HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

Historic Royal Palaces
Collections Information 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 covers how HRP records and documents the knowledge and information we hold about HRP's collections. It outlines how this information will be maintained and improved upon in line with professional standards for collections management

- 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 Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to the creation, management, access and security of Collections Information. Collections Information is all documentation, in various formats about objects and archives in the collection and related collections management activities.

1.2 The HRP collection includes both movable and immovable Collection items. Information about the HRP collection and associated intellectual property is key to enabling access to the HRP collection.

2. Accountability

2.1 HRP is committed to protecting Collections Information and the Intellectual Property Rights of the organisation and of others and aims to manage all its information and data in a legal, accountable, secure and accessible manner to a professional standard for it to be used for all required purposes.

2.2 The collection, which includes the HRP collection, objects under the care of the Royal Collection Trust and 'in-situ' at the HRP-managed palaces, and items that are on loan to HRP will be fully supported by systems of documentation that are maintained to equivalent high levels of care as the conservation care of the collection objects themselves.

2.3 We aim to account for and enable access to all items for which we are legally responsible. The information must be available for inspection by HRP's auditors.

2.4 We are committed to ensuring that the Collections Management System is the primary tool for creating, holding and managing collection information and the objects for which we are legally responsible. The current bespoke Collections Management system is being replaced in 2025. A robust and auditable process was undertaken to ensure that the new system meets HRP's needs and provides a platform for access.

2.5 Records will be kept in electronic and paper format where appropriate and will be kept in a readable format in a secure location to ensure long-term accessibility. Accession registers are still maintained and are stored in a fireproof safe.

2.6 All staff responsible for inputting and maintaining collection information must receive training in the relevant data standards and appropriate Digital Asset Management and Collections Management Systems, to enable the accurate input and retrieval of collection information. All data shall be traceable through an audit trail as to who created or edited it.

2.7 We are committed to carrying out regular reviews of the Collections Management System to ensure it is fit for purpose and that collection information is appropriately safeguarded against potential future obsolescence of the system.

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3. Standards in procedures and processes

3.1 HRP is committed to creating and maintaining good quality and up to date information about the HRP collection, which conforms to appropriate national and international standards wherever possible.

3.2 Individual policies and procedures have been developed in line with EN 17820:2023 and Spectrum 5.1. (See Collections Management Procedural Manual) including but not limited to:

- Object entry
- Acquisition and accessioning
- Location and movement control
- Inventory
- Cataloguing
- Object exit
- Loans in (Borrowing objects)
- Loans out (lending objects)
- Documentation planning

3.3 HRP is committed to identifying and addressing any documentation backlogs (See Collections Information Plan), this includes activities which may enhance access.

3.4 Any distinct special collection archives acquired or held as part of the HRP collection will be managed according to the *Code of Ethics,* International Council on Archives (ICA), 1996 and related national archive guidelines.

4. Accessibility

4.1 HRP recognises the interest in its Collections and Collections Information to a variety of audiences, both internally to staff and more broadly. HRP is committed to offering the widest and most appropriate forms of access to its collection, the information held about the collections, expertise and services. HRP is actively working to overcome any physical, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal, digital and financial barriers, through integrating equality and diversity into everything that we do, guided by our Strategy and Operating Plan.

4.2 HRP will manage the competing demands of access and long-term collection care in accordance with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy

4.3 Certain object records may contain information with confidentiality or legal implications. Staff receive training in and must follow procedures and protocols in relation to information security and access. HRP collection records are covered by HRP's Privacy Policy, which conforms to the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and Data Protection Act, 2018.

4.4 HRP's Collections Management System (due for replacement in 2025) is the key source of information about the collection. As such, retrievability of Collections Information

was at the forefront of procurement requirements. The replacement system was commissioned with a view to external accessibility and knowledge sharing and HRP is committed to delivering external access to collections information in future phases of the project.

4.5   All staff responsible for collections management functions receive appropriate and refresher training in collections management policies, procedures and current standards and will keep abreast of best current practices and new technologies in documentation and use these as appropriate to widen public access to the HRP collection.

4.6   Published collection research material will be organised according to HRP research guidelines and made accessible to colleagues, professional enquirers and to the public, with due acknowledgement where material is published or otherwise distributed. Unpublished research will be added to the CMS and made available to users as resources allow.

4.7   HRP is committed to keeping all records, whether paper or electronic up to date and in a readable format to ensure their long-term accessibility.

5.   Staffing

5.1   Expert knowledge of the HRP collection and collections conservation is recognised as essential to its management and care, as well as advising on its public engagement and presentation in the palace context.

5.2   Staff will be recruited and provided with the training and opportunities necessary to develop a thorough knowledge of the area of the HRP collection for which they are responsible. However, HRP also recognises the role of Royal Collection Trust staff in researching and maintaining records on objects belonging to the Royal Collection and will avoid duplicating effort in this area.

5.3   All staff at HRP who work with the HRP collection will be given appropriate training on HRP's Collections Management approach and procedures. This will ensure that the highest standards are maintained and that all staff understand their responsibilities towards the HRP collection.

5.4   Support will be provided to staff responsible for collections management in obtaining appropriate academic, museum-related or technical qualifications and any further professional experience necessary, to carry out the activities identified in this policy. Collection teams are also encouraged to contribute to professional training and educational programmes at HRP.

6.   Security

6.1   HRP will maintain and develop an integrated Collections Management System, designed to current museum and archive documentation standards and including Cyber Essentials, the Government backed scheme and GDPR requirements.

6.2 HRP is committed to ensuring the security of all collections information. Security and back up procedures are provided by the system supplier with oversight by HRP's IS department. Systems are backed up daily, and backups are kept for 7 days.

6.3 Security and backup procedures for other digital collections management information are set out in the Use of Information Systems and Security of Electronic Data Policy, 2019.

7. Document Controls

7.1 Policy review procedure

The Collections Information 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