

# **Fashion Museum Bath Collections Care And Conservation Policy**

**2025-2030**

**Name of museum:**

Fashion Museum Bath

**Name of governing body:**

Bath and North East Somerset Council

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

**Date for Policy Review:**

## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles governing the care and conservation of objects in the Fashion Museum Bath (FMB) collection. 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.

It sets out the approach for

- preventive conservation which covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects
- remedial conservation which involves treatment to an object to stabilise or enhance some aspects of it.

This policy forms part of a Collection Management Framework for sound management of FMB's collections, alongside the FMB Collections Development Policy and the FMB Documentation Policy. In particular the Collections Care and Conservation Policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies and plans that impact on collections care including:

- Care and Conservation Plan
- Collections Management Plan
- Emergency Plan
- Handling Policy
- Light Policy
- Building Maintenance Policy/ Plans/ Procedures including those being developed for the new museum

## 2. Mission and Vision

Fashion Museum Bath is the UK's museum dedicated to the power of fashion, with a pioneering collection to inspire, challenge and spark ideas.

**Vision:** To champion fashion's transformative power as a global industry and expression of creativity, culture and identity.

**Mission:** To craft a groundbreaking museum that brings fashion to life for local and global audiences, reshaping Bath for the future.

## 3. Standards

FMB is guided by sector standards including the [UK Museum Accreditation Scheme](#), Spectrum 5.1, [the UK Collections Management Standard](#), [BS EN 17820:2023 Conservation of cultural heritage: specifications for the management of moveable cultural heritage collections](#), [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](#) , [Benchmarks 3.0: Conservation Planning for Archives, Libraries & Museums \(National Conservation Service 2021\)](#) and the [Museums Association Code of Ethics](#)

#### 4. Context

The Fashion Museum Bath collection is currently stored at Dents Glovemakers (Dents), Warminster, where it has been housed since October 2022. Previously (since 1963) it was at the Fashion Museum (formerly the Museum of Costume) at the Assembly Rooms Bath and 4, The Circus, Bath.

It is intended that the collection will stay in storage at Dents throughout the museum redevelopment project until its planned reopening in 2030.

This policy and associated Care and Conservation Plan, relate to the collection and its care during this period of development of a new museum, scheduled for opening in 2030.

FMB is an accredited museum and the collection has been awarded Designated Status by Arts Council England, recognising its national and international significance. It showcases the story of fashion over the last 500 years and the skill and creativity of the people who have created, worn and collected these objects.

It is made up of up to 100,000 objects spanning the late 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, including garments, accessories and archive material.

The collection comprises

- **Garments:** from underwear to outerwear and all other items covering sportswear, formal wear and fancy dress. This covers men's, women's and children's wear
- **Accessories:** cuffs and collars, footwear, headwear, bags, jewellery, spectacles, gloves and scarves
- **Archives:** designer's archives, magazines and periodicals, photography, designs and samples, fashion plates, cartes des visite, knitting patterns, catalogues, dress making patterns, ephemera and books.

Other items include

- Haberdashery: sewing boxes, tools, trimmings, fastenings, buttons and ribbons
- Dolls: an important collection of fashion dolls with associated garments.
- Mannequins: historic mannequins featuring wax heads, hand painted faces, enamel teeth and glass eyes based on real people and named makers.

#### 4. People

The Fashion Museum Bath Senior Curator is responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of conservation in alignment with the FMB Collection Management Plan, Care and Conservation Plan, and Heritage Services Business Plan.

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

## **5. Principles**

The care and conservation of the collection is guided by the following principles

### **5.1 Training**

5.1.1 Collections care is the responsibility of all museum staff and everyone who interacts with the collection and appropriate training is provided as required.

5.1.2 FMB will ensure that measures for the care of the collection are communicated amongst staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, and are acted upon, for example, through training and procedures as appropriate.

### **5.2 Access to professional advice**

5.2.1 The approach to collections care and conservation is informed by professional conservation advice, sought from specialist accredited or suitably qualified conservators, either within the staff team or through externally sourced freelancers. The Institute of Conservation's (Icon) [Find A Conservator service](#) or professional recommendations will be used for this purpose.

### **5.3 Remedial Conservation**

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

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

5.3.3 Objects will be prioritised for conservation treatment according to:

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

### **5.4 Buildings**

5.4.1 The Fashion Museum Bath collection is kept in a building which is appropriate to and which aids the care of the collection and where conditions do not physically or chemically cause or pose risk of harm to objects.

5.4.2 The Fashion Museum Bath collection is housed on the Mezzanine floor of Dents, Furnax Lane, Warminster BA12 8PE. The Fashion Museum has a rental agreement with Dents for a five year period, due for review in 2027.

5.4.3 The Museum liaises with the Chairman and Chief Executive of Dents, and operationally with the Warehouse and Facilities Manager regarding the Buildings Plan for the upkeep of the building, which is undertaken through a formal periodic Condition Survey, which informs a 5-year rolling Maintenance Plan.

## **5.5 Collections**

5.5.1 The Museum is aware of the risks to the collection from agents of deterioration and of the need to record the condition of the collection. The museum cares for the collection 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:

## **5.6 Environmental monitoring and control**

5.6.1 Light levels, temperature and relative humidity are monitored, records kept and reviewed regularly.

5.6.2 Environmental monitoring equipment is calibrated regularly in line with supplier guidelines.

5.6.3 The FMB collection is kept in a controlled, managed environment where conditions do not physically or chemically cause harm to objects, where steps are taken to manage risk, and environmental records are kept.

## **5.7 Housekeeping & Pest Management**

5.7.1 The areas in which the FMB collection is stored are cleaned regularly as part of a planned and managed conservation cleaning programme. Objects are monitored and conservation-dusted if on open display/open storage.

5.7.2 An integrated pest management system is in place to monitor any potential pest activity, quarantine items entering collection areas and to take appropriate steps to tackle any infestation.

## **5.8 Documentation**

5.8.1 Records are made of condition checks, conservation work, and hazards or damage to objects and kept either filed on paper in the FMB filing system and/or on the collection management database.

## **5.9 Storage**

5.9.1 The collection is housed in appropriate storage areas using methods which in themselves pose no risk of harm to the objects. Storage space is sufficient to facilitate some engagement with the collection by local and global audiences.

## **5.10 Handling**

5.10.1 The collection is handled only by those trained and experienced in the care of historic dress and textiles, in line with the museum's Handling Policy. Where appropriate, careful handling by visitors is facilitated, supervised by trained FMB staff.

## **5.11 Transportation**

5.11.1 The collection is transported only by approved Fine Art carriers or equivalent. Where objects are travelling outside the UK, transportation is always under the supervision of FMB staff.

## **5.12 Future Museum Development**

5.12.1 The work to develop the Old Post Office in Bath as a new home for Fashion Museum Bath is being informed by professional conservation advice, as detailed in the Collections Management Plan, to ensure that it provides a suitable home for the ongoing care and conservation of the collection when on display or in display preparation areas.

## **6. Loans Out**

Objects from the collection are loaned out to Accredited museums, or equivalent, for specific and short-term exhibitions providing that the borrowing museum can fulfil appropriate loan conditions.

During the current period of closure, FMB will continue to lend and consider requests for exhibitions. All requests for Loans Out from the Fashion Museum collection are assessed individually, case by case, and decisions made according to work schedules, object condition, and venues and exhibition projects.

## **7. Loans In**

Fashion Museum Bath borrows objects for specific and short-term exhibitions which are informative and engaging, and for local and global audiences and affords the same care to objects on loan as to the Fashion Museum collection.

Fashion Museum Bath seeks to continue historic Loans-in from the Vaughan Family Trust, the Glove Collection Trust, Viscount Knebworth, Porter/Bateman, Royal Collection Trust, Papillon and seeks to acquire, return, or dispose of all other historic Loans-in.

## **8. Emergency Planning**

An Emergency Plan is in place for the collection store, which is updated and reviewed on an annual basis. In line with this Plan, Fashion Museum Bath

undertakes annual training and activities within the store to prevent or prepare to respond to fire, water ingress, or any incident that could damage the collection.