

**SHARPE'S POTTERY HERITAGE & ARTS TRUST LTD.**



**Dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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**COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY  
and associated Procedures.**

**APPROVED:.....**

**DATE: 15<sup>TH</sup> March 2017.**

**REVIEW OFFICER: Curator.**

**REVIEW DATE: January 2023.**

# **SHARPE'S POTTERY HERITAGE & ARTS TRUST LTD.**

## **COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE:**

Sharpe's Pottery Heritage and Arts Trust aims to foster a sense of pride in South Derbyshire by protecting, promoting, celebrating and sharing local history, heritage and culture. Through its management of Sharpe's Pottery Centre it is working to develop an excellent and sustainable facility within a treasured landmark building of symbolic significance, which it will conserve and guard as a constant and precious link to the past of an area where much has changed. As a mutually beneficial and interdependent partnership of heritage, arts and cultural organisations the Centre provides home to:

- The Sharpe's Pottery Museum, telling the social and physical history and personal stories of the local industrial heritage; through its own collection and loaned items
- The Kiln as a theatre and performance space for small acts in the round
- The Magic Attic archive of newspapers, documents and photographs
- The People Express community arts organisation
- Meetings of a range of community groups
- To provide opportunities to local people by offering a range of volunteer positions
- Exhibition space for local artists and makers and other historical groups
- Education work with school groups of all ages, based on structured programmes for children and broader outreach activities
- The Tourist Information Centre
  - Conferencing Facilities
- Coffee Shop
- Commercial activity to support the core purpose of the Trust

As a product of the time, effort and thought of local people the Centre will support the local community by bringing it together in a meeting place where volunteers and groups can thrive with a strong sense of ownership, and where formal activities are complemented by social events and private functions. In this way it will serve as a focus for development at the heart of Swadlincote as it attracts new audiences, participants and supporters among residents, visitors and new comers to the town.

### **2. RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Trustees 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 Trustees therefore accept 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. The Trustees 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. Arts Council England will be notified by the Trustees of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

The Curator is responsible for the application of this Policy and must advise the Trustees when a change to this Policy may be appropriate.

It is the responsibility of Retail, Museum and Marketing subcommittee to monitor conformance to the Policy, to discuss any reported problems with the curator and to report to the Trustees where an issue is identified.

Where disposal by destruction is being considered the Health and Safety, Buildings and Maintenance subcommittee should be consulted to assess the risks and to provide an appropriate risk assessment.

### 3. SCOPE:

3.1) 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.

3.2) 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 Trustees are satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

3.3) The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons and will follow the procedures defined in this Policy with respect to all disposals.

#### **History of the collections:**

Sharpe's Pottery Museum was founded in 1999, and the museum opened to the public in January 2003. The museum is located in a former pottery, and the building itself, with its disused kiln hovel, forms part of the heritage asset. The collection originally concentrated on domestic ceramics and sanitary ware, together with oral histories collected by the South Derbyshire Writers Group, who were one of the original partner organisations. Mocha ware was loaned by the Potteries Museum. Many of the sanitary ware pieces came from the Thomas Crapper Company at Stratford on Avon.

The collection has been supplemented over time with donations and loans from Sharpe's Volunteer Committee, Magic Attic, T.G Green and individual supporters of the museum.

#### **An overview of current collections:**

The collection represents the industries of the South Derbyshire and North West Leicestershire coalfield area. They include ornamental and table wares, as well as household, sanitary and industrial wares. There is a permanent display devoted to the ceramics collection.

The wares of former Sharpe's Pottery, T.G. Green and the Bretby Art Pottery are particularly well represented. Other potteries include Ault's, Ashby Potter's Guild and Moira.

In more recent years we have developed a small paper archive which consists of photographs, catalogues, and books as well as oral histories from the area which relate to the themes in our 'Toilet Story' project.

#### **Themes and priorities for future collecting:**

The museum will build up its collection of ceramics and items relating to ceramics production based in South Derbyshire and its immediate bordering industrial areas. It will also build a more diverse representation from subsidiary potteries and the wider industrial heritage linked to the area. There was no collection prior to the museum's foundation and therefore material is being acquired to meet the objective of a representative collection.

**Themes and priorities for 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 outcome and the process.

Rationalisation may occur to ensure that the historic collection is fit for the current purpose of the museum and to support effective collections development.

**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.

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

The Magic Attic, Swadlincote, The South Derbyshire Mining Preservation Group, Swadlincote Moira Furnace, Moira Ashby Museum, Ashby de la Zouch Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Derby Nottingham Art Gallery and Museum, Nottingham.

**Archival holdings:**

As the museum holds/intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

**Acquisition:**

The Curator will make decisions on whether to accession the newly donated object within a month of receipt. Objects will only be accepted into the museum's collection if they meet the requirements set out in **Themes and priorities for future collecting**.

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). 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.

**Human remains:**

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

**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 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 (i.e. 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:**

Not applicable

**Disposal procedures:**

1. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
2. The Trustees will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
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.
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 and exchange or as a last resort – destruction.
5. The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Trustees 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.
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 Trustees of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

**7.** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it in 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 Museum Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

**8.** 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 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.

**9.** Any monies received by the museum Trustees 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.

**10.** 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.

**11.** 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 de-accession and disposal.

### **Disposal by exchange:**

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 Trustees will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

In cases where the Trustees wish for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 1 – 5 will apply.

If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific accredited museum, other accredited museum which collects in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments requested.

If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice in MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museum Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.

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 Trustees must consider the comments before a final decision is made.

**Disposal by destruction:**

If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Trustees 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, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.