

# Roman Baths Collections Care and Conservation Policy

**2024-2029**

**Name of museum:**

The Roman Baths

**Name of governing body:**

Bath and North East Somerset Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**

*Insert date*

**Date for Policy Review: 2029**

# 1. Introduction

Collections Care and Conservation defines the way in which a museum sets out to preserve and care for the objects in the collection. This process is a core element of any museum's collection management processes to protect the objects in the museum's care and preserve the collections as a tangible link between the past, present and future. Collections Care and Conservation procedures allow the museum to balance its role in safeguarding items for the benefit of future audiences with its obligation to optimise access for present audiences.

This policy forms part of a Collection Management framework for sound management of the Roman Baths museum collections alongside the Roman Baths Collections Development Policy and the Roman Baths Documentation Policy. The Roman Baths Collections Care and Conservation Plan sets out the way the policy will be put into action. Detailed methodologies for the policies below are outlined in the Collections Care and Conservation Procedural manual.

This Policy is supported by other procedural documents and Plans that have an impact on care and conservation, including the Roman Baths Forward Plan, Emergency Plan and Heritage Services Business Plan.

## 2. Statement of Purpose

The Roman Baths is here to enrich people's lives by preserving, developing and making accessible the ancient monument, historic building and Designated collection held in trust by the Council. It also contributes positively to cultural life, learning and the local and regional economy by making available a nationally significant resource to a very wide range of audiences in an inspiring and sustainable way.

The purpose of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy is to set a framework for:

- The preservation of the collections, buildings, and monument 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

## 3. Standards

The museum aims to improve the care and conditions of all its collection in accordance with:

- *Benchmarks 3.0: Conservation Planning for Archives, Libraries & Museums* (National Conservation Service 2021)
- *Signposts* (Wiltshire County Council for MLA)

- SPECTRUM 5.0 (Collections Trust 2017)
- *Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections* (SMA 2020)
- *Successfully Managing Archives in Museums* (AiM 2021), and *Standards in Action Book 4: Managing archive collections in museums* (MDA 2002)
- BS EN 16790:2016 *Integrated pest management (IPM) for protection of cultural heritage*
- BS EN 16893:2018 *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections*
- BS EN 16141:2012 *Conservation of cultural heritage. Guidelines for management of environmental conditions. Open storage facilities: definitions and characteristics of collection centres dedicated to the preservation and management of cultural heritage*
- Institute of Conservation's (ICON) Conservation Register

And other approved standards within the limits of Heritage Services' 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.

## 4. Definitions

**Collections Care** is the management of all risks to the collections. Including but not limited to the following agents of decay: incorrect environment (temperature, relative humidity, light, pollutants), physical forces (handling and movement), theft and vandalism, dissociation, fire and water, pests (rodents and insects).

**Preventive conservation** is the non-interventive preventative measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects.

**Remedial conservation** is interventive treatment to an object to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural value.

## 5. People

The care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works or volunteers at the museum and off-site stores, acting under the guidance of professionally trained collections staff.

### 5.1 Workforce

The Roman Baths and Pump Room Manager is responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of conservation in alignment with the Roman Baths Forward Plan, Conservation Action Plans, and Heritage Services Business Plan.

The Collections Manager is responsible for planning and programming conservation projects undertaken by the collections team and external conservation contractors.

The Collections Team (Collections Manager and Collections Assistant) are responsible for disseminating the contents of the Policy to the workforce, contractors, and users, including through planning and provision of training.

Other staff and volunteers: The museum ensures that all staff and volunteers working with the collection have basic training in collection care procedures and practices. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the accessioned collection.

## **5.2 Advisors**

The museum has access to the regional Conservation Development Officer (CDO) for regular advice. The museum has no in-house conservation team, therefore remedial conservation work will be carried out by trained conservators with ICON registration or equivalent.

Any problems or concerns relating to the care of the collection are referred by the Collections Manager to the CDO or another appropriately qualified conservator

## **5.3 Research access and visitors**

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 Collections Access Policy (Use of Collections) outlines procedures to manage research access and visitors.

# **6. 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 all under the ownership of and maintained by Bath and North East Somerset Council:

The Roman Baths and Pump Room, Bath – Collections on display and in storage

The Guildhall, Bath – Collections on display

The Victoria Art Gallery, Bath – Collections on display

Keynsham Library, Keynsham – Collections on display

Lansdown North, Lansdown, Bath – Collections in storage

## Culverhay School, Rush Hill, Bath – Collections in storage

The museum has a PPM (Planned Preventative Maintenance) Schedule for the upkeep of all buildings which are its responsibility.

The museum 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.

## **7. 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 procedural details are listed in the Collection Care and Conservation Plan and include the following policies.

### **7.1 Environmental monitoring and control**

The collections are stored and displayed in monitored and managed environments, where the relative humidity (%RH) and temperature (°C), and where applicable, visible light, ultraviolet (UV) light, and atmospheric pollutants are measured.

The museum collects environmental data using continuous recording systems, which can be collated utilised and acted upon in order to provide stable and appropriate environments for the collection.

The museum stores collections according to their required environmental standards, and monitoring and management of storage and display is considered alongside the conservation and environmental needs of the archaeological monument.

The museum will monitor flood water levels, and use this data to act on requirements for objects potentially at risk in storage and to inform future developments in storage and display.

### **7.2 Cleaning and Housekeeping**

The areas and buildings in which collections are stored and displayed are cleaned regularly on a planned and managed housekeeping programme by the Operations and Collections teams.

Objects are monitored and conservation dusted if on open storage or display according to the Collections Care and Conservation Plan.

Records are made during cleaning and housekeeping, with responsive remedial action planned as necessary.

The museum monitors, manages and eradicates pests in accordance with an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan.

### **7.3 Remedial Conservation**

The museum will seek advice when required from a professionally accredited conservator or a conservator listed on the Conservation Register, a collection care adviser, or another appropriately qualified/experienced person on the museum's approach to collection care activities.

Remedial conservation work shall be carried out by or under the supervision of an appropriately qualified conservator.

Objects will be prioritised for conservation treatment according to:

- Exhibition & display requirements
- Cultural or historical significance
- Vulnerability to damage and decay

### **7.4 Documentation**

The museum makes records of condition checks, conservation work, and hazards or damage to objects.

Records are kept filed on paper in the supporting object files and/or recorded on the Collection Management Database, Mobydoc Micromusee.

### **7.5 Storage**

The collections are housed in appropriate, secure, accessible and well-maintained storage areas using methods which in themselves pose no risk of harm to the objects.

The museum stores collections according to the environmental and preventative conservation requirements of specific object collections and their material type.

Any new storage solution must comply with these standards.

### **7.6 Display**

The collections are displayed using methods which in themselves pose no risk of harm to the objects.

The museum will refer to external advice and procure display materials, display cases, and mounts/mount makers from professionally accredited suppliers or conservators.

### **7.7 Handling**

The collection is handled only by, or under the supervision of, or those trained by, collections staff.

The Collections team provide training and familiarisation with object handling for staff and volunteers required to work with and handle the collection.

## **7.8 Transportation**

The collection is transported only by approved carriers, and always under the supervision of collections staff.

The museum will assess transport requirements for objects on a case-by-case basis in order to address specific needs, suitability and climate impact.

## **7.9 Loans out**

The collections will be loaned out to Accredited museums, or equivalent, for specific and short-term exhibitions providing that the borrowing institution can fulfil appropriate loan conditions.

In exceptional circumstances or for special occasions other venues and exhibition projects may be allowed to borrow objects, subject to a case-by-case assessment of risk and requirement.

## **7.10 Loans in**

The museum will borrow objects for specific displays, and afford the same care to objects on loan as to their own collections, subject to a loan agreement with the lending institution or individual.

## **7.11 Working Collections**

The museum has a separate policy for the care of historic working items (e.g. machinery, clocks, mechanical toys, instruments).

The Collections Care and Conservation Plan outlines the process in place for ongoing preventative and remedial care.