

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Revision	Revision Date	Revision Owner	Reference	Comment
00	October 2013	Registrar	COL-POL-024	New policy to meet Accreditation requirements
01	September 2015	Registrar	COL-POL-024	Review and to meet new collections management policy
02	November 2016	Registrar	COL-POL-024	Amendments following Executive Board and Curatorial Department comments
03	June 2019	Director of Collections and Head of Collections Services	COL-POL-024	Rewrite to reflect collections department structure & up to date standards
04	February 2025	Director of Collections, Research and Learning and Senior Keeper	COL-POL-024	Review
05	May 2025	Director of Collections, Research and Learning	COL-POL-024	Amendments following Trustee meeting and Sub-Committee meeting

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1. Introduction

The collection is at the heart of all the Museum's activity. By definition, the Royal Armouries (the Museum) has a long-term purpose and holds the collection in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries 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. The Board of Trustees will ensure that all aspects of collections management including acquisition and disposal are carried out in a due diligent, open and transparent manner that meets national and international standards, guidelines and best practice.

Armed with Hope and understanding - We use our collection to explore the complex role of arms and armour throughout humanity's past and present.

Our Vision for the Royal Armouries' Collection:

The Museum will develop a collection which demonstrates that every nation and every community has been shaped to a greater or lesser extent by force of arms, and every right or freedom has at some point been won, lost or regained through conflict. Arms and armour are among the products of human endeavour which have had the greatest impact on the history of the world: thanks to humanity's relentless desire for advantage in defence and attack, they have been pivotal in forming and re-forming the cultural and geopolitical shape of civilisations. They have shaped all our past and will continue to shape our future. What we learn from our collective understanding of them is far from an academic exercise. It is central to understanding what it means to be human and to shaping peaceful and productive futures.

2. Legal Framework

The National Heritage Act 1983 (as amended by the Museums & Galleries Act 1992) requires the Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries to maintain and exhibit a national collection of arms, armour and associated objects, and to maintain a record relating to arms and armour and to the Tower of London. The Act requires the Royal Armouries (the Museum) to care for, preserve and add objects to the collection, as well as to exhibit them to the public, make them available for study and research, and generally promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of arms and armour.

The Museum will adhere to all national and international statutes of law in all its activities relating to the collection, as outlined in the *Collections Management Policy Framework*. Specifically related to Collections Development, these include, but not exclusively: Firearms Act 1968; UNESCO 1970 Convention of the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species 1973; Dealing in Cultural Objects

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(Offences) Act 2003; Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009); and the Human Tissue Act 2004.

3. Due Diligence

The Museum will exercise due diligence in all aspects associated with the collection and its management of those collections. The Museum will make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, any object unless the Museum is satisfied that it can acquire a valid title to it (see *Due Diligence and Acquisition Procedures*).

The Museum will not acquire or borrow (see *Loans In Procedures*) any object unless it is satisfied that the object 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. The Museum will not acquire or borrow any objects that have been illicitly traded.

Acquisitions and disposals outside this policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Museum and the Board of Trustees, having regard to the interests of other museums.

4. Ethical standards and guidance

The Museum is committed to carrying out all its activities ethically and morally (see *Ethics Policy*), adhering to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics and the Museums Association (MA) Code of Ethics. The Museum manages its collections following standards, guidelines and best practice including, but not exclusively:

- i) Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on Collecting and Borrowing Cultural Material (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2005)
- ii) PAS (Portable Antiquities Scheme) 197: 2009
- iii) Place of Deposit for Archives
- iv) Accreditation Scheme for Museums, Arts Council England
- v) Archive Accreditation Standards
- vi) SPECTRUM 5.0
- vii) CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) guidelines
- viii) Cultural Property (Armed Conflict) Act 2017

The Museum welcomes discussion, recognises and is committed to dealing with social biases, acknowledging and working with communities in an open, honest and transparent manner.

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5. Collections Development

The Museum is the United Kingdom's National Museum of Arms and Armour. It is Britain's oldest museum, and one of the oldest museums in the world. It holds one of the finest and largest collections of arms and armour in the world and includes the UK's National Collection of Arms and Armour, the national artillery collection, and the National Firearms Centre collection. It also acts as custodian of the history of the Tower of London.

The museum defines 'Arms' as manmade weapons (and their associated objects) designed to strike people, animals or targets. It defines 'Armour' as manmade protective clothing or equipment designed to protect people or animals from injury by these weapons. The Museum does not normally collect material associated with the conveyance of arms, such as tanks, aircraft or armoured vehicles. Nor does it collect objects relating to chemical or biological warfare.

The Museum's vision for the collection is to continue to develop it to that international standard. It aims to use the collection for learning, enjoyment, inspiration and the furtherance of knowledge and research, to engage users with their cultural, artistic and scientific heritage.

The Museum aims to care for the collection to the highest standards, ensuring they are preserved and developed for future generations, to be a model for best practice and a centre of excellence for the care and use of arms and armour collections.

The Museum's policy principles and mechanisms for collections management are set out in the *Collections Policy Framework* and underlying policies and procedures. The Museum actively manages its collection through acquisition, lending and rationalisation.

6. A history and overview of the collection

The Museum originated in the Tower of London and today operates across three main sites: its headquarters in Leeds, its historic home in the Tower of London and its artillery museum at Fort Nelson in Portsmouth. The Museum's collection consists of examples of arms, armour and artillery dating from antiquity to the present day. The collection covers the development of arms and armour for military, sporting, presentation and other purposes. Geographically they cover a huge area including Europe, North America, Africa and Asia.

Notable collections include important medieval holdings; royal armours of the Tudor and Stuart kings; arms and armour of the English Civil Wars; the armoury from Littlecote House; British and foreign military weapons from the Office of Ordnance and Ministry of Defence Pattern Room collections; and holdings of Asian and African arms and armour.

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The principal areas of collecting have been:

a. Firearms

The firearms collection includes military, sporting, hunting and self-defence firearms, light guns (up to 40mm calibre), grenade launchers, recoilless weapons, rocket launchers, inert munitions, air weapons, and bayonets, including accessories and ammunition. It is the largest and finest collection of its type anywhere in the world. It is truly global in theme and pan-period in date (c.1500 - Present), with particular strength in the area of British and Commonwealth military small arms. It has a strong emphasis on 20th century due in part to ongoing ties to the Ministry of Defence and various UK police services. As a result, it includes examples of modern military, commercial, and criminal use weapons not found in other museum collections. The contemporary collection in this, as other areas, has also reached out into the field of popular culture, with film and television props including 'blasters' from the 'Star Wars' films. It is also strong in experimental and trials weapons, both types that became significant in their own right, and technical 'dead-ends' that are valuable in the study of arms.

At the core of the collection is the 'Old Tower Collection' of service arms formerly kept at the Tower of London from its days as an issuing arsenal, resulting in the most comprehensive collection of 18th and early 19th century British military longarms anywhere. Alongside this were stored early trials weapons, foreign gifts, and the firearms elements of King Henry VIII's personal armoury, notably two breechloading sporting guns and several matchlock gun-shields.

This collection has been enriched by collecting activity along typological and art historical lines. A collection of continental wheellock firearms is particularly noteworthy, as is the large assemblage of highly decorated Russian firearms and accessories for Empress Elizabeth of Russia, known as the 'Tula Garniture' and dated 1752. In more recent times collecting has focussed on objects with historical, personal, or local significance, including the large number of matchlock and flintlock arms from the armoury at Littlecote House.

The collection was greatly bolstered by the donation in 2005 of the former Ministry of Defence Pattern Room collection, which excelled in material of the 19th and 20th centuries, including both experimental/trials and issue types. Though strongest in typological and technical terms, it also includes various unique or otherwise significant objects such as the presentation Colt Navy revolvers gifted to Colt's British supplier of steel, Mark Firth. The highlight of this combined collection is the Sealed Pattern collection of firearms dating from the 18th century to the end of this system of standardisation c.1918. Once the reference standard for the production of Ordnance firearms (prior to the introduction of technical drawings),

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it is now an invaluable research tool. The collection also holds examples of weapons used in crime from the 19th century to the present day. This allows the collection to illustrate the nature of the change in the use of weapons in crime.

Supporting the core collection of arms are bayonets, including Sealed Pattern and rare examples; firearms accessories including powder flasks, holsters, spanners, gauges, tools etc.; and a unique collection of live small arms ammunition.

Part of the terms of gift for the **Pattern Room Collection** from the Ministry of Defence which is detailed with an ongoing Service Level Agreement (see RA / MOD SLA & procedures) is that items from the Pattern Room (PR) collection are to be made available to SLA 'users' for training purposes, and that Royal Armouries remains current by expanding the collection in line with SLA purposes.

b. Edged Weapons

The edged weapons collection is widely regarded as one of the greatest in the world. It ranges in date from the Bronze Age to the present and contains a number of unique or rare objects. There are a wide range of types of edged weapons, including swords and daggers, along with various examples of hafted and staff weapons, including large numbers of those of the guards of Henry VIII. With the addition of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Pattern Room items, the collection holds an enhanced collection that tells the story, partly through Sealed Patterns, of the regulation swords of the British military from the end of the 18th century to the present day.

The collection contains a comparatively comprehensive selection of fine medieval pieces, including medieval daggers found in the Thames. The post-medieval section is stronger, with a wide range of edged weapons used in war, presentation, sport and hunting.

The collection contains a number of unique pieces, ranging from what is regarded as the earliest known medieval child's sword to swords associated with historical figures such as Cromwell, Napoleon, Collingwood and Wellington, as well as with various British monarchs.

c. Armour

The armour collection is important in that it is the Nation's historic royal armoury and also an arsenal. As such, considering the size, spread, quality and scope of the collection, it cannot be matched by any other world collection. One of the most highly regarded sections is its collection of armour made in the royal workshops at Greenwich, founded by Henry VIII, and its Stuart royal armours of the early 17th century. It includes important groups of medieval armour, both mail and plate, of the 14th and 15th centuries. There are collections of Renaissance armour, particularly decorated armours of Germany and Italy. There are some of

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the finest etched, gilt and embossed armours of the world. The historic Tower arsenal collection contains royal munition armour of the 16th and 17th century, but also Parliamentary armour: the Littlecote armoury. Its holdings of tournament armour, which include pieces with Hapsburg origins and from the English royal collection, are internationally significant. It also contains holdings of ancient and modern armour.

d. Artillery

The artillery collection is of national and international significance in its scope, due to its technical interest, aesthetic quality and early origins. It relates to two of the Tower of London's historic roles. Firstly, as an arsenal, the Tower was the major storehouse of artillery from the 14th century. Experimental and obsolete pieces were retained as an official record. Secondly, as a showplace, the Tower was home to many guns taken by right of conquest or presented by friendly powers. The collection includes outstanding trophy guns and diplomatic gifts ranging in origin and date from the famous Turkish bronze bombard dated 1464 to the French guns captured following the battle of Waterloo.

The artillery collection reflects technical developments in field, fortification, and naval artillery, although many of the relevant pieces also have specific military or political history attached to them, and/or are decorated artistic pieces. Notable early pieces include the mid-15th century 13-inch 'Boxted' Bombard and the historically significant 15th century bombard 'Mons Meg'.

The collection is strong in muzzle-loading artillery of the 17th to 19th century, including much of the range of 16th – 18th century defined classes, from an ornate pair of Falcons associated with the Duke of Gloucester to a Cannon cast by Pedro Dias Bocarro in Chaul, 1594. It also covers the typical range of 18th/19th century field and naval artillery, but also significant individual pieces of the era such as the unusual Mallet's mortar.

The transition from smoothbore to rifled guns is also represented alongside the armament of Fort Nelson itself, a key piece being the exceptionally rare Armstrong 7-inch breech loader. The collection also includes numerous examples of the quick-firing guns of the late 19th and the 20th centuries. The most recent examples are of two tubes from the Iraqi 'Supergun' (Project Babylon) of the late 1980s. Anti-tank artillery from the 20th century is selectively represented, including conventional weapons but also recoilless weapons, and an example of the most important 20th and 21st century form of artillery, namely the Self-Propelled Gun (a 1944 British Sexton with intact 25-pounder gun).

The collection of ammunition and artillery accessories and supporting pieces is also wide-ranging, from individual projectiles associated with the aforementioned guns to a Green Archer fire control radar system.

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e. Archery

The collection of European and American archery equipment includes some highly important objects, such as longbows retrieved from the Mary Rose, Henry VIII's flagship, excavated in the 19th century. There is a world-class group of crossbows ranging in date from the late 15th to the 19th century, including one example of a type associated with King James I, with an important group of cranequins, gaffles and other spanning mechanisms, quivers and quarrels. There is also an important holding of excavated medieval arrow and quarrel heads, mostly from the River Thames, and a significant collection of target archery equipment and accessories of the 18th and 19th centuries. Modern crossbows, bows and blowpipes are also represented.

f. Archives & Library Special Collections

The collection holds material relating to the development of arms and armour; the history of the Tower of London and its institutions including the Tower Armouries (before 1 April 1984); the Royal Armouries (after 1 April 1984); and other related subjects and organisations such as Royal Small Arms Enfield, chivalry and knighthood, documents and photographic archives related to church armours and historic private house armouries, and warfare and military science.

The scope, acquisition, disposal and use of the archives and special collections are detailed within the *Archives Development Policy*, *Information and Records Management Policy*, and the *Archives Appraisal Policy*.

The Library special collections includes early books on fencing and the art of warfare, including the oldest known European fencing manual, 16th century works of the Italian fencing masters Camillo Agrippa and Achille Marozzo and a rare colourised first-edition of Domenico Angelo's *School of Fencing*; military manuals and drill books, including: the works of Henry Hexham, used extensively during the English Civil Wars; General Wolfe's *Instructions to Young Officers*; and the *Standing Orders* written by Robert Craufurd, commander of the Light Division during the Peninsular War; official handbooks and training manuals relating to small arms and artillery, issued by the War Office and the Admiralty; illustrated books on chivalry and knighthood, including: a 19th century facsimile of *Der Weisskunig* (The Wise or White King), with engravings by Hans Burgkmair; and a number of volumes relating to the Gothic revival, in particular a fine copy of *The Eglinton Tournament 1839* illustrated by the artist James Henry Nixon. The rare books relating to the Tower of London include early guidebooks and histories of the collection of the Tower Armouries.

g. Art

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The collection of fine, decorative and applied art ranges in date from medieval to contemporary and includes drawings, prints, oil paintings, watercolours and sculptures. Most of the artworks are of European origin, principally British. The collection was primarily acquired to illustrate two strands - the use of arms and armour and the development of the Tower of London site. The majority of the oil paintings are portraits, and the collection includes a fine study of Emperor Charles V by Peter Paul Rubens. The collection relating to the Tower of London comprises of portraits of members of the Tower community as well as studies of the evolution of the site, its buildings and institutions. These include a number of artist's impressions by Ivan Lapper commissioned by the Royal Armouries in the 1990s. The sculpture collection is small but is most noted for the carved wooden horses by Grinling Gibbons and other seventeenth century craftsmen, designed to support the figures of kings and nobles wearing armour.

h. Asian and African Collection

The collection is unusual in having significant holdings from every part of Asia. In terms of the depth and range of coverage and taking into account the many unique objects it includes, it ranks among the best in the world.

Chronologically, the main strength of the collection lies between the 15th and 19th centuries, but some of the more remarkable objects are earlier including 14th century Japanese sword blades, a helmet and a mace from the Yuan dynasty (13th – 14th century), an early curved sword from the Eurasian steppe dating to around the 9th or 10th centuries, and bronze helmets, the remains of a crossbow and a dagger axe blade with its surviving scabbard all dating from the 5th – 3rd centuries BCE during the Warring States period in China. From western Asia there is an impressive group of medieval Turkish armour, and the only known surviving example of a 15th century Mamluk handgun. From South Asia comes the famous elephant armour, the only near-complete mail and plate example contemporary to the Mughal era held in a museum collection in the world. There are also important groups of objects which entered the collection as major acquisitions of arms and armour sourced from across South Asia in different contexts, such as the East India Company gift presented by 1853, the Great Exhibition display items bought in 1852, the Codrington collection objects purchased in 1863, and the equipment transferred following the Indian disarmament enforced in 1859. From Central Asia there are top quality armours and weapons, though the collection is small. Moving into East Asia, the Chinese collection is also relatively small but involves some outstanding objects such as an extremely rare sword from the early Ming dynasty which is celebrated as one of the best examples of decorative metalwork from this era still in existence. The Japanese collection is extremely important, especially in regard to armour; it includes one of the early 17th century Tokugawa presentation armours, and a very rare example of a practical field armour from the 16th century which was sent to Spain as a diplomatic gift.

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The collection also includes arms and armour from parts of Africa. The holdings from North Africa are particularly strong and feature important objects such as a sword associated with Ali Dinar, Sultan of Darfur, and Mahdist armour from the late 19th century.

i. Tower History

This collection contains a range of object types connected by their association with, or depiction of, the Tower of London. The collection includes domestic ware with printed images of the Tower; objects associated with officials and official bodies (such as the Tower Hamlets Volunteers); pictures/accounts of prisoners or their possessions; and objects linked to significant on-site events, such as the Grand Storehouse Fire in 1841.

Historically, site finds from the Tower have also been accepted into the collection. Site finds are by their nature varied and include a 'toy' firearm from the 16/17th century, a Viking stirrup and two mummified cats. Material relating to the History of the Tower of London is also contained in the archive and art collections (see above).

j. M-class

This is a collection of non-accessioned objects which is maintained for the purpose of education, handling and display. The collection contains a wide range of material relating to the subject areas covered by the permanent collection. It includes both replica and original objects, including deactivated firearms. (see M- class procedures).

7. Acquiring

The Museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collection, to ensure that care of the collection, documentation arrangements and use of the collection 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. Under the National Heritage Act 1983:

- 1) The Board may acquire (whether by purchase, exchange or gift) any objects which in their opinion it is desirable to add to their collection.*
- (2) Without prejudice to any power apart from this subsection, a Minister of the Crown may transfer to the Board any object (whether or not he acquired it before the Board's establishment) if in his opinion it would appropriately form part of their collection.*

Objects will be acquired not simply as assets and need to have a long-term purpose and use. Objects should be contextualised through documentation, oral history, film

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archive and loans to fully interpret them. The Museum will take into account the following principles when collecting:

- desirability for display and exhibitions
- suitability for use in public programmes
- contribution to research and understanding
- preservation of national heritage
- support the Service Level Agreement with the official users of the National Firearms Centre
- objects should ideally be in good condition and require minimal conservation treatment. Any objects that contain materials hazardous to health will be acquired under the terms of current Health & Safety legislation
- ideally the Museum can assume control over all Intellectual Property Rights concerned with the object, or at least licence for reproduction
- that it falls within the expertise of the collections staff.

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 permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin.

In these cases, as in all collections related activity 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 (see *Collections Information Policy and Procedures*).

The collection may be augmented by commissioning works including arms and armour, paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, photography, film and new media. The Museum's commissioning ambitions include a desire to reflect and respond to society's attitudes towards arms and armour (see *Acquisitions Procedure*).

8. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The Museum will acquire objects and collections, both physical and / or born digital relating to the following broad areas:

- the history, development, manufacture and use of arms and armour
- the history of the Royal Armouries, the Tower of London and Fort Nelson
- arms and armour as decorative arts
- the social, political and economic history of arms and armour including the history of people (e.g. collectors, communities, popular history, makers, users), places, organisations and events associated with them. In particular these will include objects relating to rebellion or resistance. Also, material relating to under-represented groups in the collection, including women and people with a

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disability. These will support the themes and storylines of the Armouries 700 projects and initiatives.

The Museum seeks to build on its strengths whilst also targeting types under-represented in the current collection across all collections referred to below. However, it does not currently have the capacity to actively acquire in areas where the collection is weak.

In addition to these broader aims, detailed collecting priorities for each collection are set out below:

a. Firearms

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- additional examples of existing objects where additional provenance and associated objects are offered (e.g. documents and photographs)
- examples of firearms and accessories created as pieces of decorative art
- early Germanic, Bohemian and Iberian tinderlock / matchlock firearms
- criminal use weapons, especially those relating to notorious cases and 3D-printed/hybrid firearms
- less-than-lethal weapons
- post-1945 Chinese and Russian material e.g. Russian AK-12
- Ukrainian-designed and manufactured small arms e.g. Malyuk bullpup, FORT products
- interwar machine guns
- modern concealed/disguised (e.g. Ideal Conceal, folding pistols);
- L85A3 (current issue British military rifle)
- L119A2 Special Forces Weapon (issue SF rifle)
- service weapons of allied nations e.g. US M4, M16, M240, XM7 etc. Australian EF88/F90, French HK 416 F)
- examples of current service weapons and those from recent conflict zones
- specifically examples of arms supplied to Ukraine 2022 onwards
- examples of modern computerised optics
- British Second World War flamethrower backpack unit
- film, TV and video-game related material
- a live example of every type of ammunition not already included in the collection (including the Pattern Room collection)

b. Edged Weapons

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- representative examples of early medieval edged weapons pre-1500, especially pieces excavated in Britain, or having a British connection, such as Carolingian winged spears, 'Viking' swords, 'Viking' axes or 'Saxon' swords
- representative examples of Iron Age edged weapons, e.g. Late Iron Age La Tène style 'Celtic' sword

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- medieval 'Ingelrii' or 'Ulfberht' swords (we have no examples of these 'factory' signed medieval swords) and other early 'signed' swords, including those with religious inscriptions
- Spanish and Italian rapiers, about 1580-1610
- post-medieval 'sword-breaker/catcher' type daggers, including 'triple-bladed' *main gauche* types
- Scottish dirks, 18th century
- continental European edged weapons, especially those from Scandinavia and the Americas, e.g. Norwegian 'walking' axe
- examples of edged weapons from important British provenances, especially those associated with historical events/figures, or churches and country house collections with historical armouries dating back to the 17th century or earlier
- British and East India Company edged weapons of types, forms or variants not currently represented
- Military edged weapons of countries or types unrepresented in the collection
- bladed objects from a specific criminal context/provenance, i.e. seized by police or otherwise known to have been used in crime
- Sealed Pattern edged weapons.

c. Armour

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- examples of armour pre-1400
- examples of armour from important British provenances, especially churches or country house collections with historic armouries
- significant pieces of armour from important international collections
- armour with significant decoration (e.g. embossing, damascening, etching, engraving or painting)
- examples of armour made in the Royal Workshops at Greenwich
- examples of armour associated with members of the British royal family
- parts of individual armours already in the collection
- armour relating to contemporary culture (film and pop-culture); and
- examples of twentieth and twenty-first century armour including experimental examples designed to respond to changes in weapons technology.

d. Artillery

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- 16th – 17th century Venetian artillery
- American artillery of any date, but especially the War of Independence, War of 1812, American Civil War and Second World War
- German artillery of the Second World War
- Russian artillery 1850-1918
- Victorian garrison guns, e.g. Moncrieff mountings

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- British 105mm Light Gun
- material relating to William Armstrong, later Lord Armstrong
- material relating to Gerald Bull, inventor of the Iraqi Supergun
- inert ammunition, including packaging and tools & accessories
- examples of mechanical artillery, original or reproduction (depending upon period); and,
- accurate and quality model artillery.

e. Archery

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- any material associated with the medieval, pre-modern English longbows, arrows and related archery equipment
- examples of the work of the major 18th-20th century bowyers, fletchers etc., not represented in the collection, with an emphasis on British makers
- examples of archery equipment of the ancient world
- target archery equipment including examples of the work of the most important bowyers, fletchers etc.
- examples of new technological developments in archery equipment such as air-bows; and,
- examples of the work of the British crossbow makers.

f. Archives & Library Special Collections

Priorities for future collecting will be archives, books and filmed oral histories relating to:

- the Royal Small Arms Factory
- other Royal Ordnance and munitions factories
- Fort Nelson and the Palmerston Forts
- the design and manufacture of arms and armour (including the records of private companies, munition factories etc.)
- the decoration of arms and armour (including pattern books)
- the sale of arms and armour (including retailers' records)
- the use of arms and armour in war, hunting and shooting (including estate records), tournament, self-defence etc.
- the personal experiences of those engaged in the above activities and in the development of the museum in Leeds
- military manuals relating to training, tactics, military theory and the art of war
- books and treatises relating to fencing and other martial arts and combat sports; and,
- born-digital material including digital files relating the creation of 3D printed weapons.

g. Art

Priorities for future collecting will be:

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- illustrations of arms and armour
- art relating to the Museum's arms and armour collection
- art responding to the contemporary debates around or attitudes towards arms and armour, including those incorporating arms and armour
- portraits of key military figures
- portraits of key figures in the history of the manufacture, distribution and use of arms and armour
- artworks relating to the supply and use of arms and armour for military purposes
- art illustrating military and social history relating to the use of arms and armour
- artworks relating to the science and technology of arms and armour; and,
- illustrations relating to the history of the Royal Armouries, the Tower of London and Fort Nelson, including both its sites and its communities.

h. Asian and African

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- early Asian material generally; most of the collection is post-1400, and within this much is post-1700
- early Islamic weapons and armour (7th century onwards)
- typical examples of Central Asian/Steppe weapons and armour
- Chinese Zhou – Ming Dynasty weapons and armour, including early Chinese firearms
- dated/dateable examples of armour and weapons from India, particularly South India
- Japanese pre-Edo period material, especially medieval arms and armour
- dateable South-East Asian weapons
- armour from the Philippines; and,
- arms and armour from North Africa (including armour for horses or camels).

i. Tower History

Priorities for future collecting will be:

- Official and personal records relating to the Tower of London, its functions, institutions and people
- objects relating to the Tower of London, its functions institutions and people
- records & objects relating to the Tower Armouries and its development; and,
- records & objects relating to the Ordnance Office and its personnel.

j. M-class

The Museum will continue to collect material relating to the subject areas covered by the permanent collection, including replica and original objects, for the

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purpose of education, handling, display and conservation testing. (See M-Class policy & procedures).

9. Lending and Borrowing

The Museum uses the loans in and out programme to achieve and fulfil its Purpose and Vision, to enhance its profile as an accessible, socially inclusive and learning organisation.

Inward loans will be for fixed periods only (see *Loans In Procedures*). Any long-term loans in need to adhere to the principles of acquisition.

The Museum will adhere to the principles of lending as set out in the BIZOT Group Loan Guidelines (2009), the Principles for Lending and Borrowing (June 2021 NMDC & TEG) and the Museums Association Smarter Loans: Key principles for loans in the UK. For all loans out the Museum will ensure any borrower can meet the terms and conditions to protect the collection (see *Loans Out Procedures & Loans Out Terms and Conditions*).

10. Rationalisation & disposal

The Museum has a long-term purpose and holds the collection in trust for society in relation to its stated purpose and vision. Under the National Heritage Act 1983:

(3) The Board may not dispose of an object the property in which is vested in them and which is comprised in their collection unless —

(a) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which is a duplicate of another object the property in which is so vested and which is so comprised, or

(b) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which in the Board's opinion is unsuitable for retention in their collection and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public, or

(c) the disposal is [an exercise of the power conferred by section 6 of the Museums and Galleries Act 1992], or

(d) the disposal (by whatever means, including destruction) is of an object which the Board are satisfied has become useless for the purpose.

The Board of Trustees therefore accepts the principle that there is a presumption against disposal, but there are some circumstances where disposal and rationalisation are key collections management tools.

Sound curatorial reason must be established before consideration is given to any disposal and / or rationalisation. A review and consultation will be undertaken prior to

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any disposal recommendation. The Museum will ensure the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency, confirming that it is legally free to dispose of an object and taking into account agreements made with donors and funding bodies, fully documenting all activity (see *Rationalisation and Disposal Procedures*).

The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. Preferred methods of disposal are gift to another institution or organisation in the public domain. In the event of removal of items from the collection through sale, any funds acquired through a sale will be invested into the collection's acquisition funds. The Board of Trustees and the Museum accepts that after all other avenues have been exhausted, for some objects the only method of disposal is destruction.

11. Collecting policies of other museums

The Museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and 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.

Specific, but not exclusive reference is made to the following museums:

- The Royal Collection
- The British Museum
- Victoria and Albert Museum
- Imperial War Museums
- London Museum
- National Army Museum
- National Maritime Museum
- National Museum of the Royal Navy
- Royal Air Force Museum
- Regimental and Corps Museums
- Historic Royal Palaces
- Hampshire Museums Service (Hampshire County Council)
- Leeds Museums & Galleries (Leeds City Council)
- Glasgow Museums
- National Museums Scotland

12. Spoliation

The Museum recognises and deplores the wrongful taking of works of art that constituted one of the many horrors of the Holocaust and World War II.

The Museum has signed up to and will use 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998

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https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/contributing-sector/spoliation/spoliation_statement/), and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

The Museum is committed to giving prompt and serious consideration to claims to title for specific works in the collection. (see Spoliation Procedure).

13. Repatriation and Restitution

The Museum understands and acknowledges that certain individuals, groups or communities may have an interest in items in the Collection and that claims could be made to 'return' certain collection items to their place or community of origin.

The Museum is committed to dealing with all requests in an open, honest and transparent manner and it will follow its *Repatriation and Restitution Policy & Procedures*. Consultation will be carried out acknowledging the interests of all the various stakeholders and appropriate communities as determined by each individual case.

14. Human Remains

As the Museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums', issued by DCMS in 2005, for both acquisition and disposal.

The Museum's Board of Trustees, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff may take a decision to return human remains to a country or people of origin (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005). The Museum will take such decisions on a case-by-case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance.

15. Review

This document will be reviewed from time to time, but at least every five years, and specifically following updates in corporate policy and plan, legislation and international conventions.

This document will be reviewed by a panel of collections staff and agreed by the Director of Collections, Research and Learning, before submission to the Director-General and Master, and the Board of Trustees for approval.

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.

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16. Risk Management

The associated risk of non-compliance with this policy is:

Impact of non-compliance: High

Likelihood of non-compliance: Low

17. Effective date

This policy is effective from the date of signing.


.....
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date... 12 JUNE 2025

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