



COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT

January 31, 2022

PRESENTED BY:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Manhattan Beach owns and manages a collection of artwork, objects, and archives. The holdings comprise approximately 1,550 historical items and 165 linear feet (LF) of archival material documenting local history from the early twentieth century to the present day. The City of Manhattan Beach houses materials that include ceramics, textiles, paintings, tools, equipment, archeological artifacts, commemorative items, photographs, serial publications, yearbooks, scrapbooks, as well as audiovisual materials. It also maintains a historic beach cottage originally built in 1905.

History Associates, Inc. (HAI), a professional museum services firm based in Rockville, Maryland, was contracted to produce a collections assessment report for the City of Manhattan Beach. An experienced team of museum professionals conducted a site visit to the City of Manhattan Beach and assessed the museum collection associated with the city from October 19 through 21, 2021. The HAI team, consisting of Senior Collections Manager Christina Conn and Archivist Brandon Werts, participated in a three-day site visit in coordination with city staff. The goals of this site visit were to evaluate the current state of the museum collection, levels of accessibility, and storage practices, supplemented by stakeholder discussions with city staff and members of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society (MBHS) to understand the strategic vision, priorities, and long-term goals for the museum collection.

As a result of the site visit and assessment, the team has developed the following report to provide specific immediate, short- and long-term recommendations toward improving care and management for the City of Manhattan Beach museum collections. Recommendations in this comprehensive report are based on observations made by the team during the site visit and conversations with various stakeholders from the City of Manhattan Beach and the MBHS.

Issues and Challenges

During the site visit and analysis, the team evaluated current practices regarding collection development, museum documentation and accountability, preservation and condition of collections, collection environment, access and use, exhibitions, security, and disaster preparedness. Based on the observations and data collected, key issues and challenges facing the City of Manhattan Beach collections are summarized below:

- Lack of collection policy and procedures
- Out of scope material present in collections
- Backlog of uncataloged materials
- Non-archival packaging and storage methods and materials
- Limited staffing resources
- Limited collections workspace and long-term storage
- Inadequate environmental and exhibit conditions at the beach cottage
- Inadequate environmental and storage conditions in long-term storage areas
- Lack of formalized roles and responsibilities for fire protection, security, and emergency preparedness
- Lack of public awareness and accessibility

Key Recommendations

Immediate (0-1 Year)

- Establish written collection policies and procedures.
- Develop a scope of collections statement and deaccession plan.
- Review, consolidate, and update museum documentation records.
- Develop and maintain a museum emergency operations plan (MEOP).

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Confirm legal status of collections.
- Survey and inventory collections.
- Create cataloging manual and processing plan.
- Identify potential backlog of collections in museum facilities.
- Maximize storage space and increase workspace.
- Improve environment, storage, and exhibition methods at the beach cottage if accessioned collections remain displayed.

Long Term (2-5 years)

- Process, catalog, and rehouse collections.
- Data clean-up of Proficio Elements catalog records.
- Improve and implement museum collection preservation methods and practices.
- Plan and digitize the archives collection.
- Increase access and use of museum collections online.
- Develop a collection storage plan.
- Hire a permanent, full-time museum curator.

The HAI team wishes to thank the City of Manhattan Beach staff and MBHS volunteers for their hospitality and cooperation throughout the project. All stakeholders should be commended for their efforts to preserve and manage these valuable collections.

I. COLLECTIONS CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The City of Manhattan Beach collections (city collections) include all types of historical objects and archival material as well as a 1905 beach cottage that pertain to the local South Bay community and history of Manhattan Beach. Materials date from the late 19th century to the present, with the bulk of material ranging between the 1910s and the 2010s. The collection comprises approximately 1,550 objects including framed items and roughly 165 linear feet (LF) of archival material. The materials are currently stored across five facilities: the historical beach cottage, an external rented trailer, old restroom facilities, the Manhattan Beach Art Center (MBAC), and the Manhattan Beach Library (MBL).

A. Observations

1. Collection Content

a. Object Collection

The object collection consists of a wide range of historic materials dating back to before the incorporation of the City of Manhattan Beach (pre-1912) as well as the beach cottage, a historic structure dated to 1905 (Figure 1).

Objects in this collection are of all types, including household tools and equipment, transportation-related items, archeological artifacts, oil paintings, framed historic photographs and maps, historic construction samples, clothing, footwear, hats, figurines, dinnerware, musical instruments, beach sand, seashells, ostrich feathers, furnishings, toys, and commemorative items. Objects are made from a wide variety of material such as textiles, ceramics, sand, wood, metal, and glass. The collection encompasses an estimated 1,550 objects of which about a third are duplicates. Examples of duplicated objects include commemorative coins, vinyl records, political signs, sand samples, and railroad spikes.



Figure 1: Entrance to the beach cottage

b. Archive Collection

The archives are divided into the following categories: books and periodicals, paper records, photographic material, and audiovisual media (see Figure 2). Most common are serial publications, yearbooks, photo albums, and scrapbooks. Roughly 20 LF or twelve percent of the archive collection relates to museum documentation and the history and operation of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society. Other organizations include the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce, Manhattan Beach Women's Club, Metlox Ceramics, Manhattan Beach Conservancy, Democratic Club, Manhattan Heights PTA, and Lions Clubs International.

Books and Periodicals

Books and periodicals account for approximately 104 LF of the collection. This category comprises of local history books, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, scrapbooks, phone books, and yearbooks. The collection is primarily made from newsprint, magazine paper, and paper as well as a smaller number of photographs included within scrapbooks. Topics include local schools, clubs and associations, city government, sports contests, and events. Many duplicated publications exist within the yearbooks (roughly 50%) and newspapers.

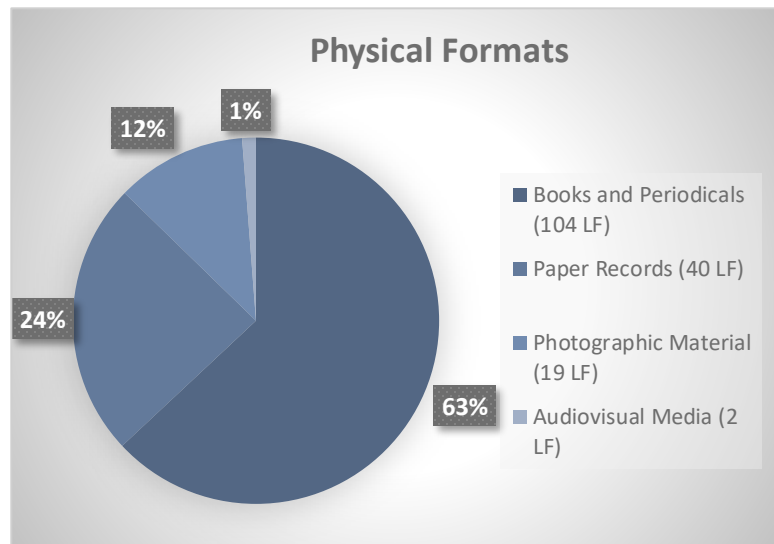


Figure 2: Approximate volume of material by category

Roughly half of this category consists of newspapers. They are stored mainly as bound volumes or loose in boxes on shelves, typically arranged by publication name and chronologically. Publications include Beach Reporter, Manhattan Beach News, Easy Reader, South Bay Post, High Tide, South Bay Lifestyle, Manhattan Beach Sun, and Daily Breeze. They also contain numerous binders that contain newspaper clippings of local events. Some binders are annotated to mark the source publication and page number. Many of the newspapers, newspaper clipping binders as well as yearbooks have been cataloged individually making these materials easier to locate and access than the rest of the archive collection.

Paper Records

Paper records account for roughly 40 LF of the collection. These records are primarily made up of paper related to city government, real estate, businesses, events, or organizations. They include correspondence, meeting minutes, ordinances, essays, oral history transcriptions, title deeds, ledgers, menus, calendars, postcards, and promotional materials. Oversized materials include blueprints, planning documents, and maps. Papers in filing cabinets are arranged alphabetically by subject in letter-sized folders; however, papers stored in boxes have not been processed, are typically not arranged in any order, and are not in folders.

Museum management records are scattered throughout the collection. They document collection acquisitions, early collection inventories, visitors, donors, and information on the beach cottage. These records are intended for internal reference rather than public research purposes. Material types include deeds of gift, loan agreements, inventories, guest register books, and reports.

Photographic Materials

Unframed photographic materials account for approximately 19 LF of the collection. They are made up primarily of photographic prints, 35 mm photographic slides, and film negatives with a smaller amount of

stereocards and tintypes (see Figure 3). Photographs document city events, activities, aerial views, and streetscapes. Like the paper records, photographic materials in metal filing cabinets are arranged alphabetically by subject in letter-sized folders; however, materials stored in boxes have not been processed, are typically not arranged in any order, and are not in folders. Photograph albums are the exception as they are usually organized by subject, and typically thereunder by chronological order.

Audiovisual Media

Audiovisual media account for roughly 2 LF of the collection. They primarily consist of an estimated 30 VHS tapes, U-Matics, audio cassette tapes, audio reels, film reels, and CDs. These contain sound and video recordings of events such as the hometown fair and History Day, interviews with Manhattan Beach residents, and digital scrapbooks. Media are stored in boxes, loose on shelves and in filing cabinet drawers (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Audiocassette tapes and 35 mm photographic slides housed in a filing drawer

2. Collection Development

a. Acquisition Strategies

The City of Manhattan Beach continues to acquire objects and archival material that relate to the history of the community through donations, purchases, and loans. There is currently no defined collection scope or acquisitions policy, which inhibits the ability to turn away items. While the MBHS has a deed of gift and loan agreement in use, it is unclear how often they are completed, where they are stored, and if the items identified by the deeds of gift or loan agreements can be tracked. No procedural documents exist to internally guide the acquisition process at the museum.

Generally, the existing collections fit the city's focus of collecting Manhattan Beach and South Bay history. However, all items should be reviewed by city staff to determine if these items are site specific, can be preserved and maintained going forward, duplicates, and/or non-collection items such as MBHS decorations, supplies, merchandise, or reproductions.

b. Scope of Collection Statement (SOCS)

A SOCS defines the parameters of present and future accessions in a museum collection. These collections should directly support the interpretation and the understanding of the community's history and significance. The SOCS should also define what objects or type of objects the city would like to preserve and maintain. This document provides selection criteria that help identify items appropriate to the museum's objectives. City staff and MBHS members should not collect and add items that do not fit the scope.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Lack of Internal Procedural Documents

There are no standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the acquisition and deaccession processes. With only one part-time dedicated city staff member and a volunteer-run historical society managing the museum, creating SOPs will help with the sustainability of the museum collections program as well as provide efficiency to the acquisition and deaccession processes.

2. No Scope of Collection Statement

The City of Manhattan Beach needs to clearly articulate the mission, objectives, and selection criteria for the museum collections. Without clear guidance for volunteer staff, the provenance for much of the collection may have been lost, excessive duplicates of items have been collected, and items that may be out of scope for the city collections have been occupying valuable storage space.

C. Recommendations

1. Immediate (0-1 year)

a. Develop a SOCS.

- Write a formal statement of purpose specific to the city collection, which describes the intended accomplishments and guides the activities for achieving these accomplishments. The statement will ensure the museum collections has a coherent and well-defined focus.
- Outline the current size of the collection and types of materials stored as well as the collections' strengths and weaknesses. From this overview, an acquisitions policy will be developed to define what material should be accepted into the collection. It will guide the selection process for identifying relevant materials to acquire through purchase or donation. This document will help prevent future out-of-scope materials from entering the collection or remaining unprocessed in storage.

b. Create and implement a deaccession plan.

- Create a deaccession plan, which internally guides the process of permanently removing items or groups of items from the museum collection's ownership and custody.
- Review material that has previously been identified for potential deaccession such as the model train and determine disposition.
- Review collections for reproductions, period pieces, living history items, exhibit props, supplies, MBHS decorations, and MBHS merchandise. Separate collection items from these non-collection items to gain better intellectual and physical control over the collections.

c. Develop standard operating procedures (SOPS).

- Create a set of SOPs for ingesting materials into the collections.
- Include step-by-step processes for ensuring all important information regarding the objects and archival material is recorded and entered into the collection management system (CMS), Proficio Elements.
- Identify a minimum data set for entering newly donated or purchased materials into the CMS to ensure standardization when cataloging.

2. Short-Term (1-2 years)

a. Identify potential backlog of collections in museum facilities.

- Research site-specific significance for historical items found in the museum facilities.
- Research general historical significance for historical items found in the museum facilities (condition and rarity with reference to similar objects preserved in museum collections elsewhere).
- Determine final disposition of found objects based on findings (e.g., exhibited or stored onsite, or deaccessioned and disposed).

3. Long-Term (2-5 years)

a. Continue to revisit SOCS and the deaccession plan.

- Review the SOCS and deaccession plan at least every 5 years and/or whenever changed circumstances clearly alter the mission of the museum and/or when priorities in a specific collecting category have been met.
- Upon completion of a revised SOCS and deaccession plan, thoroughly inventory, and review the contents of the collection and deaccession lost or out of scope items following all pertinent protocols.

II. MUSEUM DOCUMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Museum documentation records (accessions and catalog) are central components of collection management and provide crucial information regarding the growth and maintenance of the collections overall. They establish city ownership of museum objects, document custody and disposition, and ensure accountability of collections. Museum management records are permanent records and should be retained indefinitely; however, the city should not accession the records as part of the museum collection.

A. Observations

Proper museum recordkeeping improves access and use of the collections for study, interpretation, exhibition, and educational programming. This activity also assists in the protection, preservation, and accountability of objects and archival material in the city's possession.

1. Accession Records

Accession records are typically created during the acquisition process. These records may contain the following:

- Deeds of Gift
- Receipts of purchase
- Invoices or purchasing agreements
- Notes on catalog and accession number issues
- Secondary research related to collections materials
- Donor correspondence
- Shipping documents
- Expired outgoing loan agreements

Few collections materials have accessible documentation related to their acquisition. Pieces of the accession record have been stored in multiple places throughout the museum facilities. Documentation exists in binders in the beach cottage office, in the filing cabinets in the trailer, and periodically within donation boxes or adhered to the physical objects themselves (see Figure 4).

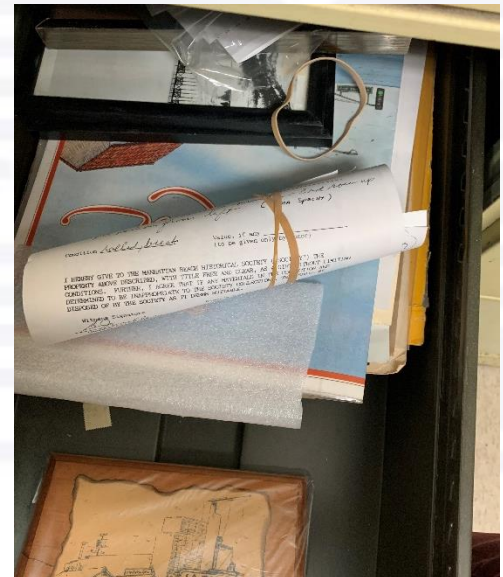


Figure 4: Rolled Deed of Gift stored with potential donations in filing drawer

Blank deeds of gifts have been stored near the volunteer reception desk at the entry of the cottage. Original copies should be filed in an accessible location so that new forms may be filed promptly, and a copy of the original should be given to the donor. It is recommended that an additional copy of the deed of gift be stored with the donation items until they have been properly processed and labeled to maintain the provenance of the donation. MBHS volunteers have already taken steps to do this as observed during the site visit.

2. Catalog Records

In the past, MBHS volunteers had used PastPerfect as the CMS for the collection. The data from PastPerfect was provided to an archivist, hired by the City of Manhattan Beach, to import the existing catalog records into a new CMS, Proficio Elements. It is unknown if this information remains with the City of Manhattan Beach. It is believed that a copy of the information may still be in the possession of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society. Over the past two years, part-time staff have created 1,221 skeletal catalog records in the new database. Each record includes the following datapoints:

- Brief description
- Artist
- Condition notes
- Page counts
- Location, and
- Image (either the front and back of an object or a scan of the book cover or front page of a newspaper)

Most collection items currently do not have a catalog number, a unique identification number, that tracks and accounts for each object or archive collection. Part-time city staff members had been taking steps to rectify this by assigning standardized catalog numbers. This task is a great first step to inventory and track what belongs to the museum and what still needs to be formally accessioned or removed from the collections.

The new numbering scheme is a trinomial number separated by periods. It begins with the catalog year, followed by a three-digit number representing the object type or physical format, and ends with a sequential unique four-digit number (e.g., 2020.001.0201). The following list denotes the significance of the middle number followed by the number of records entered in Proficio Elements:

- 001: Ceramics (213 records)
- 100: Yearbooks (127 records)
- 101: Newspapers (881 records)

These records are available from one computer. During the site visit, the database could be accessed at the MBAC, across the street from where most of the objects are stored at Pollywog Park.

3. Loan Records

It is unclear whether incoming or outgoing loans currently exist for the museum collections. There has been minimal maintenance of these records except for the



Figure 5: Displayed Manhattan Beach 50th anniversary pennant with loan note in upper right corner

occasional exhibit label or note stating whether the item is loaned or on loan (see Figure 5).

4. Inventory Records

The MBHS currently has printed copies of photograph indexes and a general inventory of the holdings (circa 1995 with some revisions from 2002) stored within the archives collection. The paper inventory of the city collections includes sections about the “Library Room,” newspaper holdings, newspaper clipping binders, scrapbooks, notes about various ephemera and collections in binders, file box inventories, and a list of what items were moved to the “storage building” in 1995. Some existing box labels are also descriptive in listing the contents within, but most were inaccurate, vague, or incomplete. While this does provide some insight into the content of the collections, there is little information about the location of the items and no unique container numbers on the storage containers to assist MBHS volunteers in locating items.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Organization and Storage of Museum Documentation Records

The lack of centralized documentation impedes the City of Manhattan Beach’s ability to demonstrate that they own a large portion of the collection material. It also inhibits the ability to remove and dispose of non-collections material as ownership, provenance, and collection status of the materials remain unclear. The lack of documentation hinders the access and use of these collections by researchers, MBHS volunteers, and other city staff, as the copyright and permissions information is minimal and not documented in one consolidated place. Accession records should also be entered into Proficio Elements.

2. Limited Catalog Records

There is currently no comprehensive catalog and/or finding aid for describing or locating material. MBHS volunteers frequently rely on their own memory in combination with descriptive box labels, which are sometimes inaccurate or vague, to locate material for research requests and exhibitions. This process can become time-consuming for volunteers and nearly impossible for city staff. The lack of a comprehensive guide or database system also makes it difficult to advertise the collection’s unique contents to potential researchers and educators.

3. Item-Level Cataloging for Archives Collection

Most of the collections within the archives are artificial and have been separated according to material type or subject and cataloged at the item level. Item-level catalog records for the newspapers and yearbooks are not compliant with contemporary archival descriptive standards. Creating item-level catalog records for archival material is not sustainable due to increasing backlog of collections material, limited staff, and limited workspace for potential catalogers. These factors inhibit accessibility and usability to researchers, educators, MBHS volunteers and city staff alike.

4. Limited Workspace

A designated processing and cataloging space outside the beach cottage's office and storage trailer is needed and would facilitate workflows and provide a better standard of care for museum collections.

5. Outdated and Incomplete Loan Agreements

All loan agreements and notes of loans are spread throughout the facilities. To keep track and account for the collections, a thorough review of this documentation needs to occur with follow up to the lender or lendee. The agreements need to be updated/created and stored in a centralized location close to the accession records. Loans should also be entered into Proficio Elements.

6. Lack of Standardized Operating Procedures

A lack of formalized, internal workflows and procedures for accessioning, deaccessioning, lending, and cataloging collections items has created issues with ownership, collections status, and provenance. A set of standardized procedures should also be incorporated for data entry into Proficio Elements as data output is only as good as data input. For example, controlled vocabulary should be established for object names and for location names.

C. Recommendations

1. Immediate (0-1 year)

a. Establish policies and procedures.

- Formulate a collection scope and acquisitions policy to determine what items are best suited to the collection.
- Update existing documentation and guidelines for MBHS volunteers for accepting and processing donations.
- Create temporary custody agreements to use with potential donors while the donated material is under review.
- Create a deaccession plan (consult California's Unclaimed Property Laws for guidance, California Civic Code section 1899.9).
- Develop a list of roles and responsibilities between City staff and MBHS volunteers.

b. Review, consolidate, and update museum documentation records.

- Review deeds of gift, donor correspondence and acquisition notes for required legal documentation. Changes for the deeds of gift may include:
 - Accession number (Year of donation & sequential number for the year: 2021.001)
 - Date of donation

- Donor information
- Donation information
 - Item list w/ descriptions
 - Relevant dates and names associated with items
 - Historical context of items
 - Other notes
- Item condition, preservation concerns, etc.
- Rights statement
- Signature w/ date (Donor & City of Manhattan Beach representative)
- Create physical accession records for collection material in a centralized and accessible location.
- Enter museum documentation records in Proficio Elements.
- Establish and update loan agreements (hard copy and electronic) with existing lenders and lenders.
- Establish deaccession files clearly delineating deaccessioned materials.

2. Short-term (1-2 years)

a. Update workspace.

- Establish a dedicated workspace for surveying, cataloging, and processing collections at the beach cottage. Staff should evaluate the efficiency of the spaces that are currently being used to determine what can be changed and what must stay as is. Staff spaces in an archive often require more space per person than a typical office space to accommodate working with oversized materials for inventorying or preservation. Any space designated for processing, rehousing, or digitization, among other archive functions, should allocate approximately 50% more space per person. For example, a typical office space is allocated 100 square feet per person, while a space that includes surveying and processing tasks will require approximately 150 square feet per person.

b. Survey collections.

- Confirm accuracy and update current inventories to assist in the full-collection cataloging.
- Determine an arrangement scheme to implement on current archives collection that will be applied to future donations.
- Prepare processing documentation outlining the arrangement scheme, methods for arrangement, and cataloging instructions for database entry. This will ensure consistent catalog records for collections, regardless of the person responsible for updating the catalog.
- Develop an Access and Use plan addressing object retrieval workflows (for exhibition, research, education and/or for loan purposes at any location where museum collections are permanently stored).

3. Long-term (2-5 years)

a. Process, catalog, and rehouse collections.

- Formally process and catalog collections. Establish an organizational schema or groupings and process the assembled archive collections at the box or folder level. Catalog objects at the item

level. Once complete create and publish a finding aid for each archival collection and catalog records for each object.

- Give items and boxes identifying tags and labels.
- Rehouse collections in archival safe materials.

b. Data clean-up of Proficio Elements catalog records.

- Update location documentation in catalog records as needed.
- Attach donor and accession information to the catalog records as needed.
- Attach loan information to the catalog records as needed.
- Review and conform catalog records for archives collection to best practices.
- Revisit and update catalog records when new research becomes available about the item or archive collection.

III. PRESERVATION AND CONDITION OF COLLECTIONS

Besides making museum collections available to the public for exhibit, education, and research purposes, city staff are responsible for preserving them for future generations. This can be accomplished by establishing and implementing policies and procedures that best protect the collections from agents of deterioration (e.g., physical, chemical and/or mechanical damage) as well as routine evaluation.

A. Observations

1. Museum Documentation

Though spread throughout the facilities, the deeds of gift observed during the site visit are in good condition. City staff should investigate storing the accession records, loan agreements and other supporting documents in acid-free folders contained in locked, fire-resistant file cabinets. Documentation should be completed using archival-safe pens and/or pencils.

2. Museum Collections

The museum collections contain stable, inorganic materials such as lithics, metal, ceramics, and glass, and are in overall good condition. The more vulnerable materials in the collections are mostly organic, consisting of leather, feathers, wood, paper, textiles, and seashells.

a. Collections on Display at the Beach cottage

Condition

The building is generally open to the public on the weekends and contains multiple permanent and temporary exhibits on the history of Manhattan Beach. The displayed items are in overall good condition, though preservation concerns do exist. The colors of a quilt located next to a window are fading due to light exposure from the window (see Figure 6). Light is a risk for all framed paper and photograph on the walls of the cottage as well. There are shades on every window that should be pulled down to minimize this risk. Due to environment constraints, iron items appear to be actively corroding and oxidizing especially in the foyer of the cottage, whereas silver materials are actively tarnishing (see Figure 7). All items on display have accumulated dust overtime. Dust is an attractant to pests and needs to be addressed.



Figure 6: Color fading on quilt due to natural light exposure



Figure 7: Railroad spikes oxidizing located in foyer of beach cottage

Display Methods

A couple of the items in the display cases are overcrowded and stacked on top of each other. Feathers especially are very vulnerable to physical forces due to their fragile structure which can be easily bent and broken.

Textiles on exhibit have extra stress and pressure on them due to their display methods. A t-shirt in the temporary exhibit room is hung on the wall using thumbtacks. Thumbtacks create holes in the fabric that may stretch overtime. Clothespins hanging clothes in the back entryway may distort fabric overtime (see Figure 8).

b. Collections Located in the Beach Cottage Office and Trailer

Condition

The collections stored in the beach cottage office and in the trailer are in overall good condition. They are kept in a relatively stable environment and rarely handled. Early 20th century newspapers do show signs of deterioration through embrittlement and fading newsprint. However, this is intrinsic with newspaper material. Little of the lignin that binds cellulose fibers together is removed. The lignin causes acids to degrade the cellulose. Newsprint discolor, become brittle and disintegrate. Eighty percent of newsprint is made this way and has an expected useful life of fewer than 50 years, even with care. While other collection materials have minor or moderate preservation concerns, the HAI team did not find any materials that need immediate care.

Housing Methods

Housing methods of collections can have a direct impact on the condition and longevity of the materials and are integral for the ongoing safety and protection of the collections. Suitable types of storage methods will provide support and protection from agents of deterioration.

Museum storage containers provide protection between the object and its immediate environment. Archival quality containers and supports not only increase the level of preservation, but also contribute to the organization of the collection (see Figure 9). They minimize object handling as well. Most storage containers used in the beach cottage office and trailer are preservation-quality acid-free, lignin-free corrugated board. It is apparent that steps have been made to process and rehouse some of the collections. Many archival boxes have been



Figure 8: Early 20th century textiles hung by wood clothespins in the beach cottage



Figure 9: Newspaper archival boxes maximize shelf space

used to house the newspaper and yearbook collections. The boxes selected for the newspaper collections are sized appropriately for the items and filled to an acceptable level. They are, however, placed on higher shelves, which makes them difficult to retrieve.

Some of the filing cabinet drawers are overstuffed and need to be decompressed (see Figure 10). As they are now, collection materials are hard to access. Audiovisual media and photographic material currently stored in non-archival containers and binders need to be put in better protective enclosures such as archival cassette boxes and archival polypropylene sleeves (see Figure 11).

Many of the non-archival boxes appear to be the same boxes that the items were donated in. These containers are often partially filled with items which are stacked haphazardly inside. A large portion of the boxes currently in use are only partially packed, or items are simply placed inside without any folders, labels, or packing material (see Figure 12). Using boxes that are sized appropriately for the donation or collection will better utilize the storage space available for the collections.

A considerable number of collections material have been placed loose on shelves, free of any container. Sometimes, they are stacked without cushion. This is a potential hazard to these objects in case of unexpected movement of the shelves. Items could easily roll or slip off the shelves and incur significant damage. The loose materials are also accumulating dust and dirt.

c. Collections Located in the Old Restroom Facilities

Condition

The overall condition of collections material located in the old restroom facilities is fair. Some items appear to be broken such as the model train (It is unclear whether the train is part of the collections.). Most items were inaccessible, so



Figure 10: Overstuffed filing drawer in the trailer

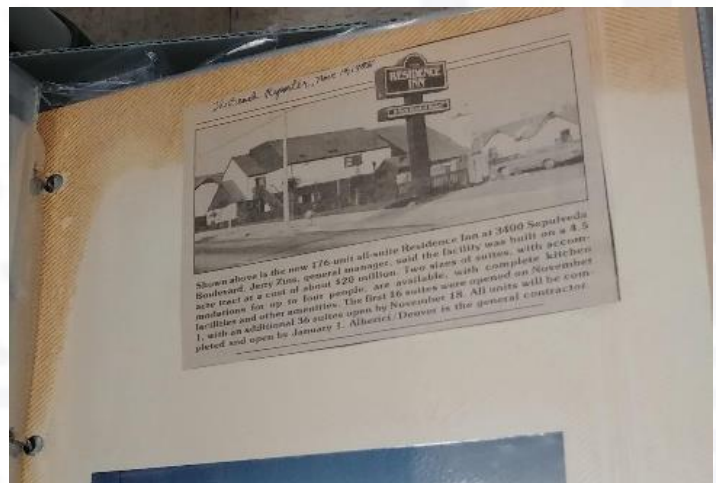


Figure 11: Photo album with non-archival sticky sleeves



Figure 12: Partially packed box with no padding, an example of inefficient storage

the HAI team was unable to assess the items individually.

Housing Methods

The oversized collection materials stored in these facilities are either stored on shelving or on the floor and are not covered by any protection; thus, allowing a considerable amount of dust, dirt and spiderwebs onto the materials (see Figure 13). Newspapers are stored loose within non-archival boxes.

d. Collections Located at the MBAC

Condition

Metlox ceramics are in very good condition, while the oil paintings have a thin layer of dust and grime on them and are in fair condition. The oil paintings are waiting to be cleaned by conservators once funding is available.

Housing Methods

The Metlox ceramics are stored in stacked plastic bins on the floor. Within the bins, the ceramics are generally housed according to good museum practice with most objects placed in cavity packs or padded with tissue (see Figure 14). Non-archival polyurethane foam has been used for the cavity mounts due to limited funding. Objects are largely not stacked or overcrowded. When possible, city staff have housed materials of similar sizes together. Objects are generally labeled with the object number written on a piece of tape adhered to the object itself and is visible for easy access; however, the tape should be replaced by archival safe object tags.

The oil paintings are stored in secure, archival shadow boxes in a closet at MBAC. The housing is in good condition.

e. Collections Located at the MBL

Condition

The bound newspapers are overall in good condition. Most of the deterioration is occurring with the older newspapers; some spines of the older volumes have fallen off or are significantly damaged. Leather and linen binding in particular show signs of damage. Interior pages of the volumes appear to be in good



Figure 13: Items overcrowded and unprotected in the old restroom facilities



Figure 14: Excellent cavity mounts for Metlox ceramic figurines and dinnerware with object numbers clearly visible

condition, although some have separated from the binding. The library staff has done a good job removing the volumes in poor condition from public access, slowing the deterioration done by overhandling.

Housing Methods

Most bound volumes are either housed upright or flat on the shelves. Some of the shelves are not deep enough for the volumes and create an overhang (see Figure 15). Ideally, protective enclosures should be created for the fragile volumes.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Non-Archival Housing Methods and Materials

City staff have rehoused some museum collections to improve overall storage conditions. In general, more archival safe supplies are needed to rehouse the museum collections. Many boxes and shelves need polyethylene foam liners added for cushion and support. Acid-free folders or paper need to be used to interweave the paper collection to prevent acid-transfer, which can stain the enclosed materials, accelerate deterioration, and possibly cause loss of content. Fragile bound volumes should be put in protective enclosures.



Figure 15: Bound volumes of Manhattan Beach News lying flat and stacked on shallow shelves in the Manhattan Beach Library

2. Lack of Dust Covers

Shelving units and tops of filing cabinets storing museum collections do not have polyethylene dust covers to protect exposed collection materials from dust and dirt.

3. Storage Organization

Objects are generally not organized by material type and size. By storing objects of the same material together in the same container, it would reduce the chance that disparate materials could produce harmful chemical reactions that would damage or accelerate deterioration within the collection. Other objects, such as framed items, do not need to be stored in a container. To consolidate space, framed artwork, prints, and documents not currently on display should be removed from their frames, stored in acid-free folders, and placed in Solander boxes.

Boxes in the trailer are stored in a relatively neat and straightforward fashion; whereas the beach cottage office is overcrowded with many boxes stacked on top of each other (see Figure 17). Storage needs to be better arranged in a single layer so not to disturb other objects when accessing.

4. Backlog of Uncataloged Materials

Most collections scattered throughout the facilities need disposition (e.g., accession, catalog, remove, consolidate). As it is likely that some of this material will fit the future SOCS, it is imperative that these items are properly surveyed and integrated into the collections. The longer these items are stored in non-climate-controlled areas and not in storage the greater the risk of loss. In addition, non-collection items (merchandise, supplies) are taking up valuable space in the storage area and are dispersed throughout the storage areas.

C. Recommendations

1. Short-Term (1-2 years)

a. Maximize storage space.

- Remove non-collection material from the storage areas.
- Group unprocessed objects from locations scattered throughout the museum facilities to a central collection storage area.
- Consider reconfiguring shelving space.

b. Identify collection materials.

- Perform a physical survey of all facilities to identify items that should be added to the museum collections.
- Identify a temporary storage space and transfer the items there until they can be accessioned and stored permanently.
- Formulate a plan to routinize the transfer of new acquisitions to the storage area.

2. Long-Term (2-5 years)

a. Improve and implement museum collection preservation methods and practices.

- Establish a prioritization plan for conservation treatment of museum objects.
- Protect museum collections from casual handling by visitors both to protect the objects and human health and safety. Objects in a public space should be roped off. Signage should accompany these objects, alerting visitors that they should not touch or climb onto them.
- Rehouse exhibited museum collections as needed.
- Raise all objects off the floor at minimum of 6 inches.



Figure 17: Overcrowding in the beach cottage office

b. Enhance protective measures.

- Create dust covers for all shelving and tables that are currently housing unprotected collections materials.
- Pad and line shelves and containers with 1/8" or 1/4" thick closed cell polyethylene foam.
- Padded shelf restraints (earthquake bars) around shelving unit to limit chance of objects falling and shattering due to heavy vibration or storms. Ideally, shelves should have a lip or rim to prevent containers from being knocked or pushed off.

c. Update non-archival storage methods and materials.

- Replace with inert, non-acidic materials, or interleave acidic museum storage folders with pH neutral buffered bond paper or tissue to avoid acid transfer onto adjacent items.
- Replace acidic containers or object labels with ones made of archival materials.
- Make storage mounts and/or trays to ensure proper object handling and to safeguard against incidental storage furniture movement especially for fragile materials.
- Add Tyvek™ sheeting to existing cavity mounts to act as buffer between collections material and foam.
- Raise oversized items off the floor by using appropriate pallets.

IV. COLLECTION ENVIRONMENT

Long-term preservation of museum collections begins with maintaining proper environmental conditions in all collection storage facilities. The bulk of the museum collections, both object and archival, is held in three rooms within two separate buildings on the same property within Polliwog Park: the beach cottage and the rented trailer. Other locations include old restroom facilities also within Polliwog Park, MBAC, and MBL. Primary conditions and environmental factors evaluated include climate control and monitoring, lighting, housekeeping and pest management.

A. Observations

1. Climate Control and Monitoring

All buildings except the old restroom facilities are equipped with a central air conditioning system or a window unit (see Figure 18). The beach cottage is set at 70°F, and the trailer is set at 71°F. There are currently no systems in place to measure or monitor the environment, including temperature and relative humidity, in the collection areas. There is also no standard procedure for a regular walkthrough of the storage areas to ensure continued monitoring of these spaces.



Figure 18: Non-climate-controlled collection storage in the old restroom facilities at Polliwog Park

Museum standards dictate that collections should be stored in a room with a temperature range of 60°F to 70°F and relative humidity between 40% and 60%, with fluctuations being kept at a minimum. Fluctuations in either measurement may cause material to expand and contract at a molecular level and result in objects and records becoming brittle, warped, or moldy. The temperature and relative humidity readings taken during the site visit fall within this recommended range except for the foyer of the beach cottage and the old restroom facilities, which both registered six degrees above 70°F. The stability in the collection environment appears to be good overall although fluctuations in the relative humidity should be monitored more closely as there are no humidity controls in place at the beach cottage, trailer, old restroom facilities, and MBAC.

2. Lighting

Many lights within the primary collection areas are artificial light (either fluorescent tubes or track lighting) with manual control. Lights are kept off when not in use.



Figure 19: Direct sunlight on shelving in the trailer

There are no sources of natural light within the old restroom facilities. All sources of unfiltered natural light through exterior windows in the beach cottage, trailer, and MBAC are blocked with shades or window coverings. However, the shades in the beach cottage and one window covering in the trailer were not in use when the HAI team assessed the buildings. Most museum collection items, except for those on display and loose on shelves, are stored in containers or cabinets and are thus not exposed to natural light (see Figure 19).

No light monitoring occurs at any location.

3. Housekeeping

The collection areas are not routinely cleaned. Moldy berries and old popcorn are present in the back entryway of the beach cottage (see Figure 20). These have the potential to attract pests and rodents. A myriad of dust, dirt, and spiderwebs are present in collection areas. There does not appear to be any established schedule of maintenance procedures and no records of completed housekeeping activities.



Figure 20: Moldy berries and old popcorn on the floor in the back entryway of the cottage

4. Pest Management

City staff members and MBHS volunteers have previously noticed silverfish and mice in the collection areas, but no integrated pest management systems are in place. Pest traps are not currently employed in any of the primary collection areas. While such measures may seem futile, the purpose of pest trapping is to identify pest types and their frequency to inform further remediation actions. The City of Manhattan Beach uses a pest exterminator for insect infestations, but services do not include regular monitoring of the collection areas.

During the site visit, the HAI team observed insect droppings behind boxes in the office of the beach cottage and near the piano in the dining room (see Figure 21). No rodent droppings or nests were observed at the time of the assessment; however, large accumulations of dust and dirt were observed on materials and on boxes, an attractant to pests. In addition, a floor grate in the hallway leads directly to the ground that may provide access for insects and rodents.



Figure 21: Evidence of pests in the dining room of the beach cottage

Unfortunately, due to limited space, funding and staff, the City of Manhattan Beach cannot inspect and isolate all incoming museum collections. This action would provide another layer of defense against preservation threats. During this intake period, staff may flag items for conservation treatment, special handling, and/or special housing.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Monitoring Environmental Conditions

Without long-term monitoring of environmental conditions, it is unclear whether the daily temperature and relative humidity severely fluctuates outside of the optimal range. These fluctuations can have a negative impact on the collection materials stored within, as evidenced by the presence of metal corrosion of the railway pins in the foyer of the beach cottage. The dry, consistent weather of Manhattan Beach has more than likely prevented this for spaces that have conditioned air.

2. Lack of Museum Housekeeping Procedures

Perhaps one of the biggest risks to the museum collections is the lack of formalized, up-to-date written procedures for museum housekeeping. Without conducting regulated walk-throughs, exhibit and storage areas in these locations are not accessed or cleaned regularly. Lack of regular housekeeping in the exhibit and storage areas can be detrimental to collections in the long-term.

Maintenance should also be done on the outside of the beach cottage. During the site visit, the HAI team observed that the gutters of the beach cottage are very full of leaves (see Figure 22). This blockage may create a possible water leakage issue if rain cannot drain properly and/or become extra kindling in the instance of a fire.



Figure 22: Run gutters of the beach cottage overflowing with dead leaves

3. Lack of Isolated Collections Space

The lack of a truly isolated space for incoming collections increases the risk of mold and pests to the rest of the collection.

4. Space Utilization

Existing storage space at the beach cottage and trailer is insufficient for current storage needs and future growth. As noted, existing storage space is nearly full, with some objects and containers placed directly on

the floor or stored in other buildings (see Figure 23). There is no storage space to accommodate the growth of the museum collections over time. The City of Manhattan Beach should continue to explore alternatives for additional space or options to reconfigure existing storage spaces to accommodate accretions.

Complicating efforts to plan for adequate storage space is the fact that the extent of historic materials is unknown. The City of Manhattan Beach has never had a full-time, permanent archivist or collections manager, with the result that materials are distributed throughout the facilities, and city staff largely are unaware of the location or even the existence of them.

Processing the catalog backlog will free additional space by allowing the museum collections to cull non-archival material and store the resource management records in a more efficient manner. Rapid processing of the archives could be achieved through some level of minimal processing, such as More Product, Less Process.¹

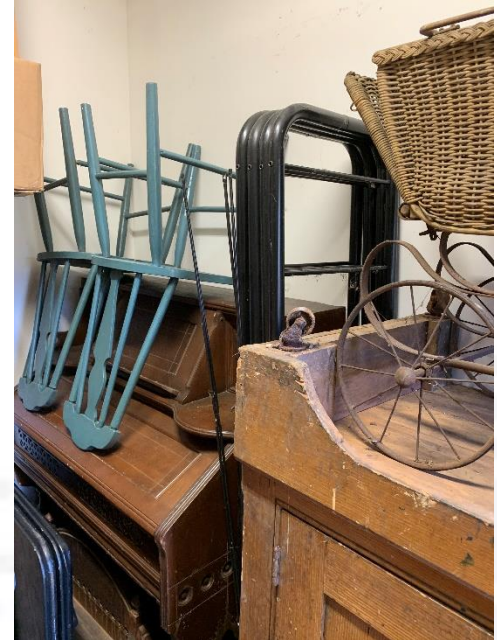


Figure 23: Oversized furniture stored in the old restroom facilities

5. Storage Methods

City staff has modified existing storage realities well by adding the rented trailer. However, space utilization constraints have resulted in some overcrowding on shelves and in containers and allowing some materials open to light, dirt, and pests.

C. Recommendations

1. Immediate (0-1 year)

a. Create a housekeeping plan.

- Adjust roles and responsibilities to reflect current staffing.
- Approve, keep current, and implement a museum housekeeping plan for every space that houses museum collections, to ensure that housekeeping routines are sensitive to museum collections preservation needs.
- Develop and incorporate a monitoring and enforcement plan.

2. Short-term (1-2 years)

a. Implement a housekeeping plan.

¹ An ideology that emphasizes the importance of creating finding aids for archives instead of arrangement at the item level.

- Implement the housekeeping plan covering routine and cyclic maintenance activities, to the extent possible with the current staffing levels and identified needs. As supported by city management, implement and train city maintenance staff to use the plan. Consider assigning (and training) a housekeeping supervisor or equivalent.

b. Create an isolated collections space outside of the beach cottage.

- Establish a collections space for intake and isolation away from the beach cottage as it is an historical structure and may suffer as well to any potential risks.

c. Monitor the environment.

- Conduct analysis of any severe daily fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity in the primary collection storage areas to identify the cause.
- Maintain minimal daily fluctuations in environment-monitored storage areas:
 - Ideal temperature set point: 65 °F (± 5 °F)
 - Ideal relative humidity set point: 45% ($\pm 5\%$)
 - Relative humidity allowable seasonal drift: 35%-55% ($\pm 5\%$)

d. Create an integrated pest management (IPM) log.

- Ensure that data on pests is collected, including:
 - Species of insect
 - Lifecycle stage
 - Direction from which the insects entered the trap
 - Unusual conditions (e.g., breakdown of climate control equipment, roof leaks, etc.)

3. Long-Term (2-5 years)

a. Develop a collections storage plan.

- Evaluate various options to permanently improve environmental conditions and space requirements in current collections storage spaces, including:
 - Replace rented trailer with larger trailer.
 - Renovate another existing city facility.
 - Construct a new facility.
 - Lease a nearby third-party facility.
 - Lease space at nearby museum or university.
- Increase total collections storage space to account for future storage needs and anticipated accretions, once a survey of the collections is complete.
- Establish staff processing workspace and reference space that is separate from, but in proximity indoors to collections storage areas.

b. Make storage furniture improvements.

- Replace wooden shelving units with powder-coated steel shelving.
- Add flat file cabinets.
- Add climate-controlled storage for oversized objects.

V. ACCESS AND USE

Facilitating access and use for museum collections are guiding principles and fundamental functions of all museums. Access can be thought of as the ability, right, or permission to use a museum item within an established set of parameters. Access can be divided into two types: physical access, which is direct contact with the object, and intellectual access, which provides information about the object such as documentation, interpretation, or photographic images. In this context, use is defined as the ability to employ a museum item for a defined purpose.

A. Observations

1. Access of the Collections

Access to museum collections should be managed through a series of defined, controlled permissions and restrictions specific to a user group as established in an access and use policy. It should include a series of controls, which permit access for museum collections per user group within an established set of parameters. Restrictions also should be identified per user group as part of the levels of access to limit access when needed to protect the rights and privacy of information or to prohibit the sharing of sensitive personal, cultural, or geographical information.

The City of Manhattan currently does not have an access and use policy to govern the museum collections. At its most basic, an access and use policy should identify the procedures and protocols, which structure and provide for access and use of the city's museum collection for specified, approved purposes. This should include identifying the basic user groups of the museum collection and the types of physical and intellectual access and use permitted per user group. Each of these should include defined restrictions when necessary. Among other things, the access and use policy should identify the staff member who reviews requests, how users submit requests to access and use the museum collection, and how these requests are managed and documented. It also should define handling and supervision procedures of the collections while being accessed and used and identify the conditions in which access and use requests may be approved or denied.

2. Use of the Collections

In its current state, the museum collections are difficult to access and use by people outside of the MBHS organization. With little documentation available, knowledge of the collection contents and location are limited to only a few of the long-standing volunteer members of the MBHS. Proper documentation of collections, including the implementation of a numbering system and building/room/shelf location names, will increase the opportunities for outside researchers and educators to access and utilize the collections.

During the visit, MBHS representatives identified the newspapers as the most-used resources in the collections. Library staff also receive on average one request per day to look at the city's newspaper collection. As such, previous efforts to process and catalog the collections were focused on newspapers. The most easily accessible portion of the newspaper collection exists in bound volumes at the MBL.

However, there is a general inventory of the newspaper collection in a binder at the beach cottage. Processed newspapers are stored, individually in plastic sleeves, in labeled archival boxes.

MBHS representatives made it clear that digitization of the newspaper collection is a top priority. This action would certainly increase the accessibility of the newspapers. Things to consider when digitizing will be the budget for the digitization itself, long-term storage (including multiple backups, periodic file migration, and regular security checks to ensure the data has not become corrupted), and hosting of the files for public access.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Access and Use Policies for Museum Collections

There are no written policies or procedures, which specify how MBHS volunteers or city staff should respond to collection inquiries, or policies on who should have access to the museum collections and at what level.

2. Lack of Public Awareness and Accessibility

Collections are not actively visible to external sources. There is very little digital content available online for public research and visibility, nor very little advertisement of the collections on the web.

3. Limited Staff Resourcing

Full-time city staff are limited to what is necessary to keep the museum functioning. Staff members are knowledgeable and passionate about their work, but with fewer numbers and resources, the amount of work they can dedicate themselves to is limited. There is no archivist or collections manager on payroll.

With such a limited number of staff members, the museum is enhanced by MBHS volunteers. As a smaller nonprofit organization, the museum greatly benefits from and highly values the support of MBHS. With assistance from MBHS volunteers who care deeply for the museum, the museum can continue to be open to the public on the weekends. As there are no archivists or collections managers on staff, much of the processing and functioning of the collections is handled by volunteers. While some of the past volunteers may have had archival backgrounds, none currently do. With the combination of different backgrounds, turnover, and differing philosophies, there is an issue with consistency in maintaining the collections and its associated documentation.

4. Digitization

Funding can be difficult to secure. It becomes difficult to maintain collections, spaces, programming, and a secure infrastructure. The HAI team has observed several challenges to digitization due to staffing resources:

- Collection documentation lacks consistency.
- Almost all materials are not prepared for immediate digitization, and city staff or volunteers will need to process and prepare these materials before they can be digitized.
- There is frequent staff turnover that adds to the lack of knowledge transfer.
- Without an archivist, digitization manager, or collections manager on staff, maintenance of the collections and the creation of the digital collection falls to current staff and volunteers who do not have the background or training.

C. Recommendations

1. Immediate (0-1 year)

a. Develop formal policies for access and use of collections.

- Develop a written access and use policy for the museum collection including basic user groups and levels of physical and intellectual access and use for each museum collection per user group. The access and use policy should be made available to all potential users of the museum collection.
- Implement restriction procedures to identify and protect personally identifiable information and other sensitive information within the museum collection. Records identified as sensitive should be physically restricted from general accessibility and redacted copies provided to researchers when requested.

2. Short-term (1-2 years)

a. Confirm legal status of collections.

- All files selected for digitization and for sharing online should be a documented donation or on loan from owner with rights and permissions to do so. If materials found in collections do not have donation documentation, they should be reconciled by following museum Unclaimed Property laws per California state statute.
- Newly entering the public domain in 2022 will be all works published in 1926 and earlier (and all pre-1923 sound recordings).

3. Long term (2-5 years)

a. Improve public accessibility and visibility.

- Upload finding aids and catalog records (minus restricted information) to a searchable public interface easily discoverable to researchers such as the Online Archive of California (OAC).
- Photograph and digitize collections for upload into web catalog such as Calisphere.
- Explore opportunities to create web exhibits of collections materials.

b. Hire a temporary, part-time digitization manager.

- Hiring a digitization manager to help prepare the collection for digitization, as well as to determine the policies, procedures, and workflows. A digitization manager with a background in digitization and digital archives will be able to lay the foundation for the creation of the digitization collection by helping to choose and maintain the collection software. HAI strongly recommends hiring someone with a master's degree in library science for at least 24 hours a week.
- c. Hire a permanent, full-time museum curator.
- The museum collections would greatly benefit from having a full-time archivist or collection manager on staff who would be able to direct the workflow, maintain, and update the museum collections as well as pass on their knowledge to volunteers and other staff members.
- d. Plan and digitize the archives collection.
- With a collection of this current size, HAI recommends that materials be sent to a vendor for digitization as the most optimal option. Considering the limited space available in the building, as well as the current level of staffing, digitization will be most efficiently accomplished through vendors. The digitization vendors will also embed the metadata in the files created for each folder they digitize.

All materials will be digitized according to accepted industry best practice, as follows:

Photographs

- 400 DPI TIFF
- 100% scanned grayscale

Documents

- 400 DPI TIFF at document level
- PDF at folder level
- 50% scanned grayscale
- 50% scanned color

Moving images

- Video Master: 10-bit uncompressed, v210 codec in MOV wrapper
- Video Proxy: 3.0 Mbps H.264, 640 x 480 in MP4 wrapper
- DVDs: ISO disc image for pres master

Audio items

- Audio Master: 96 kHz/24-bit broadcast wave file with embedded metadata
- Audio Proxy: 256 kbps MP3
- CDs: Native Resolution

VI. EXHIBITIONS

Exhibits are the primary and traditional means by which museum collections reach its public audience. Exhibits communicate information, concepts, ideas, and stories about the people, events, activities, or cultural and natural resources that the collection commemorates or preserves.

In addition to information provided by exhibit text panels and labels, museum collection objects themselves have the power to transmit a range of meanings. When a museum object is put on exhibit, visitors can access the “real thing” rather than a reproduction, virtual object, or image of the item. The opportunity for a visitor to encounter an authentic object presents an invaluable experience. A museum object is powerful because it provides a direct tangible connection to a time, place, event, and/or person. Exhibits also demonstrate to the public the resources and values that the City of Manhattan Beach is dedicated to preserving.

A. Observations

In general, the museum collections suffer from a lack of use and accessibility. The challenges in creating and managing exhibits onsite featuring these museum objects largely tie into a lack of facilities onsite that meet basic museum standards for collections (such as fire protection) to safely maintain the collections items while on display.

The museum collection could benefit from investing in selective digitization of key museum items in the archival materials and museum objects to extend access to the public and to researchers through websites and other digital media. Additionally, wayside interpretative panels featuring museum collection items and informational packets at Polliwog Park could spotlight objects in the museum collections.

The contents on display at the beach cottage are a mixture of permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as reproductions and originals. Exhibition research and preparation is done by MBHS volunteers.

The front room of the beach cottage is considered a permanent exhibition. The images on the walls have been arranged to provide a visual timeline of life in Manhattan Beach, with walls dedicated to 1900-1915, 1915-1930, and 1930-1960 (see Figure 24). The artifacts on display around the room include tools, dishware, ration books, air raid warden uniform, and bricks from local landmarks. These objects help to give visitors perspective of the tools of daily life when the beach cottage would have been occupied. The furniture in the room includes some pieces with historic value, such as the piano owned by George H. Peck, one of Manhattan Beach’s early developers. Other pieces, such as the



Figure 24: Items on display in the beach cottage timeline exhibit

dining table, serve to complete the appearance of room and displays but may not have historic value.

The kitchen installation in an adjacent room is also considered a permanent exhibition. This installation includes a kitchen table with chairs and some dishware, a stove set with various pieces of cookware, a cupboard with photos and dishes on display, and an icebox (see Figure 25). Other permanent fixtures in the room include a large glass display case with around 65 pieces of Metlox ceramic on display and a gloss-front display box housing a piece of the Tonsorail Parlor salon sign. The remaining walls are adorned with framed photographs. One accent wall is dedicated to temporary exhibitions, the current display being focused on Bruce's Beach.



Figure 25: Kitchen display in the beach cottage

In addition, the hallway walls display framed photographs of aerial views and streetscapes of Manhattan Beach across the years. Another wall celebrates the town's birthdays, and the last wall tells the story of a post office dog, "Old George."

The last room that contains exhibit items is dedicated to temporary exhibitions. It currently tells the story of beach culture in Manhattan Beach. It features a large surfboard hanging from the ceiling, swimwear encased in glass, and shirts, newspapers, programs, and seashells located in a large display case at the end of the room (see Figure 26). The walls are also adorned with hanging framed photographs, papers, and newspaper articles.



Figure 26: Beach Culture of Manhattan Beach display in the beach cottage

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Lack of Public Visibility

Roughly 90% of the museum collections are not actively visible to external sources. Very little digital content is available online, limiting the use of all the museum collections and preventing wider public access. The beach cottage has exhibit space but lack adequate facilities to properly protect the collections.

2. Lack of Adequate Exhibit Space

Currently the facilities at the beach cottage do not meet museum's best standards to exhibit museum collections such as having a fire suppression system.

3. Exhibit Environmental Risks

The lack of environmental monitoring, improper lighting, and limited housekeeping and pest management put the collection at risk of deterioration. Until a decision is made on how best to remediate the existing exhibit conditions, the state of the collections onsite is in jeopardy as it currently stands.

C. Recommendations

1. Short-term (1-2 years)

a. Evaluate efficacy of onsite exhibits.

- Determine whether museum collections can and should remain on display at the beach cottage. If so, improve the exhibit conditions to meet museum standards for lighting, environmental controls and monitoring, fire and security systems, and pest management. If not, replace items with props or reproductions.

2. Long term (2-5 years)

a. Collaborate with MBHS volunteers to develop onsite interpretation and public programming that highlight objects from the museum collections.

- Create wayside interpretative panels that display coordinating historical objects and archives in the museum collections.
- Determine long-term interpretive and programming plans are for the museum collections.

b. Increase access and use of museum collections online.

- Create a web catalog for the museum collections as appropriate to extend access to these collections.
- Make finding aids for the archive collections accessible online at OAC.

VII. SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

While collections materials are susceptible to deterioration and decay over time due to poor environmental conditions, unexpected damage or loss can have even more swift and irreversible consequences.

A. Observations

1. Fire Protection

The threat of fire is considerable for museum collections, particularly collections containing paper-based materials and other organic matter. If materials are not destroyed altogether, they carry an exponential risk of damage from heat and smoke, or even water or chemical damage from fire suppression techniques.

There is currently no fire suppression system in any of the primary collection spaces. The beach cottage contains at least two smoke detectors (see Figure 27). It is unclear when the smoke detectors were last tested, but the smoke detector has working batteries.

A fire extinguisher is present in the beach cottage. It is unclear at this time whether this fire extinguisher has been inspected recently, and whether onsite staff members and MBHS volunteers receive basic fire suppression training on a regular basis. Fire hydrants are present throughout Polliwog Park.



Figure 27: Smoke detector in the dining room of the beach cottage

2. Security

The beach cottage is equipped with a coded alarm system on the interior doors. Limited city staff and MBHS volunteers know the passcode. There are also a minimal number of keys to the beach cottage. There is a deadbolt lock on exterior and interior front doors. The same MBHS key opens them both.

The door to the trailer has a deadbolt and lock-bar. There are also bars on the windows (see Figure 28). Distribution of keys is limited for both the beach cottage and trailer.

Each door to the old restroom facilities has a deadbolt. A city key opens them.



Figure 28: Trailer's security features bars on the window and a lock-bar

3. Earthquake

The collection spaces are not prepared for an earthquake (see Figure 29).

4. Emergency Preparedness

To prevent irreversible damage to collections, it is imperative to be prepared for an emergency. Potential hazards can be due to environmental and natural factors, social factors, or vulnerabilities in storage structures or overall preparedness. Emergencies can range from natural disasters such as tornadoes, flooding, and earthquakes, to terrorism, accidents, and utility failures. City staff need to understand these potential hazards and vulnerabilities that specifically affect the museum collections, and establish procedures to prevent, respond, and mitigate disaster.

There is currently no museum emergency operation plan (MEOP) specific to the museum collections. There is no information on how to actively respond to a disaster, including lists of high-priority items to protect, or procedures for protecting collections from damage.

When mitigating damage to collections materials in the event of an emergency or disaster, city staff will also need to prepare a selection of ready-access supplies to efficiently respond and protect collections. The city currently does not maintain a cache of these types of supplies at the beach cottage, which would typically include items like drop cloths, protective equipment and masks, absorbent pads or socks, etc.

It is also imperative to ensure museum collections are properly stored; while proper storage aids in long-term preservation of assets, it also ensures compliance with fire codes and emergency response. Collection materials should never be stored directly on the floor. In the event of flooding, whether from natural causes or fire suppression techniques, materials stored on the floor are immediately susceptible to extensive water damage. As referenced in earlier sections, there are museum collections stored directly on the floor in collection spaces.

B. Issues and Challenges

1. Lack of Preparedness and Planning

There is currently no MEOP. In the event of an emergency, the museum collections are extremely susceptible; staff and MBHS volunteers will not have appropriate guidance in their response to prevent damage to collections, nor instruction to mitigate or salvage any damage that occurs.



Figure 29: Shelves in the trailer lack earthquake-proofing.

2. Lack of Fire Suppression

All museum storage and exhibition facilities should have a fire suppression system. It is problematic to expose historic records and objects to the possibility of catastrophic loss, particularly when the storage facilities in question are wooden structures. There are fire extinguishers present, but these require more maintenance including testing and staff training.

3. Increased Risk of Fire and Earthquake

Manhattan Beach has an increased risk of fire, earthquakes, and tsunamis. These increased threats from natural disasters make it imperative that staff develop plans and procedures to protect the materials from loss.

C. Recommendations

1. Immediate (0-1 year)

a. Develop and maintain a museum emergency operations plan (MEOP).

- Perform a risk assessment process to determine the hazards and vulnerabilities facing the museum collections.
- Include collection priority lists for museum collections onsite.
- Update the MEOP on a regular basis to ensure that contact information remains correct for all members of the collections staff and emergency response team.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of emergency procedures, and that the MEOP is properly distributed.
- Establish in-house training scenarios to practice response procedures.
- Stockpile emergency equipment and supplies in preparation for unexpected disaster.
- Review cooperative agreements with local law enforcement and police departments on an ongoing basis to clarify responsibilities and authority when attempting to gain access to the buildings during an emergency.

b. Clarify roles and responsibilities for security, fire protection, earthquake protection and emergency preparedness.

- Determine roles and responsibilities of city staff and MBHS volunteers for emergency planning, management, and response.
- Train staff in emergency planning, management, and response as described in the MEOP.

2. Short-Term (1-2 Years)

a. Improve security, fire protection, and earthquake protection measures.

- Install fire alarm and fire extinguisher in trailer.

- Install security cameras on both beach cottage and trailer.
- Consider fire prevention for beach cottage and trailer or relocation of collection items to a space with a fire suppression system.
- Work with MBHS representatives to arrive at a mutually beneficial plan for allowing key access to the beach cottage and trailer, while also maintaining the security of the building and the collections.
- Secure the storage shelves in the trailer to the walls and to each other for earthquake security.

3. Long term (2-5 years)

a. Maintain and update the MEOP, as needed.

- Verify and routinely update contact information for all city staff members, MBHS representatives, and any outside emergency response team members.
- Communicate and train city staff and MBHS volunteers regularly on emergency procedures.

VIII. ACTION PLAN

To develop an effective collections program that will successfully preserve and promote the history of Manhattan Beach, the HAI team has outlined a series of recommended actions to implement found at the end of each section and in Appendix A: Collections Plan-at-a-Glance. The following action plan summarizes the prioritized recommendations as a few executable options for collections support from HAI. Activities are listed by suggested project phases in order of recommended priority, but some can be rearranged as necessary. Should the City of Manhattan Beach decide to proceed with any of the phases described below with support from HAI, HAI will compile a more detailed statement of work with finalized costs for authorization as a future project.

Phase One: Policy Development

An essential component of a museum is the solid definition of governance and associated policies for administrative oversight of the collection. These policies ensure the ongoing support and safety of the museum collections and serve as the foundation for establishing a responsibly managed and accessible collection. The HAI team recommends a collaborative process to develop guiding documents to support and define the governance and policy of the museum collections, serving as the fundamental groundwork for future activities to develop, preserve, and access the collection. These policies will also protect the valuable collection from potential damage or misuse.

Phase Two: Inventory and Survey Collections

Survey and inventory approximately 1,550 objects and 165 LF of records using available museum documentation and MBHS records.

- Complete a survey spreadsheet at the box level, folder level, or item level, as appropriate, in Excel.
- Examine materials and determine applicable disposition and identify non-collections material.
- Conduct background research as necessary to understand the nature of the museum collections, their function, legal status, order, and the context of their creation and use.
- Develop a processing plan to use for future archives work.
- Develop a cataloging manual to use for future object collections work.
- Monitor collections environment and housekeep, as needed.

Phase Three: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections

1. Object Cataloging and Housing

To ensure the continued safety and preservation of the valuable objects that are included as part of the collection, all items should be cataloged in Proficio Elements. As most objects are not cataloged, it is essential that these items are adequately captured and documented to maintain proper physical and intellectual control. Tasks may include:

- Item-level cataloging of all objects currently owned by the City of Manhattan Beach, which may include capturing the following minimum data set per object: object ID, object description, object

dimensions, and object condition. This information will be determined by the accessioning and deaccessioning guidelines established in the policy development activity (Phase 1).

- Properly housing objects in preservation quality storage containers to protect from dust, dirt, and provide support if moved.
- Determining the need for any follow-on conservation work.
- Updating the SOCS for a more accurate representation of objects in the collection.

2. Archives Processing and Rehousing

The City of Manhattan Beach have no updated guide to the archives collection. HAI recommends enhancing the accessibility to the collection by creating an accurate container list at the folder level. Descriptive folder titles and dates would be cataloged with accurate location information and entered in Proficio Elements. During this process, measures would be taken to further improve the stability of the collection and ensure its long-term preservation by rehousing the records into archival folders and enclosures. Materials could be housed into hanging files for the current file cabinets and housed into archival boxes. Tasks may include:

- Rehousing all paper materials into acid-free archival folders and enclosures.
- Performing basic preservation actions such as photocopying or interleaving acidic documents, flattening oversize material, and sleeving photographs into polypropylene sleeves.
- Culling physical duplicates, blank items, or materials with no historical or research value.
- Creating a folder-level container list that can be entered in Proficio Elements for improved access and discovery of material.
- Creating a comprehensive finding aid that includes a biographical note, scope and content note, and series descriptions in addition to the container list.
- Identifying materials that could be separated (with the use of a separation sheet to maintain arrangement) and included in the museum display area if items are rotated.
- Updating the SOCS for a more accurate representation of content within the archives collection.

Phase Four: Digitization

1. Digitization of City Clerk Papers

Digitization will allow immediate internal and/or online access to a selection of content and can also be used to preserve frequently accessed material by creating a high-resolution digital surrogate. The City Clerk of Manhattan Beach is custodian to an ordinance book containing approximately 500 pages of documents from 1912 which are becoming brittle, making them a high priority for digitization.

2. Digitization of Collections

HAI recommends eventual digitization of collections items related to the history of Manhattan Beach and the South Bay community, which could be used in exhibition and education initiatives. These items would be selected in collaboration with the City of Manhattan Beach and MBHS. A cache of digitized content could also streamline future efforts to share content and engage with members of the community.

Digitization work may be outsourced to local vendors. Small projects may be outsourced to local institutions with digitization teams, like the University of Southern California (USC), University of California's Southern Regional Library Facility, and through the LA County Library's technical services department. Larger projects may be outsourced to digitization vendors, such as Backstage Library Works. Depending on the size and scope of the work, HAI can either coordinate and manage digitization or object photography through one of the trusted digitization vendors in Southern California or perform the work in-house at the client's site.

Phase Five: Maintain Collections

Once the immediate goals of consolidating, stabilizing, cataloging, and digitizing the existing museum collections are met through the above project phases, the focus will turn to the mid- and long-term initiatives of further developing and maintaining the collections program for education and exhibition uses. The HAI team can provide on-going collection support in a variety of ways, such as:

- Providing on-site training that can prepare existing city staff and MBHS volunteers to field and supply answers to requests for information based on the catalog records and finding aid supplied during Phase 3 and digital assets available created in Phase 4.
- Offering "Archives 101" sessions to introduce basic preservation, cataloging, and arrangement techniques, using examples from the museum collection. This strategy is ideal if the City of Manhattan Beach wants to retain responsibility for the safeguarding and use of the museum collections.
- Conducting routine "clean-up projects" to organize and catalog newly acquired content for the museum collections. For example, we have a decade-long partnership with the Navy Nurse Corps Association in which they contact us a few times each year to organize, rehouse, and catalog newly acquired materials into existing or totally new collections.
- Providing consultancy support to the City of Manhattan Beach on an as-needed basis. Our professional team of collection managers and archivists is ready to answer questions that may crop up or make visits to Manhattan Beach to provide in-person assistance.
- Staffing the project with a full-time archivist or collections manager onsite with routine project management support and review visits from a dedicated senior member from our team.

Cost Estimates

The table below outlines a proposed sequence of options that will further preserve and promote the city's rich history. We have provided high-level cost estimates for HAI's support on those options. Costs represent labor only, and do not include supplies, travel, shipment, etc. Estimated costs are to be used for budgetary purposes only and do not represent a firm offer from HAI.

Project Phase	Schedule*	Price Range	Dependencies
Phase 1: Policy Development	8-15 Weeks	\$25,000 - \$65,000	Determined by number and type of policies and procedures.
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	6-12 Weeks	\$90,000 - \$110,000	Determined by the size and scope of the collection.
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	24-36 Weeks	\$275,000 - \$450,000**	Determined by size and scope of collection after Phase 2.
Phase 4: Digitization			
Task 1: Digitization of City Clerk Papers	1-2 Weeks	\$5,000 - \$7,000	500-1000 scans, 8.5"x13", black and white, OCR'd
Task 2: Digitization of Collections	TBD	Digitization Plan (\$20,000 – \$25,000) Optional Consultancy (\$125/hr)	Determined by size and scope.
Phase 5: Maintain Collections	TBD	Optional Consultancy (\$125/hr)	Determined by size and scope.

*Schedule determined by the following staff resourcing:

- Policy Development: Team of 2
- Inventory and Survey Collections: Team of 4
- Process, Catalog and Rehouse Collections: Team of 4

** Additional expenses would include supply cost and at least one additional license to Proficio Elements.

APPENDIX A: COLLECTIONS PLAN AT-A-GLANCE

Project Phase	Recommendation	Timeframe
Phase 1: Policy Development	Develop a SOCS.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Create and implement a deaccession plan.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Develop standard operating procedures (SOPS).	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Establish policies and procedures.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Review, consolidate, and update museum documentation records.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Create a housekeeping plan.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Develop formal policies for access and use of collections.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Develop and maintain a museum emergency operations plan (MEOP).	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 1: Policy Development	Clarify roles and responsibilities for security, fire protection, earthquake protection and emergency preparedness.	Immediate (0-1 Year)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Update workspace.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Survey collections.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Identify potential backlog of collections in museum facilities.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Maximize storage space.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Identify collection materials.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Implement a housekeeping plan.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Create an isolated collections space outside of the beach cottage.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Monitor the environment.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Create an IPM log.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Confirm legal status of collections.	Short-term (1-2 Years)

Project Phase	Recommendation	Timeframe
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Evaluate efficacy of onsite exhibits.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 2: Inventory and Survey Collections	Improve security, fire protection, and earthquake protection measures.	Short-term (1-2 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Process, catalog, and rehouse collections.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Data clean-up of Proficio Elements catalog records.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Improve and implement museum collection preservation methods and practices.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Enhance protective measures.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Update non-archival storage methods and materials.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Evaluate efficacy of onsite exhibits.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 3: Process, Catalog, and Rehouse Collections	Collaborate with MBHS volunteers to develop onsite interpretation and public programming that highlight objects from the museum collections.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 4: Digitization	Improve public accessibility and visibility.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 4: Digitization	Hire a temporary, part-time digitization manager.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 4: Digitization	Plan and digitize the archives collection.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 4: Digitization	Increase access and use of museum collections online.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 5: Maintain Collection	Continue to revisit SOCS and the deaccession plan.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 5: Maintain Collection	Develop a collections storage plan.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 5: Maintain Collection	Make storage furniture improvements.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 5: Maintain Collection	Hire a permanent, full-time museum curator.	Long term (2-5 Years)
Phase 5: Maintain Collection	Maintain and update the MEOP, as needed.	Long term (2-5 Years)