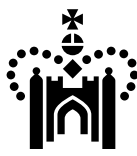


HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

Historic Royal Palaces Collection Care and Conservation Policy

Key Facts and Purpose

- This policy applies to all Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) employees, volunteers and contractors working with HRP's collections and the information held about them.
- This policy guides us in making decisions about how we care for, conserve, and manage the Collection. As a bridge between Historic Royal Palace's Strategy and our conservation team's operational guidelines and procedures, it guides everything we do. Our Conservation and Collection Care, and Collections Management team is a leader in conservation practice and research, so we recognise our responsibility to share our discoveries and promote our conservation work.
- This policy is approved through HRP's Board of Trustees and overseen by HRP's Collections Group



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1. Introduction

1.1 The Collection

The Collection consists of items owned by Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) that are accessioned into the inventory as recorded in the Collections Management System, along with items under the management of the Royal Collection Trust and in situ at the HRP-managed palaces where they are displayed in their original or early contexts. The Royal Armouries and many other lenders also own items that are in our care. For simplicity, we use the term ‘the Collection’ to encompass them all, as conservation care covers all the objects in all the collections.

1.2 Our Context

We are the trusted custodians of some of the most significant and valuable historic interiors and collections in the world. Our palaces tell the story of monarchs and their courts and were witness to many of the defining moments of the nation. The Conservation and Collection Care, and Collections Management (CCC-CM) team, rooted in the history of the palaces, is at the heart of HRP’s intention to hand our palaces on to future generations in a better condition than we received them, and this context governs CCC-CM’s approach to the task of giving our collections continuing life.

1.3 Palaces

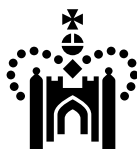
Each of our palaces has a unique history, spirit, physical environment and contemporary use, so our programmes are site-specific and yet efficiently standardised. Deploying evidence from research and prolonged experience, we collaborate with our colleagues to make the best decisions about how we care for the Collection. Together we find clever, cost-effective solutions to the challenges the palaces present.

1.4 History where it happens

Embedded in national identity, our palaces still have a ceremonial and constitutional role. Monumental objects like state beds or painted decorative schemes are integral to the palaces’ stories; storing these pieces away from view is rarely an option. Consequently, we are world leaders in managing collections on open display, in conserving objects which others might judge beyond repair, and in explaining what we do to people who see us working in situ.

2. Our Strategy

HRP’s Strategy permeates CCC-CM’s activities. Decisions are informed by understanding the unique spirit of each palace and the significance of their collections. Public access and engagement underpin conservation and scientific outputs, and our collections management and digital strategies.



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2.1 Reach further

- **Digital engagement.** Our Strategy opens up access to everything we do with our collections. We communicate directly with digital audiences about conservation through our website and digital channels.
- **Clever solutions.** We stretch ourselves to find ways to enhance the experience of our palaces so that their spirit can continue to shine through our protective measures. We innovate and collaborate to conserve the Collection and make it accessible.

2.2 Mean more

- **Explaining.** Communication is built into the job description of all CCC-CM staff. Our 'Ask the Conservator' programme has been running since 2005. It invites visitors to speak to specialists working in situ.
- **Aesthetics and protection.** Dialogue about how to care for the Collection with our colleagues and stakeholders is always mindful of the beauty and spectacle which is inherent to our work.

2.3 Act for the Future

- **Core work.** Conservation is an ongoing task; we will always love and look after the palaces in our care.
- **Research.** Relevant and applied scientific research is an invaluable evidence base for discovering more about the Collection and its preservation.
- **Sustainability.** We provide specialist training and skills sharing so that we can plan for succession and have the expertise we need.

3. Our Standards

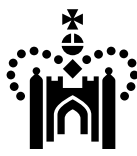
We aspire to be at the leading edge of collections treatment, preservation, science and management. We conform to an extensive list of external and internal principles and standards, referenced in Appendix 1, including Benchmarks in Collections Care and the Agents of Deterioration risk management framework, and we look after the collection in line with the standards as specified in EN 17820: 2023 and EN 16893:2018.

3.1 Treatment

We care for the best objects: they are worthy of the best treatment by the best conservators. Conservation treatment shall be done as appropriate, and cycles of conservation are led by conservation best practices and object needs. Otherwise, intervention is a once-in-a-lifetime event, identified in lengthy cycles of at least 50 years between treatments.

3.2 Learning from Collections

We enable visitors, trustees and staff to discover the beauty, history and information contained in the collections in our care and we share experiences from our exceptional contact with the Collection.



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3.3 Specialist collections

We ensure that working Collection items such as clocks, machinery and musical instruments are in operational order wherever possible. We consider research needs and long-term preservation in developing strategies for the care of working items, and commission specialists to work with us on this.

We recognise the responsibility and privilege in caring for our Designated Collection, the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection, and our work strives to increase access to this world-class collection, on-site, off-site and online.

We look after a significant scientific sample collection, and we organise and catalogue this resource for researchers.

3.4 Protecting the Collection

We commission approved art handlers and ensure that insurance appropriate to each object and its needs is in place, in line with EN 16648 and EN 15946.

To ensure that people can get as close to the Collection as possible, we protect, as appropriate, from risk by providing suitable mounts and packing objects correctly.

We ensure the safety and security of objects and visitors through regular audits, protection from risks, and conservation as required.

We partner with Media & PR, Events, Public Engagement and Development teams so that they can deliver their work successfully, secure in the knowledge that our objects, interiors, and exteriors are safeguarded.

3.5 Buildings and environment

We support the maintenance of the historic building envelope to ensure the safety of the Collection.

We manage environmental conditions based on cost-effective evidence and risk assessment.

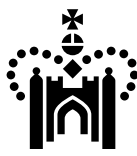
Our stored and displayed collections are kept to the same standards, i.e. in a stable environmental condition.

We are involved in the design and use of our spaces for the display of the Collection from beginning to end. We contribute our expertise to ensure the safety and security of objects and interiors and in all design, object loan and exhibition processes.

3.6 Conservation facilities and equipment

We commission suppliers and engineers to design equipment to our precise specifications.

We enable best practice by maintaining and improving our facilities to a high standard, in a cost-effective way.



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3.7 Sustainability

We minimise our environmental impact. We carefully consider our use of conservation materials like acid-free tissue, plastics or detergents, and we re-use or recycle wherever possible.

We train others so that we can recruit staff with the appropriate skill set now and in the future.

We document and archive our activities to ensure continuity of care.

3.8 Digital technology

We seek opportunities to integrate digital systems across the whole span of our work, from collections management to treatment, preservation and science.

We extract maximum value from our data and other digital assets by creating it once and using it in multiple ways.

We are committed to findability across our digital archive.

3.9 Communication

All CCC-CM team members are expected to be able to explain their work to everyone, including visitors, trustees, directors, colleagues, sponsors, members, volunteers, students and fellow professionals. We invest in explaining our work through each of our team's programmes and all our projects.

4. Our Expertise

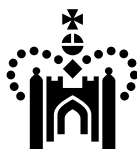
We are proud of the rigorous management and outstanding delivery of CCC-CM's programme and of our internal, national and international reputation as practitioners, researchers and communicators. Our programme must meet the highest standards of achievement on each of the three pillars that uphold it: conserving, training and explaining.

4.1 People

We employ the best people to care for the Collection and we expect the highest standard of work. We are accountable to the Executive Team and Trustees for the quality and cost of our work, and to the owners of collections.

4.2 Training

We train our existing staff to ensure that their skills are appropriate for our needs, and we encourage people to develop and share their learning. The Collection is unique, so we build up our potential workforce by recruiting and training conservation interns who benefit from the knowledge of our current specialists.



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4.3 Expertise

We are committed supporters of professional accreditation (Icon PACR, see Appendix 1). When recruiting staff, we require that UK-based conservators either have or are working towards Icon ACR status. We encourage the use of accredited conservators in commissioned work. We aspire to have all our conservators accredited, whether directly employed or commissioned.

5. Our programmes

In-house preventive, treatment, science and collections management teams collaborate to deliver our care of collections work through:

- Agents of Decay Programme
- State of the Interior Estate Survey
- Scientific Research
- Collections Management and Documentation

5.1 Preventive conservation

A development of what is still widely known in the heritage world as ‘good housekeeping’, we prevent harm to the Collection by taking precautions against damage.

5.1.1 Risk Management

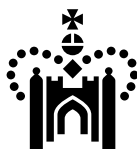
We apply an internationally recognised framework for risk management based on the concept of the Ten Agents of Deterioration. These are direct physical forces; theft and vandalism; fire; water; pests; contaminants such as dust; light; incorrect temperature; incorrect relative humidity; disassociation. We maintain an established integrated pest management programme for protecting collections from pests, as specified in EN 16790. We convene a Collections Group governance meeting, which meets quarterly to prioritise risk and report and make recommendations on mitigating action.

5.1.2 Collection Care Procedures

We undertake a programme of regular audits, cleaning and inspection of the entire collection according to our established procedures and in collaboration with our colleagues in HRP and other stakeholders.

5.1.3 Environmental monitoring

Environmental monitoring provides ‘live’, quantitative data on relative humidity, temperature, light and ultraviolet levels in our most sensitive display and storage locations at each palace, enabling evidence-based conservation best practice and decision-making. In this way, we are proactive in responding to environmental change and can better support the exhibition process in our responsibilities to lenders. We can also scientifically evaluate the impact of our collections care initiatives in bringing about environmental improvements across the palaces.



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5.1.4 Emergency planning and response.

CCC-CM has a clearly defined role within our Major Incident Plan. This plan is tested regularly and meets the standards set out in ISO 21110. Each site has an identified salvage team and CCC-CM keeps recovery materials at strategic locations.

5.1.5 Buildings, facilities, equipment, and environment

CCC-CM collaborates with our colleagues to manage our buildings and facilities. For example, in organisational terms, responsibility for storage of the Collection is owned by both CCC-CM and Curatorial teams. We have a number of plans and proposals underway. We continue to renovate and improve our Studio and Laboratories, to plan for the creation of a Collections Storage and Access facility and we aspire to upgrade our textile wet-cleaning facility.

We are working within HRP's Sustainability Programme to develop a long-term plan to limit the environmental impact of our work and reduce the impact of climate change on the Collection.

5.2 Treatment conservation

We identify treatment options and then decide on the appropriate course to take in consultation with our trustees, directors, curators and where relevant with the Royal Collection Trust staff.

We clean, stabilise, strengthen and interpret objects so that they can be enjoyed on long-term open display. We use tried and tested practical techniques or design new bespoke processes in consultation with curators and RCT staff.

We run a proactive treatment programme independent of display demands. The State of the Interior Estate Survey identifies a programme of treatments based on condition, stability, and treatment need, and is informed by a rolling audit cycle.

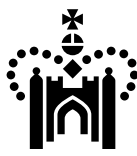
Reactively, we undertake treatments in direct response to exhibitions and event timetables.

5.3 Heritage science

Scientific research informs everything we do, and results are immediately applied to our preventive and treatment plans. We undertake major research projects ourselves to inform the highest standard of future care of the Collection, and we collaborate with other institutions and partners if they can contribute to our objectives.

Our investigative projects are targeted to answer questions raised by conservators, and acknowledge our unique context with a long standing focus on large hanging historic textiles. Our research into environmental conditions is directly related to their impact on the Collection.

In response to our digital strategy, we are using high resolution photography and 3D laser scanning technology and are collaborating with colleagues in the Digital Engagement team to capture 3D digital assets of key items in the Collection for use on our digital platforms, as well as for condition documentation purposes.



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We are outward looking, and publish research to increase both our own and others' expertise and understanding, adding value to our investment in conservation and contributing to HRP's Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status.

5.4 Collections Management

In accordance with our Collection Information Policy, we document our conservation work so that the extraordinary history of care for these great palaces since they were built is recorded. We ensure that our documentation is accessible now and for future generations.

Our collections management system is being replaced in 2025, and we are adding conservation data to the records, along with a digital image of each object. These will inform and increasingly help manage our treatment priorities.

HRP's website is a vital public link to our work, and we are populating it with fascinating conservation stories and information about how we care for the Collection.

6. Document controls

6.1 Document Location

6.2 Policy review procedure

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy will be reviewed and published from time to time, at least once every five years. The Policy is next due for review on or before July 2029.