
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Collections Care and Conservation Plan 2013-2018

a partnership between

TheHive

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1.0 Accessions process

In association with the Accessioning Archivist, ensure that no infested material that would pose a risk to the repository or other collections, or potentially hazardous materials, such as Cellulose Nitrate film are accessioned to the archives.

Ensure items are packaged appropriately with regard to size and packaging to ensure they are adequately protected prior to cataloguing

Identify potential conservation needs in advance of detailed cataloguing processes

See also the Collections Information Policy and Plan.

2.0 Access and building security

Overall control of The Hive is managed by the Building Development Manager, working with Service Managers and Team Leaders on FUDGE. Access controls and staff passes are managed by SGP Facilities Management, on requests from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service Management. Access to the strongrooms is normally permitted to archive service staff only, or to guided groups. Emergency access is available for SGP supervisors by agreement.

The original Archive searchroom is closely monitored during opening hours, by Archive staff and through the use of CCTV.

3.0 Storage of collections

The storage environment at The Hive for Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service archive collections is built to BS5454:2000 standard and conforms to PD5454:2012. Six of the seven strongrooms are for the storage of mixed archives, while the seventh is environmentally controlled for the storage of photographic, audio visual and multi-media archives.

Temperature and humidity are controlled, monitored and maintained through the Building Management System (BMS) at levels within the recommended guidelines.

Archives are held on predominantly mobile shelving racks, in a range of archivally sound boxes or paper wrapping. A volunteer programme of re-wrapping older collections is underway. A large number of bound volumes are also on the shelves and many maps and plans and other documents are rolled in cotton bags.

4.0 Housekeeping within the strong rooms.

There is a systematic shelf-by-shelf cleaning schedule in which boxes are removed, checked for external damage, replaced when necessary and shelves are wiped clean.

Strongroom cleaning is to be carried out by the Archive Service Collections Assistant.

Weekly environmental reports are to be provided to Conservator and Archival Policy and Collections Manager from the BMS

5.0 Four-phase prioritisation strategy

All conservation work to be recorded on Conservation Job Sheets

All conservation work on electronically catalogued items to be recorded on CALM database

All decisions on conservation work to take account of cataloguing prioritisation scores

5.1 - Identify items requiring conservation work arising from document production in the search room.

Weekly consultation between Conservator and Senior Archive Assistant to determine how best to treat items identified as being in need of conservation/preservation.

Items requiring conservation/preservation to be placed on a designated shelf in 61F.

'Quick-fix' items to be taken to conservation and work undertaken – items estimated to require minimal time to treat (3-4hrs).

Items not designated as 'quick-fix' to be recorded on a 'Conservation Review' list and returned to storage.

5.2 - 'Conservation Review' meeting.

A monthly meeting with Archival Policy and Collections Manager to discuss and develop treatment priorities for items that are not designated as 'quick-fix' from the search room.

5.3 - Address Conservation issues arising within projects.

In developing projects for funding, identify conservation needs and potential costs

Co-ordinate with staff to provide conservation advice and solutions to issues arising from projects being undertaken across the service

- Cataloguing
- Outreach

5.4 - Address items previously identified as being in need of Conservation treatment.

In association with Archival Policy and Collections Manager, discuss and develop treatment priorities for items known to be in need of conservation treatment, including those on the cataloguing backlog or as specified in the National Preservation Office Survey 2004

6.0 Searchroom Environment

All searchroom staff to receive appropriate induction and training in handling documents

All users of documents to have suitable induction to care and handling of documents

Appropriate rests, weights, gloves and other protective equipment to be available for use in the searchroom

In cases where production is refused or more closely monitored due to condition of the document, users should be informed and encouraged to understand any restrictions

Users should be encouraged to report any conservation needs they identify while consulting the documents

7.0 Copying

Searchroom staff accompany members of the public wishing to photocopy documents when using the original archive Searchroom. Decisions on physical suitability for photocopying will be made by the Team Leader in the Searchroom, based on appropriate awareness of handling and copying techniques. (Advice on copyright issues is available separately).

Copying must be carried out so as not to damage books and documents. Larger documents, which would not normally be photocopied, may be traced through acetate. The use of the WAAS photographic scanning and digitisation service should be encouraged, or the purchase of photographic permissions, in order to lessen the impact on individual documents of excessive photocopying.

8.0 Exhibitions

Long-term display of original documents should be discouraged and appropriate surrogates used. Where original documents are used for display, exhibition and other learning and outreach purposes, suitable environmentally controlled display cases and display supports and equipment should be used where possible.

Loaning out of material to external display, exhibition and other learning and outreach activities should be carried out under strict controls, relating to status of deposit, depositor, person withdrawing document, length of time, facilities to be displayed in, storage during 'non-display' period, agreed return dates.

All items removed from the strongrooms for exhibition and display purposes should be removed using the usual document requisition procedure.

See also Searchroom Rules

9.0 Conservation and care of digital material

Conservation, archival and darkroom staff co-ordinate appropriate care and storage of digital material. The Acquisitions Policy allows for suitable migration of records to ensure the readability and long term preservation of information contained in electronic media. The condition and state of all digital material is recorded at the point of accession.

See Digital Preservation and Digitisation Strategy

10.0 Disaster Recovery

The Archive Disaster Plan is maintained and reviewed by the Archival Policy and Collections Manager and the Conservator, in conjunction with the Hive Building Development Manager and the County Council Corporate Information Management Unit. The Plan establishes a core team to manage and oversee disaster recovery in the event of any occurrence.

See Archives Disaster Plan

11.0 Forward planning

Continue to develop commercial conservation services to individuals and organisations
Identify projects in cataloguing, digitisation and elsewhere in the service that could attract external funding for conservation work
Identify items or collections requiring large-scale or specific conservation work which relies on external funding or may need to be out-sourced
Identify a programme of 'adopting' specific documents or collections for priority funded conservation work
Currently volunteers are working to prepare acid free boxes to replace acidic packaging.
Identify, co-ordinate and implement additional projects that can be undertaken by volunteers.

12.0 Maintaining skills and training

Conservator sits on professional Archive Management Team
Conservator trains and supervises archival staff in basic preservation and conservation techniques
Conservator maintains own continuing professional development

This plan was written in August 2013 and will be reviewed in 2018 or earlier if circumstances dictate