



Museum of Domestic
Design & Architecture

Collections development policy

4th Edition (Aug 2017)

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Name of museum: *Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA)*

Name of governing body: *Middlesex University*

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: *5th October 2017*

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: *October 2020*

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.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

To preserve and hold in trust for society its internationally important collections relating to British domestic design and architecture 1870-1960.

MoDA is committed to exploring the collections with our audiences, co-creating knowledge and understanding and using the collections to inspire creativity. We support and challenge audiences, to learn with and from the collections, to demonstrate their learning in varied ways, and to feed that knowledge back into a shared knowledge base.

We have six key aims to guide our activities:

1. To empower Middlesex and other students, researchers, members of the public, local, national and international audiences to learn through engagement with MoDA's collections, co-creating knowledge, and providing opportunities and tools for people to succeed and enhance their life choices;
2. To enable physical, digital and intellectual access to the collections, for the public, students, researchers and creative practitioners, through leadership of innovative and ambitious museum practice;
3. To extend the highest professional standards in preservation, conservation, collections management and research to all of MoDA's collections and associated information, in order to continuously add to knowledge and understanding for the long-term benefit of students, researchers, scholars and other audiences;
4. To create and sustain communities of interest and research around the collections, supporting, celebrating and promoting formal and informal learning for our audiences;

5. To be committed to a process of reflective practice, and to be flexible, adaptable and innovative in our approach, in order to continuously improve what we do for our audiences;
 6. To be open and generous in our approach to sharing our knowledge, collaborating widely and being a trusted brand and a leading voice within the university museum sector.
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- 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. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

2. History of the collections

The **Silver Studio Collection** was given to Hornsey College of Art in 1967 by Miss Mary Peerless, Rex Silver's stepdaughter. In 1974, Hornsey College of Art became amalgamated into Middlesex Polytechnic. In 1992, Middlesex Polytechnic became Middlesex University.

We now think of the 'Silver Studio Collection' as a distinct and separate collection within MoDA's various holdings. However, for some years, the term 'Silver Studio Collection' was used as a catch-all title for the collections as a whole.

For example:

- at some point between 1967 and before her death in 1984, Winifred Mold donated 58 of her designs for the Silver Studio.
- In 1986 Middlesex Polytechnic Library donated **Weldon's Home Dressmaker** catalogue to The Silver Studio Collection.
- In 2000, Mary Peerless donated 55 items related to the personal life of the Silver family.

Items are now only accepted into the Silver Studio Collection if they relate directly to the Silver Studio as a working business

For example:

- In 2005 a length of printed cotton designed by the Silver Studio was purchased with support from the National Art Collections Fund and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

The **Crown Wallpaper Collection** was donated in 1989 when Crown Wallcoverings generously gave a substantial part of their wallpaper collection consisting of 5,000 wallpaper samples and pattern books from the early 1950s to the late 1960s. By mutual agreement, the earliest part of the collection (mostly late eighteenth and early nineteenth century wallpaper samples) went to the Whitworth Art Gallery at Manchester University. The remainder was given to Middlesex University as it was seen by the Keeper of the Silver Studio Collection, Mark Turner, to complement the existing holdings of wallpapers. At the same time, 11 John Alridge, RA / Edward Bawden, CBE, RA **Bardfield wallpaper samples** were donated by **Christopher Cole of Cole & Son Ltd.**

The British and American Domestic Design Collection (now known as the Domestic Design Collection) nucleus of 2,000 items came as part of the Silver Studio Collection. A further 1,000 items were collected and donated by staff at the former Hornsey College of Art. An initial selection came from a collection begun in the 1950s at a time when books on nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture and designs could be acquired very cheaply. This was added to later by the former Art and Design Librarian of Hornsey College of Art and Middlesex Polytechnic, Mr David Cheshire and his colleagues. The remainder of items have been acquired by purchase by members of staff of The Silver Studio Collection and MoDA or donated by colleagues or members of the public.

In 1994 the Silver Studio Collection purchased the **Charles Hasler Collection** of typography and printed ephemera.

Around 1994 a proposal was made to acquire the collections of **Peggy Angus** and **J M Richards**. Both were acquired as loans around 1996, although the Peggy Angus loan was moved to the Sussex Records Office in 1999 and 2004. **The JM Richards Collection** is still on loan [may need to update this if we have discussions]

In 2000, items connected to designer **Winifred Mold** were donated by a near neighbour; a collection of John Alridge, RA / Edward Bawden, CBE, RA **Bardfield wallpaper samples** were donated with the majority given to the

Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester and the remaining duplicates divided equally between MoDA (15 pieces) and the V&A.

In 2000, what was by then known as the **Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture** opened in premises purpose-built to house and display the Silver Studio Collection and other acquired collections. When Middlesex University began to consolidate its courses and teaching into its Hendon campus, the museum relocated in 2011, and refocused as an entirely new form of accessible research collection for a wide range of users. Though the museum does not now have its own exhibition space, from 2012 the collections became available 'online, on tour and on request' to a wide variety of users from academics and students to members of the general public.

3. An overview of current collections

The Silver Studio Collection

- The unique record of one of Britain's leading commercial design studios, active between 1880 and 1963.
- Over 40,000 original designs on paper, 3,000 wallpaper samples, around 3,000 textile samples and the Studio's business and photographic records.
- Several hundred rare books and portfolios, acquired by the Silver Studio as design reference
- Archive material including the Studio's business and photographic records and personal and business correspondence.

The Domestic Design Collection (1850-1960)

- More than 4,000 books, magazines and trade catalogues relating to design for the home, domestic furnishing, household management, home-crafts and cookery.
- A number of series of magazines and trade journals relating to the wallpaper and furnishing industries
- Also trade catalogues from builders, estate agents and developers providing a rich resource for the study of London suburbia in the early twentieth century.
- A significant number of original photographs of domestic interiors, mainly twentieth century, donated by members of the public.

The Crown Wallpaper Collection

- Around 5,000 wallpaper samples and pattern books from the early 1950s to the late 1960s.
- An invaluable source of 'contemporary' designs popular in the post-war period.

The Charles Hasler Collection

- Material relating to the work of Charles Hasler in the areas of railways and transport, WW2 information/propaganda, postwar reconstruction, postwar product design, printing, typography, and bookbinding. Hasler (1908-1992) was Chair of the Typographic Panel for the Festival of Britain, a typographer and graphic designer from the mid-1930s to the mid-1980s.
- The collection reflects his interest in nineteenth and twentieth century typography, packaging and printed ephemera

The Sir J M Richards Library

Around 1,500 architectural books and journals collected by Sir JM Richards (1907-1992), a leading spokesman and theorist of the Modern Movement in Britain. This collection is on long-term loan to MoDA, but the status of this loan is currently under review.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1.1 Aim of Acquisition

MoDA currently collects material relating to British domestic design and architecture 1870-1960, although it has also collected items dating from the 1970s. It aims to improve the scope, quality and relevance of the Museum's collections, within sustainable limits, in order to fulfil its stated aims. Priority is given to items that are of visual as well as historical interest.

In particular, it plans to ensure the focussed development of the Domestic Design Collection to provide primary evidence and key secondary sources for research, publishing, broadcasting and other public needs, particularly relating to students and researchers

Criteria for accepting items

MoDA's staff will ask the following questions to ascertain whether an item should be collected:

Relevance

- Does the items match our current Collections Development Policy aims and our mission?
- Would the item be more appropriate to another museum or organisation's collection?

Condition

- Is the item in a good condition?
- If not, what would the conservation and storage requirements be?

Duplicate

- Is the item a duplicate of something we already hold?
- If so, might there be a value in collecting a duplicate?

Safety

- Is the item a threat to people or other objects (e.g. through infestation or health and safety concerns)?

Usefulness

- Is the item likely to be useful for research, teaching, publication?

Context

- Does the item have sufficient background information to provide a context?

Ethics

- Has the item been ethically acquired?
- Are there any other ethical concerns surrounding its ownership and use?

Specific criteria for specific items

Books, magazines and pamphlets relating to the domestic interior, household management, cooking, house buying, house planning and decorating etc. may be accepted if:

- The items offered complement but do not duplicate existing holdings
- The items offered serve to fill in gaps, e.g. within runs of periodicals

Samples of wallpaper or furnishing textiles may be accepted if:

- The items offered were relevant to or derived from the Silver Studio
- The items offered are supported by other related information (eg photographs, receipts, correspondence, oral history evidence) which enable us to tell a story about how they were used within a real domestic interior

Criteria for rejecting items

The nature of the **Silver Studio Collection**, the **JM Richards Library**, the **Charles Hasler Archive** and the **Crown Wallpaper Collection** mean that we do not generally accept new items into these collections.

We do not have an acquisition budget so are unlikely to purchase items from dealers or at auction.

We cannot accept wallpaper that has been removed from a wall, due to the difficulty and expense of conserving it and making it accessible to students, researchers and the public.

We are not able to accept large domestic items such as gas cookers, fridges, kitchen cabinets, gas or electric fires. We are also unable to accept items such as suites of furniture, sewing machines, record players or televisions. The museum does not have enough space to store them or the resources to make them available to the public. There are no exceptions to this policy.

4.1.2 Particular priorities for enhancing the collections are as follows:

- Formally extend the scope of the Domestic Design Collection to include selected material from the 1970s and 1980s. Items might include for example magazines, catalogues, interior photography. This is to allow MoDA and its users to continue to contextualise domestic design practice and investigate the forces that shape design, production and consumption issues. Items will only be acquired if they meet the Museum's other criteria, and there is a clear likelihood of their potential use. This extension will be reviewed, with the intention of extending the scope in the future to continue to include later periods.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

MoDA does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy, nor is it actively pursuing a rationalisation programme at present.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

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):

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester University
Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden
Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford
Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne
Geffrye Museum, London
Forty Hall Museum, Enfield

General reference is also made to local and social history museums in the Greater London Area.

8. Archival holdings

8.1. The museum holds small archival collections within some of its core collections. These include the **Charles Hasler collection of typography**

and printed ephemera; parts of the Domestic Design collection and parts of the Silver Studio Collection;

- 8.2. The museum catalogues these according to ISAD(G) archival standards using its collections management system, and records for these collections exist online at the JISC Archives Hub and AIM25 sites.
- 8.3. Where the museum holds or intends to acquire archives it is guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom (2002)
- 8.4. Archives considered for acquisition must relate to the museum's existing archive collections and be collected according to its aims.

9. Acquisition

9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

- *All items considered for acquisition to be researched and examined by the Head of Collections, the Preventative Conservation Officer and the Collections Manager, consulting with external specialists as required.*
- *All items to comply with Collections Development Policy.*
- *Where possible items offered are to be accompanied by interesting supporting documentation and by further information about the designer or purchaser where relevant, especially if working on behalf of companies already represented within MoDA's collections.*
*For example: **wallpaper, textiles or lino** supported by further evidence about the date of purchase, the room(s) they were used to decorate, the location of the house in question, and/or a photograph of the room in which they were used, showing how they related to the other furnishings and items in the room; **Photographs of domestic interiors and gardens** supported by contextual information about the location, dates etc of the house, and related information about the inhabitants*
- *Donors of photographic items for the collection are required to sign a form to confirm that they transfer ownership, and rights of copyright or reproduction, to the museum. This form also confirms that the museum's governing body will hold the items in perpetuity for educational purposes and for the public benefit.*

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

The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11. Biological and geological material

The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12. Archaeological material

The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

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

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.

15. Disposal procedures

15.1. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

15.2. The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

15.3. 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.

15.4. 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.

15.5. The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body 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.

- 15.6. 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.
- 15.7. 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.
- 15.8. 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).
- 15.9. 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.
- 15.10. Any monies received by the museum governing body 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.
- 15.11. 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.
- 15.12. 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.

16. ***Disposal by exchange***

- 16.1. 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.

- 16.2. 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 14.1-5 will apply.
- 16.3. 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.
- 16.4. 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).
- 16.5. 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.

17. Disposal by destruction

- 17.1. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 17.2. 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.
- 17.3. 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.
- 17.4. 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.
- 17.5. The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.