



The Private Wardrobe Office

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ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL STEWARDSHIP FOR THE PRIVATE WARDROBE
Documentation | Evidence | Preservation | Continuity
London

Statement of Practice

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PHILOSOPHY

Statement of Practice

Private Wardrobe Office is established for the stewardship of private wardrobe collections through the application of documented standards, structured administration and long-term oversight.

The practice recognises that wardrobe collections are dynamic by nature. They are subject to continual acquisition, alteration, movement, preservation and use throughout their operational life.

Accordingly, effective stewardship requires more than physical organisation. It requires permanent documentation, consistent administration and an operational framework capable of preserving continuity as the collection evolves.

The principles set out herein define the basis upon which the Office conducts its practice.

The Wardrobe as a Private Collection

A private wardrobe constitutes a continuing collection of personal property assembled over time through acquisition, commission, inheritance and personal use.

Unlike static collections, individual articles remain in active circulation. They are worn, altered, repaired, relocated, archived and reintroduced according to changing operational requirements.

Each activity contributes to the documentary history of the collection and forms part of its continuing record.

The collection shall therefore be regarded not as a series of individual garments, but as a single administrative entity requiring structured documentation, preservation and oversight throughout its lifetime.

Principles of Stewardship

Stewardship is exercised through the consistent application of documented standards intended to preserve the integrity, continuity and operational functionality of the collection.

The Office recognises the following principles as fundamental to its practice:

Documentation establishes a permanent and verifiable record of the collection.

Administration ensures that operational activities are conducted in accordance with established procedures.

Preservation safeguards the physical integrity of individual articles through preventative conservation and proportionate care.

Continuity preserves institutional knowledge irrespective of personnel changes, relocation or the passage of time.

Governance provides the framework through which responsibilities, records and operational decisions remain accountable and capable of independent verification.

These principles govern every engagement undertaken by the Office and remain applicable throughout the lifetime of the collection.

02 — Definition of the Practice

Definition

The Private Wardrobe Office is an independent practice established for the administration, documentation and long-term stewardship of private wardrobe collections.

Its function is to provide structured oversight where the scale, complexity or significance of a collection requires systematic management beyond routine wardrobe maintenance.

The Office is responsible for establishing and maintaining the operational framework through which the collection is documented, preserved and administered. This framework consists of inventory records, condition reporting, preservation protocols, operational procedures and permanent documentation governing the collection throughout its lifetime.

The Office does not replace the Principal, household personnel or specialist service providers. Rather, it coordinates their respective functions within a documented system of administration, ensuring that activities affecting the collection are conducted consistently, recorded appropriately and capable of independent verification.

Accordingly, the collection is managed as a continuing private asset whose integrity is preserved through documented standards, accountable procedures and the retention of institutional knowledge.

Functions of the Office

Collection Audit	Wardrobe Stewardship	Collection Logistics	Image Advisory
• Comprehensive wardrobe audit • Digital inventory & cataloguing • Photography & documentation • Condition reporting • Collection organisation • Storage assessment • Collection mapping across residences	• Seasonal wardrobe rotation • Collection maintenance • Repair & alteration coordination • Inventory management • Preservation planning • Household coordination • Collection reviews & reporting • Insurance & valuation record updates	• Multi-residence wardrobe management • Travel wardrobe preparation • Collection transfers • Delivery & acquisition coordination • Inventory movement tracking • Specialist service coordination • Collection reinstatement	• Wardrobe planning • Outfit creation • Collection development • Acquisition advice • Event & travel dressing • Seasonal wardrobe planning • Wardrobe editing & refinement • Personal image strategy

Principle

The Office recognises that effective stewardship is dependent not upon individual knowledge, but upon documented systems capable of preserving continuity across the lifetime of the collection.

Operational knowledge shall remain with the collection itself through the consistent application of documented standards and permanent records.

03 — Collection Governance

Principle of Governance

Private wardrobe collections are subject to continual change throughout their operational life. Garments are acquired, commissioned, altered, repaired, relocated, archived, worn and retired, while the individuals responsible for their management may also change over time.

These activities generate information of enduring operational value. Unless formally documented and consistently maintained, that information is progressively lost.

Collection governance provides the framework through which information, responsibility and decision-making remain attached to the collection rather than to the individuals responsible for its day-to-day management.

The objective is to preserve continuity, establish accountability and ensure that every material event affecting the collection is capable of accurate reconstruction.

Operational Continuity

Continuity is achieved through the consistent maintenance of documentation, established procedures and permanent records.

The collection shall remain fully intelligible irrespective of relocation, personnel changes, household restructuring or the passage of time.

Operational continuity ensures that knowledge is retained as a permanent attribute of the collection rather than as informal experience held by individual members of staff.

Institutional Knowledge

Every significant collection accumulates operational knowledge throughout its lifetime.

This knowledge includes acquisition history, alterations, maintenance records, preferred methods of storage, preservation requirements, specialist suppliers, provenance and patterns of use.

Where such knowledge is not formally documented, it becomes vulnerable to loss through staff transition or organisational change. The Office establishes permanent records to preserve institutional knowledge as an enduring component of the collection.

Accountability

Collection activities shall be performed in accordance with documented procedures and supported by appropriate records.

Accountability provides clarity regarding responsibilities, decisions and interventions affecting the collection.

Documented accountability reduces operational inconsistency and supports informed decision-making.

Traceability

Material changes affecting the collection shall be capable of chronological reconstruction.

Acquisitions, alterations, conservation treatments, relocations, loans, disposals and significant maintenance activities shall be supported by permanent documentation.

Traceability preserves the historical integrity of the collection and provides an evidential record throughout its operational life.

Verification

Information maintained by the Office shall be capable of independent verification through documented evidence.

Condition reports, inventory records, maintenance histories, photographic documentation and location registers collectively provide an objective record of the collection at any given point in time.

Verification supports operational confidence and reduces reliance upon recollection or informal communication.

Operational Risk

The absence of governance introduces progressive operational risk.

Such risks may include:

- Incomplete or inaccurate inventory records.
- Loss of provenance or maintenance history.
- Undocumented alterations.
- Inconsistent preservation practices.
- Errors during relocation.
- Duplication of acquisitions.
- Reduced insurance support.
- Delays in estate administration.
- Loss of institutional knowledge following staff transition.

These risks seldom arise from a single event but from the cumulative absence of structured oversight.

Staff Transition

Household personnel inevitably change over time.

Where operational knowledge exists solely through individual experience, continuity is interrupted upon the departure of key personnel.

Documented procedures, inventories and permanent records ensure that stewardship remains uninterrupted and that successor staff inherit a functioning operational framework rather than fragmented information.

Multi-Residence Management

Collections distributed across multiple residences require consistent administrative control.

Location registers, movement records, preservation standards and inventory documentation ensure that garments remain identifiable, accessible and properly maintained irrespective of their geographical location.

Governance provides a single operational framework through which all residences are administered as one coherent collection.

Principle

Collection governance preserves continuity by ensuring that responsibility, knowledge and documentation remain inseparable from the collection itself.

The Office therefore regards governance not as an administrative exercise, but as the essential mechanism through which exceptional wardrobe collections retain their integrity, functionality and historical continuity throughout successive stages of ownership and use.

04 — Operational Methodology

Introduction

The Office applies a structured methodology to establish, administer and preserve each collection. The methodology provides a consistent operational framework through which documentation, preservation and stewardship are implemented and maintained throughout the lifetime of the collection.

01 — Initial Consultation

To establish the scope of the engagement, understand the Principal's requirements and determine the operational objectives of the collection.

02 — Collection Assessment

To evaluate the collection's composition, condition, documentation status, operational requirements and existing management practices.

03 — Documentation & Establishment

To create or refine the collection's inventory, condition records, location registers, preservation classifications and operational documentation.

04 — Implementation

To establish the operational systems, procedures and standards governing the day-to-day administration and preservation of the collection.

05 — Ongoing Stewardship

To maintain documentation, monitor condition, coordinate preservation activities and administer changes affecting the collection.

06 — Annual Review

To review the collection, evaluate operational performance, update documentation and revise stewardship strategies where appropriate.

Closing Principle

The methodology is intended to ensure that every stage of the collection's lifecycle is supported by documented procedures, consistent standards and permanent records, thereby preserving continuity irrespective of change in use, location or personnel.

05 — Documentation Standards

Documentation as a Standard of Stewardship

Documentation constitutes the permanent record of the collection and provides the foundation upon which its administration, preservation and continuity depend.

Every acquisition, alteration, conservation treatment, movement and material change contributes to the operational history of the collection. Unless formally recorded, that information is progressively lost, reducing the collection's integrity and limiting its future administration.

The Office establishes documentation not as an inventory alone, but as a structured system of records governing identification, condition, provenance, location, preservation and operational activity.

Accordingly, documentation serves four principal functions:

- To establish an accurate and verifiable record of the collection.
- To preserve operational knowledge throughout the lifetime of the collection.
- To support informed decision-making regarding preservation, acquisition and administration.
- To maintain continuity irrespective of personnel, residence or organisational change.

Documentation remains a living record and shall be maintained continuously as the collection evolves

Selected Documentation Standards

The Office develops and maintains documented procedures governing the principal operational functions of the collection.

Examples include:

- SOP 001 — Collection Inventory & Documentation Standards
- SOP 004 — Wardrobe Relocation & Collection Transition
- SOP 008 — Preservation of Hand-Embellished Couture Garments



06 — Preservation Standards

Preservation as a Standard of Care

Preservation is founded upon the principle that the long-term integrity of a collection is best maintained through preventative measures rather than restorative intervention.

The Office applies conservation standards intended to minimise deterioration, preserve structural integrity and reduce the frequency with which specialist restoration becomes necessary.

Accordingly, preservation is regarded as a continuous process of assessment, monitoring and controlled intervention throughout the operational life of the collection.

Preservation Framework

The preservation of each collection is governed through the following principles.

Condition Baselines

Each significant article shall be supported by a documented condition baseline established upon acquisition or entry into the collection.

The baseline provides the reference against which all subsequent inspections, alterations and conservation treatments are assessed.

Preservation Classification

Articles are assigned preservation requirements according to their material composition, construction, rarity, frequency of use and operational significance.

Classification determines the level of handling, storage, inspection and conservation appropriate to each article.

Inspection

Collections shall be inspected at intervals proportionate to their preservation classification.

Routine inspections assess structural stability, signs of deterioration, environmental exposure and any changes affecting the condition of the collection.

Environmental Controls

Environmental conditions shall be managed to minimise deterioration arising from fluctuations in temperature, relative humidity, light exposure, dust and other environmental factors.

Storage conditions shall remain appropriate to the materials and construction of each article.

Conservation History

Every conservation treatment, repair, alteration and specialist intervention shall be permanently documented.

The conservation history forms part of the permanent record of the collection and provides an evidential account of its physical development throughout its lifetime.

Material-Specific Protocols

Materials possessing distinct preservation requirements shall be managed in accordance with dedicated procedures.

Protocols may include, but are not limited to:

- Hand-embellished couture
- Bespoke tailoring
- Leather garments
- Knitwear
- Fur
- Vintage and archival textiles
- Footwear
- Handbags and small leather goods

Each protocol establishes standards for handling, storage, inspection and specialist conservation appropriate to the characteristics of the material.

Principle

Preventative conservation preserves the long-term integrity of the collection by reducing avoidable deterioration before corrective treatment becomes necessary.

The Office therefore regards preservation as an ongoing responsibility supported by documented standards, regular assessment and proportionate intervention rather than by occasional repair alone.

07 — Collection Administration

Operational Administration

Collection operations comprise the coordinated administrative activities required to maintain the continuity, accessibility and operational readiness of a private wardrobe collection.

The Office administers these activities through documented procedures designed to ensure consistency of practice, accurate record keeping and uninterrupted continuity across all stages of the collection's operational life.

Operational activities are conducted in accordance with established standards governing movement, preservation, acquisition and day-to-day administration.

Administrative Functions

Seasonal Rotation

The collection is reviewed and reorganised in accordance with seasonal requirements, travel schedules and anticipated use.

Rotation is undertaken through documented procedures that preserve inventory accuracy, storage integrity and accessibility while ensuring that garments not in active use continue to receive appropriate preservation.

Collection Movement

The movement of articles between wardrobes, residences, archives or external service providers is administered through documented transfer procedures.

Location records are updated to preserve traceability and ensure that the current location of each article remains accurately recorded.

Travel Wardrobes

Travel wardrobes are planned, assembled and reinstated through documented procedures that minimise operational risk during packing, transportation and return.

Inventories, condition reviews and movement records support continuity before, during and following travel.

New Acquisitions

New acquisitions are incorporated into the collection through a structured process of assessment, documentation and classification.

Each article is recorded, assigned a permanent inventory reference, photographed where appropriate and integrated into the existing documentation and preservation framework.

Archive Integration

Articles withdrawn from active use are transferred to archive status without interruption to their documentation or preservation history.

Archive integration preserves the historical continuity of the collection while maintaining accessibility for future reference, reinstatement or succession.

Multi-Residence Administration

Collections distributed across multiple residences are administered as a single operational entity.

Documentation, inventory records and preservation standards remain consistent irrespective of geographical location, ensuring continuity throughout the collection.

Supplier Coordination

The Office coordinates specialist service providers whose work affects the collection, including ateliers, tailors, conservators, cleaners, restoration specialists and logistics providers.

All external interventions are documented to preserve accountability, continuity and the permanent operational history of the collection.

Principle

Operational administration ensures that every activity affecting the collection is undertaken within a documented framework that preserves continuity, accountability and the long-term integrity of the collection.

09 — Image Advisory

Image Advisory

Image Advisory is not undertaken as an independent service, nor is it founded upon seasonal trends or subjective aesthetic preference.

It arises only after the collection has been fully established through documentation, assessment and operational stewardship.

Until the wardrobe is understood as a whole, any recommendation concerning personal presentation remains incomplete.

The collection constitutes a body of evidence. Its composition, frequency of use, acquisitions, omissions, alterations and patterns of wear collectively reveal the operational behaviour of the wardrobe and the relationship between the Principal and the collection.

It is through this documented understanding that advisory becomes possible.

Recommendations are therefore derived from observable patterns within the collection rather than from isolated garments or temporary stylistic direction.

Accordingly, Image Advisory concerns the considered development of the collection in response to the Principal's responsibilities, lifestyle, environment and future requirements, while preserving coherence with the character and continuity of the existing wardrobe.

The objective is not to redefine personal identity, but to ensure that the collection continues to communicate it with consistency, precision and appropriateness.

Principle

Advisory is the consequence of stewardship. It proceeds only where the collection has first been understood, documented and established as an integrated whole.

10 — Closing Statement

This Statement of Practice sets out the principles, standards and methodology through which the Private Wardrobe Office conducts its work. Further documentation, operational procedures and collection standards are developed according to the individual requirements of each engagement.