



# URRBRAE HOUSE HISTORIC PRECINCT COLLECTIONS POLICY

The Urrbrae House Historic Precinct (UHHP) and its collections are part of the University of Adelaide. The UHHP follows the University's Collection Management Policy and Procedures which may be found at: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/2163/>

The Urrbrae House Historic Precinct Collections Policy outlined below is a local area policy which sits within the broader University of Adelaide Arts and Heritage framework. See <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/uni-collections>

## Strategic Intent

The UHHP is part of the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine in the Faculty of Sciences and is committed to education and civic engagement. It is a historic house museum within the University providing a museum experience to the on-campus community and general public. It provides opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and promotion of the social, scientific and cultural heritage of the University's Waite Campus. As part of the University of Adelaide, the UHHP supports the intent and strategic goals outlined in the University's Strategic Plan, *Future Making* <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/vco/strategic-plan>

## Museum Purpose and Services

The UHHP is a centre of:

- Heritage and collections that acquires, conserves and interprets movable and built cultural heritage relating to the
  - family and social times of University benefactor Peter Waite (1834-1922)
  - history of the Urrbrae estate and
  - history of the University's Waite Campus.

The UHHP uses museum best practice in collection management and provides access to our collections to researchers and the public.

- Learning and curiosity emphasised by the Museum's focus on education programs (which encompass interactivity and excitement), special events, exhibitions, and tours.
- Engagement through a variety of stimulating public programs and activities, and use of the Museum site as a venue for site-appropriate functions. Community focused events are particularly encouraged.
- Community outreach, generating and sustaining strong relations with stakeholders on the Waite Campus, within the University of Adelaide, the City of Mitcham, the museum community and in the broader world.

## Urrbrae House Historic Precinct Collections include

- House Furniture and Artefacts Collection
- Peter Waite Library (Book) Collection
- Waite Agricultural Research Institute (Coach House) Photographic Collection
- Waite Agricultural Research Institute (Coach House) Archives [part of the University of Adelaide Archives Collection]
- Waite Scientific Collection

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## History of the Collections

The Museum's collections are a result of many acquisition periods. Prior to 1991 Urrbrae House served as the family home of Peter and Matilda Waite, and later the home of the first three Directors of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. The House was opened to the public for the first time in 1991 when a part-time Curator was appointed. Material acquired prior to 1991 was not collected or documented in a coherent manner. The greatest strengths within the collections from this time are the personal effects of the Waite family and significant pieces of domestic technology. Most of these pieces were bequeathed to the University with the house following the deaths of Peter and Matilda Waite in 1922.

Between 1991 and 2007, the staff of the Museum acquired material for the collections at an accelerated pace. Some original furnishings removed from Urrbrae House in the 1920s were donated back to the House by Waite family descendants during this time. The strengths within the collections from this period include photographs, documents and scientific equipment from the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

Since 2008 collecting has been more measured and attention has been paid toward documenting the existing collections as well as acquiring new material. During this period, much collecting has been passive with the Museum responding to offers of donation from the public and only occasionally relying on purchase or active searching. The strengths of the collecting of this period have been artefacts relating to South Australian domestic life in the 1890s when the Waite family lived in the then newly constructed Urrbrae House.

## Collection Boundaries

The collections of the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct will be selective. Due to space and financial limitations it is not feasible to allow indiscriminate growth of collections.

Objects will be collected by donation, purchase, transfer from other organisations or commission. The Museum will only receive donations upon receipt of a Donation Form signed by the donor or donor's agent. All donations to the UHHP become the property of the University of Adelaide and are subject to its policies and procedures.

- Objects collected may include both historic and contemporary materials.
- The Museum will collect paper based records such as diaries, correspondence and photographs, and three dimensional objects.
- No objects or collections will be acquired or accepted with conditions or restrictions on the way they might be used or displayed in the future.
- No item will be acquired or accepted where copyright cannot be obtained. Where possible, the Museum will obtain copyright and reproduction rights for new objects at the time of acquisition. The Museum will adhere to the Copyright Act 1968 in all collecting activity including acquiring new objects for the collection.
- Collecting, management and interpretation of Indigenous items will be in accordance with Museums Australia's Indigenous heritage policy. All collecting activity and collection management processes to be in accordance with the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.

## Acquisition Criteria

The University of Adelaide, of which UHHP is a part, will only acquire items that fulfil both the acquisition criteria and the requirements of relevance, provenance and legal title. For more information see the University's Collection Management Procedures:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/2163/>

Objects will be considered for collection only when they adequately satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

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- Significance: Objects will be sought that have a proven association with a known individual, event or period related to
    - the history of the Waite family
    - domestic life in South Australia from 1850-1920
    - Urrbrae House
    - the Waite Agricultural Research Institute and Waite Campus of the University of Adelaide.

The Museum collects objects that are valued by the community for their historical, cultural, scientific, educational or social associations. An artefact will not be considered valuable or useful simply because of its age.

- Condition and completeness: The condition of potential donations must be considered when undertaking acquisition assessment to prevent damage to our present collections and the cost implications of future conservation. Objects should be complete to the extent that an observer could visualise a past custom or activity with which the object was associated. Health, Safety and Welfare must be considered in the acquisition of objects for the Museum.
- Documentation: Every object acquired for the collection should be supported by clear documentation that defines its historical significance and/or association.
- Representation: The Museum acquires individual pieces as representatives of a range of objects that demonstrate principal characteristics of a range of activities relevant to Urrbrae House and the University's Waite Campus, past or present.
- Rarity: The Museum collects rare or uncommon objects that fall within the UHHP collecting themes and satisfy other University Collection Management Policy and Procedures criteria.

### **Research utilising UHHP Collections**

The UHHP welcomes enquiries from researchers and whenever possible provides information in response. However, assistance may be limited in responding to more complex topics and researchers are encouraged to make an appointment to visit the UHHP in order to carry out in-depth research. Potential visiting researchers who express an interest in utilising the collections of the UHHP should apply to the Manager, Urrbrae House Historic Precinct for access and complete the "Application to access the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct Collections" form.

The UHHP can provide desk-space for researchers working on projects based on UHHP collections.

When reproducing or referring to University Archives or Collections, including the UHHP Collections, in a publication or paper, it is important for researchers to cite them accurately. An archives/collection citation should identify the:

- institution holding the record/artefact
- record series and/or collection of which the record/artefact is a part and
- title of the record item/artefact itself.

For further information see <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives/using-the-archives>