

**WORCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE CONSERVATION
AND PRESERVATION POLICY**

The Hereford and Worcester County Council's General Purposes Committee endorsed a Policy Statement on Conservation and Preservation on 3rd March 1993. This was adopted by Worcestershire County Council on 19th November 1997.

Introduction

The aim of the Worcestershire Record Office is to protect, preserve and make available the documents in its care. Therefore, conservation and preservation must play a vital role in maintaining Worcestershire's archival heritage.

Worcestershire Record Office takes its responsibilities for preservation very seriously. It includes in its preservation strategy all those activities which contribute to the survival of the records by counteracting the effects of age, poor quality original records, inadequate storage, poor environmental conditions, frequent use and copying.

Criteria for assessment of a document's conservation/preservation needs:

Historical value at a national level

Historical value at a local level.

The document's relationship to the archive as a whole.

Level of public demand.

Physical condition.

Treatment costs.

Conservation

Conservation consists of the minimum necessary treatment to archives to stabilise them, prolong their life, and render them fit to be used, without compromising their integrity, in accordance with British Standard 4971, *Recommendations for repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents*.

Conservators from other Record Offices or from the private sector will, for the time being, do any necessary conservation work. It is hoped that a new archival and conservation unit will be established within the new building which is due to be completed in approx. 2005.

Therefore, whenever possible, the Record Office will undertake conservation work on those documents deemed to have intrinsic value or special needs. On undertaking such work priority will be given to the stabilisation of damage; detailed conservation work will be reserved for records of exceptional historic, symbolic or physical interest or value, and for records required for exhibition.

PRESERVATION

This statement of preservation policy sets out what the Office will do to achieve its duty of preservation – its duty to the future – while maintaining and promoting access – its duty to the present. It includes storage, handling and substitution of original records as well as their physical conservation.

Preservation is the use of treatments and methods designed to prolong the life of archival records. A pro-active preservation policy will prevent the need for expensive conservation work in the future. This will involve -

- **Maintaining good housekeeping practices, in accordance with BS 5454:2000 on *Storage and exhibition of archival documents*.**

The Worcestershire Record Office will store the records in conditions which meet the current professionally approved standards. Account will be taken of the physical nature and condition, intrinsic value and use of the records.

- **The encouragement of staff and users in good handling practices. See Appendix 1.**

The Worcestershire Record Office will do everything to minimise damage to records from use. It will promote good practice in handling documents and provide suitable equipment to protect them while in use.

- **A photocopying policy. See Appendix 2.**
- **In the rare event that private documents are loaned for exhibition, ensuring procedures comply in spirit with the policies and standards in BS 5454.**
- **Encouraging a programme of microfilm and surrogate copying.**

The Worcestershire Record Office will make surrogates available where the condition of original is unstable, or where current or anticipated use will pose a threat to their survival.

- **Monitoring the strong room environment, i.e. humidity, temperature, infestation, lighting, and general maintenance of building.**
- **Replacement of old or inappropriate storage materials and repackaging of early collections.**
- **Keeping an up-to-date disaster plan.**
- **Informing the public of preservation plans by such means as publications and exhibitions/displays.**
- **To prevent fragile material from deteriorating further, marking boxes ‘Not for General Use’ and ‘Use only with advice from Archivist.’**

The Worcestershire Record Office normally withdraws records from public access where they do not meet those criteria but are deemed to be at risk from handling. Where possible, they will be made available under supervision. The remainder will be re-assessed periodically against the same criteria.

The encouragement of staff and users in good handling practices.

Produced in conjunction with leaflets no 6 and 14 setting out search room rules.

- Staff will be pro-active in monitoring reader activities, and intervene when necessary to offer advice on handling materials.
- Book supports or cushions should be used to give bound volumes extra support when open.
- Weights should be made available to hold open pages and restrain unrolled maps and plans.
- When tracing maps and other documents, a covering of melamine should first be applied.
- All staff should be trained in, and continually updated on, correct handling techniques.

Photocopying Policy

'Photocopying is one of the most popular methods of reproducing books and documents, being quick and inexpensive. The use of copying machines however raises preservation issues. Used incorrectly, photocopying can cause severe damage to the structure of a book or document but careful handling can mitigate potential problems'. *Photocopying of Library and archive materials*. National Preservation Office. February 2000.

Self Service Copying

- Machines should be placed in clear sight of staff.
- Public must always check with a member of staff before photocopying any item.
- If more than one copy is to be made, subsequent copies must be made from the first copy.
- Do not exert pressure on the spine of a book.
- Never open a volume more than 180°.
- Books larger than the platen cannot normally be photocopied.
- Always support a document whilst placing it on the platen.
- Documents bearing wax seals may not be photocopied. Documents bearing shellac seals may be copied only if the seal is covered.
- Maps and documents larger than O.S. 1:2500 (1200 x 900cm) cannot normally be photocopied.
- Larger documents such as tithe maps should be traced through acetate.
- The public must be made aware of copyright requirements.

Worcestershire Record Office Preservation and Conservation Policy

Introduction

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Worcestershire Record Office takes its responsibilities for preservation very seriously. It includes in its preservation strategy all those activities which contribute to the survival of the records by counteracting the effects of age, poor quality original records, inadequate storage, poor environmental conditions, frequent use and copying.

This statement of preservation policy sets out what the Office will do to achieve its duty of preservation – its duty to the future – while maintaining and promoting access – its duty to the present. It includes storage, handling and substitution of original records as well as their physical conservation.

Policy

4. The Office will

- ◆ Store the records in conditions which meet current professionally approved standards. Account will be taken of the physical nature and condition, intrinsic value and use of the records.
- ◆ Do everything possible to minimise damage to records from use. It will promote good practice in handling documents and provide suitable equipment to protect them while in use.
- ◆ Make surrogates available where the condition of the original is unstable, or where current or anticipated use will pose a threat to their survival.
- ◆ Whenever possible, undertake conservation work on those documents deemed to have intrinsic value or special needs. On undertaking such work priority will be given to the stabilisation of damage; detailed conservation work will be reserved for records of exceptional historic, symbolic or physical interest or value, and for records required for exhibition.
- ◆ Normally withdraw records from public access where they do not meet those criteria but are deemed to be at risk from handling. Where possible, they will be made available under supervision. The remainder will be re-assessed periodically against the same criteria.

Further Preservation Support

5. The Office will also

- ◆ Keep under review technical developments in the field of preservation. Where suitable these will be incorporated into the policy to provide improved and more cost-effective solutions.
- ◆ Seek to improve physical access by refining and making more accurate the means of identifying particular documents.
- ◆ Promote and encourage good practice in record creation and keeping in council directives to ensure that those documents selected for permanent preservation are on stable material and in good condition on transfer.
- ◆ Seek to enhance awareness amongst staff and users of best practice in preserving and handling the records. It will provide appropriate training in record care for all staff involved in their use and promote professional development of those responsible for their preservation.

Special thanks are due to the Public Record Office for their assistance with this policy.

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are to contact

Record Office is divided into two
rches:

nty Hall Branch:
cestershire County record Office
nty Hall
chley Road
cester Worcestershire
5 2NP
(01905) 766351
ail: RecordOffice@worcestershire.gov.uk

Centre Branch:

cestershire Library and History Centre
ity Street
cester
cestershire
(01905) 765922
ail: WLHC@worcestershire.gov.uk

ining Times

unday	9.30 am – 7.00pm
sday	9.30 am – 5.30pm
nesday	9.30 am – 5.30pm
ruesday	9.30 am – 5.30pm
ay	9.30 am – 7.00pm
rday	9.30 am - 4.00pm

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Copyright requirements must be respected by the public.



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YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A READER AT THE WORCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE



