



Bishopsgate
Institute

Bishopsgate Library and Archives

Preservation Policy

Written by Nicky Hilton and Susana Pedro-Buschor.

Approved by Stefan Dickers.

December 2014

© Bishopsgate Institute

Background

Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives hold several thousand documents and published works about London history, the labour movement, co-operation, Freethought and Humanism, protest and campaigning, and the LGBT community in the UK. Bishopsgate Institute aims to assist and promote lifelong learning by providing access to these archival and printed materials. The Library and Archives continues to collect and preserve records of historical importance with reference to its Acquisition Policy. Materials collected by Bishopsgate Institute will be appraised, sorted, catalogued and indexed so that they can be easily accessed, given conservation treatment where necessary, and stored in the best environmental conditions for their long term preservation.

Policy statement and scope

The purpose of the present policy is to state the principles that guide the care and preservation of the Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives collections.

The scope of this policy is the physical preservation of archives, printed materials and other collections in our care.

Bishopsgate Library and Archives will manage its collections with regard to the principles for the preservation and conservation of library and archive materials defined by The National Archives, the British Standards Institution (BSI), the National Preservation Office (NPO) and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

This document should be read along with our other policies, particularly the Digital Policy.

Definitions

Conservation: a set of activities that aims to stabilise the physical or chemical condition of a record, to prolong its life and relevant metadata, or enhance its value, or improve access to it through interventive treatment.

Preservation: a set of activities that aims to prolong the life of a record and relevant metadata, or enhance its value, or improve access to it through non-interventive means. This includes actions taken to influence records creators prior to selection and acquisition.

Preservation policy principles

- The use of, and access to, the Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives collections is the prime purpose of its existence.
- Material added to the Library and Archives collections is acquired with the intention that it will be retained in perpetuity.
- Materials are preserved in their original format, respecting their physical integrity and authenticity.
- Active conservation is used to prevent further deterioration or damage, or to enable access to an item.

- Appropriate conservation measures will take into account the needs, value, significance, and usage of materials, and are within the constraints of the resources available.
- Conservation treatments will only be carried out by appropriately qualified persons.
- All treatments will be restricted to the minimum necessary to stabilise the item or collection and make it fit for use.
- Metadata for all Library and Archives collections will be stored and managed within the Institute's Management System (Adlib).
- Processes are in place to ensure that data held by the system referred above is secured and can be recovered in the event of a disaster.

Standards

- *The National Archives' standard for record repositories, 2004*
- *Benchmarks in collection care for museums, archives and libraries: a self-assessment checklist, Museums Libraries and Archives, 2011*
- PD 5454: 2012 Guidelines for the storage and exhibition of archival materials.
- PAS 197:2009 *Code of practice for cultural collections management*
- PAS 198:2012 *Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections*
- *Public Services Quality Group, A Standard for Access to Archives, National Council on Archives, 2008*

Conservation and preservation

Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives adopts a combined approach of preventive and conservation treatments. All treatments will be undertaken to recommended professional standards. Materials used will be of the highest conservation quality and will comply with British Standard recommendations. Where appropriate, the Conservation Assistant together with appropriately trained volunteers will carry out repairs; otherwise, the services of an appropriately experienced registered conservator will be sought.

Conservation treatments are based on minimum intervention and aim to have a minimal impact on the authenticity of the record while keeping its informational, cultural and material values.

Preservation treatments are undertaken expressly to prolong the life of individual items or series of items. This is achieved by conservation treatments or the creation of surrogates when items are at risk, damaged or deteriorated.

Access

In line with the mission statement of Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives, staff will work to ensure researchers have direct access to original materials to progress their scholarship, research and teaching. Where this is not possible because of the fragility of the

item steps will be taken to provide a suitable surrogate or other alternative. 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.

Access to Library and Archives collections is subject to the terms established in *Researchers Area Rules: Using documents from the Special Collections*.

Surrogacy

Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives does not currently hold surrogates. However, digital preservation copies have been made for some high use and high value items and collections. For example, the LAMAS collection of glass slides.

Reprographics

Copying of items for research and publication is subject to conditions of preservation and copyrights. This will determine what copies can be made and what type of format will be used. Reproduction fees apply and vary with the purpose of the reproductions.

Loan for exhibitions

Loan of original materials to external institutions for the purpose of exhibition will only be granted if the institution meets satisfactory standards of display fixtures, environment and security.

Special Collections materials can only be removed from Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives after appropriate permissions have been secured with regard to the purpose of the removal and insurance cover arranged for transit and temporary storage. 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. The specific conditions for the loan are set out in the Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives loan form.

Storage

Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives seeks to ensure appropriate and secure storage for all its holdings, providing suitable environmental conditions.

Collections are maintained under consistent levels of humidity and temperature in suitable packaging and shelving. A pest management programme is also in place.

Handling and using records

All staff and volunteers receive training on caring for materials. Users may access records only under supervision and must comply with terms set out in *Researchers Area Rules: Using documents from the Special Collections*.

In addition, staff will:

- Monitor the condition of collections and take action to replace, treat, or reformat, as appropriate, individual items identified as being damaged.
- Protect collections with appropriate conservation grade enclosures.
- Maintain cleanliness in the storage areas and clean collections on a systematic basis using appropriate methods.

Emergency response

Bishopsgate Institute has in place a *Disaster Plan* to ensure the safety of staff and members of the public, safeguard the Library and Archives collections, and enable a return to normal operating with minimal disruption.

In the event of disaster, the first priority is the safety of people followed by immediate action to rescue or prevent further damage to the records. Detailed procedures for responding to a disaster regarding the Library and Archives are described in the *Library Disaster Plan*.

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

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

Finance

Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archives allocates part of its annual budget to support an on-going preservation and conservation program for the analogue and digital collections.

Review

A formal review of the Preservation Policy will be undertaken no later than December 2018. Any revisions will be approved by the Library and Archives Manager.

For further information, please contact the Library and Archives Manager,
Stefan Dickers
Bishopsgate Institute
230 Bishopsgate
London EC2M 4QH

T 020 7392 9270

E Stefan.dickers@bishopsgate.org.uk

Version	Version date	Summary of changes
1.0	December 2014	New policy created by Nicola Hilton, Archivist, and Susana Pedro-Buschor, Library and Archives Assistant. Approved by Stefan Dickers, Library and Archives Manager.