

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

**Report to:** Art Galleries Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**Subject:** Collections Rationalisation

**Report of:** Head of Manchester City Galleries

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**Summary:**

A report on the collections rationalisation work of Manchester City Galleries, seeking approval for disposals.

**Recommendations:**

That the contents of the report are noted, and approval given to dispose of items as specified.

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**Wards Affected:**

All

<b>Community Strategy Spine</b>	<b>Summary of the contribution to the strategy</b>
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	
Reaching full potential in education and employment	The long term loan of the wallpaper collection to the Whitworth Art Gallery will increase the collections contribution to academic research and the role of the university of Manchester as an international centre for study and research
Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	
Neighbourhoods of Choice	

**Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
  - Risk Management
  - Legal Considerations
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**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET:**

There are no direct consequences for the budget as any proceeds from disposals must be returned to the Art Fund in line with the Greater Manchester Act 1981 (see Appendix 1, section 149(3)).

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET:**

Not applicable.

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## COLLECTIONS RATIONALISATION AT MANCHESTER CITY GALLERIES

### 1. Background

As an Accredited<sup>1</sup> Museum and Gallery service, Manchester City Galleries are bound by the Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums<sup>2</sup>. Within this, there is a strong presumption in favour of the retention of items within the public domain. Sometimes transfer within the public domain, or another form of disposal, can improve access to, or the use, care or context of, items or collections. Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from the museum's collections.

Art Gallery and Museum collections are established for the long term. Each generation has a responsibility to the next to preserve collections and also to ensure that they are a sustainable resource for inspiration and learning. Manchester City Galleries are responsible for the collections of art works owned or commissioned by the City of Manchester, (see *Appendix: Greater Manchester Act 1981*). The Galleries began to collect in 1882 when Manchester City Art Gallery was established by the Corporation of Manchester, taking over the collection developed by the Royal Manchester Institution from 1827 onwards. The collections that are currently held are the legacy of over 180 years of collecting. Throughout this period, collecting has reflected the changing nature of artistic and museum practice, as well as the interests and expertise of individual donors and staff.

The role and significance of museums, galleries and public collections has changed significantly over the last 100 years, and this has been mirrored by a change in museum standards and practice. It is now acknowledged by the Museums Association that collections evolve and develop in response to the needs of contemporary society and, in certain circumstances, the disposal of objects may be necessary:

- Objects that fall outside the museum's or gallery's collecting policy<sup>3</sup>
- Objects which have no potential use within the museum or gallery
- Where an object would receive a better standard of care, be more publicly accessible or be more effectively used elsewhere.
- Objects that are damaged or have deteriorated and are no longer identifiable and/or usable
- Objects which pose an unavoidable threat to other objects in the collections
- Objects that pose an unavoidable threat to health and safety
- Un-contextualised or un-provenanced items
- Where a request for repatriation or restitution has been made
- Spoliated<sup>4</sup> material identified by provenance research for the period 1933-1945
- Objects on long-term loan, where the original owners cannot be traced after an appropriate Due Diligence<sup>5</sup> attempt to return the object has been made.

## **2. The Rationalisation Programme**

An initial review of Manchester City Galleries' collection identified a group of objects, which appeared to be outside the framework of the Collecting Policy, had no display or public access potential, and collectively occupied a significant amount of storage space.

A Collections Review Officer was appointed on a 6-month contract (funded by Renaissance in the Regions) to assess these items, research their status and documentation, and create a system to record and document the process of rationalisation based on the Museums Association Disposals Toolkit<sup>6</sup>.

### **2.1 The decision-making Process**

The process of object review began with the completion of a 'Consideration for Disposal' form submitted to the Galleries' Acquisitions & Disposals Panel to decide one of the following options:

- To reject the request and retain the object
- To agree the disposal in theory and proceed to completion of a 'Disposal' form
- To defer a decision. An assigned person would complete a 'Case for Retention' form to submit to the Panel at a future meeting.

If there were any doubts about Legal Title of an object legal advice would be sought and a 'Risk Assessment for Disposals of Objects' form would be completed as part of the process to make a full and informed decision.

The Galleries' Acquisitions & Disposals Panel held regular meetings throughout the review process to make joint decisions regarding the status of objects held by the Galleries. A consensus of professional opinion, in line with the MLA Accreditation Scheme, MA Code of Ethics and the MA Disposals Toolkit, was sought at the panel meetings when agreeing any potential proposals for disposal.

Following the review of the objects by the Acquisitions & Disposals Panel a draft report was submitted to the Galleries' Departmental Management Team for comment and approval before this final report was submitted to the Art Galleries Committee following consultation with the City Solicitor's Department to confirm that it conforms to The Greater Manchester Act 1981.

Any decision to dispose of an object by gift, transfer, sale or destruction is the responsibility of the Art Galleries Committee acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not the decision of the curator of the collection acting alone.

### **2.2 Items proposed for disposal**

Approval is sought from Committee for MCG to pursue the deaccessioning and disposal of accessioned items from the collection listed below on the grounds that they fall outside Manchester City Galleries' Collecting Policy, have no potential for public/display use, and would receive a better standard of care, be more publicly accessible or be more effectively used elsewhere. The items are:

- Board room table from Ship Canal House Table (1985.4) with matching carpet (1985.5).
- Church pulpit from St. Luke's Church, Cheetham (1978.260)
- Ship model "Duchess of Kent", given by the School of Art, Manchester, in 1944 (1944.3)
- Iron screen c1890 from St. Stephen's Church, Harpurhey, given to MCC by Manchester Diocesan Board of Finance (1983.57)
- Architectural model "Mr Hyde's Shop/Walker's Ironmonger", purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.52)
- Architectural model "Seven Stars", purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.53)
- Architectural model "John Byrom's House", purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.54).
- Architectural model "Old Stage Coach", given by the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.56)
- Architectural model "The Old Infirmary, Piccadilly", purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1938 (1938.91)

In addition, the review process has identified a number of objects which should be disposed of that were used either in temporary exhibitions or as office furniture and never accessioned as part of the collection. These will be offered for sale and the proceeds will be added to the Art Fund and used to support new acquisitions:

- Sculpture of 'Rao Dev', by Sanat Ram Lohar & Ramji Ram Mandavi, 2002
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century Oval Table
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century Large Mahogany Library Bookcase
- Glass Fronted Library Bookcase

### **2.3 Method of disposal of accessioned items**

There are two main methods of disposal; transfer to another museum, gallery or public body; or offered for sale. Wherever possible, accessioned objects should be transferred to another accredited museum and gallery. This usually involves advertising the disposal through the Museums Association (the Museums Journal and/or their website). If there is no interest, items may be gifted to appropriate organisations or trusts, or sale may be considered.

All monies received for disposals, under The Greater Manchester Act 1981, will be transferred to the Art Fund and used solely for supporting new acquisitions. In summary, it is proposed that the following methods of disposal are pursued:

#### **2.3.1 Transfer to Heritage Trust North West**

- Church Pulpit from St. Luke's Church, Cheetham (1978.260)

#### **2.3.2 Disposal through Museums Association**

- Ship Model "Duchess of Kent", Given by the School of Art in 1944 (1944.3). This may also be offered to Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Iron Screen c1890 from St. Stephen's Church, Harpurhey. (1983.57)

- Ship Canal House Table (1985.4) and Ship Canal House Carpet (1985.5). If no museum or gallery is interested, this may be offered the business occupant of Ship Canal House. (Catalyst Capital).
- Architectural model “Mr Hyde’s Shop/Walker’s Ironmonger”, purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.52)
- Architectural model “Seven Stars”, purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.53)
- Architectural model “John Byrom’s House”, given by the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.54).
- Architectural model “Old Stage Coach”, given by the creator Mr. H Yates in 1931 (1931.56)
- Architectural model “The Old Infirmary, Piccadilly”, purchased from the creator Mr. H Yates in 1938 (1938.91)

Before disposal, all objects will be documented as fully as possible and records retained by MCG.

### **2.3.3 Transfer of Wallpaper Collection on long-term loan**

As part of the ongoing programme of collections rationalisation to make most effective use of the City’s cultural assets it is proposed that the City’s collection of wallpapers is transferred on long-term loan to the Whitworth Art Gallery. The Whitworth Art Gallery has a significant collection of wallpapers, a specialist curator of wallpapers and a dedicated exhibition gallery for the display of wallpapers. The proposed loan would reunite material donated by the Wallpaper Manufacturers’ Association with the substantial holdings from the same source, thus providing greater access for students, researchers and the general public while maintaining the collections in the City.

## **3. Risk Management**

The ongoing rationalisation and development of the collection contributes to the effective care and management of the City’s heritage assets and to the process of risk management.

## **4. Conclusion**

In line with national guidelines on collections management, Manchester City Galleries is taking a proactive approach to care, management and use of the City’s heritage assets, in order to ensure effective use of resources and the implementation of professional standards. As can be seen from the report, the identification of items for disposal and transfer had been undertaken with rigour and in compliance with relevant legislation and audit requirements. It is anticipated that this is the first phase of an on-going programme of collections review and development.

## **Appendix One : The Greater Manchester Act 1981**

**Section 149--(1)** In this section "the art gallery" means the Manchester Central Art Gallery being the land and building described in Schedule 2 to the Manchester Corporation Act 1882 and the land and building adjacent thereto known as the Athenaeum Annexe.

(2) The art gallery and all works or other objects of art therein shall be held upon trust by the Manchester council for the benefit of the citizens of Manchester and shall at all times be kept in fit and proper order.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (2) above, the

Manchester council may from time to time sell or exchange any works or other objects of art for the time being acquired by them for the art gallery but the money arising from any such sale shall be applied in the purchase of other works or other objects of art and for no other purpose and any such works or objects received in exchange shall take the place for all purposes of the Works or objects given in exchange:

Provided that where any work or object has become vested in the Manchester council by virtue of a gift or bequest-

(a) the Manchester council shall, if reasonably practicable consult with the donor or with the personal representatives or trustees of the donor before exercising the powers of this subsection; and

(b) the powers conferred by this subsection shall not, during a period of twenty-one years commencing on the date on which it became vested, be exercisable as respects that work or object in any manner inconsistent with any condition attached to the gift or bequest except with the consent of the donor or the personal representatives or trustees of the donor. "

(4) The Manchester council may from time to time accept by way of gift or bequest any works or other objects of art which they consider to be desirable acquisitions and all such works or objects shall belong to and form part of the art gallery.

(5) The Manchester council shall continue to administer the fund established under section 14 of the Manchester Corporation Act. 1882 and they shall devote the same at their discretion to the purchase of works or other objects of art to be held in trust for benefit of the citizens of Manchester and all such works or objects shall belong to and form part of the art gallery.

## Glossary of Terms and Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> **Accredited** - The Museum Accreditation Scheme, administered by MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) plays a vital role in ensuring a minimum standard of service delivery and public accountability across UK museums. The Museum Accreditation Scheme addresses four key elements of service delivery:

Governance and museum management;

User services;

Visitor facilities;

Collections Management.

<http://www.mda.org.uk/accreditation>

<sup>2</sup> **Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums 2007**. 'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.'

<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ma/10934>

<sup>3</sup> **Collecting Policy 2003-8, Manchester City Galleries.**

<sup>4</sup> **Spoliated Material** – 'The wrongful taking of works of art that constituted one of the many horrors of the Holocaust and World War II.'

<http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/spoliation.html>

<sup>5</sup> **Due Diligence** – 'The guidelines aim to assist museums, libraries and archives when considering the acquisition by purchase, gift or bequest of items of cultural property. They contain due diligence procedures to determine whether a proposed acquisition or loan of cultural objects is ethically and legally acceptable.' See 'Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on Collecting and Borrowing Cultural Material'

[http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3697.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3697.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> **Museums Association Disposals toolkit** – 'A disposal toolkit has been produced as part of the Effective Collections programme to provide detailed advice and guidance for museums on how to undertake responsible disposal.'

<http://www.museumsassociation.org/disposal>