

WORKS METHOD STATEMENT

PA6233/19

Archives of the Archdiocese of Malta,
Archdiocese of Malta
Pjazza Kalcidonju
Floriana



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Date of Report: May 2020

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1. Introduction

The Archives of the Archbishop of Malta (AAM) contain the diocesan records from the second half of the 15th century up to today. It is thus not only a historical archive, but also one that continues to grow. For this reason, a decision was taken to embark on the project of constructing a new diocesan archive to house this extensive archival collection in the manner best suited for its conservation. The proposed metal structure is necessary to provide storage, under proper conservation conditions, for the archival material currently in hand, which amounts to more than 760m of shelf meters, with the scope of providing additional storage areas for future donations or acquisitions.

The Church was the only institution in Malta who, up to the second half of the 19th century, preserved records on the population in general. Thus, the material conserved in its archives constitutes a valuable, and indeed indispensable, source of information not only for historians interested in the history of our nation, but also for researchers who embark on studies as varied as demographic growth, social studies, economic history, as well as all those eager on reconstructing their family history.

2. Terms of Reference

The report is based on a request from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to submit a Works Method Statement detailing the methodology on how the proposed metal frame structure would be installed.

3. Location

The metal structure is proposed to be installed in one of the large double volume rooms found on the first floor. This is situated in an area of the building, which houses the archival documents and offices for the archivists and conservators.

4. Structural and Historic Considerations

The principle aim of this project is to extend the archival storage area of the Curia without affecting the historical value of the building while maintaining the structural integrity of the building.

In order to achieve this, a structure was designed which would be totally reversible, would not load and/or damage the flooring of the room, and is capable of supporting the heavy loads required. A secondary requirement was that the archival research area becomes fully accessible for persons with mobility issues.

The metal structure, which will be on two levels, is composed of a series of beams and columns that in turn are supported on a number of structural beams spanning the width of the room at regular intervals. In view that the manufacture of this structure will be part of a design and build tender, the exact number of beams is not known. However, one of the requirements for this structure is that they are kept at a minimum. The heads of the structural main beams will then be supported on the thick masonry walls on either side of the room with the insertion of a concrete spreader support (*suletta*) underneath each one to spread the load and eliminate any overloading to the underlying stone blocks.

This type of intervention minimises the structural intervention made, while ensuring that the metal structure can be removed with no permanent damage and disturbance to the original historic structure.

5. Conclusion

The proposal for the installation of a metal structure within the Curia Archives is aimed at safely archiving the historic documentation of the Archdiocese of Malta in a safe, climate controlled environment, while ensuring the safeguarding of the historic building it is housed in.