

MUSEUM OF THE HOME

Collections Development Policy

Policy statement

Name of museum: Museum of the Home

Name of governing body: The Geffrye Museum Trust

Date on which this policy was approved by the governing body: 14 July 2022

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: July 2027

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 Our purpose is to reveal and rethink the ways we live, in order to live better together.

The Museum's manifesto is summarised in ten key statements:

- Everyone has an idea of what home means to them: Home is universally relevant but also deeply personal. Our role is to engage people with the multiple meanings of home – past, present and future. We believe that our histories are critical to understanding how we live today and imagining the home of tomorrow.
- Personal stories are our lifeblood: Without personal stories we cannot exist. We want to know how people live. The best way to do this is to ask them: to document their homes, invite them to participate in the creation of our galleries and programmes, discover their stories in what they have left behind.
- Design is important, but it has to be lived: We want to know how that armchair makes you feel, not just how it was made. Informing all our work is the question: 'What does this tell us about how people experience home'.
- We are a home for creativity: We are an active space for conversation, music, performance, storytelling, learning, play and socialising. We are also a hub where people

designing, crafting and artistically exploring the home can come together, be discovered, showcased and celebrated.

- Everyone can learn something here: Learning is at the heart of our collections and programming and we are a leading centre for studies of home. Whether someone wants to 'dip-in' or 'dive-in', we offer levels of connection and empower all our audiences and collaborators to engage.
- Our visitors feel at home: We offer a warm welcome to both our physical and digital spaces. We create experiences that are easy to navigate, and that enable our visitors to feel at ease and take control.
- We lead the debate: We have a voice and use our expertise confidently. We inspire, provoke, encourage and challenge different meanings of home. We use our collections, both physically and digitally, to lead research and discussion on the most relevant and difficult issues of our time.
- Our gardens and almshouse buildings are part of who we are: We are proud of our beautiful green spaces. They are an oasis for all to enjoy, and inspire understanding of the relationship between home and garden. Our iconic buildings have their own story to tell and provide a domestic context for our vision.
- Our East London location inspires us: We have national and international reach but are rooted in East London. We connect to our local communities living and working nearby, and create vibrant and mutually rewarding networks.
- Home is constantly evolving and so are we: We are not afraid to have fun with our collections, to question ourselves and occasionally break our own rules. We predict the trends that will interest our audiences and are forward-thinking in the way we work. We are collaborative, agile, risk-taking and creative.

- 1.2 The Geffrye Museum Trust 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 Geffrye Museum Trust 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.
- 1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The Museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Geffrye Museum Trust or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

- 1.7 In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the Geffrye Museum Trust will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
 - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
 - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection.

2. History of the collections

- 2.1 The Museum's collections have been acquired since the Museum's initial inception in 1913. The Museum was opened as the Geffrye Museum in 1914 by the London County Council to reflect the interests of the local furniture-making industry. Early acquisitions included furniture-making tools, architectural fittings, metalwork (due to the Museum's link to the Ironmongers' Company) and a range of smaller, largely domestic items including tableware and kitchenware, candlesticks, cooking equipment, and furnishing textiles.

In 1935, Marjorie Quennell was appointed Curator and the focus of the museum shifted away from the furniture-making industry towards education and school groups. Under Quennell's curatorship 'everyday things' such as scrapbooks, clothing and toys were collected. Quennell also created a chronological series of period rooms spanning from 1650-1800.

- 2.2 Collecting continued in a similar vein through the middle of the twentieth century, although the pace of collecting slowed down slightly under the curatorship of Molly Harrison. Contemporary furniture was first acquired for the collections in 1950 and a new 1960s room was later added to the period rooms. The paintings collection was developed during the 1970s and early 1980s under the directorship of Jeffery Daniels. Costume was heavily collected during this time too, but has not been actively collected since. Furnishing textiles, particularly curtains, and sample lengths of mainly mid-twentieth-century fabrics were also collected during the 1980s.
- 2.3 In 1991, the Museum became a charitable trust, providing an opportunity to review the Museum's purposes and priorities. Subsequently, the collection was developed to support the Museum's shift in focus, first to English domestic interiors, then to the main living spaces of the urban middle classes (reflecting new research and development of the Museum's period room displays in 2006) In this era, the Prints, Paintings and Drawings collection was refined and concentrated on two strands: examples of the type of picture the middle classes would have hung in their living rooms and representations of middle-class homes and gardens.

- 2.4 In 2002, the furniture collection was greatly enhanced by the donation of the Cotton Collection of English Regional Chairs, which maps regional chair-making traditions.
- 2.5 In 2003, one of the almshouses was restored and opened to the public. There are two period rooms furnished to represent the living conditions of the residents in the 1780s and 1880s and suitable objects were acquired for these displays.
- 2.6 The first Christmas items were acquired in the 1970s, and the collection has been developed considerably since the early 1990s, supporting annual *Christmas Past* exhibitions at the Museum.
- 2.7 Since 2005, the Museum has shifted its focus to the concept of home more broadly, aiming to study and reflect a more diverse and relevant meaning of home. In 2008, the Documenting Homes collection was begun, a unique collection, consisting of testimony, photographs, audio files, interviews and floor plans of people's homes. It is a rich and vibrant connection that captures the connection between people and the places they live.
- 2.8 The library collections were not systematically catalogued until 2008. Earlier collections seem to have consisted mainly of decorative arts and architectural histories. In the late 1990s selected parts of the former Shoreditch Library were acquired, expanding the collection. Since then, secondary literature as well as primary material such as diaries and decorating advice manuals continues to be collected.
- 2.9 Archival collections have followed a similar path. In 1998, an interiors archive was set up, creating an image bank of domestic interiors and the Regional Furniture Museum Trust donated its archives to the museum in 2002.
- 2.10 Since 2017, much collecting has focused on the development of the new Home Galleries and includes a new collection of objects representing the religious practice in the home as well as themes including comfort, entertainment and domestic game changers.

3. An overview of current collections

- 3.1 In the past, the Museum's collections have primarily aimed to represent the material culture of the homes of the urban middle classes from 1600 to the present day. In the past five years, the Museum has undergone significant change and will reopen in 2021 as the Museum of the Home, a place to reveal and rethink what home means. In preparation for the opening of its new Home Galleries and the refresh of its Rooms through Time Gallery, collecting has focused on the home more broadly, including kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and gardens. Collecting in the past five years has also aimed to address the lack of diversity in the Museum's collecting, focussing on representing a broad range of homes from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, not just the urban middle classes. A key focus has been objects used in the homes of the African Caribbean community in the mid-1900s, much of which will go on display in the 1970s Room through Time. This collecting has been object based, but has also formed part of our Documenting Homes collection where testimony and personal stories have been collected.
- 3.2 The object collections include furnishings such as ornaments, curtains, furniture, floor and wall coverings, tableware, heating and lighting equipment and other domestic appliances. While the majority of objects relate to the main living space, a small number of domestic

objects furnishing or used in rooms beyond the main living space have been collected. Recently, object collections have broadened to reflect more diverse homes, including a collection of objects relating to religious practice, entertainment and housework in the home.

- 3.3 The significance of the collections, library and archive lies in the fact that this is a unique body of evidence on the theme of home. No other museum in the country specialises in this particular aspect of our national heritage.
- 3.4 In collecting the material culture of home, the Museum's priority is on typical and everyday domestic items, not the exceptional, the one-off or the most famous. In recent years, we have focused on the personal story of each object, and how it unlocks the lived experience for the person who owned it. In the past the Museum's approach has been to start with the evidence of domestic inventories, wills, diaries, literature, household accounts, contemporary prints, drawings, paintings and photographs, as well as domestic architecture and artefacts, in order to build an understanding of taste, values and manners in relation to the home. Whilst this continues to inform our collecting activity, there is now more of a focus on the importance of the lived experience and how each object can unlock a personal story that resonates to the visitor and provides relevance to the concept of home today. When items are being considered for acquisition they are assessed against this contextual history, the personal story attached, as well as for qualities such as their condition and whether or not they have been restored, our preference being for items in as original condition as possible.
- 3.5 Many of the objects typically found in English homes had their origins abroad and can be the product of British colonialism, cultural appropriation and exploitation. In recent years we have sought to address this through our refreshed interpretation of the Rooms Through Time. Upon reopening we will begin the process of decolonising our collection and interpretation to recognise the human cost of the objects in our collections today by adding contextual information and using objects as a starting point for wider conversations, as well as reviewing the language we use to describe our collection both in the past and moving forwards.
- 3.6 While the overwhelming strength of the collections, library and archives lies in their wide-ranging and in-depth coverage of the history of the home, there are highly significant strands within these areas, and individual items of national significance. The collections are described in more detail below:

Furniture collection – the most extensive and comprehensive of the object collections, comprised of over 1,000 items, dating from the early 17th century to the present day, largely consisting of items that would have been used in the main living spaces of middle-class Londoners' homes. Amongst the furniture collection, there are pieces and areas of exceptional significance:

- a small but significant collection of 18th- and early 19th-century London pieces bearing labels or inscriptions relating to their supply. These include the earliest known example of cabinet furniture to carry a printed trade label. The significance of these pieces is that for the vast majority of surviving pieces of middle-class furniture from the 18th and early 19th centuries the makers and owners are now unknown. These

labelled items provide invaluable personal perspectives from which to investigate the making and consumption of furniture at this period.

- a small but significant collection of original upholstery, including an early 18th-century easy armchair (one of only two easy chairs of this date known to survive with the once relatively common stamped wool top covers intact). The importance of this collection is that upholstery is fragile and has rarely survived, and its significance for furniture has tended to be overlooked in public collections until relatively recently.
- the English Regional Chair collection is largely formed of the Cotton Collection, donated to the Museum in 2002. This exceptional and unrivalled collection of over 450 chairs, many of which are marked by the maker, maps the regional 'dialect' of English chairs providing a typology for identifying and studying regional chair production and domestic culture.
- an extensive public collection of Utility furniture, a historically significant, ambitious and unique scheme. The collection includes living room pieces as well as ephemera from the scheme such as tokens and catalogues.

Paintings, prints and drawings: historically the collection has been made up of oil paintings dating from the 17th to 20th centuries, images that would have furnished the main living spaces of middle-class Londoners' homes and, representations of domestic interiors and gardens. Given the rarity of depictions on middle-class interiors, this is now a considerable collection of over 800 pieces.

Photography: This comprises of over 200 works and explores the work of professional photographers depicting home life. Artists represented include Mark Cowper, Kyna Gourley and Jonathan Donovan. We are continuing to grow our photography collection to diversify representations of home and begin to ensure our collections reflect many types of homes, not just the middle-class main living space.

Textiles: an extensive collection of furnishing textiles, curtains, carpets, cushions and other soft furnishings with examples from the 18th and 19th centuries and strength of coverage for the 20th century comprised of nearly 1,000 items. The collection is significant because it covers an important area of home furnishing that has tended to be neglected in public collections and due to its fragility is vulnerable to loss.

Documenting Homes Collection: an exceptional and unique collection of over 7000 items providing rich coverage of homes from 1900 to the present, comprised of photographs of people's homes with supporting documentation such as questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The archive has a wide geographical and social spread, and we continue to grow it, focussing on homes from a variety of classes, cultures and backgrounds.

Christmas Collection: an extensive collection (over 1,800 items) of Christmas cards, decorations and other domestic Christmas ephemera as well as photographs of homes at Christmas, diaries and questionnaires. This level of documentation makes the collection unique and gives it a depth and richness that goes beyond other collections of Christmas material. We have started to expand this collection to encompass a broader range of winter festivals from a range of religions, cultures and backgrounds.

Metalwork, ceramics and glass: over 3,500 items comprising domestic equipment, tableware and ornaments.

Domestic Appliances: A collection of almost 900 items ranging from radio and stereophonic equipment, to domestic lighting, vacuum cleaners and sewing machines.

Wallpaper: a collection of over 200 items, wallpaper samples, sample books and fragments dating from the 18th to late 20th century. Particular emphasis is made on acquiring wallpaper layers from existing buildings which can be separated providing a sequence of decoration for a given room.

Ephemera: Over 3,000 items mainly comprising packaging, stationery, writing equipment, household cleaning items and biscuit tins. There is also an important collection of Utility Scheme related material.

Treen: Over 700 miscellaneous small wooden objects from napkin rings and wig stands to tea caddies and other boxes, as well as toy/doll's house furniture; mostly from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Geffrye Almshouses collection: objects relating to the history of the Geffrye Almshouses and their inhabitants. The 1780s and 1880s period rooms in the restored almshouse contain furnishings appropriate to their period and function, including cooking and food preparation equipment, bedroom furniture and accessories and objects relating to storage and recreation.

Costume: over 1,400 items of domestic dress, with pieces from the 18th to 20th centuries; currently the museum is not collecting actively in this area; the collection provides an aid to dating furnishing textiles and providing colour references.

Tools: an extensive collection of 19th-century and earlier cabinetmaking and woodworking tools, including complete tool chests and small machines such as lathes and jig-saws. The museum no longer actively collects objects in this area.

Furniture Archive: over 4,000 items relating to furniture design and production, including invoices, design drawings, business ledgers, photographs of stock/models (2,000 from the firm of H&L Epstein) and the Frederick Roe archive.

Architectural Items: including several 17th- and 18th-century panelled rooms in oak and deal, a 17th-century staircase, carved wood and marble fire surrounds, cast iron fire grates and firebacks, and examples of 18th- and 19th-century joinery. Lead water butts and a brick niche are displayed in the museum gardens. The museum no longer collects in this area.

Library Collections: comprises printed books and journals relating to the study of home ranging across a broad range of disciplines and subject areas from social history, through material culture, social anthropology, design history, domestic architecture, garden history and the decorative arts. It includes primary evidential material such as diaries, decorating and furnishing advice manuals and interior/life-style magazines, cookery books, etiquette manuals and household inventories both in printed and manuscript form. There is also an extensive collection of retail and trade catalogues of household goods dating from the eighteenth century to the present day. In all, the collection comprises of around 8,000 titles.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 The Museum is going through a process of reflection and change, and acknowledges that the collection does not reflect the stories of everyone and only tells one narrow part of the history of the Home. When we reopen in Spring 2021, we will publicly announce our intention to re-think the Rooms Through Time, to decolonise and democratise our collections and to introduce and embed a Rapid Response collecting strand. We are committed to the lived experience, so new acquisitions must come with some personal history/story.

4.2 The areas of focus will be:

- Homes through Time (including Rooms through Time, Gardens through time and Almshouse 14)
- Radical Home
- Rapid Response Collecting

The missing voices from our collections, based on local community mapping, are Vietnamese, African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Turkish Cypriot and other marginalised voices such as people with disabilities, those from different socio-economic back and the LGBTQ+I community. Working together with the Vietnamese community we will have an enhanced focus on the homes of local Vietnamese residents. We have identified that these voices are underrepresented and important to the future of the Museum of the Home's collections and archive. In order to include these voices in the collection we will continue to expand our contemporary collecting and Documenting Home strands; working with artists to explore themes and questions around home, and asking people to share images, testimony and audio recordings of their homes.

4.3 Homes through Time: From Spring 2021 we will prioritise collecting objects that explore the migratory and marginalised experience. Hackney and East London has a rich history of migration and these stories are missing from our collections and archives. We must collect and tell these stories and ensure they are represented within the museum. This will then inform what format the Rooms through Time and Gardens through Time of the future in phase two of redevelopment should look like. We will recruit a team of paid Community Authors who will form the basis of our research into the future of the Homes through Time alongside soliciting feedback to discover what themes our visitors want to see. This will be reviewed at the end of each year, as the process will inform future plans and allow us to fundamentally begin with a blank canvas for redevelopment.

4.4 The Radical Home: The Radical Home is political. The Radical Home is about everyday items we use in the home and the stories they tell us about what we think, and who we are. In year 1 we will focus on the Tea Towel, a humble item that is generally used in every home, and whose design can express what we think and feel about ourselves and the world. Through our community and co-curated work, the future projects in years 2 & 3 will be determined in partnership.

We use our homes to express ourselves, to tell visitors, friends and family what we think and feel. During Covid-19, as a nation we showed our support for the NHS by displaying rainbow pictures in our windows. These were home-made, individual artworks with a

powerful social and emotional message. The Radical Home and a designed tea-towel taps in to this desire for expressing strong feelings and sharing important ideas through objects in our home.

The Radical Home will be woven through all elements of the artistic and creative learning programme. In year 1 Museum of the Home will work with a team of artists and the public to create 1000 tea towels. We will explore tea towels as a vehicle for expressing social change and work with slogans and graphics. All participants will design and screen-print a tea towel. They will each make two, one to take home and one to be gifted. The Museum of the Home will acquire some into the collection either physically or digitally.

- 4.5 **Rapid Response Collecting:** Rapid Response Collecting was first launched at the Museum in Spring 2020 in response to Covid-19 in order to document how people were adapting their homes during the pandemic and to provide a national perspective of the home in lockdown. It has followed the Documenting Homes format but will also include physical objects. We document crucial moments and shifts in society that affect the home locally and globally. Contemporary objects and photographs are acquired in response to major moments that touch the home, as they happen to capture feelings in the moment rather than retrospective sentiment. Many of the objects or photographs are newsworthy because they reveal truths about how we live. We invite people to suggest ideas of what should be collected which in turn will keep the collection relevant. Each rapid response collecting project will have its own specific criteria and will utilise the Contemporary Collecting Toolkit produced by the London Transport Museum to ensure appropriate levels of safeguarding and sensitivity and ethical best practice.

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 The collections are currently under review and a deaccessioning project in progress. Particular areas of focus for rationalisation projects alongside the completion of previous furniture rationalisation projects are costume, architectural fittings and woodworking tools collections which are related to earlier collecting priorities for the Museum but no longer fit the current scope and vision and have not been actively collected for some time.

The criteria for disposal are as follows, but may be subject to refinement during the project:

- Objects identified as a potential risk to museum staff and/or visitors which cannot be adequately managed given the resources available (e.g. medium to high risk asbestos-containing materials).
- Objects considered irrelevant or outside the scope of the collection, particularly those which are not domestic or related to the lived experience of home.

- Duplicates (where second versions are not useful).
- Objects in poor condition or incomplete and those which are compromised by later alterations.
- Objects where the lack of provenance, personal story or historical information means they are of limited interest.
- Objects being returned to the rightful owner.

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): Victoria and Albert Museum, Design Museum, Hackney Museum, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Museum of London, Museum of Homelessness, People's History Museum, St Fagan's National Museum of History, Rural Life Living Museum.

8. Archival holdings

- 8.1 The archival holdings include the Furniture Archive described above. Archive material that we do not accession but collect comprises:
- Interiors and Gardens Archive – an image bank of copies of representations of domestic spaces covering the UK and abroad and all dates, currently comprised of over 5,000 images. These are surrogates and are therefore not accessioned.
 - Cabinetmakers Archive – files on mainly East London furniture manufacturers – research notes and references rather than original material and therefore not accessioned.

9. Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:
- All items considered for acquisition are to be researched and examined by the curator with the appropriate expertise, consulting with external specialists as required and ensuring value for money
 - All items are to comply with the Collections Development Policy.
 - Items under consideration are to be brought, with a completed acquisition proposal form, to the Curatorial and Creative Learning team meeting for discussion. Where appropriate, community consultation may take place.
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- Where items have a purchase price of over £1,000 or significant resource issues (e.g. large items) the proposed acquisition is to be approved by the Director. Items over £15,000 require the approval of the Chair.

Where possible, items should be acquired with extensive documentation of the home in which they were used, in the form of photographs of the home and testimony from the owner.

9.2 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).

9.3 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 will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Geffrye Museum Trust 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 The Museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11. Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum 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 will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Geffrye Museum Trust 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 Geffrye Museum Trust, acting on the advice of the Museum’s professional staff, 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’.

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The Geffrye Museum Trust 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, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Geffrye Museum Trust 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 Geffrye Museum Trust acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, 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, 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 Geffrye Museum Trust 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.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The Geffrye Museum Trust 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 Geffrye Museum Trust 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 MA'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 Geffrye Museum Trust 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 Geffrye Museum Trust 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.

Review

Policy owner	Policy to be approved/ reviewed by	Regularity of review	Date issued and version number	Date of next review
Director: Creative Programmes & Collections	Board	5 years	July 2022	July 2027