

# Collection Policy

**Name of museum:** Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

**Name of governing body:** Rugby Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** 4th April 2016

**Policy review procedure:** The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** April 2021

**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 collections.**

## 1 Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

1.1 The collections development policy aims to clearly set out the principles that Rugby Art Gallery & Museum will follow when acquiring and disposing of objects.

1.2 The museum's statement of purpose is:

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum aims to inspire and engage fostering ownership, awareness, enjoyment and learning of the culture of Rugby and beyond. We do this for the people of Rugby and its visitors by:

- Collecting, preserving and exhibiting the heritage of Rugby Borough and 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary British art.
- Presenting high quality temporary exhibitions of contemporary art from British and international artists.
- Organising an educational programme of events and activities to enhance the atmosphere of learning.
- Strengthening the work of Rugby Borough cultural organisations through support, partnership and use of our spaces.

1.3 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.4 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 governing body 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.

1.5 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

1.6 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. The most severe constraint the museum currently faces is a lack of storage and display space for large objects and artworks. Therefore large objects will only be acquired in exceptional circumstances. However efforts will be made to source appropriate sites for such objects to try to ensure that Rugby's heritage is not threatened by this storage limitation.

1.7 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, 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.

1.8 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

## **2 History of the collections**

### **Visual Arts**

#### Rugby Collection

The Rugby Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century British art is made up of a variety of paintings, prints, drawings, photography and film works that have been purchased and collected by Rugby Borough Council since 1946. The founding principle of the collection intended that: "The collection will grow each year...the net will be cast wide, policy being limited only by funds available. Rugby will never be able to acquire works of the masters by purchase, but the committee will try to build up a lively and interesting collection of works of artists of promise and renown". The collection was developed with the support and input of art advisors, industry experts who made recommendations for purchases and helped

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## Art Gallery & Museum

with finding funding. Eric Newton, art historian and critic for the Manchester Guardian and the Sunday Times was the first to advise Rugby from 1945 – 1964. Joanna Drew, who held several key positions in the Arts Council of Great Britain, succeeded Eric Newton in 1965 and supported the collection until 1974. The curator Monika Kinley joined Rugby in 1974 and stayed as art advisor until 1982. Throughout the 1980s and 90s active collecting slowed down with the reduction of purchasing budgets. During this period the collection moved temporarily to the University of Warwick where it was cared for and exhibited by the Mead Gallery. From 1988 – 1995 Contemporary Art Society (CAS) acted as art advisors for the collection. The opening of Rugby Art Gallery and Museum in 2000 saw a new acquisition budget established and collecting has continued ever since. Experienced visual art staff at the art gallery now act as art advisors for purchases. The collection offers a unique view of this period of British art through the eyes of the series of experienced art advisors who supported the acquisition process on a regular basis since 1946. Throughout the life of the collection it has benefitted from regular gifts from the Contemporary Art Society through its membership scheme. Many of the significant works in the collection are CAS gifts including works by Bridget Riley, Ceri Richards, Louis Le Brocqy, and Barbara Hepworth.

### Local Collection

The local art collection is a small collection of works of art produced by local artists, which was acquired by the Borough Council from 1979 to 2003.

### Topographical Collection

This collection, which dates largely from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, includes mainly drawings, paintings and prints, which depict local scenes and people. Most were created by local artists including Edwin Brown and Gertrude Hayes.

### **Archaeology**

The archaeology collection is dominated by the Tripontium collection, which was excavated by members of Rugby Archaeological Society over a forty year period from the Roman site located 5 miles from Rugby along the original Watling Street. This collection is divided into two specific collections. The first part is a collection of significant finds, which is on loan to Rugby Art Gallery and Museum for the purpose of display and was a key part of the museum's development when first opened in 2000. The second part is the bulk finds which were donated to the permanent

collection and is largely in storage. Prior to moving to Rugby Art Gallery and Museum in 2000 the collection was housed at Warwickshire County Museum.

In 2008 Rugby Art Gallery and Museum became an established archaeological depository for excavated material.

### **Social History**

The collections' origins date from the late nineteenth century when the old Rugby Library was given to the town in 1890 by Richard H Wood and a museum collection was set up alongside the library collection.

The social history collection aims to document the social and economic history of the borough of Rugby. It has been formally collected since 1999 and comprises of material evidence and associated information relating to the history of the borough of Rugby and of the people who have lived and worked here in the past and present.

## **3 An overview of current collections**

### **Rugby Collection**

The collection is now made up of 196 works, all of which were created by nationally known artists. It is an eclectic mixture of styles and mediums including painting, print, photography and film. Sculpture has never been added to the collection. The Rugby collection contains important works by many significant artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as Lowry, Hepworth, Sutherland, Spencer etc and many important contemporary works by artists such as A K Dolven, Lindsay Seers, Elizabeth McAlpine and Robert Priseman.

### **Local Collection**

The Local collection is of mixed media, which includes watercolours, oils, pastels, prints, acrylics and ceramics. Active collecting was ceased in December 2003 in order to redirect funds to support local artists in an alternative way through the annual Rugby Open exhibition.

### **Topographical Collection**

Many works in the Topographical collection were acquired from the original Rugby Library, which had collected them as part of their 'museum' collection.

## **Archaeology**

The Tripontium collection includes Roman ceramics, metalwork, bone work, animal bones, human remains, and a very small amount of leather and textile. Key pieces from the collection include a peacock belt buckle, lead ingot and a Roman milestone. The archaeological archive is not held by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum but remains with Rugby Archaeological Society. More recently the museum has acquired the small results of locally produced archives and continues to be an archaeological depository for excavated material.

## **Social History**

The majority of the collection dates from the 20<sup>th</sup> century although there is a small Victorian collection. The collection consists of approximately 15000 objects, which fall within the four SHIC categories of:

- Community life – includes education, health, entertainment, sport, community organisations.
- Personal Life - includes clothing, shoes and costume accessories, personal correspondence, keepsakes and photographs.
- Domestic and Family Life – includes items related to the home and living environment such as kitchen and laundry, toys and games.
- Working Life – including objects used for or created in a working environment and the local industries such as the railway and electrical engineering industries including Willans & Robinson, English Electric, BTH, AEI and GEC. Includes tools, patents, certificates, products, receipts, advertising and oral histories.

A key collection is the Redding photographic collection of glass plates and negatives dating from 1958-1972 and featuring family, community and working life in the town and surrounding area.

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

### **Rugby Collection**

The Rugby Collection has benefitted from consistent collecting since its inception in 1946 apart from the period of 1980-1990s. Ongoing collecting will continue in order to maintain the calibre of the collection and ensure it continues to represent quality British artists. It will be achieved with these general principles in mind:

- Works will continue to be acquired using a dedicated acquisition fund as well as by donation and bequest where possible.
- Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will continue to focus on actively acquiring 21<sup>st</sup> century artworks by British artists of national or potential

national standing. Mediums could include paintings, drawings, prints, photography, film and artist installations. Works selected will continue to reflect the varied nature of the collection in styles such as figurative and abstract.

- Retrospective works will only be considered for acquisition if it is felt that the work would fill a gap in the collection, particularly from the 1980s and 1990s period.
- Due to limitations in appropriate storage space and as there has never been a legacy of collecting sculpture, Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will not consider sculpture for the collection in the future.
- Future acquisitions will be made using internal visual art specialist knowledge although independent advice from an external art advisor will be sought in the absence of available staff knowledge.

### **Local Collection**

No future acquisitions will be made for the Local Collection.

### **Archaeology**

Since 2008 Rugby Art Gallery and Museum has been an established archaeological depository for excavated material. RAGM will continue to acquire archives from the same areas and future acquisitions will be governed by the continuance of developer funded field work. RAGM will continue to collect in consultation with Warwickshire Museums.

Whenever possible a full and indexed documented archive should be acquired along with the artefacts. The documentary archive may include pro-forma site records, note, maps, plans, drawing, photographs, written reports and digital material.

Wherever possible Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will acquire associated items from a single site as a complete assemblage and organisations carrying out archaeological investigation within the collection area will be encouraged to deposit the total archive into the care of Rugby Borough Council.

Prior to the beginning of an archaeological excavation an agreement should be made between the excavators, the landowners and Rugby Art Gallery and Museum for the transfer of the site finds and archive to Rugby Borough Council.

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will acquire archaeological material and associated material and associated evidence from the geographical area of the town of rugby and bordering villages as well as the Roman site of Tripontium. This includes the urban wards of:

- Newbold and Brownsover

- New Bilton
- Benn
- Bilton
- Overslade
- Caldecott
- Eastlands
- Paddox
- Hillmorton

It also includes the parishes of:

- Clifton upon Dunsmore
- Newton and Biggin
- Churchover
- Cosford
- Easenhall
- Harborough Magna
- Long Lawford
- Church Lawford
- Dunchurch
- Cawston in Admirals

Any finds from alternative parishes within the borough of Rugby will remain within the collecting area of Warwickshire County Museum Service.

Casual finds of archaeological material from within the collecting area will be considered for acquisition according to the following criteria:

- The rarity and significance of the object
- The completeness and condition of the object
- Information provided by the donor on the circumstances and the whereabouts of the find
- Potential use of material for research or display

The following archaeological codes of conduct will be adhered to:

- Standard in museum care of archaeological collection 1992
- SMA Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections Guidelines 1993
- Guidance on the care of Human Remains, DCMS 2008
- The Treasure Act 1996
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- IfA Standards and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials 2001, revised 2008

- IfA Standards and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives 2008
- Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive, SMA
- Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections, SMA

## **Social History**

The social history collection which has been formally collected since 1999 will continue to be added to, however, discretion and care will continue to be exercised with regard to the selection of objects due to the limitations on storage and staff time available.

Priority will be given to objects that fill identifiable gaps in the existing collection, rather than to those that complement areas that are already well represented.

Objects will only be accepted into the collection if they are accompanied by supporting information or provenance, which demonstrates a connection with Rugby Borough in terms of manufacture, use or strong association.

Care will be taken to avoid the collection of duplicate examples of mass-produced items common to any part of the country, unless they are accompanied by firm evidence of their significance to the Rugby area. Consideration should be given to the potential of the object in terms of display, interpretation or research as well as to the size and condition of the new acquisition.

Currently less well represented areas in the collection are:

- Rural life in the villages
- Cultural diversity in the Borough
- Willans & Robinson and English Electric
- Working lives and stories

A small selection of locally-themed artworks and drawings has been added to the collection since 2008. Topographical artworks and prints will continue to be considered for both their historical and artistic value.

Priority will be given to works that support and provide context to other areas of the collections.

## **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 Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will only dispose of items for curatorial reasons and will not undertake disposal motivated by financial reasons. Disposal will be made by gift or sale in accordance with procedures outlined below. Items will only be considered for disposal on the following principles:

- Poor condition
- Duplicates exist
- Falls outside the collecting policy
- Public benefit better serviced by transfer to another organisation

## **6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

6.1 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**

7.1 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.

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

- Warwickshire County Museum Service
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum
- The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
- Coventry Transport Museum
- Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery
- Rugby School Museum
- Warwickshire County Record Office
- World Rugby Museum

- Northampton Art Gallery and Museum
- Webb Ellis Rugby Football Museum

## 8 Archival holdings

8.1 As Rugby Art Gallery & 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).

## 9 Acquisition

9.1 The museum will only acquire material where relevant collecting criteria, as set out in Section 4, is met. Acquisitions are agreed and signed by the Collections Officer and Senior Exhibition Officer only, with consultation from Rugby Art Gallery and Museum staff as appropriate.

### 9.2 Rugby Collection Acquisitions

Works are acquired for the Rugby Collection in several ways:

- Commission to collect: art works are developed as a commission, i.e.: to be shown then brought into the collection. Works are developed with the artist in a collaborative process.
- Bought following a temporary exhibition: existing art works are purchased from an exhibition at RAGM
- Bought directly from artist, agent or gallery: art works are purchased directly from the artist or artist's studio, from a commercial gallery/other public gallery, or from an agent representing an artist.
- Donation from artist or organisation: art work brought into collection as a donation directly from an artist, organisation such as Contemporary Art Society or from another source eg: Estate or Trust.
- Auction: there may be rare occasions where art work is purchased at auction.

Any potential acquisitions for the Rugby Collection are thoroughly researched and investigated by specialist visual art staff. The same staff will also apply for external funding to support purchases. The Senior Exhibition Officer presents suggested acquisitions along with their research to a selection committee at RAGM. This committee makes the final decision as to which works will enter the collection, the practical

aspects of physically bringing the work into the collection including accessioning is undertaken by the Senior Exhibitions Officer and Collections Officer.

9.3 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).

9.4 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.

## **10 Human remains**

10.1 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**

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

## **12 Archaeological material**

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (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.

12.2 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

13.1 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

14.1 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

15.1 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

15.2 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' (DCMS, 2005).

## 16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body 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.
- 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, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 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 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, 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 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 governing body 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.
- 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.

- 16.13 Disposal by exchange. The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.
- 16.14 Disposal by destruction. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body 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.
- 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.

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& Museum