property of Havering Council. All of the finds from these excavations were originally deposited at the Passmore Edwards Museum in Newham, which closed down in 1994/1995. Its collections were subsequently dispersed; some to the newly formed Museum of London (Mortimer Wheeler) storehouse in Hackney, much of it into storage at a warehouse in Stock Street, Plaistow, but other material was deposited with local councils and museums. Around 200-250 boxes were deposited with Havering Council and this material eventually ended up at the disused Broxhill School in Harold Hill. According to Francis Grew, head of the London Archaeological Archive and Records Centre (LAARC) at the Museum of London, he and Elizabeth Neathey, then curator of Havering Museum, visited the site in 2009 to select some material and came away with the 16 boxes now held at Havering Museum. The rest was transferred to a storage container, the whereabouts of which is currently unknown. No inventory was made of the material that came to Havering Museum, but whilst much of the material remained unprocessed, some items were accessioned in the Museum's Main Collection. The Museum created an inventory of all the unprocessed material in September

2014, with a view to transferring ownership from Havering Council to the Museum, but was informed in October 2014 that LAARC wished to reclaim and rationalise the material. As of April 2015, discussions are ongoing (see clause 4.1.2).

2.2. Arrangement of current collections

The Museum now divides its collections into five distinct areas, a mixture of core and supporting collections:

Core Collections

2.2.1. Main Collection

Over 2000 accessioned objects, mainly material from the Local Authority Collection and the Havering Museum Limited Collection. Since mid-2011, the majority of new accessions have been newly acquired by Havering Museum via gift or purchase.

2.2.2. Loan Collection

Objects on short- or long-term loan to Havering Museum from other museums or private individuals. Lending institutions include the British Museum, the Museum of London, Colchester Museum, Chelmsford Museum and Valence House Museum. These are not accessioned, but are recorded on the LoanTracker database.

Supporting Collections

2.2.3. Handling Collection

Items collected specifically to be handled and used for education sessions and other events. The items do not have to be of Havering provenance, but consideration should be given to storage space and educational benefits when acquiring new items. Includes material from the Havering Museum Limited Collection as well as objects which have been donated since the Museum opened.

2.2.4. Museum Library

A collection of around 400 books and other reference material for volunteer research and use in events and activities. Most of the books are local and general history titles, and can provide contextual information on the Museum's collections. Consideration should be given to the Museum's research interests and scope of its collections when acquiring new items for the Library. Includes material from the Havering Museum Limited Collection, and material which has been donated since the Museum opened. Volunteers are able to borrow most of the items.

2.2.5. Sound Archive

Audio files of interviews with local people recounting memories of various aspects of Havering history. The majority were recorded between 2008 and 2011 as part of a Heritage Lottery Funded oral history project initiated by Havering Museum Limited and continued by Havering Museum. Some date back to the 1960s and were converted from cassette recordings.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

3.1. Havering Museum will only collect material which relates to the history of the area that is now the London Borough of Havering.

3.2. The Museum will not restrict its collecting activity to any specific historical period.

3.3. Future collecting will be carefully planned, and items offered by local people will be accepted only after careful consideration.

3.4. The Museum will not collect natural history specimens or foreign antiquities unless such material has specific local significance. For example, it is known that the museum at Bedfords House displayed specimens prepared by George Hope, a taxidermist who lived at Havering Grange, and that these were disposed of in part by donation to local schools when that museum closed. Should such specimens be traced and survive in good condition, it may be appropriate to acquire them to conserve them.

3.5. To ensure that the Museum acquires a range of material which reflects all aspects of Havering's history, current strengths and weaknesses within the Main Collection are highlighted here:

Strengths

3.5.1. Romford Brewery

The Museum has a particularly strong collection of memorabilia related to Romford Brewery and the Ind Coope company, which continues to grow. Whilst it is the Museum's aim to represent a broad range of themes in its collection, it is recognised that Romford Brewery is a particular research interest, due to the company's significance in local history and the Museum being situated within a former Romford Brewery building.

3.5.2. Blacksmith's and cooper's tools

The Museum has a substantial collection of 19th and 20th century blacksmith's and cooper's tools, formerly used at the village forge in Havering-atte-Bower, and will therefore not acquire any further examples (see also 4.1.3).

3.5.3. Agricultural tools

Agricultural tools are also well represented in the Museum's collections, therefore the Museum will not seek to acquire any further examples.

3.5.4. Second World War

The Museum holds a wide variety of military and social history objects related to the Second World War within both the Main Collection and Handling Collection. Whilst it is the Museum's aim to represent a broad range of themes in its collection, visitor feedback has indicated that the Second World War is a theme of particular interest to many of the Museum's visitors.

Weaknesses

3.5.5. Other local industries

The Museum has a specific *Made in Havering* gallery devoted to local manufacturing industries, however most of the industrial objects in the collection are related to Romford Brewery (see 3.5.1.). Some objects were recently acquired which relate to other industries which had not previously been represented in the collection, such as Roneo (Romford) and Murex (Rainham), and the Museum will seek to build on this theme.

3.5.6. Smaller local settlements

The majority of the Museum's objects are related to the settlements of Romford, Hornchurch, Upminster, Rainham and Havering-atte-Bower. Whilst the Museum will not cease acquiring objects from these areas, priority will be given to objects related to the smaller local settlements including Wennington, Noak Hill, Harold Wood, Harold Hill and Collier Row. Visitor feedback has shown that they would like to see such areas represented more in the displays.

3.5.7. Domestic items

Visitor feedback has indicated that common domestic items are of interest to many visitors, as these can trigger personal memories. The Museum will seek to acquire more domestic items in future, though these will be required to have a direct Havering connection.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

4.1. Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal and rationalisation takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections. Havering Museum is not actively pursuing a rationalisation programme at present, however certain areas of the collections have been highlighted for rationalisation in future:

4.1.1. Havering Museum Limited collection

Whilst some items from this collection have been accessioned into the Main Collection or added to the Museum Library and Handling Collection, the majority do not meet the criteria of the Museum's Collections Development Policy, and it would be appropriate to transfer them to other museums and institutions in the public domain.

4.1.2. Passmore Edwards Museum material

As stated in clause 2.1.3, the Museum has a quantity of archaeological material from the former Passmore Edwards Museum in its custody, the ownership of which remains with Havering Council. The Museum was informed in October 2014 that the London Archaeological Archive and Records Centre (LAARC) is seeking to reclaim and rationalise this material, however negotiations are still ongoing as of April 2015.

4.1.3. Blacksmith's and cooper's tools

As stated in clause 3.5.2, the Museum has a large collection of blacksmith's and cooper's tools from the forge at Havering-atte-Bower. Certain examples have been conserved and put on display. However, the majority of the tools are either duplicates of those on display or fragments which are unsuitable for display, therefore there is no public benefit to these remaining in the collection.

4.2. When undertaking any rationalisation programme, a Rationalisation Policy and Plan will be written, and an Internal Rationalisation Committee convened, consisting of members of both the Collections & Exhibitions Team and the Museum's governing body. The Museum will be guided in this process by the methodology laid down in the report *Collections rationalisation: planning for action* (Share Museums East, 2013), and may also seek further professional advice.

4.3. When undertaking disposals from its collections, the Museum will be guided by section 13 of this policy and the Museums Association's Code of Ethics and Disposals Toolkit.

5. Limitations on collecting

5.1. 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.

5.2. Due to lack of storage space, the Museum will not acquire archaeological excavation archives. The London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) at the Museum of London is the principal repository for such material in Greater London, and already holds archaeological archives from the London Borough of Havering, most of them the result of excavations by the Newham Archaeological Service.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

6.1. 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. Specific reference is made to the following organisations, though this is not an exhaustive list:

In Havering

Havering Libraries Local Studies & Family History Centre (see clause 6.2.)
Upminster Windmill
Upminster Tithe Barn Museum of Nostalgia
Upminster Old Chapel
Hornchurch Country Park Visitor Centre (opening Autumn 2015)

In neighbouring areas:

Valence House Museum (London Borough of Barking & Dagenham)
Redbridge Museum (London Borough of Redbridge)
Vestry House Museum (London Borough of Waltham Forest)
Epping Forest District Museum
Essex Record Office
Thurrock Museum
Museum of London

6.2. Havering Museum has made a formal agreement with the London Borough of Havering (see clause 2.1.1.) which recognises that the Museum's priorities for collecting will be objects, and those of Havering Libraries Local Studies & Family History Centre will relate to archive material. The agreement covers four areas:

6.2.1. Havering Museum will only acquire archive material with objects if the material relates directly to those objects, OR if the material relates directly to objects that are already in the Museum's collection, OR if there is some specific curatorial justification for doing so.

6.2.2. Any archive material which does not relate directly to objects in the Museum's collections will be offered to Havering Libraries Local Studies & Family History Centre with the consent of the donor, as long as it fulfils the criteria of the Local Studies Collecting Policy.

6.2.3. Any gift offer of material which does not fulfil the criteria of Havering Museum's Collections Development Policy or Havering Libraries Local Studies & Family History Centre's Collecting Policy will not be accepted. However, the Museum may accept material for its Handling Collection where there is no other repository and with the agreement of the donor.

6.2.4. Havering Museum and Havering Libraries Local Studies & Family History Centre have an understanding of mutual access to collections where material supports Museum or Local Studies exhibitions and activities.

7. Policy review procedure

7.1. This Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when this policy is next due for review is noted above.

7.2. 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 existing collections.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition procedures

- a. The Museum will exercise 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.
- b. In particular, 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).
- c. 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.
- d. The Museum will not acquire any biological or geological material except specimens which were prepared for the Bedfords House museum as outlined in Section 3 above.
- e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (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. 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 as defined by the *Treasure Act 1996*.
- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the Museum is:
 - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

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.

- g. As the Museum holds cremated human remains that are over 100 years old, it will follow the procedures in the *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums* issued by DCMS in 2005. The Museum does not hold or intend to acquire further human remains of any age.

10. Spoliation

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.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

11.1. The Museum's governing body, acting on the advice of professional museum 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 13a-13d, 13g and 13o/s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

11.2. 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* (DCMS, 2005).

12. Management of archives

As the Museum holds some photographs and printed ephemera in its Collection, its governing body will be guided by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom* (third edition, 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.
- c. The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 13g-13m and 13o/s will be followed. In cases where 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

The disposal decision-making process

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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 the 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. External 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

h. 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 of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

i. Any monies received by the Museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied 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.

j. 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.

Disposal by gift or sale

k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. 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.

l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

m. 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.

Disposal by exchange

n. 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.

o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. 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.

q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the Museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

r. 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.

Documenting disposal

s. 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.