COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY
(PREVIOUSLY THE ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY)
2013

Name of museum: MUSEUM OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Name of governing body: COMMITTEE OF THE MUSEUM OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 29th October 2013

Date at which this policy is due for review: 29th October 2018

1. Museum’s statement of purpose
The Museum of Classical Archaeology is part of the University of Cambridge. The purpose of the Museum is to promote Classical Archaeology by:

• maintaining, conserving, enhancing, displaying and documenting its collections of antiquities and of casts and replicas of antiquities for the benefit of students, researchers, and the general public;
• supporting research of all kinds in Classical Archaeology with grants and other resources;
• enabling the dissemination of research in Classical Archaeology at every level;
• demonstrating to the widest possible audience the continuing importance and relevance of Classical Archaeology to the contemporary world.
2. An overview of current collections

The collections of the Museum of Classical Archaeology fall into four main parts: plaster casts of sculpture from the ancient world, c.650 BCE to 500 CE, housed primarily in the Cast Gallery; a collection of sherds; a collection of ancient pots plus replicas of miniature bronzes and other objects; and a collection of epigraphic squeezes (impressions of inscriptions), mainly paper-based and housed in the Library. The unifying themes/subjects of the collections are the art and archaeology of the ancient Greek and Roman world, from prehistoric times to the end of the Roman empire.

The geographical range of the objects is focused on the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean (most especially Greece and Italy), but spreads to the extent of the Roman empire (including Roman Britain). But casts are also historical objects in their own right, and modern-day spread of the ancient sculptures on which the casts are based is even wider, since many of the originals are housed throughout Europe and in North America.

There are approximately 650 plaster of Paris sculpture casts, 450 Greek and Roman pots, 220 prehistoric replicas and classical bronzes and ivories, 10,000 sherds from 190 sites in northern Europe and the Mediterranean area, and approximately 3,000 epigraphic squeezes from the Mediterranean area.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The Cast Collection
The collection of plaster casts on display represents well-known sculptures from the ancient world, c.650 BCE to 500 CE. The earliest acquisitions were donations to the Fitzwilliam Museum from private collections, but the Museum of Classical Archaeology was founded in 1884 with a primarily aim of collecting casts for teaching purposes within the University – from its very inception, the cast collection has been an educational collection and educational interest remains the main criterion for acquisition.

Other Collections
The main use of these collections is for education and scholarly research, and research value remains the main criterion for acquisition.

Acquisition Priorities
• To strengthen the areas in which the collection is already strong, primarily the classical cultures of ancient Greece and Rome
• To collect casts and original objects relating to the pre-classical Mediterranean world to the end of the Roman empire, c.3000 BCE to c.500 CE. Objects outside this geographical area and time period would not be considered for acquisition.
• To acquire casts and original objects which fill gaps in the current collection, supplementing or expanding the range of sculpture and archaeology represented to add to the coherence and context of material already in the collection.
• To acquire an object only if it has potential for display, handling, interpretation, learning, research or outreach.
• To acquire an object only if there is adequate space for display or storage, and if there are sufficient funds for purchase and conservation given the Museum’s modest resources.

All collections are currently open to further acquisition.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
Rationalisation and/or disposal will only be considered in order to ensure that the collection continues to be used to uphold the Museum’s statement of purpose or that the collection is used effectively to benefit the public. The commitment to the statement of purpose is achieved by collecting, documenting, preserving and exhibiting material relating to the art and archaeology of the ancient world, most particularly the cultures of Greece and Rome. The benefit to the public is maintained by using the collection for display, handling and research, activities which may be carried out both by the Museum and by other organisations to which objects may be on loan.

Disposal will be considered in the case of the following circumstances:
• Poor condition, especially if conservation is unfeasible or if the object represents a risk to Museum staff or the public
• An object falls outside the current Collections Policy
• Existence of duplicates
• Public benefit is better served by transfer to another collection.

Disposal and rationalisation includes several alternative options, not listed in order of priority:
• Allocating items a different use within the Museum
• Returning items on loan
• Converting long-term loans into gifts
• Recalling items on loan to other organisations
• Disposal by gift to another Accredited museum or to other organisations or individuals
• Disposal by sale to another Accredited museum or to other organisations or individuals
• Disposal in cases of restitution, repatriation or spoliation
• Disposal by recycling
• Disposal by destruction – full or partial, in cases where no other option exists

In addition, the Museum of Classical Archaeology will not offer for sale to another Accredited museum any objects originally donated or bequeathed to it.

Collection rationalisation and disposal will take place within the ethical framework set out by the Disposal Toolkit. Disposal decisions will:
• Take place within the framework of a clearly defined Collections Policy
• Take place on the advice of a range of staff (not an individual)
• Be undertaken with the intention that wherever possible items remain in the public domain
• Be unlikely to damage public trust in the Museum
• Be likely to increase the public benefit derived from the collections
• Be communicated transparently to stakeholders and the public

Disposal and rationalisation may also be affected by legal factors arising from factors such as:

• Legislation relating to the governance of the Museum and its charitable status as part of the University of Cambridge
• The governing constitution of the Museum
• Museum management agreements
• Conditions attached to gifts bequests, purchases, loans and grants
• The ownership of items including those not yet accessioned to the collection.

The decision to dispose of an object will only be undertaken by the Museum of Classical Archaeology’s governing body, the Museum Committee. Disposal decisions will not be undertaken by any individual, but will involve a process of consultation between Museum staff, the Committee and, where appropriate, other persons with relevant experience or knowledge. Objects from the collections will be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis, for curatorial reasons only. Such decisions will be fully documented, demonstrating that ethical and legal requirements have been met and the guidelines followed. in the implementation of the rationalisation process. The Committee and the Museum staff will uphold the requirements of the Museum Accreditation scheme, the Museum Association’s Code of Ethics for Museums and Disposal Toolkit in any case of rationalisation or disposal.

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 museum(s):
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
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.

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 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.

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, 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.

d. The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

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.

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 as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.
f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 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.

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. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

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 13a-13d, 13g and 13o/s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

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’.
12. Management of archives

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).

13. Disposal procedures

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 13g-13s 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 the Arts Council England.

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 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 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

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.

*DRAFTED BY: SMT 23/8/13*