

## **POLICY TITLE**

Ayscoughfee Hall Museum's Acquisition and Disposal Policy

## **REVISION DATE**

Two years from date of adoption (January 2010)

## **REPLACES POLICY**

The Museum's previous Acquisition and Disposal Policy, dated January 1990

## **POLICY NUMBER**

TBC

## **POLICY AIM**

To clearly identify what material the Museum can and cannot acquire for the collection, and also to set out the procedures to be followed if it is decided that objects in the collection will be disposed of if it is decided that they are no longer appropriate for the collection.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. Existing collections and background**

- 1.1** Ayscoughfee Hall Museum was set up by South Holland District Council in 1983 to provide a museum which would collect and display material from within the boundaries of the South Holland district of Lincolnshire. This fenland area has a distinctive character and particular emphasis was laid on collecting material relating to land drainage, agriculture and horticulture. The Museum first opened to the public in 1987 with one gallery displaying objects relating to drainage and agriculture in the district. It closed for refurbishment in October 2003.
- 1.2** Ayscoughfee Hall Museum reopened to the public in June 2006 following a project that saw the building refurbished and the Museum reinterpreted. This scheme was financed largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and they requested that the building, along with its history and development, be the main exhibit of the new Museum.

### **2. Criteria governing the Museum's future collecting policy**

- 2.1** Although the Hall is now the centrepiece of the Museum, Ayscoughfee's mission statement makes it clear that there is a continuing duty to acquire material that is representative of the district. Some of the Museum's display areas are dedicated to exhibiting this material.
- 2.2** The Museum's collection has strengths in a number of areas, notably agriculture, horticulture, Fen drainage and social history (particularly costume and photographs). It is intended that limited collecting will be undertaken in these areas, due to the representative nature of the existing collections (see also points 3 and 4 below).
- 2.3** A number of other collections maintained by the Museum are worthy of specific mention.
- 2.3.1** Archaeology  
The majority of the archaeological objects (Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and Medieval), on display in Ayscoughfee are on loan from the archaeology department of Lincolnshire County Council's Heritage Services section. There are no plans to add to this collection by acquiring objects for the Museum in its own

right unless it is material that is specifically related to Ayscoughfee Hall or Ayscoughfee Gardens.

### **2.3.2 Archives**

The Museum has a large archival collection relating to the South Holland district. The view has been taken that this will not be added to unless the material offered is of especial interest to the district, or it relates in some way to the history of the building or Gardens. Members of the public offering archival material not required by the Museum will be given the contact details of Lincolnshire Archives.

### **2.3.3 Art**

The Museum has a small collection of art including works on paper and easel paintings. Most of these relate in some way to the building or to the families who owned or lived in Ayscoughfee. Careful consideration will be given to any potential acquisitions of works of art, due to the storage requirements of different media and associated conservation costs.

### **2.3.4 Books for display purposes**

The large number of books currently on display in the Museum's Victorian Library come mainly from the collection of Dr. William Strong, chaplain to King William IV. They have been on loan to Ayscoughfee from Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery since 1987 and neither party has any plans to change this arrangement. There are no plans to add to Ayscoughfee's display collection of books.

### **2.3.5 Schools loan collection**

The Museum maintains a small collection of stuffed, cased British birds and small mammals. This collection is seen as being outside the scope of the permanent museum collection, and as such is treated as a separate entity. It will continue to be offered to schools on a loan basis. There are no plans to add to it or to begin a collection based on any aspect of the natural sciences.

## **3. The time period covered by the collection and the geographical area to which it relates**

**3.1** Ayscoughfee Hall Museum will collect material that covers the period from c1750 (generally accepted as the date when the Industrial Revolution began), through to the present day. The only exception to this will be any material earlier than 1750 that is connected to the Hall or Gardens.

**3.2** Ayscoughfee Hall Museum will collect material from the area designated as the South Holland district and administered by South Holland District Council. This area covers approximately 280 square miles and lies in the south eastern corner of the county of Lincolnshire.

## **4. Limitations on collecting**

**4.1** 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.

**4.2** The Museum will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, conservation requirements and care of collection arrangements.

**4.3** Ayscoughfee Hall Museum has limited storage facilities for its collections, and will acquire large objects only under exceptional circumstances.

**4.4** Only material that the Museum has the resources to care for in the long term are acquired or accepted on loan.

## **5. Collecting policies of other museums**

**5.1** The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste resources. Specific reference is made to the following museums and organisations-

- Lincolnshire County Council Heritage Services (particularly The Collection, the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and the Usher Art Gallery)
- The Museum of the Spalding Gentleman's Society
- The Gordon Boswell Romany Museum
- The Pinchbeck Engine
- The Blacksmith's Workshop
- The Spalding Bulb Museum

## **6. Policy review procedure**

**6.1** The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every two years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

**6.2** The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council East Midlands will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **7. Acquisitions not covered by the policy**

**7.1** 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.

## **8. Acquisition procedures**

**8.1** 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.

**8.2** 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).

**8.3** 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<sup>st</sup> 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 DCMS in 2005.

**8.4** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the Museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- 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; or
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- 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.

## **9. Spoliation**

**9.1** 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.

## **10. Repatriation and Restitution**

**10.1** The Museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum’s professional staff may take a decision to return objects 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.

## **11. Management of archives**

**11.1** As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **12. Disposal procedures**

**12.1** By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum’s collection.

**12.2** The Museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.

**12.3** 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.

**12.4** Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.

- 12.5** 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 but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from Museums Libraries and Archives Council.
- 12.6** 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), 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.
- 12.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 12.8** If the material is not acquired by any accredited museums to which it was offered directly, 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 professional journals where appropriate.
- 12.9** The announcement 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.
- 12.10** 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. This includes photographic records, where practicable, in accordance with the SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal (SPECTRUM is a document that sets out clear standards and procedures for collections management. It is recognised nationally and internationally as the industry standard in this field).

**MONITORING**

The policy will be monitored in the following ways:

<b>MONITORING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>
If the policy is followed	<i>Museum Manager</i>

**POLICY APPROVAL**

## RELATED POLICIES & STRATEGIES

None