

Collections Development Policy 2022

Name of museum:

Chertsey Museum

Name of governing body:

Runnymede Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

TBC

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:

1 September 2025

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.

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

- 1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:
to collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens relating to the history of the Borough of Runnymede, which it holds in trust for society
- 1.2 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management.
It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

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

2 **History of the collections**

Chertsey Museum first opened to the public in 1965 as a voluntary run museum located on the first floor of the Old Town Hall in London Street. The original collections consisted of Chertsey Abbey floor tiles, Cypriot, Mycenaean and South Italian Greek pottery, furniture, local watercolours and photographs and some ethnographic material, all of which belonged to the Chertsey Urban District Council, plus material bequeathed by Mr. J. Tulk. This consisted of pottery, clocks and furniture. In addition to these collections, much material was donated by local individuals when it became known that a museum was being formed. Some of this material was of a non-local nature.

In 1969 the first professional Curator was appointed, and CM was offered the Olive Matthews collection of costume and accessories on long-term loan. However, the existing building was inadequate both in terms of storage and display of such a substantial collection. In 1970 the Trustees of the Olive Matthews Trust (OMT) purchased the present Museum building, The Cedars in Windsor Street, a grade 2 listed Regency Town House with an attractive rear garden. In 1972 OMT entered into an agreement with the Chertsey Urban District Council, allowing the display of both the Council's and the OMT collections. The new Museum opened to the public in the same year.

As a result of local government re-organisation in 1974, the Chertsey Urban District Council and the Egham Urban District Council were amalgamated forming Runnymede Borough Council (RBC). RBC operates CM under the powers of the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964. Today, CM is managed as part of the Community Development Business Centre with the Community Development Committee of the Council as its governing body.

CM has built up a strong core of local public support, including the press and some local businesses. The Friends of Chertsey Museum was launched in 1994 to help raise the profile of CM locally, to help generate funds and to promote and support CM's activities.

In May 2002 the museum relocated to temporary premises whilst The Cedars underwent a major refurbishment project, with the building of a new multi-purpose extension and the installation of a platform lift. For the first time Chertsey Museum has flat access throughout. The Museum re-opened at The Cedars in July 2003.

3. **An overview of current collections**

The collections in total consist of approximately 24,400 objects. These are largely held at CM and off-site stores, or on display in The Cedars. Existing collection areas are outlined below:

The Tulk Bequest (60 items)

This collection of clocks, furniture and miscellaneous items were bequeathed by Mr J Tulk in 1962.

The Runnymede Borough Collection (approximately 15,000 items)

This collection consists mostly of material evidence related to the history of the Borough of Runnymede and environs. It includes; a horology collection of regional significance with local makers such as James Douglass and Henry Wale Cartwright represented; topographical paintings, prints and works on paper in addition to portraits of local civic and historic figures associated with the Borough, by artists including Robert Gallon, William Daniell and Joseph Farrington; archaeology from the Thames Valley of national significance, such as a Viking sword by the German maker Ulfberht and a Bronze Age socketed axe complete with wooden handle, the only one of its kind in Europe; medieval tiles and stone work from Chertsey Abbey; a geology collection of prehistoric animal bones and antlers from the Thames Valley; social history, including material relating to the Chertsey foundries, and documents and maps relating to the local area; and a collection of ancient Greek pottery.

The Olive Matthews Collection of Costume & accessories & Decorative Arts (approximately 8,300 items)

This collection is on long term loan from the Olive Matthews Trust who oversees its care and administration. The core of the collection is a group of costumes and accessories, ceramics, silver, furniture and clocks originally belonging to the late Miss Olive Matthews of Virginia Water. The costume collection consists of high quality fashionable English clothing from the period 1700 to the present, with one important item from the 17th century, an embroidered gentleman's cap dating from between 1600 and 1610. Much of the material was acquired by Miss Matthews from the Old Caledonian Market in North London before 1939 and more rarely at auction sales. OMT's remit allows it to seek significant additions to supplement the existing collection. This long-term loan collection was renewed for another 30 years in 2002.

The Oliver Collection (approximately 1,200 items)

This collection is on long term loan from the Oliver Trust, set up in 1985 to oversee the care and administration of the collection of Sydney Oliver of Egham, an antiques dealer, valuer and local historian. The collection consists of paintings and prints, photographs, ephemera, clocks and social history objects, many of local significance but also including non-local material. A 10-year loan agreement for this collection was originally entered into by RBC and OT in 1986. The loan was reviewed in 1994 and as a result was extended for a further 10 years to run from December 1996. The collection is currently under review, in consultation with OT, as part of the process of rationalisation.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Chertsey Museum will continue to acquire, preserve, document and display items relating to the history of the Borough of Runnymede.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy. The collection was reviewed in 2014 and items that did not fit with our collecting policy were rehomed in other museums, or returned to their legal owners in the case of Oliver Trust items. The procedures used meet professional standards, and the process was documented, open and transparent.

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.

8. Archival holdings

The museum has a collection of almost 9,000 photographs, documents and printed ephemera and is guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums.

9. Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:
Acquisitions are at the discretion of the curator as long as they fall within the museum's collecting remit of pertaining to the history of the Borough of Runnymede. Items acquired through purchase are agreed by the Head of Community Development and the Head of Finances.
- 9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10. Human remains

- 10.1 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.

11. Biological and geological material

- 11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

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:

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

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

14. Spoliation

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

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 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 Arts Council England.
- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

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.