

Role Definition

Job Title: Special Collections Archivist

Reporting to: Publications and Research Manager on a day-to-day basis and ultimately to the Head of Communications

Responsibilities

- Lead on the overall function of the Foster + Partners archive, setting priorities and overseeing the day-to-day delivery of work across the archive team.
- Ensure architectural drawings, photographs, models, and other archival material are appropriately catalogued, digitised where suitable, stored securely, and accessible for exhibitions, research, and use across the practice.
- Maintain and manage the collections management system (e.g. CollectionsIndex+), ensuring data accuracy, consistency, and alignment with professional archival standards.
- Monitor risks relating to collections care, including environmental conditions, storage security, and disaster preparedness within the in-house archive.
- Respond to requests for archive material from within the company and externally.
- Maintain professional networks with architectural archives, museums, and relevant professional bodies to share knowledge and stay informed of sector developments.
- Develop and implement long-term plans for the archive, including collection development, resource allocation, and project delivery.
- Lead on cataloguing and digitisation programmes for architectural drawings, photographs, negatives, slides, audiovisual material, and other ephemera, ensuring best-practice standards are followed.
- Develop value-judgement frameworks to support cataloguing priorities across the model collection.
- Lead architectural collection projects, including audits, retention and appraisal activities, project planning, and storage reorganisation for architectural models, including work relating to the DeepStore audit.
- Support internal and external access to the model collections for exhibitions, research, and loans, in collaboration with the Exhibition and Model Coordinator.
- Work with the Model and Exhibition Coordinator to develop and implement cataloguing frameworks, metadata standards, and controlled vocabularies aligned with architectural project typologies, ensuring cataloguing adherence to relevant archival and museum standards (SPECTRUM, ISAD(G), and digital preservation standards).
- Work with the Cataloguing Archivist (Photography) to deliver the Precious Originals digitisation project develop, ensuring digitisation, preservation and cataloguing adherence to relevant archival and museum standards and coordination with the Foster + Partners photography team and Open Asset photo library.
- Maintain and develop specialist knowledge of the practice and its work to support archive enquiries, and a thorough knowledge of and compliance with Foster + Partners procedures and standards.
- Assist the Publications and Research Manager with on-boarding, support and expectations related to archive deliverables for new Special Collections Archive team members.
- To contribute, or otherwise assist, as required.
- Thorough knowledge and compliance with Foster + Partners procedures and standards.
- Equity, diversity & inclusion (EDI) is a core priority. To support and champion the embedding of this focus as a collective workforce responsibility, EDI should be integrated, where relevant, into all workstreams.

Qualities and skills required

- Able to demonstrate the ability to undertake the above responsibilities.
- Legally able to work in the country in which the position is based.
- Excellent organisational skills.
- Able to manage sensitive and sometimes confidential information.
- Self-motivated and able to take responsibility.
- Able to demonstrate initiative and a proactive approach to daily tasks.
- Good interpersonal skills and able to work independently and as part of an effective team.
- Flexible attitude.
- Able to build good relationships at all levels, internally and externally.
- Resilient to cope with conflicting demands, able to prioritise duties and work effectively under pressure [while always remaining calm and professional.
- Able to work as part of an effective team assisting and supporting team members.
- Specialist archive experience, preferably in an architectural context.
- Research skills.
- Able to use database technology proficiently.
- Able to research new developments in archival techniques.
- Good communication skills.
- Attention to detail.
- Able to file in alphabetical and numerical order.
- Empathy with a creative environment.
- Appreciation of, and commitment to, the business of the Practice.

This description reflects the core activities of the role but is not intended to be all-inclusive and other duties within the group/department may be required in addition to changes in the emphasis of duties as required from time to time. There is a requirement for the post holder to recognise this and adopt a flexible approach to work. Job descriptions will be reviewed regularly and where necessary revised in accordance with organisational needs. Any major changes will be discussed with the post holder.

