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FOCUS ON:
**HERITAGE
COLLECTIONS
STORAGE**



Business sector

Heritage and Conservation

Organisation

National Conservation Service
Collaborative Storage Scheme

About

National Conservation Service
Collaborative Storage Scheme

Of the specialist services the National Conservation Service (NCS) offers to heritage organisations around the world, the partnership with Restore to provide heritage collection storage in ex-aircraft shelters at Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire is one of the most exciting. NCS Director, Chris Woods, tells us how this original partnership came about.

Why I would recommend Restore



The appeal for me is quality, price and a full appreciation of what we want to achieve. ”



Chris Wood,
NCS Director

01.

The challenge

In 2011 the British Standards Institution reviewed its industry-wide standard for the storage of archival materials. The work was led by me as chairman of the committee responsible and became the new BS PD5454:2012 Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials. The stipulations to minimise risks to priceless artefacts from light, humidity, temperature and pests, for instance, are strict and take the long-term view in order to preserve precious objects into the future.

With this new standard in place, our thoughts turned to setting up a national scheme that would benefit heritage institutions. Quite simply, we wanted to help broker a new business model for our sector. This would mean persuading a supplier to provide a premium storage service at a fixed bargain price, so that all those caring for historic collections could afford to have the best storage environment in a top security location, regardless of how much they needed to store or for how long.

In addition, whoever we selected to provide the storage would need to agree to work in partnership with us, while we would maintain an independent stance monitoring PD5454 standards on behalf of our members with the power to authorise non-payment of rent for any breach in those standards. Not only that, but the supplier would need to be flexible enough in attitude to allow NCS not to have to meet in full the cost of the first storage shelter at Upper Heyford in year one.

Pretty tall orders, you might think. But not where Restore was concerned...

02.

Our experience partnering with Restore

In fact, we'd been approached by Restore during the formation of the NCS Membership scheme in 2010. Right from the outset they were supportive of our ideas for helping institutions achieve good conservation affordably. They sponsored the building of our first NCS website and later a series of public meetings that launched the new





Notes

Complete information management:

5 reasons to choose Restore

1 Flexibility – with Restore as your outsourcing partner you can be sure we will listen to what you want, then deliver it.

2 Nationwide – we offer a truly national service with a range of document handling choices – and we're still growing.

3 Complete information lifecycle – from Cloud data back-up where information is available at the touch of a button, to near storage document management where information is accessible within hours, to deep, specialised storage of archive papers, we make sure you have what you want, when you want it and where you want. And, at the end of your information's life, we dispose of it efficiently, responsibly, securely.

4 Control – by handing responsibility for security, logistics and compliance to Restore you are effectively taking back control over your information. You can rely on us to work in partnership with you, caring for your information in dedicated, approved facilities right across the UK.

5 Feel the benefits – we give excellent value for money, timely communications that are tailored to your needs, professional and experienced staff at every level – no wonder our customers will tell you that moving to Restore is 'the best decision you'll ever make'!

standard PD5454. Restore managers and shareholders recognised the uniqueness of the facilities at Upper Heyford and understood and cared about the heritage sector's need for this type of storage. It was Restore's willingness to listen and adapt to the exacting heritage storage conditions we require that helped them secure the partnership.

Prime examples of this flexibility and support can be seen in the fact that Restore spent a good deal of money ensuring that these amazing bomb- and flood-proof aircraft shelters – heritage buildings in themselves – were fitted out to meet PD5454 specifications. These concrete structures were given improved airlocks round the huge doors, hygroscopic paint on the ceiling, anti-moisture acrylic paint on the floor, with back-up cooling and humidity control equipment installed where necessary.

My other example is this: heritage collections such as Faraday's 18th and 19th century scientific instruments, internationally important textiles, musical instruments and works of art, may need careful storage, but they also need caring for – researching, restoring, removing from an on-loan museum location back to storage. Once again, this was not an issue for Restore, who can often provide free-of-charge uplift of some smaller items and are also in the process of creating dedicated, specially equipped spaces for archivists, curators and librarians to work in when on site.

This going-the-extra-mile, caring attitude was reflected in Restore's flexibility on price – all in all making them the most affordable, desirable option for our scheme.

03.

Our results since using Restore

The NCS is well-known and respected in the archiving and conservation world and colleagues across the heritage sector trust our experience and judgement.

We're fortunate in our choice of Restore as a partner in securing national heritage artefacts for generations to come as they have always been supportive and flexible in their dealings with us. Not in partnership to make a fast buck – they're in it for the long-term, just like us.

It's really pleasing, then, that to date, the uptake of this new scheme has been better than expected. Each shelter provides 3,000 cubic metres of storage in custom-configured racking; after ten months of operations we have already filled half of this vast space, with a strong chance that our original five-year plan will be fulfilled in around 18 months.

