



Bendigo Law Courts

Collection Management Plan

Prepared for

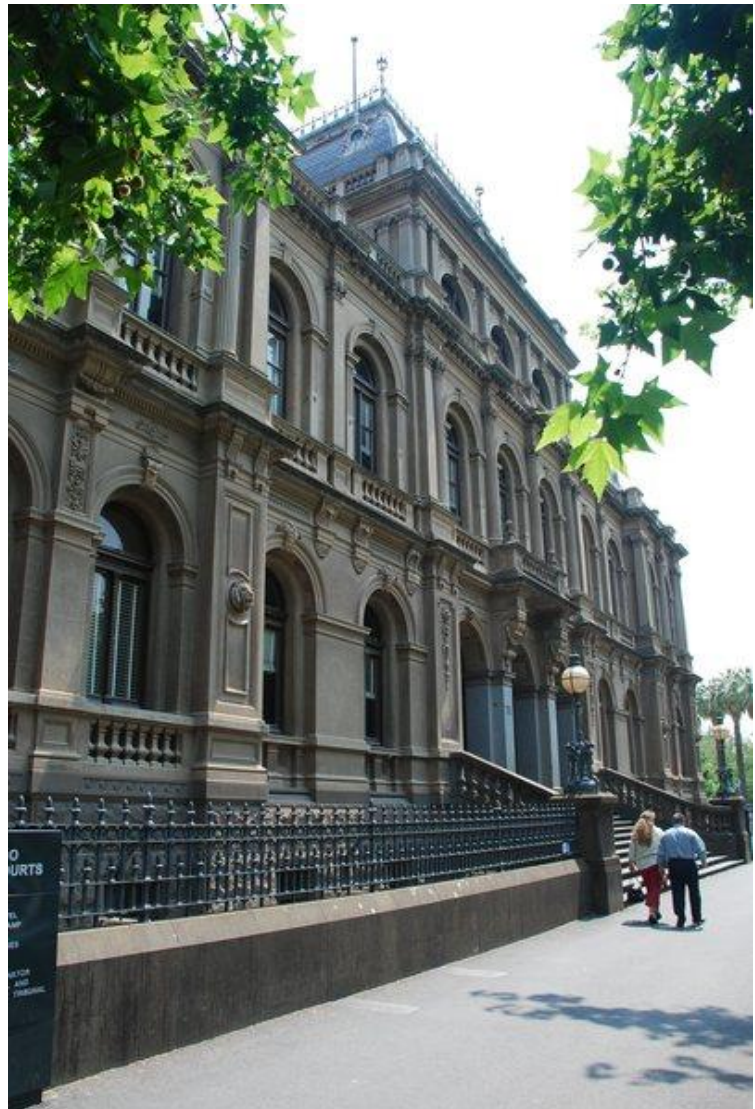
Kendo Consulting Services on behalf
of Court Services Victoria (CSV)

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4 Harper Street, Abbotsford VIC 3067, Australia
+61 3 7013 2892 | icsmelbourne@icsconservation.com
www.icsconservation.com
ABN 64 052 402 981

1 Introduction

This Collection Management Plan was prepared for Court Services Victoria (CSV) in 2022/23, at the request of Nicole Cowley, Kendo Consulting Services, to assist in the management of artefacts located within the historic Bendigo Law Courts (VHR Number H1466) at 77-85 Pall Mall, Bendigo, and their tenancy at 51-67 Pall Mall, Bendigo (the current Visitor's Centre and former Post Office). It should be reviewed every 5 years.

In this Collection Management Plan is a set of policies that define the scope of the Bendigo Law Courts collection and provide guidance for its ongoing care and management. This Plan is not to be confused with the Conservation Management Plan prepared by Lovell Chen in 2021, which focusses on the cultural heritage values of the Bendigo Law Courts building. This Plan focusses specifically on the artefacts associated with the building which form 'the collection'. The Bendigo Law Courts collection consists of fixed furniture such as magistrate's benches, jury/accused docks, etc. as well as movable furniture and objects such as tables, chairs, benches, artworks, clocks, architectural moulds, flags, jury ballot boxes, typewriters, archives, books and more.

The collection was partially catalogued in 1986 by Robert Peck and Company, and again in 2021 by Lovell Chen. The data from these catalogues was collated in 2022/23 by International Conservation Services (ICS) who, alongside the development of this Collection Management Plan, were engaged to catalogue the collection on a broader scale than the earlier works.

The requirement for a current and complete catalogue of the Bendigo Law Courts collection, and a plan for its management, stemmed from the planned relocation of court operations from the buildings on Pall Mall to a new state-of-the-art building at 188 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo.

The following chapters detail the policies and procedures which apply to the Bendigo Law Courts collection.

2 Accessioning, Cataloguing and Labelling

Accessioning is the act of formally documenting an artefact in the Bendigo Law Courts catalogue and assigning to that artefact a unique identification number. The identification number should be recorded both in the catalogue and on the artefact (using one of the labelling methods in chapter 2.3). All artefacts belonging to the Bendigo Law Courts should be accessioned and catalogued in the existing catalogue prepared by International Conservation Services in 2022/23.

2.1 What to accession

The existing catalogue (ICS, 2022/23) captures the Bendigo Law Courts collection as at 2022/23. Since the Bendigo Law Courts collection centres around a building that is due to be repurposed, it is unlikely the collection will grow considerably in future. The types of artefacts likely to require accessioning in future are:

- Artefacts that were not accessible or missing during the 2022/23 cataloguing works.
- Archives that were not included in the scope of the 2022/23 cataloguing works.
- Original building fabric that was not included in the scope of the 2022/23 cataloguing works (which will be particularly important if fabric becomes detached from the building to avoid dissociation).
- Donations, gifts and acquisitions that present to Court Services Victoria in future.

2.2 Cataloguing Standards

Artefacts belonging to the Bendigo Law Courts collection should be documented to the international standards of SPECTRUM¹, Dublin Core², and ICOM-CIDOC³. The standards for documenting books are those of Dublin Core, AACR2⁴ and DDC⁵. A minimum level of data must be recorded before an artefact can be considered "accessioned". This minimum level includes the unique identification number, title, material type and current location. Bendigo Law Courts should endeavour to augment this level of data with more detailed information as resources permit.

2.3 Labelling Methods

Labelling of artefacts should be carried out using one of the following reversible methods.

1. An archival grade foil-backed self-adhesive label and ink
2. Two varnish layers and ink as instructed below:
 - Apply an isolating varnish layer to the artefact e.g., 10% Paraloid B72 in acetone
 - Number the artefact using ink, preferably black or white
 - Apply a varnish topcoat with different solubility parameters to the isolating varnish layer to allow for edits to the numbering without complete removal e.g., 10% Paraloid B67 in white spirit
3. Natural graphite pencil (books and archives only)

It is best to position labels in consistent locations. For example, a book should be labelled in the top right-hand corner of the first page. This will make it easier to locate the accession number and thus reduce artefact handling. Three-dimensional artefacts should be labelled as discreetly as possible, e.g., the underside of a chair.

2.4 Movement of Artefacts

Once accessioned, any movement of artefacts must be documented immediately in the catalogue to avoid dissociation and loss to the collection. Instances may include:

- Artefacts on loan to other institutions.
- Artefacts on loan to the new Bendigo Law Court building.
- Artefacts requested by Bendigo Law Court staff.
- Artefacts on display.
- Artefacts moved to a new location or storage facility.

3 Significance Criteria

The Bendigo Law Courts building is subject to heritage protection at State and Municipal level and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Database (H1466)⁶.

The building was designed by architect George W. Watson in the Victorian Second Empire style and built between 1892-96 by McCulloch and McAlpine. The Bendigo Law Courts is culturally significant as one of Australia's finest 19th century public buildings and a great achievement of the Public Works Department of Victoria. The Victorian Heritage Database states that Bendigo Law Courts is historically significant 'for

¹ SPECTRUM – The UK Museum Documentation Standard developed by the Museum Documentation Association

² Dublin Core – Museum minimum metadata standards

³ ICOM-CIDOC – International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums

⁴ AACR2 – Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2nd Edition

⁵ DDC – Dewey Decimal Classification

⁶ Victorian Heritage Database, *Law Courts, 77-85 Pall Mall Bendigo*, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/131>

housing an extensive collection of 19th and early 20th century furniture and fittings, much of which is original to the building⁷. Thus, the artefact collection contributes to the overall significance of the site.

3.1 Classification of significance

Artefacts in the Bendigo Law Courts collection can be classified into three significance categories: high, contributory, and little to no. An artefact's classification is informed by its acquisition date, provenance, and use.

3.1.1 *High significance*

Artefacts identified as having high significance to the Bendigo Law Courts are those which:

- Reference the land before it was developed, e.g., archives.
- Reference the Municipal District, Borough, or City, of Sandhurst (Bendigo was known as Sandhurst between 1855 and 1891), e.g., archives, books etc.
- Are associated with the construction of the building, e.g., archives, original building fabric, architectural moulds etc.
- Were commissioned for the courthouse in the late 19th and early 20th century, e.g., fixed furniture, movable furniture etc.
- Hold evidence of court operations and people in the late 19th and early 20th century, e.g., archives, books, photographs, artworks, jury ballot boxes etc.
- Form a set of artefacts, the earliest of which were produced in the late 19th and early 20th century e.g., books etc.

3.1.2 *Contributory significance*

Artefacts identified as having contributory significance to the Bendigo Law Courts are those which:

- Derive from other 19th court buildings.
- Were supplied by the Public Works Department and are therefore representative of the type of furnishings found in significant public buildings of the late 19th and early 20th century, e.g., Parliament House, the Supreme Court in Melbourne, etc. These artefacts can be identified by the acronym PWD, and a crown incised in the timber frame.
- Were acquired in mass quantities in the late 19th and early 20th century. Note: if more than one artefact of its kind exists, those additional artefacts may be categorised as having little to no significance.
- Hold evidence of court operations and people from the late 20th century onward, e.g., archives, photographs etc.

3.1.3 *Little to no significance*

Artefacts identified as having little to no significance to the Bendigo Law Courts are those which:

- Were acquired from the late 20th century onward and are generic, mass-produced or not in-keeping with the character of the building.
- Are an exact copy of another artefact that is in better condition.
- Are in such poor condition that the artefact is no longer fit for purpose, identifiable or legible.

3.1.4 *Integral or Non-integral*

An artefact's significance category dictates whether that artefact is integral or non-integral to the Bendigo Law Courts building. As a general rule:

⁷ *Ibid.*

- Artefacts that are integral to the building are those which are classified with high significance. These artefacts are integral to the reading of the building as a historic courthouse and without them the building would lose value. Artefacts that are integral to the building must be retained within the Bendigo Law Courts collection.
- Artefacts that are non-integral to the building are those which are classified with contributory or little to no significance. These artefacts are not integral to the reading of the building as a historic courthouse and without them the building would not lose value. Artefacts that are non-integral to the building do not have to be retained within the Bendigo Law Courts collection.

It is important to consider the value (heritage and operational) of each artefact carefully prior to entering the deaccession process. There may be value in retaining an artefact that is non-integral. Please refer to Chapter 4 Retention of Assets for further information.

3.1.5 *Registration of Integral Artefacts*

Artefacts classified as integral to the building should be added to the Victorian Heritage Register under the existing listing for the Bendigo Law Courts building (VHR H1466). For advice about registrations, please contact Heritage Victoria⁸.

4 Retention of Assets

The process of asset retention begins as soon as an artefact has been accessioned into the Bendigo Law Courts collection. Once an artefact has been accessioned and given a significance classification, a decision on retention can be made.

As detailed above, artefacts classified with high significance are integral to the reading of the building as a historic courthouse and therefore must be retained in the collection. Artefacts classified with contributory or little to no significance can be considered for attrition of assets. That is not to say all artefacts classified with contributory or little to no significance should be deaccessioned. Many of these artefacts will have some retention value, if not for their heritage value, then for their operational value. This must be explored in full before considering deaccessioning. Some reasons why Bendigo Law Courts might choose to retain an artefact classified with contributory or little to value are:

- Operational value, e.g., artefacts such as tables and chairs may be useful to future tenants.
- Aesthetic value, e.g., artefacts may contribute to the overall character of the building.
- Story telling value that is less focussed on the Bendigo Law Courts building and more focused on significant public buildings of the late 19th and early 20th.

Artefacts that are retained should be managed under the advice outlined in chapter's 6 and 7.

5 Deaccessioning and Disposal

Deaccessioning is the procedural action taken in relation to an artefact prior to its disposal. Disposal is the removal of an artefact from the collection after it has been deaccessioned.

The following sub-chapters detail the deaccession and disposal policy that applies to all artefacts in the Bendigo Law Courts building, including:

- all heritage registered, accessioned, or catalogued artefacts.

⁸ Heritage Victoria, *Registrations*, <https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/about-us/contact-us>, accessed February 2023

- all artefacts which have not yet been heritage registered, accessioned, or catalogued, but have documentation indicating their ownership by the Bendigo Law Courts.

5.1 Deaccessioning

The Bendigo Law Courts must only deaccession artefacts for which it can clearly demonstrate ownership of.

Any artefact proposed for deaccessioning must first be researched to ensure it is not subject to any condition established at the time of acquisition which may affect its disposal, to ensure it has no other operational value within Bendigo Law Courts, and to ensure that its disposal does not violate any existing laws or regulations.

Deaccessioning from the Bendigo Law Courts collection can be considered after the above criteria has been exhausted, subject to one or more of the following criteria being fulfilled. The artefact must:

- Pose a preservation threat to other elements of the collection.
- Be unable to be appropriately cared for or stored.
- Be damaged beyond repair.
- Be redundant or bring no value to the collection.
- Be duplicated within the collection.
- Not comply with the Bendigo Law Courts collection management policy.
- Be classified as having little to no significance to the Bendigo Law Courts.
- Have been stolen or lost (evidence must be provided).

Financial reasons (either to raise money for any purpose or to reduce expenditure) must not be a principal reason for deaccessioning an artefact.

The responsibility for deaccessioning artefacts belongs to the Managing Officer of the Bendigo Law Courts. If there is any doubt about whether an artefact can be deaccessioned, the Managing Officer should seek advice and approval from Heritage Victoria.

5.2 Disposal

Once an artefact has been deaccessioned, it should be disposed of in one of the following ways (from most preferred to least preferred):

1. Returned to the donor.
2. Gifted/sold to another similar heritage organisation.
3. Gifted/sold to an educational organisation.
4. Stored for salvaged parts in case other artefacts break or require repair.
5. Sold at public auction.
6. Destroyed.

The deaccessioning and/or disposal of an artefact must be immediately documented in the Bendigo Law Courts catalogue.

6 Housing, Display and Storage

Artefacts which are integral to the Bendigo Law Courts must be housed within the building at 77-85 Pall Mall, Bendigo unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with Heritage Victoria. This being the case, the integral artefacts should be an important consideration when it comes to planning for the building's future use.

It is imperative the artefacts housed within the building are displayed or stored in appropriate conditions to ensure the long-term preservation and safety of the collection.

6.1 Display and Interpretation

Subject to the building's future use, the Bendigo Law Courts collection should primarily remain on public display. It is likely most of the artefacts will be required for public use, thus serving a dual purpose – both interpretive and operational. Artefacts in public areas should be consistently and uniformly interpreted to the public to clearly portray their heritage status and that of the building.

Bendigo Law Courts should clearly indicate areas where heritage artefacts are for display purposes only (e.g., through the use of ropes, stanchions, plinths, etc.). If there is a need to provide seating for the public, whilst limiting the use of heritage furniture, Bendigo Law Courts can use modern/contemporary furniture to augment the use of heritage furniture and should consider the use of a universal symbol that invites the public to use the modern/contemporary furniture. Unless explicitly required for interpretation purposes, no replica furniture should be used in the Bendigo Law Courts. Any replica artefacts must be clearly labelled as such and will not be protected from use in the same manner as the heritage furniture (to clearly differentiate the two).

Bendigo Law Courts should be aware that artefacts are most vulnerable when on display due to the increased risk of unstable temperature and humidity levels, higher light levels, and greater public access etc. Bendigo Law Courts should strive to meet best practice conditions as established by the Canadian Conservation Institute⁹, within the limitations of the building. Bendigo Law Courts should regularly review and monitor artefacts on display and make any changes as necessary.

6.1.1 *Heritage Artefacts in Court 1 and Court 2*

Most of the artefacts in Court 1 (Supreme Court) and Court 2 (Magistrate's Court) are integral to the reading of the building as a historic courthouse. They may continue to have high use through public access and education programmes. These rooms have unique requirements that must be considered, including:

- Access should only be permitted with an escort (i.e., a Bendigo Law Courts staff member or volunteer).
- The fixed artefacts (magistrate's bench, accused dock, jury dock, media area and witness dock), once deemed to be in a stable condition, may be made available for public use.
- All possible means of preservation should be considered when artefacts are to be used for interpretation e.g., educating those who will use the artefacts, provision of gloves to school parties, restricted number of users, etc.

6.2 Storage

Subject to the building's future use, it is possible some of the artefacts within the collection will need to be stored offsite. These artefacts must be stored at an appropriate location, considering factors like value, individual environmental requirements, and the frequency with which an artefact is likely to be accessed. It is imperative that storage materials and methods are of the highest quality, as incorrect materials and/or conditions can accelerate deterioration. Artefacts in storage must be monitored and reviewed regularly and any necessary changes to their environment should be made promptly as required.

7 Conservation Requirements

The Bendigo Law Courts collection has a unique set of risks associated with its conservation. Unlike a museum collection, the artefacts in this collection have endured continual and active use over a number of

⁹ CCI, *Agents of Deterioration*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/agents-deterioration.html>, accessed November 2022

decades. This use has resulted in wear, damage and even repair for many of the artefacts. A particular challenge in managing such a collection is understanding the conservation requirements of each artefact and those of the collection as a whole.

7.1 Interventive Conservation

For artefacts to retain their significance they must be maintained, so far as is reasonably practicable, in a stable condition. That being said, it is imperative that artefacts are only restored and repaired to a level that does not erase the physical evidence of their history and use. This philosophy is consistent with that of conservation practice today and meets the need for more pragmatic and lasting conservation solutions.

To understand the interventive conservation requirements of an artefact/s, the Bendigo Law Courts should engage a suitably qualified conservator to assess its condition. The artefact's condition should be recorded in the Bendigo Law Courts catalogue, along with any intervention undertaken to stabilise or repair the artefact. Conservation interventions can range from surface cleaning to structural repair, and everything in between. If conservation budgets are limited, priority must be given to artefacts classified with high significance.

It is important that any occurrence of artefact damage is reported in real time to ensure artefacts are given appropriate and timely care.

7.2 Preventive Conservation

Preventive conservation involves forward planning to manage risks to the collection. Where risks have been identified, urgent steps should be taken to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. In understanding the risks to the Bendigo Law Courts collection, it is useful to consider the following agents of deterioration and what can be done to manage them. This information does not negate the need for individual condition assessments by a conservation professional, but rather should be used as a guide to possible risks.

7.2.1 *Agents of Deterioration*

- Incorrect environmental conditions (temperature and relative humidity):
Temperature and relative humidity requirements will differ for every artefact in the Bendigo Law Courts collection with factors such as material, construction and condition influencing how each artefact will respond to the environment. As the Bendigo Law Courts collection will primarily be housed in the historic Bendigo Law Courts building, it is not realistic to expect to achieve ideal conditions for every artefact. The best we can do is maintain conditions within an acceptable range for the whole collection. The AICCM have established environmental guidelines (2022) for cultural heritage collections which provide temperature and relative humidity parameters for the Australian climate. Conditions maintained within these parameters will generally be acceptable for most artefacts in a stable condition. The Bendigo Law Courts should endeavour to maintain environmental conditions within the following parameters:
 - Temperature range: 15°C - 25°C
 - Relative humidity range: 40 – 60 % RH
- Light, ultraviolet and infrared:
Light exposure can result in the fading of colours, UV can cause yellowing, chalking, and disintegration of materials, and infrared can introduce heat to an artefact's surface.¹⁰ By minimising the exposure artefacts have to light, you can reduce the speed at which these deterioration processes

¹⁰ CCI, Agents of Deterioration, <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/agents-deterioration/light.html#det5>, accessed November 2022

occur. At the Bendigo Law Courts, control measures may involve keeping light levels low in particular rooms (e.g., Court rooms 1 and 2), the use of screening where light is unavoidable and UV filters on the windows if the existing blinds are ever removed/replaced.

- Pests:
The term 'pests' encompasses fungi (moulds), bacteria, insects, rodents, birds and bats. Each of these pests can pose a serious threat to the Bendigo Law Courts collection. The books and archives in the collection are especially vulnerable to insects, particularly silverfish. A pest management plan should be prepared for the Bendigo Law Courts if one does not already exist. This plan should be implemented immediately, since the building is likely to be unoccupied while its future use is considered. A plan should involve regular cleaning, inspections, and pest monitoring/trapping.
- Dissociation:
Dissociation is the risk of losing information about an artefact which provides the context for its significance. This can lead to a lack of understanding of its value. A powerful example of dissociation is the large quantity of artefacts acquired by Bendigo Law Courts which derive from other 19th century Victorian court buildings. These artefacts have become dissociated from their original location/purpose and have subsequently lost value.

The risk of dissociation is particularly high for the Bendigo Law Courts collection due to the relocation of court operations to the new building. The catalogue will go some way to mitigating this risk, therefore it is imperative it is continually updated.
- Water and Fire:
The risk of damage to the collection from water and fire is ever-present in a historic building such as the historic Bendigo Law Courts. Water may enter the building via roof leaks, open windows, or faulty plumbing and the like. It may also take the form of dampness resulting from condensation and rising moisture. Fire may result from faulty or overloaded wiring, electrical panels, electrical appliances, gas leaks, construction activities such as hot works or even arson. It is therefore important that the building is frequently inspected for possible sources of water and fire, and to ensure that all required fire detection and suppression systems are fully operable and code compliant.
- Physical forces:
Frequent and long-term use of artefacts exposes them to the risk of damage from physical forces. While this risk cannot be completely removed, measures can be introduced to minimise the damage. Such measures might include moving artefacts of high significance out of harm's way (i.e., high traffic areas), training staff and volunteers in handling artefacts, and employing professional art handlers for any significant movement of artefacts. Any damage sustained by an artefact must be recorded in the Bendigo Law Courts catalogue, and actions required to repair that damage explored.
- Pollutants:
Pollutants originate from both people and the environment and are carried or circulated through the air. Some likely causes of pollutants in the Bendigo Law Courts building are local industry and construction as well as staff and visitors to the building. Pollutants can be responsible for many deterioration processes including corrosion of metals, rotting of leathers, and soiling of furniture among many others. Pollutants can be controlled with regular cleaning. Any direct cleaning of artefacts should be undertaken or supervised by qualified conservation professionals.

- Thieves and Vandals:
Premeditated or opportunistic theft and wilful damage of artefacts can usually be deterred or avoided with good security. The risk of theft and vandalism whilst the building is unoccupied or being refurbished for its future use is very high, thus security must be maintained throughout that period of time. Once a future use has been decided, a risk assessment will help to determine the new security measures required to protect the collection. Any theft or vandalism that occurs at any time should be tracked using the Bendigo Law Courts catalogue.

8 Authorship and Project Team

This Collection Management Plan was prepared by Eden Christian (Conservation Projects Manager) and Katie Smith (Senior Conservation Manager and, Stone, Wood, and Decorative Surfaces Conservator), International Conservation Services (ICS).