



Society of the Sacred Heart England and Wales Province Collection Management Policy

1. PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

The aim of this policy is to promote the preservation of materials in the archive of the Society of the Sacred Heart (England and Wales Province) in line with nationally- and internationally-agreed standards of collection management and care.

Every effort will be made to ensure that temperature and relative humidity parameters of library and archive collections are maintained within the provisions of PD5454:2012 *Guide to the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials*. Steps will be taken to rationalise, upgrade and enhance current storage conditions, to enable the organisation and retrieval of materials and their preservation for the future.

1.1 Access to materials

The Archivist will work to enable researchers to have direct access to original materials to progress their scholarship, research and teaching. Where this is not possible, due to the fragility of the item, steps will be taken to provide a suitable surrogate or other alternative.

Should original materials be required for purposes of exhibition or display, a surrogate or other alternative may be provided where it is possible to do so without risk to the original document, and the Archivist reserves the right to make a charge.

Researchers will be denied access to an original item only as a last resort in the best interests of preserving the item, or where issues of confidentiality or privacy apply.

1.2 Handling and transportation of materials

Research Area guidelines have been developed to encourage the proper handling of original materials in the archives. These emphasise the responsibility of both staff and researchers to handle original materials, whether rare books, archives, manuscripts or artefacts, with respect for their condition and for their longer-term preservation.

In particular, the Archivist and volunteers will:

- Monitor the condition of collections and take action to replace, treat or reformat, as appropriate, individual items identified as being damaged.

[Supplied April 2014]

- Protect collections with appropriate conservation-grade enclosures.
- Maintain cleanliness in the storage areas and clean collections on a systematic basis using appropriate methods.

Staff will consult with a qualified conservator before rare books, archives, manuscripts or artefacts are made available to researchers, to ensure that these materials are handled with due regard to their physical condition. In addition, the condition of a particular item will be carefully considered before any copying may be undertaken.

Materials shall not be removed from Barat House. For any material that should for some reason require removal, insurance cover for transit and temporary storage will be arranged. All material thus removed will be documented and signed for, and a signature obtained from a member of staff on its return. Materials may only be removed for specific purposes, e.g., for exhibitions and displays, for cataloguing, preservation, conservation or copying, and in line with agreed procedures.

Whenever a collection is proposed for acquisition by Barat House, the condition of that collection will be appraised and steps may be taken to improve its condition prior to its physical receipt into the Archives.

Whenever an application for funding is being considered to improve researcher access to a collection, the preservation and conservation needs of the collection will be considered alongside the need for retrospective conversion and cataloguing, and funding sought to an appropriate level.

1.3 Staff training

The Archivist will provide training and advice on the safe handling of materials to all volunteers and visitors as necessary.

1.4 Disaster management, preparedness and business and service continuity planning

Boxes of disaster supplies are located at strategic locations throughout Barat House. Contact details for senior staff are available in the event of an emergency.

Barat House maintains a subscription with Harwell Drying & Restoration Services to ensure recovery and restoration of library materials in the event of a disaster.

The Society is engaged in an ongoing risk assessment and disaster management exercise. A disaster plan does not currently exist for Barat House but is expected to require enhancement in the light of agreed policy.

1.5 Preservation treatments

Preservation treatments are undertaken expressly to prolong the life of individual items or series of items by conservation treatment or the creation of surrogates when items are at risk, damaged or deteriorated. All treatments will be undertaken to recommended professional standards and all materials used will be of the highest conservation quality and will comply with British Standard recommendations. Where appropriate, the Archivist together with appropriately trained volunteers will carry out repairs; otherwise, the services of an appropriately experienced registered conservator will be sought.

All preservation and conservation treatments will aim for minimum sympathetic intervention, leaving the integrity and originality of the original item unchanged. Each item will be individually assessed and conservation limited to what is necessary for its

[Supplied April 2014]

long-term stability and expected use. A record of all treatment undertaken will be maintained.

1.6 Financial commitment to preservation and conservation

In addition to the general Society budget for preservation and conservation, additional funds may be sought via funding applications in support of specific collections to provide high-grade conservation standard materials and appropriate treatments by experienced external registered conservators.

2. ELECTRONIC CATALOGUING STRATEGY

Barat House is undertaking an ongoing programme of retro-conversion of its existing catalogues of library and archival holdings using Access.

Cataloguing is a priority task. The rate of cataloguing is monitored. Archives are catalogued to ISAD (G) standards. Recently accessioned material will be catalogued as soon as possible to national standards.

Barat House aims to make its catalogue more widely available through COPAC and AIM25 in future.

3. DATE OF REVIEW

This document will be reviewed in 2014.