

# TAMWORTH CASTLE

## CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

**JULY 2014**

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## Contents

## Page 2

1.	Introduction and aims of the Policy	3
2.	Scope of the Policy	3
3.	Resources and Responsibilities	4
4.	Background to the Collections	4
5.	Tamworth Castle and buildings	4
	5.5 Changes and Events Impact	5
6.	Conservation Factors	5
	6.1 Conservations Factors and Links	5
	6.2 Environmental Monitoring and Control	6
	6.3 Storage	7
	6.4 Object Access	7
	6.5 Qualified Staff and Resources	8
	6.6 Condition Checking	8
	6.7 Conservation Cleaning	9
	6.8 Pest Control	9
	6.9 Remedial Conservation	10
	6.10 Materials	10
	6.11 Emergency Plan and Security	10
	6.12 Documentation	11
	6.13 Training	11
	6.14 Annual Environmental Monitoring Report	11
7.	Authorisation and review date	12

Appendix 1 Care and Conservation Plan

Appendix 2 Documentation Backlog Policy and Plan

Appendix 3 Condition Checks Forms

Appendix 4 Handling and Moving of Objects

Appendix 5 Packing and Storage Policy and Procedures

Appendix 6 Tamworth Borough Council Environmental Strategy

# Tamworth Castle Museum

Governing body: Tamworth Borough Council

Approved by Tamworth Borough Council Date: .....

This policy will be reviewed by Tamworth Castle Date : .....

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS OF THE CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

- 1.1 This policy has been written in accordance with **Tamworth Castle's Statement of Purpose** and the Collections Development Policy. The Care and Conservation Plan sets out the way the policy will be put into action, and should be read in conjunction with the Forward Plan, Emergency Plan, and any other plans affecting the collections and the museum buildings. This Policy will cover the conservation of objects (including two-dimensional printed, painted and drawn material), photographs, and archives collectively referred to in this Policy as "items".

A key function of Tamworth Castle Museum is the care and long-term preservation of its collections. To this end Tamworth Castle recognises the importance of good conservation practice and undertakes to maintain the highest standards in the storage, handling, display and preservation of collection items in its care.

Responsibility for the care, management and development of Tamworth Castle's collections, and for the implementation of this policy, lies with the core management team at Tamworth Castle.

- 1.2 Tamworth Castle is owned and governed by Tamworth Borough Council. Its Mission Statement is:

**"Tamworth Castle is a unique monument offering an inspiring, entertaining and enjoyable learning experience for all our users. Through the collection, conservation and preservation, interpretation and exhibition of the museum's collections and buildings, we strive to maximise access to and understanding of Tamworth's heritage"**

## 2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of Tamworth Castle with regard to the care of its collections are outlined in its Care and Conservation Plan and the Forward Plan. This Conservation Policy aims to identify those factors which have a bearing on the care and preservation of collection items and to provide a best practice guideline and reference manual for achieving the day-to-day and long-term care of Tamworth Castle's collections.

### **3. RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Overall responsibility for the care of Tamworth Castle collections lies with the Heritage and Visitor Services Manager. However, responsibility for the execution of this policy and for the day-to-day care of the collections lies with the Collections Officer.
- 3.2 Limited financial resources prevent the instigation of any major remedial conservation work. The budgetary resources of Tamworth Castle in this area are, therefore, directed predominantly towards preventative<sup>1</sup>, rather than remedial<sup>2</sup> conservation.

### **4. BACKGROUND TO THE COLLECTIONS**

- 4.1 Tamworth Castle's collections cover a wide range of subjects mainly within the fields of local, social and industrial history, as well as those items relating directly to Tamworth Castle and the development of its history including its Saxon history. The collections contain some 25,000 objects and 12,500 photographs. A small number of furniture items from the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, continue to be incorporated into the period room displays, with a current 3 year loan agreement
- 4.2 With such a wide subject base, the material composition of the collections varies greatly and includes metal, terracotta, ceramic, wood, glass, textile, plastic and paper, with many objects containing a mix of these materials.
- 4.3 Object size ranges from coins and tokens of 10mm in diameter to a terracotta statue over 2 metres in height.
- 4.4 Tamworth Castle has available limited storage space, smaller items being based largely within the museum buildings themselves, and an off-site industrial unit object store containing the reserve collection of boxed and palleted items.

### **5 TAMWORTH CASTLE BUILDINGS**

- 5.1 Tamworth Castle is a Norman motte and bailey castle categorised as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.  
The Holloway Lodge Archive store and Stables are Grade 2 early 19th century buildings within the Castle grounds, but outside of the Scheduled Ancient Monument boundary.  
The off-site object store is a late 20th century industrial unit on a small nearby industrial estate, in use since April 2010.
- 5.2 Within the constraints of a Scheduled Ancient Monument building the environmental controls are limited principally to monitoring and basic resources, even so the environmental data shows that it remains within acceptable parameters, as does the Holloway Lodge archive store and the Stables.
- 5.3 The off-site industrial unit object store is a vast improvement on the previous various storage locations for the reserve collections.  
Storage systems include bespoke racking, and the environment as a whole provides much more appropriate storage.

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<sup>1</sup> Preventative conservation: The delaying of object deterioration by providing favourable and stable external conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Remedial conservation: The active removal of destructive elements from an object and the providing of support for degraded materials enabling its original purpose and qualities to be understood.

The aim is for environmental controls for the building to be considered and acted upon within budgetary constraints, now that baseline data has been obtained.

- 5.4 Maintenance of buildings is fundamental to the preservation of both the buildings and the collections. Tamworth Borough Council is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all the Tamworth Castle buildings, however due to the nature of Tamworth Castle, the Holloway Lodge, and the Stables, specialist external contractors are brought in for remedial and conservation work on the fabric of those particular buildings. Overall responsibility for all the Tamworth Castle buildings lies with the Heritage and Visitor Services Manager, with the Castle staff and visitor services staff maintaining the Castle on a day to day basis. The Collections Officer has responsibility for overseeing the day to day aspects of Holloway Lodge and the Stables, and the off-site industrial unit store.

## **5.5 Changes and Events Impact**

- 5.5.1 A major store change took place in April 2010 when the object collections previously stored in three buildings across Tamworth were merged into one off-site industrial unit. This has provided improvement in storage and access, as well as security and alarmed protection. (See 6.11)
- 5.5.2 In April 2011 Tamworth Castle underwent preparations and improved security measures to the building to display the main touring exhibition in July 2011 of the Staffordshire Hoard, as one of the four venues in the West Midlands.
- 5.5.3 In July 2011 the Heritage Lottery Fund project commenced for the major capital building works carried out on Tamworth Castle internally and externally, and on the motte between July 2012 and July 2013. These changes and events impacted heavily on the workload for the small team of Castle staff, as well as the previously set timescales for actions planned in the Care and Conservation of the collections, and the Documentation Backlog. (See Appendix 2)

## **6. Conservation Factors**

### **6.1 Conservation Factors and Links**

The following factors have a bearing upon conservation within Tamworth Castle and its collections:

- Environmental monitoring and control
- Storage
- Condition checking
- Preventative conservation
- Conservation cleaning
- Documentation
- Materials
- Health and Safety
- Emergency Plan
- Object access
- Training
- Environmental sustainability

"Documentation" and "Materials" relate to all of the other factors shown.

## 6.2 **Environmental Monitoring and Control**

6.2.1 One of the most effective and fundamental ways in which Tamworth Castle is able to arrest the degradation of objects is by the careful monitoring and control of environmental conditions in which the collections are stored and displayed.

6.2.2 Temperature, relative humidity<sup>3</sup> and light can be monitored and to some extent controlled with fairly basic equipment and resources.

### 6.2.3 **Ideal Conditions:**

Different materials each have their own preferred conditions. However, for mixed collections, both in storage and on display, the following stable, controlled environment is regarded as ideal:

Temperature	18°C +/- 1°C
Relative Humidity	50% +/- 2%
U.V. Light	less than 75 microwatts per lumen
Illuminance	less than 250 lux

All airborne particulates such as dust and soot should be removed from the atmosphere. All airborne gaseous pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide should be removed from the atmosphere.

### 6.2.4 **Practical Aims:**

It would be very difficult to achieve the above environmental conditions even with state of the art equipment and an extremely stable building. Tamworth Castle must have practical environmental objectives which take into account the nature of the building and the monitoring and control equipment available.

The following represent practical targets in environmental control:

Temperature	14-22°C (display areas) 10- 22°C (storage areas)
Relative Humidity	45-65% (display areas) 45-65% (storage areas)
Ultra Violet Light	less than 75 microwatts per lumen
Illuminance	less than 250 lux (50-100 lux for textiles and other light susceptible items)

6.2.5 At present Tamworth Castle has no way of measuring particulates or gaseous pollutants. The investigation of relevant monitoring equipment (possibly on loan from another Museum service) is therefore regarded as a long-term objective.

6.2.6 Although some of the above limits fall well outside the ideal, the stability of the environment is of paramount importance to the collections. Rapid fluctuations generally cause more damage to objects than permanently high or low temperatures and humidity.

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<sup>3</sup> Relative Humidity: The amount of water in a given quantity of air as a percentage of the maximum amount the air can hold at that temperature.

6.2.7 There are two forms of equipment available to Tamworth Castle and its buildings at present for environmental monitoring.

TINYTAG RH and temperature data loggers are used in all of the Tamworth Castle buildings. 15 monitor conditions in the period display rooms and Tamworth Story gallery, with an additional dedicated monitor inside the Staffordshire Hoard display case.

2 operate in the two Archive store rooms in Holloway Lodge, and 4 in the off-site industrial unit store.

2 separate RH and humidity units are used to monitor the Stables storage environment for temporary and non-collections items.

Downloads from the monitors are done quarterly and a report produced annually.

Hand held monitoring equipment is available to take on the spot readings of temperature, relative humidity, visible and ultra violet light.

6.2.8 The method generally used for control within Tamworth Castle displays and the Holloway Lodge store is the use of heating devices which, with careful manipulation, can retain relative humidity to acceptable limits (especially in the colder months) although this is far from ideal with obvious problems arising during warmer periods.

Other storage areas currently lack any forms of heating.

6.2.9 Light is effectively controlled with the use of opaque Holland blinds and U.V. window filters in all south facing rooms, and appropriate lighting systems throughout Tamworth Castle. The off-site industrial unit and Holloway Lodge storage buildings, all benefit from complete window blackouts along with U.V. fluorescent filters on all accessible light fittings.

6.2.10 Tamworth Castle ensures that display cases for objects, including supports, and fabric backings all comply with good practice guidelines on materials used. Conservation materials are used at all times including glass, perspex, unbleached calico / cotton, acid free paper / card, polyester buffering and Plastazote.

### 6.3 **Storage**

6.3.1 The collections for which Tamworth Castle is responsible vary greatly in material, size, shape and therefore have widely ranging storage requirements. The main off-site storage space is open plan with a partial mezzanine floor to one side, which provides a discrete space beneath.

Consideration has been given to enclosing the mezzanine, and the space beneath to provide two environments that could be more effectively controlled.

The archive and photographic collections are located in historic Grade 2 listed buildings. This causes problems in terms of accessibility, floor loading, climate buffering and limits store expansion.

6.3.2 It is the policy of Tamworth Castle to store items, where possible, in such a way as to best preserve their physical integrity and inhibit degradation, whilst still allowing easy identification and access. This generally involves the covering or boxing of objects and costume using archival quality materials and inert, acid free packaging, or calico with their location off the ground. The vast majority of small objects are stored in this way. Larger items are located on bespoke open pallet racking, and pallets for floor storage. Boxes are clearly labelled with their content details.

- 6.3.3 The art and fine art collections are stored on a combination of static hanging picture racking and picture shelving, beneath the partial mezzanine floor.
- 6.3.4 For the storage of the costume collection it is Tamworth Castle's policy to hang the majority of items but, where fragility is a problem, boxes will be used. A survey of the costume collection has been undertaken within the major collections audit, and items have been noted for disposal, particularly certain duplicate items. (See Appendix 1)
- 6.3.5 The archive, book and photographic collections are stored in archival quality materials and boxes on epoxy powder coated shelving.  
(See Appendix 5 for Packing and Storage Policy and Procedures)

#### 6.4 **Object Access**

- 6.4.1 It is one of the main aims of Tamworth Castle to make the collections more widely accessible through improved interpretation of the period room displays, living history events, specialist subject weekends, open store days, digitisation and online access.
- 6.4.2 Such activities could incur significant, irreversible damage to collection items if carried out in an undisciplined manner. However, in order to eliminate/minimise the risk of damage and deterioration Tamworth Castle operates within a set of guidelines for the handling, movement and display of collection items. (The guidelines are outlined in Appendix 4)
- 6.4.3 Public access to collections for research purposes is encouraged but can only be accommodated when supervision is given by the Collections Officer.
- 6.4.4 Where objects are actively used, for example in the living history events, it is the policy of the Tamworth Castle to use only reproduction items, those which are duplicated within the collection, or those whose deterioration will not increase if only handled by trained Castle staff.
- 6.4.5 A handling collection, clearly marked and separate from Tamworth Castle's reserve collections, has been developed as a learning resource
- 6.4.6 **Access and Security:**  
Period room settings are all on open display with barriers and movement sensitive alarms, together with monitored CCTV.  
Smaller, valuable and sensitive objects are in locked and alarmed display cases.

#### 6.5 **Qualified Staff and Resources**

- 6.5.1 Tamworth Castle does not employ a trained conservator. Therefore all remedial conservation work is to be carried out externally by an approved trained conservator.
- 6.5.2 The Collections Officer is responsible for implementing preventative conservation according to the procedures, and guidelines in this policy and in Appendix 1.
- 6.5.3 Volunteers may assist with preventative conservation, under supervision once full training has been provided by the Collections Officer.
- 6.5.4 Due to limited conservation budgets, any remedial conservation work must be first authorised by the Heritage and Visitor Services Manager.



## **Condition Checking**

- 6.6.1 The regular checking of objects within the museum collections is vital in identifying those in need of remedial attention and for evaluating the effectiveness of preventative conservation measures.
- 6.6.2 As those objects on display receive cleaning on a rolling programme they are also given a brief, superficial inspection. Those in storage are inspected as and when they are accessed apart from the wooden objects which are checked annually and where necessary treated for woodworm.
- 6.6.3 Since the Tamworth Castle is committed to the regular condition checking of objects, the framework for a more disciplined approach is to be implemented now the audit has been completed. (see Appendix 3) This will involve the checking of items on a more frequent basis, depending upon their condition and/or importance and written records completed. The Condition Checking Report Form will form the basis of future checking frequency and action required.

## **6.7 Conservation Cleaning**

- 6.7.1 The cleaning of collection objects and their surroundings, particularly for those on display, is an obvious and vital aid to preventative conservation.
- 6.7.2 The internal cleaning of Tamworth Castle is the responsibility of the visitor services staff on a day to day basis, assisted by trained volunteers one day a week. The responsibility for the cleaning of the collection objects falls to the Collections Officer and trained volunteers on a rolling programme.
- 6.7.3 The regular tasks carried out by the small team of visitor services staff within Tamworth Castle keeps the fabric of the building clean under difficult circumstances and therefore also reduces the amount of particulates finding their way onto displayed objects.
- 6.7.4 With many objects on open display it is the policy of Tamworth Castle to clean these items on a rolling programme. Those displayed within cases are less susceptible to particulates, however, the aim is also for them to be cleaned on a rolling programme. Surface cleaning is done using conservation brushes, vacuum cleaners with adjustable suction and white lint free cotton cloths. Muslin and fabric covered elasticated bands are available to use over the end of the vacuum cleaner for delicate items.
- 6.7.5 Some objects require more frequent cleaning, such as period furniture in the room displays, which can be affected by dust carried in from the Courtyard by visitors. The frequency of future cleaning is determined in conjunction with the object checking exercise (see 6.6.3) and written records are completed (see Appendix 3) These records are kept in conjunction with Condition Checking Report Forms to build up a comprehensive conservation history.
- 6.7.6 The majority of display objects are cleaned by the Collections Officer and trained volunteers, however, where appropriate and necessary, help is given by the visitor services staff, all of whom have also received training.

6.7.7 The off-site industrial unit stores, Holloway Lodge and Stables stores are also cleaned on a rolling basis, by the Collections Officer and trained volunteers.

6.7.8 Eating and drinking is not permitted in collection areas.

All food and food remains must be kept in well-sealed containers.

Any area where food is stored or prepared, such as the staff kitchen facilities in the Castle, Holloway Lodge and the off-site storage unit must be cleaned on a regular basis.

When food is consumed in the museum buildings the area must be cleaned up immediately. Food remains and wrappers must be deposited in the external waste bins located at the Castle, Holloway Lodge and the off-site storage unit, all of which are emptied weekly.

## 6.8 **Pest Control**

6.8.1 Tamworth Castle and the stores suffer from four main pests:

- woodlice
- silverfish
- furniture beetle (woodworm)
- carpet beetle

6.8.2 Display and storage areas are monitored as part of an integrated pest monitoring (IPM) system. Traps are checked every three months. Conservation cleaning is supplemented by a regular check on all known areas of the Castle and the collections in the spring of each year as the furniture beetles become active.

6.8.3 As part of the integrated pest monitoring system bat-proof insect traps are distributed around Tamworth Castle and the stores. Due to all the buildings being situated in an area of known bat colonies it has become good practice to use the same traps throughout.

Due to its town centre proximity to fast food outlets and the confluence of two rivers Tamworth Castle does suffer occasionally from rat and mice ingress, however they are kept in check by humane traps and poisons, provided and monitored by an external pest control expert.

All entrances to the off-site storage unit have been fitted with brush and rubber strips, and vents covered with muslin sealed with duck tape.

## 6.9 **Remedial Conservation**

6.9.1 Only very basic levels of remedial work are tackled by the Collections Officer for Tamworth Castle and these actions are generally limited to collection objects of lesser importance, or reproduction items. Any processes carried out are first checked to ensure they are reversible. No conservation work is ever undertaken by an untrained or unsupervised member of staff.

6.9.2 For any larger projects or work on objects of greater importance, outside assistance is always sought from specialist, ICON registered conservators. The planning of such projects would require some form of external grant-aid assistance, as well as authorisation from the Heritage and Visitor Services Manager (see 6.5.4).

## 6.10 **Materials**

- 6.10.1 It is the policy of Tamworth Castle where materials or equipment are required, to use those which are recommended by individual conservators, professional bodies or sector standard documents such as the Museum Association's Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0 (Collections Link).
- 6.10.2 All chemicals used and stored by Tamworth Castle are listed under a COSHH register with the list being updated as new materials are introduced. Under COSHH guidelines appropriate health and safety measures are taken and protective clothing available, when any chemicals are used.
- 6.10.3 As with the overall approach to conservation by Tamworth Castle, the materials and equipment are geared towards preventative conservation.

## 6.11 **Emergency Plan and Security**

- 6.11.1 The effort and hard work put into preventative conservation can easily be eradicated if a major disaster (such as fire or flood) takes place for which there are no contingency plans. Consequently, an Emergency Plan has been developed, covering the collections on display in Tamworth Castle, the off-site object store and the archives store, and linked to this policy.
- 6.11.2 The touring exhibition and subsequent permanent display of items from the Staffordshire Hoard has enabled Tamworth Castle to improve its security measures with an upgraded intruder alarm system and CCTV.
- 6.11.3 The relocation of the object collections to the off-site industrial storage unit has ensured that the security recommendations raised from the previous review have been addressed. The store has fully maintained intruder and fire alarm systems, with all entrances alarmed, PIR movement sensors and smoke detectors in all areas.

## 6.12 **Documentation**

- 6.12.1 One of the most fundamental aspects of any conservation programme is the accompanying documentation; recording the object's condition, and detailing conservation work and materials used.
- 6.12.2 It is the aim of the Tamworth Castle to include all written reports and object information in the MODES XML database so that the history of all individual objects together with any conservation history of individual items is easily retrievable.  
New timescales have had to be developed for the Documentation Backlog Action Plan due to the impact of the events and changes at Tamworth Castle since the plan was originally produced. (See 5.5)  
(See Appendix 2 for Documentation Backlog Policy and Plan)

## 6.13 **Training**

- 6.13.1 Tamworth Castle is committed to the training and updating of members of its staff involved with conservation / preservation issues and practice.

6.13.2 This is predominantly 'on the job' training, by the Collections Officer including updates through written material - guidelines, integrated pest management (IPM) training and posters, handouts, and external professionally run seminars and short courses.

6.13.4 It is of vital importance for Tamworth Castle visitor services staff, schools facilitators and volunteers to be aware of basic conservation practice in order to be able to answer visitor queries accurately and to deal with any localised emergency, such as breakages. Training sessions and guidelines are therefore organised from time to time to update existing staff and train new staff.

6.13.5 Tamworth Castle has developed strong links with professional conservators, specialist equipment suppliers, and fabricators specialising in replica objects. These links enable the Museum Service to remain up to date on new initiatives and best practice ideals.

#### 6.14 **Environmental Sustainability**

6.14.1 Tamworth Castle's care and conservation work will be underpinned by Tamworth Borough Council's Environmental Policy, "Tamworth's Climate Change Strategy - Instinctively Green" ensuring that any negative effects our activities have on the environment are kept to a minimum, and that wherever possible our environmental footprint is reduced. (See Appendix 6)

#### 6.15 **Annual Environmental Monitoring and Preventative Conservation Report**

6.15.1 An Annual Environmental Monitoring and Report is produced. This report summarises results of environmental monitoring; the integrated pest monitoring programme, cleaning programme and condition checking; and provides recommendations for improvements in collections care and conditions which feed into Tamworth Castle's Care and Conservation Plan. (See Appendix 1)

### 7. **Authorisation and review date**

Louise Troman  
Heritage and Visitor Services Manager  
June 2015