

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

St Albans Museums



St Albans Museums

Name of museum:

St Albans Museums

St Albans Museums is a directly provided service of St Albans City & District Council [‘the governing body’]. There are two museums, Verulamium Museum and St Albans Museum + Gallery, in the meaning of the Accreditation Standard published by Arts Council England. The service also manages historic properties: St Albans Clock Tower; Sopwell Ruins and the Roman Mosaic (or ‘Hypocaust’) in Verulamium Park.

Name of governing body:

St Albans City & District Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

16th October 2023

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:

Review by 1st October 2028

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.

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Arts, Tourism, Heritage and Culture Manager*

*Signed: Chris Traill
Director of Community and Place Delivery*

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GENERAL STATEMENTS OF ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/ plans of the organisation:

1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:

St Albans Museums Service exists to safeguard the special heritage of St Albans and district, and share it widely. In doing so it has or will form substantial collections of artefacts, natural specimens, environmental samples, written records, and data.

In building a comprehensive record of the lives of the people of the City & District, St Albans Museums Service will seek to represent all elements of its community.

St Albans Museums Service is currently carrying out evaluation of its NLHF funded project to open the new St Albans Museum + Gallery and following this evaluation our Collections Development Policy may be amended and updated.

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 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.

1.5 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.

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

2. History of the collections

St Albans Museums consists of two museums, St Albans Museum + Gallery and Verulamium Museum. St Albans Museum + Gallery opened in 2018 in the old St Albans Town Hall. It is the successor to the Museum of St Albans which was established in 1898 as the Hertfordshire County Museum.

St Albans Museum + Gallery's collections reflect the social history of St Albans, the Natural History of Hertfordshire and also include the Salaman Collection of Trade Tools, which is nationally significant.

The Verulamium Museum was established as the site museum of Iron Age and Roman Verulamium during the 1930s, following the archaeological excavations by Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler. It holds most of the excavated material discovered in the City and District of St Albans.

3. An overview of current collections

The museum collection is owned by St Albans Museums Service, as part of St Albans City and District Council.

The existing collections, and policies for their future development, are described in more detail in sections 21-25. In summary, the main elements are:

- the residue of Sir John Evans' archaeological collections originally placed in the Hertfordshire County Museum [later Museum of St Albans]
- small quantities of local prehistoric archaeological material
- Late Iron Age and Roman archaeological finds from Verulamium and its hinterland within the City & District boundaries, an area of approximately 200 km². The most significant finds are Late Iron Age burial, cemeteries, coinage and pottery, Roman mosaics and wall plasters, burials, and everyday objects from a type Romano-British town.
- the *in situ* Roman mosaic in Verulamium Park
- Archaeological material from the Late Saxon and later monastic and market town of St Albans
- the fifteenth-century town belfry, the only example in Britain, with its original great bell
- ruins of Sir Richard Lee's house on the site of Sopwell Nunnery, St Albans

- social history collections from the post-medieval thoroughfare, market, and commuter town of St Albans
- Hertfordshire-wide maps, prints, watercolours and drawings from the Lewis Evans collection, including comprehensive material for St Albans to 1900
- an extensive twentieth-century photographic record of St Albans & District, and nineteenth and twentieth century local ephemera
- English trade tools of the period 1700-1950 comprising the Salaman Collection, an important partially published collection.
- the residue of geological, palaeontological, and natural history collections (now a closed collection)

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 4.1** The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 4.2** Policies for the future development of the collections are described in more detail in sections 21-25, where closed elements of the collection are also identified.
- 4.3** The Museums Service normally restricts its collecting to the City & District of St Albans. Most collections arise from Verulamium and St Albans in the centre of the District. However the District is a modern political boundary rather than a historical or natural one. The Service may therefore occasionally collect material significant for the understanding and use of its own collections from adjoining districts. The Service will inform the relevant local museum or archive if it intends to collect outside the District, and not collect in competition with any other museum.
- 4.4** The Service may passively collect/accept material from adjoining districts with no Museum Service, or whose museums do not collect in a particular subject area, until such time as an acceptable Registered/Accredited Service is established in these areas, when active consideration will be given to the relocation of finds. In the past this practice has usually involved stray archaeological finds from adjacent districts where it seemed desirable that unusual or important material otherwise at risk should enter the public domain.
- 4.5** The Salaman Tool Collection was collected throughout England and parts of Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Occasional

additions may be of national or even international material, but never in competition with other museums.

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 Each subject area within the museum's collections has its own priorities for rationalisation and disposal and these are described in more detail below in sections 21-25

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):

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 (third edition, 2002).

9. Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Acquisitions are considered and approved by the Curators as responsible officers. Prospective acquisitions which bear significant resource implications will be reviewed by a working group staff including curators and other members of the museum team.

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

10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

- 10.2** St Albans Museums Service will, under the terms of Home Office Exhumation Licences, store, study, and display human skeletal material from archaeological contexts within its collecting area. In the great majority of cases excavation will have been saved this material from damage/destruction or uncontrolled dispersal in the course of development. Normally material will be held in store until it can conveniently be studied; subsequently it will be reburied with appropriate rites. Samples may be retained for display or if they have strong pathological significance.
- 10.3** In these matters, and especially as regards the display of human remains, a sensitive approach will be maintained and current best practice in the archaeological and museum professions closely observed. Responsibility in this area lies with the Curator of Archaeology and the District Archaeologist

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 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 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 museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum'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 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 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 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 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 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 museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

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, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

SPECIFIC LOCAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

17. Acquisition

- 17.1** Prospective acquisitions which bear significant resource implications will be reviewed by a working group staff including curators and other members of the museum team.
- 17.2** No fire-arms of any kind will be accepted without reference to the Museums & Heritage Officer. Weapons will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and any fire-arms accepted will be kept in accordance with fire-arms law
- 17.3** Museum donations offered by minors (under 18 years of age) will only be accepted after consultation with the donor's parents / guardians.
- 17.4** Donors will be apprised of the potential financial value of their donation if appears that it may exceed £100 (see also 14.2 below)
- 17.5** Material taken into the collection must be suitable for public display, have potential for research or be of educational value.
- 17.6** Where possible all relevant documentation and provenance must be acquired to accompany the object

18. Enquiries

- 18.1** The Museums Service will operate an enquiry service in all sections. It shall be the policy of the Museums Service, where appropriate, to pass on to another relevant museum service, Herts Archives & Local Studies, Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record or the Portable Antiquities Scheme, information concerning potentially significant material bought in as enquiries from outside the District, or offered for sale.
- 18.2** The Service will not value works of art or specimens brought in as enquiries, unless for purposes of acquisition by the Service, in which case at least one independent valuation will normally be obtained for items likely to exceed £100.
- 18.3** The Museums Service reserves the right not to provide written descriptions of an object where the officer concerned has reasonable ground to believe that such a description will be used as validation/authentication of material for the purpose of sale.

18.4 The Service reserves the right to refuse to identify or otherwise give an opinion on any object where a provenance is not supplied and the possibility remains that an object has been stolen, illegally imported, acquired or retained in contravention of British nature conservation, ancient monuments, antiquities, or other legislation.

18.5 Notwithstanding Sections 14.3-4, the Service may, in confidence, identify portable antiquities at the request of the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and its agent the British Museum under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

19. Loans

19.1 Loans from the collections shall have due consideration to the following:

- that the material is properly insured against loss or for the purposes of repair if damaged
- it will provide public or other benefit which justifies the expense of the arrangement and carries an acceptable level of risk to the object/s
- that the curatorial staff are satisfied with the environmental conditions of the receiving institution and that the objects are in a fit state to travel and be displayed
- that the security of the object is satisfactory
- that the owner of the material gives consent in the case of material not owned or held in trust by St Albans District Council (e.g. a loan)
- that the objects required for loan are not crucial to the permanent displays
- the loan will promote and enhance the reputation of SADC
- the loan will have provision for annual inspection and review

19.2 Requests for loans will only be considered from:

- institutions who meet ACE Accreditation standard or who can demonstrate that they are working towards the standard
- foreign museums who are members of a recognised association in their own country
- other reputable heritage bodies
- specialist providers for e.g. photographic or conservation purposes
- organisation offering material or promotional benefits
- members of a corporate loans or membership scheme administered by the museum

19.3 Requests from individuals will not normally be considered.

- 19.4** Loans into the collection will only be accepted after due attempt has been made to acquire material by donation and after due consideration of storage, conservation and curation implications, including insurance and other long-term costs. They shall clearly fall within the Collections Policy, and there shall be a specific purpose in view, normally display. Written fixed-term agreements shall be made with the lender.
- 19.5** All loans accepted into the care of the Museums Service shall be subject to the same conditions of curatorial care as if they were the property of St Albans Museums Service.
- 19.6** Any incoming loan will have an object entry form.
- 19.7** The Service will seek to return items on long-term loan which it cannot display.

20. Disposal

20.1 Disposals from the collections will only take place in the following cases:

- where the material falls outside the collecting policy of the Museums Service, including mass-produced modern material where the only local association is through use
- where the item is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of use for the collection
- where the museum has multiple duplicates
- fragmentary archaeological material of low significance (often unstratified) which has been fully studied and recorded, and where the museum has better examples. A voucher sample may be retained

20.2 The Museums Service's duty of care to its collections cannot be maintained in overcrowded conditions. Recommendations for disposal will be considered by a working group of the curatorial and collections staff, as well as other members of the museum team, working to the guidelines set out above and with reference to the Documentation Procedural Manual.

21. Archives

21.1 Policy guidance on the acquisition of archives is outlined in para 11 above

- 21.2** The bulk of St Albans City & District Archives has been physically transferred to Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies [formerly Hertfordshire County Record Office]. Where there is doubt on the proper home of a paper document, the curator will liaise with Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies.
- 21.3** When modern documents are deposited in bulk, the curator will agree with the donor an acceptable means for disposing of unwanted items prior to accession.

22. Archaeology

22.1 The Museum Service's archaeological material is largely housed at the Verulamium Museum and at Sandridge Gate Business Centre and forms the bulk of the current collections. The Verulamium Museum was founded in 1939. Initially the collections were those from the excavations conducted by the Wheelers within the Roman Town. These have subsequently been added to by further excavations and the inclusion of the archaeological collections from the Hertfordshire County Museum.

22.2 Acceptance of Archaeological Archives.

22.2.1 Development-led archaeological evaluation and excavation under the guidelines supplied by the Department of the Environment's *Planning & Policy Guidance No. 16* 1990 [PPG 16] has increasingly led to the offer of archives [the totality of records and objects from an archaeological intervention] which do not conform to the priorities laid out in 21.4-8, and/or contain material of little archaeological value. Such material will usually originate from excavation agencies outside the control of St Albans Museums.

22.2.2 Following consultation with Hertfordshire County Council, the SADC District Archaeologist, and other archaeological agencies and repositories in the County, the Museums Service will from time to time issue guidance on the expected standard of preparation for material to be deposited with SADC. This will emphasise:

- that SADC reserves the right to refuse all or part of the archive
- that SADC may request a once-for-all payment, based on volume, at the time of deposit; and that liability for it should normally be a matter for negotiation between the developer and the excavating agency, in advance of excavation.
- that there is a strong presumption against the preservation of 100% of bulk finds (such as tile and animal bone), especially from unstratified contexts. The right is reserved to sample such collections on a scientific basis. In the case of material not owned

by the City & District of St Albans this will be carried out only after due consideration with the legal owners.

- 22.2.3 Where objects of national importance found within the District have been acquired by the British Museum or other institutions, the Museum Service may endeavour to obtain them on loan or commission high-quality replicas

22.3 General Archaeological Priorities

- 22.3.1 Although the collections are based around those from the Roman town of Verulamium they include material of all periods. Throughout, however, the collections are weak in material from outside the pre-1974 St Albans City boundary.

Policy Statement

- 22.3.2 *Archaeological survey and fieldwork will be used to generate material from areas of the District outside the pre-1974 City boundary.*

22.4 Prehistoric

- 22.4.1 The collection under-represents all prehistoric material, particularly prior to the Late Iron Age. Similarly, little is known of the location of sites.

Policy Statements

The under-representation of prehistoric material within the collections is a matter for concern and a priority for future collecting. Apart from the passive collection of all 'stray' finds, the opportunity should be taken to collect data through survey and fieldwork where possible.

- 22.4.2 *All finds of the period should be pursued, whether by 'passive' collection of stray finds or by active fieldwork. A particular priority should be the acquisition of coins of the Verulamion mint and other significant metalwork.*

22.5 Roman

- 22.5.1 This is the strongest area of the collections. The Verulamium collections are of national importance though there are recognisable gaps in the area of 'luxury' items. Although Verulamium is one of the best known Roman towns in Britain we still know relatively little about its hinterland and this is reflected in the collections.

Policy Statements

- 22.5.2 *The Service will seek to acquire the archive from archaeological interventions in and around Verulamium and its cemeteries.*

22.5.3 *The passive collection of casual finds from throughout the district should continue. Where possible active fieldwork should be undertaken in rural areas to identify sites and to provide further data on those already known.*

22.5.4 *Acquisition of material from the hinterland of Verulamium should continue. In particular this should include material from out-lying villas and other rural sites, and products from Verulamium-region kiln sites.*

22.6 Saxon

22.6.1 The Museums' collections are very weak in all material of this period (perhaps reflecting its material culture or its true extent). We still have limited knowledge of the immediate post-Roman history of Verulamium, the founding of the Abbey and the early origins of St Albans.

Policy Statements

22.6.2 *Full attention should be given to fieldwork as a means of identifying Saxon and early medieval sites.*

22.6.3 *Every opportunity should be taken to collect material of this period from throughout the District*

22.7 Medieval

22.7.1 Excavations within the medieval town have provided a considerable amount of data in terms of collected material. There is still a need to locate and explore the pre-twelfth century town. Excavations at the Abbey have provided a considerable body of material from the religious centre. Our knowledge of the hinterland of St Albans is still very weak.

Policy Statements

22.7.2 *The passive collection of all casual small finds should be continued.*

22.7.3 *Attention should be given to fieldwork and survey and to the recording of buildings especially in and around existing or former villages*

22.8 Post-medieval sites and buildings

22.8.1 Fieldwork should record post-medieval buildings, deposits and finds wherever this can be done without jeopardising the investigation or preservation of earlier deposits. The recording of post-medieval buildings and archaeology in the District has been relatively slight, with few significant acquisitions resulting.

Policy statement

22.8.2 *More excavation and recording of post-medieval archaeology and buildings should be encouraged, and the Museum Service will attempt to acquire and use the archives which result.*

22.9 Excavation history

22.9.1 The process and location of excavations and other means of archaeological discovery is of increasing interest to the museum's public. The Service will actively collect archival material, such as photographs, letters, or ephemera, and make oral history recordings relating to past campaigns of excavation at Verulamium / St Albans.

22.10 Human remains

22.10.1 St Albans Museums Service will, under the terms of Home Office Exhumation Licences, store, study, and display human skeletal material from archaeological contexts within its collecting area. In the great majority of cases excavation will have been saved this material from damage/destruction or uncontrolled dispersal in the course of development. Normally material will be held in store until it can conveniently be studied; subsequently it will be reburied with appropriate rites. Samples may be retained for display or if they have strong pathological significance. *See paras 9g and 11*

22.10.2 In these matters, and especially as regards the display of human remains, a sensitive approach will be maintained and current best practice in the archaeological and museum professions closely observed. Responsibility in this area lies with the Curator of Archaeology and the District Archaeologist

22.11 Foreign Material (closed collection)

22.11.1 The collections include small assemblages of material from Ireland, and from Egypt, Cyprus and other Mediterranean areas. These objects were acquired from the Hertfordshire County Museum in 1955 having been collected by past residents of St Albans.

Policy Statement

22.11.2 *No more continental material will be collected, unless, exceptionally, comparative material is needed for the Roman collections. Existing objects will be retained.*

23. Natural Sciences

23.1 Introduction

The Museums Service's Natural Sciences collections are housed at the Sandridge Gate Depot Store. The Natural Science Collections are largely 'historic' in nature, the majority of the material being derived from the Hertfordshire County Museum and the collecting activities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Substantial purchases were made, for example, as late as the 1940's for educational purposes but no large and/or important groups have been given to the Museum in recent years. More recent donations have been largely of individual items. Field collecting has ceased.

23.2 Existing collections

23.2.1 British Vertebrates (closed collection)

The current vertebrate collection consists of 300 mounted specimens and associated field material, 200 microscope preparations of vertebrate histology, 200 fish in spirit and 1200 birds eggs. There is little documentation associated with these collections, which are mostly 'historic' in nature. There is also a small collection of osteological material.

23.2.2 Invertebrates (closed collection)

The current collections consist of 17,500 lepidoptera (including important regional and national collections) 5,000 other insects (including the important Victorian county collections) and 5,000 mollusca.

23.2.3 Botany (closed collection)

Although a large section of the vascular plant herbarium (including most of the county flora of 1832) was destroyed in the 1950s much important material is still extant. The County herbarium function passed to Hitchin Museum during the 1950s. Collections of bryophytes, fungi and other non vascular cryptograms have been transferred to North Hertfordshire Museum Service.

23.2.4 Earth Sciences

The petrology, mineralogy and palaeontology collections comprise: a representative collection of major British rock types and local building stones; a small collection of minerals, many of them unprovenanced; and a good collection of fossils representing the local Chalk and Pleistocene deposits, together with characteristic non-local British material of all periods

Policy Statement

- 23.3** *The natural history collections are effectively closed and active collecting will not usually be undertaken. The existing historical collections will be maintained in the best possible conditions; but for some areas of the collection countywide developments may suggest the further loan or transfer of material elsewhere in future.*

24. Social and local history

- 24.1** The Museum Service's social history section is based in St Albans Museum + Gallery with outlying stores at SADC Depot, Sandridge Road. The social history section is responsible for both social and local history as well as fine and decorative arts. The current collections contain the following elements:

- 24.1.1** *Hertfordshire County Museum 1898-1956* As the first Museum in the County, a very wide range of material relating to the whole of the County of Hertfordshire and not merely St Albans was collected. Much of the material is unprovenanced, and many other items have, been passed on to the appropriate museum within the County since 1956. Where material forms part of a discrete collection this has been maintained intact (e.g. Lewis Evans Collection). The main body of the collections include a number of small groups of material such as:

- Hodgson Collection of silver spoons (closed collection)
- Curtis Collection of fans (closed collection)
- Lewis Evans Collection of books, pocket compasses and music staves (closed collection)
- Lewis Evans collections of maps, prints and drawings
- Evan Roberts Collection of watches (closed collection)

- 24.1.2** *St Albans City Museum 1956-89.* The most significant addition to the collections during this period was the purchase of the Salaman Collection of trade tools in 1969.

- 24.1.3** *Museum of St Albans 1989 – 2018.* The policy of the Museum of St Albans will be to collect material of local provenance, i.e. items used or made within the City and District of St Albans.

- 24.1.4** *St Albans Museum + Gallery 2018 – present* The policy of St Albans Museum + Gallery will be to collect material of local provenance, i.e. items used or made within the City and District of St Albans.

24.2 General

- 24.2.1** Much past collecting has been of a passive nature, and the current collections reflect a distorted picture of the City's material culture, being biased towards items small or light enough to be carried into the Museum or which were considered 'interesting'

by the general public. There was no programme of active collecting or recording. In this way, for example, the craft trades are well represented at the expense of industrial trades and service industries, costume is represented by fine and fashionable female garments rather than male working clothes, and fine ceramics rather than everyday crockery. Many objects were collected without adequate provenance.

- 24.2.2 Documentation of the paper and photographic collections through digitisation has progressed well in the past five years, but social history objects have not been so recorded.

Policy Statements

24.2.3 *The Museums Service's view of the District's local history will include social history in the broadest sense. It will record the history of the urban and rural environments, local agriculture, industry, politics and the experiences of work, leisure, home and personal life. Attention should be given to collecting and recording the experience of the Italian, Asian, and other minority communities in St Albans.*

24.2.4 *Collection over such a wide field could easily overwhelm the Service's existing resources. The emphasis in collecting for twentieth century and contemporary subjects should shift where possible from objects towards photograph, film, sound recording and printed ephemera. Mass-produced twentieth century three-dimensional objects will be collected with caution, and with special attention to the quality of local provenance. The Service will take every opportunity to encourage co-operative collecting with other Hertfordshire museums, archives and SADC Planning Department, in order to reduce unnecessary duplication of social and local history holdings.*

24.2.5 *Social history objects should be the subject of the next round of digital imaging, as an aid to documentation and use.*

24.2.6 *Where not part of discrete collections, material from areas outside the District will be transferred to the relevant registered Museum. Where this is not possible, such material will be held 'in trust'.*

24.3 Local Trades and Industry

24.3.1 The collections are particularly weak in this area. There is, for example, little material from the brick makers noted by Dickens in Bernards Heath, coats made by Nicholson's of Hatfield Road and shoes from the Lees factory. In general twentieth century industry from the City is under-represented.

Policy Statement

24.3.2 *Collection of material from local trades and industries is a Service priority. This should include not only the objects associated with these trades both in terms of tools and the finished objects but also all associated written and printed material and oral reminiscence.*

24.4 Costume

24.4.1 The collection of costume has grown haphazardly and although it contains some fine items is not representative of the everyday wear of any particular period or class.

Policy Statement

24.4.2 *Costume shall be collected to provide a broad reflection of social classes in the district, with particular emphasis on male and female working clothes, leisure wear and the products of the City's clothing manufacturers. Costume made for a local event, e.g. the Pageant, or in local factories will be a priority. During the course of this policy the costume collection will be documented and identified in greater detail.*

24.5 Dolls and Toys

24.5.1 The collections range from dolls of the eighteenth century but include few items with a local provenance

Policy Statement

24.5.2 *Future collection should be restricted to important items with a clear local association.*

24.6 Farm Vehicles and Implements (closed collection)

24.6.1 The collections include a number of large agricultural vehicles which cannot be displayed at present. The Salaman Collection contains many agricultural hand tools. Other agricultural collections are slight: photographs, reminiscence, costume and printed ephemera.

Policy Statement

24.6.2 *Given the difficulty of storing and displaying the material, and the availability of collections elsewhere, further large objects will not normally be collected. Agricultural tools may be collected for the Salaman Collection; and photographic, oral and other records of the District's agricultural past will be actively collected*

24.7 Furniture

24.7.1 The collection of furniture includes items from the civic past of the City, but local domestic items are poorly represented.

Policy Statement

24.7.2 *Space is a problem in collecting these items but this is an area where future acquisitions reflecting all aspects of the life of the District are a priority. Collecting will be restricted to items with a very strong local association.*

24.8 Decorative Arts

24.8.1 In metalwork, ceramics and glass the Service holds small, but representative collections of general interest rather than of local relevance.

Policy Statement

24.8.2 *Material with a strong local association, including that made after 1945, shall be actively collected.*

24.9 Maps, prints, drawings, and paintings

24.9.1 The Service holds a particularly fine collection of maps, prints, and drawings relating to the County and acquired/collected by the curators of the Hertfordshire County Museum. St Albans and surrounding settlements are particularly well represented though not completely comprehensive, even in maps and prints. The collections date from the eighteenth century onwards but there is a lack of post-1920 material. There are few oil paintings and works by locally significant artists, the result of the concerns of the County Museum.

Policy Statements

24.9.2 *This material will be retained and items relating to St Albans and district will be actively collected. In particular, gaps in the collections shall be filled, by purchase where necessary. Such material will include local views or works of local artists such as J H Buckingham, F G Kitton, H G Moon, E A Phipson, C Holmes Winter, H Miton Wilson, Robert Groves, and others. Local subjects by better-known artists including Harry Hine, Cornelius and John Varley will be sought, as will work by Louis Wain illustrating his years at Napsbury Hospital. Works by Sir George Clausen should relate to his Childwick Green period, and those by F O Salisbury to his residence at Harpenden. The chronological gap of 1920- present day in the collection should be filled where possible.*

24.9.3 *During the term of this policy a campaign of documentation and improved storage will attempt to clarify the extent of the Service's holdings in this field. The importance of the Lewis Evans Collection material relating to Hertfordshire outside the City & District will be investigated, and external funds may be sought for its conservation.*

24.10 Numismatics

24.10.1 The Museum has a good collection of Hertfordshire Trade Tokens but is not comprehensive in St Albans material.

Policy Statement

24.10.2 *St Albans trade tokens will be collected when the opportunity to acquire good specimens arises.*

24.11 Photographs

24.11.1 The collection includes substantial amounts of photographic material relating to St Albans in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Collecting during recent years has filled many gaps, but there remains little before 1880, or for the wider district.

Policy Statement

24.11.2 *Photographic material relating to the District, in particular early material, and the area outside St Albans will be actively collected.*

24.12 Other Printed Material

24.12.1 The Museum has a wide collection of ephemera, with particular strengths in political posters from c. 1840, theatre bills, chap books, mourning cards, WWII official notices etc. There is also a collection of bound copies of various local newspapers covering the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Policy Statement

24.12.2 *Printed items will be actively collected in consultation with the Herts County Libraries Local Studies Collection which holds much similar material. The Service will seek books and pamphlets relating to St Albans and district, and to its printing industry, from the Boke of St Albans to the Campfield Press.*

24.13 Residues of transferred collections (closed collections)

24.13.1 The collections of Arms and Armour are a legacy the Ball Collection held by the Hertfordshire County Museum from the 1920s until the 1950s. Although withdrawn by the 1950s the collection had attracted other local donations.

24.13.2 Ethnographic material previously held has been passed to Ipswich Museums' Ethnology Department, though some items have been retained as representing St Albans citizens' past activities such as campaigns in India.

24.13.3 Hertfordshire Regimental items have mostly been passed to Hitchin Museum

24.14 Salaman Collection of trade tools

24.14.1 This is the most important single group of objects in the history collections, and was purchased from Raphael Salaman in 1969. It was assembled by trade rather than by locality and is drawn from all over the country. The collection is therefore national in scope and importance. Salaman used the collection, and other material, as the basis for his *Dictionary of Woodworking Tools* 1975, and *Dictionary of Leatherworking Tools* 1986, where many of the more significant items in the collection are illustrated.

Policy Statements

24.14.2 *The tool collection remains a collecting area though this is not a strong priority in view of the current strength of the collection.*

24.14.3 *Emphasis will be placed on collecting from urban trades (for example the building trades) which are least well represented in public collections here and elsewhere, and where the survival of tools is often poor.*

24.14.4 *Contemporary material will be selectively collected to illustrate modern developments in tool manufacture and use. Other tools which illustrate specific aspects of history, design, construction or use will also be individually acquired.*

24.15 Film

24.15.1 The Museum Service has very limited collections of moving image material made in, or depicting, St Albans. There is no comprehensive list of such material, whether in private or public ownership.

Policy Statements

24.15.2 *Research will be carried out to identify films depicting, made in and otherwise related to St Albans district, and digital copies made where possible. Further efforts will be made to document and obtain the work of Arthur Melbourne-Cooper.*

24.15.3 *Original film stock will be transferred to the Hertfordshire Film Archive held by the East Anglian Film Archive, and copies obtained for the Museum Service's use.*

24.16 Twentieth century collecting and contemporary recording

24.16.1 The collections of post-1930 material have been augmented by recent collecting. The Museum Service has devoted

considerable time to recording change within St Albans over the past 15 years, resulting in exhibitions on *Food, Domestic Interiors* and the *Home Front*. But much more remains to be done.

Policy Statements

24.16.2 *The retrospective collection of twentieth century life in the district is a Service priority, while it remains a living memory. The selective recording of contemporary life should be designed reduce the need for major retrospective collecting campaigns in the future.*

24.16.3 *The Museums Service will attempt to collect and document both the twentieth century and contemporary life of the District. An integrated approach is favoured, combining material evidence with sound, video, photographic and other forms of record.*

24.16.4 *The Museums Service will record, collect and archive objects, ephemera and oral history from local minority groups, including during the course of this policy the African-Caribbean and South Asian communities.*

24.17 Building Records

24.17.1 The Museums Service holds the results of photographic building surveys of St Albans City Centre and similar surveys are held by the Planning Department.

Policy Statement

24.17.2 *Over the term of this policy the Museums Service will liaise with the Planning Department with the object of producing a unified listing of these and other historic buildings records.*

25. Education collection

- 25.1 The Museums Service recognises the public demand for, and educational potential of, objects which can be freely handled and examined in the museum. Specially collected material, and selected objects from the accessioned collections cover most periods outlined in the History National Curriculum and can be used as recommended elements in English, Geography, etc. Replica material is used where appropriate

Policy Statement

- 25.2 *Handling and other education material is appropriate within most areas of the Museum's collections. Considerations of storage capacity aside, the constraints of acquisition and disposal policy need not fully apply when collecting specifically for this purpose. But objects in handling collections run the risk of damage or loss; this will always be borne in mind when selecting them from the existing collections, and the choice should be made by more than one member of curatorial staff. Donors must be informed before their gifts are used for educational/handling purposes, and whenever possible consulted at the time of donation if this seems the best use for material.*