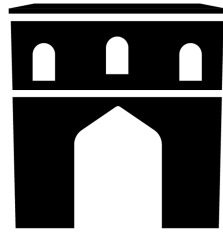


Sherborne Museum

Collections Development Policy - December 2019



SHERBORNE museum

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

December 2019 – December 2022

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Version Control		
Version 1.0	First version	
Version 2.0	Novated from SMA to CIO and updated	December 2019

Review Procedure	
Name of governing body:	Sherborne Museum Board of Trustees
Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:	December 2019
Policy review procedure:	Published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every three years.
Date at which this policy is due for review:	December 2022

Mission Statement

Our mission is to increase public awareness, appreciation and understanding of Sherborne's natural, historic and cultural heritage through the acquisition, preservation and display of a unique collection of items that are particularly relevant to the area.

We will play an active role in the community, creating a centre of inspiration, education and enjoyment for all, while providing excellent standards of customer service. We will endeavour to reduce all physical, cultural, social, intellectual, financial and psychological barriers to access. Bearing in mind our commitment to future generations, our policies will be governed by the principles of resilience and sustainability and governed by the Museum Association's Code of Ethics.

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1. Introduction

Our operating principles are:

1. The Board of Trustees will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
2. 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 Board of Trustees 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.
3. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
4. 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.
5. 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 Board of Trustees or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
6. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

Other relevant policies/plans of the organisation: Collections Care Plan, Collections Care Policy, Documentation Policy and Procedure.

2. History of the collections

Sherborne Museum was developed from the town's Historical Society which in the 1960s was particularly active and campaigning on various aspects of local heritage. Several members including Gerald Pitman, David Hunt, Reverend Gordon S. Robinson and Cyril Chester were concerned that the town needed a museum that right from the outset aimed to reflect the history, industry, geology and culture of Sherborne and its surrounding villages. Silk mill owner Frederick Marsden purchased and gifted the Abbey Gatehouse building for the purpose and from 1966-8 its first curator, Joane Edwards, worked constantly to accession items that local people offered.

Many of these items were gifted by prominent members of the Historical Society, for example, Annie Sidaway and Elizabeth O'Shea. Loans of archaeology were accepted from the Castle Estates and Abbey stonework and tiles from the Vicar of Sherborne and the PCC. The collections have grown organically since the Museum opened in 1968, initially under the

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impetus of Joane Edwards who expanded on the agricultural and social artefacts and negotiated the loan of the botanical drawings from Ruth Fyson in 1971.

Her successor Marjorie Rogers raised money to purchase the C17th town tokens in 1982. Since then the museum has continually developed its collections of art and images, textiles and items relating to social and industrial history.

3. An overview of current collections

Geology: Collected mainly by private individuals across the mixed strata of the Sherborne scarps and valleys; principally limestone, sandstone, Yeovil sands, Forest Marble; over 155 examples of local fossils mainly from the Middle Jurassic, with some Late Jurassic and Cretaceous items. Includes several good examples of polished ammonites and Marston Marble.

Archaeology: Includes significant contributions from Joseph Fowler, Charles Bean and from Sherborne Boys' School digs led by James Gibb and John Leach in the late 1960s. Items, mainly flints and pottery, associated with early settlement patterns from the Palaeolithic through the Romano-British to the medieval period, and from more recent excavations including Fosters Field, Nether Compton and Paddock Garden sites.

Items from Sherborne Abbey and its associated monastery as well as from the now demolished parish church of All Hallows. Human remains (bone and skull fragments) recovered from drainage ditch passing through monks' former cemetery in 1968. Medieval wall painting c. 1480 discovered among several other panels in Tudor Rose Cottage, Long Street, featuring Richard Beauchamp, Bishop of Salisbury, with the attributes of John Schorn.

Items from the two Sherborne Castles including artefacts relating to the Civil War, the sieges of the Old Castle and traces of troop encampments in the local area.

The coin collection includes a major set of C17th trade tokens, produced in the town by local merchants, and other coinage (the Sherborne Halfpenny and the SS Johns Almshouse farthing for the poor).

Natural History: Small natural history collection featuring historic birds' egg and shell collections. Three annotated collages created by Ruth Gervis, the children's book illustrator who was a local art teacher and an early member of the Board. Collection of 194 botanical watercolours of local flora; the early work of Sherbornian Diana Ruth Fyson (nee Wilson 1886-1969) who became a significant contributor to the botany of the Southern Indian Hill Stations. There is an associated archive relating to her life and work, donated by her descendants.

Herbarium of 594 specimens collected by pupils from Sherborne Boys' School in the early C20th.

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Textiles: Including accessories, over 1011 items, mainly from 1850–1940. Includes groups from local donors: Lady Thornton (Georgian waistcoats), Florence Emily Miles (Georgian silks including brocades to designs by Anna Maria Garthwaite), Lady Jose Wilson (Victorian infant clothing and white work) and Elizabeth Carey (Edwardian children’s clothing). Many items are handmade locally by farming families or produced by local dressmakers and tailors. There is also a collection of labourers’ smocks and working women’s sun bonnets.

Several items relate to the Sherborne Pageant of 1905, and there is also a group of authentic and vintage costumes donated by the Sherborne Amateur Players. There are items of school and Civil Defence uniforms. Of particular significance are the early C18th linen wall hanging and 4 silk banners from the Sherborne Old Friendly Society.

Archives: Deeds and wills from the C17th–C19th including indentures and property deeds relating to prominent townspeople; a collection of records from the Abbey Pharmacy of over 40 prescription books and pharmacopoeia, donations from the Sherborne Urban District Council following the reorganisation of local government in 1974; a second tranche was donated between 2005-10; maps from various donors; a large collection of architectural plans and drawings from the C19th and C20th; a large collection of printed material, postcards and ephemera; accounts and letterbooks from Westbury Silk Mill 1760-80 accessioned in 1968; the Foster’s Grammar School Archive accessioned in 1992; the Sherborne Historical Society Archive and a large reference library.

Photographic archives consist of two main collections donated by Gerald Pitman and David Hunt both of which include work by town photographers Adam Gosney and the Chaffins; 1500 glass plate negatives and positives; transparencies and lantern slides. Many other photographs from individual donations by local people.

Industrial and social history: Items associated with local agriculture, thatching, leatherwork and saddlery, willow working, carpentry, silversmithing, wheelwrighting, public houses and brewing, the silk mills, gloving, the gasworks, tanneries, dairies, railway, local businesses, organisations, schools and societies in the town and public health.

Domestic items including kitchenware, household, china, Bakelite, toys and games. Of particular interest is the Victorian dolls’ house modelled on Sherborne House and which has featured in books and television programmes.

Items relating to the two World Wars and the town’s involvement including a large collection of medals and military and nursing badges.

Intangible heritage: Items relating to unique local customs and festivals such as Pack Monday Fair, Teddy Roe’s Band, the Bonfire Boys and the Sherborne Carnival. There is also a small collection of apotropaic items found concealed in the fabric of buildings (dried cat, shoes, hat, almanac) now recorded on the Concealed/Revealed database.

An extensive oral history created by Christine Stones in the 1970s, and translated onto CD by past curator Eric Webber which captures unique memories of domestic service, schooldays,

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the First and Second World Wars, the Bombing of Sherborne, The Pageant, Pack Monday and other significant events and local places.

Art: Includes oils painted by local artists such as William Anstice Brown, and watercolours by Mabel Wickham and Ann Moorse.

A large collection of reproduction prints and engravings (mainly late C19th) of all aspects of the town's architecture, internal and external, donated by Gerald Pitman.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

We actively seek out any artefacts that will enhance the breadth and depth of our existing collections, particularly those from the outlying villages in the collection area, which are underrepresented.

Identified gaps in the collection include:

- Photographic images of working life of all periods, as well as industrial premises and utilities within the collection area.
- Photographic images of local transport from all periods.
- Photographic images of past local construction and building sites as well as more recent developments.
- Items of male dress, particularly working class, of all periods.
- Women's clothing from the fifties to eighties.
- The Boys' and Girls' School uniforms are not currently represented.

We are no longer actively seeking to collect wedding dresses, christening robes, Bibles or Singer sewing machines, of which we have many good examples, unless there is a particularly significant provenance.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 We are not currently seeking to dispose of particular items or groups of items, beyond those which natural good housekeeping demands, such as removing duplicates, poor photocopies of images or documents of which we hold the originals, items of exhibition set dressing which were accidentally accessioned, and items that are damaged beyond reasonable repair which would otherwise pose a threat to the collections. Disposal will only be undertaken, therefore, for legal, safety or conservation reasons (for example

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spoliation, radiation, infestation or repatriation). This process will be documented and agreed by the Board of Trustees, and will follow all guidelines proposed in para 16.

6. 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.

7. 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:

The Sherborne Steam & Waterwheel Museum, The Dorset County Museum, The Keep Dorchester, Sturminster Newton Museum and Mill Society, Beaminster Museum, Blandford Town Museum, Gold Hill Museum Shaftesbury and Shaftesbury Abbey Museum.

8. Archival holdings

- 8.1 The Museum is recognised as an archive repository by The National Archives and has its own unique archon number for the purposes of recording groups of documents on the Discovery website.
- 8.2 The Museum fosters a relationship with the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester, whereby items that are too large, fragile or on closed record can be sent to them to be kept in appropriate environmental conditions, while still under the ownership of the Museum.

9. Acquisition

The Museum's policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

- 9.1 The Board of Trustees delegates decision making to the curator who may also access guidance from within the sector.
- 9.2 Future items will only be accepted from our catchment area, which is defined as Sherborne and its environs, i.e. the villages of the Sherborne and Yetminster Hundreds: Batcombe, Beer Hackett, Bishop's Caundle, Bradford Abbas, Castleton, Caundle Marsh, Chetnole, Clifton Maybank, Folke, Haydon, Holnest, Leigh, Leweston, Lillington, Longburton, Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmund, Nether Compton, North Wootton, Osborne, Over Compton, Purse Caundle, Sherborne, Thornford, Trent, Up Cerne, Yetminster. It also includes Hilfield, Goathill, Poyntington, Ryme Intrinseca, Sandford Orcas and Stockwood.
- 9.3 We will no longer accept duplicates of items, unless they are in better condition than those previously held and therefore more suitable for display.

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- 9.4 We will endeavour to acquire all items responsibly and honestly, with proof of their ownership and provenance as far as can be ascertained.
- 9.5 We will acquire an item only after thorough consideration of its long-term value and how it will be used, and only if the museum can provide continuing long-term care for the item and public access to it without compromising standards of care and access relating to the existing collections.
- 9.6 Regarding metal-detecting, we encourage responsible activity and we will liaise between the finder, the landowner and other interested parties to ensure any finds are officially recorded under the Portable Antiquities Scheme and under the guidelines of the Treasure Acts. We actively seek advice on these matters from the County Finds Liaison Officer. Items pertaining to our area, once officially recorded and ownership confirmed, would be considered for the collection if not conflicting with the interests of other local museums (see 7.2).
- 9.7 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.)
- 9.8 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 Board of Trustees 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

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

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.

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12. Archaeological material

The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Board of Trustees 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).

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. The repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains

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 Board of 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.
- 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.

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- 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 Board of 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.
- 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 Board of Trustees 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 Board of 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.

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- 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 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 Board of Trustees will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
 - 16.13.1 In cases where the Board of Trustees wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
 - 16.13.2 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.
 - 16.13.3 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 on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
 - 16.13.4 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 Board of Trustees must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Board of Trustees may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.

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- 16.17 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.
- 16.18 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.