



ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

Barnsley MBC Growth and Sustainability Directorate

Regeneration and Culture

Culture and Visitor Economy Service

Barnsley Museums

Barnsley Archives and Local Studies

Collections Care & Conservation Policy

November 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Barnsley Archives and Local Studies (hereinafter referred to as Barnsley Archives) is part of Barnsley Museums, within the Culture and Visitor Economy Service of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as Barnsley MBC).
- 1.2 Barnsley Archives exists to preserve and provide access to the historical archives and resources in its care. It aims to provide borough-wide service that meets the needs of its collections and customers to the best standards of quality and value possible.
- 1.3 The long-term preservation of the historical archives in the care of the Service are paramount and at the forefront of our planning processes.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Preservation: the passive protection of material where no direct physical or chemical treatment occurs.
- 2.2 Conservation: the active protection of material using physical and chemical treatment necessary to prevent further deterioration.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The work of Barnsley Archives is informed by the following standards:

PD5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival material.

PAS 198:2012 Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections.

Standard for Record Repositories (The National Archive, 2004).

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Preservation Assessment Survey for Libraries and Archives
(Preservation Advisory Centre).

- 3.2 The Archives and Local Studies Manager oversees the preservation and conservation of the collections. He is responsible for the storage areas and for setting and maintaining standards.
- 3.3 Some preventative conservation is undertaken in-house, by both staff and volunteers. This includes wrapping, cleaning and boxing.
- 3.4 As the service does not employ any trained conservation staff, conservation work that requires specialist treatment is normally done via external practitioners.

4. Storage

- 4.1 Wherever possible, collections are stored in strongrooms which adhere to PD 5454:2012. Where this is not possible, all reasonable steps are taken to minimise deterioration and degradation of materials.
- 4.2 All the collections held by Barnsley Archives' are housed within Barnsley Town Hall. This huge step forward has been taken since 2017, at which point two external outstores were still being used. Stores 1 and 2 within the Town Hall were converted in 2012-13 for archives storage, along with the smaller Photo Store (for special media). Store 3 was converted during 2020, and an additional Vault store was converted during 2022 to provide extra storage for incoming public records. The Vault store has also provided the service with accrual space for approximately ten years.
- 4.3 Incoming material is initially stored in the service's Vault store. The Archives and Local Studies Manager will determine whether any cleaning or drying is required before the items are accessioned and transferred to the main store.
- 4.4 Items that are heavily infested or badly damaged may not be retained for permanent preservation. Decisions are made on the

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informational and evidential value of the document, its intrinsic value and its likely future use by the public.

- 4.5 Newly received material is packaged as soon as possible after receipt. Minimum protection is provided by adding the material to an acid-free archival box and wrapping if deemed to be a priority.
- 4.6 Access to strongrooms and other storage areas is restricted to Archives staff and key Facilities Management personnel. Monthly electronic access reports can be requested by the Archives and Local Studies Manager.
- 4.7 Strongrooms are protected against unlawful intrusion.
- 4.8 Two of the stores in the Town Hall are protected by an FM200 fire suppression system as well as a water detection alarm.
- 4.9 The environment in our stores is maintained within the parameters set out in PD 5454:2012. Equipment is in place to ensure constant environmental monitoring and if concerns occur, Facilities Management and/or contractors are called to investigate and rectify problems.
- 4.10 Storage areas are generally kept tidy. They are not used as general storage areas for large equipment or furniture. A small number of conservation and preservation resources are however housed in our main stores.
- 4.11 All shelves and bays in the main two stores have a unique number. This is recorded on the customer request slip so that items consulted can be quickly returned to the correct box or shelf. Store 3 contains mainly unrequested, uncatalogued material. Whilst the individual shelves and bays are not numbered, categories of records are generally stored together and in collection number order.
- 4.12 Steel shelves and cabinets are used to store material. Archives are no longer stored in any wooden cabinets or on any wooden shelves.
- 4.13 Strongrooms in the Town Hall are cleaned on request by Facilities Management personnel.

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5. **Document handling**

- 5.1 All staff are trained in the safe and correct handling of items from within the collections. Refresher courses are run regularly as part of the training programme.
- 5.2 Printed guidelines for searchroom users are provided at the time of registration. This provides practical advice on handling material in order to protect the collections.
- 5.3 The searchroom is under constant supervision by staff. In addition, CCTV cameras are monitored by Town Hall officers.
- 5.4 Equipment is provided for items which are outsize or awkward. This includes weights, melinex sleeves, cushions and other support devices.
- 5.5 Items from the collections which we have surrogates in place for are not normally made available to researchers.
- 5.6 Catalogues are used to help users identify suitable items to be consulted, and so reduce the need for handling of original records unnecessarily. There is also an online catalogue available at www.explorebarnsleycollections.com.
- 5.7 Items from secure areas are not left out for longer than is necessary and in any case are returned to secure areas at the end of the working day.
- 5.8 Original archives do not generally leave a secure area, as a dumb waiter is used to transport archives between the main stores and the public searchroom.
- 5.9 Items loaned out or exhibited are subject to an agreement being signed and a number of stipulations and requirements being met.
- 5.10 Items may be withdrawn from public access if they are heavily damaged and at risk from further handling. Where possible, surrogate copies will be provided. Such items may be made available under supervision.

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6. Reprography

- 6.1 When making decisions about providing copies of items, its preservation needs are taken into account and remain a priority.
- 6.2 All photocopying is undertaken by staff.
- 6.3 Parchment items and bound archival volumes are not generally photocopied.
- 6.4 Items larger than the photocopier platen (i.e. A3 size) are only photocopied at the discretion of staff, if the document is not likely to be damaged in any way.
- 6.5 A range of other copying options are available. For example large maps and plans can be copied off-site, and items can be scanned or photographed.
- 6.6 Subject to certain restrictions, researchers are able to use their own digital cameras, after purchasing a permit.

7. Training and Awareness

- 7.1 Whilst Barnsley Archives does not have a Conservation Unit or trained conservators, we maintain a relationship with the Conservation Unit at Sheffield Archives.
- 7.2 The conservators at Sheffield Archives have in recent years delivered bespoke preservation training sessions for our staff. These will be repeated on a regular basis.
- 7.3 Internal training sessions on basic preservation and handling techniques are delivered periodically.

8. Dissemination and Review

- 8.1 This Policy will be made available to the public and a copy will be sent to the National Archives.

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- 8.2 This Policy will be reviewed as necessary to take into account any changed circumstances and in any case it will be reviewed after 5 years.