

Site Collections Development Policy

Name of Museum: English Heritage – Lindisfarne 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 the 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.
- 1.3. Lindisfarne Priory was placed into guardianship on 28th September 1913, transferred from the Office of Woods who leased it to the Manor of Holy Island. It has been in Crown ownership since 1537. There is some uncertainty whether site ownership is now In Right of the Crown or the Crown Estate Commissioners. English Heritage manage the site.
- 1.4. The museum building is North West of, and separate to, the priory site and is owned by HMBCE, and is managed by English Heritage. It is not on scheduled land nor listed.
- 1.5. Lindisfarne Priory is located on the southern side of Holy Island, south of the modern village. It is in the Northumberland Unitary Authority. It is a scheduled monument, list entry number 1011650, National Grid reference: NU 12618 41732. *'The monument includes the site of the pre-Conquest monastery¹ of Lindisfarne and the Benedictine cell of Durham Cathedral that succeeded it in the 11th century. Monastic remains from both periods will survive outside the precinct of the later monastery. These have not been included in the scheduling, however, as their extent and state* ¹ This is an assumption.

¹ This is an assumption

*of preservation are not yet sufficiently understood.*²

- 1.6 Holy Island is a conservation area and an SSSI and is within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast. There are seven scheduled ancient monuments, including the monastic remains on St Cuthbert's Isle just south of Holy Island. There are 22 listed buildings, with Lindisfarne Priory and the adjacent St Mary the Virgin's Church being Grade I, the rest grade II.
- 1.7 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 on Holy Island. Development on Holy Island is controlled by Northumberland County Council is and subject to pre-planning consent desk-top assessment and then archaeological mitigation on approval. It is a requirement of archaeological mitigation work undertaken in line with paragraph 199 of the NPPF that any archive generated is deposited appropriately and publicly available.
- 1.8 There is no area wide scheduling on Holy Island. Research archaeological investigations or metal detecting are not subject to planning control on unscheduled land. As such the same advice is given for deposition of archive and finds but it is not enforceable under the NPPF.

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, all 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. The archaeological collections held by English Heritage have been continually collected through interventions and gathered from the site and locality since excavations in 1821 to the beginning of the 21st century. There are over 150 known interventions and discoveries across Holy Island listed in the EHT site archive. They are summarized below:
- 3.2 Following the collapse of the priory church tower, south arcade

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011650>

and the triforium of the north arcade in the 18th and early 19th century JSD Selby, commenced clearance of the ruins and undertook limited repairs in 1821.

- 3.3 The west front and the crossing arch collapsed in the 1850s. The architect Anthony Salvin was commissioned, and paid by the government, to complete a programme of repairs in 1855-6. This included stabilising the walls, reconstructing the rainbow arch, reconstructing the west front and revealing the church plan.
- 3.4 Further investigation work was carried out by William Crossman in 1887-89 with clearance work across the conventual buildings.
- 3.5 Following guardianship in 1913, the Office of Works partially excavated the church and consolidated the walls in 1915-16, followed by clearance work in the cloister, infirmary and outer court in 1919-24.
- 3.6 Modern excavation and research on Holy Island started with investigations by Hope-Taylor in 1962 followed by investigations lead by O'Sullivan and Young under the auspices of the University of Leicester in the 1970s and 80s. These include the English Heritage Museum site in 1977, Ness End, Green Shiel, Jenny Bell Well Midden, The Heugh and Sanctuary Close.
- 3.7 Since then investigations have largely been associated with development control in the village. Further research excavations have taken place since 2000 with the Time team/Northern Archaeological Associates investigation of The Palace and the most recent excavations which have been carried out under the Peregrini Project, centred on the Heugh, (2016-19) and Dig Ventures, centred on Sanctuary Close, since 2016, both on the probable site or within the vicus of the Anglo-Saxon monastery.
- 3.8 The majority of the collections are from the priory site, coming with site guardianship and are poorly contexted. The museum site comprises the majority of the bulk collections. There are also several objects from the 20th century excavations at Green Shiel (northern part of Holy Island) and Jenny Bell Well Midden (south of the priory) as well as random finds from Sanctuary Close, the shoreline and The Heugh. The finds from Green Shiel and Jenny Bell Well Midden are from current split archives with the majority still held by O'Sullivan at the University of Leicester.
- 3.9 An informal museum was established in the holder of the Manor of Holy Island's estate office during the 19th century in outbuildings of the Manor House Hotel. In 1921-22 the Office of Works rented the building and established a more formal museum, open to paying visitors. The first inventory was written in 1921; this listing included material excavated from the site from 19th century excavations as well as limited material gathered from outside the priory site. This is

not all separately identifiable with absolute certainty. This first museum was superseded by a new build museum directly opposite on vacant land acquired by HMBCE by 1977 when excavations took place. This museum was opened in 1987 and is the current site museum and main visitor admission point to Lindisfarne Priory.

- 3.10 Gifts to the collection include 19th century prints, from the collection of a former parish vicar in the 1980s, and a fish lure and stone tool gifted by Lady Rose Crossman in the 1990s. The legal status of material from Green Shiel and Jenny Bell Well midden and the cross head from the Village Green still needs to be established.

4. An overview of the collections

- 4.1. Collecting to date has been sporadic and largely unplanned and as such is neither entirely comprehensive nor logical. There are 430 current object records for Lindisfarne Priory permanent collection. Existing collections contain very significant material and describe aspects of monastic and post monastic life. The majority of the collection is archaeological and includes bulk finds. The collections range in date from Roman to post medieval. The majority are medieval and post medieval and include small finds, bulk finds of ceramics and CBM, textile as well as architectural stonework and stone sculpture. Over a quarter of the registered finds are coins or jettons. The Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture forms an internationally significant collection and includes:
- 14 'name-stones' dating from 7th-8th century
 - 24 fragments from high crosses, 8th to 11th century ranging from sections of shafts or cross arms to complete heads.
 - 1 cross base, 8th-9th century
 - The 'Viking Raider' stone, 9th century
 - 9th century grave cover
- 4.2 There is a small but internationally significant published collection of knitted textile fragments including jerkins and stockings, dated 1720-50 representing some of the earliest knitting discovered in the UK.
- 4.3 The Anglo-Saxon small finds and other later medieval and post-medieval collections are largely of local and regional significance.
- 4.4 There are 9 works on paper including 18th and 19th century antiquarian prints showing views of the site as well as the published 1889 site plans of the priory and St Cuthbert's Isle by Hodges. The original H. S. Grimm watercolour wash pen and ink drawing of the priory church in 1778-80 is of national significance. The site paper-based archive dating from c. 1916 to present includes correspondence, finds book, sketch plans, paintings, rubbings of

objects and photographs of works and collections, archaeological plans and museum development plans.

- 4.5 There is one item on long term loan, name stone, accession number 8820214.

5. Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 5.1 EHT recognizes that a more logical approach to securing past and future collections from Lindisfarne Priory and Holy Island is required and there needs to be better co-ordination amongst all stakeholders and collecting bodies to enable holistic collecting, research and access of all archaeology and archives from across Holy Island. This CDP reflects the most recent discussions with other stakeholders to define a coherent and consistent approach to collecting areas, themes and exemptions as well as appropriate collection transfers between institutions.

5.2 Archaeological material:

- 5.2.1 The geographic area of historic occupation and land use at Lindisfarne Priory is not fully established. It is likely that both the Anglo-Saxon monastery and the later medieval priory were a dominant and influential presence across the whole island. The later medieval monastic precinct does not appear to have been walled but may have been indicated by boundary stones and the shoreline. Some boundary stones are evident but their date has not been established. 16th century fortifications in the village may have overlain earlier boundaries. The later medieval precinct area may be roughly indicated by taking the Scheduled Ancient Monument as the core and extending that area on all cardinal points bounded by the shore on the East and South (including the Heugh) and West (including St Cuthbert's Isle), and across the modern village to the North for the period of medieval land use (the monastic precinct). This same area probably incorporates the vicus of the original Anglo-Saxon monastery.
- 5.2.2 EHT seeks to set a geographical collecting area that better respects likely activity in and around a monastic core whilst recognising a need to limit collecting from this wider area to material deemed of key interest in our ability to curate and interpret the guardianship site. In terms of a collecting area it is sensible to consider this area as a focus, but limited to the northern boundary of Sanctuary Close, the north boundary of St Mary's Church yard and the north boundary of Manor House Hotel, excepting the museum site as a separate collecting area. This area concurs with the historic collecting area by antiquarian excavators and earlier HMBCE and English Heritage acquisition policies. Excepting the guardianship area and museum site the

collecting area is not obligatory on English Heritage and may require negotiation of a deposition grant dependent on the nature and scale of the intervention.

- 5.2.3 We would seek to collect, through negotiation, all known and future archaeological archives (artefactual and paper-based) from the scheduled monument area and wider boundary identified above, plus a 250m buffer zone in the village if the majority archive has an irrefutable connection to the Anglo-Saxon monastery or medieval priory site, or later military activity on the priory site. Where interventions lead to potential deposition with English Heritage all periods of finds will be considered for acquisition, with a pre-deposition disposal policy for repetitive and non- diagnostic material. Archaeological archive resulting from large scale excavations would only be accepted following negotiations with the excavator/developer, including the issues of capacity and costs.
- 5.2.4 We would also seek to collect, through negotiation, all known and future chance discoveries (single or small group) from the collecting area (which should be reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme), including items which fall under the Treasure Act 1996. These will be limited to monastic related finds with clear provenance. Primary consideration would be given to whether those objects could be brought to display at Lindisfarne, or if a more appropriate institution (e.g. GNM) could acquire and display to the public instead.
- 5.2 Detached architectural material:
Detached architectural material which is diagnostic and non-repetitive will be collected if it cannot be adequately recorded for archiving or it is of display quality.
- 5.3 Dispersed collections: We seek to unify split assemblages whether through acquisition or disposal.
 - 5.3.1 The Great North Museum hold single or very small quantities of finds from Lindisfarne (see list in 7.2 below). English Heritage would accept these collections if their future was otherwise in jeopardy and/or would seek to unite split archives by deposition with English Heritage.
 - 5.3.2 English Heritage would collect known archaeological material currently held by private individuals originating from the collecting area if it was to be offered to English Heritage and fulfilled all other criteria for collecting.
 - 5.3.3 English Heritage would seek to collect 1900-1930s excavation paper- based archive and other relevant photographs and records relating to historic archaeology at Lindisfarne priory.
 - 5.3.4 English Heritage would seek to collect 18 photographs taken

by CC Hodges, presented to the meeting of Proceedings of Soc of Ants, Newcastle 1889, Lindisfarne, Holy Island (p254) if located.

5.4 Books:

We would seek to collect original site and Holy Island guidebooks.

5.5 Prints, paintings and maps:

We would seek to acquire prints, paintings and maps that show key views of Lindisfarne Priory, and antique maps of Holy Island, in particular those with a detailed level of recording which aid our understanding of the history of the island, priory and discoveries.

5.6 Photographs and postcards:

We would seek to acquire photographs and postcards that show key views of Lindisfarne Priory; in particular those which show detailed views of excavated features, site layout, the historic museum and collections as well as events held at Lindisfarne Priory which relate to the history of the site.

6. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

6.1. Accessioned collections from Green Shiel should be considered for transfer to another museum (coin 880129 and spear head 880138). They are split from their main archive which is currently at the University of Leicester and all should ultimately be deposited with the Great North Museum/ Society of Antiquities Newcastle under their Collections Development Policies. It is not entirely clear what their status was intended to be, nor who owns/owned them, when displayed in the site museum in 1988 but they are currently listed as permanent collections. This potential transfer would not preclude future loan agreements.

6.2 Rolled plans on film from the 1977 excavations have become severely embrittled and may be considered for disposal after recording or establishing whether the information they contain is held in another format.

6.3 No other reviews of the permanent collection are currently planned as all are either of display quality, further research potential or add to the overall understanding of the site.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

7.1. English Heritage will take account of 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 Historic England Archives holds photographs taken between 1856 and 1859 by Roger Fenton (FEN01), six photographs

taken 1896–1920 by Alfred Newton and Sons (CC98/10007–10012) and a property file containing 464 drawings, maps and plans dating from the 1880s to 2011 (PF/LIN).

- 7.2.2 Alnwick Castle Archives: holds watercolours by John Wykeham Archer, 1862 of excavated Lindisfarne carved stone and a plan of the village of Holy Island, including the property of the Duke of Northumberland, 1842, by John Craig, land surveyor, Lowick (AC: O.XXIVA/5) and Sir D. W. Smith archive of Camps and Castles (DNP: MS 187A/8), including a large section on Holy Island's castle and Osborne's Fort, and a hand-drawn map of Holy Island dated 1715, but does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.3 Berwick Museum and Art Gallery: holds some antique maps and paintings of Lindisfarne Priory and souvenirs and contemporary artwork from Holy Island. It does not hold any archaeological archive from Holy Island. It's CDP (2015), 4.1 states '*The museum is a repository for archaeological material excavated within the town (the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is responsible for material found elsewhere in Northumberland)*'
- 7.2.4 Berwick Record Office: holds the Crossman archives NRO 683 and maps, plans and prints of Holy Island.
- 7.2.5 The British Library: holds the Lindisfarne Gospels (Cotton Nero D.iv) and The St Cuthbert Gospel (Add MS 89000) and prints and maps from the King George III topographical collection but does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.6 Durham Cathedral; holds relics from Cuthbert's coffin, account rolls of the priory's agents who supervised the parish of Holy Island, account rolls of the priory's cell on Lindisfarne, but does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.7 Great North Museum (GNM) and Society of Antiquities Newcastle: holds Lead plate, acc. no 1857.8, Bronze Age Adze – Palace site, acc. no 1926.13, Bronze age spear head – Jenny Bell midden –acc. no. 1978.20, 2 coin hoards found on Fiddlers Green, deposited by 1562, first hoard of 50 silver coins, second of 10 gold and 7 silver coins , 1977 Museum site – split archive between EH and GNM, 1994 Fort on the Heugh archive - M. Haggie, P. Ryder, P. Huntley, 1998 Lindisfarne Castle access path evaluation archive, 1998 St. Mary's cemetery, Lindisfarne - archaeological monitoring report, 2004 Lindisfarne Gospel's Garden - Archaeological Services Durham University and 2 Copper alloy rings – 1931(not traced Oct 2020). GNM are awaiting deposition of archaeological archive from The Palace and other Holy Island interventions by Northern Archaeological Associates.
- The GNM actively collect from Holy Island and are recommended

by Northumberland County Council as the repository for archaeological mitigation depositions from development. The GNM CDP, October 2018, part 13.1.2, states that for archaeology *'The acquisitions policy for the British Antiquities collection is based on Statute 2 of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, which states that the object of the Society is 'the study, investigation, description and presentation of antiquities and historical records in general and of those of the historical counties of Northumberland and Durham and the City and County of Newcastle upon Tyne' (1813). The present collecting area for British antiquities includes the County of Northumberland...with the exception of sites provided with site museums. All periods up to c. AD 1600 (or later in the case of multi-period sites where the whole assemblage must be preserved in situ) are included.'* The GNM also recognises in the same policy, section 5 that it *'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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.'* GNM is supportive of the EHT collecting area proposed in this paper.

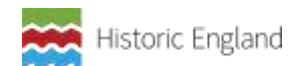
- 7.2.8 Holy Island Reading Room: holds Holy Island church and parish registers and copies of documents from Berwick archives. There is no active CDP for archaeological archives and no facility or specialist staff for care of collections.
- 7.2.9 RCHMS, Edinburgh: holds B. Hope-Taylor, 1962 Heugh and other trenches west of the priory paper archive, no finds traced, it does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.10 RIBA Library: holds Salvin drawings, north and south elevations of choir (Y6/57/2) it does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.11 St Mary's Church, Holy Island: holds a manuscript fragment of a commentary on canon law (possibly Gratian's Decretum) – not currently traced, and a namestone currently on long term loan to English Heritage. It does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island. The burial ground is active. Any finds on church land would be reported to, and be under the jurisdiction of, the PCC.
- 7.2.12 The National Archives: holds Lindisfarne Priory Works 14 files, it does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.
- 7.2.12 University of Oxford: holds Bede's 'Life of St Cuthbert' (Oxford, University College MS 165), it does not have an active CDP for Lindisfarne Priory or Holy Island.

WebGIS Map



Red line: boundary of collecting area
Dark red and pink: English Heritage managed area
Red: other scheduled areas

Date 05/03/2021
Map Scale 1:5,000
Map Centre 412690,641631



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