

Members Interest
N/A

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee 18 February 2016

Minton Archive Project

Recommendation(s)

1. That the report is noted for information.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities (Staffordshire County Council) and Chief Operating Officer – Resources Directorate (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations

2. The Minton Archive was gifted to the City of Stoke-on-Trent by the Art Fund, to be held at the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives. The completion of the Minton Archive Project in December 2015 has brought an end to the first phase of work.

Background

3. Following the gift by the Art Fund to the City of the Minton Archive on 31 March 2015 Stoke-on-Trent City Archives undertook to complete the following project funded up to £30,000 by the Art Fund:

- To complete an audit, create a box-list and basic online catalogue for material for the Minton Archive and associated collections.
- To mount a display of material from the Minton Archive and associated collections at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG).
- Through these activities make the Minton Archive and associated collections accessible to the general public and raise the profile of the Minton Archive and the Joint Archive Service.

Listing and cataloguing

4. The Minton Archive includes the records of several firms including Royal Doulton. The Royal Doulton and other companies part of the Archive is uncatalogued. There was a partial existing box-list for some of the Doulton material. However a very large amount of material at Barlaston was not in boxes or listed. The following tasks were completed to enable the transfer from Barlaston to Stoke on Trent City Archives to take place:

- Four archive staff working four days a week for six weeks at Barlaston boxing and box-listing this material prior to its removal.
- Over 600 boxes, 200 wrapped oversize and loose parcels and approximately 30 paintings and a stained glass window were listed on an initial spreadsheet prior to transfer.

5. The Minton company hard copy catalogue, compiled 1971-1998 , was converted to electronic format using optical character reading technology. This subsequently required extensive correction by a team of five volunteers. The resulting 5,400 catalogue entries was then imported, structured and standardised by the Archivist. The catalogue is now searchable on the Archive Service online catalogue Gateway. This was completed in November 2015.

Display at Potteries Museum and Art Gallery

6. A display which combined original Minton ceramic pieces from the Potteries Museum collection with items from the Minton Archive was prepared jointly with the curatorial staff of the Museum. It opened on 29 September and closes on 31 March 2016.

7. A major feature of this display was the use of a digital touch table to enable the presentation of more items than could be accommodated in display cases.

Making the collection more accessible

8. The development of content for the touch table was undertaken by the Digital Development Officer, employed on a temporary contract as part of the Art Fund's funding. To function effectively the touch table required the integration of high quality images, the cataloguing data, and web content, presented in appropriate and intuitive design. This is available on the website www.themintonarchive.org

9. The Minton website has been designed to be permanent, capable of continuous expansion and enhancement, and able to integrate the contributions of scholars, researchers, collectors and all others interested in Minton.

10. The exhibition and website were the focus of an Art Fund celebration event on 29 November to which donors and stakeholders were invited. The website has risen steadily to appear on the front page of internet searches for Minton Archive. The site has had in the past three months over 1400 separate users visit it, with over 13,400 page views and has generated approving comment from users. The site is publicised on the front page of the Joint Archive Service website and through regular Facebook and Twitter updates.

Future Development

11. The City Council in recognition of the importance of the collection and maintaining the impetus given by the Project has made the post of Digital Development Officer permanent on the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives establishment. This will ensure that the website can continue to grow and develop.

12. An application to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and the Art Fund for funding to conserve some of the earliest and most important items in the collection was successful. The funding of £33,000 will enable the Joint Archive Service to appoint a conservator or a year from some time in the spring. The conservator will be managed by the Senior Conservator and split their time between Stoke on Trent City Archives and Staffordshire Record Office.

13. A grant in order to catalogue the Doulton and associated companies part of the archive will be sought in June from the National Cataloguing Grants Fund, administered by the National Archives.

14. The Art Fund have established the Futures Fund to support both the Wedgwood Collection and the Minton Archive. A sum of £100,000 has been ring-fenced within this Fund to support the Minton archive specifically. The most efficient use of this generous support will be to provide match funding when applying to other grant giving bodies.

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:

The total extra cost of the Minton Archive Project was £23,706.50, the whole of which was reclaimed from the Art Fund's 'Futures Fund'. This means that there remains £76,000 available to claim as match funding to support future projects or development around the Minton Archive.

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
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Minton Project Final Report To Art Fund dated 08/01/2016	
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