

# Collections for Rationalisation

## Norwich Area Museums Committee 15 September 2015

### Report by the Head of NMS

#### Summary

This report sets out the background to the review of collections from the Museum of Norwich and recommends deaccessioning a group of social history items that are outside the NMS Collections Development Policy.

#### Recommendation

Members of the Norwich Area Museums Committee are asked to recommend to the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee (JMC) that the objects listed in Annex 1 are deaccessioned.

## 1. Background

1.1 Collecting within NMS is undertaken in accordance with the Collections Development Policy approved by the Joint Museums Committee. This is reviewed every five years and sets out the strengths of the collections, areas for future collecting and constraints on collecting, such as resources, space and expertise. As part of a responsible collections management strategy, NMS undertakes regular reviews of its collections to ensure that material is properly classified and adequately housed. Objects that are deemed unsuitable for retention as part of the core collection are identified and alternative homes found. The process to be followed was agreed by Committee in 2002 following a Best Value Review of collection and collections management

1.2 To summarise the collections review process, material is proposed for rationalisation which:

- Does not fall within the current collecting policy.
- Is loan material no longer required for display.
- Is of good quality but would fit better into another organisation's collections (including those of Norfolk Record Office and Norfolk Library & Information Service).
- Does not provide important information about Norfolk and its history.
- Has no reasonable expectation of being useful for display or research.
- Has been unethically acquired.
- Is unprovenanced (i.e. has no background information to provide a context).
- Is of poor quality compared with other examples in the collection.
- Has deteriorated beyond any useful purpose (e.g. through decay or infestation. This might be a natural history specimen that has suffered pest infestation).
- Poses a threat to other objects or people (e.g. by contamination. This might be WW2 gas masks with degraded asbestos filters or radioactive geological specimens).
- Is an unnecessary duplicate.
- Offers no reasonable expectation that NMS will be able to provide suitable levels of curation or collections care.

Meeting one of the above criteria does not automatically condemn any object. Each will be considered on its merits. There may well be good reasons why objects that fall into one or more of the above categories should be kept, but they will be critically examined and justified.

1.3 **Options for disposal:** there are several ways in which material that is not suitable for the NMS core collections might continue to fulfil a useful purpose including:

- Transfer to a handling collection for use with schools or the public

- Working machinery can be used to engage the public and demonstrate historic practices

Other alternatives include (in order of approach):

- Transfer to another Accredited museum by gift or sale
- Transfer to another public institution by gift or sale
- Return to donor or lender
- Repatriation to country of origin
- Charitable donation
- Set dressing or adapted to repair working objects
- Sale on the open market, or
- Destruction (as a last resort)

Any income generated by sales of objects is allocated to a ring-fenced fund for the purchase of new collections or the care of existing collections.

1.4 Once JMC has agreed the list of proposed disposals the following steps will be taken:

- As required by the conditions of the Museum Accreditation Scheme, a notice will be placed in the Museums Journal or on-line equivalent, and any other appropriate specialist publication, advertising the availability of significant material to other Accredited museums.
- Direct contact will be made with any Accredited museums or other public institutions that would have a particular interest in any of the objects.
- If no Accredited museum is interested and the material was donated within the last 20 years, attempts will be made to contact the donor to return the item.
- Material in which no interest is expressed will be either sold or destroyed.
- Complete records of all transactions will be kept.

## **2 Review of Norwich social history collections**

2.1 The larger part of the social history collections of the Museum of Norwich and Strangers Hall are stored at the Norfolk Collections Centre, situated at Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse. Many of the objects were brought into the collections during the 1970s at a time when museums generally were actively collecting items in a relatively uncontrolled manner, without reference to an official collecting policy or quality control. Others are unprovenanced architectural salvage, probably collected when Norfolk Museums Service shared a store with the City Works Department in the 1970s and 1980s.

As a result the collections contain objects which are duplicated elsewhere within Norfolk Museums Service or by other museums, or are of poor quality and now require large conservation resources to be of display standard. Most of the objects proposed for rationalisation have little or no provenance and some have no known relevance to the local history of the area. As a result these fall outside the Collections Development Policy of the Museums Service today.

These social history objects take up large areas of storage space and are in some cases bulky and cumbersome. As a result the proper care of and access to other stored and better provenanced collections is made more difficult.

2.2 A review of these collections has been undertaken in order to:

- Improve access to the collections as a whole
- Release storage space and resources to allow improved collections management

- Remove threats posed by possible insect infestation
- Remove threats posed by inappropriate storage conditions

- 2.3 Following the agreed process the attached list of objects (Annex 1) has been identified for deaccessioning and subsequent dispersal or disposal. These objects have little or no provenance, have little relevance to the history of the area and as a result fall outside the Collections Development Policy of NMS. Many duplicate items in the collection and others are in extremely poor condition and incomplete.
- 2.4 While finding a new home for the objects in another museum will be the ideal first priority, it may be that because of the poor quality and lack of provenance of the objects, sale or destruction of some the objects may be the only realistic outcome of the rationalisation process.
- 2.5 The objects listed in Annex 1 have been identified by the relevant curators as candidates for deaccessioning and dispersal if possible. The list has been scrutinised by NMS' internal Rationalisation Committee which comprises the Chief Curator, Collections Development Manager, the Senior Conservation Officer and the Registrar. Where possible these objects will be found a home in another museum or cultural institution.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 **Finance:** a budget of up to £500 may be required to pay for removal charges and possible disposal of objects which have deteriorated too far to save. Objects found homes in other cultural organisations will normally be collected at the new owner's expense, but in some cases assistance from this budget may help encourage an organisation with restricted financial means to acquire an object and thus keep it in the public domain.

### **4 Equality Impact Assessment**

NMS puts diversity, equality and community cohesion at the heart of service development and service delivery. It aims to ensure that activities included in the service plan are accessible to diverse groups in Norfolk and that all policies, practices and procedures undergo equality impact assessment. These impact assessments help the service focus on meeting the needs of customers in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion & belief and sexual orientation.

This report has no equality implications.

### **5 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

There are no Section 17 implications.

### **6 Conclusion**

The collections reviews are proposing to remove items that are of minimal interest in interpreting the history of Norfolk and will free up space and resources for the benefit of the remaining collections and the visiting public.

### **7 Recommendations**

Members are asked to recommend that JMC approve the deaccessioning and ethical disposal of the objects listed in Annex 1.




**Background Papers**





Arts Council England – Museum Accreditation Standard






Museums Association – Code of Ethics




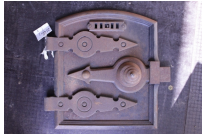
Museums Association – Good Practice Guidelines on Acquisition and Disposal

NMS Collections Development Policy




Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 1972.258.17	fireplace	Cast iron, squat fireplace with Gothic side panels, 19th century		This fireplace is in poor condition and a selection of better examples of similar type have been retained	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1972.514	board	Glass fascia board from above shop of C.B. Martins Butcher, 28 St. Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk, Reads '28 Martins 28', gold letters on blue ground, (two polychrome tiled panels depicting bulls' heads from beneath either side of the shop window NWHCM : 1972.514.1), late 19th to early 20th century		The sign is in such poor condition that it adds little additional value to the understanding of Martins Butchers. The sign is beyond repair and unlikely to ever be wanted for display. It is advised that this sign be disposed/destroyed. Additionally, it presents a health and safety issue due to the sharp edges of the large fragments. The sign is also incomplete with a large section missing.	Destruction. This object should be safely disposed of.
NWHCM : 1980.160.1	rack	Case rack and 11 type cases, two with cast iron handles, John Haddon and Co, London, E.C., early 20th century, from R.P. Colman and Co Ltd, St. Andrew's Hill, Norwich, Norfolk		We have other examples of print cases in the collection, both on display and in store. Others that have been retained are in better condition and are complete.	Disposal. Offer to John Jarrold Printing Museum, Frogmore Paper Mill and other museums via Museums Journal.


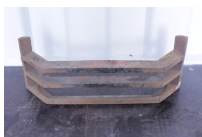



Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.56	clock	Carved wooden clock. Face of clock surrounded by carved boarder of leaves and rope design. Below clock face, glazed window over pendulum flanked by carved dolphins and bottom of clock has carved anchor and rope design.		This object is incomplete and in poor condition with significant wood worm damage. It has been re-accessioned as it could not be linked to any documentation, so therefore has no provenance.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.66	blind	'Hartshorns' improved self-acting shade roller from the 1900s, long pole at the top, with metal ends with blue material extending from it, bottom of material wrapped around thin piece of wood, material is substantially damaged		This object is in poor condition and outside of the collecting policy of Museum of Norwich. It is possible that this object was never intended to be part of the collection (potential that it was office material), it has no provenance.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.69	pole	long thin metal pole, hollow and not joined up, long slot throughout the pole where metal doesn't join, possible bottom of banner to weigh it down?		This object is in poor condition and outside of the collecting policy of Museum of Norwich; it is unsure of the usage of the object. It is possible that this object was never intended to be part of the collection (potential that it was office material), it has no provenance.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.74	sign	Enamel sign for 'Brookers Coco'. Main text is in dark blue on a white background. 'Brookers' is in joined up writing while 'coco' is not. Left corner of sign has yellow circle with 'Dutch' written inside in black. There remains evidence that there would have been a yellow circle of similar shape opposite but damage to the enamel is too severe to ascertain. Sign is damaged with enamel eroded top section of sign and right hand side.		This object is on very poor condition.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.






Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.75.2	sign	Enamel sign for 'Cashmere Soap'. White lettering on blue background with white border		This sign is a duplicate and is in poor condition, the better of the two have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.76	sign	Pressed metal sign advertising 'Nectar Tea'. Black background with yellow writing. Bottom right corner has joined up inscription 'London' and left corner is partly illegible but 'Tea Co.' can be made out. Significant rust and erosion on sign		This sign is a duplicate and is in poor condition, the better of the two have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1929.111.4	spit	Plain spit, wooden wheel, 2 pronged fork		This object is a duplicate, better examples have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1968.69.3.1	fire guard	Semi-circular fire guard from Mousehold House, Norwich		This fireguard belongs with NWHCM : 1968.69.3 which has already been approved for rationalisation. Although this piece has a local provenance it is in poor condition and a representative selection of fire grates/guards in better condition has been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1972.572	lamp	Rear lamp for cycle, acetylene, with red glass, made by Powell and Hammer, Birmingham, no 135, 20th century		This has no local provenance and therefore falls outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.




Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 1974.414	cooker	Kitchen range made by Palmers and Co. of Norwich, 19th century, (range has been split into 26 accessioned pieces of various sizes all marked with 974.414 (18.3.2015), it is uncertain whether these are all the sections - there may be more still in the roller racking at superstore.)		This object is in extremely poor condition. It is incomplete; missing integral sections of oven therefore cannot be constructed. If the range is to be retained and stored correctly it would take up an extremely substantial amount of space, materials and resources ,as well as time, at the detriment of other objects.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1975.213.87	fender	Fender of brass, knob and rod style, 19th century. Gold lacquered fender with rectangular base with rounded upper which has six balls attaching the two parts.		This fender is in poor condition with the gold lacquer rubbed off, a better selection of fenders have been retained	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1986.52.4	jack	Smoke jack, blades missing, vertical shaft with cylindrical oil reservoir at top, a sprung forked lever plays on the shaft at the mid point, shaft continues into a worm drives which drives a brass sprocket, lower part of sprocket passes through an oil reservoir, reservoir, sprocket and worm drive in a metal casing, sprocket drives horizontal shaft on which is a single wooden pulley having triangular grooves for three ropes, end of shaft runs on two brass discs in an oil reservoir, found in wall of ground floor store at rear of 54A Pottergate, when store was being demolished, July 1983; late 18th to early 19th century		This item is in poor condition and incomplete, Strangers' Hall has a complete example in better condition.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.17	cooker	Kitchen range; two panels from a cast iron range with manufacturer's plate - C.F. Day & Co. / Dayturina / London N; single door with sliding damper control; marked on back - No. 14 13 OUR; not known whether door is part of range; there may be other parts to this object; 19th century		This object is in extremely poor condition. It is incomplete, having only two fragments of the range.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.











Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.84	range parts	Multiple pieces of range varying in size and shape; some very large other small. Parts include doors, grates, panels, but many are unidentifiable. This item was found in the collection without any documentation. It is unclear whether all the pieces make a single range or whether the pieces are from multiple ranges. If the pieces are from a single range it is unlikely that they would be constructed to make a complete object. Some pieces may relate to NWHCM : 2014.57.17.		This object is in extremely poor condition. It is unknown whether it is complete or whether it corresponds to a single range or multiple ranges. If it corresponds to a single range it is unlikely to be complete. Attempting to construct the range together would be an enormous undertaking which is unlikely to happen. If the range is to be retained and stored correctly it would take up an extremely substantial amount of space, materials and resources as well as time, at the detriment of other objects. The object has no discernable provenance.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.85	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.86	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.

Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.87	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.88	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.89	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.90	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.91	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.

Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.92	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.93	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.94	fire grate	fire grate		This object has no provenance and cannot be matched to any documentation or corresponding fire place. A selection of fire grates with fireplaces have been retained.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.97	cistern	Part of lavatory cistern? Metal, hollow cylinder with flat rounded bottom		Item is in very poor condition. It is unknown to whether it is part of a cistern or not. It is unlikely that this object will ever be matched to its relevant cistern.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.101	timber	Block of timber with mortis joint one end and tennon joint the other. Five nails in one side		Architectural salvage and therefore outside of collections policy	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.

Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2014.57.102	strap	T shaped metal wall strap. Short leg of 'T' is pointed at both ends. Long end is flattened and drilled to take fixing bolts		Architectural salvage and therefore outside of collections policy	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.103	wall tie	T shaped metal wall strap. Short leg of 'T' is pointed at one end and triangular form at the other. Long end is flattened and drilled to take fixing bolts		Architectural salvage and therefore outside of collections policy	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.104	cushion	Dining chair cushion covered in green velvet. Wooden frame with webbing and sacking. Stuffed with white material		This object is in poor condition. It has been retrospectively accessioned, we cannot link it to any chairs we have in the collection.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 2014.57.107	toilet	Toilet bowl probably porcelain. Piece missing from under rim		Object is in poor condition. We have other toilets that are in better condition and have better provenance.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.

Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2015.57.7	door	Wooden door, black on one side and brown on the other.		This door is in poor condition and as architectural salvage is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. Offer to museums via Museums Journal.
NWHCM : 1970.210.73	sleevebands	Chinese sleevebands for a woman's robe, pair sewn together by a collector to make a decorative object to frame or by someone who has not understood they should mirror each other; in ivory silk embroidered in floss with metal thread, satin stitch, seed stitch( the forbidden knot); women in a garden with bridges pavilions ,trees		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.
NWHCM : 2011.101.221	waistcoat	Waistcoat (non-British)		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.
NWHCM : 2015.57.1	tablecloth	Table cover, runner or throw; hand worked in gold metal thread on a woollen brown ground with pink floss silk carnations, pink lining to reverse and gold fringing to edge.		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.

Record number	Object Name	Brief Description	Image	Disposal Reasons	NMS Committee Recommendation
NWHCM : 2015.57.2	waistcoat	Waistcoat; non - British waistcoat possibly purchased as a souvenir, worked in gold metallic thread.		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.
NWHCM : 2015.57.3	mat	Mat or table runner hand worked in silver metal thread and purls on a silk organdie white fabric.		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.
NWHCM : 2015.57.4	border	Fabric border or sample with a worked border on two long edges of gold metal embroidery and the central strip has been left unstitched but marked with a red/ brown line to shown a decorative stitching line.		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.
NWHCM : 2015.57.5	runner	Runner or border for use on a table worked in silver metallic thread with silver sequins and purls to form stylised floral motifs on a pale green velvet ground. Silver thread fringing to each edge.		This was accidentally missed from a 2011 round of rationalisation. As it is of Chinese origin it is outside of our collecting policy.	Disposal. South Asian Decrative Arts and Crafts (SADDAC) have offered to take this item.