

Disposals Risk Assessment

The Collections Trust offer guidance on the disposal of accessioned objects. There are two types of objects where disposal may involve risk. These are **non-accessioned objects and unidentified finds (UF)** and **accessioned objects of uncertain ownership**. In these cases, there are additional issues of legal and ethical obligation and public relations management to consider.

UF's and non-accessioned objects are identified as such by Collections Documentation Procedure 4 – Inventory.

The disposal of any object which falls into these categories must involve the consultation of the Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Collections Management Policy, Collections Documentation Procedure 16 - Deaccessioning and sector guidance such as [Collections Trust Disposing of Items You May Not Own.pdf](#), and [HS377—MA-New-Disposal-Toolkit 08-FINAL.pdf \(museumsassociation.org\)](#).

Type of object	Risk	Possible effect	Risk rating H, M, L Indicate the rating prior to controls being in place.	Control measures	Further action required to reduce risk	Revised risk rating H, M, L Indicate the rating following implementation of controls.
Accessioned objects of uncertain ownership	Loss of a culturally or historically significant object.	Potential impact on the community, the donor, loss of knowledge and reputational damage	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional knowledge and experience of the Collections and Exhibition Teams to assess objects. - Documentation Procedures in place to ensure ownership documented for items entering the care of 		L

				<p>Museums, Arts and Heritage's care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RMBC Collections Management Policy, Procedure 20 - Collections Review, and Procedure 16 - Deaccessioning and Disposal detail rationale for rationalisation. - The Disposal Proposal Form records the objects' potential significance against the RMBC Collections Management Policy, Procedure 20 - Collections Review, and Procedure 16 - Disposal and Deaccessioning. - As per the RMBC Collections Management Policy, all disposals of accessioned objects are advertised in The Museums Associations Find an Object Web Listings Service and Museums Journal. 		
	Donor comes forward and enquires about the object or	Reputational damage	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedure 16 - Disposal and Deaccessioning is designed to minimise risk and the Disposal Proposal Form evidences all research conducted. 		

	wants it back.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation Procedures are in place to ensure ownership is documented for items entering the care of Museums, Arts and Heritage's care. - RMBC Collections Management Policy, Procedure 20 - Collections Review and Procedure 16 - Disposal and Deaccessioning detail rationale for rationalisation. - The 'donor' will be asked to provide original paperwork in the first instance. - Accessioned objects cannot be returned to the donor, and this will have been stated on any paperwork the donor has proving that they donated it. 		
	Future claims that the object was valuable or unique.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputational damage, loss of an important object. 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Collections Management Plan includes actions to ensure a full inventory of Museums, Arts and Heritage collections. Documentation Procedures are in in place to document ownership and identification of items in the care of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the first instance, any potential donors that come forward will be asked to provide original paperwork. 	L

				<p>Museums, Arts and Heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- All objects for disposal are taken to Acquisition and Disposal panel and approved by the delegated authority (see Procedure 16 - Deaccessioning and Disposal).- RMBC Collections Management Policy, Procedure 20 - Collections Review and Procedure 16 - Disposal and Deaccessioning detail rationale for rationalisation.- The Disposal Proposal Form records research into the objects' potential significance against the Collections Management Policy, Procedure 20 - Collections Review and Procedure 16 - Disposal and Deaccessioning.- As per the Collections Management Policy, all Disposals of accessioned objects are advertised in The Museums Associations Find an Object Web Listings Service and Museums Journal.		
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<p>Non – accessioned objects / Unidentified finds (UF)</p>	<p>Loss of a culturally or historically significant object.</p>	<p>Potential impact on the community, the donor, loss of knowledge and reputational damage</p>	<p>L</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where an object is non – accessioned, the research conducted as part of Procedure 4 – Inventory, will help to identify how the object came into our care (it could be as identification or as an object enquiry, for example). - Historically, entry forms for object identification / enquiry detailed that the museum was not responsible for the object and would be entitled to dispose of it after three months. The current Object Entry procedure (Procedure 1) does not allow for entry of objects except through Procedure 2 - Acquisition and Accessioning, or Procedure 7 - Loans In. - Procedure 16 – Deaccessioning and Disposal and the Disposal Proposal Form records the objects’ potential significance against the Collections Development Policy. - Professional knowledge and experience of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Necessary due diligence for locating past donors added to Disposal Procedure (ie. If a donor is found, search the electoral roll and attempt to contact them to return the object, allowing three months for them to reply). 	
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				Collections and Exhibition Teams to assess objects.		
	Donor comes forward and enquires about the object or wants it back.	Reputational damage	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objects that have been categorised as non – accessioned are researched as part of Procedure 4 – Inventory. If an object has been processed as an UF, any paperwork would have been identified through Procedure 4 – Inventory. - Historically, entry forms for object identification / enquiries detailed that the museum was not responsible for the object and would be entitled to dispose of it after three months. The current Object Entry procedure (Procedure 1) does not allow for entry of objects except through Procedure 2 - Acquisition and Accessioning, or Procedure 7 - Loans In. - The Disposal Proposal Form details the due diligence completed on an object. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the first instance, potential donors will be asked to provide original paperwork. 	L
	Future claims that the object	Reputational damage, loss of an important object.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any potentially significant objects are processed 		L

	was valuable or unique.			<p>through the creation of a Potential Acquisition Form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All objects for disposal are taken to Acquisition and Disposal panel and signed off at a cabinet meeting. - A Potential Acquisition Form is completed for objects in our care that we know aren't accessioned but are significant. - The Disposal Proposal Form records the objects' potential significance against the Collections Management Policy and Procedure 20 - Collections Review and Procedure 16 – Deaccessioning and Disposal Procedures. - Expertise and experience of Collections and Exhibitions team to identify potentially significant objects. 		
	Intent to give is difficult to prove.	A donor comes forward after disposal and did not intend to gift their object to the museum.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and due diligence are conducted through Procedure 4 - Inventory to identify a potential donor. - If a donor is found, they are contacted to arrange return or transfer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the first instance, original paperwork will be requested. 	L

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">- These decisions are recorded on the Disposal Proposal Form.- Historically, entry forms for object identification / enquiry detailed that the museum was not responsible for the object and would be entitled to dispose of it after three months.		
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