
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

July 2014

1. Introduction

This policy is part of the **Fitzwilliam Museum Collections Management Framework**.

The purpose of this policy is to guide conservation and collections care activities as outlined in the Fitzwilliam Museum's **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**, in line with the Museum's Forward Plan and in proportion to resources available. The policy includes a combination of preventive and remedial measures, designed to contribute to the long-term preservation of the collections.

Care of the collections is a primary duty of the Fitzwilliam Museum. All Museum Syndics, staff, interns and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their induction to the Museum and form part of the Policy documents available online to all.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions have been adopted:

Collections care (preventive conservation)

The measures necessary to avoid, slow down or minimize deterioration or loss of museum objects and specimens and structures

Remedial conservation

An action applied directly to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting deterioration processes and stabilizing structure in order to preserve cultural and scientific value. It may include restoration, where appropriate.

3. Ethics and Legislation

In caring for its collections, the Fitzwilliam Museum adheres to the following legislation and ethical guidelines:

- *Museum Association Code of Ethics, 2008*
- *Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2006*
- *Museums and Galleries Act, 1992*
- *Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974*
- *COSHH regulations, 2002*
- *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 2004*
- *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances, 2013*

4. Standards

This policy for the care and conservation of collections is guided and informed by the following standards:

- *PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections*
- *PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management*
- *PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*
- *SPECTRUM: UK Museum Collections Management Standard V.04, 2011*
- *Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 2007*
- *Institute of Conservation (Icon) Conservation Register, 2013*
- *'Bizot' Group Agreement: Achieving sustainability for galleries and museums, 2013, which has been formally adopted by members of the UK University Museum Group*
- *University of Cambridge Environmental Policy, 2011*

5. Principles for care and conservation of the collections

The Fitzwilliam Museum is committed to care for its collections according to the sector guidance set out in *Spectrum: UK Museum Collections and Management Standard* and *Benchmarks in Collections Care* and other approved standards, within the limits of its resources.

It aims to strike a balance between the long term preservation of collections and the accessibility of objects for public display and research, through the careful management of risks to collections.

5.1 Condition of the collections

The Museum will continue to assess and monitor the physical condition of its collections, thereby quantifying needs and providing the basis for strategic preservation and conservation planning. Priorities across curatorial departments will be incorporated into the Museum's **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**.

5.2 Risk Management for Collections

The Museum aims regularly to assess and review all risks to the collections and to manage and mitigate these to a level that is acceptable, balanced against the need to ensure that the collections are accessible and interpretable. The strategy for mitigating risks will be incorporated into the **Collections Care and Conservation Plan**. Strategies for safeguarding and recovery of the collections in the event of an emergency are included in the Museum's **Emergency Plan**.

5.3 Environmental monitoring

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue to monitor environmental conditions in all collections areas, using a combination of automated (telemetric) and manual measurement. It will ensure that the data collected is assessed and is disseminated

to all relevant personnel in order to inform and facilitate decisions about preservation and to ensure that remedial action can be taken promptly in the event of malfunction or breakdown of equipment.

5.4 Environmental control

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue its commitment to maintain and, where necessary, improve environmental conditions in order to preserve the physical condition of objects according to standards outlined in *PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections* and *PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*

The Museum will continue to work in partnership with architects, building engineers and conservation specialists to deliver, where possible and appropriate, more sustainable systems for controlling the environment in collections areas. The Museum is part of the University of Cambridge, and our practice in this area is guided and supported by the University's Environmental Policy which states that 'In achieving excellence in teaching and research, the University of Cambridge aims to manage its activities, buildings and estates to promote environmental sustainability, to conserve and enhance natural resources and to prevent environmental pollution to bring about a continual improvement in its environmental performance'. Full details can be found at <http://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

5.5 Provision of suitable buildings

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue to maintain and improve the physical condition of its buildings (Grade 1 listed) in line with the **Fitzwilliam Museum Conservation Plan** and agreement with English Heritage and according to the schedules of care and upkeep agreed with the University of Cambridge Estates Management Department and Listed Buildings Consent. It will always consider the suitability of buildings for storage and/or display of its collections according to guidelines *PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections* and *PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* and standards outlined in *Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 2007*.

5.6 Housekeeping and Pest Management

The Fitzwilliam Museum will continue its commitment to raise housekeeping standards across the institution by implementing the procedures and timetables outlined in the documents **Housekeeping Procedures, 2014** and **Housekeeping Programme, 2014**. The Museum accepts that there will be a level of pest presence across the building, but this will be managed through good housekeeping and in accordance with the **Integrated Pest and Mould Management Policy** and **Procedures for Dealing with Pest and Mould Infested Objects**.

6. Collections care and conservation support and advice

Care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works with or makes use of the collections. The Museum will train all staff, interns and volunteers who handle collections in the course of their work. Researchers and other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle objects and will be supervised at all times.

The Museum will employ only professionally trained conservators who should be either accredited by the UK Institute for Conservation (Icon) or be committed to working towards accreditation.

Any external conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services should normally be included on the Institute for Conservation (Icon) Register. Whenever possible, a professionally accredited conservator is used.

Date of Approval by The Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate: 14 July 2014

Date of review

The Fitzwilliam Museum will be mindful of new developments in collections care and conservation and will review this Policy at least once every five years. The next review date will be no later than July 2019.

Appendix

Fitzwilliam Museum collections care and conservation policies and plans referred to in this policy:

- Collections Care and Conservation Plan, 2014
- Housekeeping Programme, 2014
- Housekeeping Procedures, 2014
- Integrated Pest and Mould Management Policy, 2011
- Procedures for Managing Pests and Mould, 2012
- Procedures for Dealing with Pest and Mould Infested Objects, 2012
- University of Cambridge Environmental Policy
- Emergency Plan, 2010