

PENLEE HOUSE GALLERY & MUSEUM DOCUMENTATION POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

Penlee House Gallery & Museum exists to serve the local community and the visiting public through its displays, exhibitions and educational activities. It collects, preserves, interprets and makes accessible art and artefacts related to the history and culture of West Cornwall, specialising in the work of the Newlyn School of artists.

Penlee House Gallery & Museum will ensure that information about the objects in its care is accurate, secure and accessible, and completed to at least the minimum standard, as set out in Spectrum 5.0, the UK Collections Management Standard. We recognise that good documentation is essential to collections management and enables us to provide easier access to our collections.

Every artefact in the collections will be easily identified, located, condition checked, securely stored and entered onto the MODES cataloguing system. These same principles will also apply to long-term loans. Temporary loans for exhibition will be documented using Entry Forms, an Excel database and photography but will not be entered onto MODES.

Penlee House also has a handling collection for educational use. This is inventoried but not accessioned or catalogued onto MODES.

2. Present practice

2.1 Object Entry

The procedure will:

- Establish the terms and conditions under which objects will be received for deposit
- Uniquely identify the newly received object or associated group of objects
- Ensure the museum is able to account for all objects left in its care
- Provide a receipt for the owner or depositor
- Help establish the extent of the museum's liability
- Indicate the reason for the receipt of the object
- Determine a finite end to, or a programme of review of, the deposit
- Enable the object to be returned to the owner or depositor as required
- Allow for objects and associated records to be checked on entry to ensure that they correspond to any accompanying inventory and/or transfer of title documentation supplied
- Help establish legal title to the object in case of subsequent acquisition
- Capture key information about the object, to be augmented in the future
- Inform the decision-making process

2.2 Acquisition and Accessioning

The procedure will:

- Ensure that written evidence is obtained of the original title to an object and the transfer of the title to the acquiring institution
- Ensure that a unique number is assigned to, and physically associated with, all objects
- Ensure that an accessions register is maintained, describing all acquisitions and listing them by number
- Ensure that information about the acquisition process is retained
- Ensure that donors are made aware of the terms on which their gift or bequest is accepted by the museum

- Ensure that collecting complies with the museum's collecting policy and does not contravene any local, national or international law, treaty or recognised code of practice
- Ensure a copy of the information in the accessions register is made and kept up-to-date
- Be in accordance with the Arts Council England Museum Accreditation Scheme guidelines

2.3 Location and movement control

The minimum standard is to:

- Provide a record of the location where an object is normally displayed or stored
- Provide a record of the location of an object when it is not at its normal location
- Enable access to location information by object number and by location name
- Provide an up-to-date record of the relocation of an object
- Provide an up-to-date record of any movement of an object as soon as practicable
- Provide a record of the person responsible for moving an object
- Provide a record or a statement of the members of staff responsible for authorising object removal

2.4 Inventory

The object(s) will be entered onto the MODES cataloguing system and each record will include:

- A unique object number.
- An object name
- The number of objects
- A brief description
- The current location
- A record of the donor, or, if on loan, details of who owns the object
- A note of who recorded this information and when

2.5 Cataloguing

Cataloguing information will provide:

- A level of description sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other like objects
- An image of the object
- Dimensions of the object
- Condition of the object

- An historic archive relating to an object
- A reference system for use by the public, staff, researchers and the media

2.6.1 Object Exit (disposal)

The procedure and documentation will:

- Ensure that the decision to dispose is carefully considered and that all relevant evidence and opinions are sought according to the Collection Development Policy and statutory legal requirements
- Ensure that Penlee House makes every effort to determine title to objects involved and that they are free from relevant special conditions attached to the original acquisition
- Ensure that the decision to dispose does not rest with an individual and the action is formally approved by the Penlee House Committee of Penzance Council
- Ensure that preference for transfer be given to institutions provisionally or fully registered/accredited by ACE
- Ensure that title to the object is transferred to any receiving institution
- Ensure that objects disposed of are marked as such on the accessions register and moved to the 'disposals' database on MODES
- Ensure that all decisions and actions are fully documented

2.6.2 Object Exit (temporary)

There may be occasions when objects are temporarily removed for conservation, re-framing etc. The following procedures will apply:

- An Exit Form will be created and signed by both a member of the curatorial team and the remover / recipient.
- Upon return of the object, the Exit Form will be signed by a member of the curatorial team and filed.

For temporary loans for exhibition, these will be returned as per the Loans In procedure in section 2.7.

2.7 Loans in

The procedure will:

- Establish the purpose for which a loan is being requested
- Enable at least the same care of the borrowed object as if it were part of the permanent collections
- Include written agreements signed by both the borrower and lender before the loan commences. For long-term loans this will be in the form of a signed long-term Loan Agreement and Entry Form. For loans to temporary exhibitions, this will be in the form of a signed Loan Agreement and signed Entry Form.
- Ensure that the terms and conditions of loan are adhered to

- Ensure that all loans are for fixed periods
- Ensure a written record of the loan is retained
- Enable effective control of the loan process
- Enable the provision of information about the borrower and the loan as requested by the lender
- Provide insurance or indemnity cover for the loan period
- Ensure that up-to-date information about the location of borrowed objects is maintained
- Ensure that up-to-date information about the security of borrowed objects is maintained
- Ensure that up-to-date information about the physical well-being of borrowed objects is maintained, including the environment and condition of objects

2.8 Loans Out

The procedure for documenting and managing loans out will:

- Ensure that all loan requests are assessed according to the Loan Out Policy which includes a standard set of conditions which borrowers must meet
- Ensure that there are written agreements signed by both borrower and lender before the loan commences
- Ensure that the loan is for a finite period
- Ensure that Penlee House maintains and retains a record of all loans, including details of the borrower, the venues, the loan period and the purpose of the loan
- Ensure that the borrower confirms their intent and ability to provide an acceptable level of care, security and safekeeping for the object and to conform to the conditions of loan specified
- Ensure that the loaned objects are covered by insurance or indemnity as appropriate for the duration of the loan

2.9 Documentation Planning

Regular analysis of the collections will be carried out to highlight any issues with the Inventory and a separate Documentation Plan is regularly reviewed. The plan includes:

- The objectives we wish to achieve, referring to any relevant standards that are important to ensure quality (e.g. subject-specific cataloguing schemes, terminology sources, image specifications).
- The actions we will take to meet those objectives (e.g. photographing the objects, using standard terminologies for describing objects, carrying out rights research on the collection).
- The resources (e.g. people and time) that will be used.
- The measurable results that are based on our stated objectives.
- The milestones that can be used to review progress by specified dates.

3. Review date

This policy was reviewed and approved on 30 September 2019 by the Penlee House Committee

Signed _____

Cllr Dennis Axford, Chair of Penlee House Committee, 30 September 2019

It is next due for review in September 2022.