

**Statement of Objectives and  
Collection Policy for Archive Collections  
ARCHON National Repository Number: 3010**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy statement relates to The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 16 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JA, United Kingdom.

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (the Centre) is an educational charity registered in Britain and administered by a Director of Studies. The Director of Studies reports annually to the Board of Governors, consisting of officers and faculty of Yale University. There is an Advisory Council, comprised of twelve distinguished representatives from the British academic and museum community, who meet twice a year to make recommendations on grants and fellowships to be awarded.

The Centre promotes and supports the study of British history of art and architecture and is a member of the Association of Research Institutes in Art History. It has two complementary purposes: to contribute to the study and understanding of British art and architecture and to act as a research centre for scholars working in this field.

The Centre has accepted archive collections since 1977 and these are mainly the papers of art historians, although they cover any study of British art history from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first professionally qualified archivist, Charlotte Brunskill, undertook a survey of the collections in 2009 and following on from recommendations made at this time, the Centre now employs two full-time permanent Archivists. The Centre actively collects archive material and has acquired many new collections since 2009.

The Centre derives its authority to manage and collect archives from the Memorandum & Articles of Association for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1970.

## **2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Paul Mellon Centre seeks to acquire, process, manage, make available and promote its archives to support both internal and external teaching, learning and research activities.

### **3. LEGISLATION & STANDARDS**

The Paul Mellon Centre seeks to observe all relevant archive legislation. It adopts The National Archive's *Standard for Record Repositories* as its policy and aims to store the archives in the best conditions within the limitations of its listed building. It is working towards a long-held aim to provide secure and environmentally stable conditions for the archives in its custody which accord with the relevant British Standards, in particular PD5454.

### **4. ACQUISITIONS**

#### **4.1 Scope of the Collection**

The first deposit was made in 1977 and consists of the papers of Art Historian and Gallery Director, W.G. Constable (1887-1976) which were transferred from the Yale Center for British Art to the Centre and mainly relate to his research on Richard Wilson. The Centre's strength is the study of 18th-century British Art and Architecture but its remit extends from the medieval to the contemporary. It has attracted a steady stream of acquisitions, including the papers of important scholars in the field such as Ellis K. Waterhouse, Brinsley Ford and Oliver Millar. Many of the archives have either been created as research material for publication or have subsequently been used to generate publications. Examples of this include John Ingamells' *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701 – 1800*, published by the Centre, 1997 which was compiled entirely from Brinsley Ford's archive and Alistair Smart's research papers that were posthumously edited for *Allan Ramsay: a Complete Catalogue of his Painting*, published by the Centre, 1992. Collections may also relate to exhibitions or come about through the association with the Centre's academic programme. Often the donors have a close relationship with the Centre, serving on its Advisory Committee, working at the Centre or having one or more of their books published by the Centre.

More recent acquisitions have included the papers of art critics, art dealers and architects such as Brian Sewell, Frank Simpson (Knoedler & Co) and Dennis Sharp (Connell Ward and Lucas practice) Many of these collections have included not only research papers but material relating to the whole of the individual's life (from childhood to death). Since 2007, all material has been acquired by donation.

#### **4.2 Criteria for Acquisition**

The Paul Mellon Centre seeks to acquire original, unique records worthy of permanent preservation in the following fields:

- The study and research into, and patronage of, British Art and Architecture from the medieval to the contemporary period covering:
  - Painting
  - Drawing
  - Sculpture
  - Prints

- Photography
  - Architecture
  - Decorative Arts
  - Garden History
  - Non-British artists working in Britain
- Art History including, in particular, the papers of Art Historians, Curators, Critics, Dealers, Art Galleries, Auctioneers and Auction Houses or those working in an art historical capacity, as well as the papers of relevant societies or institutions

It seeks to acquire not only the working notes, research papers, images and other material compiled in the process of preparing publications, academic titles, research projects and exhibitions concerning the study of British Art and Architecture but also – where relevant – material relating to the wider life and career of an individual. This may include, for example, diaries, photographs and personal correspondence.

Consideration will be given to the research value of the material and the scholarly reputation of the creator. If the papers relate to a publication, consideration will be given to how much of the material has been incorporated in the published text.

All records are accepted, regardless of date, but existing holdings mostly date from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **4.3 Records not accepted:**

The Centre does not collect records in the following fields:

- Non-British Art and Architectural history
- Artists' papers - except where they form an integral part of an archive
- Archives which are solely photographic - these are usually managed as part of the Centre's Photographic Archive
- Libraries or books- these are usually managed as part of the Centre's Library unless the publications are annotated, interleaved or form an integral part of an archive

#### **4.4 Format of records:**

Records are accepted in paper and photographic format. The Centre is currently investigating the best means of preserving electronic records long-term and although it does not yet have a digital archive repository it is prepared to consider the acquisition of material in this format.

The following material is not usually accepted:

- Three-dimensional objects or works of art - since these are not traditionally considered archive material.
- Slides - since securing their long-term preservation is problematic and costly
- Collections containing a significant volume of photocopies - since the Centre seeks to acquire original, unique material; providing public access to photocopied material is problematic for copyright reasons and ensuring its long-term preservation is difficult.

The Centre does not seek to compete with other repositories. It will liaise with other institutions when necessary to ensure that archives are secured in an appropriate place of deposit. The advice of The National Archives: National Advisory Service will be sought where appropriate.

#### **4.5 Procedure for acquisition:**

The Centre aims to develop its archival holdings in a coherent and consistent fashion so that together the collections form a body of material that supports research of the highest standard. With this in mind, it has adopted standard procedure for assessing potential offers. Specifically, donors are requested to check whether the material falls within the Centre's Archive Collection Policy and if it does, to forward some initial assessment information to Archive staff.

Once the initial assessment information has been received, the Centre will follow standard procedure for assessing potential offers, as detailed below:

- Archive staff will review the initial assessment information against the Centre's Archive Collection Policy, existing holdings and resources
- If the acquisition looks promising, Archive staff will visit to review the material wherever it is currently stored. Please note: material will not normally be accepted without review
- All material fitting the Centre's Archive Collection Policy - whether subject to an onsite visit or not - will be formally discussed at a monthly acquisition meeting with the Director and other relevant Centre staff. Please note: no material fitting the Archive Collection Policy will be declined without the consent of the Director.
- If the acquisition is approved by the Director and Centre staff, the material will be formally acquired. Please note: all acquisitions at the Centre are accompanied by an *Archive Acquisition Form*.
- If the acquisition is declined, the decision will be communicated by letter

Any individual or institution wishing to offer material to the Centre should follow these guidelines/procedure. Further information is available on the Centre's website.

## **5. TERMS OF DEPOSIT**

Except in exceptional circumstances, records are usually acquired by gift (including bequest). The Centre does not have a budget for acquisitions and all material acquired since 2007 has been by donation. Loans will not normally be accepted. Permanently closed records will not be accepted.

No material will be accepted without clear and valid title of ownership. All acquisitions must be accompanied by an *Archive Acquisition Form* signed by the archive's owners and the Centre, covering ownership, copyright, access and arrangement and provision for materials not selected for permanent retention.

## **6. SELECTION & DE-ACCESSIONING POLICY**

Following acquisition and during the cataloguing process Archive staff will, in accordance with best practice in the field, review and assess the collection identifying any material not required for permanent preservation. Material not identified as having long-term historical or research value will be returned or destroyed in a confidential manner as required by the donor and specified on the *Archive Acquisition Form*.

The Centre does not routinely de-accession material in its care except in extenuating circumstances. For example, when the physical condition of an item prevents its preservation. If at any time in the future the Centre should need to de-accession archival material the following procedures will apply:

- The donor or nominated successor will be contacted and the material will be returned to them
- In the event of the above not being possible, all reasonable attempts will be made to transfer the material to another suitable repository.
- The Paul Mellon Centre shall not dispose of any documents in its ownership by sale

## **7. ACCESS**

The Centre aims to provide the widest possible access to its holdings. The long term aim is that all collections will be catalogued in detail and the descriptions made available on line. In the short term, boxlists can be accessed via the Centre's website.

The Archives will be made available for use to students, academics and *bona fide* researchers. Some restrictions on access are inevitable because of the nature, contents or physical condition of the archives. Access to records in a poor state of repair has to be restricted until necessary work has been carried out. Fragile or heavily used material may be produced in the form of a surrogate.

As far as resources and priorities allow conservation will be undertaken on archives which are physically damaged.

Material containing personal information may be subject to a period of closure in accordance with the Data Protection legislation. Material may also be closed at the request of the donor or require the owner's or creator's permission before access is provided. Closure under these terms is exceptional and will be discussed and agreed at the time of acquisition and documented in the *Archive Acquisition Form*.

Subject to these restrictions the collections are made available to visitors in the Public Study Room during its advertised opening hours and in accordance with its rules and regulations, free of charge. The Centre reserves the right to restrict or prohibit access, especially in the case where its rules and conditions as outlined in the *Reader Agreement Form* are infringed.

All archives received will be accessioned. They will be made available as soon as possible after sorting and either boxlisting or cataloguing by a qualified archivist. Material that has been boxlisted will be checked before issue and access provided in line with the Centre's Data Protection and Access to Archives policy. Access to all material will be supervised in the Public Study Room.

The Centre aims to provide accurate, friendly and helpful advice about its holdings in response to personal, written, electronic and telephone enquiries. It is preferred that researchers visit the Centre to do their own research. However, the Centre's staff can carry out limited and specific searches on their behalf. Further information is available on the Centre's website.

Copies of records may be made for private research use only subject to the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and subsequent legislation. Photocopying and scanning are not permitted but researchers can apply to photograph records themselves using their own camera. Further details are given in the *Application for Photographs (own camera or mobile phone)* form. Where material in the archive is already a copy, either of an original source or a publication, the Centre allows access but does not permit copying as this is an infringement of the Copyright Act. See also the Centre's *Access to the Archives Collections Policy Statement*.

## **8. REVIEW**

This policy statement will be reviewed at least once every five years, the next review being due in February 2023.

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