

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 1 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

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AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 2
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	3
PURPOSE	3
MISSION STATEMENT	4
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	4
BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE	4
History	4
Governance	5
Significant Buildings and sites	5
SCOPE OF COLLECTION	5
CATEGORIES OF COLLECTIONS	7
REFERENCES	8
GLOSSARY	8
ARCHIVES PROCEDURES AND PLANS	10
FORMS AND REGISTERS	10
ACQUISITION OF COLLECTION ITEMS	10
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF COLLECTIONS	10
PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION	11
DISPLAYING THE COLLECTION	11
SHARING THE COLLECTION	11
DEACCESSIONING COLLECTION ITEMS	12
INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT	12
VOLUNTEER INDUCTION AND TRAINING	12
COLLABORATION WITH OTHER MEHER BABA ARCHIVES AND EXTERNAL EXPERTS	13
APPENDICES	15
APPENDIX 1 - ARCHIVES HISTORY	15
APPENDIX 2 - COLLECTION USE, ACQUISITION, CARE AND DEACCESSIONING	19
APPENDIX 3 – AVATAR’S ABODE PROPERTY, HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND SIGNIFICANT SITES	25
APPENDIX 4 – TO DO LIST	28
ATTACHMENTS	29

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 3
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 4
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

PREAMBLE

When His close mandali and family are no more, these treasures will be the tangible connection to His physical Advent. In days to come, the world will awaken to the fact of His Advent and will be hungry for anything and everything personally associated with Him. — Mani S. Irani

His things are the tangible things that keep His presence alive in our hearts by helping us remember Him. Every little thing keeps His Presence fresh in our hearts. These little things make the Unapproachable approachable. — Eruch Jessawala

If we do not preserve things associated with His Advent, posterity will blame us and we will be failing in our duty towards Him" — Bhau Kalchuri

In centuries to come, the things that Avatar Meher Baba touched or used or wore, the places He visited, the pictures and films of Him, the letters He wrote, and other objects and materials bearing the personal imprint of His Humanity will all serve as tangible links for savouring the fragrance of His physical Presence and for remembering His life as Man.

The written communication between Meher Baba's early Australian followers and Meher Baba, and with His mandali, their published and unpublished writings, and their artistic and other cultural or functional works, also form an integral part of the Avatar's Abode Trust collection. Such remnants provide insights into the context of His Advent and the earliest years of the Meher Baba movement, enabling a richer understanding of Meher Baba's words and actions.

Finally, the extensive collection of publications, documents, vinyl records, paintings, films, audio and video recordings, relics and artefacts bequeathed by Francis Brabazon and other early followers to the Avatar's Abode Trust, are already of great significance to the Meher Baba community and, to a lesser extent, the wider community. This is due to the pivotal role of these persons (especially Francis Brabazon) within Australia – both in the Meher Baba scene and generally. The original structures built for Meher Baba's visit in 1958 and the sites visited by Meher Baba while staying at Avatar's Abode have special archival significance.

During His lifetime, Avatar Meher Baba mentioned from time to time, the importance of His personal effects and the things closely associated with Him. On one occasion, He gestured, "You have no idea what just one scrap of My sadra will mean to the world in the future." The example shown by the Mandali for everything and anything pertaining to Him, deeply informs the principles we use in caring for the collection.

It is recognized that the process of sharing will inevitably hasten the deterioration of some types of items. However, the accessibility and availability of these items to contemporary and future humanity is most important, and great care will be taken to make this possible by giving the utmost attention to the delicate balance between sharing and preservation.

PURPOSE

This policy provides a framework to enable the Archives Committee to safeguard and preserve for future generations, the precious artefacts, relics and archival records of Avatar Meher Baba's life and advent, especially pertaining to His visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958. It supports the preservation of items, relics, artefacts and records associated with the cultural and architectural development of Avatar's Abode, and the sharing and appreciation of all these irreplaceable links to Meher Baba's human form and His time at Avatar's Abode.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 5 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

MISSION STATEMENT

The Archives Committee mission is to collect, preserve and share information relating to the history of Avatar Meher Baba's connection to Australia for current and future lovers of Meher Baba and for those who seek to know more about Him.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The mission will be achieved by a commitment to the following guiding principles:

- Maintaining professionally accepted standards and methods for the storage, handling, treatment, care, conservation, preservation and sharing of the unique collection of items associated with Meher Baba and His connection to Australia
- Through ongoing research, acquiring help and recommendations from experts, and training of volunteers.
- Provide for the responsible accessibility, sharing and use of the collection through duplication, display, exhibit, education and sharing programmes.
- Provision and maintenance of adequate storage facilities at Avatar's Abode to safely house and preserve the collection.
- Development and maintenance of detailed records of the provenance of collection items including recording the recollections of the Avatar's Abode residents and other Australian Baba lovers when possible; and to create and maintain permanent and accessible collection records.
- Develop and implement responsible guidelines and procedures for acquisition, access, sharing, and all aspects of collections care.
- Provide regular updates to the Trust on the activities of the Archives Committee, and guidance on the care and preservation of Baba treasures, collection items and archival materials.
- Establish and maintain close supportive links with Baba archives in other countries.
- Effectively manage all the resources concerned with the collection.
- Establish procedures for the periodic evaluation and revision of the Archives Committee quality management system.

BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE

History

Archive Committee members David Bowling, Jeanette Young and Kay Walker commenced the development of this policy in 2021. This Collection Management Policy defines the purpose, scope, objectives, activities, guidelines and procedures of the Archives Committee.

The historic buildings, structures, grounds and sites at Avatar's Abode that were used or visited by Baba and existed during His lifetime are now included in the Scope of Collection. A detailed history of the archives from 1958 to 2020 is attached in Appendix 1.

Governance

Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd acts as the Trustee for the Avatar's Abode Trust. The Objects stated in the Avatar's Abode Trust Deed include:

(g) *to preserve and protect "Baba's Room" and those articles and items associated with Avatar Meher Baba that are deemed to be sacred by the directors.*

The Avatar's Abode Trust determines the scope of items and articles which require preservation and protection. This is done through an Archives Committee which operates with a clearly defined Terms of Reference which is reviewed annually.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 6
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

This committee, which meets quarterly, has the responsibility for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Collection Management Policy and reports six monthly in writing to the Directors of the Avatar's Abode Trust. One committee member position is reserved for a Director of the Avatar's Abode Trust.

The Archives Committee is committed to a collaborative approach working closely with other committees of the Trust.

Significant Buildings and sites

Committees responsible for the maintenance of significant buildings (Baba's House, the Meeting Hall, and the Farmhouse) and sites (e.g. Francis' grave, the site of the tents, the ablution area), will meet at least annually with the Archives Committee for the purpose of consultation and exchange of information, and for discussion of proposed changes, new work or procedures during the coming year including any renovations or improvements.

For further detail see Appendix 3 for a description of the Avatar's Abode property, significant sites on the Abode, description of the buildings with historical significance, and a history of each building.

SCOPE OF COLLECTION

The following list serves to define the scope of present and future collections of the Avatar's Abode Trust Archives that contribute directly to the Archive Committee's stated purpose and mission:

1. Any collection items referred to as 'Meher Baba Treasures' which include any sacred relics from His physical form and any personal articles or unique items touched or used by Him, which are all priceless and irreplaceable, including:
 - Avatar Meher Baba's hair, nails, teeth, and other sacred relics of His physical form.
 - Avatar Meher Baba's personal articles, items used by Him (clothing, toiletries, medical, etc.).
 - Anything else touched or used by Avatar Meher Baba or used directly for Him.

2. Any other collection items associated with Meher Baba and possessing an intrinsic value which cannot be reproduced, including:
 - Furniture and household items used by or for Avatar Meher Baba or that existed at Avatar's Abode during His visit.
 - Gifts given to Avatar Meher Baba
 - Selected items and materials of the Mandali, Baba's family and the five Perfect Masters that are directly associated with their lives with Avatar Meher Baba.
 - Any furniture and household items used by Avatar Meher Baba at locations other than Avatar's Abode or Meher House in Sydney and are of special importance and significance.

3. Any buildings, structures, grounds and sites associated with Avatar Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode, as follows:
 - Baba's House
 - The Meeting Hall
 - The Farmhouse
 - The flagpole
 - Baba's square
 - The road onto the Abode that Baba drove on

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 7
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

- Other buildings, structures, grounds and sites that were used or visited by Avatar Meher Baba, or that existed during His visit in 1958 (see attachments)
4. Any buildings, structures, grounds and sites associated with the period after Baba's visit up to Francis' death in 1984 as follows:
 - The Bruford house
 - The stables
 - The pilgrim quarters
 - Francis cabin
 - Judith's cottage
 - Bill and Diana's house
 - Francis' grave
 5. Any archival materials documenting the life, activities, teachings and advent of Avatar Meher Baba, and any other associated archival materials which can be copied, reproduced or reformatted:
 6. Originals or copies of anything Avatar Meher Baba wrote or bearing His signature, and any materials written under His direction, or written/sent to Him during His lifetime.
 7. Originals or copies of anything the Mandali wrote or bearing their signature, and any materials written/sent to them during their lifetime.
 8. Originals or copies of all written source materials which are by, from, or about those who met Avatar Meher Baba or who were His followers in Australia during His lifetime, and which are mainly about or related to Avatar Meher Baba's life and teachings or His presence in their lives.
 9. Originals (manuscripts) and archival printed copies of all written published works which consist of Avatar Meher Baba's teachings, or His life and advent, or which are mainly about or related to His presence in the lives of those who met Him or who were His followers in Australia during His lifetime.
 10. Originals and copies of audio-visual source materials (still or moving images and audio recordings) in which Avatar Meher Baba appears or that were recorded in His presence, or are directly associated with His advent, having been photographed, filmed or recorded by those who met Him or in which those who met Him appear; or whose subjects consist of Avatar Meher Baba, His Mandali, or places, events, or topics mainly about or related to His life or His presence in their lives.
 11. Originals and copies of audio-visual published materials (compiled or edited still or moving images and audio recordings) which include Avatar Meher Baba's image or audio material recorded in His presence, or are directly associated with His advent, because they include materials photographed, filmed or recorded by those who met Him or in which those who met Him appear; or whose subjects consist of Avatar Meher Baba, His Mandali, or places, events, or topics mainly about or related to His life or His presence in their lives.

This Scope of Collection Statement includes collection items and archival materials currently in the care of the Archives Committee, on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust, as well as items and materials that may be acquired in the future through gifts, bequests made to the Avatar's Abode Trust, or purchases made by the Trust or requests made by the Archives Committee on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust.

Archival materials and collection items that become relevant in the future may be added to this list at the suggestion of the Archives Committee, and the approval of the Avatar's Abode Trust.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 8
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023

CATEGORIES OF COLLECTIONS

Artefacts

- Furniture made for Baba's visit in 1958
- Furnishings present in 1958
- Personal items used for and by Meher Baba in 1958 and in India

Relics



Buildings and sites

See Appendix 3 for detailed description

Documents

- Francis Brabazon collection
- Bernard Bruford collection
- Ena Lemmon collection
- May Lundquist collection
- Joanna Bruford collection
- Cynthia Borg (Adams) collection
- Jack Mormon collection
- Jim Miskia collection
- Documents from other donors

Audio-visual

- LP & 78 records
- compact cassette tapes
- reel to reel tapes
- CDs
- DVDs
- 8mm and 16 mm films
- microfilm
- video tapes and cassettes

Photographic

- black and white prints
- colour prints
- black and white negatives
- colour slides
- 2 framed photos of Meher Baba, given by Him and hung inside and outside Baba's room
- framed montages of Baba photos by Robert Rouse prepared for 100th birthday
- framed photos on display of the site as it was during Meher Baba's visit in 1958

Detailed cataloguing of all photographs is held in a Portfolio database

Archival Publications

- Jim Migdoll Publication Collection - This collection was gathered by Jim Migdoll over 50 years and gifted to the Trust and includes publications about and by Meher Baba dating from 1929. The collection includes early newsletter and journals. New publications and gifts of items not currently held are added to this collection.
- Duplicate publications collection. These are duplicates of items held in the Jim Migdoll Collection.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 9 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

- Newsletters - Multiple copies of Meher Baba Australia newsletter as well as copies of Baba periodicals, newsletters and pamphlets from around the world.

Artworks

The artwork collection includes:

- busts of Meher Baba sculpted on the property by John Bruford during Baba's lifetime.
- paintings by Francis Brabazon which have been gifted to the Trust (and any which might be gifted or acquired).
- Laurie Adolphus painting of scene from Meher Baba's 1958 visit (and any Laurie Adolphus painting which might be gifted or acquired).
- Robert Rouse artworks done on the property, loaned, gifted or acquired.
- John Parry painting which Francis hung when given it in 1975 and any other paintings gifted or on loan.
- Sam Saunders tapestry of Meher Baba given to Francis early 1970s
- Other artworks that may be gifted or bequeathed to the collection that are assessed to be of significance.

REFERENCES

Cross reference to other trust policies or external standards, legislation etc.

External

- Preservation Digitisation Standards – National Archives of Australia, Australian Government, 2018
- ISO-11799:2015 Document storage requirements for archive and library materials
- IASA-TC 06 Guidelines for the Preservation of Video Recordings 2019
- IASA-TC 03 The Safeguarding of the Audiovisual Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy, 2017
- The Burra Charter - The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
- AMRC Collection Management Policy 1996

Internal

- Memorandum of Association of Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd.
- Avatar's Abode Trust Deed
- 2021 Avatar's Abode Archives Preservation Needs Assessment Report
- 2022 Avatar's Abode Archives Preservation Plan
- AAT028 Avatar's Abode Trust Archives Committee Terms of Reference
- AAT027 Archive Collection Web-Sharing Policy
- Avatar's Abode Trust Strategic Plan
- Avatar's Abode Trust Workplace Health and Safety Policy

GLOSSARY

Accession

Material that comes into an archive as a single acquisition is described as an accession. It may be a gift or a purchase, and ownership or copyright may be legally transferred. A number of accessions may form one single collection with shared provenance.

Acquisition

The process of obtaining legal title to a collection item. Items may be acquired through various methods, including but not limited to gift, purchase, bequest, or commission.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 10 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

Archive

A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people.

Artefact

Any object made by human beings, especially with a view to subsequent use.

Avatar Meher Baba Treasures

This refers to any sacred relics from Avatar Meher Baba's physical form, any personal articles used by Him or for Him, and any other unique items touched or used by Him or for Him, which are all priceless and irreplaceable.

Bequest

A gift or form of pledge made to the Avatar's Abode Trust, forming part of a Donor's will, to be received under a will following the Donor's death.

Deed of Gift

A formal, legally binding document that establishes that title to an item is given to the Avatar's Abode Trust as a gift. The Archives Committee template Deed of Gift also outlines the terms and conditions of the gift and its acceptance.

Donor

An individual, organisation or group who has made or is proposing to make a gift to the Avatar's Abode Trust.

Pledge

A gift commitment made where part or all of the receipt of the gift is deferred until an agreed date(s) in the future.

Provenance

The history and ownership of an item in the collection from the time of its discovery or creation to the present day, which assist in the assessment of authenticity and ownership.

Purchase

The acquisition of property and title in a collection item through the exchange of money or other valuable consideration.

Quality Management System

A set of internal rules developed by the Archives Committee that are defined by a collection of policies, processes, plans, documented procedures, and records.

Sacred articles and items

Items that are deemed by the Avatar's Abode Trust Directors to have archival significance and which fall within the scope of the collection as stated in this policy.

Relic

The physical remains of saints or holy people or, more generally, objects that have been in contact with holy individuals.

Title

The legal right to ownership of property.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 11 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

ARCHIVES PROCEDURES AND PLANS

1. AAA215 Preservation Plan
2. AAA122 Collection Access Procedure
3. AAA205 Disaster Preparedness Plan
4. AAA127 Sharing Digital Archives Procedure
5. AAA206 Migration of Digital Records Procedure
6. AAA214 Collection Care Procedure

To be developed by 2025.

1. Guidelines for incoming gifts and bequests
2. Guidelines for incoming loans
3. Guidelines for outgoing gifts of duplicate collection items
4. Guidelines for outgoing loans of collection items
5. Guidelines for removal of collection items from the collection (deaccessioning)

FORMS AND REGISTERS

1. AAA112 Deed of Gift Form
2. AAA113 Letter of Intent Form
3. AAA138 Collection Access Request Form
4. AAA207 Loans Form
5. AAA208 Artworks Inspection and Conservation Register

To be developed by 2025

1. Agreement form for incoming loans
2. Agreement form for outgoing gifts of duplicate collection items
3. Agreement form for outgoing loans of collection items
4. Form for removal of collection items from the collection

The Archives Committee will use a quality management system for all controlled documents to ensure archival work is done in accordance with documented procedures and guidelines.

ACQUISITION OF COLLECTION ITEMS

A Deed of Gift form will be completed for all items acquired by gift. This will be signed by the donor and by a member of the archive committee and a Trust Director. A Deed of Gift Register is to be maintained.

An Acquisitions Register will be maintained for items purchased for the collection and will include supplier, price, provenance and copyright information.

A Bequests Register is to be maintained for items bequeathed to the collection and will include donor, provenance and copyright information.

The Archives Committee will report annually in writing to the Trust on gifts, acquisitions and bequests.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF COLLECTIONS

Significance assessments and preservation needs assessments will be undertaken on the collection.

When items are offered as gifts or bequests to the collection they will be assessed for significance in a timely manner and where they have low significance, and the Archives already hold copies of this material the offer of gift may be respectfully declined. Preservation priority and needs will be evaluated when items are added to the collection.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 12 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION

The Trust recognises that it has a responsibility for the long-term preservation of the collection for pilgrims and followers of Meher Baba. This responsibility involves caring for the collection for hundreds of years. This will include an assessment of a range of risks that may threaten the safety and integrity of the collection.

Preservation methods will be based on accepted archival best practice and shall be informed by consultation with other Meher Baba collection archivists and specialists as required. Approaches to preservation will be informed by Significance Assessments and Preservation Needs Assessments.

The historic buildings and sites that were prepared for Baba's visit in 1958 represent the most significant link with His visit. Consultation with the Archives Committee will be undertaken prior to any significant maintenance work or planned alterations to these buildings or sites.

DISPLAYING THE COLLECTION

The Trust is committed to displaying the items in the collection which may be of interest to pilgrims and visitors to Avatar's Abode.

These displays may be prepared to reflect specific themes and events. The Trust recognises that some items, while being of great interest to pilgrims, may need to be on display for limited periods due to their fragility or their significance.

Records will be maintained of items displayed and the occasions on which they were displayed.

SHARING THE COLLECTION

The Avatar's Abode Trust is committed to sharing the collection with other Meher Baba centres in Australia and overseas. The Archive Committee is responsible for the detailed cataloguing and assessment of collection items. Consistent with the Avatar's Abode Trust Archive Collection Web-Sharing Policy, as cataloguing, assessment and digitisation of the collection is completed items will be made available digitally where possible.

Loan of Avatar Meher Baba treasures

When a request is made for an item to be loaned this will be assessed by the Archive Committee.

Requests will be assessed based on documented criteria reflecting the preservation needs and priorities of the item or items requested. Loan guidelines will be used to guide decision making. The Trust will be informed of any item/s being loaned.

Collection items that can be gifted

The collection includes some items where multiple copies are held. e.g. Meher Baba Australia newsletters. Where we hold more than 2 copies items may be gifted to other Baba centres in Australia and New Zealand and the Meher-e Manzil archives at Meherabad.

Avatar Meher Baba treasures that can never be loaned or given away

- Baba's tooth
- Fingernail and hair brooch
- Baba's pink coat
- 2 cotton sadras worn by Baba
- Pink shroud from the crypt
- 2 photos at entrance to Baba's room given by Meher Baba
- Small stone given by Meher Baba for Avatar's Abode

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 13 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

- Any item which is considered rare or of special significance in a particular phase of Baba's work.
- Any item which is extremely fragile or actively deteriorating.
- other items to be determined from time to time by the Avatar's Abode Trust Archives Committee

DEACCESSIONING COLLECTION ITEMS

The Archive Committee is to develop deaccessioning guidelines and a Trust approved disposal schedule.

Using a significance assessment of the collection, and with a project plan developed and resources allocated to manage the process, create an assessment framework to assist in evaluating items within the collection and their subsequent suitability for disposal.

When an item is identified for disposal, determine if responsibility for disposal is to be delegated to the Archive Committee or whether the Trust needs to agree to the disposal. Ensure collection documentation is as complete as possible.

Dispose as part of an overall collections management strategy and part of a review of collection, and with regard to other centres as priority potential recipients. Disposal includes the gifting of items to other centres or gifting to the bookstore. Where an item is to be destroyed the method of destruction will be documented.

INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is a major part of the Trust's responsibility to minimize any potential problems or dangers to the collections (including fire detection and suppression, security, and prolonged/extended power outages). The Trust has responsibility for:

- insuring plant and equipment assets
- insuring the collection
- insuring the buildings housing the collection and the identified historic buildings.

The Avatar's Abode Trust will maintain a disaster management plan that provides clear guidance on how disaster risks are to be managed and will regularly train volunteers responsible for implementing the plan.

VOLUNTEER INDUCTION AND TRAINING

The Trust is committed to providing a safe work environment for volunteers. The Trust Workplace Health and Safety Policy provides the framework for ensuring volunteers are able to work in a safe environment.

All archive volunteers will undertake a documented induction and orientation before commencing and will agree to a code of conduct and sign a confidentiality agreement. It is important that volunteers feel valued and appreciated for the service they provide.

The Archives Committee will develop appropriate opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback and to identify their training needs and will ensure that training opportunities are provided to all volunteers.

The Trust recognises that preservation, display and sharing of the collection requires a wide range of archival skills and is committed to the ongoing training of all volunteers who undertake archives related work.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 14 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER MEHER BABA ARCHIVES AND EXTERNAL EXPERTS

The extent to which archives have developed and continue to work towards best practice in the preservation and display of the collection is enhanced by ongoing close communication and working relationships with other centres and with local, regional, and national archiving and museum professionals.

The Trust is committed to maintaining a close collaborative working relationship with other Meher Baba archives around the world and especially in Australia and New Zealand.

In Australia and New Zealand custodians of archival items include:

- Bill and Diana Le Page, Avatar's Abode, Qld
- Avatar Meher Baba Trust Australia, Meher House, Beacon Hill, NSW
- Ross and Jenny Keating, Beacon Hill, NSW
- Jill and Kelvin Hobbs, Whanganui, New Zealand
- Marama Herekiuha, Kaikohe, New Zealand
- Julie and Paul Lee-Morris, Jarrahdale, Western Australia
- Individuals in each state and territory of Australia and in the North and South Island of New Zealand

Collaboration between Meher Baba archives in Australia and New Zealand will be aided by the development of comprehensive catalogues of items held in each location and the sharing of these catalogues between centres. These catalogues can inform research and scholarship, sharing of items between centres, and can support good archival practice as information on caring for the collections is shared.

Holding similar items in different locations is an important strategy in managing the risks of damage or destruction of archival items. Good collaboration between centres will improve the management of these risks.

Opportunities to share information with other archives about collection care and management should be developed on an annual basis.

The Avatar's Abode Trust is committed to sharing the archives for the purpose of research and to support visiting conservators. An annual budget is established for international airfares and costs for researchers and a conservator in residence program.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 15 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - ARCHIVES HISTORY

About the Avatar's Abode Trust Archives

After Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958 the Bruford and Rouse families were asked by Baba to live on the property. Many precious items now in the collection were lovingly cared for and preserved by these two families for over 25 years. Along with items gifted by the mandali to Francis Brabazon, Bill Le Page and other early followers, these precious relics and artefacts are preserved as part of the archives collection and some are displayed in special museum quality display cabinets in Baba's House, which is open during special occasions and events, and they can also be viewed on request.

When Francis Brabazon died in 1984, he left his estate to the Avatar's Abode Trust. The three executors, Roy Hayes, Bernard Bruford and Peter Davies spent many years sorting through his papers and sending much original material back to India at the request of the mandali at that time. Photocopies of many documents were retained in the collection. The document collection from Francis has been lovingly rehoused into more than 50 archival boxes. Hundreds of 78 rpm records and vinyl LP records owned by Francis are also included in the collection. In addition, Francis had a large collection of books which now forms the basis of the Francis Brabazon Library, located at Avatar's Abode.

A unique gift of nearly 1,000 books, booklets, magazines and pamphlets about Meher Baba and His mandali was collected by Jim Migdoll over 40 years and was gifted to the Trust. These publications form the core of the archival book collection and are known as the Jim Migdoll Publications Collection.

The collection includes photographs of the development of Avatar's Abode and Baba's visit to the Abode in 1958, anniversaries celebrated during the 1960s, early Australian Baba lovers, and images collected by Francis Brabazon during his stay in India with Baba from 1959 to 1969. Baba himself stressed to His close disciples the importance of preserving the tangible reminders of His advent.

Early days

The earliest origins of Avatar's Abode Archives lay in documents and a personal library of Baron Frederick von Frankenberg, accumulated in Germany and other parts of Europe c.1900-1920s. This original portion was initially housed at the Baron's home in Camden (outside Sydney, NSW), where it formed the core resource for Australia's first Inayat Khan Sufi group. Some of the Archives pertain to this period. This includes Francis' and the Baron's correspondence concerning the Sufi group.

In 1950, Francis Brabazon inherited the estate of the Baron, in his role as the head of the Sufi Society. Thereafter, and until 1959, the collection was housed in the building Francis was constructing at Beacon Hill (Meher House, Sydney). This was also Francis' home.

Francis added items from his earlier (1930s-1940s) life in Melbourne, and books and recordings he acquired in Melbourne, New York and elsewhere during his travels. There is some correspondence in the Archives pertaining to this phase of Francis' life.

In 1958, Francis moved to Avatar's Abode and the core of the current collection was moved there. However, he was soon called to India and left Avatar's Abode in January 1959.

In India, Francis gathered a great deal of materials pertaining to Meher Baba, and Indian spiritual culture. He accumulated such a large quantity of books, personal documents, and manuscripts as

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 16 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

reference material for books and poetry he was working on, often on Meher Baba's request. In addition, Francis collected many photographs and other artefacts and relics during his stay with Baba. On Francis' return from India (1969), he brought all these to Avatar's Abode.

1969 to 1984 – additions to the archives during Francis' residence on Avatar's Abode

Once Francis settled into life at Avatar's Abode, he added many documents, letters and items from other Baba lovers, and especially the Abode families. Thus, there are some materials in the Archives representing this stage (until his death in 1984), covering communications with India, the growing Australian Baba movement, and most of all, Francis' work of writing poems, songs and dramas, developing Avatar's Abode and its programs of entertainment honouring Meher Baba.

At this time, various historic items and relics pertaining to Meher Baba were still on open display, being not yet especially old or frail. Some were kept in a display cabinet. In 1989 a large cabinet was completed by Michael Walmsley in Baba's House to display and house clothing items from Meher Baba. These had previously been stored in Baba's Room.

After Francis' death in 1984 all his personal papers became part of the Avatar's Abode Trust Archives. Francis' estate was stored by the Executors at their homes, whilst most of the book collection and other documents were kept in a room in Francis' Cabin, which was only accessed at request of individual researchers, or for the work of preservation, sorting and repair, which was conducted by Leigh Rowan and Patricia Saunders.

In 1984, the Abode's first accessible library was established by Bill Le Page and managed by Judith Garbett in a small building where the current Bookstore stands. Books covering a wide range of spiritual subjects and general interest topics were included. It was built and run by the Meher Baba Australia Foundation and included a small archival component.

1990s and early 2000s – research, reviews and development of archival plan

In 1996, a Reception Building was finally completed that included rooms for a library, archives and a small room for keeping Baba relics and more vulnerable books and archives. The contents and layout were mostly developed by Sim Symons and Ray Kerkhove, with some input from Robert Rouse.

During the planning period, expert advice on conservation was sought by Ray Kerkhove and Sim Symons (delegated by Avatar's Abode Trust) visiting Sunshine Coast (Maroochy) Shire Library Services and Queensland Museum (meeting with curator Michael Aird). On the basis of expert recommendations, a dehumidifier was installed, along with open shelving and darkened curtains where appropriate. Textile conservator Michael Marendy visited Baba's House in 1996.

A preservation report was also prepared by an external consultant, Linda Black, in 1996. This examined the state of the collection items, especially fabrics, in Baba's House.

The Directors of the Avatar's Abode Trust envisaged Baba's House having an area that would enable Baba's personal items to be more accessible to visitors. This led to the development of a climate controlled and secure room in what had originally been the verandah of Baba's House. Bill Le Page later also transferred some of his archives in their own display case into the main Avatar's Abode Trust collection.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, under the auspice of Avatar's Abode Trust, much work was done by Ray Kerkhove, Grania Kelly, David Hobson and Alison Spark to fulfil the Meherazad directive (led by Meheru Irani) that all Baba groups and centres record all they could of their Baba relics and documents. This resulted in correspondence and interviews to better identify and tag Baba relics and also considerable sorting, cataloguing and naming of archival collections.

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 17 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

As part of this process, details of the Abode's relics were sent to India, as well as a full inventory of Avatar's Abode's archival collection contents. The emphasis on preservation also led to the conducting of book preservation and repair workshops by Steve Rooney.

Fortuitously, this was also when Ross Keating and Ray Kerkhove were undertaking extensive research into the Abode collections for their respective Doctoral theses – Keating's *Francis Brabazon: Poet of the Silent Word* (published 2002) and Ray Kerkhove's unpublished *Authority and Egolessness in the Emergence and impact of Meher Baba* (granted also in 2002). This enabled the discovery of previously lost manuscripts within the collection, including *Life in a Hut* and the *Combined Diary* of the earliest (1920s) mandali. Meherabad was alerted and these documents were later published online.

Meanwhile, the three Executors of Francis' estate systematically reviewed the entire document collection in the two decades after his death. At the request of the mandali in India, they sent back much original material and copies of original material that Francis had taken to Australia. Copies of returned material were made and kept in the archives. Patricia Saunders spent several years cataloguing the documents in the collection.

During this period the Baba House Committee was responsible for the artefacts and relics in Baba's house at Avatar's Abode. Most of the archival collection was temporarily stored in large plastic bins or folders to alleviate immediate damage from pests or mould but some of the material was given mylar covers and acid free interleaving.

In 2008, Ray Kerkhove was commissioned by Avatar's Abode Trust to write a Significance Assessment Report on the Francis Brabazon Collection as one of the required preliminaries towards funding and improving public recognition of the collection.

2010 to 2022 – significant progress in archival work

In 2010 a small team including Kaelin Rimmelzwaan, Gilad Bakas, and Jim Frisino commenced the digitisation of documents in the collection. Also, about this time, Reg Love began the work of transferring much photographic and film material into digital form.

Due to the passing of various early Australian Baba lovers, the Abode archives began receiving various deceased estates. These were sorted, with portions added to the current collection.

Around 2012, Avatar's Abode Trust arranged for the consultative visit of Fiona Mohr, Director of Regional Museums, for advice on the preservation needs of Avatar's Abode. Ms Mohr reiterated earlier directives, but from this developed the impetus to better isolate and refrigerate archival film, replace current containers with archival boxes, and extensively interleaf archival documents. David and Glenda Hobson, Marilyn Hopkins and Alison Spark formed a team that conducted this process.

Between 2012 and 2014, through a Sunshine Coast Community Heritage grant organised by Ray Kerkhove, a number of professional workshops on preservation and archiving specific to religious collections were run at Nambour, Avatar's Abode and Eumundi, enabling upskilling of Abode archival teams and exposure to shared needs. Out of the latter, Ray Kerkhove produced an official assessment including a series of recommendations for Sunshine Coast Council's heritage team (*Spiritual Heritage of the Sunshine Coast: A report to Sunshine Coast Council on religious architecture, art and archival records of the region* 2018).

In this same period, David Bowling organised a larger-scale involvement of teams of volunteers at Avatar's Abode and negotiated the development of a more structured and state-of-the-art archives for Avatar's Abode. His efforts culminated in 2013 with the Avatar's Abode Trust creating an Archives Committee to safeguard and preserve for future generations the precious artefacts, relics

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 18 Version 2.0 Date 13 July 2023
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

and archival records of Avatar Meher Baba's life and advent, especially pertaining to His visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958.

The Committee also aims to preserve items, relics and records associated with the cultural and architectural development of Avatar's Abode, and to share and enhance appreciation for all these irreplaceable links to Meher Baba's human form and His time at Avatar's Abode. Compactus storage was installed in both archive rooms in the Reception Centre and systematic cataloguing of the document collection commenced.

In July 2016 archivist and conservator Sue Chapman, Board Member of the Meher Baba Association from the UK was sponsored by the Trust to visit for a month and conduct training of volunteers on document rehousing. This led to a concerted effort by a small team of volunteers to rehouse the entire Francis Brabazon document collection which was completed in 2019. Digitisation of the Francis document collection also commenced in 2017 and was completed in 2021. Transcription of documents began in 2016 and is continuing with a team of transcribers.

Jim and Tricia Migdoll worked with great focus and sensitivity on cataloguing and rehousing a large collection of archival books, journals, pamphlets, and printed ephemera, which Jim had earlier donated to the Trust. Jim worked on this until two weeks before he died in 2018. David Hobson was trained by Jim before he died and took responsibility for managing the archival publications as well as the conservation of the film collection. Jim's dedication was recognised in 2019 when the collection was named the *Jim Migdoll Publications Collection*.

Francis' extensive collection of LP records has been carefully cleaned and re-sleeved since 2016 and two specialist curators, with extensive experience in the conservation of paintings and art objects, manage the small but significant artwork collection.

In 2018 Sue Chapman returned from the UK for a month to assist with rehousing the artefacts and relics on display in the archive room in Baba's House including Baba's coat. Jeanette Young worked closely with Sue and took responsibility for managing the cataloguing, conservation, display, and storage of the artefacts and relics collection. A team of volunteers helps with this important work.

In 2020 three new museum quality display cabinets were purchased with the assistance of a grant from the Sunshine Coast Council Heritage Grants program, Trust funds and a special appeal for funds from local Baba lovers. These cabinets are used to display collection items in Baba's House and support long term preservation and display.

An online database for documents was developed in 2020, based on the model developed in India. Scanned documents are uploaded to the database and contents are made searchable. The database is accessed via the [Trust website](#). Researchers can access more detailed information about the documents by request.

In 2021 further funding was obtained from the Sunshine Coast Council for museum quality LED track lighting for the cabinets, and for a Preservation Needs Assessment (PNA) which was completed in Feb 2022 by conservator Lydia Egunnike. Training on a range of preservation issues was provided to volunteers by Lydia and by Michael Marendy, a textile conservator. A Preservation Plan was commenced based on the recommendations from the PNA.

Detailed cataloguing of over 2,300 photographs in the collection has been undertaken by Gusi Carpenter since 2010. Some of these images, including the early development of Avatar's Abode and Baba's visit in 1958, can be viewed online at the Avatar's Abode Photographic Collection avatarsabodecollection.zenfolio.com

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 19 Version 1.0 Date: 21 May 2022
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

APPENDIX 2 - COLLECTION USE, ACQUISITION, CARE AND DEACCESSIONING

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Buildings	Baba's House	Ongoing preservation and display through limited open hours	original building constructed in 1958	Dedicated committee and regular cleaning and maintenance	In accordance with a Trust approved Disposal Schedule
Buildings	Baba's Room	Ongoing preservation and display through limited open hours	original building constructed in 1958	Dedicated committee and regular cleaning and maintenance	To be preserved in perpetuity
Buildings	Meeting Hall	ongoing public access	original building constructed in 1958	regular cleaning and maintenance	In accordance with a Trust approved Disposal Schedule
Buildings	The Farmhouse	Pilgrim accommodation	Original building relocated on the property in 1958	regular cleaning and maintenance	In accordance with a Trust approved Disposal Schedule
Site	Baba's square	Public events and open hour access to public	Original space	Regular Maintenance	NA
Site	Francis' grave	Open hours access to public	Constructed 1984	Regular Maintenance	NA

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

Document No. AAT029
Page 20
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Site	Original road	Open hours access to pedestrian public	Original access to the property	Regular Maintenance	NA
Artefacts & Relics	Artefacts	Preservation and display	Bequests and gifts	Regular inspection. Placed in museum quality display cabinets or in storage in archival boxes in a temperature and humidity-controlled room	To be held in perpetuity
Artefacts & Relics	Relics	Preservation and display	Bequests and gifts	Regular inspection. Placed in museum quality display cabinets or in storage in archival boxes in a temperature and humidity-controlled room	To be held in perpetuity
Artefacts & Relics	Baba's Room furniture	Limited open hours and accessed by arrangement	Constructed on the property in 1958	Regular inspection and cleaning	To be held in perpetuity
Publications	Jim Migdoll collection	Restricted Research only	Bequests, gifts and purchase	In lockable steel cabinets in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	permanent archival reference collection

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

Document No. AAT029
Page 21
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Publications	Other archival publications not housed in Jim Migdoll collection	Research only	Bequests, gifts and purchase	In lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	Managed in accordance with deaccessioning procedure
Publications	Books signed by Meher Baba	Restricted Research only	Bequests and gifts	In locked fireproof safe in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	To be held in perpetuity
Publications	Francis Brabazon Library	Public access lending library	Bequests, gifts and purchase	Library committee responsibility. Regular pest management	Library Committee responsibility
Documents	Francis Brabazon collection	Research and display	Bequest	Rehoused in acid free paper and placed in acid free archival boxes in lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	Managed in accordance with deaccessioning procedure
Documents	Stay With God original manuscript	Restricted Research only	Bequests and gifts	In locked fireproof safe in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	To be held in perpetuity

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

Document No. AAT029
Page 22
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Documents	Other collections	Research and display	Bequests and gifts	Rehoused in acid free paper and placed in acid free archival boxes in lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Photographs	Photographic prints	Displays using originals. Digitised versions shared via internet	Bequests and gifts	Rehoused in archival sleeves and placed in acid free archival boxes in a lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Photographs	Slides	Digitised versions shared via internet	Bequests and gifts	Rehoused in archival sleeves and placed in acid free archival boxes in a lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Photographs	Negatives	Digitised versions shared via internet	Bequests and gifts	Rehoused in archival sleeves and placed in acid free archival boxes in a lockable compactus in a locked temperature and humidity controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Photographs	Digital image only	Shared via internet	Bequests and gifts	Stored on the Network Attached Storage with two hard drive backups stored in separate locations	In accordance with disposal schedule

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

Document No. AAT029
Page 23
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Artworks	Paintings	Displayed in Baba's House, Reception Centre, and Pilgrim Accommodation buildings. Digitised images shared via the internet or publication	Bequests, gifts and loan	Annual visual inspection. Identification of items requiring expert conservation. Clean artworks. Replacement of backings.	In accordance with disposal schedule
Artworks	Drawings	For temporary display in Baba's House, Reception Centre, Digitised images shared via the internet or publication	Bequests, gifts and loan	Annual visual inspection. Identification of items requiring expert conservation. Clean artworks. Replacement of backings.	In accordance with disposal schedule
Artworks	Sculpture	Digitised images shared via the internet or publication	Bequests, gifts and loan	Routine specialised cleaning	In accordance with disposal schedule
Artworks	Other	Displayed in buildings at Avatar's Abode and grounds	Bequests, gifts and loan. Created on-site	Routine monitoring and cleaning	In accordance with disposal schedule
Audio visual	Compact cassettes	Digitised, transcribe when relevant, and share via database	Bequests, gifts and purchase	Digitise by 2025 Store original tapes in lockable steel compactus in a temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Audio Visual	Audio visual - Film	Digitise and share original footage	Bequests, gifts and loans. Purchase	Stored in deep freeze	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

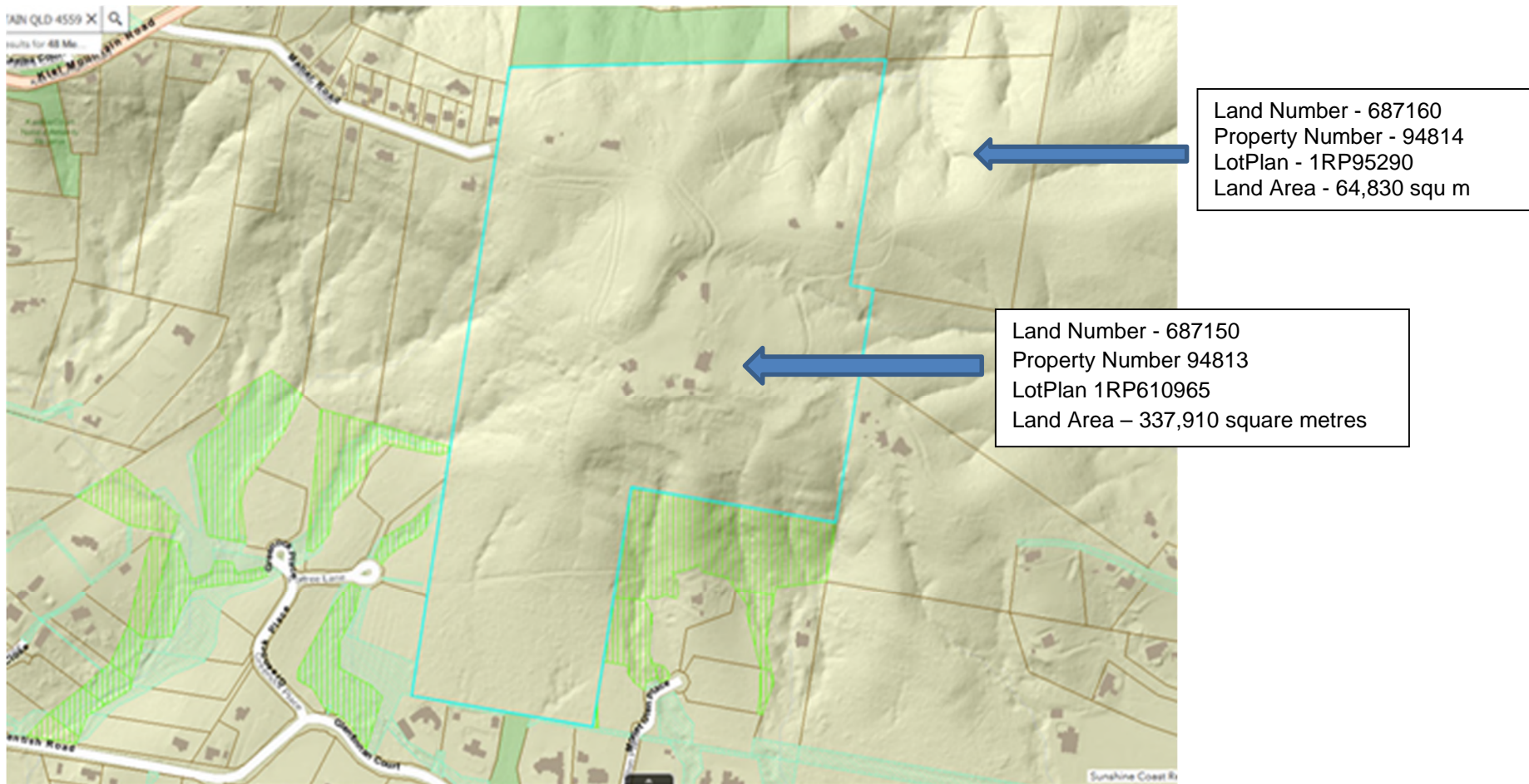
Document No. AAT029
Page 24
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Category	Sub-category	How used	Method of acquisition	Care	Deaccessioning
Audio Visual	Video	Digitise and share original footage	Bequests, gifts and loans. Purchase Recorded on-site	Digitise by 2025 Store original tapes in lockable steel compactus in a temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Audio Visual	LP and 78 RPM Records	Storage and display only.	Bequests and gifts	Selected digitisation where content not available in public domain. Cleaned, re-sleeved and stored in a temperature and humidity-controlled room.	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation
Audio Visual	Reel to Reel magnetic tape	Storage and display only.	Bequests and gifts	Digitise by 2025. Store original tapes in lockable steel compactus in a temperature and humidity-controlled room	In accordance with disposal schedule after digitisation

APPENDIX 3 – AVATAR'S ABODE PROPERTY, HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND SIGNIFICANT SITES

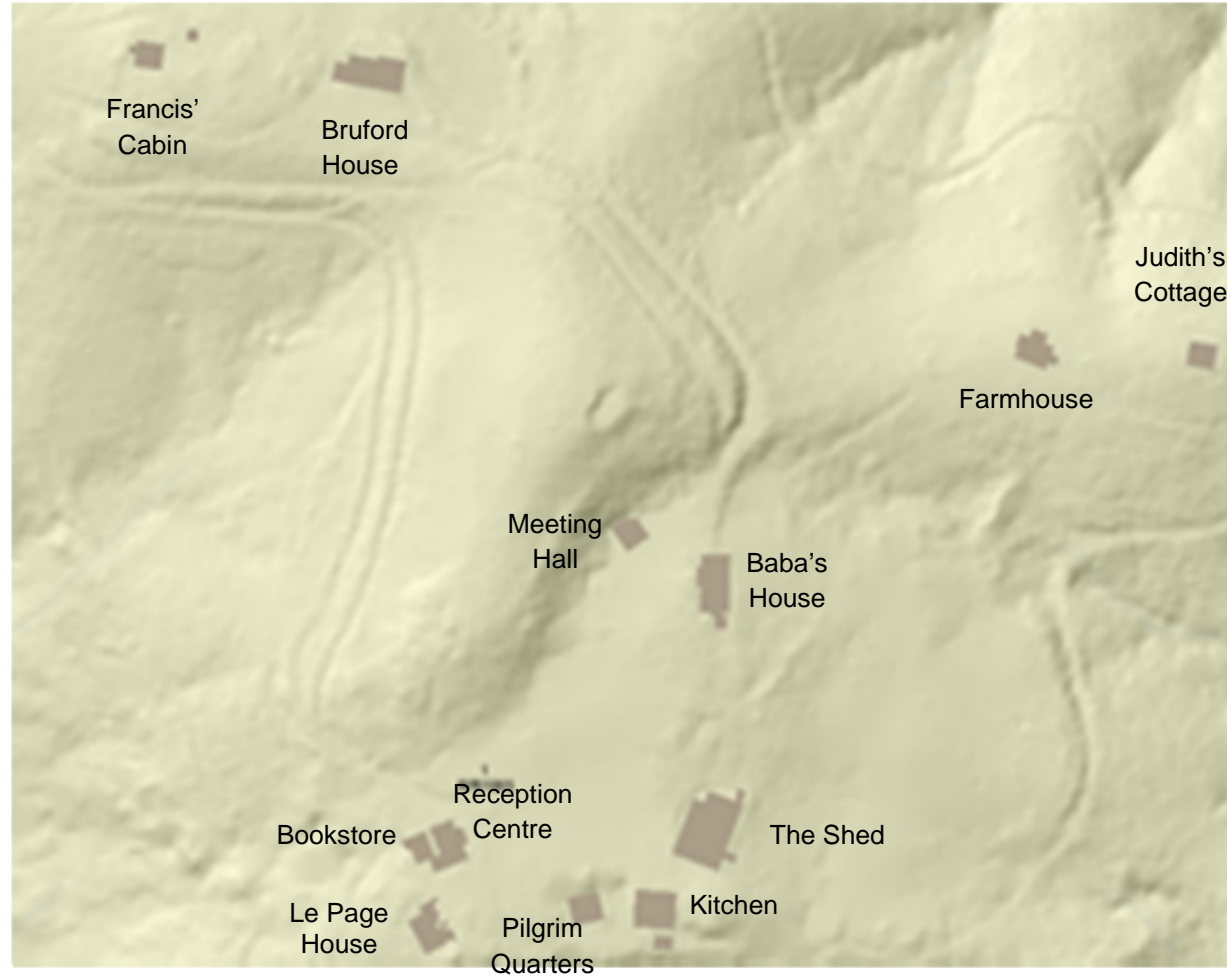
A description of the Avatar's Abode property, significant sites on the Abode and description of the buildings with historical significance.



AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST

Document No. AAT029
Page 26
Version 1.0
Date: 21 May 2022

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY



AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 27 Version 1.0 Date: 21 May 2022
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

Built for Baba's visit

- Baba's house, (being a steel construction kit shearing shed on timber foundation posts, to which an additional enclosed veranda was added along the western side in early 1970s. The current outside veranda extension was added in 1988)
- The Meeting Hall (another kit steel shed, which had a dirt floor and hessian walls when Baba visited in 1958)
- The Farmhouse (originally near the site of Baba's House and moved to the current location during the building/preparations for His visit in 1958, and where Robert and Lorna Rouse lived for the rest of their lives.)
- Flagpole (designed and fabricated by John Bruford from plumbing pipes for Baba's visit in 1958)

Built between 1958 and 1984

- Bruford house
- Francis Cabin
- Judith's Cottage
- Bill and Diana's house (built in the late 1970s,
- Pilgrim Quarters (originally a workshop and tool shed, nursery and garage built early 1970s by Reg Paffle who lived in a caravan nearby - according to Judith Garbett- redesigned for use by Pilgrims)
- Ablution block attached to Baba's House (redeveloped in the early 1970s with septic)
- Horse stables

Built after 1984

- Reception Centre
- Bookstore
- The Shed
- The Kitchen

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 28 Version 1.0 Date: 21 May 2022
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

SIGNIFICANT SITES

- The site of the original tents in 1958
- Men's ablution area near Bruford House
- Men mandali washing area beside Baba's House
- The road onto the property used by Baba
- The flagpole
- Baba's square
- Area immediately to the north of Baba's House where Baba looked out to the coast.
- Francis' grave

AVATAR'S ABODE TRUST	Document No. AAT029 Page 29 Version 1.0 Date: 21 May 2022
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY	

APPENDIX 4 – TO DO LIST

THINGS TO BE DONE BY THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE BEFORE SHARING AVATAR MEHER BABA TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION

1. Obtain inventories of items held by other archivists in Australia and NZ which includes provenance of items.
2. Decide what items or types of items will be shared with Baba groups in Australia and New Zealand.
3. Decide whether items will ever be given or loaned to individuals.
4. Decide if there should be different categories of sharing for different types of groups or recipients.
5. Decide what portion of the collection and which specific items will always remain at Avatar's Abode and determine what representative items will always remain in the collection.
6. Decide how to maintain the authenticity of Baba items, and how to identify collection items that are shared.
7. Develop guidelines and agreement forms for making long term loans of Avatar Meher Baba Treasures from the Avatar's Abode Trust collection.
Indemnity form including:
 - Loan duration agreement
 - Transportation details
 - Sharing of costs
 - Insurance
 - Conditions of display, storage and context
 - Purpose
 - Intention

ATTACHMENTS

Photos of the buildings and sites