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Collections Management

Care and Conservation Policy

Produced by:

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 Laura Waters, Curator Collections and Library

Approved by:

.....
 Karen Rigg, Chairman Collections Management Committee

Authorised Board of Trustees:

.....Date.....

**Karen Rigg, Chairman Board of Trustees,
 The Tramway Museum Society**

Date for next review: November 2024

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Care and Conservation Policy

Name of Museum: The National Tramway Museum

Name of governing body: The Tramway Museum Society

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: November 2019

Policy Review Procedure:

This Care and Conservation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time by the Collections Management Committee, when amendments are deemed necessary due to changes in conservation practices and standards of care in the Museum sector.

As a minimum the policy will be reviewed at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: November 2024

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1.0 Introduction

The Tramway Museum Society's Cause Statement and Core Purposes as defined in its Forward Plan are as follows:

Cause Statement:

To be an immersive and captivating experience that unites the past, present and future through tramway heritage. Trams move people. [February 2019]

Our core purposes are:

- To collect, preserve and share collections relating to tramcars and tramway history
- To inspire and educate through telling the story of tramways
- To provide an immersive educational experience to visitors
- To raise awareness of the past, present and future importance of tramways to the country
- To advocate for the contribution of tramcars to urban transport

The collections are at the heart of all the Museum's activities. Caring for the collections and associated infrastructure and buildings is fundamental. The Museum and all its staff, volunteers and members are committed to caring for and using the collections, library and archive in ways that are sustainable and ensure they are available to generations to come.

The Museum operates a risk managed approach to collections care and conservation and strives to provide the best possible conditions for the care and use of the collections, and excellence in all activities relating to collections care within available resources.

2.0 Ethical Framework & Guidance

The Museum will follow National standards, ethical codes and best practice guidelines including but not exclusively the:

International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics

Museums Association (MA) Code of Ethics

ICON Professional Guidelines

Health & Safety Executive Guidelines, Regulations and Statutory Provisions

Benchmarks in Collections Care

Spectrum Guidelines as they relate to care and conservation of collections

ABTEM Guidelines for the Care of Larger and Working Historic Objects

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Canadian Conservation Institute REORG guidelines

3.0 Scope

The collections, and the good care of them are of fundamental importance to the Museum and its responsibility for the long-term preservation of its Nationally Designated collections, so that they can continue to be used into the future.

Collections care includes organisation wide strategies such as emergency planning and environmental monitoring, to operation which has a more direct impact on the physical condition of the collections.

The historic buildings are as much an integral part of the collections as the objects, and within the Museum's control, will be managed with an equal degree of care and expertise.

The collections are safeguarded through the specification and management of the following:

- Building management systems
- Collections management systems
- Collections reviews
- Emergency planning and response
- Environmental systems and monitoring
- Fire and evacuation procedures
- Building maintenance
- Hazard management, including asbestos, radiation & heavy metals
- Housekeeping
- Key Control
- Management of personnel and resources
- Mechanical and electrical maintenance, storage
- Pest Management
- Physical security
- Professional development
- Working objects

4.0 Conservation Approach

The Museum has a proactive approach to collections care through the programme of collections care reviews and plans. Resources and priorities for conservation and improving collections care are set out in the Museums *Care and Conservation Plan*, as well as the *10 Year Conservation Workshop Programme*. These will be reviewed regularly, particularly when circumstances change to impact the conservation work of the Museum.

Objects, building and vehicles will be conserved and preserved according to national and international standards using both preventative, remedial and restorative techniques.

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The Museum will continue to make improvements to comply with the requirements set out in the Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for National Institutions, and work within all best practice guidelines, and with the National Security Adviser and local police and fire services, on the safety and security of the collections on display, in store and on loan.

Any object known or suspected to contain a hazardous material will be assessed and managed in line with legal regulations and best practice.

4.1 Remedial or Interventive Conservation

Remedial conservation will only be undertaken after appropriate research and assessment by Museum staff with appropriate skills and training. Where appropriate Conservation skills are not present within the Museum's staff team, a trained conservator or specialist, identified from ICON's Conservation Register will be sought to provide advice, guidance or undertake necessary work.

All treatments and proposed treatments will be recorded in the appropriate history file connected with the object(s) being assessed / treated.

The Museum will opt for interventions within accepted ethical guidelines as resources allow and will make fair and balanced judgements for treatment in respect of the object's historical significance, rarity, cultural value and relevance.

4.2 Preventative Conservation

The Museum aims to slow down or minimise deterioration of objects through preventative measures, including the management of museum buildings, sites and environment to achieve optimum conditions, environmental control and monitoring, integrated pest management and appropriate storage and display conditions.

The Museums collections are spread across multiple buildings at its main Crich site, and at its off-site store at Clay Cross.

Buildings are the first line of defence for the collections and regular inspections of all the Museum buildings will be carried out to ensure any potential threats to the collection are identified. All plant and other equipment will be regularly inspected in line with service agreements and legal and Health & Safety regulations.

The Museum aims to house its collection in a manner that protects them from harmful environmental conditions within available resources. The Museum will actively monitor the environment in its buildings, try to improve conditions where possible and within resources. The Museum will provide best practice conditions for storage and display depending on material type within available resources.

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The Museum will follow an integrated Pest Management approach, actively monitoring and responding accordingly to changes.

5.0 Care of Working Objects: tramcar collection and other vehicles

The Museum accepts that the mechanical operation of an object for the purposes of demonstration can imply its possible eventual destruction.

It is the view of the Museum, that the demonstration of vehicles within the Tramcar Collection is the most effective method of communicating a vehicle's Form and Function to the public.

The demonstration of tramcars is necessarily linked to the demonstration of the associated infrastructure. As such, the Museum takes the view that the continued demonstration of tramcars constitutes preservation of the operation of traditional tramways.

The tramcars operated for the purposes of demonstration are subject to some but not all of the above principles and will also be governed by the additional principles and processes listed below and with reference to the ABTEM guidelines for the Care of Larger and Working Historic Objects.

5.1 Attitude Statement documents will be produced to determine the Form and Function of a vehicle, and whether it should be demonstrated, conserved or restored. The statements consider each vehicle with regard to:

Curatorial considerations

Technical considerations

Social considerations

Health and Safety

Financial

Other Value – (Commercial considerations)

5.2 The preparation of the Attitude Statement documents is overseen by the Curator Collections and Library and approved by the Tramcar Conservation Committee in the case of the vehicle collection, and the Collections Management Committee in the case of significant and larger artefacts, and final authorisation is by the Board of Trustees.

5.3 The continual maintenance of vehicles that are demonstrated, is undertaken by the Museum's Conservation Workshop, in conjunction with Workshop procedures and the *10 Year Conservation Workshop Programme*. The Workshop will ensure that:

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5.3.1 Preventative maintenance is carried out in appropriately traditional form, as is allowed under present legislation and to ensure safety. All actions will be fully recorded.

5.3.2 Where known, and where legislation allows, materials used in the maintenance of the vehicles will be as used in the tramcar's working life with the original tramway undertaking.

5.3.3 Wherever possible, changes and modifications will be fully reversible and recorded.

5.3.4 Where components will be liable to destruction by wear and tear / premature failure or suffer accidental damage as a result of the demonstration of the tramcar collection, consideration will be given to their replacement by new replica components or like for like contemporary parts.

5.4 Tramcar Components

The Museum will identify and conserve examples of type of important tramcar components.

These examples of type will be Accessioned into the Collection and enter preservation. Their ongoing care will be covered by the principles set out in this Policy.

6.0 Staff and Contractors

All staff, volunteers and members share the responsibility for safeguarding the collections and will be appropriately trained to their roles. Conservation of objects will be carried out or overseen by appropriately qualified or experienced professional staff.

The Museum is committed to encouraging staff and volunteers to share their expertise and to continuing professional development. This allows staff and volunteers to make use of new methods and develop new solutions themselves and share their knowledge within the Museum sector.

The Museum will only let contracts relating to care and / or conservation of the collection, where necessary, to suitably qualified professionals, and only after due financial consideration, regulation and procedures have been followed.

Records of activity will be documented and kept in line with best practice standards including those detailed within Spectrum guidelines and the Institute of Conservation.