

Conservation and Collections Care

Name of museum: Chertsey Museum

Name of governing body: Runnymede Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

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

Statement of purpose

This policy has been written in accordance with the museum's Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. All staff (paid and volunteer) 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, the Building Plan and any other plans affecting the collections and the museum buildings.

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

Context

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.

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.

People

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

Any concerns regarding the collections should be reported in writing to the Curator or Keeper of Costume.

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.

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.

The museum has access to conservation advice from Surrey Heritage, for local history items, and from freelance conservator Poppy Singer for the costume collection.

Any problems or concerns relating to the care of the collection are referred by the Curator to Surrey Heritage, Poppy Singer or another appropriately qualified conservator.

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.

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

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

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

The Buildings and environment

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
The Cedars	Main museum and stores	Olive Matthews Trust	Runnymede Borough Council
Store 2	local history store	Runnymede Borough Council	Runnymede Borough Council
Store 1	Costume & furniture store	Olive Matthews Trust	OMT/RBC

Runnymede Borough Council has a Buildings Plan for the upkeep of all buildings which are its responsibility, and carries out an annual inspection of all buildings which are not its responsibility and notifies the body responsible about any remedial or maintenance work required.

The museum and main storage areas have data loggers in place to record the temperature and humidity in them, and light levels in the galleries is carefully monitored. When necessary, de-humidifiers are deployed to assist in the Fashion Gallery.

The museum and stores are regularly cleaned to ensure that they remain unattractive to vermin and all in-coming objects are quarantined and inspected before being taken in to the collections.

Plants and flowers are not permitted in the museum, and soft furnishings have been chosen so as to not attract pests.

Building Maintenance

As part of the agreement with the Olive Matthews Collection Trust Runnymede Borough Council is obliged to undertake all building maintenance including interior and exterior decoration. As a result there is an annual maintenance budget of c.£29,000 for remedial and planned works, and a 5 year plan as agreed by RBCs Building Services Dept.

Faults are reported to Building Services as they occur with procedures in place for all staff to follow, and work is checked on completion by RBCs Clerk of Works.

Action: All staff report faults as they occur and ensure prompt response when

required

Agreed annual programme of works with RBC Building Services Dept.

Housekeeping

Public areas of the museum are cleaned 3 times per week, including galleries and display areas. Stores are regularly cleaned and pest traps are inspected monthly. Special attention is given to the storage area of the costume collection which is particularly vulnerable to infestations. Conservation grade materials are used for all exhibition and storage containers, and galleries are off-gassed after repainting prior to installing objects.

ACTION: Weekly cleaning of galleries and offices
Monthly inspection of stores

Environment Monitoring

Both stores and galleries are monitored with data loggers providing accurate temperature and relative humidity readings which are reviewed monthly by the curator. The Meaco system will be regularly calibrated and maintained to ensure accuracy.

Light sensitive items, such as textiles and watercolours, will not be displayed for extended periods of time, and will be regularly monitored whilst out.

Visitors are not permitted to use flash photography and light levels and RH levels are set for each exhibition.

ACTION: Monthly review of environmental levels
Annual calibration of monitoring system

Environmental Control

Environmental control is limited due to the nature of the buildings, however, the following steps have been taken:

- All windows are covered with shutters or blinds which block harmful UV
- De-humidifiers have been installed in galleries where needed
- Fibre optic lights have been installed in the majority of display cases, and LED room lights eliminate heat and UV damage
- Permanent displays are cleaned by the curators on an annual basis to remove contaminants such as dust whilst the objects themselves are inspected monthly for deterioration

ACTION: Maintain annual deep clean of galleries

Exhibitions and Loans

Each new display or exhibition is checked to ensure that it complies with environmental conditions and objects are only loaned to museums who can match our standards as a minimum.

All materials used in exhibition are inert and proper handling procedures are carried out when the curators are moving objects.

ACTION: Monthly review of environmental levels
Annual calibration of monitoring system
Update loan policy with specific requirements for each loan
Check security measures within galleries regularly/daily

Remedial Conservation

As CM does not have a trained conservator on the team expert advice is sought from outside the organisation when required. The Olive Matthews Collection Trust employs a freelance conservator for each exhibition to ensure the individual items are fit for display, however, this is not financially possible for the local history collections which is conserved when needed using the small annual conservation budget available.

ACTION: Continue annual conservation programme funded by OMT
Seek advice from Surrey Museum conservator when issues are raised by annual audit process

Emergency planning and response

As stated in the museum's Emergency Plan, in the event of an emergency objects will be removed to a place of safety if leaving them in situ would cause more damage. Specialist advice would always be sought to undertake any work required as a result.

ACTION: Test emergency response times with regular fire/emergency drills
Maintain alarm systems with weekly, monthly and quarterly checks by staff and maintenance company

Security

As stated in the Emergency Plan, CM has been inspected by a security advisor and met with government indemnity standards in 2006 with no changes to buildings or procedures since then. CM works closely with the local police who advise on matters of security when necessary.

ACTION: Review security requirements for each exhibition and take advice if necessary