

Worcester City Council

Museum Collection Development Policy

2023-2028

Name of museum: Commandery, Worcester and Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

Name of governing body: Worcester City Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: Adopted by Worcester City Council Joint Museums Committee, 15 June 2023

Policy review procedure: 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: June 2028

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.

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Relationship to other relevant policies/ plans of the organisation

Museums Worcestershire Statement of Purpose

We aim to enrich the lives of people from Worcestershire and beyond, today and for future generations.

We want to inspire them to deepen their knowledge of the City and County and make sense of the world.

We will do this by preserving and interpreting the museum collections and sites; sharing our passion for the unique art, artefacts and stories that have shaped the identity of Worcestershire and its county town for over 2000 years.

Museums Worcestershire roles are to:

- Enable shared experiences, discovery and interaction at the County Museum at Hartlebury Castle, The Commandery, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Museum on the Move and the Collections Centre.
- Safeguard the museum collections of Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council, maintaining national standards of care.
- Enrich the cultural heritage and future of Worcestershire and beyond.
- Expand perspectives and opportunities by supporting other museums and organisations in Worcestershire and beyond.

The Worcester City collection includes archaeology, social history, natural sciences, fine and decorative arts; some elements of the collection are of national significance.

A range of services is available to make the collections more accessible to the public. These include exhibitions, workshops, events, holiday activities, talks and guided tours on a regular basis; community-based projects are also developed for new audiences. The museum website provides access to information on collections both by museum staff and external experts.

This policy sets out the principles that will provide the Joint Museums Committee elected members for Worcester City Council and their supporting officers with a framework for the scrupulous and ethical acquisition and disposal of collections using clear procedures and decision-making processes common to UK museums in the Accreditation Scheme.

Implementing the policy will enable Museums Worcestershire to demonstrate the public benefit in their actions relating to the acquisition and disposal of collections on behalf of Worcester City. It provides a basis for decision-making and an informed dialogue between governing bodies, donors, funding bodies and other stakeholders.

This policy applies to material which Worcester City Council owns and has accessioned into the museum collection or intends to own and accession into the collection.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

History of collecting at Worcester City Museums

There has been a museum in Worcester since the 1820s, estimated to be the eighth oldest in the country. Museum collecting began in earnest in 1833 with the formation of the Worcestershire Natural History Society led by Sir Charles Hastings. These early and now extremely significant natural history collections were bought by the Corporation of Worcester in 1881, completing the Victoria Institute to house the Library, Museum & Art Gallery and School of Art & Science in 1896.

Throughout the twentieth century the collections continued to be drawn from a very wide geographical area and range of disciplines and included the purchase of The Commandery building in the 1970s. Local Government reorganisation in 1974 saw the building split as the Library became Worcestershire County's responsibility while the Museum and Art Gallery stayed with the city. Photography, documents and ephemera collections were split rapidly between the organisations at this time.

During the late twentieth century it was the policy of the museum to 'illustrate the story of man and his environment in the Severn valley, with particular reference to Worcester'. Since 1997 the focus for the archaeology, social history and applied art collections has been more precisely defined as the area governed by Worcester City Council and the people who have lived and worked within that boundary.

Participation in the Contemporary Art Society Special Collections Scheme in the late 1990s and the early years of the new century saw the refocus of the fine art collection to more fully explore urban and rural landscape. The scheme gave Worcester City Museums the opportunity to acquire works by internationally important contemporary artists.

In 2006 a partnership was formed with Worcestershire County Museum in the formation of a joint museum store outside of the city on Hartlebury Trading Estate. The majority of the archaeology, social history and applied art collections have been moved from less-suitable stores around the city and are now stored to a high professional standard in this building, making the collections more widely accessible for visitors, researchers and learning groups.

In 2010 Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council took the decision to merge the management of their collections and museum venues, although ownership remained with each authority and the collections are managed in parallel. The new service was named Museums Worcestershire and is overseen by the Joint Museums Committee, formed of representatives from each authority and, when required, additional external expertise.

Specific collections of material relating to the city are also known to exist at other museums in the fields of sports, education, friendly societies and the archaeology of Worcester Cathedral as well as the well-established independent museums of medical history, Worcester Porcelain, the Worcestershire Yeomanry and Worcestershire Regiment (both with displays hosted by the City Museums), and freemasonry. We offer both paid and unpaid advice and expertise to the staff and volunteers of these collections to facilitate the long-term future of these collections and to encourage improvements in public access.

The 2020 COVID pandemic saw a renewed focus towards contemporary collecting, and, likewise, a successful track record of community focussed collections outreach projects has seen a commitment in collecting to better reflect and represent communities in the collections.

An overview of current collections

“The town is precisely in character with the beautiful and rich country, in the midst of which it lies”

William Cobbett September 1826

Understanding the English Landscape

The Story of Worcestershire

The city of Worcester is placed within a very typical English landscape. While it is centrally located in the country, the rise and fall of the ocean tides have their influence: Worcester grew up because of the crossing point of the River Severn at low tide. The Severn is a respected force in the city with floods reclaiming both farmland and city streets on a regular basis. Worcester sits in the shadow of the Malvern Hills, one of Britain’s most important classic geological areas and now recognised as an internationally significant Geopark. Eleven out of the thirteen recognised geological periods of time are represented by the rocks of Worcestershire.

This special position encompassing urban, rural, river, tidal water and hill has created a museum collection significant both regionally and nationally that allows us to explore the quintessential English landscape.

The bedrock of this collection is the herbarium and geological collections, which in part date back to the founding of the Museum of the Worcestershire Natural History Society in 1833. Further natural history collections of birds, mammals and insects from Worcestershire increase the information about the range of habitats in landscape.

In more recent years, the fine art collection has been focussed to interpret our ‘way of looking’ at and increase our understanding of the peculiarly English landscape. Collecting in this area has sought to comment on the relationship between urban and rural landscapes and the tension between the two.

For this core collection, of paramount importance is the advice of experts and partners for acquiring, identifying, interpreting, documenting and disseminating the information the collection holds. Substantial work on cataloguing and research has been completed in the last thirty years via collaboration and partnership, working with the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre at the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust at the University of Worcester and the Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark and the Contemporary Art Society. These and other relationships will continue to develop over the lifetime of this policy and will inform future acquisitions.

Natural History

The Natural History Collection contains an enormously useful catalogue of specimens that charts the natural landscape, flora and fauna of Worcestershire. The collection acts as an accessible central resource for the people of Worcestershire to connect with their present and past environment and understand their place within it. It also chronicles significant environmental change, habitat and species loss caused by human factors such as global warming, land development and introduction of invasive species.

The collection Includes:

Herbarium

- A large and significant part of the collections, with at least 10,000 individual specimens comprising a wide variety of flowering plants, mosses, algae, lichens, liverworts, ferns and fungi, the majority from Worcestershire and including the earliest recorded specimens of several species. The nineteenth century collections of local naturalists include those of William Matthews, Harvey Buchanan Holl, and J.H. Thompson. The collection of over 300 specimens of flora from Wyre Forest was amassed by George Jordan, butler to a surgeon from Bewdley.

Geology

- The geological collection was mainly assembled in the nineteenth century. It holds important scientific material including type, figured and cited specimens. It has historical significance because of the association with the early pioneers of the science including Murchison, Phillips, Lyell, Buckland and Owen. The individual collections of well known local geologists can still be recognised, including Strickland, Hastings, Symonds, Buchanan Hall, Allies, Roberts, Reece and Winnington-Ingram.
- Stratigraphical Collection
A large collection of British rocks and fossils dating from the Precambrian to the Pleistocene. The majority are from Worcestershire and the neighbouring counties. They include material collected during the construction of the Malvern and Ledbury railway tunnels in the nineteenth century. Many individual collections have been amalgamated to form this reference collection.
- Vertebrate Collection
A small collection of mainly British and local vertebrate fossils determined and listed by Delair. It contains some of the most spectacular specimens as well as important scientific and historical material. The particular strengths are local Old Red Sandstone fish, Liassic ichthyosaurs and Pleistocene mammal remains from the River terrace deposits of the Severn and Avon.

Birds, Mammals, Fish, Shells and Insects

- A substantial collection of birds both full mounts and study skins. The largest single part of the collection, including most of the study skins, was bequeathed to the Museum in 1907 by Robert Fisher Tomes, a local Justice of the Peace and collector.

- A selection of British, particularly local, mammal specimens purchased mainly in the late twentieth century. This is further enhanced by groups of horns and bones.
- A small collection of mainly British freshwater fish, but including the amazing sturgeon, nearly 2 metres in length, which was caught in Worcester in the 1830s.
- A small group of mainly British corals, sponges, sea urchins and crustaceans.
- Some 10,000 examples of land, sea and freshwater shells, including collections by Whitmore, Gale, Martin, Moseley and Thomas. This includes examples from Worcestershire, and is one of the largest such collections in a provincial museum.
- Several thousand specimens of mainly British butterflies, moths and beetles, including the collections of Carlton Rea and Bloom, and those from the former Malvern Museum.

Fine Art

Includes:

- The Sale Bequest of nineteenth century English watercolours is one of the strongest and most coherent elements of the collection. There are 87 watercolours altogether, including works by Samuel Prout (1783-1852), Peter de Wint (1784-1849), Thomas Sidney Cooper, William Callow (1812-1908) and W.J. Muller (1812-1845). Of most importance are the 29 works by Birmingham artist David Cox (1783-1859), which demonstrate early freedom of expression from British artists alongside JMW Turner that influenced the French Impressionists
- A significant collection of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century landscape and interior paintings showing the influence of French plein-air naturalism, alongside a British concern for social realism, considered the British Impressionism collection. This area of the collection includes work by Alexander Stanhope Forbes (1857 - 1947), William Blandford Fletcher (1858-1936), Charles Napier Hemy (1841-1917), Arthur Mead (1864-1948), Julius Olson (1864-1942) Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970) and Sir Arnesby Brown (1866 -1955). Many of these artists were of national importance and were members of the New England Art Club (NEAC). This area of the collection is important as it represents the start of modernism in British art, providing a link between the strengths of the nineteenth century collections and the contemporary collection of landscape-based work and showing how influential Worcestershire and West Midland artists were in this period
- A significant collection of contemporary work in all medias acquired through the Contemporary Art Society Special Collections Scheme at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with funding from the Arts lottery and the Elmley Foundation. This collection focuses on work which explores the imagery of light across contemporary landscape and image-making techniques, particularly that which contrasts with the often idyllic rural scenes already represented in the rest of the art collection. This collection includes works by Paul Seawright, Sophy Ricketts, Willie Doherty, Heather & Ivan Morrison, Carol Rhodes and Dan Holdsworth.

- A good collection of nineteenth century landscape paintings by important local artists including, Benjamin Williams Leader, Henry Harris Lines, Harry Adams, David Bates. As well as illustrating the development of the artist's approach across the nineteenth century, these works also give an insight in Worcester's creative industries and the strong art school training that was in place to serve the porcelain and gloving factories.
- A number of mid- and late-twentieth century prints, including those by important artists Howard Hodgkin, Gillian Ayres, Elizabeth Frink, Patrick Caulfield, Barbara Hepworth, Paula Rego, Eileen Cooper and Julian Trevelyan.
- Early work includes two seventeenth-century views of the city, a Dutch interior by David Teniers III (1638-85), and a series of royal portraits on panel from the Rev Bowles collection.
- Topographical paintings, prints, drawings and photographs of Worcester, many of exceptional artistic merit and documentary value.

Understanding Life in a County Town

The Story of Worcester

Worcester's typical English landscape has facilitated a representative history of human occupation, development and use.

Worcester has been the focus of some kind of urban settlement for over 2000 years. For most of the first 1000 years of this occupation, archaeology is the only evidence we have for understanding the City's development. The earliest structure on the site of Worcester's Castle, now Kings School dates back to the later Neolithic and Bronze Age, with further evidence of an Iron Age boundary in the Cathedral area and Iron Age roundhouses at Deansway and Bath Road

Worcester developed into a small town (probably called Vertis) during the Roman period; a town supported by its agricultural hinterland as well as its strong industrial traditions of iron working but also pottery production, bronze working and glass production. The Roman town spanned the Cathedral and High Street area at its peak with development known to the north and into Sidbury and across the river in St Johns

Archaeological evidence suggests life continued in the town beyond the end of the Roman period and though evidence exists from excavations particularly at Deansway, archaeological evidence for the early medieval period is still very rare. Most significantly, at the end of the seventh century, during the reorganisation of the Church under Archbishop Theodore, the see was founded at Worcester and the City came to be dominated by the church and Cathedral that would continue to influence the city so heavily in the medieval period.

Its position as a key river crossing point on the route between the key southern cities of London, Oxford & Bath and Wales has left its mark on the community most violently by civil wars in the twelfth and seventeenth centuries including the significant 1651 Battle of Worcester. Even in the twenty-first century the city continues to act as a litmus paper for modern political battles, in the fight for the votes of 'Worcester Woman'.

Encompassing both urban and rural land, the city has developed to serve the fertile surrounding agricultural area and has also experienced the poverty of slums, factory work and heavy industry. The industries for which the city is most famous – Roman iron working, medieval tile making and cloth manufacture, as well as its more recent gloving, vinegar making and porcelain industries– exploited the benefits of local raw materials, good transport and close-at-hand labour.

Worcester is provincial, yet here creativity and enterprise has had internationally significant impact from the experimentation of the early porcelain industry, to the founding of the British Medical Association and the compositions of Sir Edward Elgar.

Worcester's position as both city and country, both gated and yet outward-looking, both working class and affluent – its representative cross section of English history is what makes the city's history special.

Archaeology

Includes:

- Large deposits from the key city centre excavations Lychgate, Blackfriars, Sidbury, Copenhagen Street, High Street, Deansway, Magistrates Court, the Commandery and Newport Street
- Significant collections of flints by three key collectors: A.E. Jones, Bruton and Bowen. Stone axes from several sites across Worcestershire.
- Bronze age pottery and axes from sites both in the city and wider county; a Bronze Age sword dredged from the River Severn.
- Roman pottery, glass, metalwork, ironworking, bronzeworking and glassworking waste plus a rural Roman milestone and mosaic. Roman Severn Valley and Samian ware are also well represented.
- Early medieval grave goods including jewellery, metalwork, shield bosses, spears and a sword chape from sites both in the city and wider county.
- Medieval pottery, floor tiles, domestic metalwork, glass, shoes and a rare barrel latrine from sites within the city walls.
- Post medieval pottery and glass bottles. Eighteenth and nineteenth porcelain waste and kiln furniture from the city industry.
- Human remains including Roman cremations from the Diglis cemetery, Roman skeletons from the Kings School cemetery and a significant collection of disarticulated medical waste from medical treatment, training and post mortems carried out at Worcester Royal Infirmary
- Paper archives of site records, notes, maps, plans, drawings, photographs, written reports. Digital material is deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

Social History & Applied Art

Includes:

Working Histories

- A large and important collection of gloves and related archives from collector Robert Ring and a range of glove making tools both from factories and outworkers. This reflects Worcester's international recognition between the eighteenth and twentieth century as a centre for the manufacture of gloves. This collection is of national significance, plotting the rise of an industry within a locality to become a global centre for glove design and manufacture. The industry impacted on other linked industries and employed tens of thousands of local people before completely disappearing. The legacy of the trade and the local people connected to it are found within the tools and archives held in the City Collection, as well as one off unique examples of craftsmanship that put Worcester at the centre of the high fashion gloving world. This collection is a focus for potential designation and significant new additions are actively acquired.
- Large industrial and agricultural machinery from key Worcester firms including items from Lee & Perrins, Fownes Glovemakers, Spetchley Bros Brewery and Guinness Hop Farm. In some cases they represent the first stage of mechanisation and demonstrate local enterprise and creativity in the design of the process.
- Sizeable collections from individual Worcester tradesmen and small firms, including the Stewards Chemist Shop, Littlebury printers, early twentieth century offices and a cobbler's shop.
- A small collection of shoes drawn from Worcester's late nineteenth and early twentieth century shoemaking factories.
- Ephemera from Worcester firms such as Kays, and theatrical posters and playbills including Worcester born music hall star Vesta Tilley.
- Cared for on long-term loan, spectacular large historic textiles from the Clothiers' Company. This includes a late fifteenth century embroidered funeral pall, which was supposed to be used at the funeral of Prince Arthur at Worcester Cathedral in 1502.
- A representative collection of Royal Worcester porcelain (a comprehensive collection is held by the Museum of Worcester Porcelain) from 1751 to the present day alongside interesting examples of work by other local, English and international manufacturers, with a particularly strong collection of Boehm of Malvern.

Community, Domestic and Personal Histories

- Architectural fragments, particularly from churches, in Worcester. In some cases the area has been redeveloped and the building no longer exists. Together with photographic records recording architectural change in the city, these form a physical record of the urban landscape.

- Weaponry, armour and historic items relating the Civil War period and the particular role of Worcester.
- Coins, tokens and medals, both with a Worcester connection national and international, including coinage from the earliest times and most significantly, from early medieval Worcester mints
- A moderately-sized costume collection including some examples of agricultural costume and a small collection on long-term loan collected by the Worcester Women's Institute.
- Domestic items with a particular strength in kitchen items and cookery.
- A small collection of furniture, including a varied school collection.

Understanding Collecting

The Story of Worcester's Museums

Cabinets of Curiosity

As one of the earliest established museum collections in the country, Worcester City's collections span 175 years of collecting interest, fashion and occasional excess. The result is some exceptional individual items and small collections which are highly unusual in a medium-sized regional museum and should be seen as a strength of Worcester's collection.

Many of these objects are fascinating for visitors because of their rarity and for some visitors represent what a museum 'ought to be'. The potential for learning is high and some have clear links to units of the National Curriculum. These collections should be seen principally as a source of inspiration and comparison for the other collections as developing staff expertise in these areas is not a priority.

Non-native Natural History Specimens

Includes:

- Important Australian and New Zealand bird study specimens, including specimens donated by Gould and Holden, the extinct Huia, and the rare Kokako and Kakapo and a large Albatross brought here from the Southern Hemisphere. Also a collection of foreign taxidermy specimens, including big game hunting trophies.
- A good range of mineral specimens from worldwide locations, mostly collected in the nineteenth century, and including the Strutt and Tennant collections.
- Within the large shell collections collected by Whitmore, Gale, Martin, Moseley and Thomas, examples from the Indian Ocean.
- About 100 specimens preserved in spirit jars including examples from the Challenger expedition.

World Cultures Collection

Includes:

- A small but varied collection of decorative items from Asia, America, and the South Pacific including pottery and ceramics, weapons, costume and religious items.
- The collection includes a Māori skull and an amulet made from human bone from Torres Straits, Australia that may be appropriate for repatriation.
- Excavated Ancient Egyptian artefacts including the Corbett collection, objects excavated at Lahun and Harageh by Flinders Petrie and a small collection of mummified animal remains.
- A significant bark cloth from Pitcairn Island made around the time of the mutiny on the Bounty (the mutineers took women from Tahiti to form a colony at Pitcairn in 1767), a rare ceremonial club from Gazelle Peninsula, northern New Britain, Papua New Guinea and a rare woven mat from southern Australia.

History of the museum buildings

The two museum buildings, the Commandery and the Art Gallery & Museum are themselves important historical assets for Worcester City. Historical items relating to the development of the museums in Worcester and their buildings have been collected steadily since the foundation of the service in the nineteenth century. These will continue to be acquired with careful selection and moderation.

Working and Educational collections

The power of museum objects can sometimes only be fully accessed through handling the artefact, or seeing it work in its original function. In order to preserve significant items, it is important that some specific objects are designated or collected as handling/working items. These items are not considered part of the main collection and the processes of acquisition, documentation and disposal is less formal than for the main collection.

Education handling collection

Handling items enable visitors, particularly in formal learning groups and community groups, to interact directly with objects by touching, feeling, smelling and wearing and are acquired to reflect the accessioned collections. These items might be primarily original historic items but can be replicas, but all are considered a core learning resource. Although treated with care, it is assumed that some will be damaged or destroyed with use and that eventual disposal may be necessary.

As with accessioned collections, the handling collection considers acquisition, disposal, management, care, and access for all handling items.

Museums Worcestershire have a number of objects that have been collected or prepared especially for handling, particularly by school groups, the majority of which are not accessioned. Donations of historical objects have also sometimes been designated as handling rather than refusing the offer.

Working Objects

Working items are restored, sometimes with the addition of new parts, to more fully demonstrate the purpose they were originally used for. The restoration should not transform the original purpose or original look of the object: if parts are removed as part of the restoration they will be

kept alongside the object. The decision to restore an object to 'working' should only be made to add to visitors' understanding of that item rather than simply to make it look more attractive. Once an object has been restored to work it should, wherever possible, be maintained in a working state.

As part of the full audit of the social history collections during the life of this policy, a small number of items may be designated as working.

Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting

Natural History

Any future natural history acquisitions will focus on Worcestershire items acquired through partnership working. The main aim will be to ensure the collection remains representative of the landscape. New specimens must come with exceptionally good stratigraphic and locality information, and to have been recovered in accordance with recognised professional codes of practice and guidance.

The Collection acts as a catalogue of the environment and ecology of Worcestershire and change over time. Species loss, flooding and ecological change caused by human factors can also be tracked by the collection and its augmentation and supplementation to reflect this should be considered as long as all above standards are met.

Fine Art

Future acquisitions will focus on gaps in these collections and artworks that will aim to fill gaps to increase the coherence and narrative of the collection's strengths. Expert advice and further partnership working should guide active collecting during the lifetime of this policy to ensure the collection remains strong.

Particular areas of emphasis should be local pictures of exceptional artistic merit:

- British Impressionist painters working in the second part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, those that influenced them and were influenced by them.
- Nineteenth century English watercolourists.
- Work by significant painters who were known to have visited, worked in and been inspired by the Worcestershire and its neighbouring counties' landscape, and contemporary work responding to these historic movements and seeking to represent the English landscape through new trends in artistic practice.

The museum will actively seek to identify, fundraise for and acquire artworks and associated ephemera to fill the following gaps:

- The Broadway Colony, particularly John Singer Sargent
- The short-lived Evesham artists colony
- The artistic communities that formed around the 1930s Malvern Festival
- Paul Nash's visits to Madams in the southern Malvern Hills
- Newlyn School artists that extend the story of its wider influence
- Paintings of an exceptional standard capturing the traditional life of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities, particularly work by Augustus John, Alfred Munnings and Laura Knight
- Works that highlight the significance of artists with connections to Worcestershire and its neighbouring counties in influencing the art movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Archaeology

Museums Worcestershire will continue to seek to acquire excavated material, chance finds and paper archives from every period from the Palaeolithic to the present day from within the boundary of the City of Worcester, and from property belonging to Worcester City Council.

Archives of excavated finds will be subject to a rationalisation and selection process undertaken on a site-by-site basis in discussion with the Museum, Archaeological Contractor and City Archaeology Team and subject to the Guidelines for Depositing Archaeological Archives.

The acquisition of private and historical archaeological collections of relevance to the City or City people will be considered on a case-by-case basis if offered.

Archaeological material from outside the City boundary may be considered for acquisition in exceptional circumstances. Items designated as treasure are more rarely found in built up areas and items found elsewhere in the county may be most appropriately held within the city collection.

Social History and Applied Arts

Future collecting should continue to represent firms and small businesses that exist uniquely in Worcester because of its position as a transport link (both physically through river, rail, canal and road and virtually through digital media) and that exploit the urban/rural locality.

In acknowledgement of the national significance of the gloving and glove collection, an application for designation is expected to be made to Arts Council England during the lifetime of this policy. The national significance of the collection will also be acknowledged in, uniquely for the City Museum collection, considering relevant objects for collection from a regional and national geographical collecting area.

Items relating to significant, female historical figures such as Worcester born Vesta Tilley, or performances by Sarah Siddons should be acquired to celebrate their significant influence on the development of the arts.

Future collecting will focus on developing areas where the Worcester's experience of an issue - both historically, from the present and into the future - is particularly strong. It is important to avoid the collection of duplicate examples of mass-produced items common to any part of the country, unless they are accompanied by firm evidence of their particular significance to Worcester and of the city's leading place in this field.

Documentation of the recent past will continue to take place not only through the collection of objects, but also through documentary, oral and photographic sources. The emphasis will be on actively seeking items from identified themes rather than continuing to accept more items from the categories already well represented.

Community focussed collection development will be a key focus during the lifetime of this policy, building on work and relationships developed through the Esme Fairbairn funded Glove Affair & Volunteers at Home projects and Arts Council England funded Museums Voices project, the

museum will seek to identify gaps in representation of the city's communities in the collections and will seek to respond where opportunity allows.

World cultures and non-native species

These collections have not been added to in recent years and there are no plans to actively develop these collections within the lifetime of the policy.

Education handling collection

During the lifetime of the policy, Museums Worcestershire learning staff identify gaps through consultation and items actively collected to fill those gaps.

Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

Worcester City Museums are undertaking active rationalisation and disposal.

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.

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. Insert additional commentary relating to themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal.

The procedural process is laid out in the *Acquisition and Disposal Procedures* document associated with this Collections Development Policy.

During the lifetime of the policy, Museums Worcestershire will identify, research and, if appropriate, process objects for disposal that are:

- Damaged beyond repair
- Contain hazardous materials with risks that cannot be sufficiently mitigated
- Were previously over collected in duplicate, in bulk without sampling or selection or are unprovenanced and have no relevant context
- Or are not part of the collection but were abandoned loans or unaccepted gifts.

All objects that are considered to fulfil one of the four criteria themes for disposal will be subject to a matrix to consider their significance against criteria set out in the disposal procedure.

During the lifetime of this policy priority areas for rationalisation will be objects in the social history, transport and furniture collections that satisfy one of the four disposal theme criteria and are considered to be of low significance. Archaeological archives will be subject to site by site selection and retention strategies prior to deposition set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeology's *Selection and Retention Toolkit* and the *Museums Worcestershire Guidelines for Archaeological Deposition*.

Education handling collection

During the lifetime of the policy, Museums Worcestershire learning staff will rationalise the education collections and dispose of objects which have little or no handling value.

Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

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

Collecting policies of other museums

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.

Worcestershire County museum collection.

The two museum collections managed by Museums Worcestershire have complementary strengths and themes. All potential acquisitions and disposals are discussed by a curatorial panel and, when required, by the Joint Museums Committee to ensure that each collection continues to grow its strengths and neither duplication nor gaps occur.

In addition, specific reference is made to the following organisations:

- Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service which is the main repository for documentary items relating to Worcester City and Worcestershire County.
- Worcester Porcelain Museum, Worcestershire Masonic Library & Museum Trust George Marshall Medical Museum who collect items connected to specific parts of Worcester's history.
- Worcestershire Regiment Museum Trust and Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum Trust who collect items relating to Worcester's military history.

Archival Holdings

Worcester City museum collection holds a small quantity of archives, including photographs and printed ephemera that were either acquired before the formation of Worcestershire Record Office/Archives Service or have a strong relationship to the other museum collections. 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 will consider in the future if accreditation by the National Archive's Archive Service Accreditation Scheme should be sought

Acquisition Procedures

The policy for agreeing acquisitions is laid out in the *Museums Shared Services Partnership Agreement* between Worcestershire County Council and Worcester City Council, 2010, schedule 7. The procedure will follow the Acquisitions and Disposal Procedures document associated with this Collections Development Policy.

Museums Worcestershire 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.

Museums Worcestershire 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).

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, Museums Worcestershire 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.

Museums Worcestershire will seek to acquire copyright along with artefacts and research being added to the collection, but where this is not possible will follow current legal obligations and guidance with regard to artefacts and research for which it has responsibility.

Human Remains

As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

Biological and Geological Material

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.

Archaeological material

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.

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).

Exceptions

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

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.

The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, 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 the first five paragraphs of the Disposal Procedures on page 21 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

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*'.

Disposal procedures

All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

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/Welsh Government / Museums Galleries Scotland/Northern Ireland Museums Council (delete as appropriate).

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.

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

Disposal by exchange

Museums Worcestershire will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

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

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.

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.

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.

The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file

Associated Guidelines

Worcester City Museum Collection Development Policy is referenced by the following documents:

Collections Management Policy

This policy outlines the approach and framework to develop and care for these collections to ensure the people of Worcestershire today and for future generations continue to access and understand their culture and heritage.

Human Remains Policy

Since 2008, collecting in Worcester City has been guided in the management of the human remains it curates, by its Policy for the Care of Human Remains. It is based on DCMS 2005 *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* and has been reviewed and extended to guide the care of the Worcestershire County's collection of human remains collection in 2015.

Conditions for Deposition of Archaeological Archives

Intended principally for use by archaeological contractors, this document sets out the requirements of Museums Worcestershire when acquiring artefacts and archives resulting from of archaeological excavations. It aims to ensure consistency of approach and ease of future access to the information.

Acquisition and Disposal Procedures

This document lays out the process to be followed when objects are considered for acquisition or for disposal. It is partly based on the Museums Association's *Disposal Toolkit* and has integrated advice from the Museums Association to Museums Worcestershire.