

North Hertfordshire Museum

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

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North Hertfordshire District Council
Museum Service
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1: Introduction

1.1 This policy has been written in accordance with the museum's *Statement of Purpose* and the *Collections Development Policy*. All staff have read and agreed to abide by the policy. The *Collections Care and Conservation Plan* sets out the way the policy will be put into action and should be read in conjunction with the *Forward Plan*, the *Emergency Plan*, any other plans affecting the collections and the museum buildings.

1.2 **The purpose of the *Collections Care and Conservation Policy* is to set a framework for:**

- The preservation of the collections and buildings in the care of the museum,
- Preventative and remedial conservation of the collections
- The safe use of and access to collections, within the limits of the museum's resources

1.3 Context

1.3.1 The museum aims to improve the care and conditions of all its collection in accordance with *Benchmarks in Collections Care*, *Signposts* or other approved standards within the limits of its resources.

1.3.2 The safety and preservation of the collection will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage, to modify the buildings or to allow access to any part of the collections.

2: People

2.1 The care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works in or visits the museum.

2.2 Any concerns regarding the collections should be reported in writing to the Museum Curator and Heritage Access Officer.

2.3 The museum trains all staff and volunteers who handle the collections in the course of their work. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the accessioned collection.

2.4 Researchers or other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle the items they are working on, and will be supervised at all times.

2.5 The museum has contacts in the museum community (e.g. Museums Development Officer for Hertfordshire) to source expert conservation advice when needed.

2.6 Any problems or concerns relating to the care of the collection are referred by the Museum Curator and Heritage Access Officer to appropriately qualified conservator/s.

2.7 The museum will check the suitability of conservators chosen to work or advise on the collections. A professionally accredited conservator or a conservator listed on the Conservation Register will normally be chosen.

2.8 No item in the collections will be modified or altered until advice has been obtained from a suitably qualified conservator.

2.9 Only suitably trained and qualified conservators will carry out remedial treatment on objects.

2.10 The museum will keep detailed records of all treatments carried out on objects, including the name and contact details of the person or company.

3: **The Buildings**

- 3.1 The museum recognises that the maintenance of its buildings is fundamental to the preservation of both the building and collection and endeavours to keep the buildings in a suitable condition. The museum's collection is stored and displayed in the following buildings. The body responsible for the upkeep of the buildings is listed.

Building	Used for	Owner	Upkeep carried out by
North Hertfordshire Museum	Exhibition and storage	North Hertfordshire District Council	North Hertfordshire District Council
Former Letchworth Museum	Temporary Storage	North Hertfordshire District Council	North Hertfordshire District Council
Burymead Museum Resource Centre	Main storage	North Hertfordshire District Council	North Hertfordshire District Council

- 3.2 The North Hertfordshire District Council Property Services Department has a Buildings Plan for the upkeep of all museum buildings, and carries out regular inspections of the museum buildings. The museum team also notifies the Property Services Department about any remedial or maintenance work required.

4: **The Collections**

- 4.1 The museum is aware of the risks to the collection from environmental factors, poor handling, storage and display materials and methods, and of the need to record the condition of the collection. The museum cares for the collections in store, on display and, by setting suitable requirements, on loan.
- 4.2 The details are listed in the ***Collection Care and Conservation Plan*** and include:
- Awareness of vulnerable objects
 - Identifying threats to the collection
 - Checking building condition
 - Building maintenance
 - Inspecting and cleaning the museum
 - Housekeeping and cleaning objects on open display
 - Condition checking the collection
 - Collections Care and Conservation records
 - Environmental monitoring including temperature, relative humidity, light and dust
 - Environmental control and improving the environment
 - Pest monitoring and managing the threat from pests
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Storage materials and methods
 - Display materials and methods
 - Transporting objects
 - Collection care resources
 - Professional advice
 - Remedial conservation and working with conservators

- Training for the collection care team

4.3 **The Collection: Working Items**

- 4.3.1 The museum does not contain any working historic items.