

# COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## 1 Relationship to other relevant policies

This policy is a revision of the statement that was last adopted by the Culture and Sport Committee on 28 May 2013. This policy sets out:

- Our mission, strategic aims and objectives
- Brief history of our current collections
- Summary overview of current collections
- Themes and priorities for future collecting
- Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The adoption and implementation of such a policy by the City of Edinburgh Council is a requirement of the Museums Accreditation Scheme, managed in Scotland by Museums Galleries Scotland. The contents of this policy have been developed to meet the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom, Template Collections Development Policy, 2014.

This policy relates to Aim 1 of the National Strategy of Scotland's Museums and Galleries and its accompanying objective: *Maximize the potential of our collections and culture. 1(a): Improve and ensure the long-term sustainability of collections through care and preservation, and responsible acquisition and disposal.*

At Council level, this policy forms part of our service's commitment in fulfilling the Council's 52 Commitments, published in 2017. It also contributes to the following Culture Plan objectives:

- Ensure that everyone has access to world class cultural provision.
- Encourage the highest standards of creativity and excellence in all aspects of cultural activity.
- Support greater partnership working in the cultural and creative sectors and maximise resources available to help them thrive all year round.
- Articulate the positive impact of culture in Edinburgh and promote Edinburgh's cultural success locally, nationally and internationally.
- Develop and support the infrastructure which sustains Edinburgh's cultural and creative sectors.
- Invest in artist and practitioner development, and support and sustain the local artistic community.

It is an important component of the Museums and Galleries Edinburgh (MGE) current Service Plan, aim 4 of which states that as a service we want to: *Achieve excellence in the development, use and care of collections*. This document most directly relates to objective 4.1: *Create policies and plans for how we manage, develop and care for our collections*.

This policy informs our Care and Conservation Policy and Plan, Documentation Policy and Plan, and our Temporary Exhibitions Policy.

## **1.1 Statement of Purpose**

- 1.1.1 **Our Vision:** To inspire, enthuse and provoke through a shared passion for Edinburgh, art and history.
- 1.1.2 **Our Mission:** MGE enables people to connect with the city, its many histories and its role in presenting art from around the world. We do this through our collections, temporary exhibitions and public programmes, both physical and digital. We balance our responsibility to preserve, display and interpret collections with our mission to encourage debate, interaction, reflection and exploration.
- 1.3 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.4 By definition, MGE 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 MGE 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. We will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.7 MGE will undertake 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.
- 1.8 MGE will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

## **2 History of the Collections**

- 2.1 The collections belonging to the City of Edinburgh Council have, like many municipal collections, evolved in various ways over many decades. Some of the earliest civic portraits, for example, date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Accession registers date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when artefacts were held within the City Chambers as there was no museum provision at that time.
- 2.2 In 1907 Lady Stairs House in the Lawnmarket was gifted to the City for use as a museum, and the Council's collection of artefacts were transferred from the City Chambers. Today, the property (now renamed The Writers' Museum) displays items relating to some of Scotland's most famous historic and contemporary authors.
- 2.3 In 1926, Mr and Mrs William Reid left in trust to the nation Lauriston Castle, its contents and grounds. Since Mrs Reid's death in 1926, the Trust has been administered by the City (firstly Edinburgh Corporation, then Edinburgh District Council, and now by the City of Edinburgh Council). The Reid's Trust specifically stated that the interior should be preserved 'as at the death of the survivor of us', and consequently the Castle today remains a remarkable example of Edwardian taste.
- 2.4 Our Childhood collection was originally the work of City Councillor Patrick Murray (1908-1981). He was a passionate collector of toys and childhood memorabilia. When the Museum of Childhood opened in 1955, under Murray's stewardship, it was the first museum in the world devoted to the history of childhood. In 1996 Mrs Catherine E Cowper established a bequest to be used by the Museum of Childhood to acquire items for its collection which has subsequently been Recognised as Nationally Significant (under the Scottish Government's National Recognition Scheme).
- 2.5 In 1960 the Second Earl Haig donated a collection of items that document the life and military career of Field Marshal Earl Haig. Items from the collection are on permanent display within the Museum of Edinburgh.
- 2.6 In 1961 Miss Jean F Watson gifted a sum of money to the City of Edinburgh with instructions to build up a collection of Scottish visual and applied art. At her death she bequeathed an additional amount, and a bequest fund was established in her name to oversee future acquisitions. It still operates today, administered by a Committee of the Council.
- 2.7 In 1964, the City's fine art collection also benefitted from another significant donation, when over 300 artworks owned by the Scottish Modern Arts Association were gifted to the City. This collection is particularly rich in Victorian and Edwardian Scottish art.

- 2.8 In more recent times, the former Scottish Arts Council bequeathed a collection of modern and contemporary Scottish art to the City in 1998, and in 2011, the majority of the artworks in the Lothian Schools Art Collection were also transferred into the City's care.

### **3 Overview of current collections**

The general intention of this policy is to strengthen the scope of our existing collections by filling gaps, purchasing new work by contemporary artists and makers, and in some cases by acquiring comparative material (items which shed light on aspects of our collections through their contrast in style / usage / medium / manufacture, etc).

#### **3.1 Archaeology**

This collection comprises both archaeological material and the numismatics collection. The Archaeological collection currently spans the periods from Scotland's earliest settlers in the Mesolithic period (c.8500-4000 BC) to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The collection's strength lies in its comprehensive coverage of Roman Cramond and the medieval and post-medieval burghs of Leith and the Old Town.

The small numismatics collection includes coins recovered from excavations (from Roman denarii to English groats) in addition to Scottish coins, Scottish medals and communion tokens and a few commemorative medals.

It is noted that the archaeology collections can, and do, complement many of the objects held in the social history collections. Archaeological approaches to object and material culture study is applicable to collections representing historical time periods, as well as proto-historical and prehistoric.

#### **3.2 Applied Art (including Lauriston Castle)**

Except for the Reid Bequest (see below), this collection is largely concentrated at the Museum of Edinburgh, with small groups of objects on display at The Writers' Museum, The People's Story and the Museum of Childhood.

The collection comprises five main elements:

- (I) Edinburgh and Canongate silver from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day;
- (II) Edinburgh and Leith glass from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day;
- (III) Scottish pottery, particularly from south-east Scotland dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day;
- (IV) Edinburgh and Canongate long-case clocks, other clocks and watches; and
- (V) A small collection of Scottish jewellery from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day.

The Applied Art Collection of silver, ceramic and glass at the Museum of Edinburgh has been Recognised as Nationally Significant (under the Scottish Government's National Recognition Scheme).

**Lauriston Castle:** The Reid Bequest comprises Lauriston Castle, its contents and grounds, left in trust to the nation by Mr and Mrs W R Reid. Since Mrs Reid's death in 1926, the Trust has been administered by the City. The collections at Lauriston in part consist of items brought from the Reid's former home in Edinburgh, where Mr Reid created a series of rooms furnished in 'perfect taste' (see Ian Gow, *The Scottish Interior*). These collections form the basis of the furnishing in the house, but many further items were purchased, with specific locations or decorative purpose in mind, to create the outstanding Edwardian interior which characterises Lauriston Castle today.

The Reids furnished the entire property, including the servants' quarters, with items they considered appropriate, to create a unified decorative scheme. The Reid's Trust specifically states that the interior should be preserved 'as at the death of the survivor of us', and consequently the Castle today remains a remarkable example of Edwardian taste.

The collections comprise:

- (I) British and Continental furniture, including a fine collection of Southern Italian commodes;
- (II) Crossley Wool Mosaics;
- (III) urns and vases made from the Derbyshire Fluorspar known as Blue John;
- (IV) a large group of Caucasian and near-Eastern rugs;
- (V) Scottish, English and French clocks;
- (VI) a large collection of mezzotints;
- (VII) a group of Italian flower paintings; and
- (VIII) an extensive collection of Sheffield Plate.

### 3.3 Childhood Collection

Accommodated in the Museum of Childhood, as well as the Museums Collection Centre, the City Chambers and Murrayburn Archive Store, this collection contains around 50,000 objects concerning every aspect of the concept of childhood.

Although the collection ranges in date from Ancient Egypt to the Computer Age and is international in its geographical spread, its main strengths are items relating to British children of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The museum's founder, Patrick Murray, also began a collection of children's books, which currently comprises approximately 20,000 volumes.

Contact is made frequently with other Scottish museums which acknowledge the Museum of Childhood as the country's leading repository for historical childhood items. In turn, the Museum of Childhood will direct items offered for sale or as donations which have a strong local significance to an appropriate local museum. The Museum of Childhood also has contact with comparable institutions in the rest of the UK, such as the V&A Museum of Childhood in London. The Museum of Childhood collection has been Recognised as Nationally Significant.

### 3.4 Fine Art

The Fine Art collection comprises oil and acrylic paintings, watercolours, drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures, tapestries and installation works. Ranging in date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, it consists mainly of works by Scottish artists, artists working in Scotland, and works with a strong Scottish connection. It covers a wide variety of subject-matter, including portraits and figure studies, landscapes, still lifes, genre scenes and abstract compositions. Although the collection is cared for at the City Art Centre, works are also displayed in the Museum of Edinburgh, the Writers' Museum, the Museum of Childhood, the City Chambers and many other public buildings in the City of Edinburgh. The Scottish Art Collection held at the City Art Centre has been Recognised as a Nationally Significant Collection under the Scottish Government's Recognition Scheme, managed by Museums Galleries Scotland.

The collection has five principal components:

- (I) Artworks that derive from the City's original civic collection of paintings. These include portraits of notable Edinburgh figures, such as former Lord Provosts, and topographical views of the City;
- (II) Artworks that have been transferred to the City's care from other art collections. These include works from the Scottish Modern Arts Association (presented in 1964), the Scottish Arts Council Collection (transferred in 1998), and the Edinburgh Schools Art Collection (transferred in 2011);
- (III) Artworks that have been acquired since 1962 with funds given, and later bequeathed, by Miss Jean F Watson. All acquisitions are approved by the Jean F Watson Bequest Committee;
- (IV) Artworks that are accepted as donations from organisations and individuals. Potential donations must fit within the remit of the Fine Art collection to be accepted; and
- (V) Artworks on long-term loan to the City for purposes of display and research. All long-term loans are subject to the terms and conditions of formal loan agreements.

### 3.5 Social History (including the Writers' Museum)

This collection spans The People's Story (Canongate Tolbooth), the Museum of Edinburgh, The Writers' Museum, Queensferry Museum and the collection associated with the former Newhaven Heritage Museum. The material of which it is made up encompasses four main subject areas:

- (I) Community life (cultural local traditions and religious beliefs, including those of black and ethnic communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and organisations; organisations such as Friendly Societies, political groups, cooperative movement, etc; local government and law enforcement; health, welfare and sanitation; education; entertainment, sport and public amenities; communications and currency and life in wartime).
- (II) Domestic and family life (household life and work; services; furnishings and fittings; household management: food, drink and tobacco; and hobbies, crafts and leisure activities) from post-medieval times to the present day.
- (III) Personalalia and costume (personal administration and records, relics and mementos; costume; and personal care and well-being). The small costume collection includes civic and ceremonial costume and examples of working and occupational dress. A collection of historic tartan costume, portions of early tartan, prints, and items relating to the production of tartan were donated by J Telfer Dunbar in 1950.
- (IV) Working life (business and professional organisations; labour organisations; agriculture and fishing; energy and water supply; mining and mineral extraction; engineering and metalworking industries; manufacturing industries including food and drink, textiles, leather goods, footwear and clothing, timber and wooden furniture, printing and associated trades; rubber and plastics; construction trades; transport operations and communications; wholesale and retail distribution; hotels and catering; banking, finance, and insurance services; business services; cultural and recreational services and personal and domestic services). The collections include an impressive holding of trade union, political and friendly society banners and regalia.
- (V) The Haig collection is based at the Museum of Edinburgh, and documents the life and military career of Field Marshal Earl Haig. It contains personal belongings (including uniforms, ceremonial costume, decorations, freedom caskets, manuscripts, books, paintings, drawings, prints and photographs). The collection was donated by the second Earl Haig in 1960.

**The Writers' Museum:** The Writers' Museum collection comprises personal belongings, manuscripts, early editions, commemorative items, paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture primarily associated with Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. In the case of Stevenson, there are also photographs of the author, his family and circle. The Scott section includes items relating to the Scott Monument and its architect, George Meikle Kemp. The material associated

with Robert Burns forms part of the Robert Burns Collection (which is distributed across Scotland). That collection has been Recognised as Nationally Significant. There are a small number of items and books relating to Muriel Spark, Dorothy Dunnett and other contemporary writers.

### **3.6 Handling Collections**

A variety of objects are lent out in the form of handling collections. These are administered by the Outreach Service (currently based at the City Art Centre) and the Museum of Edinburgh. They are used for a variety of purposes including reminiscence with older people, handling sessions with children, informal learning sessions with a range of audiences, and community exhibitions. The handling collections offer hands-on engagement for communities with our collections.

These are non-core collections and consist of non-accessioned duplicate items, specifically collected or purchased items and replicas.

## **4 Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting**

The collections shall reflect the contribution made by all sections of Edinburgh's community. Every effort shall be made to develop those parts of the collection where this is not the case.

We will seek quality rather than quantity, and to acquire items of artistic, historic and cultural significance that can be interpreted for audiences in a meaningful and dynamic way.

We will acquire items only when we can guarantee that we have the capacity to ensure their long- term care.

In addition to artefacts, electronic media and related documentary material (such as photographs, digital media, video recordings, etc) shall be acquired. We will seek to document as fully as possible all items that are acquired.

Collecting material relating to contemporary Scottish society, visual arts and crafts will form a key component of our collecting strategy.

### **4.1 Archaeology**

Most future acquisitions will be the product of properly conducted archaeological excavations by external archaeological organisations, undertaken as part of the Council's development control process, and monitored by the Curator of Archaeology. In addition, there may be some acquisitions from casual archaeological finds and private collections which shall be subject to the requirements of paragraphs 10 – 13 below. The geographical scope of the collection will be confined to the area administered by the City of Edinburgh Council, except for items acquired for the purpose of comparison in display or for educational and research purposes.



As a comprehensive Scottish and international coin collection is held by the National Museums of Scotland, the development of the numismatic collection shall be restricted to coins and medals with a connection with the area of the City of Edinburgh, including types of coins known to have been used in Edinburgh in the past. Coins recovered during archaeological excavations shall continue to be acquired, subject to the requirements of paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 below.

#### **4.2 Applied Art (including Lauriston Castle)**

The future development of the collection shall concentrate on filling gaps in the subsections indicated above, extending the historical time periods covered by the existing collections. Emphasis will be placed on acquiring items made in, or closely associated with Edinburgh, except for Scottish pottery, which has traditionally been drawn from a wider geographical area.

The Applied Arts Section will actively develop a collection of contemporary silver, ceramics and glass produced by makers currently living and working in Edinburgh, or closely associated with the city. Through donation or purchase, the section will also seek to improve the collections of 20<sup>th</sup> century material, particularly late 20<sup>th</sup> century pieces. Archival material (business correspondence, photographs, work books, pattern books, etc) relating to local potteries, glass factories and other manufactories, and the work of individual makers and studios will be collected to enhance the existing object-based collections.

**Lauriston Castle:** Under the terms of the Trust, it is inappropriate to widen the scope of the existing collection. However, it may be desirable to acquire items that fall into the following categories: items with a personal or family connection to the Reids; material relating to Mr Reid's company, Morison & Co; items that have associations with the house or any of the previous owners / occupants; items required to maintain the interior and collections in line with the terms of the Trust document; items which can be used to enhance the interpretation of the house (handing collection).

#### **4.3 Childhood Collection**

Within the tight constraints of storage and display space and curatorial staff resources, it is proposed to continue to add to the collection to extend our knowledge of childhood in the past and to represent contemporary childhood for the benefit of future museum visitors. Priority for expansion and gap-filling will be given to items in use before 1850, items in use during World War II, and carefully selected items from 1970 to the present day. Other particular areas to strengthen are children's furniture and household items, photographs, sports-related items (especially football-related) and material relating to the working lives of children.

#### 4.4 Fine Art

The main objective shall remain the building of a representative collection of Scottish art from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Given the strength of our existing topographical collection, continued emphasis shall be given to the visual documentation of the development of the City of Edinburgh, chiefly parts of the city that are less well recorded.

Gaps in the representation of important historical artists such as David Wilkie, Henry Raeburn, William Dyce, Sam Bough, etc shall be filled when opportunities arise and funding is available.

In line with the current MGE Service Plan, there will be a renewed emphasis on the purchasing or commissioning of works by contemporary Scottish / Scottish-based artists. Recognising the current demographic of the collection, as well as the increasing diversity of the artistic community within Edinburgh, there will be greater awareness regarding the work of contemporary female artists, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Jean F Watson Bequest Fund shall continue to be employed in line with the original minute of the bequest. It will be used for the purchase (and commissioning) of work by artists born, practicing in, or otherwise associated with Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh. This work shall include paintings, sculpture, prints and drawings, and items of applied art such as tapestries, stained glass, glass, ceramics, silver and jewellery. It shall be a requirement that works by local artists selected for purchase should be of sufficiently high quality to achieve national standing. The Jean F Watson Bequest Advisory Panel is guided by a Collecting Strategy most recently revised in 1997, following the distribution of the former Scottish Arts Council collection.

#### 4.5 Social History (including The Writers' Museum)

Chronologically, the Social History collection covers a time span from the beginning of the post-medieval period to the present day. An active programme of contemporary documentation shall be pursued with an attempt to record the areas of rapid change in the area. Due to storage limitations the collection of contemporary material will largely be of ephemeral material.

The main emphasis shall continue to be on the acquisition of items owned, produced, or used in the City of Edinburgh Council area. Occasionally, items from outwith this area shall be collected for purposes of comparison, to illustrate an important point, or if they belong to categories of objects relevant to Edinburgh but unrepresented in the collection. This will be done after consideration of the interests of any other museums in the relevant area.

A policy of collecting shall be adopted to fill existing gaps. In addition to artefacts, contemporary photographs, videos, and other related documentary material shall be acquired. Items must be as fully documented as possible when they are collected. Preference will be given to items with a strong local provenance or story. It is clear that there are many gaps particularly in the early period. Items to fill these gaps will be actively sought.

As an important collection of historic costume and textiles exists in the National Museum of Scotland, future additions to our costume collection shall be confined to well-documented items with specific connections with Edinburgh. Additions to the J Telfer Dunbar tartan collection shall be sought to reflect the interest and importance of this collection.

Additions to the banner and regalia material shall be sought, covering the period from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

The Social History collections include many items relating to Leith. Parts of these collections were donated by the former Leith Museum Trust to be held in trust until a suitable Accredited museum in Leith is established. Attention will be given to collecting items for this intended future museum in Leith.

**The Writers' Museum:** Emphasis shall be given to acquiring items with a direct connection with the writers, in preference to commemorative objects, and development shall be largely concentrated on filling gaps. Acquisition of items related to other major Scottish literary figures will be considered where appropriate.

#### 4.6 Handling Collections

Future development would involve collecting to add to or complement the current handling collections. Collections to develop would include: Material for schools loan boxes, including World War 1 and 2 material and other items such as toys and games; material for reminiscence/ handling with community groups - in particular, social history items from the 1950s onwards and collecting material to represent the diversity of the city and changes since the 1950s; collecting and contemporary collecting of material relating to the Leith, Newhaven and Queensferry areas of Edinburgh, and finally the updating of resources such as tapes and videos to CD and DVD.

## 5 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 By definition, MGE has a long-term purpose and possesses permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. MGE 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.

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

- 6.1 MGE 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 MGE 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):

### **All subject areas**

Members of the East of Scotland Museum Partnership

### **Archaeology**

National Museums of Scotland

### **Applied Art**

National Museums of Scotland

East Lothian Museums Service

Fife Museum Service

Glasgow Museums and Art Gallery

Aberdeen Museum and Art gallery

Perth Museum and Art Gallery

McManus Galleries, Dundee

### **Childhood Collections**

V&A Museum of Childhood, London

The National Trust Museum of Childhood, Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire

Highland Museum of Childhood, Ross and Cromarty

Museum of Childhood, Lancaster

Glasgow Museums

### **Fine Art**

National Galleries of Scotland

Glasgow Museums and Art Gallery

Aberdeen Museum and Art Gallery

McManus Galleries, Dundee

Fife Council Museum Service (Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery)

Perth Museum and Art Gallery

### **Social History**

National Museums of Scotland

Scottish Mining Museum

Scottish Maritime Museum

Scottish Fisheries Museum

Tartan Society

Bemersyde House (Earl Haig)

City of Edinburgh Council Archives and Libraries

### **Writers' Museum**

Scottish Borders Council Museum Service (Sir Walter Scott)

Abbotsford House (Sir Walter Scott)

Dumfries and Galloway Museum Service (Robert Burns)

National Trust for Scotland (Robert Burns)

National Library of Scotland

National Museums of Scotland

Burns Scotland Partnership of Recognised Collections

- 7.3 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.

## **8 Archival holdings**

- 8.1 MGE does not intend to acquire archival material unless there are exceptional reasons to do so.

## **9 Acquisition**

- 9.1 The City of Edinburgh Council, as the governing body, has overall responsibility for the stewardship of the collections.
- 9.2 The Service Manager, Cultural Venues (Museums and Galleries), as the Council's senior museum professional, shall normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential gifts or bequests to MGE, for soliciting gifts of material for the collections within the terms of this policy, and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of museum objects.
- 9.3 The Curatorial and Engagement Manager, in consultation with history and childhood curatorial staff, and with reference to the Collections Care Officer, shall approve all potential donations, gifts or bequests to the social history, literary and childhood collections. The Archaeology Officer, in consultation with the Curatorial and Engagement Manager, shall authorise acquisitions to the archaeology collection. Potential acquisitions may be rejected on the grounds of significance, condition, or an inability to ensure their long-term care. The exception to this are any acquisitions made through the Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest.
- 9.4 The Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest oversees acquisitions made to the city's fine and applied art collections using funds bequeathed to the Council by the late Miss Jean F Watson. The Committee, comprised of Councillors and external advisers, considers acquisitions proposed by curatorial staff via reports authorised by the Executive Director of Place. The Committee also oversees acquisitions made to the Childhood collections through the Cowper Bequest.
- 9.5 All potential donations, gifts or bequests are subject to a 28 day approval period.
- 9.6 MGE 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).

- 9.7 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 1 November 2002, MGE 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 MGE holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

- 11.1 MGE will not acquire any biological or geological material.

## **12 Archaeological Material**

- 12.1 MGE 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 Scotland, under the laws of bona vacantia including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of bona vacantia. Scottish material of chance finds and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to MGE by the Crown. However, where the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council, 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.

## **13 Exceptions**

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because MGE 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, MGE will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. MGE will document when these exceptions occur.

## **14 Spoilation**

14.1 MGE 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 governing body of MGE, acting on the advice of MGE'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 Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. MGE 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 Scotland will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

## **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, MGE 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, exchange 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 MGE 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 MGE 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 governing body of MGE 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 Museums Association'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, MGE 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 governing body of MGE 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 Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 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 MGE 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.
- 16.13.1 In cases where the governing body 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 Museum Association'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 governing body 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 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, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.