

Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre Collections Development Policy 2015-2020

Name of museum: **Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre**

Name of governing body: **North Kesteven District Council**

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 03.09.2015

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: March 2020

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. Introduction

Relationship to other relevant policies and plans of the organisation: this document explains the Museum's policies and procedures for acquiring and disposing of collections in support of the Society's statement of purpose. It is intended to guide the work of Councillors, staff and volunteers and to inform potential donors. This policy is closely associated with the Museum's Documentation Policy, Care and Conservation Policy and Forward Plan.

- 1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is: to inform and educate communities and visitors with regard to the history of RAF Cranwell, RAF College Cranwell and the wider aviation heritage within Lincolnshire, providing an informative and good quality visitor experience, and collecting, safeguarding and making accessible artefacts and heritage assets, which are held in trust for society.
- 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'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 governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

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

2. History of the collections

North Kesteven District Council, the RAF and other private and public sector bodies formed a partnership to develop interpretation and marketing for aviation heritage and aviation attractions. Building on this success, the group grew to include Lincolnshire Tourism, Lincolnshire County Council and other local authorities and has made aviation an important theme through which the heritage of Lincolnshire is promoted.

The history of R.A.F. Cranwell, which has provided initial training for RAF officers since 1920, is of national significance, however as a working R.A.F. base, public access is limited by security restrictions. The Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre (CAHC) was developed to overcome this issue and to tell the story of this prestigious establishment.

At present, Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre, which opened to the public in 1992, is housed in leased farm buildings situated close to R.A.F. Cranwell at North Rauceby. The centre is operated and funded by North Kesteven District Council who are committed to the conservation and promotion of our local, regional and national aviation heritage. The collections have grown up since the Centre was created and developed and include donations and loans from the RAF, the RAF Museum and members of the public

3. An overview of current collections

The museum's collection has been kept small as both storage and display space are limited. CAHC owns some 100 artefacts, including a Jet Provost aircraft and other aircraft parts, uniforms, badges photographs and other memorabilia associated with RAF Cranwell, including a number of groups associated with particular cadets and officers. There are also a small number of loans including the cockpit of a De Havilland Vampire, a balloon basket, both on loan from the RAF Museum and an ejector seat on loan from RAF Cranwell. The earliest item dates back to 1919 and the collections covers most of the history of RAF Cranwell, through the inter-war years and the Second World War, which is most strongly represented, up to the Falklands War.

Although the collection is small it includes a number of items of more than local significance because of their association with the Royal Air Force College, which still trains new RAF officers today.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

CAHC collects material associated with the history of RAF Cranwell, from April 1916, when the Royal Naval Air Service established its Training Establishment at Cranwell, to the present. It will also collect representative examples of objects that are or were particularly associated with the RAF or Cranwell village, where these would not be better kept elsewhere.

In practice however CAHC does not collect actively because of limited storage space, and is from time to time offered material that it cannot currently accept, even though it would fit well with the purpose of telling visitors the story of RAF Cranwell. CAHC is therefore actively seeking new premises that will allow it to preserve more historic material in keeping with its purpose.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy. As detailed in 1.3 above, CAHC has a presumption against the disposal of items in the Museum Collection. Disposals would however be considered where the following criteria apply:

- a. Research reveals that items do not fall within the categories described in this policy.
- b. Items are found to be, to all intents and purposes, duplicates.
- c. Items have been damaged or have deteriorated beyond the museum's ability to repair them.
- d. Items are discovered to pose a threat to health and safety.
- e. Items have been identified as spoliated during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period.
- f. Items have been subject to a request for repatriation or restitution.

Where disposal is being considered this will be carried out in accordance with the disposal procedures, outlined in section 16 below. The Museum will also be guided by the Museums Associations 'Disposal Toolkit', 2008.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal. These legal and ethical elements have informed the procedures set out in clauses 9 to 16 below.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

The Museum does not have any formal collecting relationships with other museums. It will however 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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums and organisations:

- RAF Museum
- RAF Metheringham Visitor Centre
- RAF Cranwell
- RAF Coningsby – Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre
- RAF Digby Ops Room

8. Archival holdings

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

9. Acquisition

- 9.1. The decision to acquire any item will be made by the Economic Development Project Officer in discussion with the Heritage Assistants and the Centre's professional advisor.
- 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 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

The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11. Biological and geological material

The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12. Archaeological material

The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

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

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

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum Management Group and the Museum Mentor, 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.

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

- 16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, 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 the Museum Management Group and the Museum Mentor and not of the Museum Manager acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.

- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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 governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.12.1 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.
- 16.12.2 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.
- 16.12.3 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).
- 16.12.4 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

- 16.13 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.14 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.
- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.
- 16.17 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.