

Collections Care and Conservation Plan 2025-2030



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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 to ensure they are adequately protected prior to cataloguing.

Advising on and dealing with preservation/conservation issues which arise during the cataloguing process such as constructing bespoke packaging.

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 FUDG. Access controls and staff passes are managed by Bellrock 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 Bellrock 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 large number of bound volumes are also on the shelves and many maps and plans and other documents are rolled in cotton bags. A volunteer programme of re-wrapping older collections is underway.

4.0 Housekeeping within the Strongrooms

'Box cleaning stations' have been established and staff are requested to clean external surfaces of boxes before issuing to prevent transfer of surface dust to items within the box.

Temperature and humidity levels within each strongroom are monitored and recorded with the aim of providing a stable storage environment and regular reports provided to the County and Diocesan Archivist and Conservator.

5.0 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 Searchroom

Items requiring conservation/preservation highlighted during use in the Searchroom to be placed on a designated shelf in 61F. Regular and designated Archive Assistant consultation between Conservator to determine how best to treat items identified as being in need of conservation/preservation.

'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 identified as 'Not for General Issue' and returned to storage.

A 'Traffic Light' system is in operation in which items identified as 'Not for General Issue' are assigned a colour on the locations database and progress through the colour scheme depending on the number of requests that have been made for any given item. Upon reaching 'red', the item will be forwarded to Conservation.

5.2 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
- Volunteers

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

Copying documents is permitted, where the physical condition of a document and copyright allows by digital photography.

We encourage visitors to use their own digital camera or camera phone on-site. Alternatively, customers can make use of our in-house Digitisation Service by ordering copies from the search room or through our enquiry system.

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 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.

A 'Condition Report Prior to Loan' will be prepared, highlighting issues relating to condition and usability for each item.

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 Media

Conservation, archival and darkroom staff co-ordinate appropriate care and storage of digital material. The Acquisition and Collection 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 and will be audited at regular intervals for integrity.

10.0 Disaster Recovery

The Archive Disaster Plan is maintained and reviewed by the County Archivist and the Conservator, in conjunction with the Hive Service Review Team and the County Council Corporate Information and Governance Team (CIGT). 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.

Currently volunteers are working to clean and repackage Worcester City Engineering plans.

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 attending local and national training events as appropriate.

13.0 Review

This plan was written in January 2025 and will be reviewed in April 2030 or earlier if circumstances dictate.

This plan should be read in conjunction with other related Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service policies and accompanying documents including:

- Acquisition and Collection Policy
- Appraisal Guidance
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Policy on Preservation and Conservation
- Collections Information Policy
- Collections Information Plan

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