

Collections Care

Stranahan House assumes responsibility for the care of its collections in order to ensure that they are in good condition for exhibition today, as well as preserving them for the benefit of future generations. This care includes protecting the collections against agents of deterioration

such as fire, water, pests, pollutants, light and radiation, incorrect temperature and relative humidity, neglect and theft, as well as providing preventative conservation and conservation treatment when needed.

Stranahan House strives to provide a high standard of care for all of the elements in its collections. Funding and staffing limitations, however, require prioritizing the collections and allocating collections-care resources accordingly. Within this framework, objects in the Stranahan Collection will receive first priority of care; objects in the Period Collection will receive second priority; and objects in all the remaining collections will receive third priority.

Staff responsibilities:

- The Records and Collections Manager is responsible for monitoring the overall security and condition of the collections, display areas and storage rooms and to report any adverse conditions to the executive director and recommend corrective action. He or she is also responsible for training and supervising staff and volunteers in the proper handling of objects in the collections; writing procedures for proper collections care; and conducting regular inventories of the collections.
- The Caretaker is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the museum's HVAC system, fire suppression system, security system and pest control program.
- The Executive Director is responsible for creating and managing the collections' care budget, approving expenses and authorizing conservation treatments. The Director also supervises staff and volunteers in the proper handling of objects when needed.
- The Housekeeper is responsible for learning and following housekeeping procedures specific to historic houses. Stranahan House will create a housekeeping procedure for this purpose.
- All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that members of the public are prevented from damaging, either by accident or intent, any object or objects in the collections. Maintaining the collection according to conservation standards raises the public's awareness of preservation issues.

Preventative Conservation

Preventative conservation of the collections in a historic house museum presents many challenges. The majority of the collections are on display in open rooms where it is

difficult to fully control the environment. Protecting and preserving the collections must be balanced against the public's access to the collections and preservation of the building itself. Stranahan House is in the process of assessing the condition of its collections and will develop a long-range conservation plan. In the short term, the museum will develop an action plan to prevent damage and minimize deterioration of its objects. The measures in this short term action plan will lead staff and others to:

- Know the causes and recognize the symptoms of object deterioration
- Monitor, record and control environmental agents
- Inspect the condition of objects
- Develop an integrated pest management program
- Practice proper handling, storage, exhibit, housekeeping and packing and shipping techniques and use proper materials to do the same
- Develop an emergency operation plan for the museum.

Handling Objects in the Collection

Professional standards and supplies will be used when handling or moving museum objects.

Staff and volunteers who assist the Records and Collections Manager will receive formal training in safe object handling techniques. Only trained staff and volunteers are permitted to handle objects under the supervision of the Records and Collections Manager or the Executive Director.

The Caretaker has the responsibility to move furniture and other museum objects in the course of regular maintenance and emergency events.

Museum staff and contractors responsible for cleaning exhibit and storage space will adhere to object handling procedures and standards.

The Records and Collections Manager will supervise all packing and shipping of objects that leave the museum's premises.

If any object is damaged, the Records and Collection Manager or the Executive Director will be notified immediately.

Conservation Treatments

It is in the museum's best interest to spend its limited resources on preventative care rather than on costly conservation treatments. Adhering to preventative conservation practices will greatly reduce the need for individual objects to receive conservation treatment. Conservation treatment should only be considered as a supplement to and not an alternative for preventative care.

Factors to be considered in determining if an object will receive conservation treatment include the condition of the object, the priority of the object as it relates to the museum's mission, the object's historical significance, recommendation of a conservator, and the technical feasibility and cost of treating the object. A trained professional conservator will be consulted before determining whether to treat an object, and all conservation treatments must be approved by the Executive Director and be carried out by trained professional conservators.

Special Care of Sacred or Culturally Sensitive Objects

Objects deemed to be sacred or culturally sensitive will be treated with care and respect. The museum will adhere to the applicable laws regarding the Native American Graves Protection and Reparation Act. (NAGPRA)

Storage Environment

Objects from the permanent collection not on display will be kept in the second-floor storage closet in the museum. Best efforts will be made to monitor and control temperature, relative humidity, light levels and pests in the storage area. Objects will be housed in archival materials and clearly labeled.

The Knox Collection is housed in a self-contained locked cabinet in the administrative office.

There is no off-site storage for the permanent collection. Objects from the secondary collections, including the Christmas, Education and Display Collections, may be stored at the Museum's secure and air-conditioned off-site storage unit.

Pest Control

The museum will develop an Integrated Pest Management program based on preventative measures such as inspection, record keeping, sanitation and housekeeping so that pesticides are used only when other methods will not work. The goal of the Integrated Pest Management program is to protect the museum and its collections from pests and to reduce the amount of pesticides used in the collections.

When pesticides are necessary, care will be taken to choose a pesticide that minimizes the risk of harming the collections. Contractors will provide the museum with a Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) containing information on the manufacturer's name and contact information, hazardous ingredients, physical and chemical characteristics, fire and explosion hazard data, reactivity data, health hazard data, safe handling and

use, and control measures. MSDS sheets will be kept in the collections management binder.