Preservation Recommendations for Archives
Norlin Building (LIBR)

Executive Summary of Recommendations:
Conservation Needs Assessment Project (CNAP)
Preservation’s Facility Survey
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Preservation Recommendations for Archives

Executive Summary

This is a summary of recommendations to improve the preservation of the University Libraries’ Archives collections. Archives was included in a Norlin Building Facility Preservation Survey Completed in 2006. In the end of 2007 to early 2008 discussions were held with Facilities Management about constructing a separate room for colder storage of audio visual materials and a proposal was received. Recently Archives facilities were re-inspected and discussions with staff were held. In 2008 the Preservation Department conducted a Conservation Needs Assessment survey of the material housed in Archives. All of these form the basis of the following recommendations.

Relocation to a collection storage area specifically designed for rare and fragile research materials is first among any recommendations. Such a facility, regardless of location, must include climate controls appropriate to different material types as well as storage equipment designed to house the various materials held by this collection. Although the Norlin Renaissance plans include a new facility for the Libraries’ special collections, relocation does not appear to be imminent. All of the following recommendations should be weighed against any potential move(s) of the collections.

Recommended actions are listed below in priority order. Some of these recommendations are in various stages of implementation.

- Improve environmental conditions for multi-media/audio-visual materials in particular. General environmental conditions have improved since the recommendations of the NEH-supported consultant have been implemented (Jan 2009). On the other hand, Archives holds a large number of unique audio visual materials that need even better environmental conditions: a cool/cold microclimate separated from staff and public work areas. This space was discussed in 2008 should continue to be aggressively sought.

- A multi-media/audio-visual archivist position for Archives should continue to be requested by the Libraries. This archivist is needed to be able to prioritize and suggest processing for the myriad of different media held by archives.

- Improve physical storage in Archives. A recent survey of shelving found approximately the same number of serious and damaging storage conditions, floor storage and blocked aisles as was found three years ago. The vacuuming project completed by Preservation in 2008 was just the first step. Palettes provided by Preservation to lift some collections off the floor are now in use, but many more palettes are needed.
  - Lack of space is a large part of the physical storage problem. Collections are stacked floor to ceiling inhibiting air circulation and exposing collections to sprinklers, dust and grit. More storage space should be sought.
  - Some material is being transferred to PASCAL. We recommend that Archives continue moving materials off-site to the special location at PASCAL (SL@P) to gain shelving space and to take advantage of the superior environmental conditions in PASCAL. Preservation staff may be able to provide assistance with this process.
  - Implement a vacuuming and inspection schedule that will provide ongoing maintenance of the collections.
➢ Update Archives emergency procedures to include salvage priorities and their locations on floor plans. Mark shelves of priority collections as well. A shelf plan containing locations of all collections needs to be available at all times in the event of an emergency.

➢ Use the Conservation Needs Assessment Project (CNAP) report to develop a Conservation Plan for materials that are damaged, fragile, that are most used and/or have greatest value. The goal of this plan should be to ensure that resources for processing, enclosures, conservation are spent where they are most needed. The attached CNAP report lists all recommendations. However, we recommend that the following have the highest priorities for treatments:

- Film and Photographic Images (approximately 940,000 items) – train or hire staff to process these specialized materials and to rehouse appropriately.
- Conduct preservation processing on the older legacy collections.
- Digitize the newspaper collection which is at risk because of its degree of embrittlement.
- Review boxed and shelved bound materials for treatment, rehousing or shelving.

➢ There continue to be a large number of collections that are unprocessed. Review existing processing guidelines to verify current best practices. At least minimal processing should be conducted for these collections to determine long term needs and priorities for both processing and emergency response. Archivist’s Toolkit or similar software could facilitate this recommendation.

➢ Establish a systematic program for monitoring for insects and pests with FacMan Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

As part of this Preservation Survey of Norlin building collections, all open and closed stacks, were walked. The shelves were surveyed for quantifiable preservation handling and storage issues. The number of shelves, boxes or piles refers to “events” not to the number of books or boxes falling down or placed on the floor.

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