



**Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust**

**Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust Collections  
Documentation and Information Policy  
2020**

**Date at which this policy is due for review: January 2021**

## **1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Royal Pavilion & Museum's Trust (RPMT) vision is to provide museums that play a vital role in making Brighton & Hove a fantastic place to live work and visit, and inspire people to build a more sustainable and socially just world. Our mission is to preserve the past to inform the present. Using the outstanding collections, buildings and knowledge in our care, we will challenge and inspire our visitors to positively shape their future. Our sustainable museums will support the economy of Brighton & Hove, promote personal well-being and celebrate diversity.

We aspire to transform into a resilient organisation with a reputation for vibrancy and relevance, renowned for its digital innovation and inspiring a sense of shared ownership, and where our work is driven by creative collaborations with local communities and partner organisations.

RPMT collects, rationalises and disposes of collections within the remit and guidelines set out in this Collections Development policy document, in line with our current Business Plan. The aims for our 2018-22 Business Plan are:

- Be more strategic in caring for and developing our natural, scientific and cultural resources for present and future generations.
- Develop a distinctive offer at each of our five sites and online to support learning, creativity and well-being
- Actively engage more people in understanding, developing and / or interpreting our shared collections, including a focus on children and young people
- Build a co-operative, sustainable and resilient organisation that supports the wider cultural sector
- Ensure the organisation and its work reflects the diverse culture of contemporary society

All five aims are supported by the RPMT Collections Development 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 collections knowledge
- 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 sustainable and resilient organisation
- Developing and sustaining partnerships
- Developing processes to support the organisation deliver efficiently and effectively
- Shared ownership
- Supporting museum development through sharing our expertise
- Developing and championing diversity

RPMT 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 RPMT 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 current 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 RPMT Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual, and a plan of action illustrated in the RPMT Collections Documentation Plan.

## **2.POLICY**

### **2.1 Acquisition**

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

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

- RPMT commits to maintaining current SPECTRUM standards in relation to object entry procedures.
- RPMT Curators will establish the terms under which the object are received, and as appropriate enter the collection.
- RPMT 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/depositor's signature and that of the RPMT relevant Curator.
- RPMT 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 RPMT is responsible for a specific period of time and for a specified purpose; usually exhibition, but also research, conservation, education etc.

- RPMT commits to maintaining current SPECTRUM standards in relation to loans in and out procedures.
- All Loans requests are assessed according to the current RPMT Loans Policy. The RPMT Loans Policy, a standard set of conditions and procedures can be found in the current RPMT Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual.
- RPMT will enable the same level of care of the borrowed object as if it were part of the RPMT permanent collection.
- RPMT 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.
- RPMT will ensure and stipulate that the terms and conditions of the loan as agreed are adhered to.
- RPMT 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.
- RPMT will provide insurance or indemnity for the loan period
- RPMT will record sufficient information about the objects so that each object that RPMT 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 RPMT has a legal responsibility. This may include objects on loan, unaccessioned or previously undocumented items, temporarily deposited objects and support collections.

- RPMT commits to maintaining current SPECTRUM standards in relation to inventory control.
- RPMT will record sufficient information about the objects so that each object that RPMT 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.
- RPMT is committed to following procedures that maintain up-to-date information locating the current whereabouts of all objects for which RPMT has a legal responsibility.
- RPMT aims to provide a reference to ownership of each object.
- RPMT 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 RPMT objects should occur within a maximum of one month from acquisition.
- All labelling or marking of RPMT 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 RPMT 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 RPMT 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.

- RPMT commits to current SPECTRUM standard procedures for managing and documenting location and movement control.
- RPMT 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
- RPMT will record the location where an object is normally displayed or stored.
  - RPMT will record the location of an object when it is not at its normal location.
  - RPMT 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.
  - RPMT will maintain up-to-date records of any movement of an object across the physical or administrative boundaries of the organisation.
  - RPMT will record the person responsible for moving an object.
  - RPMT 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.
  - RPMT will provide a record or a statement of the persons responsible for authorising object movement (see RPMT 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 RPMT location and movement control procedures are adhered to.
  - RPMT 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.
  - RPMT will provide a history of an object's previous locations, while in the organisation's care.
  - For RPMT 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 e.g. 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 RPMT.

- RPMT will provide a level of description sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other similar objects.
- RPMT will provide an historical archive relating to an object or cross-references to sources where information can be found.
- RPMT 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 RPMT. The RPMT Collections Documentation Plan, written in line with the RPMT Business Plan, outlines the timescale and targets to achieve this.

## **2.6 Object exit**

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

- RPMT will ensure that the legal requirements, and RPMT policies and procedures, are fulfilled when objects leave its premises.
- RPMT 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.
- RPMT keepers and curators will maintain location information for accessioned objects leaving the organisation's premises.
- RPMT keepers and curators will ensure that all objects leave with appropriate authorisation.

RPMT 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 RPMT Catalogues and Documentation**

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

Documentation must be physically secure. RPMT 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 RPMT we consider the potential obsolescence of electronic systems. As part of RPMT 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.

## **2.8 Insurance and indemnity management**

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

- RPMT 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.
- RPMT buildings and collection insurance is managed corporately by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), who arrange for insurance policies to be drawn up under long-term agreements on the basis of three to five years.
- BHCC and RPMT commit to reviewing insurance policies annually.
- BHCC officers working with RPMT will ensure that current insurance liabilities are up-to-date.
- RPMT will ensure that there is indemnification in place for all eligible objects in the organisation's custody and while in transit.
- BHCC and RPMT will make sure that the appropriate minimum liability sum or excess is available to be paid if required.

## **2.9 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.

- RPMT ensures that valuation information is available as required to support the organisation's needs.
- RPMT policies and procedures used for valuation are approved and applied consistently across collections and museum sites.
- RPMT 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 RPMT or BHCC officers on request and as required.

## **2.10 Audit**

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

- RPMT maintains, manages and documents a regular review of the objects in its collections and the information relating to them.
- RPMT 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.
- RPMT ensures that remedial action is taken as required, following discovery of missing objects, wrongly or inadequately documented objects, or undocumented items.

## **2.11 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 RPMT and to respect the rights of others.

- RPMT keeps up-to-date with and takes account of relevant rights legislation, and monitors changes.
- RPMT ensures that the rights of others are respected by RPMT and BHCC, and any other third-party users.
- RPMT works to ensure that the rights of RPMT and BHCC are respected by others.



- RPMT 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 RPMT will always ask for copyright over the work or object so that RPMT can use it to its full public benefit. (See current RPMT Rights Policy).
- When RPMT commissions works, all intellectual property rights (IPR) are assigned to the organisation.
- When RPMT creates new material it records the associated rights in MimsyXG, or in RPMT's digital asset management system – Asset Bank – as appropriate.
- RPMT records and monitors changes, and maintains full details of all associated rights in the relevant database.
- RPMT 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.

RPMT is committed to an awareness of material sensitive to publication right (and other rights), and that any publication rights remain the property of RPMT and are not accidentally lost.

### **2.12 Retrospective documentation**

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

- RPMT defines that the primary purpose of RPMT's documentation system, MimsyXG, is to establish accountability, increase access and record actions regarding RPMT collections.
- RPMT has a documentation backlog and RPMT curators commit to working towards reducing this backlog through regular projects and programmes of documentation.
- Every item in RPMT'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. RPMT 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.
- RPMT will review progress on reducing the backlog on a regular basis.
- RPMT will work towards an overall improvement in the quality of information held about objects and collections.
- All RPMT staff are committed to improving the information, and accessibility to that information, for the benefit of RPMT and the public.

### **2.13 Outsourced management of collections**

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

- being managed day-to-day by another organisation, e.g. RPMT 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.

- For RPMT objects on loan to other organisations for an anticipated period of less than five years, see current RPMT Loans Policy and procedures found in the current RPMT Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual.

### **3. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The documents and publications referred to within this policy are:

- Collections Trust, PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management, 2009
- Collections Trust, SPECTRUM 5.0 (2017)

Internal documents:

- RPMT Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2018
- RPMT Collections Care and Conservation Plan, 2018
- RPMT Collections Development Policy, 2018
- RPMT Collections Documentation Backlog Plan, 2013
- RPMT Collections Management & Documentation Procedure Manual, 2018
- RPMT Disaster & Business Continuity Plan, 2018
- RPMT Business Plan, 2018
- BHCC Sustainability Policy, 2013, & RPMT Sustainability Action Plan, 2013
- Keep Collections Statement, 2013