



Chain Bridge Forge Museum

Care and Conservation Policy and Plan

2019-2024

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1. Vision

Chain Bridge Forge Museum will be a living museum, which tells the story of the Blacksmith's workshop, the people involved the Blacksmith's craft, and their relationship to the community that they served.

2. Care and Conservation Policy

Caring for heritage assets in order that they will be available for future generations is fundamental to Chain Bridge Forge Museum's purpose and both preventative and remedial conservation will be used to ensure the long-term preservation of the artefacts in our care. Inevitably there are conflicts between this objective and our vision of a working forge, where historic tools and materials hang on the walls and shelves of a building that cannot be both a modern museum building and an artefact in its own right. The Board recognises that it will not be possible to provide more than a basic level of care for much of the collection, but believes that active condition checking and regular review will enable these two objectives: conservation and operation, can both be carried out side by side. Until the Museum is able to provide an adequate environment for the care of sensitive materials, including documents and photographs, it will not acquire such items and this will be reflected in our Collections Development Policy.

The ongoing need to actively care for the Museum's collections will be reflected in the Forward Plan and the associated Action Plan and Budget. Chain Bridge Forge Museum's Induction Programme, Emergency Plan, Acquisition and Disposal Policy and Access Statement will also be informed by the needs of the collections and these policies will be mindful of this Policy and the associated Care and Conservation Plan.

Chain Bridge Forge Museum has a limited budget for active conservation work and priorities are assessed using a risk management approach to collections care. The allocation of resources will also take into account the significance of individual items. This Policy has been informed by the following standards and frameworks: BS5454, Benchmarks in Collection Care, PAS 197:2009, PAS 198: 2011 and SPECTRUM. The Museum will be mindful of new developments in collections care and will review this Policy at least once every five years. The next review is due to take place in March 2018.

Chain Bridge Forge Museum receives professional advice from a Museum Mentor, who will be an experienced and qualified collections care specialist. The Museum Mentor will also recommend other sources of appropriately qualified and experienced advice should this be necessary. Remedial conservation work will always be carried out by a professional conservator. When conservation advice or services are needed the Museum will always seek to employ a conservator or conservation practice that is included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

Care of collections is a primary duty of Chain Bridge Forge Museum and all trustees, staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of the Museum's induction programme.

4. Care and Conservation Plan

This plan will enable Chain Bridge Forge Museum to minimise the risk of harm to the collections from people and the environment. Items will initially be assessed as groups of similar material, but regular inspection, use of the collections and new research will continue to build awareness of the needs of individual items and groups of materials.

These procedures take into account the following risks to our collections:

- The nature and vulnerability of different materials, methods of construction and the condition of individual items
- Potential risks from other items and materials in the collection
- Action by people working in the Museum, or handling collections for display, research or conservation, which could result in:
 - Accidental or malicious damage
 - Theft or loss
- Similar risks may be associated with activities and events, and use by other appropriate organisations
- Emergencies, particular those identified as the least unlikely to occur in the Emergency Plan, and the plans of the Museum and the emergency services for an emergency response
- The collection is protected through the treatment of protective coatings which must be reviewed regularly.

4.1 The Museum Building

The collections of Chain Bridge Forge Museum are held in the Forge on High Street, Spalding. The Forge itself is the Museum's primary exhibit, however it has a secondary function, as the other collections' primary protection against the external environment and damage or theft by others and as such it meets the following requirements for an effective defence:

- 4.1.1 The building is fit for purpose, providing basic protection from the elements and of adequate strength and quality of construction.
- 4.1.2 All floors are capable of safely supporting the loads placed on them. Changes in use, particularly in stores areas, will be made after an assessment of loading limits.
- 4.1.3 The building is regularly inspected (every week) and potential threats such as leaky roofs, poor wiring, blocked gutters and ill-fitting windows are identified and assessed. The timetable for these inspections is set out in the Museum's Emergency Plan and where weaknesses are identified action will be taken to remedy them.
- 4.1.4 Plant and equipment will be inspected periodically, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. In particular, portable appliances, fire extinguishers, burglar and smoke alarm, and circuit testing are all carried out at agreed times either by appropriately qualified staff, volunteers or contractors.

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- 4.1.5 The museum has an offsite store which houses items on display. Items are inspected to ensure no adverse deterioration.
 - 4.1.6 Volunteers visit the Museum at least once a week to review its condition.

4.2 Collections condition overview and environmental monitoring

The majority of the core collections of Chain Bridge Forge Museum are made of ferrous metal sometime with wood, horn or bone handles, as they are the tools or products of local blacksmiths (sometimes both). All these collections are kept on open display in conditions that protect them from the wind and rain. The Museum is also building collections of photographs, documents and oral history, but this is stored in digital format only (the originals are normally held elsewhere, often in the homes of local people) and duplicates are stored off-site.

It is not practical on either environmental or financial grounds to attempt to maintain a controlled environment in a building constructed from a single layer of brick, with a tiled roof trusses and no insulation at any point. The Museum does however carry out continuous environmental monitoring in order to assess the likely impact on the collections of the lack of environmental controls.

- 4.2.1 All items currently in the collection are visually inspected and their care needs assessed. The results are recorded in their catalogue description and any areas of concern are added to a prioritised list of items requiring remedial conservation. New acquisitions will be assessed on arrival at the Museum.
- 4.2.2 The Museum does not accept any material that has been identified as sensitive and vulnerable as we do not currently have the capacity to care adequately for such material. The Museum does however assess the significance of individual tools before deciding whether or not it is appropriate for them to be used by the Blacksmith for demonstration purposes. Professional conservators will be employed to carry out any remedial conservation work, in accordance with the Museum's Care and Conservation Policy.
- 4.2.3 Due to the nature of the building environmental measure is not practical. Items have been treated so that they can withstand the environment.

4.3 Environmental control

The collections are kept in a manner that protects them from environmental extremes. This is achieved by:

- 4.3.1 All collections are kept within a sound building, as described in 3.1 above.
- 4.3.2 Ambient light levels in all areas are within the boundaries identified in Annex I. No vulnerable items are exposed to daylight and no sensitive material is kept at the Museum.
- 4.3.3 No collections are not on display, nor can they be stored away from sources of heat, drafts, light and other potentially damaging conditions. The Museum does not therefore acquire material that is too sensitive or fragile to be kept in the conditions that prevail at the Forge.
- 4.3.4 Items are so displayed that there is a minimal risk that they can cause physical or chemical damage to other items in the collection.
- 4.3.5 Windows and doors are kept closed except when in use to provide protection from gaseous and particulate airborne pollutants.

4.4 Cleaning and housekeeping

The Museum's exhibitions and collections are carefully cleaned to reduce the risk of infestation or damage from mould or abrasive or acidic particles.

- 4.4.1 All display areas and furniture are cleaned and inspected regularly.
- 4.4.2 Cleaning methods, products and tools have been selected to reduce the risk of physical and chemical damage to collections.
- 4.4.3 All incoming material is examined for signs of infestation, dampness or mould. Where this is obvious items will either be isolated immediately, or removed from the building. Advice will be sought promptly and appropriate action taken as a matter of urgency.
- 4.4.4 All items that show signs of pest infestation will be isolated from the rest of the collection until treated. Advice will be sought promptly and appropriate action taken as a matter of urgency.
- 4.4.5 Display and storage areas are monitored for the presence of insects and rodents, and traps are regularly checked. Trapped insects are identified.
- 4.4.6 Both the collections and the cleaning materials used include substances that are potentially hazardous to health and all staff and volunteers working with these collections will receive appropriate health and safety training in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 2002.

4.5 Handling

All handling of collections, whether for display, research or conservation will be carefully planned to minimise the risk of physical or chemical damage.

- 4.5.1 All volunteers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding the care of the Museum's collections at all times during their induction training.
- 4.5.2 Volunteers who are expected to work with the collections will first undergo appropriate training in handling, packaging and safe storage of museum artefacts.
- 4.5.3 Under no circumstances will heavy or cumbersome items within the museum collection be moved (even short distances) unless: those moving the object have undertaken manual handling training; and a risk assessment for the move has been carried out using the HSE template for risk assessment available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm> .
- 4.5.4 Museum volunteers ensure that public access to the collections is supervised at all times.

4.6 Emergency Preparedness

All Trustees, volunteers and temporary staff will be made aware of the content of the Museum's emergency plan during their induction training, including instructions for salvage and actions in the event of an emergency.

- 4.6.1 All incidents, however small, that threaten the Museum building or its collections will be reported to the Trustees and recorded and documented within the risk assessment register of the Emergency Plan in order to inform future development of the Plan.

Appendix I

Substances Hazardous to Health

The Museum's collections include a number of items that could be hazardous to health in an emergency, or if not handled with care. All are appropriately kept and guidance will be given to all new volunteers who may be called upon to work with these artefacts.

The following substances that are potentially hazardous to health can be found in the collections:

- Tools with sharp edges
- Heavy objects that could cause harm if moved carelessly

Appendix II

Risk Assessment

This process is intended to help a museum to assess the degree to which its collections are at risk of harm from people and the environment and to suggest an appropriate level of response.

Severity scale (the impact on the object of the potential damage)

1. Accelerated deterioration where external factors significantly influence the expected deterioration rate of the item.
2. Minor physical damage, requiring remedial conservation/ preservation action to prevent further deterioration
3. Major physical damage, requiring active conservation treatment to enable access
4. Catastrophic destruction

Risk level

The colour code is based on the level of risk, combined with an assessment of probability rated from 1 (less than 5%) to 6 (more than 80%).

Probability of risk occurring	Severity 1	Severity 2	Severity 3	Severity 4
Less than 5%	1	2	3	4
Less than 10%	2	4	6	8
Less than 20%	3	6	9	12
Less than 40%	4	8	12	16
Less than 80%	5	10	15	20
Over 80 %	6	12	18	24

Suggested level of response

Critical	Collection management measures should eliminate such risk; collection preservation is otherwise not sustainable
Severe	Impact and likelihood are high; specific procedures/measures should be in place to eliminate or control such risks
Significant	Detailed procedures/ plans are required to address areas of concern
Moderate	Additional procedures/ plans are likely to be required to address areas of concern
Low	Risks are either rare or of low impact; regular procedures should cover any necessary actions
Negligible	Risks tend to be in occurrence and low impact; regular procedures are sufficient to cover any necessary actions

Risk Assessment conducted by Simon Davies, March 2013

Cause of damage	Current likelihood	Current severity	Risk	Control measure	Likelihood with control	Severity with control	Mitigated Risk
Inherent instability	2	1	2				
Damage by other items	1	2	2				
Accidental or deliberate damage	1	2	2				
Theft or loss	2	4	8	Review security with local CPO	1	4	4
Neglect	1	2	2				
Operation	4	2	8	Distinguish between core collection and operational tools.			
Hospitality	1	3	3				
Use by other bodies	1	3	3				
Fire	1	4	4				
Water	2	4	8	Raise all items in store 6" off ground	1	3	3
Temperature	1	2	2				
Light/UV	2	1	2				
Humidity	3	3	9	Inspection only	3	3	9
Pollutants	2	1	2				
Pests	2	2	4				
Technology	1	2	2				