



Collections Development Policy

Gairloch Heritage Museum

Gairloch & District Heritage Company

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 27/08/2012
Section 7 was amended: 27/05/2013

Date at which this policy was reviewed and amended
(in the light of the Museum Development Project) 26/10/2015

Date at which this policy is due for review: August 2017

Museum's Statement of Purpose

As per the Articles of Association 2012:

To maintain the Gairloch Heritage Museum is the main activity of the Gairloch and District Heritage Company. The Purpose of the Company, as a Registered Charity, is to promote and encourage interest in, and care for, the history, culture, beauty and character of the Parish of Gairloch, for the benefit of all who wish to be engaged in such advancement of its heritage, be they locally resident, visiting the area in person or in contact through any form of communication from afar.

1. An overview of current collections

The collecting area for the museum will be, as it has been from its establishment, that of the Parish of Gairloch, that part of the Parish of Applecross on the North side of Loch Torridon, and that part of the Parish of Lochbroom on the south side of Little Loch Broom. Items made in, at some point used within, or otherwise provenance to the museum's collecting area may be acquired, regardless of their location at the time of acquisition.

The museum aims to represent all aspects of the life of the area from pre-history to the present day. There are displays devoted to archaeology, geology, natural history and social history, including textile production, fishing, fishing boats, a dairy, a schoolroom, a shop, a croft house and a lighthouse. The museum library and archive contain printed and written material, photographs and oral history recordings.

The main collecting categories are: archaeology, arms and armour, buildings, crafts and trades, decorative arts, dress and accoutrements, farm stock, fishing, food and drink, Gaelic language, game and vermin, geology, health, hunting and trapping, illustrations and photographs, law and order, maps and plans, music, natural history, pleasure, religion, shops, the dairy, the house, land, transport, weights and measures, and writing and education. A full list of the categories used to classify our collections can be found in Appendix 1.

The museum has three main collections: Artefact Collection, Library Collection and Archive Collection. The Artefact Collection contains objects spanning the above collecting categories. A subset of Handling and Display items is incorporated in the artefact collection. The Library Collection consists of bound reference books and literary works being primarily published material dating from the 18th century to the present day. The Archive Collection contains original documents, some published works, personal papers, maps and plans, facsimiles of estate records from the Conon House Archive, genealogical material, developed photographs, negatives, slides, postcards, and digital photographs (framed photographs are part of the Artefact Collection) and audiovisual materials of mainly Gaelic language material both spoken and sung.

2. Themes and priorities for future collecting

GHM is committed to contemporary collecting, however, current spatial limitations have hindered the expansion of our collections over the past ten years. Some sections of our collection are fairly comprehensive, and further collection will be directed towards individual items that are lacking, items that are better examples than those already held or duplicate items that are of exceptional historical value and which should be preserved.

In other sections, a wider policy will be adopted. These are:

- Archaeology where any finds will be accepted subject to the provisions of paragraphs 9e and 9f.
- Textiles where dress, locally woven materials and articles typical of the area will be actively collected.
- Photographs.
- Archive material of all kinds.
- Artisan's tools to add to those already held, which are representative of trades listed in paragraph 2.
- Objects which we are actively seeking to form part of the displays for the new museum building.

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made after proper consideration by the curator and, where appropriate, governing body of the museum, having also taken into regard the interests of other museums. In such circumstances a principle of open action and good communication will apply.

3. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

A disposal decision will not be made with the principal objective of raising funds – see paragraphs 11e and 11f.

In those circumstances where disposal is permissible under this Policy, the museum will be guided by the Museums Association *Disposals Toolkit* and the Museums Association *Code of Ethics* and will follow the Disposal Procedures outlined in paragraph 11 of this Policy.

The decision to dispose of artefacts from the museum collection will be taken by the governing body on the basis of a recommendation from the Curator. In this respect, the governing body will undertake a critical review of the recommendation, and the argued reasons for it, before coming to a decision.

The museum will undertake rationalisation of the collection where:

- an item is a duplicate of another artefact in the collection
- an item is too badly damaged or decayed to be worthy of retention
- an item's ongoing retention would represent a threat to the health or safety of museum staff or members of the public
- an item is not part of the core collection
- an item would be more appropriate in another museum's collection.

4. 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.

5. 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:

- Ullapool Museum
- Applecross Heritage Centre
- Inverness Museum and Art Gallery
- The Highland Folk Museum
- Russian Arctic Convoy Museum Project

6. 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 August, 2017.

Museums 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.

7. 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.

Acquisition procedures

- a. The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, 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 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.
- e. In Scotland, under the laws of bona vacantia including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Gairloch Heritage Museum by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the Gairloch and District Heritage Company, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

- f. Any exceptions to the above paragraphs 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.
- In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- g. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

8. 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.

9. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

Not relevant.

10. 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* (third edition, 2002).

11. Disposal procedures for Artefact Collection

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 11g-11s 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 Museums 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 Associations Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of

at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Disposal by exchange

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 11a-11d and 11g-11h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 11p-11s.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting disposal

- s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.