

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 16 July 2015

Minton Archive Project

Recommendation(s)

1. That the report is noted for information.

Report of the Acting Director for Place (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Directorate (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The gift of the Minton Archive to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service by the Art Fund has created opportunities and obligations which the Archive Service is collectively undertaking under the title of the Minton Archive Project. This activity is funded, where there are costs, by the Art Fund. This report is to inform the committee of the acquisition of the archive and the progress made since acquisition.

Background

Context to the archive collection

3. The Minton Archive is the designation of the very large archive of the Royal Doulton and Minton the many significant ceramic manufacturing companies which Doulton acquired in the second half of the twentieth century
4. It clearly has great significance for Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire but it is also a key ceramic firm with national and international relevance. The archive is wide ranging and offers great potential for research by academics, local and family historians and others researching the development of the ceramics industry in Stoke on Trent.

Acquisition

5. The complex ownership and custodial history of the archive was reported to this committee at its meeting of 26 March 2015. Subsequently The Art Fund completed the purchase of the archive from WWRD(Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton) for £1.65M on 31 March 2015 and by immediate gift transferred ownership to the Archive Service. This transaction was not a simple donation however and the Archive Service and the City Council took on the following obligations as conditions of the gift

- To identify all the material at Barlaston that fell within the scope of the sale as it had not been possible to carry out a full audit or inventory process beforehand
- To consolidate the archive at Stoke on Trent City Archives from the various locations (Bonhams warehouse, Wedgwood Museum stores, other locations at Barlaston) at which it had been kept
- To transfer the existing typescript catalogue of the Minton portion of the archive into the Archive Service's electronic online catalogue, Gateway
- To undertake sufficient work on the larger, uncatalogued part of the collection comprising the records of Royal Doulton to be able to accurately estimate how much further work would be required to catalogue it to the same level of detail as the Minton part
- To mount a display at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in the autumn of 2015
- To reach agreement with WWRD on a framework for loans and exhibitions

6. In addition, the City Council may not sell the archive and should it ever cease to provide an Archive Service, then ownership and all licenses of the IPR would revert to the Art Fund.

7. The Art Fund has made available £30,000 pounds to cover removal costs, packaging costs, display costs and the funding of a Digital Development Officer post for four days per week for 6 months.

8. Stoke-on-Trent City Archives has redistributed public facing and administrative duties so that the Archivist can concentrate wholly on the Minton Project.

Progress to May 2015

9. The portion of the archive at Bonhams returned to Stoke-on-Trent on 24 May. This received coverage in the Sentinel and Radio Stoke and was recorded by the Art Fund's photographer

10. With the help of volunteers, 30% of the typescript catalogue has now been turned into usable electronic format and work begun on inputting into the online catalogue.

11. The portion of the archive at Barlaston must be moved before the end of July when the current Museum stores are to be demolished. There is a very large quantity of records here and Archive Service staff are currently working two days per week in the stores in order to pack and box list the material.

12. Discussions with WWRD and with Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG) on displays are at still an early stage.

13. On 1 June an experienced photographer and electronic media worker was transferred from the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in order to work as a Digital Development Officer. He will initially support the work of transfer and catalogue creation but will also explore and promote the archive through digital channels and test solutions that might form part of future bids to external funders for further access and cataloguing work on the collection.

14. During the six month project the Stoke on Trent City Archivist and Archivist will assess the Minton Archive for further funding bids to enhance access, interpretation, digitisation and research potential of the collection. The County Archive team will work with Stoke to identify suitable funders and draft bids drawing on existing experience across the Joint Archive Service. Similarly the Archive Service will also continue to work with the Potteries Museum to identify collaborative grant funded projects. Potential funders will include: National Cataloguing Grants Scheme, Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and other charitable trusts.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

The Minton Archive will be available at Stoke on Trent City Archives free of charge. Access will be provided in a number of ways to ensure different audiences are aware of it.

Legal implications:

The agreement with WWRD for future display and exhibition of the collection is to be concluded within a year of the Deed of Gift

Resource and Value for money implications:

Extra costs are being borne by the Art Fund. The concentration of Stoke-on-Trent City Archive's resources on this important archive is only possible because external support is available

Risk implications:

None

Climate Change implications:

No significant implications.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

No significant implications.

Report author:

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List of Background Papers

Papers

Contact/Directorate/ext number

Deed of Gift between the Art Fund and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.