



SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

Uttlesford District Council &
Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd



4.2 COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2020-2025

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Name of museum: *Saffron Walden Museum*

Name of governing body:

Uttlesford District Council & Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

Date on which this policy was approved by Museum Management Working Group:

Insert date TBA.

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review:

Insert date TBA.

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

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Relationship to other relevant policies/ plans of the organisation:

- 1.1** The museum's statement of purpose is to give people inspiration and a sense of place in Uttlesford district / north-west Essex, through exploration of our wide-ranging collections and the histories they represent.
- 1.2** The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3** By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4** Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5** The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6** The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

- 1.7** In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
 - extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken
 - the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection

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History of the collections

2.1 Ownership and History of the Saffron Walden Museum Collections

2.1.1 The collections are owned by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd, UK registered charity 1123209, which founded the Museum in the 1830s to house its collections (then known as the Saffron Walden Natural History Society). Society members were local gentlemen of learned interests and far-flung contacts, allowing them to acquire collections from all over the world, notably in ethnography and the natural sciences, as well as closer to home. Pre-eminent among the Museum's founders were John Player, a retired civil servant from the Admiralty, and Jabez Gibson, a member of a prominent local Quaker family of brewers and bankers. Later nineteenth century collectors continued to enrich the Museum, such as George Stacey Gibson's herbaria and fossil collections, Joseph Clarke's collection of antiquities and the fine collections of ceramics and glass made by William Tuke (another Quaker family of note) and Dr Henry Stear. Until the 1880s members of the Society curated the collections but in 1880 the first professional curator, George Nathan Maynard, was appointed. The Society continued to run the Museum directly, with the aid of grants from various sources, until 1974, when the newly established Uttlesford District Council took over the operation of the Museum Service. Saffron Walden Museum Society leases the Museum collections and buildings to Uttlesford District Council under a joint management agreement (revised 2004, 2009 and 2014).

Under this agreement, the Museum Service's governing body is the Museum Management Working Group, a joint committee of representatives from Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd and Uttlesford District Council.

- 2.1.2** The collections of Saffron Walden Museum, estimated to be about 170,000 objects and specimens, have been developed since 1832. Initially collecting was widespread, reflecting the diverse interests and contacts of the Society membership, and covered natural and human history from around the world, as well as objects and specimens local to north west Essex. Many of the Museum's most important ethnographic items were collected in its early decades.
- 2.1.3** In the twentieth century, the rise of social history and archaeology as museum disciplines and the disposal of many of the older exotic animal mounted specimens in the early 1960s led to a greater focus on the immediate district (now Uttlesford). That process of refining and targeting collecting continues in the twenty-first century. The Museum must also balance the demands placed by developments such as Stansted Airport, which are producing large volumes of archaeological material, with finite resources. The off-site store and subsequent adjustments to the Museum buildings will set a finite spatial limit on sustainable collecting for the foreseeable future.

3

An overview of current collections

The scope of the collections is summarised below under headings to reflect the dual local (north-west Essex) and global range of subjects covered. In general, the Museum's collecting area will be defined by relevance to Uttlesford District, the area of north-west Essex defined by the local authority boundary of Uttlesford District Council.

Occasionally offers of appropriate objects or specimens may be accepted for subjects which are non-local by their nature, such as ethnography, as described below. The time span within which the Museum collects also varies according to subject. For the archaeology and history of Uttlesford, all periods from earliest prehistoric to today are relevant. For geological collections, the time-frame extends backwards to include Pleistocene remains and beyond that fossils from the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras.

3.1 Human History and Culture of north-west Essex, and its regional and British context

- 3.1.1 Archaeology** – excavated finds and records from Uttlesford, all periods from prehistoric to post medieval, and finds made as a result of other fieldwork or by chance. Historically, the Museum also holds some antiquarian finds from the region and further afield.

- 3.1.2 Social and Local History:** objects, ephemera and documents – made or used in Uttlesford, or associated with local places and people
- 3.1.3 Pictorial: Prints, Watercolours, Paintings, Drawings and Photographs** reflecting the history, people and natural history of Uttlesford, but excluding ‘fine art’
- 3.1.4 Costume, Textiles, Needlework and Accessories** – range of English and local.
- 3.1.5 Ceramics and Glass** – British and European ceramics and glassware, 16th – 20th century (decorative arts).
- 3.1.6 Woodwork and Furniture** - local and English domestic woodwork of 14th – 18th century and a small collection of English furniture of 16th-18th century

3.2 Natural Environment of north-west Essex and its regional and British context

The natural science collections contain about 70,000 specimens of plants, animals, rocks, minerals and fossils. The founders of the Museum and other 19th century naturalists presented most of these specimens. They collected in Essex and the rest of Britain.

- 3.2.1 Plants** - specimens of flowering plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, fungi, lichens and algae
- 3.2.2 Animals** - mammals, birds, birds’ eggs, amphibians, reptiles, fish, insects, molluscs and other invertebrate groups
- 3.2.3 Fossils** – fossils from Palaeozoic, Mesozoic and Caenozoic eras of geological time
- 3.2.4 Minerals and Rocks** – minerals; sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks

3.3 Human History and Culture – the wider world

- 3.3.1 Mediterranean and Egyptian antiquities** – a small collection including pre-dynastic to Ptolemaic artefacts and one Roman-period mummy from Egypt, and pottery from Greece and Cyprus.
- 3.3.2 Ethnography (world cultures)** – a collection of international significance, over 4,000 objects mostly collected between the late 18th and early 20th centuries, all continents and many different cultures represented.

- 3.4 Natural Environment - the wider world**
Specimens illustrating the natural environments of continents around the world.
- 3.4.1 Plants** – plants collected outside Britain in the 19th century
- 3.4.2 Animals** – animals collected outside Britain during the 19th and early 20th centuries
- 3.4.3 Geology** - rocks, minerals and fossils found outside Britain

4

Themes and priorities for future collecting

This section provides more information and subject-specific guidance, additional to and subject to the general acquisition and disposal criteria.

4.1 Human History and Culture of North-West Essex, and its Regional and British Context

4.1.1 Archaeology

Scope and Role of Collections

Single finds and excavation archives (the finds and records from archaeological fieldwork) covering all periods from earliest prehistoric (Old Stone Age) to recent centuries (Post Medieval). The role of the collection is to preserve and interpret evidence of human activity and sites, especially those that have been damaged or destroyed by development, agriculture or by natural erosion. It is also to help us understand the long history of changing human cultures and interaction with the landscape and environment. The collection includes early coins, from Iron Age to Post Medieval, recovered from archaeological sites, and antiquarian coins and numismatics of no fixed provenance. The new purpose-built museum off-site store, which has been fully operational since 2016/17, has resolved immediate issues of capacity for archaeological archives, allowing the backlog of archives from archaeological contractors to be deposited, notably those from large-scale projects at Stansted Airport (Framework Archaeology) and the new A120 (Oxford-Wessex). However the current and anticipated extent of development in the district along the M11 and A120 corridors will continue to generate a significant number of evaluation and larger project archives, which may test future capacity.

For future use, the special strength of the archaeology collection will be as a large archive of multi-period sites reflecting the evolution of a rural landscape and sites within it from prehistoric to recent times. The nature of the developments at Stansted Airport, coupled with road schemes, pipelines and community projects, will provide a unique archive of local and some regional importance, even

nationally with regard to the Airport projects.

Human remains from archaeological excavations, skeletal or cremated, will continue to be collected (subject to storage space) for long-term research and educational potential where appropriate, and according to the terms of the Ministry of Justice licence (*Authority to excavate human remains for archaeological purposes*) issued to the archaeological contractors, and any other necessary permissions, e.g. from Church authorities. (see also Guidelines below).

Historic Building Records or HRBs (usually paper and/or digital records without finds) relating to properties in Uttlesford district will also be accepted.

The acquisition and deposition of archaeological archives and HRBs will be governed by the standards set out in *Archaeological Archives in Essex - Guidelines for preparation and deposition* (2015 and subsequent editions) including deposition charges to be paid by archaeological contractors. This includes criteria under which digital material will be accepted, but a copy of the digital archive must be deposited by contractors with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) and associated costs borne by the depositing contractor. The Museum lacks the resources and IT capacity to continually migrate digital data to new software and platforms, but the ADS fulfils this function ensuring that digital archives will be future-proofed and remain accessible.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Fieldwork archives, provenanced finds from Uttlesford including finds which have been declared treasure and which Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd is willing and able to purchase (with grant-aid if necessary). Special priority will be given to acquiring major archives from Stansted Airport, the A120 and related large-scale fieldwork from associated developments, and to smaller archives from parish projects where local communities working with professional advice have undertaken systematic in-depth studies or fieldwork.

In all cases, it is necessary to establish that finds are acquired legally with the landowner's consent, or in keeping with the Treasure Act 1996 where appropriate, and to avoid acquiring 'tainted cultural objects' as defined under the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003.

Sampling, Selection and Retention

For large-scale linear projects e.g. pipelines, roads across district boundaries, deposition of the archive should be made on archaeological criteria, to prevent illogical division of archives across collecting area boundaries, and provided copies of documentation are deposited with other museum services involved. An example is the archive from the Cambridge-Matching Green Gas Pipeline 2002

which will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum, by arrangement with Cambridgeshire Archaeology Service and Epping Forest District Museum.

Large quantities of common finds such as potsherds, unworked animal bone, waste products of industrial processes and building materials will be preserved through samples and records rather than in their entirety, unless there are special reasons for preserving all finds from a particular context intact. The Museum will work with excavators and specialists to refine the content of archives before acquisition as far as possible.

Large quantities of common finds from archives already in the collection may be reviewed and sampled in future, in consultation with appropriate specialists, with the aim of maintaining collections within sustainable limits while retaining, through records and scientifically viable samples, the information essential to preserve the archive's usefulness and integrity of purpose. The long-term retention of very small quantities of common finds from evaluations and watching briefs may also be reviewed, if subsequent fieldwork or research shows that they are not significant. Older excavation archives and antiquarian collections with limited contextual data will be priority for rationalisation, though with due regard for the impact of new analytical techniques or information from more recent fieldwork, which can sometimes transform the significance of older collections.

In sampling and disposal, care will be taken to preserve evidence or record of individual sites and ensure every parish in Uttlesford remains represented in the collection, and the collections retained should allow comparative studies of the distribution of sites across the landscape. The needs of local educational and community projects for access to finds from their own parish will be observed.

Sampling of archaeological material for destructive techniques, such as Radiocarbon dating or DNA analysis, may be permitted if appropriate and the potential gain to information and research outweighs the physical integrity of the object or specimen.

Antiquarian collections with material from outside Uttlesford may be retained where these form a distinct group with its own story or purpose. An example would be collections amassed for broader comparative purposes e.g. in prehistoric lithics, the Palaeolithic flint and stone tools which cover sites in south-east Britain, and extend to comparative material from a few French sites.

4.1.2 Social & Local History: Objects, Ephemera and Documents Scope and Role of Collection

A wide range of objects connected with the history of Saffron Walden and the district of Uttlesford. It includes collections of traditional building material used locally and objects relating to local trades. Of

particular interest is the agricultural collection, which contains farm tools and vehicles of local significance. There are also several discrete collections of domestic metalwork, timepieces, medical instruments, scientific pieces, and lighting instruments. The general collection of British coins and numismatics includes a good collection of 17th century tradesmen's tokens, and local bank notes. Examples of Saffron Walden clock-makers' work are also a special local feature. The small collection of toys and dolls has some good examples of 18th- 20th century dolls and dolls clothes from the 17th – 19th century, which are of regional importance.

There is an extensive collection of documents and ephemera relating to the administration of the town with some items of regional significance. It also includes good documentation on the Museum's own beginnings. Items of national importance include some Robert Southey manuscripts, William Penn letters, and annotated books from Gabriel Harvey's library and a collection of autograph letters collected by George Stacey Gibson. There are some historic maps and large-scale 19th century OS plans of Saffron Walden and the surrounding area.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Additions will only be made to this collection provided that the objects offered are associated with people, places, events or industries in the Uttlesford District, or fill gaps in the existing collections. Small items that do not have a local connection but which illustrate a general trend or local theme, and are of a high quality will be acquired, provided that no other accredited museum has a stronger claim. In future acquisitions of toys and dolls from the 20th century could develop a comparative collection. Toys and dolls with a local connection and that fill gaps in the current collection will continue to be collected.

Priority needs to be given to reflecting the social life and changes in Uttlesford through the 20th century, particularly in domestic and personal life and changes in the local economy and industry. Restrictions of resources, space for display and storage means that items of large machinery and equipment, domestic appliances and vehicles, will not be acquired. The emphasis will be on smaller objects, good examples of printed items and ephemera.

Firearms will only be collected if of local relevance (e.g. local gunsmiths, local militia, and poacher's guns) and within the scope of the Museum's Firearms Licence. Prohibited weapons, live ammunition or anything containing explosives or unstable chemicals will not be collected.

Pharmaceutical and medical items containing stable residues of historic identified drugs will be retained intact for research and display, and the appropriate Ministry of Justice licence obtained if

necessary (the Museum is currently licensed for the possession of opiates in respect of a Victorian doctor's portable medicine cabinet, but may not loan these without a licence to supply opiates).

4.1.3 Pictorial Collections: Prints, Maps, Watercolours, Paintings, Drawings and Photographs.

Scope and Role of Collection

Prints, maps, drawings, photographs and paintings form a comprehensive collection of Saffron Walden topographical representations from 18th century to 20th century, with good coverage of other parts of the county. There is a collection of portraits of Essex personalities and some early photographs, though not necessarily of local people. The Clarke collection of Essex views and portraits is the most significant single collection. There are important collections of natural history prints by Thomas Bewick and prints of Roman mosaic floors. The collection of Essex and local maps includes historic printed maps and sets of 19th-20th century large-scale Ordnance Survey maps for the district, some with historical annotations.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Prints, drawings and paintings are acquired primarily as historical or topographical records and must possess aesthetic or historic merit and depict people, places and events in Uttlesford, and/or be by local artists. The Museum does not collect from a 'fine art' perspective and will refer works by the Great Bardfield group of artists (Bawden, Ravilious and associates) and other 20th – 21st-century recent north-west Essex artists to the Fry Art Gallery (North-West Essex Collection).

There are a small number of oil paintings which are largely an outcome of random historic acquisitions, which do not form a coherent collection and most of which are not displayed. Exceptions are a small number with strong local connections, principally portraits of local gentry, work of local 19th century artist J Youngman and the friezes by Cipriani for the Adams' rooms at Audley End House; the latter have been returned to Audley End on renewable loan for display and study alongside related documents in the Audley End archives. An expert assessment (for insurance valuations) in 2006 coupled with the work of the Public Catalogue Foundation since then, has led to a re-assessment of the oil paintings, and as a result a small number of paintings in very poor condition and of no artistic, historical or local merit have been disposed of.

Past and present photographs of named people and places in Uttlesford, especially outside Saffron Walden, should be actively acquired and with copyright, or record of the copyright holder, wherever possible. Film collections will be referred to the Essex Record Office or East Anglian Film Archive where specialist facilities for their care, use and preservation are available.

Priorities for documents, manuscripts and books should be the acquisition of printed documents, ephemera and where applicable maps that relate to the more recent history of the Museum and the Uttlesford district. Books should not be actively collected as there are current difficulties in storing early books; only volumes in good condition with a very direct relevance to items in the collection should be accepted. Isolated examples of manuscripts or other documents may be collected where these relate closely to objects in the Museum's collection and do not have special archival needs beyond the Museum's scope, such as an account book amongst a group of items from a local shop, or a diary with other belongings of a famous local resident

4.1.4 Costume, Footwear, Textiles, Needlework and Accessories Scope and Role of Collection

This collection ranges from the 17th century to the 20th century with costume and accessories not necessarily of local origin, but able to illustrate stories relevant to life in north-west Essex and its inhabitants, and a range of techniques, styles and materials. Samplers, lace samples and equipment, children's costume and stump work are of regional significance. Important individual items include a late 16th century glove said to have belonged to Mary Queen of Scots. Under Ethnography, there are other items of costume and textile, notably a significant collection of Chinese and east Asian costume and textiles, collected and/or used by the families of Essex residents.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Storage problems in the costume and textile store will restrict acquiring large examples or collections of costume and or textiles for the immediate future. The Museum will acquire locally-related costume and textiles in good condition if they can be accommodated. Priority will be given to sparsely represented items e.g. men's clothing, uniform relating to the First and Second World Wars, work wear for men and women, and clothing reflecting 20th century trends as experienced by people living in Uttlesford. Children's clothing from the 20th century is also a priority, but items over-collected in the past such as christening robes and wedding dresses will not be collected except in exceptional circumstances, if they fill a gap and are accompanied by exceptional contextual information.

4.1.5 Ceramics and Glass Scope and Role of Collection

Two local benefactors, William Tuke and Dr Henry Stear, made the core collection of British and European ceramics and glass in the late 19th century, with some later additions. This collection contains some pieces of national importance, particularly in the field of tin glazed earthenware, and also includes cream ware, stoneware and English drinking glasses of a high quality. English porcelain, medieval

earthenware and Staffordshire figurines are also represented. A small collection of Castle Hedingham pottery (19th century art pottery) provides a local dimension.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Ceramics and Glass will be acquired if the items offered fill a gap, have a local connection or will add to important or high quality pieces already in the collection. The Museum should be actively seeking to acquire donations, bequests or affordable purchases of pieces, which extend the collection into the twentieth century, concentrating on the development of tablewares and domestic pottery. Studio pottery will continue to be represented by long-term renewable loans for the foreseeable future, as acquisition would require funds and expertise beyond the Museum's scope. Braintree District Museum is considered the primary collection of Castle Hedingham ware in Essex, and will be given priority for any pieces offered at public auction.

4.1.6 Furniture and Woodwork

Scope and Role of Collection

One or two pieces of national importance are contained in this collection: a Tudor bed, an oak stool, plus other items of high quality such as chests. The majority of the collection consists of decorated panels and structural timbers of local interest. Occasional additions to the collections are made through local donations or bequests but the Museum does not have the space, purchase funds or in-house expertise to actively pursue collecting.

Collecting Area and Priorities

The Museum will not acquire large items of furniture or woodwork that cannot be adequately displayed or stored; this means that little is likely to be acquired for the foreseeable future. The priority will be to improve care and interpretation of the existing collections, including links with textiles (tapestries), ceramics, glass and social history collections.

4.2 Natural Environment of Uttlesford (north-west Essex) and its regional context

The natural science collections contain about 70,000 specimens of plants, animals, rocks, minerals and fossils. The founders of the Museum and other 19th century naturalists presented most of these specimens. They collected in Essex and the rest of Britain.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Acquisition of specimens found in north-west Essex will be given priority over material from elsewhere in Britain and the rest of the world. Field collection and survey at sites in Uttlesford will not be undertaken without permission of the landowner. The Museum will not collect or record on Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) without official permission.

Sampling, Selection and Retention

Natural history specimens should be accompanied with full data, such as species/object identification, exact location found, method of collection, whether it was found dead as a result of accidental death, date collected, name of collector.

4.2.1 Plants

Scope and Role of Collection

The historic herbarium is of considerable regional importance. It contains about 14,000 dried specimens of flowering plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, fungi, lichens and algae. Essex botanists such as George Stacey Gibson, Joshua Clarke, W.L.P. Garnons and Frederick Brocas collected many of these plants in Britain during the 19th century. The Museum has a copy of G.S. Gibson's *Flora of Essex* and some field notebooks of wild flowers records.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Biological records of sightings of plants in north-west Essex. The Museum coordinates and undertakes surveys of plants at sites designated under the Special Roadside Verges Project in Uttlesford. The Museum will collect voucher specimens of plants that are found in north-west Essex.

4.2.2 Animals

Scope and Role of Collection

Mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, insects, molluscs and other invertebrates can be found in the zoology collections. A small collection of mainly British mammals includes the famous "Wallace the Lion" who was born in Scotland and belonged to menagerie-owner George Wombwell, who came from a village near Saffron Walden. Historic specimens of British birds form the main part of the bird collection. Joseph and Joshua Clarke, Jabez Gibson, John Gould, Stephen Salmon, and Mr Stevenson presented birds. There is a field notebook of bird records. The birds' egg collection includes material from W.M. Tuke and H.E. Smith. Breastbones from different species of birds are part of the bone collection.

The insect collection includes large numbers of British beetles, butterflies and moths, including micro-moths. Shells from Britain are found in the mollusc collection and the local material has extensive data.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Biological records of sightings of animals in north-west Essex. Mammals and birds found in north-west Essex. The Museum may acquire historic mounted specimens with data and modern specimens that have died of natural or accidental causes. Birds' eggs will not be accepted unless they have paperwork to prove they were legally collection before 1954, the specimens have

collection data and the eggs fill gaps in the collection. Specimens of insects and other invertebrates from north-west Essex will be collected; however, the acquisition of butterfly and moth collections is not a priority unless the collections have full data.

4.2.3 Fossils

Scope and Role of Collection

Fossil remains of animals from the Chalk and Red Crag seas that once covered East Anglia are the strengths of the fossil collection. It is particularly rich in Crag fossils from Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, amassed into a collection by G.S. Gibson. There are local chalk and boulder clay fossils and remains of animals from the Ice Age glaciations of the Pleistocene period. Most fossils date from the Caenozoic and Mesozoic eras of geological time.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Caenozoic and Mesozoic fossils found in north-west Essex.

4.2.4 Minerals and Rocks

Scope and Role of Collection

The mineral collection contains specimens from Britain collected in the 18th and 19th centuries by Sir John St. Aubyn, Dr W. Babington, G.S. Gibson and J.E. Drew. Many of the mines in Cornwall, Derbyshire and northern England where these minerals were collected are now closed. The rock collection has examples of igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Rocks, minerals and fossils found in north-west Essex.

4.3 Human History and Culture – the Wider World

4.3.1 Egyptian and Mediterranean Antiquities

Scope and Role of Collection

A small historic collection formed mainly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Mediterranean antiquities are principally Greek and Cypriot pottery. Egyptian antiquities range from pre-dynastic to Ptolemaic, including one human mummy. These collections are used for teaching National Curriculum topics on Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece to visiting school classes, Saffron Walden Museum being the only museum in Essex to offer Ancient Egypt as a standard and popular part of its schools' programme. Most of the Egyptian antiquities are common items from funerary contexts but some are more significant, such as a Middle Kingdom double statue, a stela and a pot for sacred milk from the temple of Hathor. In recent years, research has continued to shed new light on important exhibits: the CT scan of the Roman-period mummy of a young boy attracted much attention and led to significant new information, while other re-identified objects include a rare *Book of Breathings* funerary papyrus

and shabti figures from the tomb of Seti I.

Collecting Area and Priorities

The Museum does not intend to actively add to these collections: besides the relative restrictions on acquiring ancient Egyptian and Mediterranean antiquities today, purchase costs, lack of space and lack of appropriate curatorial staff in these fields make it inappropriate. Offers of small items by gift or bequest may be considered only if they fit with the existing collections and are of sound provenance. Efforts will be concentrated instead on researching and widening the uses of the existing collection, through involvement with The Fitzwilliam Museum /University of Cambridge museums, British Museum and other appropriate networks.

4.3.2 Ethnography (World Cultures)

Scope and Role of Collection

An internationally important collection of some 6,000 objects, mostly domestic artefacts, worldwide in scope. Significant early acquisitions include the Bennet collection (Polynesia), Helder Wedge collection (Australia) and objects reflecting the native cultures of North America. Oriental collections include an early suit of Samurai armour and East Asian costume and textiles, notably a collection of costume from a Chinese family spanning 1870 to 1970 and a collection of embroidered textiles from the Middle East to China. The collection asserts the creativity and skills of many different cultures around the world, and records some cultures which have since disappeared (often as a result of European intervention) or changed dramatically in the last two hundred years. It also reflects the trading, missionary and colonising context, in which much of the ethnographic collections were made during the 19th century, and the stories of individual local collectors and their travels. In recent decades, Saffron Walden Museum has also become the repository for small collections of ethnography from other museums in Essex; therefore it also holds a countywide responsibility for historic collections relating to Essex collectors and travellers in general.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Acquisitions will be restricted to donations of provenanced items, which relate to or complement existing collections, and especially any associated with collectors, residents or explorers from north-west Essex, to reflect the continuing exchange and contacts between; local communities and other parts of the world. In assessing offers for the collection, the Museum must be able to establish that the object(s) were not exported illegally from the country of origin. The Museum will not collect human remains from outside the UK (see Archaeology above), unless as artefacts incorporating small amounts of historic human tissue (e.g. hair, teeth). Active collection from present-day communities is outside the Museum's scope, so the Museum will concentrate on interpreting historic collections in their context.

Projects in recent years with other small ethnographic collections in the region (museums in Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Wisbech and Time & Tide, Great Yarmouth) have increased awareness of potential links with these and other collections through themes and geographical areas of interest, collecting histories and early collectors. In considering any future acquisitions and rationalisation, reference will be made to these and other specialist and to other museums with specialist ethnographic collections in the region, as appropriate (e.g. Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Sainsbury's centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich; Colchester & Ipswich Museums; Horniman Museum).

4.4 Natural Environment - the wider world

Material was collected from Europe and all over the world during the 19th century. These specimens illustrate the natural environments of continents around the world.

Collecting Area and Priorities

Not a priority unless specimens represent groups not found in the collection and can be used for education; for example to illustrate animals found in different habitats, or the types of materials found around the world.

4.4.1 Plants

Scope and Role of Collection

The herbarium has a small number of plant specimens and tropical seeds collected outside Britain. The collection also contains some examples of products from the cotton and rubber industries.

4.4.2 Animals

Scope and Role of Collection

The Mammal collection contains some European material. Birds were collected from Europe and there is a wealth of fine artistic Victorian taxidermy with examples of humming birds, Birds of Paradise and other species from Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia. A small number of foreign Reptiles and Amphibians are represented.

Local Essex donors have presented insects and other invertebrates from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Shells from around the world are found in the mollusc collection.

4.4.3 Geology

Scope and Role of Collection

Some fossils, minerals and rocks were collected in elsewhere in the world. There is an interesting collection of volcanic rocks.

4.5 Handling & Educational Loan Collection

It is the policy of Saffron Walden Museum to regard all collections as of educational value and to make all objects and specimens available

for educational purposes in ways compatible with their nature and preservation. Nevertheless safeguards have to be in place to prevent any objects or specimens from the Museum collection being exposed to excessive risk from repeated handling or use off the Museum premises without Museum staff present. For this reason, the Museum's Learning & Outreach Officer maintains a separate Handling & Educational Loan collection of objects, specimens and replicas specifically for frequent handling in learning activities, and for Loan Boxes to be used by teachers, community groups and others for learning and well-being, in schools and other venues. This Handling and Educational collection is distinct from accessioned Museum objects or specimens, which may however be *occasionally* shown or handled under the direct supervision of Museum staff for specific purposes, when material in the Handling & Educational collection will not suffice.

Objects and specimens diverted to the Handling & Educational Loan Collection will be duplicates or otherwise surplus to the Museum collection, and be suitable for handling by all age groups or for use in school classrooms and other educational venues on a regular basis.

Donors offering items which are unsuitable for the Museum collection, but accepted for the Handling & Education Loan Collection, will be informed of the difference in risk and status, and must consent to the item(s) being allocated for handling and schools loan use. This should be noted on the signed Entry Form.

The interests of other accredited museums take precedence where an object or specimen, which is not acquired or required for Saffron Walden Museum's collection, may be suitable for handling and educational loans but also meets acquisition criteria for another Accredited museum which wants to acquire it.

Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

5.3 Human History and Culture of North-West Essex

5.3.1 Archaeology

Finds identified in conjunction with researchers and specialists as having insufficient context or research potential to justify retention. Bulk excavated finds of common types which could be adequately preserved by record and/or a statistically viable sample, according to specialist advice. Isolated finds or small groups of finds from other parts of Britain, where they do not contribute significantly to understanding the archaeology or collecting history of Uttlesford and its context, and significantly greater public benefit could be achieved by permanently transferring it to another accredited museum.

5.3.2 Social & Local History

Objects that have no local connection or provenance, or cannot be used to illustrate a local story, and the condition of which is such as to necessitate more conservation work that their significance merits will be prioritised for disposal. Duplicate items such as single examples of common tools and other common equipment or household items will be assessed for disposal and other uses as part of the transfer of collections to the new off-site store. Care will be taken however to preserve intact collections of associated tools from named local workshops or craftsmen.

5.3.3 Pictorial Collections: Prints, Maps, Watercolours, Paintings, Drawings and Photographs

Offers of historic manuscripts such as deeds, wills and other documents with specialist archival needs will be referred to the Essex Record Office. This will include comprehensive archives from local businesses, such as series of ledgers, accounts and long-term diaries kept by Essex residents.

Maps, especially historic Ordnance Survey editions, have already been the subject of a cataloguing and rationalisation programme 2009-2012, which resulted in duplicate copies being disposed of to appropriate local sources, historic reference maps being accessioned due to accrued historic significance, and a small number being transferred to the *Essex Record Office* because of links with other records held there. A similar process will be applied to other categories of prints as work through the collections progresses. Antiquarian collections of brass rubbings from various counties will be considered for disposal to relevant museums or archives where possible, with only Essex examples or samples retained as appropriate.

Disposal from photographic collections (including glass plates and lantern slides) will be considered to remove non-local and unprovenanced images which do not form part of a coherent collection.

Rationalisation of oil paintings without local connections will continue, to consider the disposal of paintings which could be better curated and displayed in other institutions, preferably accredited galleries or museums.

5.3.4 Costume, Footwear, Textiles, Needlework and Accessories

Continuing contact with other museums collecting costume and textile in the county and region to establish collections which specialise in certain types of costume or textiles, e.g. the Warner Textile Archive in Braintree.

5.3.5 Ceramics and Glass

Damaged pieces where a duplicate in better condition exists or can be acquired, unless part of a set. Specialist advice will be sought if any disposal is contemplated.

5.3.6 Furniture and Woodwork

There is little scope for rationalisation or disposal envisaged at present, and expert advice would need to be sought if any were contemplated.

5.3.7 Biological Specimens (Animals and Plants), Geology (Fossils, Rocks and Minerals)

Categories for disposal are duplicates of common species, or specimens, which do not have associated data and are in poor condition. Objects that pose a health and safety hazard that cannot be controlled or isolated.

5.3.8 Egyptian and Mediterranean Antiquities

No scope for rationalisation and disposal is seen in the foreseeable

future; the collection includes a small number of items of significance, and others, which are likely to benefit from further research.

5.3.9 Ethnography (World Cultures)

Fuller documentation and research may reveal a small number of unprovenanced, duplicate items suitable for handling collections or disposal, otherwise disposal is not envisaged. A large collection of items placed on long-term loan by the Cuming Museum in the 1960s has been re-assessed with the Cuming Museum; items in store were returned to the Cuming Museum and the remaining 120 objects on display are being regularly reviewed. In the event of the Museum receiving any requests for repatriation of artefacts, each request will be considered on its own terms and advice will be sought from the Museum Ethnographers Group (MEG) and other sources of appropriate expertise and guidance. There are no human remains in the ethnographic collection, except for human components such as hair and teeth used in a few artefacts. Two Toi moko (Maori preserved and tattooed heads), which were previously in the collection from the mid-19th century, were repatriated to New Zealand in 2005.

5.3.10 Handling & Educational Loan Collection

Objects and specimens from the Museum collections, which are diverted to the Handling & School Loan collection, should be deaccessioned, i.e. formally removed from the Museum collection, subject to the approval of the Board of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. This process should ensure that items of potentially high research potential are not placed at unnecessary risk, and keep the Museum's governing body aware of specific educational developments. It should also free parts of the collection for more imaginative use. Because they are unaccessioned or deaccessioned, items in the Handling & Educational Loan collection are not subject to the disposal policy in this document. However, a register of items in the Handling & Educational Loan collection will be maintained by Learning and Outreach Officer, and the loss, damage or disposal of any item, and the reason, will be recorded in that register.

6

Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

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

7

Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 **Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):**

Work in Essex and the region on collecting, and the network of subject specialist groups, are likely to establish county and regional priorities and centres of specialisation in future, which will be accommodated into this policy as they arise.

In particular, Saffron Walden Museum will liaise regarding acquisitions of common interest with local museums and galleries which are accredited or actively seeking accredited status, and other institutions:

- 7.2.1 **Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden** – paintings and other works by North-West Essex artists
- 7.2.2 **Great Dunmow Museum** – local history objects from or relating to the town of Great Dunmow and Little Dunmow
- 7.2.3 **Neighbouring museum services in Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk** on acquisitions which cross collecting area boundaries and interests. Saffron Walden and Bishop's Stortford museums have agreed to share information on local history and archaeological acquisitions from Uttlesford parishes (Essex) bordering Bishop's Stortford (Herts.): Birchanger, Farnham and the Hallingburys. Acquisitions of objects and specimens from border locations, especially where county and district boundaries have changed, need particular consideration.
- 7.2.4 **Saffron Walden Gibson Library** (formerly known as the Town Library) - printed and hand-written documents, photographs, pictures, books and other sources of information on Saffron Walden's history. Like the Museum, the Town Library is a special legacy of learned

local benefactors from the mid-19th century, and there are close connections between the Town Library's and the Museum's collections.

7.2.5 Essex Record Office, Chelmsford – historic documents and archives that can be more appropriately cared for, interpreted, used and accessed in a record office with archivists and specialist conservation facilities for documents.

7.2.6 Essex Regiment Museum (Chelmsford Museum) – items relating to the Essex Regiment

8

Archival holdings

As Saffron Walden Museum holds and, in certain circumstances, may acquire certain types of archival material, such as photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd edition, 2002).

Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

9.1.1 Aim of Acquisition

To improve the scope, quality and relevance of Saffron Walden Museum's collections, within sustainable limits, in order to fulfil the Service's stated aims.

9.1.2 Definition

To **accession** is formally to enter an object or specimen into the Museum collections. A record of the object or specimen is made in the Saffron Walden Museum Accession Register and a unique accession number is issued for the object or specimen.

9.1.3 Methods of Acquisition

Collections may be acquired by the following methods: donation, bequest, purchase and field collection (for natural science and archaeology in certain circumstances).

Anyone intending to bequeath items to the Museum will be encouraged to discuss and agree future bequests with the Museum, which will keep a record for future reference. Bequests or conditions made without the Museum's prior knowledge and agreement cannot be regarded as binding on the Museum.

Loans will only be accepted for a specific time period and purpose, such as a special exhibition or for comparative study as part of a research project. 'Indefinite loans' or 'permanent loans' are not accepted. Items loaned for the long-term, usually for long-term display, will be accepted as renewable loans and the loan agreement will be reviewed and renewed by both lender and Museum at regular intervals, of not more than five years. Loans will not be accepted simply for storage or 'safekeeping'.

9.1.4 Limitations on Collecting

Saffron Walden Museum will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage or care of collection arrangements. In cases where extensive conservation of an acquisition would be necessary, the cost and benefits must be weighed.

9.1.5 Shared Acquisitions

Occasionally it may be beneficial for Saffron Walden Museum to seek joint acquisition of an exceptional item with one or more other museums. This may be considered where it is the best or only way of acquiring an important item for public collections, or where a strong interest is equally shared between museums and cannot be addressed by ordinary loan arrangements. In such cases, the terms and responsibilities and administrative obligations of the joint

acquisition must be agreed with participating museums before acquisition and recorded in full.

9.1.6 Authority for Acquiring Items

For donations and bequests, authority to determine acquisitions is delegated to the Curator, acting in consultation with other curatorial staff as appropriate in accordance with this policy, and with external expert advice if necessary.

For purchases, permission must be sought from the Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd, which provides the purchase funds. This should be by the Board of Directors of the Society in accordance with its articles and memorandum.

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Museum's governing body, having regard to the interests of other museums. The Museum's governing body is the Museum Management Working Group (MMWG), which comprises four Saffron Walden Museum Society representatives and four members of Uttlesford District Council. Decisions affecting the collections (acquisitions outside the policy, loans, purchases and disposals) must first be agreed by the Board of Directors of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (owners of the collections) before being referred to MMWG. MMWG will then make a recommendation to the Cabinet of Uttlesford District Council for formal approval.

- 9.2** The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 9.3** In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10

Human remains

- 10.1** The museum does not hold or intend to acquire human remains under 100 years old; human remains acquired through archaeological fieldwork are all over 100 years old, and objects in the social history and ethnographic collections which contain human tissue (e.g. hair, teeth) are all over 100 years old. In the unlikely event that the museum should acquire any human tissue under 100 years old, it will obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004 and any subordinate legislation from time to time in force.
- 10.2** As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.
- 10.3** Human remains from archaeological excavations in Uttlesford may be acquired for long-term research, reference and educational purposes where permitted under Ministry or Justice Licence, and with the consent of the appropriate church or religious authority for remains from Christian burial grounds. Human remains from burials of other existing religious faiths are not anticipated, given the rural nature of the district, but if they do occur then the same principle of liaison with the appropriate religious organisation will apply. Saffron Walden Museum recognises the special status of human remains which under UK law cannot be 'owned' in the same way that other collections are. Human remains from elsewhere in the UK or from other countries will not be acquired. The only exception may be if human tissue forms an integral part of an artefact, for instance if human hair or teeth have been used in historic jewellery.

11

Biological and geological material

- 11.1** So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

Archaeological material

- 12.1** The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2** In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13

Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14

Spoliation

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

The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1** The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The Board of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd (owners of the museum's collections) will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort – destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Board of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone. Decisions to dispose will be initially taken by Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd, as owners of the collection, and then reported to Uttlesford District Council's Museum Management Working Group (MMWG, the museum's governing body) (as section 9.1.6 above).

- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd, as owners of the collections from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.

- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The 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.
- 16.13.1** In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2** 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.
- 16.13.3** If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4** 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.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance

(duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17** Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18** The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.