



Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

# **Collections Documentation and Information Policy 2013**

**Name of museum:** The Royal Pavilion & Museums

**Name of governing body:** Brighton & Hove City Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** Summer  
2013

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** no later than Summer 2017

\*This revision replaces RPM Collections Management Plan Section 6; written 1998,  
revised 2006



## **1. Statement of Purpose**

The Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove aims to inspire, illuminate and challenge its visitors and virtual users. It does this by caring for and interpreting its outstanding collections and historic sites to support discovery, enjoyment and learning.

RPM has a vital role in the cultural, economic, education and social life of the city, and the health and well-being of its citizens. It celebrates the city and its communities, helping generate civic pride and develop a sense of cultural identity, as well as building respect and understanding of others. It is a cultural industry employing a wide range of creative experts including curators, conservators, decorative artists, designers, artists, makers, teachers, actors and writers. It is a major tourist attraction supporting the city's visitor economy. It plays a role in the knowledge economy through research, creating and disseminating knowledge through exhibition, display, publication, public learning and event programmes. It also provides inspiration, influence and a stepping off point for creative production both locally, nationally and internationally. It operates in a digital world making collections and knowledge available on line and providing a platform for user generated content and debate.

The Royal Pavilion & Museums (RPM) collections include both the physical objects and buildings and their related documentation. This documentation or information, consisting of historical, practical and scientific data, is a principal support and research tool in any museum. RPM's approach to collections management and documentation is illustrated by this policy, which is designed to achieve the aims set out in the RPM Forward Plan and to be in proportion to resources available to RPM and Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC).

RPM Forward Plan states, as strategic aims:

- Connecting people with museums and changing lives
- Developing and caring for cultural, scientific and natural resources (collections and buildings)
- Building a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Exercising leadership

All four strategic aims are supported by the RPM Collections Documentation Policy, especially in the areas of the following key activities:

- Public programming
- Learning and community engagement
- Digital engagement
- New galleries
- City-wide initiatives



- Accreditation standards
- Building collection knowledge
- Maintaining and presenting the collections and buildings
- Developing the collections to maintain the contemporary record
- Sustainable use of all resources – sites, collections and assets
- Maximising income generation and fundraising
- Improving RPM's profile and brand
- Digital potential for building a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Workforce, volunteer development and succession planning
- Developing and sustaining partnerships
- Developing processes to support the organisation deliver efficiently and effectively
- Shared ownership
- Supporting museum development through sharing our expertise

RPM is accountable for all objects and buildings in its care, and the history of each object and a record of any activities associated with it must be kept. This policy is designed to ensure that RPM fulfils its responsibilities in relation to security, management and access to the collections.

The policy aims to:

- establish that professional standards in collections management are maintained as per PAS 197.2009 Code of Practice in Collections Management
- establish that professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information as described in SPECTRUM standards need to be maintained
- improve accountability for collections
- extend access to collections information
- strengthen the security of the collections

Throughout this document where the term 'objects in the care of RPM' is used, this includes the permanent collection, objects on loan, unaccessioned or previously undocumented items, temporarily deposited objects, and support collections.

This policy is supported by procedures detailed in the RPM Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual, and a plan of action illustrated in the RPM Collections Documentation Plan.

## **2. Policy**

### **2.1 Acquisition**

This is the documenting and managing the addition of objects and their associated information to the RPM collection.

- RPM will collect objects in line with the RPM Collections Development Policy.
- The decision to acquire will have been made by Curatorial presentation of the reasons to acquire and the risks associated with the acquisition at the monthly Collections Development Panel meeting.

- RPM Curators will obtain RPM the legal and unambiguous title of the object by asking the owner to complete and object entry and/or transfer of title form.
- RPM Curators will ask any donor or depositor to assign all rights associated with the object to RPM.
- RPM Curators will aim to acquire all relevant, appropriate information and supporting contextual documents alongside the acquisition of the object, see SPECTRUM standards for further details of types of supporting documents that should be acquired and retained.
- RPM Curators commit to abide by acquisition procedures detailed as part of RPM Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual, these include assigning a unique number to the object, recording the acquisition in the RPM Accession Register, and documenting the acquisition of the object on MimsyXG.
- RPM will send acknowledgement to the Donor as per SPECTRUM standards.

## 2.2 Object Entry

This is the management and documentation of the receipt of objects and associated information which are not currently part of the RPM collection.

- RPM commits to maintaining SPECTRUM standards in relation to object entry procedures.
- RPM Curators will establish the terms under which the object are received, and as appropriate enter the collection.
- RPM will use an Object Entry Form to initially record receipt of the object and provide a receipt for the owner or depositor. This form will indicate:
  - the reason for receipt for the object
  - determine the finite end of the review of a deposit, as appropriate.
  - record details of the owner/depositor.
  - transfer the title of the object to RPM, if required at the time. (if not transferred at entry, and the object is retained, then a Transfer of Title form will be used at the point of acquisition).
  - Capture key information about the object
  - Any insurance details, value and additional information.
  - Must be completed with owner/depositors signature and that of the RPM relevant Curator.
- RPM Curators will use temporary labelling procedures to uniquely identify the newly received object or group of objects and enter the object details onto MimsyXG, under a unique entry number and include the objects current location.

## 2.3 Loans In and Out

Managing and documenting the borrowing of objects for which RPM is responsible for a specific period of time and for a specified purpose; usually exhibition, but also research, conservation, education etc.

- RPM commits to maintaining SPECTRUM standards in relation to loans in and out procedures.
- All Loans requests are assessed according to RPM Loans Policy. The RPM Loans Policy, a standard set of conditions and procedures can found in RPM Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual.
- RPM will enable the same level of care of the borrowed object as if it were part of the RPM permanent collection.
- RPM will complete written agreements between borrow and lender before the loan commences, ensuring that the loan is for a fixed period of less than five years, and will regularly review its 'long term' loans in and out.
- RPM will ensure and stipulate that the terms and conditions of the loan as agreed are adhered to.
- RPM will ensure that a written record is retained and that up to date information about the location, security and physical wellbeing; environment and condition of the loan objects are maintained on MimsyXg.
- RPM will provide insurance or indemnity for the loan period
- record sufficient information about the objects so that each object that RPM is legally responsible for can be accounted for, identified, and up-to-date information can be provided as required.

## 2.4 Inventory Control

This is the maintenance of up-to-date information accounting for and locating all objects for which RPM has a legal responsibility. This may include objects on loan, unaccessioned or previously undocumented items, temporarily deposited objects and support collections.

- RPM commits to maintaining SPECTRUM standards in relation to inventory control.
- RPM will record sufficient information about the objects so that each object that RPM is legally responsible for can be accounted for, identified, and up-to-date information can be provided as required.
- A regular audit of inventory information will be undertaken quarterly, and results reviewed and systems and procedures updated accordingly.
- RPM is committed to following procedures that maintain up-to-date information locating the current whereabouts of all objects for which RPM has a legal responsibility.

- RPM aims to provide a reference to ownership of each object.
- RPM recognises that it is desirable to have a photographic image of each object, preferably attached to a collections management system (MimsyXG) object record where feasible.
- Every item in a museum collection must carry its unique identity number at all times, so that it can be linked to the information a museum holds about the object. Therefore the labelling, numbering and marking of RPM objects should occur within a maximum of one month from acquisition.
- All labelling or marking of RPM objects with a unique number carried out by the Collections or Conservation Team will be done using a reversible method and adhere to the guidance on methods and position of object labelling as outlined in RPM Object Marking and Labelling Procedures. The proposed temporary object labelling methods for different objects and materials have been agreed by conservation and curatorial staff.
- Prior to the use of any identified methods for the labelling of RPM objects, the health and safety risks associated with the method will be assessed to ensure safe working practices are used at all times

## 2.4 Location and Movement Control

This is the documentation and management of information concerning the current and past locations of all objects or groups of objects in the organisation's care to ensure the organisation can locate any object at any time. A location is a specific place where an object or group of objects is stored or displayed.

- RPM commits to SPECTRUM standard procedures for managing and documenting location and movement control.
- RPM will enable access to location information by, at the very least, object number and by location name.
- The location and movement of objects is governed by this policy when such activities take place within the physical and administrative boundaries of the service (e.g. locations where movement can take place before the need to use an Object Exit Form). These boundaries include:
  - Brighton Museum & Art Gallery
  - Hove Museum & Art Gallery
  - Preston Manor
  - The Royal Pavilion
  - The Booth Museum of Natural History
  - The Keep
  - Offsite store
  - The Old Courthouse
  - Palace Place conservation studios
  - William IV Gatehouse

- Northgate House
  - Other council-run buildings across the city of Brighton & Hove
- 
- RPM will record the location where an object is normally displayed or stored.
  - RPM will record the location of an object when it is not at its normal location.
  - RPM will be able to provide an up-to-date record of the relocation of an object within the physical or administrative boundaries of the organisation.
  - RPM will maintain up-to-date records of any movement of an object across the physical or administrative boundaries of the organisation.
  - RPM will record the person responsible for moving an object.
  - RPM will maintain a list of people permitted to view and amend location and movement records. This list is maintained through access permissions set in MimsyXG.
  - RPM will provide a record or a statement of the persons responsible for authorising object movement (see RPM location and movement control procedures).
  - It is the responsibility of the keeper, curator or manager of the collection (or the specific object) to ensure that the RPM location and movement control procedures are adhered to.
  - RPM commits to maintaining an up-to-date record of all object locations in the collections management system, MimsyXG. Exceptions to this are:
    - The Booth Museum, who use the SPECOL database for recording all locations except those for Vertebrate material.
    - The Keep which use a separate inventory management system (IMS) to maintain detailed movement control for objects held within The Keep. MimsyXG will maintain a high level record of the location of these archives, where the object catalogue entry will be associated with the location of The Keep, and a container number, but not with each user and each movement within the building.
  - RPM will provide a history of an object's previous locations, while in the organisation's care.
  - For RPM objects on loan to other organisations, the loans out policy and procedure will be adhered to. This includes recording the name of the organisation the object is on loan to and, if possible, the building in which it will be used for display, research etc.

## 2.5 Cataloguing

This is the compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing objects. It may include information concerning the provenance of

objects and also collections management documentation eg details of acquisition, conservation, exhibition and loan history, and location history. It need not bring together in one location everything known about an object, but should provide cross-references to any other relevant information source known to RPM.

- RPM will provide a level of description sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other similar objects.
- RPM will provide an historical archive relating to an object or cross-references to sources where information can be found.
- RPM collections management system, MimsyXG, is designed to allow convenient access using indexes or free-text retrieval, and this will be maximised by continuous review and revision of data.
- The aim is to catalogue to the most in-depth level, and within reason produce full catalogue records for all objects held by RPM. The RPM Collections Documentation Plan, written in line with the RPM Forward Plan, outlines the timescale and targets to achieve this.

## 2.6 Object exit

This is the management and documentation of objects leaving RPM's premises.

- RPM will ensure that the legal requirements, and RPM policies and procedures, are fulfilled when objects leave its premises.
- RPM is committed to be able to account for the exit of all objects from its premises, including those which have been deposited as offers or for identification or loaned.
- RPM keepers and curators will maintain location information for accessioned objects leaving the organisation's premises.
- RPM keepers and curators will ensure that all objects leave with appropriate authorisation.
- RPM keepers and curators will ensure that a signature of acceptance from the recipient is always obtained when transferring custody of an object between parties. Where the first recipient is a courier it may also be necessary to get a signature from the person or organisation to which it is delivered.

## 2.7 Security and Preservation of RPM Catalogues and Documentation

The security and preservation of the documentation, knowledge and information relevant to, produced by and held by RPM is paramount to the organisation's business continuity.

- Documentation must be physically secure. RPM commits to putting measures in place to ensure the physical security and long-term preservation of all documentation records, whether paper or computerised.
  - Digital records will be backed up and stored securely.
  - Access to hard copy records will be via a designated member of staff, usually the relevant curator.
  - Duplicate hard copy records will be maintained at a separate site from the originals.
- At RPM we consider the potential obsolescence of electronic systems. As part of RPM Business Continuity Planning (BCP), a plan to restore and renew these systems is monitored and implemented in order to ensure long-term accessibility of the information held.
- With digital records held in MimsyXG there is the ability to set security and manage authorisation permissions to read, edit and delete records. These security settings are used to prevent unauthorised persons from changing records.

## 2.7 Insurance and indemnity management

This means the documenting and managing the insurance needs of objects both in RPM's permanent collection and those for which it is temporarily responsible.

- RPM ensures that all the objects in an organisation's care are appropriately insured within the terms of legal and statutory requirements, and the terms of the organisation's policy.
- RPM insurance is managed corporately by BHCC, who arrange for insurance policies to be drawn up under long-term agreements on the basis of three to five years.
- BHCC and RPM commit to reviewing insurance policies annually.
- BHCC officers working with RPM will ensure that current insurance liabilities are up-to-date
- RPM will ensure that there is indemnification in place for all eligible objects in the organisation's custody and while in transit.
- BHCC and RPM will make sure that the appropriate minimum liability sum or excess is available to be paid if required.

## 2.8 Valuation control

This means the management of information relating to the financial valuations placed on individual objects, or groups of objects, normally for insurance and indemnity purposes.



- RPM ensures that valuation information is available as required to support the organisation's needs.
- RPM policies and procedures used for valuation are approved and applied consistently across collections and museum sites.
- RPM ensures that valuation information is treated as confidential, valuation information is maintained in object history files and on MimsyXG and is only accessible to curatorial staff and other RPM or BHCC officers on request and as required.

## 2.9 Audit

This is the examination of objects or object information, in order to verify their location, authenticity, accuracy and relationships.

- RPM maintains, manages and documents a regular review of the objects in its collections and the information relating to them.
- RPM uses an audit process to ensure that all relevant object-related documentation is updated as required in a timely manner, and ensures that the audit of objects is based on the physical presence of the objects.
- RPM ensures that remedial action is taken as required, following discovery of missing objects, wrongly or inadequately documented objects, or undocumented items.

## 2.10 Rights management

The management and documentation of the rights associated with the objects and information for which the organisation is responsible, in order to benefit RPM and to respect the rights of others.

- RPM keeps up-to-date with and takes account of relevant rights legislation, and monitors changes.
- RPM ensures that the rights of others are respected by RPM and BHCC, and any other third party users.
- RPM works to ensure that the rights of RPM and BHCC are respected by others.
- RPM curators ensure research into all associated rights is carried out as soon as new material is acquired, and this is fully documented within the object history file and MimsyXG.
- When acquiring new acquisitions RPM will always ask for copyright over the work or object so that RPM can use it to its full public benefit. (See RPM Rights Management Copyright Policy).

- When RPM commissions works, all intellectual property rights (IPR) are assigned to the organisation.
- When RPM creates new material it records the associated rights in MimsyXG, or in RPM's digital asset management system – Asset Bank – as appropriate.
- RPM records and monitors changes, and maintains full details of all associated rights in the relevant database.
- RPM ensures that any contract negotiations for the use of IPR assets are carried out, taking into account the issues of legal entity, legal restrictions, funders' requirements and the tax situation.
- RPM is committed to an awareness of material sensitive to publication right (and other rights), and that any publication rights remain the property of RPM and are not accidentally lost.

## 2.12 Retrospective documentation

This is the improvement of the standard of information about objects and collections to meet SPECTRUM minimum standards by the documentation of new information for existing objects and collections.

- RPM defines that the primary purpose of RPM's documentation system, MimsyXG, is to establish accountability, increase access and record actions regarding RPM collections.
- RPM has a documentation backlog and RPM curators commit to working towards reducing this backlog through regular projects and programmes of documentation.
- Every item in RPM's collections must carry its unique identity number at all times, so that it can be linked to the information the museum holds about the object. RPM curators will endeavour to create one database record in MimsyXG for each object, or group of objects, which includes at least its unique number, simple name, description and location.
- RPM will review progress on reducing the backlog on a regular basis.
- RPM will work towards an overall improvement in the quality of information held about objects and collections.
- All RPM staff are committed to improving the information, and accessibility to that information, for the benefit of RPM and the public.

## 2.13 Outsourced management of collections

This relates to RPM collections that are outsourced to a third party organisation for management. This could refer to collections that are:

- on deposit in an archive, eg owned by RPM but custodial management is by another, such as the archive contract BHCC has with East Sussex County Council/East Sussex Record Office;
  - being managed day-to-day by another organisation, eg RPM collections at The Keep (a BHCC/East Sussex County Council/University of Sussex partnership), which East Sussex County Council runs day-to-day;
  - or objects that are on loan to other organisations for the purpose of display or research.
- Where the operation of parts of the RPM service has been outsourced to a third party, there is a clear relationship between the management agreement and the collections documentation policy.
  - For RPM collections that will be managed by a third party on a daily basis for a long period of time (five years or more) a long-term management agreement will be developed by the partner organisation to define responsibilities.
  - Underlying the management agreement a Collections Statement, Policies and Procedures should be drafted and agreed by both parties.
  - Mechanisms for audit of collections documentation and condition against the required standards set will be explicit in the Long-term Management Agreement and Terms of Governance.
  - For RPM objects on loan to other organisations for an anticipated period of less than five years, see RPM Loans Out policy and procedures found in RPM Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual.

### **3. Bibliography**

The documents and publications referred to within this policy are:

- Dawson, A. and Hillhouse, S. SPECTRUM 4.0 The UK Museum Collections Management Standard, London: Collections Trust, 2011
- PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management, London: British Standards Institution, 2009

Internal documents:

- RPM Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2013
- RPM Collections Care and Conservation Plan, 2013
- RPM Collections Development Policy, 2013
- RPM Collections Documentation Backlog Plan, 2013
- RPM Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual, 2013
- RPM Disaster & Business Continuity Plan, 2013



- RPM Forward Plan, 2013
- BHCC Sustainability Policy, 2013, & RPM Sustainability Action Plan, 2013
- The Keep Collections Statement, 2013