

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre Storage Standards

1 THE STATUTORY / LEGAL FRAMEWORK

BCHRC is the responsibility of The House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust, the Trust which runs the House on Crutches Museum. HOCMCT is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with Companies House. Both registrations impose specific standards of conduct on the Trust and require annual returns, including audited accounts, to demonstrate compliance.

The HoC Museum is also fully registered with Re:Source (the successor body to the Museums & Galleries Commission). The Trust has to maintain standards set for Museum Registration and supply annual returns / reports to demonstrate this. In turn the scheme obliges statutory providers (in our case Shropshire County Council (SCC) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives - West Midlands (MLA-WM)), to offer HOCMCT professional advice and support on establishing procedures and provide access to specialist personnel and facilities as well as training.

2 SECURITY

From the inception of this Project, professional museum staff have had a key role in establishing the design criteria. The facilities described below are largely based on this advice.

EXTERNAL

Unnecessary openings to the building have been eliminated. The remaining three have been fitted to a very high specification: heavy 50mm oak door with 5 lever security mortice sash lock and vandal proof glass in double-glazed lockable sash windows. Each of these openings is protected by an electronic contact monitor, part of the intruder alarm system, which includes motion detectors. The whole system is linked to the telephone line with automatic dialling of three key holders, (there are a total of five), each resident within five minutes walk of the Centre. The intruder alarm is set every time the building is left empty.

INTERNAL

As part of the store construction, 12mm plywood sheathing has been included in the partition wall to provide extra resistance to physical attack and fire. The store door is 50mm thick, and has it's own 5 lever security mortice sash lock. The fire retardancy of the store partition wall and door is 1 hour. The electrical and water services within the store itself have been kept to a minimum. An automatic fire alarm linked to smoke detectors throughout the building has been fitted. Advice on suitable fire-fighting equipment has been followed and a contractor engaged to inspect all the equipment annually. More frequent tests will be logged by the HoC/ BCHRC Safety Officer. The electrician who fitted out the building has been contracted to return annually to test all the portable electrical appliances, as required by recent legislation.

3 THE STORE

The original professional recommendation of creating a room-within-a-room for the storage of collections has been followed. The store has been fully dry-lined, with sheet insulation below the concrete slab floor, installed to carry the 3 metre high compactor racking. Natural light has been totally excluded. UV filtered strip lighting is installed in the store and throughout the building. The store environment is constantly electronically monitored for relative humidity, which is maintained through use of a humidifier/de-humidifier with humidistat, to 55% +/- 5%. The store will normally be kept locked. The key will be kept in a secure key cabinet. Keys to this cabinet will be limited to the five key-holders and available only to those responsible for activities in the Centre.

4 PROCEDURES

The Procedural rules relating to the store and its contents will be communicated to all volunteers and visitors. Access to the store will be limited to authorised BCHRC volunteers and professional advisors and will be minimised to avoid changing the environment in the store. Collection items will receive the minimal handling required to transform them from their un-archival condition on reception to the archival condition in which they will enter the store. Copying of and access to these items will only occur with the permission of the storer. (See the *Deposit Agreement* and *Terms of Acceptance*)