

Brief

Collection condition survey: contents of Shoe Museum, Street



Application deadline: Friday 27th November 2015

Interviews: Monday 7th December and Tuesday 8th December 2015

Report completion date: Monday 7th March 2016

1. Introduction

The Alfred Gillett Trust wishes to commission a condition survey of the mixed collections currently on display in the Shoe Museum, Street. The Alfred Gillett Trust is a charitable organisation which manages the historic archive and object collections of the shoemaking company C. & J. Clark Ltd and the Clark family. The Shoe Museum is owned and managed by C. & J. Clark Ltd, and is housed in the company headquarters in Street, Somerset.

The Museum has existed since 1951 but was redeveloped in 1974. The displays have changed little since the 1974 opening, with many items remaining on display for the duration of this period.

The displayed collections include a variety of objects and archival material. The main element of the display is 1121 single items of footwear ranging in date from 300AD to 2008 and made from materials including leather, textile and plastics (notably polyurethane). Many of the shoes on display are half of a pair, with the other shoe in storage.

In addition to the footwear, the displays include approximately 100 items of point of sale material (posters, showcards, display miniatures), tools (approximately 150 shoemaking hand tools), machinery (including an electronic footgauge) and furniture (C19th and C20th office furniture, 2 Glastonbury chairs, C19th workshop furniture, mid-C20th shop furniture and fitting stools). Archival material fills three display cases and is otherwise interspersed throughout the other displays (see attached photographs). This comprises early C19th-late C20th material including the indenture of James Clark's apprenticeship, photographs, price lists, stationery, drawings and other ephemera.

Documentation for all the collections includes a combination of paper-based systems including a card index, and the Adlib collections management system.

2. Purpose of brief

In order to plan for the future care of these collections, a condition survey will be commissioned. This will provide an overview of the current condition of the displayed mixed collections, identifying areas of vulnerability, current causes of deterioration and conservation priorities. N.B. The scope of this brief does not include collections in store.

The survey will provide recommendations to inform a Collections Management Policy and be used to share information about the collection's condition with external stakeholders.

A redisplay is planned in the mid-term future, but the current brief is intended to establish an understanding of the current condition of the objects on display and what measures are necessary to preserve them.

3. Contract requirements

Working closely with the collections staff, the appointed team will develop a detailed methodology for the survey and produce a final report on the condition of the displayed collections (please refer to **timescale**, below). The resulting report must include:

- A description of the building and environment (refer to information provided by Alfred Gillett Trust)
- A description of the displayed collections and the broad object groups identified (compiled in consultation with collections staff)
- An overview of the condition of each of these object groups on display
- Condition reports on the sample selection

And based on the above information:

- Identification of areas of vulnerability in the collection
- Identification of decay mechanisms and causes, including:
 - Environmental conditions
 - Mounts, supports and display cases
- Priorities for future care, including recommendations for:
 - Environmental conditions
 - In storage
 - On display
 - Mounting and supports
 - Repair

- Identification of areas where remedial work might be appropriate if display is recommended in future, with an outline of what options might be appropriate

4. Format of report

The report on the survey will be presented in electronic form and two hard copies. It will be appended to Adlib for permanent storage within our system. Documentation must include photography where appropriate, to be undertaken by the appointed team.

5. Timescale

The survey work will entail no more than 3 weeks' work on site, but may otherwise vary depending on the team and their methodology. The report on the survey must be submitted to the Director of the Alfred Gillett Trust before **Monday 7th March 2015**.

6. Location

The Shoe Museum is located at 40 High Street, Street. There is no dedicated workspace on site, although desk space may be provided.

The Alfred Gillett Trust offices and collections storage is located at the Grange, Street. A workspace will be provided on site with access to running water and electricity.

7. Access

Access can be provided to contractors between 9am and 5.30pm on weekdays. Please note that the Museum will remain open to the public between 10am and 4.45pm, Monday to Saturday.

The Grange is open between 9am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Please note that there is currently no access to the Museum for those with mobility impairments.

8. Application process

Applicants are invited to submit a competitive quote for the work, including all related costs, to Rowan Brown, Alfred Gillett Trust Museum Director rowan.brown@agtrust.org.uk by **Friday 27th November**.

Applications should comprise:

- **An overview of the applicant team**, detailing personnel numbers, brief curriculum vitae (including qualifications, specialisms and experience), references etc. (maximum 750 words)
- **Proposed dates of work**
- **Proposed outline methodology for the condition survey** (maximum 500 words)
- **Two recent case studies** (completed within the last 5 years) of collection condition surveys demonstrating specialism across varied media and object types (maximum 250 words each)

Interviews will take place on Monday 7th December and Tuesday 8th December.

Applicants will be scored on the cost of the quote, the experience of the applicant team and their proposed methodology. Preference will be given to proposals submitted by accredited conservator-restorers.

Any questions relating to the brief prior to application may be directed to Judeth Saunders, Collections Assistant judeth.saunders@agtrust.org.uk

9. Health and Safety

The appointed applicant team will be expected to comply with current health and safety legislation, and with internal (Clarks and Alfred Gillett Trust) health and safety policies.

10. Insurance

The appointed conservators will each be required to have professional indemnity insurance to the minimum value of £50,000.

11. Payment

Payment will be made at 25% upon signing the contract and the remaining 75% upon receipt of the final report.

