



## Borthwick Institute for Archives

### Care and Conservation Policy



This policy sets out how the Borthwick cares for the Archives in the Borthwick Institute and Rare Books in the University Library Rare Books section.

#### 1. Policy

- 1.1 The mission of the Borthwick Institute for Archives (Borthwick) is to support and expand the University of York's cultural endeavour and contribute to human understanding through collecting archives and rare books, preserving them and making them widely available for research to all people, now and in the future.
- 1.2 We are committed to *preservation for access*. We preserve archives and rare books so that they can be used by present and future generations. Preservation is a central function of the Borthwick and underpins our core activities.
- 1.3 We minimise the risk of damage or deterioration to the archives and rare books in our care, through preservation and conservation.
- 1.4 We apply recognised standards for the preservation and conservation of the archives and rare books in our custody. The principal standards, best practice guidelines and tools we use are given in Standards and Guidelines Used at the Borthwick.
- 1.5 We apply cost effective preservation and conservation measures for maximum benefit to the archives and rare books. We are committed to a programme of preservation and

conservation work, carried out in accordance with agreed priorities and available resources, drawn from both internal and external funds, as set out in the preservation plan.

#### Risk assessment and management

- 1.6 We manage risks to the archives and rare books through the provision of appropriately qualified staff, secure, environmentally-controlled storage, searchroom and exhibition facilities, environmental monitoring, preservation equipment, training and guidance in document handling, surrogates, and a secure and standards-compliant digital archiving facility. These systems are covered by the regularly reviewed Borthwick disaster control plan and the Information Services Directorate and University's business continuity planning measures.
- 1.7 Qualified archive conservators at the Borthwick provide professional management of our preventive and remedial conservation activity. Conservation staff work to the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO) code of ethics and the Institute of Conservation (ICON) code of conduct. They strive to keep abreast of current developments in their field and promote an awareness and understanding of the Borthwick's conservation work amongst our staff, users, volunteers and the wider public.
- 1.8 We employ appropriately experienced, trained and qualified staff to oversee digital preservation activities at the Borthwick, keep abreast of current developments in this field, and promote our activities to internal and external audiences.
- 1.9 We assess the needs of the archives and rare books and identify any risks of deterioration through surveys and a high level technology watch. The results of these activities inform our preservation and conservation priorities.
- 1.10 Prioritisation for remedial conservation work and treatment decisions is driven by preservation and conservation survey work, user demand, physical condition, significance, and anticipated use, as assessed by the Borthwick's Archives Development Group.
- 1.11 Prioritisation for digital preservation activities is driven by risk assessments, an embedded technology watch, user demand and the availability of appropriate tools, as assessed by the Borthwick's Archives Development Group.

#### Acquisition of archives

- 1.12 Where facilities for the preservation of particular formats of archives are not available in the Borthwick at the point of acquisition of those archives, the Borthwick aims to secure and provide such facilities either onsite or elsewhere (for example through deposit of archives in a specialist repository).

### Security

- 1.13 We store all the archives and rare books in our care securely. We protect the archives and rare books against environmental threats, theft, vandalism, deliberate or accidental damage, and mishandling.
- 1.14 Access to digital storage is closely controlled and integrity checks are performed across the digital archive on a regular basis to ensure that each digital object remains authentic and unchanged over time.

### Buildings and Storage

- 1.15 We ensure that our building provides the appropriate conditions for the storage, consultation and exhibition of the archives and rare books in our care following recognised standards and through regular maintenance schedules.
- 1.16 Digital archives are stored and actively managed in conformity with the Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System. The digital archive keeps multiple copies of archives in different locations to limit and mitigate potential data loss.

### Housekeeping

- 1.17 All areas are kept clean to minimise threats from dust, pollutants, pests, mould and other agents of deterioration. Good housekeeping practices are routinely implemented by a specially trained team of cleaners and these practices are monitored by archives staff, enabling action to be taken quickly in the event of a threat.
- 1.18 New accessions are inspected for threats such as damp, mould, pests and dirt and isolated and treated as necessary before being placed in the strongrooms. Digital archives are inspected for viruses and malware before being ingested into the digital archive.

### Environmental monitoring and control

- 1.19 We manage the environment in all areas where archives and rare books are stored, consulted and exhibited using a building management system and/or digital loggers, and take appropriate action if the temperature, relative humidity or light levels fall outside the ranges specified in the recognised standards.

### Packaging

- 1.20 We package the physical archives in our care in suitable materials as a first defence against agents of deterioration. Packaging for rare books is determined by packaging surveys carried out by the Rare Books Librarian and the conservators.

#### Disaster recovery and continuity

- 1.21 In the event of a disaster we will implement our Disaster Control Plan.

#### Access

- 1.22 Public access to physical archives and rare books books in their original format takes place under the controlled conditions of an invigilated searchroom in accordance with our searchroom regulations.
- 1.23 We restrict or mediate access to fragile material as necessary for its preservation. Material may be declared unfit for public access by an archivist or conservator until such time as it has been treated by a conservator, or a surrogate copy has been created. The reasons for our decision will be clearly explained to the researcher and we will prioritise the treatment or digitisation of unfit material in a timescale agreed with the researcher.
- 1.24 We promote good handling practices through the provision of preservation equipment, verbal advice, written guidance, social media, handling training, and surrogates.
- 1.25 We make surrogate copies of documents to minimise handling of the originals in the interest of their long-term preservation. Where surrogates are available, access to physical archives and rare books books in their original format is only be granted where researchers can demonstrate that the surrogate is not an adequate substitute. Dissemination copies of born digital material are created as surrogates for access in order to protect the authenticity and integrity of the born-digital originals and preservation copies, to which access will not be permitted.
- 1.26 Reproductions of documents and rare books books to facilitate access, either at the request of individual researchers or as part of a larger project, are only made where we can minimise the risk of damage to documents as a result of the copying process.

#### Exhibitions and loans

- 1.27 Exhibitions in the Borthwick are mounted in secure display cases in accordance with the recognised standards. Original records and rare books items are displayed for no longer than four months and facsimiles are used where appropriate. Environmental conditions in all exhibition areas are monitored, light sources are UV filtered, and the areas are monitored by CCTV.
- 1.28 We supply material for exhibitions to owners, other archive repositories, museums, libraries or galleries on completion of the appropriate documentation. We reserve the right to decline exhibition requests for material deemed at risk by qualified conservation

staff, where the host organisation's facilities cannot be shown to meet the recognised standards, or appropriate insurance is not available.

- 1.29 We keep permanent records of withdrawals of records and rare books, whether for exhibitions or other reasons.

#### Principles of conservation of physical objects

- 1.30 We minimise the need for remedial conservation by actively promoting and undertaking preventive measures wherever possible.
- 1.31 We employ conservation treatment that respects the evidential and physical integrity of the original records, applies minimal intervention and employs reversible methods wherever possible and appropriate, uses repair materials to the recognised conservation grade, is fully documented, guided by the recognised standard, and carried out in accordance with health and safety requirements and risk assessments.

#### Principles of digital preservation

- 1.32 We create representations of digital objects that respect the significant properties that need to be retained to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the digital objects. The integrity of the original files and other manifestations are maintained by the use and verification of checksums. Technical metadata is extracted from digital archives and stored in a standards-compliant manner to facilitate future management of, and access to, the archives.
- 1.33 We maintain a complete record of preservation work undertaken during the ingest process and as a result of enacting preservation plans. Original digital objects will be maintained and preserved.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 The policy applies to all archives and rare books in all formats held by, or in the care of, the Borthwick Institute.
- 2.2 The policy is binding on the staff, volunteers, contractors, users of and visitors to the Borthwick Institute.

## **3. Oversight**

- 3.1 Overall responsibility for preservation and conservation is with the Assistant Director of Information (Archives and Information Policy) as Keeper of Archives.
- 3.2 The Borthwick Senior Management Team is responsible for overseeing policy implementation.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 Preservation is the shared responsibility of all Borthwick staff, volunteers and users.
- 4.2 The Preservation Team is responsible for coordinating preservation activities.
- 4.3 The archive conservators carry out conservation work and provide professional preservation and conservation advice and support.
- 4.4 Digital archiving activities are managed and coordinated by the digital archivist.

#### **5. Policy implementation documents**

- 5.1 This document is supported by the following policies and implementation documents:

- Collections care and conservation plan
- Preservation and conservation procedures
- Digital preservation plan
- Digital preservation handbook
- Disaster control plan
- Reprographics procedures
- Digitisation policy, plan and procedures
- Access policy, plan and procedures
- Forward plan
- University Library contingency management plan
- University Library business continuity plan
- University of York business continuity plan
- University of York Information Security Policy
- University of York Data Protection Policy

## Document history and status

19 Oct 2013	A Jones	Began first draft
17 Dec 2013	A Jones	Revised and updated, issued to BGSM
03 Jan 2014	A Jones	Incorporated BGSM comments
06 Jan 2014	C Fonge	Reformat to ISD policy style
12 May 2014	A Jones	Incorporated BSTM comments
28 May 2014	A Jones	Incorporated conservation principles
Dec 2015	J Mitcham	Incorporated digital preservation principles
12 Feb 2016	A Jones	Revised and updated to meet Archive Accreditation standards
15 Apr 2016	A Jones	Incorporated Borthwick team comments
3 May 2016	A Jones/S Griffin	Incorporated rare books
19 May 2017	C.Webb	Tidying for consistency, new clause about recording loans. Suggestions for comment.
24 May 2017	A Jones	Edited in response to C Webb's comments
10th August 2017	Information Services SMT	Approved

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