

WEALD & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Governing body: Trustees of the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum Ltd

Acquisition and disposal policy

Revised August 2010

[to be Adopted by Trustees 22 November 2010]

To be reviewed no later than October 2015

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I Statement of purpose

1.1 Statement of purpose

The purpose of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is to stimulate public interest in and to promote and encourage the preservation of buildings of architectural or historical interest and to stimulate public interest in ancient crafts, trades and manufactures. (*First object as stated in Memorandum and Articles of Association*).

1.2 Key aims

1. To run an open-air museum that inspires and delights its users.
2. To provide lifelong learning based on the Museum's collections and other resources.
3. To ensure high standards of collections care.
4. To pursue research and scholarship.

2 Buildings

- 2.1 The principal collection held by the Museum consists of buildings dismantled and transferred to the Museum site. Currently the Museum has re-erected 48 buildings and has a further 15 buildings in store. The exhibit buildings range from a hall house of c1400 to working buildings of the late 19th century.

- 2.2 The principal aim is to build a representative collection of buildings that will illustrate the development of the construction and planning of vernacular buildings from the counties of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex and the eastern part of Hampshire. While the focus of the collection is on buildings up to the mid-nineteenth century, more recent buildings will be acquired if they show a clear line of development from earlier examples.
- 2.3 Agricultural, industrial, craft and domestic buildings will be collected in order to exhibit the life of communities, as well as the processes that took place in those buildings.
- 2.4 Buildings will be selected from those that are to be demolished or for which there is clearly no appropriate future on their original site. There will always be a presumption that a building should stay on its original site and that a solution to the future of the building should be found within its own area in preference to its being collected by the Museum.
- 2.5 The buildings taken into care by the Museum will be re-erected in a variety of ways. Some will be re-erected as closely as possible to the form in which they may have been constructed by their original builders; others will be re-erected to demonstrate a later phase in their development. In some cases only those modifications will be made that are vital to enable the building to fulfil its role as part of the collection. Repair policies will be followed that seek to retain as much as possible of the historic material.
- 2.6 The Museum will take all reasonable measures to ensure that buildings accepted into the collection will be protected from decay, bearing in mind the special difficulties of conserving an historic structure in the outdoors. External protections that alter the appearance of structures may from time to time be adopted in the interest of the conservation of the buildings. A recording and reporting system will be maintained. Responsibility for the condition of the buildings will be with the Museum Director.
- 2.7 Buildings accepted by the Museum for rescue will be placed in store and re-erected as soon as possible but the order of priority for re-erection will depend on the overall planning policy. The presumption will be that a building dismantled by the Museum will be re-erected. The Trustees will, however, need to consider the condition of the building after it has been dismantled and reserve the right to decide not to re-erect.
- 2.8 Should it prove impossible to re-erect a structure, consideration will be given to the use of sections or pieces of the building as part of the general collections of the Museum.
- 2.9 The buildings will be insured against all reasonable risks.

3 Building parts, materials and trade

- 3.1 A collection of parts of buildings will be made. This will consist of furnishings such as hinges, latches, doors, etc, as well as larger structural elements. Such furnishings

and other items will in most cases come from the same region as the main building collection. From time to time items from outside this region will be accepted if they significantly contribute to the usefulness of the collections.

- 3.2 Building materials will be collected. Historic material, such as samples from buildings, as well as new material, will be collected. Material used in the conservation of buildings will be collected in order to form a reference collection for the use of people concerned with the care of buildings outside the Museum. These requirements will be reviewed from time to time.
- 3.3 The dismantling and repair of buildings generates a considerable amount of material that is not used in subsequent re-erection. Samples of such material will be collected. Material discarded as unsuitable for inclusion in a re-erected structure will be retained, especially in those cases where the evidence for the repair or construction is contained in the discarded part.
- 3.4 Items will be actively collected to represent the construction of buildings and the manufacture of building materials. This collection is to interpret both building construction and maintenance, and the manufacture of building products. Acquisition will concentrate on items associated with the building trade, stone masons, plumbers, plasterers and other trades involved in the construction of buildings.

4 Rural life collections

- 4.1 The purpose of the rural life collections will be to support the principal collection of the Museum.
- 4.2 Collecting will take place in the following fields: agriculture, domestic life, trades and industries, transport. It has not been the intention of the Museum to build up representative collections in these fields, but we recognise that the collections as they exist are nevertheless of very high quality.
- 4.3 The total number of items currently in the collections under headings 2, 3 and 4 is 10,251 (August 2010).

5 Items collected for use

- 5.1 Another group of materials will be retained for demonstration, education, experimental purposes, spares or consumable working parts. A separate catalogue is maintained for these items and they are not accessioned into the collections. Donors will be made aware of these intentions.

6 Archives

- 6.1 The Museum will maintain an archive consisting of photographs and unpublished drawings and reports which support research and understanding of the collections. A separate catalogue is maintained for the archives and they are not accessioned into the collections.

- 6.2 As the museum holds archives, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).
- 6.3 Material that has special conservation requirements will be deposited in the appropriate Records Office.

7 Library

- 7.1 A library of printed books, maps and other published materials relevant to the Museum's collections will be maintained and catalogued, but will not form part of the Museum's accessioned collections.

8 Acquisitions outside the current policy

- 8.1 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9 Acquisition policies of other museums

- 9.1 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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 9.2 Specifically, the Museum takes account of the acquisitions policy of Amberley Working Museum, Museum of Kent Life (Cobtree), Hampshire County Council Museums Service, Rural Life Centre (Tilford).

10 Limitations

- 10.1 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 inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

11 Policy review

- 11.1 The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is 2015.

- 11.2 The MLA or successor body will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

12 Acquisition procedures

- 12.1 The museum will exercise 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. In particular, 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).
- 12.2 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 DCMS in 2005.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (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, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).
- 12.5 Any exceptions to the above clauses 12.1, 12.2, 12.3 or 12.4 will only be because the museum is either:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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.

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

13 Spoliation

- 13.1 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.

14 Disposal

Disposal preliminaries

- 14.1 The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- 14.2 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.
- 14.3 The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- 14.4 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- 14.5 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 14.7–14.19 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- 14.6 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

The disposal decision-making process

- 14.7 Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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 the 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. External 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- 14.8 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 of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- 14.9 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied 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 MLA or its successor body.
- 14.10 The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

- 14.11 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. 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.
- 14.12 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- 14.13 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.

Disposal by exchange

- 14.14 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.
- 14.15 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 14.1–14.4 and 14.8–14.9 will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 14.16–14.19.
- 14.16 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.
- 14.17 If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the *Museums Journal* and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- 14.18 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.

Documenting disposal

- 14.19 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 de-accession and disposal.
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Appendix : Buildings collection

Buildings re-erected and on display (48)

<i>Name of building</i>	<i>Accession no. (prefix WDOAM.OBJ:)</i>	<i>Acquired</i>	<i>Re-erected</i>
Medieval cottage from Hangleton, Sussex	<i>Reconstruction</i>	—	1971
<i>Winkhurst</i> : kitchen from Sundridge, Kent	1995.016	1968	1969
Medieval shop from Horsham, Sussex	1995.018	1968	1985
<i>Bayleaf</i> : Wealden house, from Chiddingstone, Kent	1995.012	1968	1972
<i>Pendean</i> : farmhouse from Midhurst, Sussex	1995.013	1968	1976
Medieval house from North Cray, Kent	1995.020	1977	1984
Toll cottage from Beeding, Sussex	1995.005	1968	1970
Granary from Littlehampton, Sussex	1995.011	1969	1970
Cattle shed from Lurgashall, Sussex	1995.006	1970	1971
Hall from Boarhunt, Hampshire	1995.015	1970	1981
Smithy from Southwater, Sussex	1995.029	1971	1971
Treadwheel from Catherington, Hampshire	1995.019	1969	1970
Cattle shed from Rusper, Sussex (<i>stables</i>)	1995.009	1970	1970
Market hall from Titchfield, Hampshire	1995.017	1971	1974
Windpump from Pevensey, Sussex	1995.034	1972	1972
Cattle shed from Kirdford, Sussex (<i>toilets</i>)	1995.007	1971	1973
Barn from Hambrook, Sussex (<i>Introductory exhibition</i>)	1995.002	1971	1973
Cattle shed from Coldwaltham, Sussex (<i>Woodland exhibition</i>)	1995.010	1973	1974
Upper hall from Crawley, Sussex (<i>Library and meeting room</i>)	1995.022	1972	1978
Watermill from Lurgashall, Sussex	1995.036	1973	1977
Granary from Goodwood, Sussex (<i>Finance office</i>)	1995.078	1973	1973
Stable from Watersfield, Sussex	1995.032	1974	1976
Medieval house from Sole Street, Kent	1995.035	1970	1991
Building from Lavant, Sussex (<i>Schools and Interpretation centre</i>)	1995.027	1976	1978
Saw-pit shed from Sheffield Park, Sussex	1995.030	1976	1980
Wagon shed from Wiston, Sussex	1995.028	1976	1980
Carpenter's shop from Windlesham, Surrey	1995.024	1978	1980
<i>Court Barn</i> from Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire (<i>Trade exhibitions and demonstrations</i>)	1995.033	1977	1979
Pugmill house from Redford, Sussex	1995.082	1979	1980
Brick drying shed from Petersfield, Hampshire	1995.026	1979	1980
Horse whim from West Kingsdown, Sussex	1995.056	1981	2000
House from Walderton, Sussex	1995.003	1980	1982
School & stable from West Wittering, Sussex	1995.039	1981	1984
House extension from Reigate, Surrey	1995.021	1981	1987
<i>Poplar Cottage</i> from Washington, Sussex	1995.037	1982	1999

Barn from Cowfold, Sussex	1995.014	1980	1988
Privy from Charlton, Sussex	1995.080	1983	1983
Pigsty from Coultershaw, Sussex	1995.081	1983	1984
Joiners' shop from Witley, Surrey (<i>Hands-on building materials exhibition</i>)	1995.023	1982	1983
Animal pound from Walton Heath, Surrey	1995.031	1983	1983
Plumbers' workshop from Newick, Sussex	1995.025	1985	1985
Hay barn from Ockley, Surrey	1995.054	1985	2010
Granary from West Ashling, Sussex	1995.079	1985	1985
Cattle shed from Goodwood, Sussex (<i>Redvins</i>)	1995.008	1986	1988
<i>Whittakers Cottages</i> from Ashtead, Sussex	1995.039	1987	1997
<i>Longport</i> : farmhouse from Newington, Kent (<i>Shop, ticket office and administration</i>)	1995.044	1992	1995
Open shed from Charlwood, Surrey		1999	2000
Mission church from South Wonston, Hampshire		2006	2011

Buildings in store (15)

* <i>Little Winkhurst</i> from Sundridge, Kent	1995.058	1968
<i>Tindalls Cottage</i> from Ticehurst, Sussex	1995.038	1974
Granary from Chilcomb, Hampshire	1995.053	1972
Granary from Ashurst, Sussex	1995.055	1977
Barn from Berrylands Farm, Kirdford, Sussex	1995.049	1978
Cattle shed from Berrylands Farm	ditto	1978
Stable from brickworks, Petersfield, Hampshire	1995.050	1979
Dovecot from Milton Street, Sussex	1995.052	1980
* Outhouse from Green Street	1995.043	1981
* Medieval hall from St Mary Cray, Kent	1995.057	1987
Forge from Great Bookham, Surrey	1995.046	1988
House from Holloway Hill, Godalming, Surrey	1995.041	1989
Bakehouse from Newdigate, Surrey	1995.045	1988
Cottage from Lodsworth, Sussex	1995.040	1993
Chapel from Ovingdean, Sussex		1996

* : Buildings not to be re-erected, but kept in accessible storage

This list does not include machinery, bell frames, game ladders, churn stands etc