

Collections Development Policy

Conwy County Borough Council Conwy Museum's Service

Date of Approval: December 2020

Date for Review: December 2025



**Sir Conwy, yr amgylchedd iawn i fyw, gweithio
a darganfod**

**Conwy County, the right environment to live,
work and discover**

Collections Development Policy

Policy review procedure:

The Collections Development Policy will be reviewed every five years or as and when any issue arises. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above. The Arts Council England/Welsh Government's Museum, Archives, Arts Libraries Division (MAALD) will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Relationship to other Policy and Plans

This policy is associated with Conwy Conservation Management and Maintenance Plan; Forward Plan; Documentation Procedural Manual, Collections Significance Report 2013. Along with external documents which inform care and conservation, such as: Museum Association Code of Ethics 2016, ICON Professional Guidelines Code of Ethics 2020.

1.0 Statement of Purpose

1.1. Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) Museums Service's mission is to:

'Enhance the quality of life for Conwy County Borough's communities. We help people to engage with heritage, boosting local pride and a sense of identity. We strive to bring about local economic local benefit through enabling heritage tourism to reach its fullest potential. We work to conserve, document and make accessible the rich evidence of Conwy's past. We promote and celebrate our collections and hold these in trust for society, working with our communities to bring the past to life for inspiration, education and enjoyment'

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

1.3 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 Service's collection.

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

1.5 The Museum Service 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 2018. This includes using the Collections Trust SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management and also utilising the MODES Compact database. It will take

into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

1.6 The Museum Service 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.

1.7 The Museum Service will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2.0 History of the Collection

Conwy County Borough Council (CBBC) was established in 1996 following Local Government Re-organisation. It acquired responsibility for museum collections from neighbouring authorities from Clwyd and Gwynedd Councils and the former Aberconwy Borough Council and Colwyn Borough Council.

2.1 *Quantity and focus:* The Museum Service collection consists of approximately 1,250 items in 2020, including paintings, archaeological material and items illustrating social and industrial history.

2.2 *Displays:* Some of the Museums Service's collections are on display at Conwy Culture Centre: Llandudno Museum and Gallery; Sir Henry Jones Museum; Colwyn Bay Library; Colwyn Bay Town Hall; CCBC's civic buildings; Great Orme Tramway.

2.3 *Archives:* Many of the Museum Service's collections relate to substantial documentary or photographic collections in Conwy Archive. Local industries including the mussel-fishery of Conwy, the Dolgarrog Aluminium Works and Hotpoint Llandudno Junction are well represented in documents, photographs and artefacts. The Museum collection is also well represented in archaeological material from the Great Orme and has rough out axes from Graiglwyd Axe Factory.

2.4 *Significance:* In 2013, the core collections were reviewed in terms of condition and graded in terms of significance. The following collections are rated as being in good to fair condition and are of significance in retelling the stories of Conwy through heritage collections.

- *Archaeology, Geology and Palaeontology*

The archaeological collection includes the internationally important Kendrick Cave material, dated by the British Museum from 14,000 B.P. and other prehistoric finds e.g. Bronze Age palstaves and axes, and Roman coins. The geological collection consists of some 70 fossils and minerals, mainly from the Great Orme and Llandudno area, and is of international significance. There is a Roman amphora discovered in Rhos on Sea and archaeological samples from Graiglwyd Neolithic axe factory.

- *Conwy Library Collection & Art Collections*

The collection includes a number of drawings and lithographs of local landscapes.

- *Economic History: Industries*

Conwy Mussel Fishery is represented by a small number of tools and decorative tourism items. The Hotpoint Factory in Llandudno Junction is represented through washing machines and items representing the employees' social pastimes.

- *Military Collections - The Bradley Collection/The Reckless collection.*

The Bradley Collection comprises of WW2 material relating to James Bradley from Colwyn Bay who became a prisoner of war in Burma (Myanmar). The Reckless collection includes a small amount of material relating to WW1 from Sergeant Ernest Reckless who died at Gallipoli; there are a number of medallion given by Llandudno Urban District Council to local families and a selection of medals from the Boer War.

- *Social History Collections*

The Collection includes a range of individual items and small collections that relate to the lives of local people. Of significance are the African war clubs associated with the Rev William Hughes and the African Institute in Colwyn Bay. Also, of regional significance is: Rhoslan medical collection is a comprehensive collection of approximately 230 medical instruments which provides insight into medical practises in the 1940's; The Dolgarrog Dam Disaster (1925) boat piece originally used to save survivors; An elaborately carved Eisteddfod chair, associated prints, and badges; Late 19th and early 20th century costume; Collections relate to materials from local churches, scout collection, home decorating and domestic items e.g. 1950s television and 1960s transistor radio.

- *Civic Regalia Collections*

A complete collection of civic material relating to the town of Colwyn. The majority of the collection is of silver, including desk furniture, cups and plaques for prizes provided by local dignitaries. The collection also includes photographs of mayors, decorative parchments and material associated with local people and twin towns overseas.

- *Local Transport*

The collection includes a modest amount of operational and advertising material relating to the Great Orme Tramway and the Llandudno and Colwyn Bay Electric Railway.

- *Economic Collections*

The Weights and Measures Collection has some historic, aesthetic and scientific significance and is an almost complete set of Imperial weights and measures transferred from Trading Standards following metrification; *The Aberconwy token*, dated 1663 is the earliest example of trade within Conwy.

3.0 Themes and priorities for future collecting

3.1 The Museum Service's Mission statement (See 1.1) works: *'to conserve, document and make accessible the rich evidence of Conwy's past'*. In keeping with this statement, CCBC will acquire objects that reflect the history, heritage and culture of Conwy County Borough. The service will focus on proactively acquiring items which are currently underrepresented and to strengthen future interpretation. In particular the Museum Service will seek items for which the Authority has archival material. Whilst the Museum Service has benefited from a new store there is not infinite storage for oversized collections and the Museum Handling Collection.

Acquisitions will include objects, used, made or owned in the area of Conwy County Borough. The Museum Service will not collect duplicate items. Items from outside the County Borough will only be collected if they have proven local connections or are of a type once used in the area but of which no local examples survive. Other Museum collecting policies (See Section 7.0) will also be considered.

3.2 Archaeology

Conwy County Borough Museums Service will collect archaeological material from the area dating from the earliest times to the present day. These may be acquired through scientific excavation or by casual find. Collecting will abide by the policy outlined in section 12.

3.3 Social History

The Museums Service will acquire social history objects relating to domestic life and cultural activity in Conwy County Borough. Topics covered will include education, religion, home life, customs and beliefs, military life, medical, sports and pastimes. Whilst there is some representations in collections, these areas could be strengthened, particularly in regard to childhood, tourism and working life.

3.4 Economic History

Artefacts will be collected relating, in particular, to agriculture, forestry, tourism, maritime history, quarrying, lead mining, clock manufacture and the woollen industry. All these are particularly underrepresented in the collection and need proactive collecting.

3.5 Fine and Decorative Art

The Museums Service will acquire works of fine and decorative art produced by artists from the County Borough or depicting a scene or people from the County Borough. Contemporary art collecting is a new venture and is underrepresented.

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5.0 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The Museum Service 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 Following a significance report undertaken in early 2013, some elements of the collection have been identified for rationalisation and possible disposal. These include:

- Items in the art collection which are without provenance and damaged beyond repair.
- Social history material which are without provenance and would be better used as handling collections.
- Generic spoils from the archaeology collections which are of low significance. Professional advice will be sought from an external archaeologist.
- Duplicate weights and measures and trophy items will be reviewed.

6.0 Legal and ethical framework for the acquisitions and disposal of items

6.1 The Museum Service recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

6.2 There will be limitations on Collecting. CCBC Museums Service recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet minimum requirements. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements. The Museum Services service will not accept loans unless required for display. Items of non-local provenance will only be collected if they have proven connections with the collecting area.

- Costumes and Textiles: Due to the major conservation requirements of textile and costume collections, collecting will normally be restricted to items of display quality.
- Add in industrial collections – and size constraints
- Science Collections: Due to lack of staff expertise and major conservation requirements, there will be a presumption against the collection of natural history or ethnographic material except when required for specific displays.

7.0 Collecting policies of other museums and partners

7.1 The museums service 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 accredited museums:

<p>Conwy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llandudno Museum • Sir Henry Jones Museum • Penmaenmawr Museum • Aberconwy House • Conwy Toll House and Conwy Suspension Bridge. • Ty Mawr Wybrnant <p>Gwynedd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lloyd George Museum and Highgate • Storiell • Barmouth Sailors' Institute • Llŷn Maritime Museum • Narrow Gauge Railway Museum • Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw • Porthmadog Maritime Museum • Yr Ysgwrn • National Slate Museum • Penrhyn Castle • Plas yn Rhiw • Royal Welch Fusillers Regimental Museum 	<p>Denbighshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhyl Museum • Ruthin Gaol • Plas Newydd • Rhyl Miniature Railway • Wireless in Wales • Llangollen Museum <p>Flintshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mold Library, Museum and Gallery • Buckley Library, Museum and Gallery • Greenfield Valley Museum • St. Winifred's Well <p>Wrexham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrexham County Borough Museum • Chirk Castle • Erddig
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7.3 A number of organisations are involved in archaeology in Conwy and the Museums Service will liaise with Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT),

8.0 Archival Holdings

8.1 CCBC's Archive Service will maintain Archive Accreditation.

8.2 There will be a presumption against the acquisition of documents and photographs as these form part of the collections policy of Conwy Archive Service.

8.3 Where documents are retained as part of an integral group with a collection of artefacts, a list will be supplied to Conwy Archive Service.

9.0 Acquisition

9.1 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Museums Service having regard to the interests of other Museum Services.

9.2 The Museum Service 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).

9.3 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 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museum Service 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.

10.0 Human Remains

10.1 The Museum Service does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11.0 Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum Service will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12. Archaeological material

12.1 The Museum Service 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 For all archaeological material found in Wales, 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).

13.0 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the Museum Service 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 Service 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 Service will document when these exceptions occur.

14.0 Spoliation

14.1 The Museum Service 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.

15.0 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 Not applicable. See 10.

16.0 Disposals

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 Service 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, and 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 the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the 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 Museum 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, the Museum Service 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 Service 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 Welsh Government /MAALD.

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 The Museum Service will not dispose of items by exchange.

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 Service 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.