

Collections Care and Conservation Policy 2021-2026





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Statement of purpose

This policy has been written in accordance with the museum's Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. All staff have access to this 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/ Business Plan, the Emergency 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. This will be done via risk assessment to ascertain any risk management arrangements to secure care of collections items while allowing access.

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 Collections Officer.

The museum trains and gives direction to all staff and volunteers who handle the collections in the course of their work.

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 service has access to the regional West Midlands Development team experts at <https://mdwm.org.uk/the-team/> for regular advice. We also use conservation advice from experts at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

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Any problems or concerns relating to the care of the collection are referred by the Collections Officer or Museum Services Manager who will seek advice from another appropriately qualified expert or 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

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
Haden Hill House Museum	Display Attics for storage	Trust – trustee is Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance
Oak House Museum	display	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance
Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery	Display Basement for storage	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance
Bromwich Hall Museum	display	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance
Galton Valley Pumping Station	display	Canals and rivers trust	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance
Bishop Asbury's Cottage	display	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council property maintenance

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The buildings have conservation management plans which are updated every 5 years. Sandwell Museums consults with the Borough Conservation Officer to ensure best practice in looking after our historic buildings.

Sandwell Museums monitors issues with our buildings and reports issues to property maintenance, records building maintenance and monitors works which are undertaken.

The Collections

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.

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

The Collection: Working Items

The museum does not contain any working historic items.