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BOISE CITY DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

**Taking Care of Boise's Art and Cultural Heritage:
A Plan for Boise's Art, Artifacts, and Archives** MAY 2015



BOISE CITY
DEPT OF ARTS
& HISTORY

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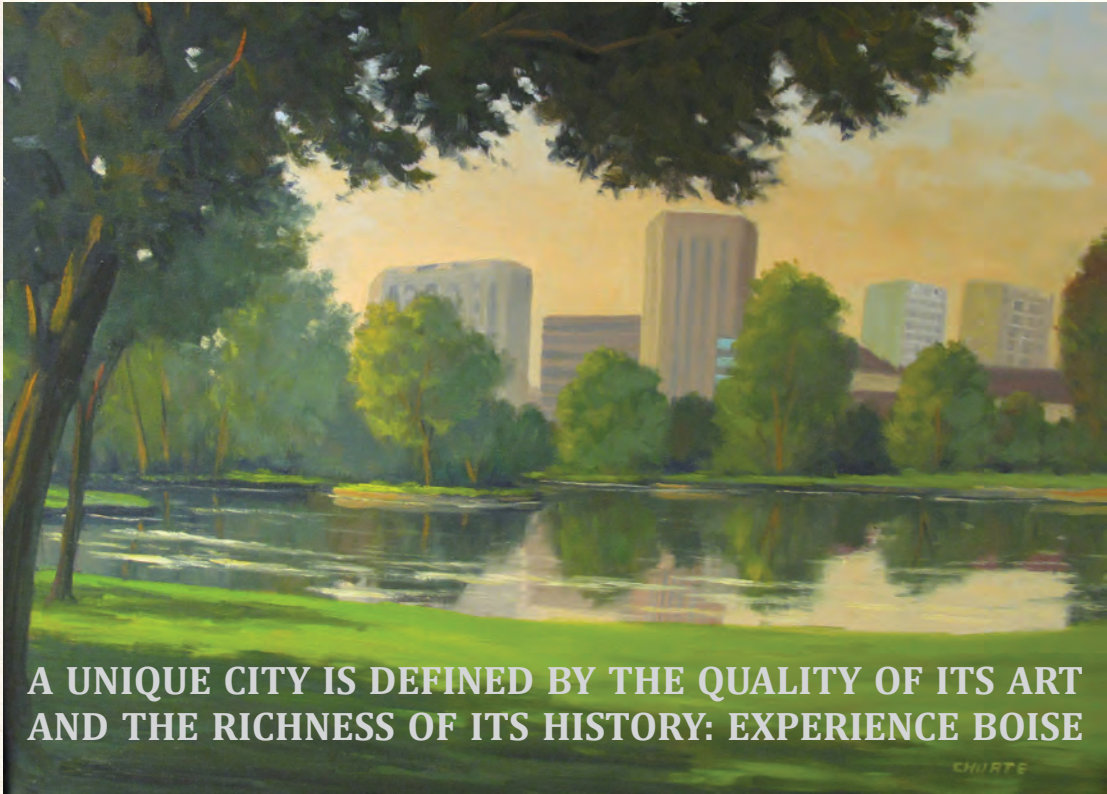
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A UNIQUE CITY IS DEFINED BY THE QUALITY OF ITS ART
AND THE RICHNESS OF ITS HISTORY: EXPERIENCE BOISE

Boise City Department of Arts & History Mission

To enhance Boise by providing leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for arts and history in order for people to create, engage and connect with the community.

Department's Purpose in Collection and Caring for Art, Artifacts, and Archival Materials

It is imperative to collect, preserve, and provide access to the historical and cultural materials directly related to the City of Boise government and its citizens using the highest professional standards for current and future generations.



By the Department of Arts & History staff. Prepared with assistance from Linda Morton-Keihley (certified archivist) and TAG Historical Research.



INTRODUCTION

Since its creation in 2008, the Department of Arts & History (A&H) has carried out its mission to enhance the community by providing leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for arts and history. Essential components of this mission include collecting, preserving, and providing access to City of Boise municipal historical records and donated cultural materials. By doing so, we help preserve our city's heritage for current and future generations.

Properly cared for collections also nurtures an informed and authentic "sense of place" that helps residents feel more connected with their community. A strong central repository for cultural materials also presents our municipal government as a proud custodian that upholds professional standards in regards to public transparency and values and respects an educated populace.

This plan outlines a phased approach to professionally care for community and City of Boise's municipal art, archival, and artifact collections. Such care requires a fully functional facility and professionally trained staff.

Key elements of the plan are to:

- **Gain physical and intellectual control over the collections;**
- **Provide professional care and long-term storage; and**
- **Enhance public access for research and education.**

Summary: A&H Efforts Since 2008

The Department of Arts & History recognizes the importance of professional collections management within the City. With a small staff and limited resources A&H has thus far:

- Purchased a collections management software, with the support of IT, to catalog and track existing art and cultural history collections in A&H, Boise City Fire Department, and Parks & Recreation
- Established an oral history program that includes nearly 100 interviews
- Developed basic processing procedures and donation forms
- Assisted other City departments with inventorying cultural materials
- Facilitated efforts to professionally inventory and catalog historical collections at the Fire Department and develop an exhibit
- Created a reference collection on historical and cultural topics
- Planned and implemented BOISE 150 for the city's sesquicentennial, which heightened awareness of Boise's cultural heritage through programs, events, and other opportunities

Records Management Center

The Records Management Center (RMC), a division of the City Clerk's Office, maintains City of Boise records according to a retention schedule as established the City of Boise code and State of Idaho statutes. These records generally include those related to all city ordinances and resolutions, document recordings, annexations, legal notices and publications, contracts, council minutes and all other documents adopted by the city council.

The RMC staff also manage all Public Information Requests for these documents and have a record of all Boise City Council actions. The RMC provides storage and indexing of vital city records from a variety of City departments and divisions.

Some RMC records are of a permanent historic nature. These could potentially transfer to A&H once a permanent facility is secured along with resources for professional staff dedicated to care for such collections. A&H could then provide long-term preservation and public access. Often these materials relate to the city's incorporation, policies, programs, governing officials, and local history.

Other City Departments

A&H staff has assisted other departments (such as Parks & Recreation and Fire) in evaluating and processing collections. Surveys are also underway of other departments' potential historical materials.

A&H plans to work closely with the City Clerks Records staff and those from other City Departments to unify our approach to best care for these materials in the short and long term.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Current Collections Need Proper Care [sustainability threatened]

The City of Boise is required to care for its records. Boise City Department of Arts & History is committed to documenting and preserving (sustaining) visual art and historical materials as a core mission of the department. This includes managing art, archival (e.g., manuscripts and photographs), and historic artifact collections. Resources are needed to:

- a) Document and preserve current collections,
- b) Make collections available to the public, and
- c) Obtain and care for new donations.

Storage space is inadequate according to standard professional protocols and environmental requirements.

A&H's Collections are currently held within the A&H offices and are in urgent need of being housed in a collection storage facility with appropriate security and environmental controls. Collections include:

- Boise Visual Chronicle, a collection of public art managed by A&H and exhibited on a rotating basis throughout City-owned buildings
- Donation of local art collection
- Portable Art Collection, a growing collection of culturally significant assets that have been gifted, donated, or acquired through unusual circumstances, including artist samples, paintings, material samples, and interpretive kiosks
- Documentation pertaining to the public art collections, including correspondence with artists, photographs, and plans
- A&H oral history collection, including some 100 interviews with 87 individuals
- A&H photo collection, dating from the 1900s to present, representing a variety of subject matters, from irrigation to downtown redevelopment to family photographs
- Pinney Theatre collection, consisting of photographs, playbills, and correspondence
- Ashley Sign Company collection, with original artwork sketches of commissioned signs, photographs, trade magazines, and small objects
- Architectural remnants, including doors, braces, signs, and decorative features from Boise buildings
- Letters, documents, and maps, such as correspondence from local families and ranchers; promotional brochures; an original Boise streetcar ticket; and documents salvaged from the Hop Sing building
- Papers of former Mayor Richard Eardley

RESOURCE NEEDS

The need is urgent. Existing materials need adequate space and proper care; meanwhile, collections continue to grow.

Storage Space

Currently the City of Boise's permanent historical archival materials are dispersed throughout the City and all lack environmental controls and consistent standards to meet professional criteria. The ideal situation would allow a space in which the Records Management Center and A&H staff could collaborate to ensure professional care for our permanent historical collections using environmental controls (temperature and humidity), consistent monitoring, and archival quality storage materials (folders, files, shelving, etc.). It would also allow A&H to house historic artifacts and art collections.



Overland Storage. **Need:** Professional care, shelving and facility controls.

Storage Locations - 2015

Overland Storage – Records Management Center (9,964 sq. feet)

Permanent historical records falling within the parameters of the Boise City Code and Idaho State statutes are held at the Overland storage site. The site lacks environmental controls, adequate storage shelving and materials, and a workable public access area with regular hours. Many on-site permanent historical archival materials are deteriorating.

Kendall Street – assumed lease from the Idaho State Historical Society (3,500 sq. feet)

The Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) returned a significant number of City of Boise records (previously transferred to ISHS) to the City Clerk's Office in April 2014. These included 208 shelves, each holding 6 cubic feet of blueprints; 146 blueprint boxes; and 1500 banker boxes of materials. Imerge consulting has evaluated these records and recommended 62 boxes for A&H review to assess historical value. These boxes were set aside at the Kendall site (at expense of the City) for review and storage until a permanent solution is found.

Arts & History Offices

Cramped office space has made it difficult to properly care for the archival, historic artifact, and visual art materials A&H has acquired. The history division is housed in a former repurposed meeting room down the hall from A&H and is used to store some historic materials. Additional materials, including art, are stored in the main A&H office, a nearby temporary space (former Main Street conference room), and on display throughout City Hall.

Other Departments throughout the City

A&H staff is conducting a general inventory of materials held throughout the City to help identify needs and develop protocols for a consistent citywide approach to collection care. These are held outside of the Records Management because they do not fit the strict criteria for retention but are valuable related to the history of their respective department. For example, Parks & Recreation holds Jim Hall's personal records of park development as well as a large pile of original doors from the Depot currently housed beneath the building on a dirt floor.

Materials

Archival, historical artifacts, and visual art pieces all require proper storage shelving and storage materials (i.e., shelving, files, acid-free paper). With appropriate resources, A&H can guide this process throughout the City.

THE PLAN

Phase 1 - Taking Care of Now (FY15 – FY16)

Phase 1 focuses on the urgent need to care for and store collections already in custody of A&H. As of 2015, these collections are stored in A&H offices in overcrowded conditions and, despite best intentions, out of compliance with professional standards. Phase 1 builds support for permanent, long-term storage and research strategies, all of which will require an appropriate level of staffing, training, and financial support. During this phase, A&H staff will initiate discussions regarding the feasibility of sharing storage and public research space with the City Clerk and other municipal departments holding historical and cultural materials.

Administration

Department of Arts & History staff will lead the planning process and will communicate with other departments and coordinate professional contracts.

Community-donated materials

The Department of Arts & History's interim collection storage space is limited. Donors of historical and artistic cultural materials need to be assured that the City will properly care for their valued items in perpetuity. A&H staff provide physical and intellectual control over the collections and will work toward obtaining resources to provide a level of care with long-term storage that meets current professional standards and ensure access to the collections for research, interpretation, and exhibit purposes.

Municipal records

The Department and the Office of the City Clerk will continue to work together on matters of municipal records. The Clerk is responsible for municipal records with temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent value. A&H will survey other municipal departments to identify any historical and cultural items and determine long-term collection care and storage needs. Collaborative strategies might include, but are not limited to, sharing a single storage facility, establishing a single point of access for researchers, and providing a consistent level of collections care.

ACTION ITEMS – FY15 – FY16

A&H will build citywide support for collections storage, which includes meeting with the stakeholders, such as Office of the Mayor, Boise City Council, other City departments, A&H History Committee, A&H Visual Arts Advisory Committee, Arts & History Commission, and the public.



Remnants of Boise Exhibit. **Need:** Permanent facility to store artifacts properly.

CHECKLIST:

- A&H begins discussions with City departments to identify collaborative strategies to preserve historical, cultural, and municipal collections held through the City.
- A&H works with Government Buildings to identify and occupy an appropriate space to serve as the interim collection storage facility.
- Research appropriate potential funding sources, including foundations, donations, and grants to support future staffing and supply needs.

Staffing

A&H staff, primarily the cultural assets program manager and history programs manager, will provide access to and oversight of existing collections. The cultural programs manager will facilitate overall coordination with contractors and communications with other City departments. This is anticipated to include developing and implementing a final collections management policy, and surveying of other departments' archival and artifact holdings.

ACTION ITEMS – FY15 – FY16

- Create and fill contract to develop a collection policy and provide guidance on other planning.
- Continue providing support for the oral history program.
- Contract as needed for archival materials processing.
- Continue to work with local colleges and universities to provide student interns to assist with collection management tasks.

Collection Development and Care

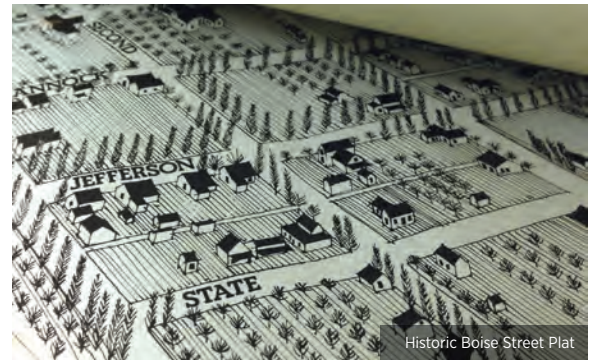
Collection development and care comprises many activities, including donor relations; acquisition, processing, basic cleaning and repair of incoming collections; and, occasionally, consultation with a professional conservator. Each of these activities must be guided by appropriate policies and procedures, developed with the Department's specific collections in mind.

ACTION ITEMS – FY15 – FY16

- Prepare a preliminary processing manual for manuscript, photograph, and object collections.
- Purchase appropriate collection storage supplies per current archival or museum standards.
- Join appropriate professional organizations.
- Continue to develop a professional library for staff.
- Identify and attend training opportunities.
- Continue survey of other internal departments' archival and artifact collections.



1890 Boise Street Plat



Historic Boise Street Plat

Facility

The interim collection storage space at City Hall will store A&H collections until a permanent facility is secured.

This phase assumes that the cultural programs manager, history programs manager, and cultural assets program manager will work from Boise City Hall and will use existing office equipment, furniture, and technical infrastructure.

ACTION ITEMS – FY15

- Secure space to hold existing collections (as of March 2015 A&H is using the Main Street Conference Room)
- Continue collaborative work with City staff to secure a permanent facility.

Phase 2: Taking Care for Tomorrow

The focus of this phase is to acquire permanent collection space and develop strong intra-City alliances. A&H will complete assessment and implementation of long-term permanent storage and research needs identified in Phase 1.

City of Boise/Municipal Records

Phase 2 finalizes long-term permanent storage and research strategies as identified in Phase 1. This includes implementation of a formal relationship between A&H and the Office of the City Clerk Center in regard to responsibility for the municipal archive to enhance preservation and public access to records of permanent, historical value as determined by the City's records retention schedule. As this phase proceeds, it will also be necessary to inventory City departments in a more detailed fashion to determine the exact scope and content of pertinent holdings.

City's Role in Preserving It's Records

The City of Boise has long recognized the importance of the written record. In 1985, the Office of the City Clerk received a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to develop a records management program. In 2005 the Boise City Clerk joined the Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) to update and revise statewide municipal records management standards.

In its *Records Management Manual*, the AIC identifies five primary values for municipal records: administrative, policy, legal, fiscal, and historical.

1. **Administrative** records include the day-to-day activities of the creating department.
2. **Policy** records document the establishment and interpretation of city laws and policies.
3. **Legal** records relate to the rights and responsibilities of the interested parties, for example, property ownership or contracts and agreements.
4. **Fiscal** records provide documentation of the acquisition, management, and expenditure of monies held in the public trust.

All of these categories might also contain historical value as evidence of a city's incorporation, policies, programs, governing officials, and local historical information.

Correlation with Permanent Historical Records and Local Government Requirements

Staff from the City Clerk's Office is currently working to amend Idaho Statutes and Boise City government code regarding retention and destruction of records related to those born digitally. Their efforts will ultimately save valuable resources enabling a more concerted focus upon identifying and processing permanent historical records in conjunction with A&H staff.

These two government entities (State of Idaho, City of Boise) mandate both the preservation of and public access to municipal records. The requirements define different types of records: temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent. For the purposes of this plan, all records identified as 'permanent' are considered to have historical value.

A permanent facility and professional staff dedicated to care for such collections is critical for their long-term preservation and accessibility. A&H plans to work closely with the Office of the City Clerk's Records staff and those from other relevant City Departments. In this way we can unify our approach and maximize efficiency and attain compliance.



City of Boise, holdings Records Management Center.
Need: Conservation and proper storage.



City of Boise, holdings Records Management Center.
Need: Conservation and proper storage.

Other Reasons to Preserve Municipal Records

Long-term access to municipal records provides public transparency and information about past decisions and actions. As with the A&H historical and cultural collections, municipal records also provide the raw material for historical research by historians, students, the media and others.

Administration

Oversight of the City of Boise archival operation is currently under administration of the Office of the City Clerk as part of the records management program. Based on the successful completion of Phase 1 of this plan, we advise municipal records having **permanent, historical value (archival function)** will be transferred to the custody and administration of A&H, with a corresponding commitment to providing commensurate increased staffing resources. Administration of the City's records management program, including oversight of the Records Center, will remain with the Office of the City Clerk.

A&H will also continue to advocate for a permanent storage facility for additional community-based historical, cultural items, and municipal materials held by City departments and ancillary organizations, and for a companion facility (same location) for a modern professional Records Center.

ACTION ITEMS – FY16+

- Submit a resolution to Boise City Council regarding transfer of the City's archival function from Office of the City Clerk to Department of Arts and History.
- Obtain a commitment from the City to proceed with implementation of this phase by providing the necessary resources.
- City Clerk's Office finalizes changes to State of Idaho and City of Boise codes regarding retention schedules.

Staffing

Upon approval of an FTE, A&H will hire an Archives and Historic Artifacts collections manager to: 1) prepare a detailed inventory of citywide historical and cultural holdings; 2) finalize policy and procedural documents; and 3) ensure collections are properly cared for; 4) serve as liaison with public art and history staff.

An **Archives and Artifacts collections manager** will also:

1. Finalize the Collection Management Policy and processing manual;
2. Implement the Proficio archives module;
3. Develop strategies to share information and cross-reference with other relevant City Departments;
4. Serve as the primary point of contact for potential donors;
5. Supervise staff and interns;
6. Develop public access and finding aids strategy for archival materials;
7. Collaborate with other A&H staff in program and exhibit development;
8. Assist with grant-writing.

Other positions will be essential to assist with the inventory process for City departments and process incoming collections, including managing data entry into Proficio. Other critical duties are expected to include processing and retrieving materials as needed for research and exhibit purposes. These duties will be more fully scoped during this phase.

ACTION ITEMS – FY16+

- Obtain approval for an FTE (potential title Archives and Historic Artifacts Collections Manager)
- Obtain resources for contractors to assist with processing and planning
- Scope out additional positions for Phase III

Collection Development and Care

A number of City departments are known to hold materials of permanent, historical, and cultural value, including:

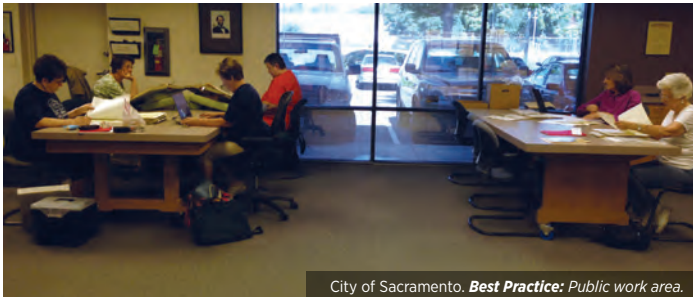
1. Approximately 700 cubic feet of records held at the City Records Center and designated as having permanent, historical value by the records retention schedule.
2. Jensen Farm history collection and Gordon Bowen papers, both at the Department of Parks and Recreation.
3. Fire Department historical collection.
4. Police Department historical collection.
5. Historical permanent records not yet transferred to the City Records Center.
6. Ephemera (i.e., things that exist or are used or enjoyed for only a short time) and historical and cultural objects such as departmental art work, plaques, murals, sculpture, and memorials.
7. Structures such as the O'Farrell Cabin currently under the supervision of departments other than A&H.

Additional materials held in the community that could potentially become part of City collections include:

1. Those identified as having potential historical significance (62 boxes) from the approximately 4,000 cubic feet of Boise municipal records currently held at the Idaho State Archives.
2. Historical resources held by other organizations, who possess photographs, oral history interviews, newsletters, meeting minutes, and other items of interest to the historical record.

ACTION ITEMS – FY16

- Conduct a detailed inventory of City departments to identify historical and cultural collections, as well as municipal records of permanent, historical value.
- Continue to process incoming collections per current archival or museum standards, as appropriate.
- Continue to upload collection information to Proficio.
- Obtain resources for processing materials (archival, storage, shelving, computers, etc.)



Permanent Facility

During Phase 2, staff will plan long-term storage requirements for municipal and community-donated collections based on the needs identified during the inventory of City departments. Staff offices, workspace, and a small reading/research room for the public will also be addressed. The plan assumes that the City will provide technical infrastructure, such as computer network and server access.

ACTION ITEMS – FY16

- Plan a permanent collection storage facility, to serve Boise residents.
- Contract with archives/collections facility planning expert to guide specific planning for permanent facility (working with A&H, Government Buildings, Public Works, and others as necessary).

Public Access, Outreach, and Advocacy

Public access to A&H collections requires online finding aids and digital images. A&H uses Proficio's collections module for art, archives and historical artifacts. Proficio also offers a web module that allows off-site researchers to browse, search, and view descriptions and images of collections.

ACTION ITEMS – FY16

- Implement Proficio's web module to enhance public access to collection information and images.

The following spaces for the permanent collections storage facility should be considered during the planning process:

Offices/Employee Support Spaces

- Collection Manager
- Archivists
- Collection assistants, interns, and volunteers
- Restroom facilities
- Break room
- Parking with separate entrance
- Processing/Cataloging work rooms (2) – one for objects; one for manuscripts and photographs

Public/Visitor Spaces

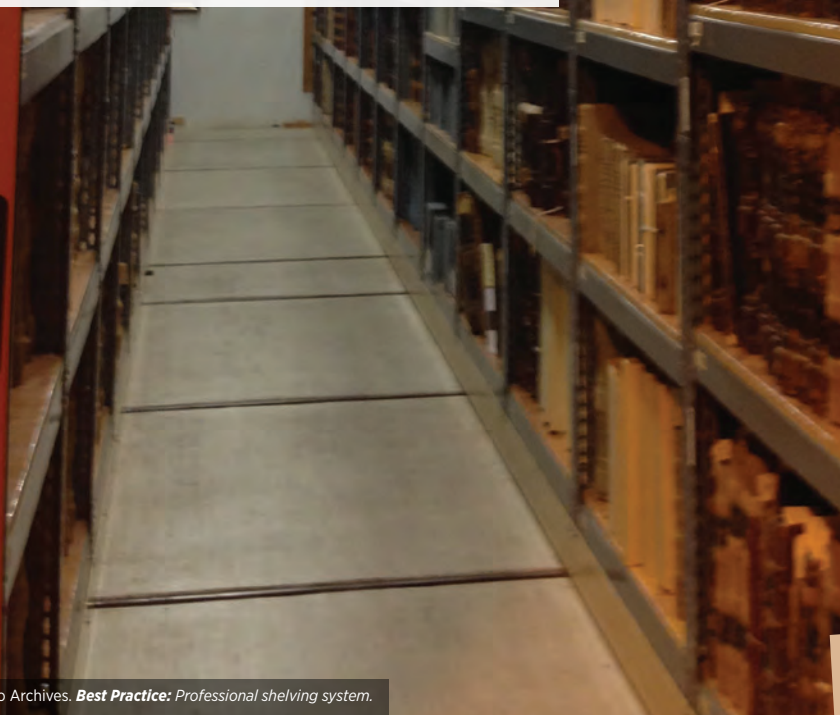
- Lobby/Security/Check-in – must be monitored by staff
- Restroom facilities – may be shared with staff
- Reading/research room – must be monitored by staff
- Parking

Storage

- Open steel shelving for box storage and/or oversize, rolled drawings, etc.
- File cabinets—letter, legal, flat
- High-density storage systems
- Art storage racks
- Three-dimensional object storage
- Supplies
- Receiving/Sorting/Shipping

Design Criteria

- No exterior windows and walls, and auto-shutoff lights.
- Structural loading for storage areas: 150psf-250psf (depending on type of storage, high density type storage will require higher live load)
- Climate control – Temperature, humidity, daylight requirements will differ for office/public areas and storage spaces
- Fire protection systems – water main outside of storage space, type of system to provide quick response with minimal damage
- Expansion – storage needs will continue to grow and type of storage will change (objects, electronic media, etc.)



Phase 3: Taking Care In Perpetuity - Ensuring A Legacy (FY17 – FY18+)

A&H enhances Boise's livability by recognizing and celebrating its arts, culture, and history. Phase 3 will ensure a legacy to care for Boise's art, artifacts, and archival materials, while providing a foundation for future generations to explore and tell Boise's story. Phases 1 and 2 of this plan identify ways to increase A&H's capacity to carry out its mission of providing leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for arts and history. The Department will have gained support from other City of Boise departments, acquired an appropriate level of funding, and started planning the permanent collections storage facility.

At completion of Phase 3, the permanent home will be in operation. Requirements to maintain a fully-functional permanent collection storage facility will be clearly defined.

Administration

A&H staff will process collections, work with other City departments, and lead efforts to care for Boise's art, artifacts, and archival materials.

Staffing

As the collection grows, additional positions will be required. For example, future staffing could include archivists, collection assistants, and curators. Assuming the donation of three-dimensional objects, curatorial staff will also be necessary.

A **curator** will:

- Collaborate in updating the Collection Management Policy and processing manuals for object collections;
- Collaborate with cultural assets program manager about the preservation of objects and carry out basic repairs;
- Maintain collection records;
- Work with potential donors;
- Collaborate with other A&H staff in program and exhibit development;
- Supervise the collection assistants, interns, and volunteers;
- Assist with grant-writing.

A **collection assistant** will assist with all activities related to the three-dimensional collections. Long-term positions could also include a digital assets archivist, curatorial registrar, and conservators for paper and object collections.

ACTION ITEMS – FY17 AND BEYOND

- Finalize critical positions needed
- Secure funding to create and fill additional positions as needed.

Collection Development and Care

BOISE 150 heightened, community awareness of the historical record resulting in numerous individuals offering to donate substantial collections to A&H with more expected in the future.

Such collections, in addition to the municipal records, will contribute to a robust historical collection of great value for research, interpretation, and exhibit purposes.

ACTION ITEMS – FY17 – FY18

- Prepare scope and construction documents related to a permanent collection storage facility.
- Furnish the storage facility with suitable office furniture and equipment, shelving, racks, cabinets, ladders, carts, tools, and technical infrastructure.
- Continue working with City staff to transfer art archival and historic artifact collections to a permanent facility.

Financial Requirements

Because the majority of Phase 3 activities take place in the near future, cost estimates will need to be determined at a later date for purposes of accuracy.

- Prepare a disaster plan specific to the facility.
- Transfer municipal records of permanent, historical value from both the Records Center and the Idaho State Archives to a permanent collection storage facility.
- Solicit donations from the local community, including personal, business and organizational art, manuscripts, photographs, objects, and records.

- Purchase collection storage supplies and re-house collections per current archival or museum standards, as appropriate.
- Process (arrange and describe) collections per current archival or museum standards, as appropriate.

ACTION ITEMS – FY17 AND BEYOND

- Seek additional funding from appropriate sources, including foundations, donations, and grants to support staffing, supply and facility needs.

Access, Outreach, and Advocacy

A dedicated reading/research room at the permanent collection storage facility for historians, students, media, and general public should include tables and chairs, a public computer with Internet access, in-house finding aids and other reference materials, copying equipment (such as a photocopier or scanner), appropriate carts and supports to transport materials from storage, and a staff area to provide reference services and supervise collections usage. The reading/research room should be open and staffed during regular business hours.

ACTION ITEMS – FY17

- Furnish and staff the reading/research room for access by the public.
- Develop and promote access to collections, including finding aids, web interface, and engagement programming.
- Join Northwest Digital Archives and upload EAD finding aids to the NWDA database.