

## Site Collections Development Policy

Name of Museum: English Heritage - Brinkburn

Priory Name of Governing Body: English Heritage

Trust

Date on which this policy was approved by the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Committee: 17 March 2021

Policy review procedure:

The Site Collections Development Policy is owned by the Senior Curator for the geographical area. It will be reviewed at least once every five years as part of a cyclical process managed through Registry.

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2026

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Site Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of the collections.

### 1. Management Arrangements and scope

- 1.1. This policy covers all museum artefacts managed by English Heritage from, or associated with, the site whether they are held on site, at another English Heritage site or store, or on loan to a third party. This policy does not cover artefacts associated with other English Heritage sites which are stored or displayed at this site.
- 1.2. The site and its collections form part of the National Collection of English Heritage Trust.
- 1.3. The site of Brinkburn Priory is owned by Hugh Fenwick; however, the priory church, manor house and gardens are managed by English Heritage under guardianship.
- 1.4. Both the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990 limit the amount of development or investigation which can take place in this area.

### 2. Relationships to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

- 2.1. The national Collections Development Policy approved by the Board of Trustees on 9 November 2016, (together with any amendments to, or replacements for, the policy approved by Trustees), apply to the site. In the event of any disagreement between this site policy and the national policy the national policy will apply.
- 2.2. Without limitation to the above all the procedures, and ethical and

legal considerations set out in the national policy apply to acquisitions, disposals and loans from or to the sites collection.

- 2.2. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

### 3. History of the collections

- 3.1. English Heritage collections from Brinkburn Priory largely consist of historic furnishings from the priory church and some objects and fragmentary interiors from the manor house, which remained on site after Brinkburn was taken into guardianship in 1965. To date, there has been no archaeological excavation at the site. As a result, all collections are non-archaeological, with a small assemblage of medieval architectural stonework largely recovered during restoration of the priory church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.2 Five portraits of the Ames family (including Sarah Hodgson Cadogan) were acquired on permanent loan in 1978. Ownership was later transferred to English Heritage. In 2003, components of the Anderson Place staircase and other interiors from the manor house were removed from the coach house and placed into long-term storage in the manor house under an informal agreement with Hugh Fenwick. An oil painting of the site was donated to English Heritage in 1994 and a silver-plated tray in 2006. In 2014, the owner of the site donated a group of liturgical books from the priory church to English Heritage.

### 4. An overview of the collections

- 4.1. There are 257 catalogue records for the Brinkburn Priory permanent collection, with around 70% of the collection relating to the priory church. The collection comprises four main categories;
  1. 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century furnishings and fixtures from the restored priory church: 88 entries.
  2. Ex-situ architectural stonework largely relating to the medieval priory but including some post-medieval fragments: 26 entries.
  3. Ex-situ interior scheme fragments and objects from the manor house: 50 entries.In addition, there are;
  4. Ex-situ fragments of the Anderson Place and other fragments of interior in store, not part of the permanent collection: 49 entries.
- 4.2 When Brinkburn Priory was brought into state care in 1965, a proportion of the restored priory church furnishing remained onsite and came into state care. These comprised a pair of choir stalls, canopied sedilia, two lecterns, prayer desks and altar furniture. In addition, fixed furnishing including the William Hill organ, high altar, transept altars and pulpit are

also part of the permanent collection.

- 4.3 In 1965, the gardens contained a small assemblage of architectural stonework, now forming part of the permanent collection. Primarily medieval in date, the group includes nine 12<sup>th</sup> century capitals found during the removal of the late medieval heightening courses of the choir in 1858. These freestanding capitals belong to the first cloister arcading; found in the late medieval fabric of the choir, they provide the only evidence for a later phase of cloister construction. A gable-end cross and fragments of window tracery also found in 1858, are mentioned specifically in Cadogan Hodgson Cadogan's journal which documents the restoration. Other medieval fragments in the collection are likely to originate from the west, east or southern ranges, of which there is very limited in situ evidence.
  - 4.4 Unoccupied since 1952 and largely empty since the 1955 house contents sale, by 1965 the manor house had been ravaged by rot. The Ministry of Works/Department of Environment's approach was to strip out any affected interiors, which left behind only partial interiors on the eastern half of the house. Some fixtures removed during this treatment process and other residual material now form part of the permanent collection, including a large iron safe (from the Schoolroom), ceramic wine bin labels, a wedding trousseaux trunk and a pine tool chest. A small quantity of material stored in the manor house (No.3 Bedroom) includes further interiors removed during the dry rot treatment and a garden roller; these are currently not part of the permanent collection.
  - 4.5 Subsequent additions to the collection include a group of family portraits including sitters; Sarah Hodgson Cadogan (sister of Cadogan Hodgson Cadogan); her children Felix Lyde Ames, Henrietta Elizabeth Ames, Winifred Rose and Catherine Mary Ames; and her mother-in-law Margaret Wilhelmina Hamilton. These portraits never hung at Brinkburn but are likely to have originated from nearby Linden Hall. Further donations include a silver-plated tray purchased from the 1955 sale and a collection of liturgical books, including prayer books, bibles and marriage registers, donated to English Heritage by the site owner Hugh Fenwick.
  - 4.6 Highlights of the collection include;
    - A 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade 1 listed pipe organ by William Hill.
    - A 19<sup>th</sup> century high altar by sculptors George Walker Milburn (York) and Robert Beale (Newcastle).
    - A highly ornate bespoke set of altar furniture with matching lectern.
    - Two 19<sup>th</sup> century textile banners.
5. Themes and priorities for future collecting
- 5.1. The collecting policy for Brinkburn Priory has previously followed a national template, this is the first bespoke policy written specifically for the site. All future collecting at the site should consult the two research reports written by Mason (2020; 2021). These documents provide the most comprehensive

understanding of all known objects from the site.

5.2. Future collecting for the site falls under the following four themes.

5.2.1 Priory church furnishings, fixtures and associated objects.

Whilst most of the current collection consists of objects relating to the restored priory church interior, many of the original 19<sup>th</sup> century furnishings and objects were removed from the church in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These missing objects have been thoroughly documented by Mason (2020), a document which should be used to guide future acquisitions for material pertaining to the priory church. A known group of objects including altar textiles, church plate and 19<sup>th</sup> century stone samples is still held by the owners and should be considered a priority for future collecting (see below). Whilst the current environmental conditions in the church are unsuitable for open display of most sensitive materials, this should not prevent the future collecting of such material. The most significant period in the history of the church is its restoration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; future collecting should aim to preserve as much of the original interior scheme as possible.

The following objects should be considered as priorities for future collecting:

1. Church plate: chalice, paten, collection plate - in the private collection of the site owners. See Mason (2020) for details.
2. Altar textiles: altar cloths, chalice veil, chalice burse - in the private collection of the site owners. See Mason (2020) for details.
3. Stone samples: box of decorative stone samples supplied to Cadogan Hodgson Cadogan during the restoration of the priory church - in the private collection of the site owners. See Mason (2020) for details.
4. Gonfalon: hand painted gonfalon depicting St Paul, one of a pair, the other depicting St Peter already in the current collection - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
5. Stool: original stool for the William Hill organ - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
6. Kneeler: embroidered kneeler associated with prayer stand (81024227) in the current collection - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
7. Chair: Bishop's chair - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
8. Lighting: gas lighting including wall mounted sconces and freestanding candelabras - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
9. Chair: one pine rush-seated chair from the original nave seating as a representative sample should be acquired -

location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.

10. Architectural stonework: ex-situ fragments of medieval architectural stonework with historic value should be considered for acquisition. This includes material pertaining to the secular medieval ranges.

#### 5.2.2 Objects associated with the manor house and gardens

Unlike the priory church, the future collecting of objects associated with the manor house is more complex, as the scope is ultimately many thousands of objects. Approximately several hundred objects including furniture, art and decorative objects are still held by the site owners in private collection; these have not been documented by Mason (2021). A small but similar group of material is also held by another family member; these are included in the report by Mason (2021). These two groups probably form most of the material not included in the 1955 house contents sale - a sale of over 1,100 lots. On average, 1-5 objects from this sale enter the art market every year. Given the high quality of original furnishings, such material frequently commands high hammer prices at auction (see Mason 2021 - Appendix 2).

Future collecting of this material needs to have a clear and rational strategy. The current environment within the manor house offers almost no scope for the open-display of material - the ability to display within a cased environment should be considered for all future acquisitions. Future development and partial redressing of the historic interiors must also remain a possibility; current environmental conditions should not preclude the assembly of material for future redressing. Any restoration of the historic interiors would almost certainly be limited to those rooms with partially surviving interiors and offer the best evidence for authentic restoration; these rooms are listed below.

There is no common theme amongst objects from the manor house in the current collection; the current collection cannot be used to direct future collecting. Given the sheer variation of potential acquisitions and their unknown quantity/type, it is unlikely that any CDP could successfully cover and correctly direct all future acquisitions - it is imperative therefore that all are considered, assessed on their individual merits and not immediately discounted on the basis of display/storage requirements.

However, based on the current facilities in the manor house, future acquisitions should consider prioritising the following:

1. Objects which have an inherent visual quality that can be reproduced e.g. artistic works.

2. Objects representing, or related to (collected, purchased and used by), known individuals, or known groups of people who occupied the site.
3. Objects associated with known provenance to a specific room. Particularly those most likely to receive refurbishment and redressing. On the ground floor; Entrance Corridor, Drawing Room, Library. On the first floor; Outer/Inner No.1 Bedroom, Outer No.1 Dressing Room, No.2 Bedroom, Slip Room. In the basement; kitchen and wine cellar.
4. Objects with a known function which specifically enhances the understanding and development of this country house occupancy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Objects which directly relate and illustrate significant events or development of the house and its interiors.
6. Objects associated with occupation of the house from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century, the period of occupation of which very little is known.

The collection held by the current site owners should be considered as a high priority for holistic recording and all considered for future acquisitions.

5.2.3 This CDP should be revised after the new assessment of the 'Anderson Place staircase' has been completed. At the time of writing, it is not possible to state what proportion of this assemblage should be acquired for the permanent collection. Objects from the historic house interiors should be acquired. Fragments of the Anderson Place staircase should be considered for acquisition as the assemblage illustrates the personal tastes and ambition of Ward Cadogan, a significant development of the manor house and reflects the changing circumstances during this development which directly relates to the partially developed appearance of the surviving historic interiors.

#### 5.2.4 Social history

Whilst there may be considerable crossover with the collecting themes discussed in 5.1 and 5.2, objects associated with the social history of the site must be considered as an individual theme, as it incorporates material pertinent to the history of the site from outside the collecting area. The guardianship area was originally the hub of a large estate with a community of tenant farmers, estate workers and household staff. Material relating to these groups of people, estate activities including social events

should be considered for future collecting.

All cases must be assessed on an individual basis, and consideration given to whether English Heritage is the most appropriate collecting body (see section 7).

Priorities for future collecting should consider:

1. Photographs and ephemera relating to the manor house, its occupants and the core estate business e.g. commercial fishing, shooting, hunting.
2. Photographs and ephemera relating to the wider Brinkburn Estate activities e.g. agriculture, industrial processes.
3. Oral histories relating to household staff and estate workers.
4. Original manuscript: poem by Cadogan Hodgson Cadogan titled 'The House the Monks Built' - in the private collection of the site owners.

#### 5.2.5 Images of the site

Historic works of art representing Brinkburn Priory and its immediate surroundings should be considered for future collecting; particularly depictions that pre-date the restoration of the priory church or include the manor house.

Priorities for future collecting should consider:

1. Images of the priory church before restoration, particularly those from the south east and north east which show a possible lost sacristy structure between the north transept and choir.
2. Any images which show lost/previously unknown structures.
3. Images including the manor house, particularly those prior to the 1830s which will inform on our limited understanding of the earlier development of the manor house.

#### 5.2.6 Archaeological material

Brinkburn is somewhat unusual in that there have been no recorded archaeological excavations at the site in the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. As guardians of the site, we would acquire all future archaeological material from within the boundary identified in the appendix (subject to pre- deposition disposal policies). Some important discoveries made at the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century still exist in the private collection of the site owners; others are now lost. All should be considered as a priority for future acquisition. These are:

1. Coin hoard: the remaining elements of a nationally significant coin hoard and container found near the church in 1834. A substantial hoard when found,



the coins are now largely dispersed. The 14<sup>th</sup> century bronze vessel and five of the gold coins are still held in the private collection of the site owners. Acquisition of this material should be considered as the highest priority for its historical value/significance to the site and its national significance in monastic coin hoards. See Mason (2020) for details.

2. Coin hoard: a ?16<sup>th</sup> century coin hoard found during restoration of the priory church in 1858 - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.
3. Bell: medieval bell fragments from the priory church found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and present in the antiquarian collection of Cadogan Hodgson Cadogan in the 1850s - location unknown. See Mason (2020) for details.

## 6. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 6.1. The assemblage of ex-situ architectural timber which contains fragments of the Anderson Place staircase - currently in storage but not part of the permanent collection, nor under a formal loan agreement - was proposed for disposal in 2018. Subsequently Mason (2021) has identified numerous items within this assemblage as fragments of the historic manor house interiors. This assemblage now requires a holistic reassessment, with any items which belong to the historic interior of the house being secured for the permanent collection. Only after this process has been completed, can a reliable and informed decision be made on the future of the Anderson Place staircase assemblage.
- 6.2 An assemblage of architectural stonework (recorded as permanent collection on HOMS - see 81024220) remains partially buried within a roofless structure adjacent to the game larder. Partially exposed pieces appear to be medieval in date. This assemblage was presumably found during the 1960s and 1970s during ground works by the Ministry of Works/Department of Environment in the area of the cloister and east range. This assemblage should be uncovered, with items of historic value being individually recorded and retained; repetitive or non-diagnostic pieces should be considered for disposal.

## 7. Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1. English Heritage will consider the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related subject areas or 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 museums and organisations:
  - 7.2.1 Northumberland Country Record Office (Woodhorn). Collections at Woodhorn include photographs, documents and ephemera associated with the site. These include the personal papers of Ward Cadogan (owner of Brinkburn 1825-1833), photographs of the family's estates in Barbados and photographs of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

8. Appendix

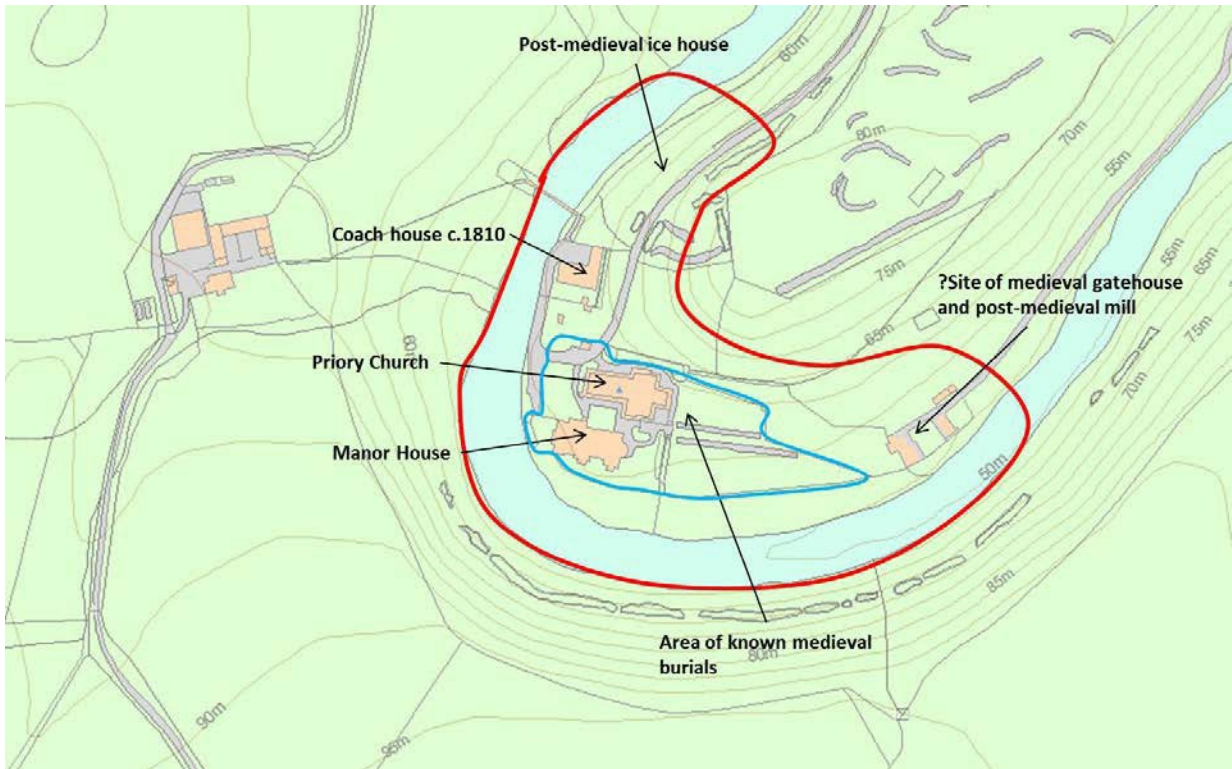


Figure 1: Collecting area for Brinkburn Priory pertaining to archaeological material only (highlighted red). Area of guardianship (as of 2021) marked in blue.