



Collections Development Policy 2024-2029

Name of museum: Museum of Scottish Lighthouses (MoSL)
Name of governing body: Scotland's Lighthouse Museum Trust Ltd.

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:
April 2024

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2029

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 History of Collections
- 3.0 An Overview of Current Collections
- 4.0 Themes and priorities for future collecting
- 5.0 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
- 6.0 Legal and Ethical framework for acquisition and disposal
- 7.0 Collecting Policies of Other Museums
- 8.0 Archival Holdings
- 9.0 Acquisition Procedure
- 10.0 Human Remains
- 11.0 Biological and Geological Remains
- 12.0 Archaeological Material
- 13.0 Exceptions
- 14.0 Spoilation
- 15.0 Repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains
- 16.0 Disposal Procedure

Appendix 1: Model Definitions

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is the Policy Statement regulating the acquisition and disposal of items for the collections of MoSL. The adoption and implementation of such a policy by the Board of Trustees of MoSL is a requirement of the ACE Accreditation Scheme for museums in the UK.

1.2 This represents the aims and plans of the Board of Trustees at the time of its adoption in April 2024, and as such will be subject to revision as the Museum develops and in accordance with standards in museums in the UK. It is intended that this policy should be reconsidered at least once every 5 years, and in any case no later than March 2029, and a revised statement brought before the Board of Trustees for its agreement. Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy and the implications of such changes for the future of existing collections.

1.3 This policy supersedes all previous and existing practices and policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of items for the collections of MoSL.

1.4 'Our mission is to inspire a passion for the heritage of Scotland's Lighthouses and the work of the Northern Lighthouse Board and to preserve and interpret in a creative way the industrial and maritime heritage of Scotland's Lighthouses.'

1.5 The collections development 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 noted above.

1.6 Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

2.0 History of Collections

2.1 The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses was founded in 1995 as an Independent Museum supported by Grampian Regional Council (predecessor to Aberdeenshire Council) and the Northern Lighthouse Board. The Museum was primarily a visitor attraction with a number of objects donated and loaned by the Northern Lighthouse Board. The Museum plan was an expansion of a small-scale plan by the Northern Lighthouse Board to create a small attraction at Kinnaird Head Lighthouse from 1988.

2.2 A number of lenses and objects were at first loaned to the museum by the Northern Lighthouse Board from 1994 in order to allow for the opening of the museum by June 1995.

2.3 Much of the early collecting of the Museum was undertaken by Museum Manager Richard Townsley. Townsley was given access to the Northern

Lighthouse Board's lighthouses in order to identify items which the museum wanted to acquire. Acquisitions were approved or declined by the Northern Lighthouse Board general manager.

2.4. With support of the Northern Lighthouse Board, from 1998 Richard Townsley also put together what he termed as the national collection of lenses. With support of the Northern Lighthouse Board Townsley brought lenses into the collection which had previously been given on 'permanent loan' to other institutions. Loan agreement remain in place for many of these lenses which continue to be displayed at their local museum's and centres as per original agreements.

2.5 The Museum's archive and research space was developed in 2005. This space existed until 2021 and is currently being redeveloped following Storm Arwen.

2.6 In 2007 the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses became an Accredited Museum.

2.7 In 2007 the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses' entire collection became a Recognised Collection of National Significance. It still enjoys this status to date, with the most recent review in 2022.

2.8 Permanent display items and other important items, such as Robert Stevenson's Bible, which were originally given on permanent loan in 1994 were officially donated to the Museum's collection in 2010. This agreement was reached by Museum Director Virginia Mayes-Wright and the Northern Lighthouse Board.

2.9 Between 2016-2019 a retrospective accessioning plan was brought into force to capture historic undocumented NLB loans and donations to the industrial collections and archives. Retrospective entry forms were signed by the Northern Lighthouse Board where it was proven they were the original donor. This scheme was spearheaded by Museum Manager Dr Lynda McGuigan as part of necessary plans to tackle the museum's backlog.

2.10 The Northern Lighthouse Board is a major stakeholder with regards the historic formation of the museum's industrial and archival holdings.

2.11 Donations from light-keepers and their families have helped form the bulk of the photographic and social history holdings within the collections.

3.0 An Overview of Current Collections

3.1 The collection of MoSL consists of artefacts, photographs, documents and recordings that are grouped into the following categories:

3.2 Technical equipment relating to lighthouse illumination, foghorns, radio beacons, satellite navigation and way marking.

3.3 Personal artefacts belonging to individual lighthouse keepers and their families, members of the Northern Lighthouse Board, and their technical staff.

3.4 Documents or photographs associated with lighthouses under the control of the Northern Lighthouse Board and including items that deal with their day-to-day management.

3.5 The collecting area of the Museum will be defined by the area already managed by the Northern Lighthouse Board, that is Scotland and the Isle of Man.

3.6 The period of time to which the collection relates will be defined as the earliest date at which lighthouses were conceived to the present day.

3.7 Items made in, at some point used within, or otherwise provenanced to the Museum's collecting area may be required regardless of their location at the time of acquisition.

3.8 In an emergency, and to ensure the preservation locally (and in public ownership) of important material, the Museum Manager and Collections Manager are exceptionally authorised to collect material from outside the Museum's stated collecting area. Such material is acquired on the understanding that it may be transferred to other museums at a future time.

3.9 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy should be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration of The Board of Trustees, having regard to the interest of other museums.

4.0 Themes and priorities for future collecting.

4.1 Future themes for collecting will be carried out in accordance with the following collecting areas:

- The work of the Northern Lighthouse Board as it develops into new areas (1786-present).
- Artefacts associated with lighthouses along the Scottish coast and in Scottish waters.

- Developments in the technology of navigation utilised by the Northern Lighthouse Board.
- Artefacts and documents showing the association of development of technology for the Scottish lights with the development of lighthouse services across the globe.
- Items reflecting social history of light-keeping, with a particular interest in the wives and families of light-keepers.

4.2 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 the limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and the proper care of collection arrangements.

5.0 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The MoSL's priorities regarding rationalisation and disposal of collection items will be curatorial motivated as set out in section 16.5-16.6 of this document.

5.2 MoSL will actively pursue a policy of rationalisation, guided by a collections review, in order to make the collection manageable, and to ensure that proper standards of care can be implemented and preserved for the collection.

5.3 The MoSL's policy of rationalisation will aim to reduce the overall size of the collection by identifying

- Collection objects which have existing, and numerous, duplicates.
- Collection objects which are deteriorated beyond repair.
- Collection objects which fall outside of the collection area.

6.0 Legal and Ethical Framework for acquisition and disposal

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

7.0 Collecting Policy 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 museums:

- National Museum's Scotland
- National Library of Scotland
- Manx National Heritage
- Arbroath Signal Tower
- Fraserburgh Heritage Centre

8.0 Management of Archives

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

9.0 Acquisition

9.1 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 Board of Trustees or Collections Manager is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

9.2 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 purpose 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, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Board of Trustees 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.

9.4 The Museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

9.5 The Museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

9.6 Any exceptions to the above clauses 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, or 9.5 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.

9.7 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.

9.8 The Museum will not acquire any human remains.

Collecting Procedure

9.9 The Museum Manager and Collections Manager will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance and rejection of potential gifts or bequests to the Museum, and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this Policy and within The Board of Trustees normal standing orders.

9.10 Items offered to the Museum as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions, such as that they be displayed in a particular way. In exceptional circumstances, if the Museum Manager or Collections Manager feels that the item(s) in question are of overriding importance, the Board of Trustees may be asked to approve the acquisition of a specific item or items to which conditions are attached. A general exception to this rule will be deemed to exist in respect of restrictive covenants or special conditions intended only to assure the permanent protection of the item or items concerned in the Museum's collections, such as restrictions placed upon and legal powers of disposal that the museum may have; under such circumstances, the Museum Manager or Collections Manager may reasonably recommend that the Board of Trustees accept the gift or bequest in question.

9.11 The acceptance of items, on loan, for a finite period for display or specific study, may be authorised by the Museum Manager or Collections Manager acting on the Board of Trustees' behalf. In exceptional circumstances, a privately owned item of major importance that falls within the scope of this policy may be accepted on a finite long loan, whether or not it is needed for immediate display or study. No item will be received on 'permanent loan', a term which has no legal status. The period of all loans will be agreed in writing between the Collections Manager and the owner of the item at the time of

deposit. Where the term of the loan has expired, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the Collections Manager,

10.0 Human Remains

10.1 As per 9.4 and 9.8, the Museum will not acquire biological matter up to and including human remains.

11.0 Biological and geological material

11.1 As per 9.4, the Museum will not acquire biological or geological material.

12.0 Archaeological Material

12.1 As per 9.5, the museum will not acquire archaeological material.

13.0 Exceptions

13.1 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by The Board of Trustees of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

14.0 Spoilation

14.1 The Museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoilation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War Two period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15.0 Repatriation and Restitution of objects and Human Remains

15.1 As per 9.4 and 10.1, the Museum will not collect or acquire Human Remains.

15.2 The collecting area of the museum make it highly unlikely that the museum will acquire culturally sensitive material.

15.3 Where restitution is necessary a report will be made and submitted to the Board of Trustees regarding an item or items with a recommendation from the

Museum Manager and Collections Manager. Only the Board of Trustees have authority to return objects through this process of restitution.

16.0 Disposal Procedure

Disposal preliminaries

16.1 The Board of Trustees will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

16.2 By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The Board of Trustees 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.

16.3 The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreement on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

16.4 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

16.5 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraph 16.7-16.15 will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

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

The disposal decision-making process

16.7 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by The Board of Trustees 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 other 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

16.8 A decision on the disposal 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 Board of Trustees of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not by the decision of the Museum Manager or Collections Manager alone.

Use of Proceeds of Sale

16.9 Any monies received by the Museum Board of Trustees from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collection. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions or improvements relating to the care of the collection in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collection may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for 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 the collections will be sought from MGS.

16.10 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

16.11 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.

16.12 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 Museum's Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

16.13 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

16.14 The Museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documenting disposal

16.15 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposal 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.

Appendix 1: Model Definitions.

1. 'The Museum' is defined as those premises, staff and collections of original material, which may from time to time be under the control of the Museum Manager or Collections Manager. At the time of adoption of this policy, this principally encompasses the 'museum' building at Stevenson's Road and items held within the Historic Scotland property at Kinnaird Head.
2. 'The Collection' is defined as any item entered in the Accessions Register of MoSL, whether as a gift or as a purchase., together with any item not entered in the Accessions Registers, but in the possession of the Museum which was donated or purchased with the intention that it should become part of the collections.
3. 'valid title' is defined as valid legal ownership.
4. 'The Museum Manager' is defined as the officer responsible to The Board of Trustees for the operation of the Museum.
5. 'The Collections Manager' is defined as the officer responsible to the Museum Manager and The Board of Trustees for the protection and maintenance of the Museum Collections.