



Accreditation

Bruce Castle Museum

Haringey Council

Collections Care and Conservation policy 2019-2024

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Care and Conservation Policy

Name of Museum: Bruce Castle Museum

Name of Governing Body: Haringey Council

Approval date: 23 August 2019

Review date: annual internal review – July 2020

Renewal date: July 2024

Purpose

Bruce Castle Museum is committed to its duty of care for the borough's historical collections. This policy sets out the Council's policy on the care and conservation of these collections and defines an overall framework that Bruce Castle Museum adopts to ensure collections are cared for to appropriate professional museum standards, and at the same time balancing the needs of access and long-term preservation of the collections.

The purpose of Bruce Castle Museum's Care and Conservation Policy is to set a framework for:

- the preservation of the borough's historical collections in the care of the Heritage Service
- preventative and remedial conservation of the collections
- the safe use of and access to collections, within the limits of the museum's resources.

Introduction

Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. This policy includes a combination of preventive and remedial conservation measures, designed to ensure long-term preservation:

- **Preventive conservation** covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures.
- **Remedial conservation** involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

This policy will guide the work Bruce Castle Museum does in the field of collections care and conservation. This policy should be seen in conjunction with the Collections Care and Conservation Plan for the collections at Bruce Castle Museum. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Salvage Plan, and any other policies or plans affecting the collection and the museum.

Ethics and legislation

This policy is also guided by ethical guidelines and legislation for this area of museum work, such as:

- Museum Association Code of Ethics
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- COSHH Regulations 2002

Standards

Care of collections: standards and aims

Bruce Castle Museum aims to improve the care and conditions of all its collection in accordance with Benchmarks in Collections Care, SPECTRUM or other approved standards within the limits of its resources.

The safety and preservation of the collection will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage, or to modify the buildings.

All decisions to carry out conservation will be guided by the responsibility to maintain physical, historical and aesthetic integrity of the objects.

The care of the collections is the responsibility of everyone who works in, volunteers with or visits Bruce Castle Museum.

Bruce Castle Museum will:

- continue to ensure that best practice professional and ethical standards are met and will use SPECTRUM and *Benchmarks in Collections Care* for guidance, as well as standards laid down by ICOM (International Council of Museums), Icon (Institute of Conservation), and the V&A Ethical Checklist:<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/conservation-journal/issue-50/appendix-1/>
- create a care and conservation plan in order to address areas that need to be improved
- detail operational guidelines concerning the procedures to be followed for documentation in the documentation procedural manual
- ensure that all preventive conservation measures are guided by Bruce Castle Museum's Environmental policy statement and balance the needs of object care against environmental impact.

Preventive conservation

Bruce Castle Museum aims to advise on and monitor appropriate storage and display conditions to ensure a stable environment and conditions in which deterioration and damage to objects are limited as far as possible.

Bruce Castle Museum will ensure it carries out preservation in relation to the Nine Agents of Decay:

1. Direct Physical Forces
2. Thieves, Vandals and Displacers
3. Fire
4. Water
5. Pests
6. Contaminants
7. Light
8. Incorrect Temperature
9. Incorrect Relative Humidity (RH)

This can be assured by:

- advising on safe handling, transport, packing and display of objects and loans
- advise on and carry out conservation as requested
- advising on storage conditions, materials and methods
- identifying hazards in collections
- condition checking objects

- implementing Benchmarks in Collection Care surveys
- maintaining a salvage plan as an appendix to emergency plans for Bruce Castle Museum

And by monitoring and maintaining:

- documentation
- the environment (relative humidity, temperature, light)
- integrated pest management (managing threat from pests)
- housekeeping, to include conservation cleaning of objects on open display as well as storage areas
- standards for loans
- display conditions and materials used
- store conditions and materials used
- providing reports on these functions

Remedial conservation

Bruce Castle Museum aims to provide and undertake remedial conservation treatments to provide stability and longevity to objects while allowing their interpretation and maintaining their integrity.

Conservation treatments will employ techniques and materials that, to the best of current knowledge, will neither endanger the object nor impede future treatment or the retrieval of information through scientific examination.

The museum will check the suitability of conservators chosen to work or advise on the collections. Where remedial conservation is contracted out, conservators accredited by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) will normally be selected to carry out or supervise remedial treatment of objects. Treatments may be carried out on Bruce Castle Museum's premises by less experienced conservators under the supervision of the collections staff if applicable.

Bruce Castle Museum assures this by undertaking the following:

- examination prior to acquisition
- assessment of the physical condition of objects
- advising on suitability for display and loans
- advising on safe handling, transport, packing and display of objects and loans
- providing condition reports for objects
- providing loan reports
- undertaking further research where required
- overseeing and undertaking conservation treatments
- advising on further action and the level of interventive treatments where required

Establishment of priorities for treatment

Conservation priorities will be established on the basis of Bruce Castle Museum's strategic aims and the delivery of its programmes, as well as through audits and surveys (for example through managing the documentation backlog or through a collections review).

These priorities will inform the care and conservation plan in order to make best use of available resources.

Documentation

Bruce Castle Museum will keep detailed records of all treatments carried out on objects, including the name and contact details of the person or company.

Preliminary examination and actual treatment of an object will be recorded on the digital collections management system, in that object's history file, and in any other appropriate locations.

The documentation policy, plan and procedural manual outlines the creation and management of all documentation including care and conservation.

Access to collections

Bruce Castle Museum recognises that there is a requirement to maintain a balance between the need of the public to have access to the objects in the collection and the preservation of those objects.

Bruce Castle Museum staff train volunteers who handle the collections in the course of their work. No untrained personnel handle items from the collection.

Researchers, members of the public or other visitors accessing the collections for whatever purpose will be briefed on how to handle the items they are using, and will be supervised at all times.

Collections staff undertake to further their own knowledge and experience of care and conservation by attending training, reading best practice articles and advice, and by seeking external opinions of specialists at regular opportunities.