

Dundee Heritage Trust Collections Development Policy

Discovery Point and Scotland's Jute Museum @Verdant Works

Date approved by Trustees – November 2019

Date for Review – November 2024

1. Museum's statement of purpose

The purpose of Dundee Heritage Trust is:-

‘The guardianship, preservation, and portrayal of Dundee’s Heritage in ways that educate, inspire and enlighten current and future generations.’

2. An overview of current collections

a) Royal Research Ship *Discovery* and Polar Collections

The primary object is the historic vessel RRS *Discovery*, built in Dundee and the first ship built specifically for scientific research in polar regions. She took Captain Scott to the Antarctic in 1901-04 as well as taking part in other important expeditions.

In addition to the RRS *Discovery*, the Trust also holds associated collections related to the history of the ship and other polar expeditions. The collection is a Recognised Collection of National Significance and covers the fields of costume, numismatics, fine art, arms & armour, archives, science, photographs and social history. Items within the collections vary from navigational instruments, scientific specimens collected on the ship's expeditions to personal objects which vividly represent daily life for polar explorers of the period. These include such items as wooden skis, sledging equipment (e.g. man and dog harnesses), fine quality expedition crockery and cutlery for use in the officers' wardroom and some of the original food rations and games used for amusement during the long, dark Antarctic winters. The collections contain many rare and unique objects which have very special resonance and international importance.

b) Textile Industry of Dundee & Tayside

The textile collections relate to the history of Dundee's textile industries - primarily jute but also flax, polypropylene and non-wovens. The core of the collection is the textile machinery representing the processing of jute through all the stages of the mill and factory.

The collection is a Recognised Collection of National Significance and as well as the large machinery objects, the associated textile collections cover the fields of industrial history, social history, fine art, archives, photographs, costume and numismatics. Topics covered in the collection include Dundee mills, research and development, textile products, quality control, textile engineering, the industry's Indian connections and the lives of the workers. Objects include machinery patterns, jute and flax products, small tools, technical drawings and plans and quality control equipment. The archives and photographic records of various mills and their workers have considerable historical research value.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Criteria governing Dundee Heritage Trust in regards to future acquisitions including the subjects or themes, periods of time and geographic areas and any collections which are not subject to acquisition.

a) General Criteria

Dundee Heritage Trust will only collect objects for which suitable storage and exhibitions facilities are available.

As Dundee Heritage Trust has no in-house conservator it will in general acquire only objects which are in good or excellent condition. In exceptional circumstances objects which are in poorer condition may be acquired provided (a) resources are available to carry out necessary restoration work and (b) they are important acquisitions of a type otherwise unlikely to become available.

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

b) Royal Research Ship *Discovery* and Polar Collections

Dundee Heritage Trust will continue to collect significant fixtures, fittings, scientific materials, clothing and personal artefacts, documents, photographs and any other items deemed relevant to the history of the RRS *Discovery* and her subsequent interpretation for public benefit. The Trust will also collect material related to other polar expeditions associated with the RRS *Discovery*, expeditions concerning the men of *Discovery*, material related to the scientific work which *Discovery* undertook, and expeditions specifically related to Dundee and her maritime history most notably Captain Scott's fateful *Terra Nova* expedition (the *Terra Nova* was a Dundee built whaler). The period of time to which the collection relates will be c.1800 to the present day.

c) Textile Industry of Dundee & Tayside

Dundee Heritage Trust will continue to collect material relevant to the representation of the textile history of the area and its subsequent interpretation for public benefit. The focus will be primarily jute but will also include flax, polypropylene and non-wovens. The period of time to which the collection relates will be c.1700 to the present day with current special emphasis placed on representing contemporary textile production in the area.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Dundee Heritage Trust will only dispose of objects for curatorial reasons and will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. Disposal will be made by gift or sale and in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 12e and 12f below. The Museum Association's Code of Ethics and Disposal Toolkit will be used to guide disposal.

Objects from the collections will be considered for disposal on a case by case basis under the following criteria:

- Poor condition

- Duplicates exist
- Falls outside the Collections Development Policy
- Public benefit better served by transfer to another organisation

5. Limitations on collecting

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.

6. 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 museums:

National Museums of Scotland
 Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge
 McManus Galleries, Dundee
 National Maritime Museum, London
 Dundee City Council Archive Service
 University of Dundee Archives Department

7. Policy review procedure

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Museum Galleries Scotland 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.

Anonymous donations will be actively discouraged. Where there is no opportunity to engage with the Donor nor to work through a third party such as the Donor's legal representative, failure by DHT

to secure the Donor's name and address will not prevent DHT from legally acquiring the object, if appropriate, where it can be shown that every possible attempt has been made by DHT to locate, contact and secure agreement from the Donor. Nor will this prevent DHT from exercising the disposal of the object under the terms of the Disposal Policy should that be deemed appropriate.

For all acquisitions, the means by which the object is acquired or disposed of will be fully documented and be completely transparent.

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, 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. 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.

e. The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is either:

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

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. Management of archives

As the museum holds 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

(3rd ed., 2002).

12. Disposal procedure

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 12g-12o will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

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 Museum Galleries Scotland.

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 the 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 museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documenting disposal

o. 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.