



SOCIETY OF  
ANTIQUARIES  
OF LONDON

Society of Antiquaries of London

# Conservation & Collections Care Policy

for Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor

**Governing Body:** Council (the Society of Antiquaries of London)

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## **1. Statement of Authority**

### **1.1 Mission statement**

In 1717 the Society of Antiquaries of London was established as a constituted Society. A Royal Charter of 1751 established the Society with its formal mission and governance system, and provided a framework from which the Society could meet its aims.

“The encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries.”

Royal Charter, Society of Antiquaries, 1751

The Society achieves this by promoting and supporting conservation, research and dissemination of the material remains of the past. The care of collections remains central to the Society’s purpose:

### **1.2 Strategic goals and intentions**

- To engage, enthuse and foster the Fellowship and staff in pursuing the aims of the Society to further our understanding of the past and influence the heritage sector and the general public.
- To conserve and develop the research and educational potential of the buildings, collections and library at Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor and to make these resources more accessible to Fellows and the wider public.

### **1.3 Governance**

**1.3.1** The Society’s governing body is a Council, subject to annual election, who are responsible as Trustees under the Charities Act (2009). Council determines and approves policy, and the strategic objectives of the Society. Council also delegates responsibility for advice and assistance to a number of Committees, comprising officers and Fellows who have specialist knowledge, understanding and responsibility relevant to each Committee’s remit.

**1.3.2** The development of the Society’s collections falls under the responsibility of the Library & Collections Committee, who, along with furthering the Society’s strategic goals and intentions, are charged with:

- Encouraging and supporting the maintenance and development of the museum collections at Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor.
- Ensuring the Library and Museum Collections are adequately conserved, preserved and securely housed.
- Promoting awareness and use of the collections and improving access through temporary loans and exhibitions.
- Improving and widening access to the Library and Museum resources and services and making them better known.

- Discussing strategic requirements and priorities which will inform the budget setting for the library and collections and fundraising priorities.

**1.3.3** An Advisory Committee for Kelmscott Manor, is additionally responsible for:

- Advising on collection management and the conservation of both the fabric of the buildings and the contents.
- Liaising with the Library and Collections Committee about loans from the collections at Kelmscott.

**1.3.4** Policy development and implementation is delegated to the General Secretary and the Head of Libraries & Collections. A Collections Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and care of the Museum collections at Burlington House. A Property Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and care of the museum collections at Kelmscott Manor.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the policy**

**1.4.1** The policy aims to strike a balance between long term care and preservation of the collections, and continuing improvement of access to the collections, both physically and remotely. This will primarily be achieved through risk management and preventive conservation measures. The importance of ensuring all staff are aware of the Society's responsibilities towards the collection is also fully acknowledged.

**1.4.2** The policy provides a framework around which future Care and Conservation Plans can be shaped.

## **2. General statement**

**2.1** Care of collections is a fundamental duty of all museums, and this duty is specifically both an implied and explicit responsibility of the Society through both its Royal Charter, and its strategic aims and intentions.

**2.2** As an Accredited museum service, the Society recognises its responsibility towards the care of its collections, and the importance of retaining a holistic balance between access and preservation. The on-going use of some historic objects from the collection as part of the fabric of the Society's governance and operations and the role of Kelmscott Manor as a historic house open to visitors, both necessitates and encourages this approach. Care of the Society's collections will be coordinated through preventive and interventive conservation measures, allowing for long-term preservation and resource management. The main focus will always be the use of preventive conservation measures to minimise risk.

**2.3** Care and conservation of the Society's collections will be carried out in compliance with best practice standards and guidelines, including (but not exclusively) the *Museums Association Code of Ethics* (2008); the *Code of Ethics for the Institute of Conservation (ICON); Conservation Register* (ICON; 2013); *SPECTRUM 4.0 : The UK Museums Documentation Standard*; *BSI Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections* (PAS 198 : 2012); *BSI Code of Practice for Collections Management* (PAS 197:2009); *BSI Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* (PD 5454 : 2012). In addition the Society's care and conservation of collections will comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) and COSHH Regulations (2002).

**2.4** *Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0* (2011) will be used to assess and evaluate current standards of collections care. This process of self-assessment will assist with planning, monitoring and budgeting for the care and conservation of the Society's collections as reflected through its Forward Plan; will ensure regular assessment of performance; will record improvements in standards, and will determine priority areas for improvement in line with best practice, and balanced against available resources.

**2.5** The Society has established basic standards for physical care, preventive conservation and environmental monitoring of its collections. Preventive and interventive conservation programs, maintenance and monitoring schedules are designed to work with (1) the access and operational requirements of both Fellows and members of the public; (2) the physical and environmental restrictions presented by both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor (both Listed properties); (3) the research and exhibition needs of the collection; (4) funding and staff resources (both in the present, and in light of long term future planning) and (5) the urgency of care required.

**2.6** Collections care and conservation will be undertaken by, or in consultation with, recognised specialists in accordance with current best-practice guidelines and standards. Collections care and conservation issues will be communicated to Fellows, researchers and members of the public through labels detailing object removals, and through press releases, the Society's website, social media and written articles where appropriate.

**2.7** Conservation surveys have been carried out at Kelmscott Manor, identifying priorities and needs. This survey exercise will inform the Conservation and Collections Care Plan of future conservation priorities.

**2.8** An annual 'putting to bed' audit and assessment process will be carried out at the start of each annual closed season at Kelmscott Manor, to condition check, assess and monitor objects on display, which will culminate in a formal meeting to review the audit and assessment results. This exercise will inform the Conservation and Collections Care Plan of future conservation priorities.

**2.9** A formal review of objects in store at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor will be carried out at least every 5 years.

### **3. Care of collections**

#### **3.1 Risk management and security**

**3.1.1** The Society recognises that all activities involving collections, such as handling, display and transportation, carry the potential risk to reduce both the quality and condition of the object, its potential longevity and quality of preservation. The function of the Society's museum collections both within an historic house, open to visitors, and within a Learned Society, which continues to utilise some elements of its collection as part of its historic function, is fully recognised and accepted by the Society as raising the potential risk of either accidental or purposeful damage. The Society therefore aims to manage and mitigate risk as far as reasonably possible to levels that are acceptable and balanced against the need to ensure collections are still accessible, and able to be interpreted, researched and actively engaged. The Society's risk management approach comprises:

- Ensuring only appropriately-trained and competent staff and specialists are charged with the care and conservation of the collections.
- Ensuring handling guidelines and procedures are disseminated to staff, Fellows, researchers and contractors, with appropriate training and supervision provided where necessary.
- Use of conservation-grade materials (where appropriate) in the storage or transportation of collections to prevent damage or deterioration, and ensuring appropriate equipment is provided for handling and moving objects, or appropriate specialists used. A list of suppliers and approved materials forms part of the Society's *Documentation Procedural Manual*.
- Raising awareness of collections care issues among staff, researchers, volunteers and members of the public through training, regular meetings, appropriate Committees and through the use of labels, website, social media, press releases and publications where appropriate.
- Monitoring the condition of objects both on display and in store through regular collections care programmes (condition checks, housekeeping activities, environmental monitoring and control measures, audits etc.)
- Implementation of a housekeeping routine and IPM Policy.
- *An Emergency Plan* to safeguard the collection in the event of a disaster.
- Procedures specifying established methods of recording and archiving changes in environmental or object condition.
- Training and supervision (where appropriate) of all volunteers working directly with collections.

- The introduction of Standard Risk Assessments as part of the Museum's *Conservation and Collections Care Plan*, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that object moves take place wherever possible outside public opening hours, in order to reduce risk.

**3.1.2** The Society ensures its buildings are secure, well-maintained and with appropriate and practical levels of care made to the building's fabric and structure, as the foundation for the security protection of its collections.

**3.1.3** The Society regularly assesses and maintains appropriate levels of security and insurance on its buildings. The Society utilises the following in-house security measures for the care of its collections at Burlington House:

- Presence of a Porter with responsibilities for security during opening hours. 24 hour surveillance of the area is in place via Royal Academy of Art security staff.
- CCTV and Intruder Detector Systems (IDS).
- Fire and evacuation systems (including Fire Risk Assessments).
- Use of security screws, mirror plates and Ryman's fittings, and Abloy high security barrel locks on cases.
- Magnetic contact and motion detectors - localised alarms for works on open display.
- Emergency alarms monitor unauthorised use of exits.
- Key control, fire and other security and protection systems in place are regularly tested/assessed, inspected and serviced where appropriate.
- Restrictions are in place to control access, when required or necessary, to areas of the building and areas occupied by the Museum, to both staff, volunteers, Fellows, researchers, contractors and members of the public when necessary.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for volunteers, contractors, and members of the public, when appropriate.
- Regular assessment of the UKRG Standard Facilities Report.
- Programmed Environmental Visual Assessments and Security Audits will be carried out as part of the Museum's Conservation and Collections Care Plan.
- A signing-in/out register for Fellows, visitors and contractors is maintained at the main entrance/exit of the building.
- Security assessments by an external specialist carried out at least every 5 years.

Kelmscott Manor has recently undergone an Arts Council security assessment by the National Security Advisor (November 2013). The conclusion of the assessment was that "overall the level of security appears appropriate...[and] in conclusion I can confirm that Kelmscott Manor is suitable for Accreditation from the security point-of-view". The Society utilises the following in-house security measures for the care of its collections at Kelmscott Manor:

- All windows are protected by 20mm steel bars.
- External doors are robust, fitted with good quality locks and hinge bolts.
- An Intruder Detector System (IDS).
- Fire and evacuation systems (including Fire Risk Assessments).
- Room invigilation during public opening.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for volunteers, contractors, and members of the public, when appropriate.
- Regular assessment of the UKRG Standard Facilities Report.
- Programmed Environmental Visual Assessments and Security Audits will be carried out as part of the Museum's Conservation and Collections Care Plan.

A number of recommendations made as a result of the security assessment will be reviewed, and will inform future *Conservation and Collections Care Plans* and the *Future Plan* of short, medium and long term security priorities.

**3.1.4** When a loan request is received, conservation implications will be considered at the earliest stage.

**3.1.5** Objects both borrowed and loaned-out will be condition-checked and photographically recorded on arrival and departure.

**3.1.6** The advice of a conservator will be sought if necessary prior to acceptance of a loan request.

**3.1.7** A formal loans procedure will ensure risk management and a formalised approach to the management of loans.

**3.1.8** Objects from the collections will only be loaned to borrowers who can satisfy the appropriate conditions for their safe and secure storage, study, interpretation or display. The requirements of borrowers, and the Society's expectations and commitments as a lender, are outlined in the *Standard Terms and Conditions for Loan of Objects* document.

**3.1.9** Records will be kept of all loans in compliance with SPECTRUM 4.0.

## **3.2 Preventive conservation**

**3.2.1** The Museum acknowledges that there will be a level of pest presence at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor, commensurate with the age and fabric of both buildings, terms of use, and their respective surrounding landscapes. However, this will be



managed through a combination of good housekeeping (in accordance with an Integrated Pest Management Policy and Housekeeping Procedures), and support and assessment by recognised specialists on at least an annual basis.

**3.2.2** Risk to collections from pollutants and infestations such as dust and pests will be managed by good housekeeping and timetabled cleaning regimes.

**3.2.3** Objects at risk from vibration or shock will be appropriately packed and stored to mitigate this. Objects on open display will be regularly assessed in order to monitor condition.

**3.2.4** Materials and equipment identified as risking deterioration or damage to objects will not be used for packing, handling or transportation. Any materials and equipment of this kind found to have been used previously for the storage or display of objects will be replaced or removed as part of programmed and budgeted improvements to collections care.

**3.2.5** All environmental control systems are covered by service contracts, and are inspected periodically by both internal staff and service contractors to ensure continued performance and maintenance.

**3.2.6** Collections specialists will be consulted at the earliest opportunity in the event of planned building or structural development, repair programmes or changes of use to ensure cost-effective, sustainable and practical measures are taken for the maintenance, care and conservation of the collections.

**3.2.7** Appropriate guidelines, procedures and training will be provided to all staff, visitors, volunteers and researchers actively engaging or working with the collections.

### **3.3 Environmental monitoring and control**

**3.3.1** The Society will monitor the environment in all areas used for the storage and display of collections, and will measure and record relative humidity (RH), temperature, visible light and ultra violet radiation (UV).

**3.3.2** Where collections are stored or displayed, the Society will continuously monitor these areas using a Hanwell electronic system. On occasion, additional instruments may be deployed in particular areas where closer monitoring is required. It is acknowledged that the normal climatic characteristics and changes within both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor will be better understood through continuous recording and monitoring over sustained periods of time.

**3.3.3** Data from all electronic monitoring systems will be checked on a monthly basis and added to a log archived both digitally and as part of hard-copy records. Every year, a summary report will be produced providing an overview of environmental standards and conditions at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor.

**3.3.4** Light readings will be taken in specified areas at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor where appropriate. These will be recorded and added to a log archived both digitally and as part of hard-copy records. Natural and UV light levels will be included in a summary report providing an overview of environmental standards and conditions at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor.

**3.3.5** The Society will utilise environmental data to ensure stable and appropriate conditions for collections wherever practically possible.

**3.3.6** Functional testing of UV films on windows at Burlington House will be carried out and routinely tested as part of future Conservation and Collections Care Plans.

**3.3.7** Additional mobile de-/humidifiers are also utilised in specific areas to assist with environmental control. Spot checks of these mobile systems are carried out daily and recorded.

**3.3.8** Kelmscott Manor currently has additional access to off-site storage, which is environmentally controlled.

### **3.4 Housekeeping**

**3.4.1** Regular cleaning and pest inspection programs are in place to ensure acceptable standards of housekeeping and pest monitoring.

**3.4.2** Specialist conservators carry out annual dusting and monitoring programmes at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor.

**3.4.3** Pest management specialists carry out annual inspections and reviews of Housekeeping Procedures and IPM at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor.

**3.4.4** Areas containing collections, and any other areas considered vulnerable, will be monitored using insect traps (both blunder and pheromone) which will be checked every 6-8 weeks. If pests are detected, advice may be sought from a pest management specialist prior to trap contents being recorded and the areas monitored to locate and eradicate the source.

**3.4.5** Dedicated cleaning kits will be introduced to key areas at both Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor, ensuring a reduced risk of potential cross-infestation and to ensure cleaning equipment is readily available.

**3.4.6** Contract and office cleaning regimes will be checked at least annually to ensure rubbish is being appropriately disposed of, food waste is not presenting a pest risk and dust in general areas is being effectively controlled. Contract cleaners will be trained, where appropriate, in conservation cleaning procedures.

**3.4.7** Cleaning programs will be regularly assessed against *Benchmark* actions.

### **3.5 Handling, moving and transportation**

**3.5.7** Collections are at particular risk when being moved or handled, therefore *Object Handling Procedures* will be issued to researchers and volunteers working with, or directly accessing, the collection.

**3.5.8** The movement of large or awkward objects will be pre-planned and Risk Assessed to ensure correct arrangements and resources are available in order to minimise risk to objects and staff. Specialist contractors will be used to handle and transport large, heavy or fragile objects. Specialist contractors may be expected to present a risk assessment and method statement prior to any move, packing, handling or transportation taking place.

**3.5.9** All collections that are due for transportation will be suitably wrapped and/or crated to give them the best possible protection.

**3.5.10** Specialist contractors employed for the handling and transportation of objects will be requested to present their corporate H&S policy and proof of indemnity.

**3.5.11** Object moves will take place wherever possible outside of public opening hours.

### **3.6 Storage**

**3.6.7** The Society accepts that its storage facilities present challenges when it comes to the care of collections. The Society will however ensure that its stored collections are:

- Housed in a storage area that is kept clean, well-organised and well-managed, as far as is reasonably possible.
- Protected using appropriate conservation-grade packaging and systems, which are cost-effective and able to reduce potential damage from poor handling and environmental conditions.

### **3.7 Disaster / Emergency planning**

An *Emergency Plan* exists and is regularly re-assessed and updated. The Society will introduce annual refresher training for all staff outlining disaster response and responsibilities, and will practice the plan every two years.

### **3.8 Interventive conservation**

**3.8.1** Interventive conservation refers to the active treatment of an object to stabilise, enhance or improve its condition, or improve an aspect of its research, interpretation or display potential.

**3.8.2** Conservation work on the Society's collections will only be carried out by suitably qualified conservators, or under the direct supervision of an appropriately qualified person.

**3.8.3** Conservators may be selected through a formal tender process.

**3.8.4** Conservators, mount-makers and contractors will be expected to present Health & Safety and indemnity documents where appropriate.

**3.8.5** Conservators accredited by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) will normally be selected. All conservation work on objects in the Society's museum collections will be expected to conform with the standards set down by the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Conservation (ICON) and to British Standard 4971 (2002), and in line with the current Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) and COSHH Regulations (2002).

**3.8.6** All conservation work will be preceded by submission of a method statement, treatment proposal and a formal quotation.

**3.8.7** All conservation treatment will be photographed and documented as part of the treatment process, with conservation work culminating in the production of a treatment report or summary.

**3.8.8** All conservation treatment will be recorded in the Object History Files and in the Conservation Treatment Files.

### **3.9 Expertise, advice and access**

**3.9.1** Collections care and conservation issues will be communicated to Trustees through the appropriate Committees.

**3.9.2** Collections care and conservation issues will be communicated to staff via Staff Meetings, and through the appropriate Committees.

**3.9.3** Staff and volunteers involved either directly or indirectly with the museum collection will be made aware of policies and procedures – their development and introduction – through regular briefings, and will receive appropriate training where appropriate.

**3.9.4** The Society will seek to disseminate information relating to conservation to its staff, Fellows, volunteers, researchers and the wider public through printed and online resources, and through events, talks and meetings wherever possible and practical to do so.

**3.9.5** The Society will actively seek ways to open up the conservation and research process in order to engage the wider public.

### **3.10 Budgets**

**3.10.1** The *Future Plan* and the *Collections Care and Conservation Plan* will seek to balance available resources (both financial and staffing) against the needs of the collections.

**3.10.2** The Society will seek external funding for specific conservation projects as agreed by the Library and Collections Committee and/or the Kelmscott Committee.

### **References**

SAL Collections Care and Conservation Plan  
SAL Collections Development Policy  
SAL Documentation Policy  
SAL Tendering Policy  
SAL Health, Safety and Welfare Policy