

University of Colorado -- Boulder
University Libraries

Preservation Survey Norlin Library Collections - Web Summary -

Collections include:
Archives
Art and Architecture
East Asian
Government Publications
Juvenile
Media Library
Norlin Basement
Norlin Stacks—Social Sciences and Humanities
Periodicals Room
Reference
Science
Special Collections

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What is a Preservation Survey?

This Preservation Survey—referred to as a “Facility Survey” internally at UCB Libraries—is an overview of the conditions that are affecting the preservation of the collections, specifically those in the Norlin Library, our main library on campus. This includes an overview of the building construction; the environmental conditions inside collections (temperature, humidity and light); the cleanliness and custodial services in collection areas; collections handling and shelving practices; and security and disaster planning. This report also looks briefly at the services Preservation Department provides to extend the useful life of the collections and finally there are notes about significant findings in each collection. Other “Facility Surveys” will cover each of the University Libraries’ branches and our off site storage facility—known as PASCAL. As each survey is completed, the executive summaries will be posted to the web site.

The purpose of this report is to help in the formulation of a Preservation Plan for the University Libraries. A major rehabilitation of Norlin is projected over the next ten to twelve years, and this report takes the projected renovations into account. The Facility Survey findings provide additional background for the Collection Assessment Survey, which will project data regarding the specific conservation treatment needs required to maintain items in the collections.

Following is the Executive Summary of the 66-page report submitted to the Head of the Preservation Department March 17, 2006.

Preservation Survey of Norlin Library Collections Executive Summary

This report is an overview of the conditions that are affecting the preservation of the Norlin Library building collections. The multi-year survey was done concurrent with emergency planning, the establishment of an environmental monitoring program, the undertaking of an NEH Preservation Assistance grant, and the beginning of a Collection Assessment project. Recommended actions are listed below in priority order, not a proposed chronological order; and some of these recommendations are in various stages of implementation.

- Hire a qualified environmental consultant to draft a program for environmental controls for the Norlin building, specifically for air handler units where problems have been noted. Use the recommendations to resolve the issues which affect these large portions of the collection. *
- Government Documents and Archives suffer the most pervasive preservation problems; and the preservation issues should be addressed in tandem with plans for the anticipated relocation of these collections.
- Conduct a detailed collections needs assessment to evaluate current preservation programs and project future preservation resource requirements for a fully-developed preservation program appropriate to an ARL library.*
- Special Collections and Archives require the installation of reliable alarms to alert staff to damaging environmental conditions or water emergencies on a 24/7 basis.*
- Continue an aggressive program to move materials off-site to PASCAL and move collections to other buildings to ease widespread overcrowding. Establish Libraries-wide collection storage guidelines.

- Move collections that are exposed to sunlight (especially south side). Expand the use of solar film on south side windows and to Special Collections courtyard. Establish guidelines for collections lighting levels.
- Improve housekeeping in stacks and reading rooms, especially at times of heavy library use such as at the end of each semester. Special cleaning projects are needed for problem areas, for example, the tops of book shelves and the outside air vents.
- Preservation problems that are the result of the rapidly expanding East Asian Library collection should be addressed.

These recommendations are based on the detailed findings of the report which is available from the Preservation Department.

*Preservation Program is currently addressing this priority.

Table 1

**Norlin Collections
Preservation Needs Matrix**

This table was developed as a means of summarizing the relative preservation needs for the different collections in Norlin building.

	Uniqueness of materials	Amt of non-paper	Environmental Needs	Inventory Needs	Collection Size	Handling Shelving Needs	Over-crowding	Vacuumping Needs	SCORE	RANK
<i>Score Range</i>	<i>1 to 10</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>		
Archives	10	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	31	1
Art and Architecture	5	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	15	6
East Asian	5	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	21	4
Government Publications	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	25	2
Juvenile	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	10	11
Media Library	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	14	7
Norlin Basement	3	3	1	3	2	3	1	3	19	5
Norlin Stacks	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	12	9
Periodicals Room	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	11	10
Reference	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	9	12
Science	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	2	13	8
Special Collections	10	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	22	3
Technical Services	1	1	3	2	NA	1	1	1	NA	NA

Other factors that could be considered: likelihood of eminent relocation, emergency risk, presence of pests, rehousing and possible reformatting needs.

Arguably some of the factors considered above, such as "uniqueness" (value) or collections size, should be multipliers rather than simply added to form a score. Also, some factors such as overcrowding should have greater weight than others such as vacuuming, but the above matrix serves as a simple guide and the results match approximately the general preservation status of each collection.