

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service

Preservation and Conservation Policy and Strategy

Name of organisation: Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service

Name of governing body: Staffordshire County Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: **Insert date**

Date at which this policy is due for review: **Insert date**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Staffordshire Archives and Heritage comprises Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, the William Salt Library and the County Museum Service. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service is an Accredited Archive Service administered and funded by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council under a joint agreement. The William Salt Library is a charitable library managed by the Archive Service on behalf of the Trustees. The County Museum is a provisionally Accredited Museum funded by Staffordshire County Council and works in partnership with museums across the region to provide museum development support.

The Archive Service operates Staffordshire Record Office, Stoke-on-Trent City Archives and the William Salt Library. A significant proportion of the County Museum Service's collection is on long term loan and public display at

the National Trust owned Shugborough Estate. The Archive Service provides services for Staffordshire County Council in relation to its legal documents and archives.

The vision is:

Connecting people to the collected stories and heritage of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and beyond.

The mission is:

To connect people to the memories of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, by engaging them with the collections we develop and preserve for current and future generations.

1.2 The Archive Service acknowledges that the long-term preservation of archives means much more than their immediate rescue from destruction and more than the technical processes of repairing inherent or mechanical damage to prevent further deterioration. Preservation is a holistic activity, which incorporates all the steps necessary to preserve not just the physical item itself and its environment, but also its intellectual content. As an activity, it does not take place in a vacuum but is an intrinsic part of the work of the Archive Service and, as such, is at the forefront of service thinking, planning and delivery. The Archive Service also encourages a strong preservation ethos among its staff and users, which is achieved through the adoption of best practice and through regular staff training.

1.3 The Archive Service is wholly committed to the preservation of the collections in its care by the most appropriate means. Without preservation there can be no access. In order to meet this commitment, the Archive Service will continue to strive to meet nationally defined standards in relation to the storage, preservation and conservation of archives by providing appropriate storage for archive collections; appropriately qualified and competent staff, trained in archive conservation, preservation and management skills; a suitably equipped conservation studio; ongoing staff training to maintain professional competencies and to develop a preservation ethos at all levels; and familiarisation for archive users.

1.4 A major challenge facing the Archive Service is that the number of documents in its care requiring preservation and conservation far exceeds the capacity and resources of the Service to cope with the work required. Further, the whole purpose of preserving archive collections in the first place is to ensure that they can be accessed by the public for the purposes of research. The purpose of this document is to set out a policy and strategy for preservation and conservation for the Joint Archive Service, which seeks to take account of the necessary balance between access and preservation.

1.5 Owners who deposit their documents with the Archive Service are advised of our terms and commitment to their preservation and conservation.

1.6 The preservation of records in digital format is covered in a separate policy.

2 Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

2.1 Preservation

Preservation is defined as the passive protection of an archive where no direct physical or chemical treatment of the item occurs. The control of environmental conditions is included.

2.2 Conservation

Conservation is defined as the active protection of an archive using the minimal physical and chemical treatment necessary to prevent further deterioration and which will not adversely affect the integrity of the original document.

2.3 Surrogacy

Surrogacy is the action of replacing an original with a substitute in either physical or virtual form. Its purpose is to minimise wear and tear and to improve or facilitate public access.

3 Legislative framework

3.1 The Joint Archive Service works within a framework of archive legislation, which applies to the preservation and administration of specific types and series of records.

3.2 The key legislation for local authority archive services is:

The Local Government (Records) Act, 1962, which enables a local authority to acquire records by deposit, gift or purchase and to make such records available for public use

The Local Government Act, 1972, which under Section 224, requires local authorities to make 'proper arrangements' for the care of their own records, historical, semi-current and current.

In addition, under the Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service is approved by the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of certain classes of local public records as specified by the Acts.

The Tithe Act, 1936 and the Manorial Documents Rules, 1959, provide for tithe and manorial records to be deposited with the Joint Archive Service as approved by the Master of the Rolls.

The Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978, amended 1992, provides for the records of Anglican parish churches to be deposited in

repository approved by the relevant diocese, in the case of the Joint Archive Service, the diocese of Lichfield.

4 Assessment of new accessions

4.1 Material entering the Archive Service will be initially assessed, cleaned, where necessary, and packed in suitable archival storage materials before being placed in the repositories.

4.2 Documents displaying signs of infestation, mould damage or volatile formats and will be isolated as appropriate until further action can be taken

4.3 Newly acquired material is assessed for conservation needs as a prelude to the cataloguing process. Material held by the Archive Service is assessed as part of planned survey programmes.

5 Buildings and asset management

5.1 The Archive Service has endeavoured to maintain and improve the quality of its archive buildings and mostly meet the standards set out in PD5454:2012, Guide for the storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents. All the Archive Service buildings are subject to a high level of risk management and their performance in terms of asset management is judged on whether they meet the requisite standards. With the current exception of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, all have been approved for archival storage by the national archive inspecting bodies.

5.2 Access to the repositories is restricted to staff only, contractors will always be supervised by a member of staff.

5.3 Archival material in repositories are cleaned as part of a regular cleaning programme by staff members or approved cleaning staff.

5.4 Staffordshire Record Office

The Staffordshire Record Office was only the second purpose-built record office in the country. It has been extended three times on its original site, the first extension resulting in a new conservation workshop. An extension in 1980 resulted in the installation of a new fire detection system. In 1994 major alterations to the building included a new air conditioning system in the strong rooms and a substantially upgraded conservation workshop. In 1997 a high sensitivity (early warning) fire detection system was installed in the strong rooms to supplement the existing system.

The extension to the strong rooms, completed in 2002, meets the revised BS5454, Recommendations for the Storage of Archival Documents (2000). It also incorporates dedicated storage for photographic collections.

5.5 Stoke-on-Trent City Archives

Storage facilities for archives are provided at Hanley Library, where Stoke-on-Trent City Archives is based. In 1996 a high sensitivity smoke detection system was installed on Level E and extended to Level A in 1999. Stoke-on-Trent City Archives will be moving from Hanley Library to the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery in 2023. An immediate priority for the Archive Service is to ensure that the necessary adaptations to the new storage areas are carried out when possible.

5.4 William Salt Library

The library is currently in temporary storage at 56 Eastgate Street whilst Staffordshire History Centre project is underway. The repository does not provide optimum conditions for the Archive Service but extra precautions have been taken to protect the library materials with housing and environmental controls. The building is currently running within the parameters of PD545:2012 but some fluctuation occurs at certain parts of the day. This collection will move to new strong rooms at Staffordshire Record Office in 2025.

6 Current conservation overview

6.1 The archive collections in the care of the Archive Service have benefited over many years from the developments outlined above, not least in terms of the encouragement of a holistic approach to preservation management within the Service.

6.2 The Archive Service conservation section and collections management staff follow annual work programmes with set targets for both conservation and preservation, which incorporate longer term projects as well as short-term 'task and finish' projects. A number of long-term projects have been successfully delivered, reinforcing the value of this type of approach.

6.3 Each of the Archive Service's repositories has a pro rata allocation of conservation time which is calculated from available time left when allowances for annual and public leave, sick leave and training have been deducted. The Archive Service also allows approximately one month of time annually for work for the William Salt Library's collections.

6.4 Best practice: standards, principles and processes

The Joint Archive Service recognises, supports and depends upon the standards, principles and ethical requirements implicit in the scheme for the Institute of Conservation. In addition the sharing of best practice is encouraged through the relevant professional groups and an annual CPD programme.

6.5 Standards

All preventative preservation and conservation work is carried out in accordance with BS4971: Repair and Allied Procedures for the Conservation of Documents. This is on the basis of minimal intervention.

6.6 Key concerns to be addressed

Despite the continuity of conservation work within the Archive Service over many years, a huge backlog of work exists at all the Joint Archive Service's repositories. This increases annually as new collections are acquired but has yet to be evaluated in terms of volume. The Joint Archive Service has never undertaken a formal survey of the quantity of archives requiring some form of conservation work. It is assumed that each member of the archive team will record documents requiring treatment as a matter of course and bring them to the attention of the Conservator.

6.7 Continuing developments and improvements in conservation practice, materials and techniques mean that some work, undertaken during the early years of the Archive Service, is now having to be re-evaluated. Treatment is carried out by fully trained staff using up-to-date equipment and techniques. The need to ensure value for money means that current systems need to be refined to set measurable, achievable and challenging targets and to measure performance.

7 Strategic direction

7.1 Strategic Aims

To develop the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service as a centre of excellence for preservation and conservation

To achieve national standards of storage and care at all the Joint Archive Service repositories

To maintain the security of collections

To establish a balance of future work between high priority items, high priority collections and high priority archive types

To create a regular cleaning programme for all repositories in the Joint Archive Service utilising staff, volunteers and externally approved cleaning teams.

To develop further best practice in the management, co-ordination and implementation of conservation and preservation throughout the Joint Archive Service through internal and external training sessions.

8 Key strategic objectives

The aims of the policy will be achieved by the following key objectives:

8.1 To re-define prioritisation criteria and processes for conservation and preservation

8.1.1 It is unrealistic to suppose that all damaged or fragile items in the care of the Service can all be conserved. Therefore, the Archive Service of necessity undertakes a prioritised work programme. At present, items requiring conservation and preservation are identified either as a result of assessing new accessions or as a result of daily use by the public or by staff. A new priority system is in the process of being set up to establish the criteria applied in the assessment of incoming collections. This system will be disseminated through internal training for all staff.

8.1.2 All new accessions will be automatically assessed on arrival at any of the Archive Service repositories. If practicable, a preliminary inspection of the condition will be carried out prior to deposit (externally if a great quantity or are aware of damage which may cause problems in the existing repositories), with a more detailed assessment upon arrival at the repository. The assessment procedure will include cleaning, infestation treatment and an overall condition survey to record packaging and storage requirements in accordance with BS 5454. The information will be then transferred to the preservation programme (see Appendices 3 and 4).

8.1.3 Priorities for conservation are determined using the following criteria:

- Degree of existing damage and potential future deterioration and degradation
- Public demand, both expressed and anticipated
- Historical/legal/administrative significance
- Collections which are owned by the Joint Archive Service
- Suitability for use of surrogates

The condition of some archives on receipt by the Joint Archive Service may necessitate some immediate remedial work.

8.1.4 In determining conservation/preservation priorities from incoming accessions or from items identified through daily use. Assist staff in the technical assessment process, the conservation staff will provide assessment templates.

8.1.5 Staff should not be influenced by pressure from depositors in matters of conservation and should not make unrealistic promises to depositors concerning conservation in order to secure a deposit.

8.1.6 The Head of Archives and Heritage determines the final inclusion of items for conservation in the annual work programme, in consultation with the

Conservator, in relation to technical issues, and in consultation with other members of staff, as necessary.

8.2 Annual work programme

8.2.1 Preservation and Conservation work is carried out according to annual work programmes, which form targets in staff personal performance plans. The programme is determined by the collections manager at each archive and in consultation with the Conservator.

8.2.2 The conservation work programme includes the following: documents identified when in use or requested and exhibition work; responses to pressing reactive work are accommodated where possible; collections coming into the service via the collection policy in which the needs are discussed with Collection Officers.

8.2.3 The preservation work programme includes re-packaging and re-boxing, clear labelling for identification and production purposes. Ongoing effective use of storage space is in effect in collaboration with collection teams.

8.2.4 The range of work carried out in any given year is subject to budgetary provision. A summary of any given year's output is available in the annual report for the Joint Archive Service.

8.3 Preservation and the public service

8.3.1 Guidelines for the safe handling of documents are displayed in all reading rooms. A copy of the Archive Service Code of Conduct and the leaflet, 'In Safe Keeping', which set out guidelines for the handling of original documents is available in the reading rooms. Appropriate aids for using documents, such as perspex book rests and gloves, are provided in all the Archive Service's reading rooms

8.3.2 All staff are provided with a copy of the Information Leaflet 'Handling of Documents by Readers' and receive regular training on how to assist readers with careful handling of archives while in use (see Appendix 1).

8.3.3 As part of its encouragement of a preservation ethos among users, the Archive Service will provide general information sheets for family historians and other researchers who seek advice on preserving family certificates, photographs, letters and other archival material. We will provide outreach sessions on 'Handling of archives' as part of the Staffordshire History Centre project activity programme.

8.4 To provide conservation and preservation advice to external bodies

8.4.1 The Archive Service recognises that it has an expertise and specialism in preservation and conservation, which can benefit other archive holding institutions in the County and the City and can also assist private owners of

archives. This can contribute in the long run towards the preservation of the archival heritage of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and assist in the outreach programme.

8.4.2 Demands of this nature on conservators' time can be considerable and it is therefore also necessary to introduce some prioritisation into this process.

8.4.3 Priority will be given to institutions and owners who guarantee to provide public access to their collections and to existing depositors. Advice in general terms only can be given to owners, who have no desire or intention to provide public access nor to deposit their collections ultimately with the Archive Service. The Archive Service reserves the right to refuse or to charge such owners for advice or conservation surveys.

8.5 To maintain emergency responses

8.5.1 The Archive Service maintains an Emergency Plan for all of its four repositories and for the William Salt Library, Stafford. The Plan is tested and updated annually.

8.6 Environmental sustainability

8.6.1 The Archive Service's care and conservation work will be underpinned by Staffordshire County Council's Environmental Policy, ensuring that negative effects our activities have on the environment are kept to a minimum, and that wherever possible our environmental footprint is reduced.

9. Review date

9.1 Review date: 28 February 2026

Appendix 1

Care of Documents

Our role is to preserve the archival heritage of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and make it available for use.

Please help us to achieve this by following these guidelines:

Readers are responsible for the safety of documents issued to them until they are returned and checked back by a member of staff. Therefore please do not leave documents unattended at any time.

Please handle documents carefully at all times.

Pencils only may be used in the reading rooms.

Please do not mark, annotate or deface documents in any way.

Please do not lean on documents, or rest papers or notepads on them while making notes, nor run fingers down pages or follow text with your finger or a pencil.

Volumes should be placed on a foam support or cushion and should not be kept open for longer than necessary.

Please use a sheet of melinex or perspex to protect maps while consulting them. Rolled maps should be held open by archival weights. Once protected, maps may be traced, using a 2B pencil, with the permission of the reading room staff.

Please use latex gloves when handling parchment documents and cotton gloves when using glass negatives or photographs.

Bundles and file and guarded material will be issued one at a time and are weighed on issue and return. Items in bundles must be kept in the order in which they were received.

Where documents have been microfilmed the surrogate microform copy should be used in place of the original.

Documents may be withheld from public use on preservation grounds if we consider that use of the document will cause further deterioration.

Please tell a member of staff if you find any documents which appear to be misplaced or which you find in a fragile or damaged condition.

Thank you for helping us to preserve Staffordshire's archival Heritage

Appendix 2

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service Integrated Pest Management Policy

Integrated pest management (IPM) uses a range of preventive measures to control pests. It significantly reduces the need to use chemicals while providing the same, if not better, level of protection for collections. Research indicates that commonly used chemicals produce adverse effects on archive materials and the people who use them. This knowledge, combined with chemical resistance in pests and environmental concerns, has led to a move away from chemical intervention to control rodent or insect infestation.

How it works

IPM is based on the knowledge of what pests need to survive. Pests are controlled by making the environment around and within the archives hostile to their life cycle. This approach is not pest specific, as many aspects of the program provide protection against a range of biological hazards, for example, good housekeeping can be as effective against mould as it is against rats. In a well-run institution many components of an IPM program will already be in place. Chemical treatments are used only in a crisis situation threatening rapid losses or when pests fail to succumb to more preventive methods.

Pests likely to affect archives

Woodlice, silverfish, moths, spiders and beetles are the most common problems, but it is best to be guarded against any infestations. Moths, ants, and spiders are not likely to damage a paper collection but may attract other pests that do.

Implementation of integrated pest management

Risk assessment

Undertake a thorough inspection of the premises and records to identify any current activity, what it is and where it is located. Local museum or university entomology departments or commercial pest control companies will help you identify any unfamiliar pests. Look for possible entry sites and map the location. Review cleaning procedures and identify any problem areas.

Also examine staff habits and procedures. Do people eat at their desks or store food in offices? Are there flowers or pot plants in collection areas? Make sure your building maintenance procedures are adequate and kept up to date. Monitor the climate and make sure standards are maintained (18-20 °C temperature, 35 - 50 per cent relative humidity). Examine records that are entering the collection for possible infestation.

Once the information is collated it should be possible to identify factors causing or contributing to infestation and take remedial action.

Reporting and inspection

A reporting structure with one person taking responsibility for collating the results, disseminating the information, and coordinating action when required is imperative.

There should be routine annual or quarterly inspections of the building and grounds, with written reports that feed into the maintenance program. A spreadsheet for logging stray sightings should be kept up to date.

Active intervention

Monitoring

It is important to know if pests enter your building. Traps can be used to determine what pests you have, where they are and the size of their population. Mark plans of the building with trap locations and establish reporting structures.

Blunder traps, sticky board and box traps are readily available in the Conservation studio. When using traps, it is important to follow placement guidelines. Traps should be checked monthly, and the catch identified and removed, as full traps are not effective. Increases in activity or changes in species should be noted and followed up to identify the cause and allow remedial action. Traps and lures are also available for flying insects and can be suspended or wall mounted.

What to do if insects are found

If insects are found, identify the source and extent of the problem by using traps and bait stations. Determine whether collection material is at risk or infected and to what extent. If the infestation is collection-based, seal the infected items and remove them to a clean area. Thoroughly clean and remove all debris from the infected site.

Determine the route of entry and/or cause of the infestation and institute remedial action.

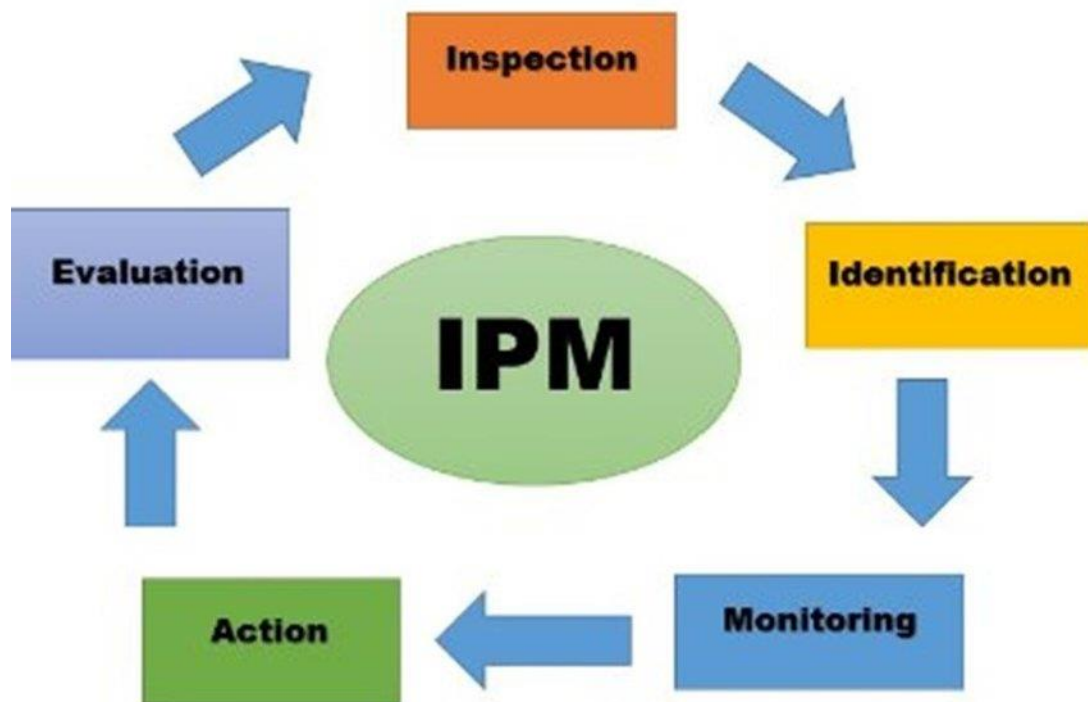
Treat the infected records or area. Depending on the volume of material and type of pest, this can be done in house or by a contracted pest control company. It is important to keep records of actions taken, including details of material treated and chemicals used.

Treatment of records

Cleaning, repairs and/or copying of records will solve the problem of rodent activity because rodents do not leave eggs and larvae behind to reinfest material.

For insects there is a wide range of treatment options including a range of low-toxicity chemicals and chemical-free treatments.

Freezing is very effective against mould, borers, moths and silverfish, and modified environmental controls are successful in relation to most pests with the exception of silverfish. Please seek further advice from Conservation staff. Below is a flow chart that explains the IPM process:



Appendix 3

To create Conservation Records on CALM

Go to Archive Menu/Catalogue/Search.

Input Ref number into Any Text Field, bring up the catalogue page

Go to Conservation Priority (if not present, add it in by going to Field/Insert then type-in and select Conservation Priority) write-in Awaiting Conservation.

Go back to Main Menu then Conservation menu/Find Items, from the drop-down options select Awaiting Conservation.

Go to the menu on the left-hand side of the screen, select Transfer Now.

On the Conservation Form add-in missing fields, go to Field/Insert then type-in and select Doc Ref Number and Time Taken.

Appendix 4

DOCUMENTATION RECORD

REFERENCE: _____ DATE IN: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: _____ DATE OUT: _____

MEASUREMENTS (cm): _____ No OF ITEMS: _____

THICKNESS: _____ JOB NO _____

LOCATION: _____ HOURS _____

DOCUMENT TYPE

BOOK	<input type="checkbox"/>	FILE	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROLL	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOOSE	<input type="checkbox"/>
MAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRINT	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTO	<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRACING	<input type="checkbox"/>	DRAWING	<input type="checkbox"/>	DEEDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>

MATERIAL

HANDMADE PAPER	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARCHMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	LINEN	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACHINE MADE PAPER	<input type="checkbox"/>	VELLUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SILK	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEATHER	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOOKCLOTH	<input type="checkbox"/>	WOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>

TREATMENTS

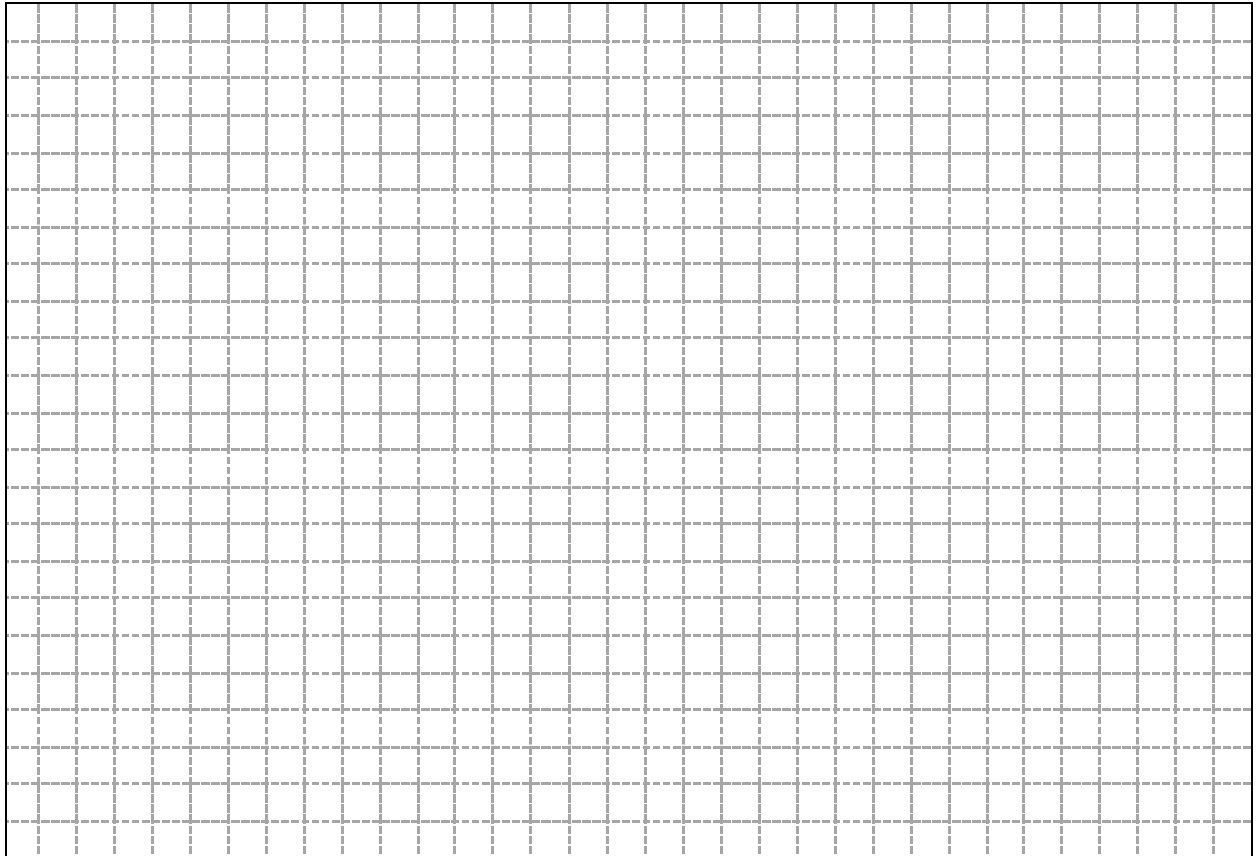
SURFACE CLEANING	<input type="checkbox"/>	HUMIDIFICATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	AQUEOUS CLEANING	<input type="checkbox"/>
DE-ACIDIFICATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	BLEACHING	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONSOLIDATION	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENCAPSULATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	BACKING REMOVAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	LINING	<input type="checkbox"/>

REPAIRS

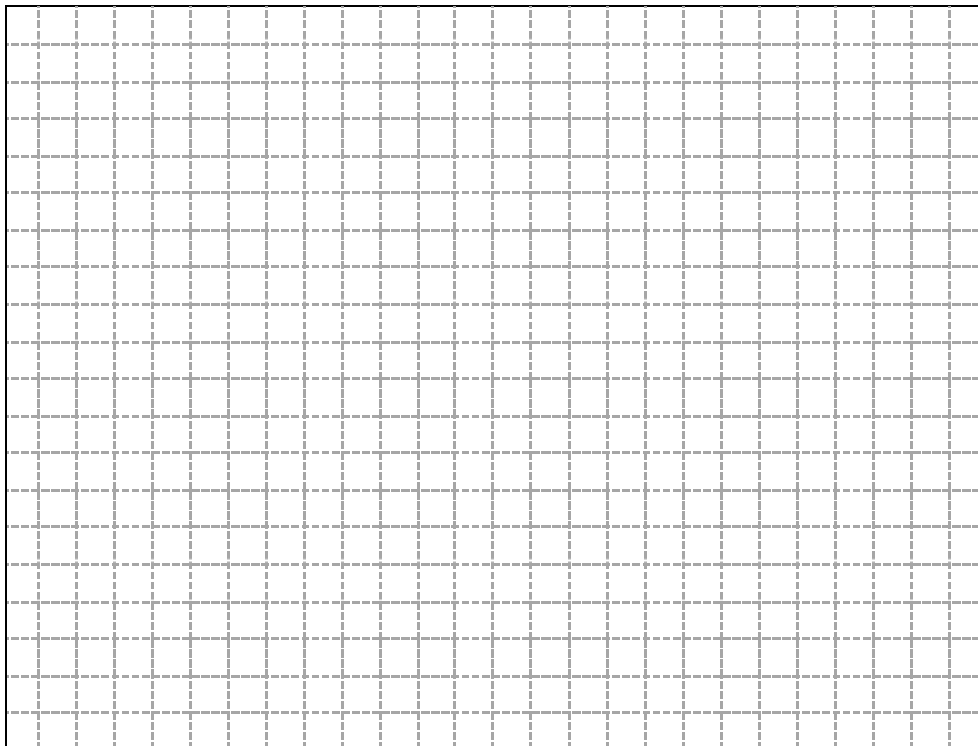
PAPER:	HANDMADE	<input type="checkbox"/>	MACHINE	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARCHMENT:	VELLUM	<input type="checkbox"/>		
TISSUE/THICKNESS:	JAPANESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	LENS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DRY MOUNT	<input type="checkbox"/>	HEATSET	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADHESIVE:	PVA	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANIMAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
	WHEAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	RICE	<input type="checkbox"/>
	POTATO	<input type="checkbox"/>	GELATINE	<input type="checkbox"/>
	OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>		

CONSERVATORS COMMENTS:

DIAGRAMS/PHOTOGRAPHS



RECTO



- WATER
- TEAR
- CREASE
- MISSING
- MOULD
-
-
-

CONSERVATOR: _____

Appendix 5

Inventory of Equipment in Conservation Room		
No.	Description of Item	Cost (£ excl. VAT)
1	Board Chopper/Guillotine	£1000
2	Ademco Dry Mounting Press	£1200
3	Cutting Mats x3	300
4	Nipping Presses x3	750
5	Paper trimmer	45
6	Tacking iron x2	126
7	Filing Frame	95
8	Finishing Presses	210
9	Electric Fan x2	60
10	Black and Decker Drill	35
11	Anglepoise Lamp (Magnifying)	167
12	Book Measuring Device	94
13	Magnetic Stirring hot plate	340
14	Cockerell Gold Tooling Stove	135
15	Gold Blocking Press	1260
16	Fume Hood	1747
17	pH Metre	251
18	T-square	35
19	Whirling Hygrometer	47
20	Heavy Duty Stapler	25
21	Water De-ioniser	70
22	Ultra-sonic Welder	850
23	Electronic Weighing Scales	60
24	Still, & Assorted Equipment (for water purification)	977
25	Double Boiler	14
26	Board Creaser	372
27	Nikon F301 Camera (Digital SLR)	800
28	Electronic Eraser	92
29	Leaf Casting Machine	1400
30	Preservation Pencil	695
31	Lux Meter	119
32	Ultra Violet Meter	470
33	Bunsen Burner	50
34	Slide Viewer	46
35	Key box	22
36	Plastic Bins x 12	60
37	Food blender	56
38	Conservac x 2	440
39	Ultra Violet Light	108
40	10pt Handle Letters	360

41	Fillet Roll	80
42	Decorative Tools	160
43	Flash Gun	200
44	Electric Glue Pot	200
45	Digital Thermometer	25
46	Sword Hygrometer	75
47	Microwave Oven	60
48	Dremell Drill	75
49	Sewing Machine	113
50	Tripod	40
51	Ultrasonic Humidifier	123
52	Scanner	150
53	Edge Welding Machine	1165
54	Steam Iron	25
55	Computer	350
56	Kenwood Hand Blender	16
	Total =	£17,840