



Crafts Study Centre: Collections Care and Conservation Policy 2020-2025

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

The Crafts Study Centre (CSC) is committed to making its collections accessible to as wide an audience as possible, both today and for future generations. It does this through a combination of preventive and remedial conservation, and through high standards of collections management and security. It also understands that the responsible management and care of its important collections of objects and archives is central to its reputation.

The CSC aims to pursue best practice in the care and conditions of all its collections in accordance with the Collections Trust's *Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Libraries and Archives*, within the limits of its resources. 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. The care and conservation of the collection is paramount in all matters regarding the acquisition and use of items.

This policy is divided into five key areas:

- People
- Buildings
- Preventative conservation
- Remedial conservation
- Emergency preparedness

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, plans and procedures:

- Collections Development Policy
- Collections Care and Conservation Plan and associated guidelines
- Business Plan
- Emergency Plan

2.0 People: Who is responsible for collections care and conservation

The care of the collection is the responsibility of everyone who works in or visits the CSC. Any concerns regarding the collections should be reported to the Curator, preferably in writing.

All new staff, volunteers, interns, students, visiting researchers, and other visitors working with collections will be trained in health and safety matters and object handling, and be made aware of any risks associated with the collections. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the accessioned collection. Researchers or other visitors will be supervised at all times.

Only qualified conservators will be employed to undertake remedial treatments on items in the collection. Wherever possible, the conservator will be registered with the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

3.0 Buildings: Maintenance and security

The CSC recognises that the maintenance of its buildings is fundamental to the preservation of both the building and collections, and endeavours to keep the buildings in a suitable condition. The staff of the CSC work closely

with the Estates Department of the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) to ensure the provision and maintenance of suitable building conditions at the CSC on the UCA Farnham campus, and to achieve the best possible conditions for the collections. The Estates Department is responsible for inspecting buildings on a regular basis and undertaking repairs as required.

Security of collections is paramount. The public areas throughout the CSC building are monitored by CCTV. Display cases are kept securely locked, and objects on open display are monitored. The doors to display areas and storage areas are fitted with locks recommended by the MLA security advisor in 2013. Visitors to collections areas are supervised at all times. Any theft or unaccounted loss will be reported to the police. The collections are further safeguarded by the provision of 24 hour security cover, intruder alarms, and a fire and evacuation system. All security systems are maintained by companies with the appropriate accreditation.

The CSC also makes use of three units at external storage facilities run by Safestore Farnham under a commercial agreement. Safestore is responsible for the maintenance of these buildings, although it is the responsibility of CSC staff to monitor the conditions within the CSC's units. The units are fitted with padlocks and there is CCTV coverage of the outside areas and corridors of the building which are monitored by a control centre and from the Safestore reception during office hours.

4.0 Collections: Preventative conservation

The CSC recognises that preventative conservation involves the limiting of damage or deterioration of items in its collection.

4.1 Buildings

The CSC works with UCA's Estates Departments/Farnham Safestore to ensure that all its buildings are well maintained, and any defects are remedied promptly. Any faults that threaten unacceptable environmental conditions, for example water leaks, will be remedied as a priority.

4.2 Storage

Wherever possible the CSC makes use of suitable, environmentally stable and inert packaging materials, such as buffered boxes, acid free tissue paper, archival paper, Tyvek, polyester sleeves etc.

See also *Collections Storage Guidelines*.

4.3 Housekeeping and pest management

Good housekeeping, and the use of display cases or storage enclosures, are used as methods to control dust levels. Any collections on open display are cleaned only by curatorial staff.

A pest monitoring system using insect traps is in place throughout the on-site and off-site storage areas. These traps are checked monthly. Should pests be detected, the trap contents are recorded and the area monitored to locate and eradicate the source. Spot-checking of high-risk zones is also undertaken, and the vigilance of all staff is required. Where relevant the CSC operates a procedure for quarantining new acquisitions where there is a possibility of live infestation, such as textiles and wood. Such material remains in quarantine until frozen at the CSC or until arrangements are in place for it to be outsourced for fumigation. Infestations will be treated promptly by quarantine, freezing, fumigating or manual cleaning as appropriate for the material, to be followed by regular checking. UCA's Estates Department are responsible for the monitoring and control of rodent pests.

See also *Housekeeping Guidelines*.

4.4 Handling and Use

Handling of objects is kept to a minimum, and staff, volunteers and researchers will be guided by the CSC's *Handling and movement guidelines*. This includes the wearing of gloves for handling objects where appropriate and the use of pencils only. Visits by researchers are invigilated by a member of staff or trained volunteer at all times. The CSC recognises the value of using surrogate images to minimise the handling of objects, especially those which are fragile/damaged or which have undergone wear and tear as a result of over-handling.

Museum objects are particularly at risk when being moved, whether within the CSC or from off-site facilities. The CSC moves its collections safely and securely and in accordance with the guidelines contained in its Collections Care and Conservation Plan. All items that are transported are suitably wrapped or crated to give them protection, as specified in the Collections Care and Conservation Plan. Items that are transported abroad are accompanied by a courier, who will be a member of staff, or a delegated representative from another museum.

See also *Handling and movement guidelines*.

See also *Research Room guidelines*.

4.5 Environmental monitoring and control

The CSC continually monitors the physical environment in which its collections are stored and displayed. It monitors and records relative humidity (RH) and temperature in all stores and display areas, using Testo monitoring equipment on-site and thermohygrographs and RH spot-checkers off-site. The equipment is checked monthly and the reports are filed. There is currently no monitoring of light levels, either lux or UV, in the storage or display areas. Unfortunately, there is no means of controlling or adjusting the environmental conditions at the off-site store.

Temperature and RH conditions in the CSC building are managed using air handling and air conditioning equipment maintained by the Estates Department, and buffered storage and microclimates as appropriate within the constraints of the CSC's building. Light levels are managed through controllable lighting and the elimination of natural light. The environmental needs of an object will be part of the evaluation for any kind of use.

There is no control over temperature and RH conditions in the off-site store, with the exception of buffered storage and microclimates as appropriate. There is no exposure to natural light in the off-site store, and lights are controlled by a timer.

See also *Environmental monitoring and control guidelines*.

4.6 Pollutants

Pollutants are managed by the choice of materials used for packing objects, display cases, storage furniture, mounting methods and construction or finishing of areas containing museum collections.

4.7 Physical/chemical damage

Physical and chemical damage to collections is mitigated wherever possible by accurate identification of materials.

5.0 Collections: Remedial conservation

The CSC acknowledges that in addition to preventative conservation, interventive or remedial conservation will often be required to stabilise or improve the physical condition of an item. Priority will generally be given to items whose condition is poor and are likely to deteriorate quickly, or to items which need their condition enhancing so as to allow them to be used for exhibition or display.

Remedial conservation treatments will involve the appropriate stabilisation of objects rather than restoration. The principal of minimum intervention will be adhered to. No object will be altered, nor material removed from it, without justification. When such removal or alteration is required, the object will first be documented in its original state and any removed material will be kept, labelled and filed.

The CSC does not employ a permanent conservator. Only qualified conservators will be employed to undertake remedial treatments. Consultant conservators are required to give references and examples of prior work within the sector, which are actively checked. Any conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services is checked for inclusion on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON), and professionally accredited conservators are used wherever possible.

Prior to any remedial conservation, the object will be fully examined and a condition assessment made. Past treatment records will also be consulted. All treatments will be planned and carried out in consultation with an

appropriate member of CSC staff. All remedial treatments will be fully documented with a written and photographic record.

6.0 Emergency preparedness

The CSC's Emergency Plan is reviewed annually. All staff are required to be familiar with the contents of the plan. Emergency response equipment in the CSC and at the off-site storage facilities are maintained and checked by the Curator on an annual basis. The CSC subscribes to Harwell's Document Restoration Service, a professional salvage company, as a Priority user. (Please note that, at the time of writing, the Emergency Plan is under review).

Name of governing body: Crafts Study Centre Trustees

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 24 September 2020

Policy review procedure: The Care and Conservation Policy will be reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: September 2025