

UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND
THE MURRAY LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

PRESERVATION POLICY

Introduction

Preservation consists of a range of measures taken to protect material from damage and deterioration and to conserve damaged or fragile items. Preservation enables us to make informed decisions on the handling, packaging, storage, and conservation of material, in turn ensuring that the records remain available and accessible for future generations. Conservation work is an aspect of preservation that requires staff with appropriate professional training, qualifications and skills.

This policy identifies relevant areas where preservation is to be considered.

Storage

- Storage area conforms to BS5454:2000 'Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents'.
- Good housekeeping practice is regularly maintained

Conservation

Conservation work can be split into two very distinct areas: Preventive and Remedial.

Preventive conservation consists of activities which ensure the long term preservation of our collections.

These include:

- correct handling of material
- correct use of material
- using surrogate copies where available
- correct storage of material

Remedial conservation involves direct action carried out on damaged or deteriorated material with the aim of slowing future deterioration. There is no accredited archive conservator on the staff of the University of Sunderland. All remedial conservation work, therefore, must be outsourced.

Emergency Planning

- There is a Disaster Control Plan for the University Libraries Service which covers arrangements for The Murray Library.
- There is a basic Disaster Reaction Kit in Special Collections. Staff members are trained in its use.
- Special Collections is included in the University Library Services fire evacuation plan and drills.
- Special Collections is included in the University Library Services Health and Safety inspections and risk assessments. Staff members recognise their role in regularly monitoring practices and procedures and reporting potential hazards and risks.

Public Use

- We encourage our users to make effective use of our finding aids. This prevents the unnecessary use and removal of un-wanted items from storage.

- Allowing access to the material is a priority. However we will not produce items which are in very poor condition, those with restricted access for legal reasons or those which have surrogate copies.

Reprographics

- Photocopying is a convenient and inexpensive way of reproducing material but there are risks involved when copying archival items.
- Material needs to be handled and supported properly during copying.
- If copies are regularly required of an item, one master copy should be made and used for subsequent copying.

The following items are not recommended for photocopying:

- Fragile documents
- Tightly bound volumes
- Very large maps
- Deeds or other items with seals
- Deeds with multiple membranes

Members of the public may use their own digital or other camera to reproduce an item, subject to the Reprographics and Publication Policy. The restrictions and risks associated with photocopying remain the same when taking a digital image.

Exhibitions

- When exhibiting material, preservation is paramount. The composition and condition of items, the duration of the exhibition, the environmental conditions and the security of the venue are all taken into consideration.
- A 'Receipt for Items on Loan' form is completed by the owner or representative on receipt of items. This form is then kept on file for the duration of the exhibition.
- We strongly recommend the use of facsimiles for long term display.
- We can provide written handling guidelines available to accompany items leaving the premises.

Advice

For advice on preserving their personal records that have not been deposited in or given to Special Collections, members of the public can contact:

Institute of Conservation

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3 Floor

Downstream Building

1 London Bridge

London, SE1 9BG

Tel: 020 7785 3805

www.icon.org.uk

Acknowledgements

The National Preservation Office guidelines 'Building Blocks for a Preservation Policy' have been consulted in the writing of this policy.