

Archives and Special Collections Handling Guidelines

- Archive material can only be **consulted under supervision**.
- **No food or drink**, including chewing gum, cough sweets and water, may be consumed while consulting material.
- **Ensure you have clean hands** when consulting material. Avoid using hand cream beforehand.
- **Don't lick your fingers** when changing pages – this is harmful to you and the material.
- **Wear gloves when handling photographs**.
- **Pencils only** to be used for note taking, **no pens** are allowed. The **use of laptops** is permitted.
- **Do not mark or write on the material**.
- **Avoid leaning on material** and **minimise touching** where possible. Use a paper marker to follow text. Snake weights should be used to hold pages open.
- **Only use acid-free slips to mark a page**. Other kinds of markers – such as post-it notes – can leave a stain.
- Always **use the available book supports** when consulting bound volumes and books.
- **Turn pages with care**.
- **Do not remove material from clear plastic sheets**.
- **Do not attempt to remove any staples, pins or paperclips** from the material.
- Keep loose material in the **original order** in which it has been found.
- **Avoid placing volumes and books on top of each other**.
- **Make sure you have enough space** before consulting large items such as plans.
- **Avoid leaving open books, documents or photographs in direct sunlight**. Close books and volumes when you have finished consulting them and return documents and prints to their folders or boxes. This will protect them from exposure to light which can cause fading and discolouration.
- The **use of cameras** and mobile phones for photography is allowed, provided you complete a **Self-Service Photography Form**. The **use of flash is not permitted** for preservation reasons.
- **Readers may not borrow material** from the Archives and Special Collections.
- Report any material which is in a **fragile condition**.
- Any **questions** about handling archive material? Ask the Archivist.