



VALENCE HOUSE
a place of discovery

LBBB Archive Access Policy

This policy was approved on 21 July 2015.
It is due for review in July 2020.

Name of the repository: Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre

Address: Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 3HT

Governing body: London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 21 July 2015

Date at which this policy is due for review: July 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this access policy is to outline the principles and practices that guide the provision of access to the collections held by the Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre.

2. Context

2.1. LBBD Archive has a fundamental responsibility to provide access to its collections under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and the Local Government Act 1972. For further information on how this legislation relates to the work and services provided by LBBD Archive see **Appendix A**.

2.2. Moreover it is a statutory right for citizens to be able to access information, subject to certain exemptions and conditions as outlined by the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Copyright and Related Rights Regulations Act 2003 and the Environmental Information Regulations. Closures and access restrictions made under this legislation are outlined in **Appendix B**.

2.3. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Public Services Quality Group Standard for Access to Archives, as well as existing access policies used by other repositories, namely London Metropolitan Archives. For a full list of policies used see **Appendix C**.

2.4. The terms used in this document are specific to this policy and are defined in **Appendix D**.

3. Aims

3.1. The aims of this access policy are as follows:

- To make the archive and local studies collections available to the widest possible audience to promote an understanding of and pride in the heritage of Barking and Dagenham.
- To ensure that access to the collections takes place in a safe, secure and comfortable environment.
- To employ effectively new technologies to deliver remote access to our holdings.
- To provide an enquiry service, which is responsive to, and meets the needs of current, as well as potential future users.
- To raise awareness of the relevance and significance of the collections both now and in the future.
- To guide the development of procedures and guidelines consistent with the value and goals of LBBD Archive.

4. Policy Statements

4.1. Collections

4.1.1. LBBB Archive is the primary source of historical information on the place and people of Barking and Dagenham, which is an often overlooked part of London on the border with Essex. We hold records of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and its predecessor authorities dating back to 1558.

4.1.2. The archive collection also comprises the records of a wide variety of organisations, including businesses, charities and non-conformist churches, as well as the papers of families and individuals with connections to Barking and Dagenham. The archive holdings are complemented by an oral histories, photograph and film collection, printed books and maps.

4.1.3. The local studies collection comprises printed ephemera, books, newspapers and maps primarily concerning the history of Barking and Dagenham, as well as the surrounding areas of London and Essex.

4.1.4. Housing, education, health, leisure, business and industry are all key themes reflected by the documentary sources held by LBBB Archive. For further information on the scope and content of the collection see our Collections Development Policy.

4.2. Users

4.2.1. LBBB Archive is free to use and open to everyone. The archive and local studies collections are used by a wide range of different users with diverse research needs including council staff, family and local historians, academic historians, university and college students, school groups, community groups, independent learners, journalists and artists.

4.2.2. However it is recognised that the current user profile does not adequately reflect the demographics of the community within Barking and Dagenham. To address this situation the service is committed to promoting the use of the collections through advocacy and an extensive outreach programme. See below for further details on our learning and outreach programmes.

4.3. Reading Room

4.3.1. Access to the archive and local studies collections is provided within our published opening hours and under supervised conditions in our fully accessible reading room, which is situated in the Visitor Centre at Valence House Museum.

4.3.2. All users are required to adhere to the **Reading Room Rules**. Notices outlining these rules are clearly displayed in the reading room. Further details about our reading room rules can also be found on our website or on application to staff.

4.3.3. New researchers who wish to consult original documents and rare books are required to complete a **Registration Form**. Full details on the registration process and acceptable documents required for registration can be found on our website or on application to staff.

4.3.4. Users are able to browse printed books, topic boxes, family history resources and maps that are on the open access shelves in the reading room. Users can find further details on how to use the reading room, and resources on the open shelves can be found in our **Brief Guide to the Archives and Local Studies Centre**. This guide is made available in the reading room, as well as being published online.

4.3.5. Microfilm readers are available and can be used to access copies of the local newspapers, electoral registers and parish records.

4.3.6. Users are also able to use computers with access the internet, and family history databases and websites without charge including Ancestry and Find My Past.

4.3.7. Information about the archive and local studies collections, including catalogues, indexes and resource guides, that help researchers identify archive and local studies material they wish to view are made available to users in the reading room, as well as in a variety of ways online (See below for further details on Remote Access and our Finding Aids).

4.3.8. Members of staff are on hand in the reading room at all times to provide users with informed advice and assistance on the facilities, services, holdings and conditions of access at LBBB Archive. These members of staff are trained in disability awareness, and promote the standards outlined by the council wide Equalities and Diversity Strategy.

4.4. Original documents

4.4.1. LBBB Archive makes original documents and rare books available to researchers in the reading room situated in the Visitor Centre at Valence House Museum. Some closures and access restrictions are, however, inevitable due to the nature, contents or physical condition of the unique and irreplaceable records we look after.

4.4.2. Access to material which contains sensitive personal information concerning potentially living in is restricted for a term of years under the Data Protection Act. Non-statutory access restrictions are negotiated with the legal owner of the material on accession to the archive. For further information on closures see **Appendix B**.

4.4.3. Heavily used and fragile material will be produced in the reading room in the form of a surrogate, such as a microfilm or digital copy.

4.4.4. We endeavour to work with users to find a solution which allows access to the required information, as an original document if possible, otherwise in a surrogate or different form. For further details on which of our records are closed and why see **Appendix B**.

4.4.5. Users are not required to make an appointment to view original documents and rare books, but it is advisable to order this sort of material in advance as it is kept in our strongroom. Original documents and rare books must be ordered using an Archive Request Slip. For further details on the storage of the archive holdings see our **Preservation Policy**.

4.4.6. LBBB Archive supports the training of staff, volunteers and users in the correct handling of documents. Staff will monitor document handing within the reading room, and are able to advise on correct document handling on request or when necessary. A guide on the correct handling of archival material has also been published on our website. Behind the scenes tours of the archive stores and preservation room are regularly offered and show the importance of this work.

4.5. Remote access

4.5.1. LBBB Archive recognises that not all current and potential users are able to visit the reading room. We therefore strive to make the archive and local studies collections available in a variety of ways online.

4.5.2. At present our catalogue is not available remotely via our website. However we publish finding aids on our website, and contribute information about our collections to online portals, such as The Archives Hub, AIM25 and The National Archives A2A Database.

4.5.3. In order to increase access to the collections, articles and content are regularly posted on social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter. In addition, a number of digitalised photographs have been uploaded to Flickr and Historypin, while film footage from the archive can be viewed on Vimeo.

4.5.4. We also collaborate with different partners to digitalise our resources, such as Find My Past and Max Communications.

4.5.5. Material that is classed as restricted or closed will not be made available online.

4.5.6. Material that is not our copyright will also not be made available online without seeking permission from the copyright holder. If the copyright holder is unknown or cannot be traced the material will only be posted online following a risk assessment with a disclaimer stating that the copyright does not belong to LBBB Archive. Material will immediately be taken down, if we become aware that making it available online is an infringement of copyright.

4.6. Enquiry Service

4.6.1. LBBB Archive strives to provide free and accurate information, as well as friendly and helpful advice on our facilities, services, holdings and conditions of access to members of the public.

4.6.2. As mentioned above, helpful, knowledgeable and properly trained staff are on hand to answer enquiries on our facilities, services, holdings and conditions of access in the reading room. Enquiries received by telephone, email or letter are responded to within ten working days.

4.6.3. Our preferred form of enquiry is either in person or by email via localstudies@lbbd.gov.uk. When a user makes an enquiry in person or on the telephone the member of staff on duty will fill in an **Enquiry Form**. We may ask telephone enquirers to email us the details of their request, and we usually respond to letters by email, if an email address is given.

4.7. Research Service

4.7.1. We will always try to identify sources within our archive and local studies holdings that are relevant to the enquiries that we receive. Staff are unable to undertake in-depth research on the behalf of users. Enquirers will need to visit to do their own research but we appreciate that this is not always possible.

4.7.2. We sometimes recommend the use of record agents to carry out research work on the behalf of the enquirer. However we do not recommend or list individual record agents but offer a list compiled by national institutions, such as the National Archives.

4.7.3. If we, or the enquirer, have identified a particular relevant source within our holdings, we may carry out limited and specific searches in the specified records as part of our paid 'Lookup Service'. We will warn enquiries that the nature of archive research means that this sort of paid search may often find no answers. We do not refund where we have searched in agreed sources but found no relevant information. Therefore we reserve the right to turn down lookup requests where we consider that no specific relevant source has been identified or that, in our view the chances of finding any relevant information are slight.

4.7.4. Users that need help with their family history can take advantage of our free monthly helpdesks run by the local branch of the East of London Family History Society.

4.8. Reprographics Service

4.8.1. LBBB Archive provides copies of records for use in private research subject to copyright law, and payment of a reprographics fee. Up to date information on our reprographics fees and charges can be found on our website, or on application to staff.

4.8.2. Copies of documents will not be made of records where there is a risk of damaging them.

4.8.3. Users can photograph records for themselves using their own cameras or the self-service overhead scanner in the reading room, after paying for a **Photography Permit**.

4.8.4. Facilities are provided for the public to make copies from microfilms. Users can also copy printed books and ephemera using the self service photocopier. Information on our copying fees and charges can be found on our website, or on application to staff.

4.8.5. Users can also request copies of original documents, photographs and printed books by telephone or email via localstudies@lbbd.gov.uk.

4.9. Copyright

4.9.1. The publication of copies of our records must be agreed in advance and special conditions apply. Original documents and photographs that are clearly protected under copyright legislation and may not be reproduced without permission. If you wish to discuss obtaining permission to publish material from our collections and the fees involved, please contact us via localstudies@lbbd.gov.uk.

4.10. Collections information

4.10.1. LBBD Archive recognises that information about its holdings and associated intellectual property is key to enabling access to the collections, as well as being integral to good collections management. Also see LBBD Archive's **Collections Information Policy**.

4.10.2. LBBD Archive is committed to creating and maintaining good quality and up to date information about the archive and local studies collections, through accessioning and cataloguing, which conforms to appropriate national and international standards wherever possible.

4.10.3. LBBD Archive uses the following standards when creating and maintaining collections information:

- ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, International Council on Archives (2007)
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names (1997)
- UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT)

4.10.4. Accessioning and cataloguing manuals have been developed to ensure that collections are accessioned and catalogued appropriately on to our specialist archive and library software system, Adlib. These guides should be used in conjunction with national and international cataloguing standard, such as ISAD(G).

4.10.5. All staff responsible for creating and maintaining collections information must receive training in the relevant data standards and on how to use the specialist software system. Data inputted in the specialist software system shall be traceable through an audit trail as to who created or edited it.

4.10.6. LBBB Archive is committed to ensuring that the specialist archive and library software system is the primary tool for creating and managing collections information.

4.10.7. The specialist archive and library software system is also the primary way that we control the location of archive and local studies collections.

4.10.8. An accession record must be created on the specialist software system for all items added to the collections held at LBBB Archive. Each accession record must include the following essential information:

- Unique reference number.
- Accession date.
- Accession title.
- Content description.
- Date of content.
- Extent.
- Contact details of the source of acquisition.
- Location.

4.10.9. A printed accessions record will be produced and kept with the forms completed and signed as part of the acquisition process, together with any correspondence relating to the acquisition of the material as part of the collections held at LBBB Archive. For further details see our **Acquisitions Procedure**.

4.10.10. Catalogue records created on the specialist software system must include the following essential information in accordance with ISAD(G):

- Unique reference number.
- Title.
- Date.
- Extent.
- Level of description.
- Creator.

4.10.11. In addition to the above essential fields required by ISAD(G), where possible the following information is included when cataloguing collections at LBBB Archive:

- Administrative history.
- Archive history.
- Source and date of acquisition.
- Scope and content.
- Appraisal.
- Conditions of access.

- Reproduction conditions.
- Location.

4.10.12. For further information on how collection information is recorded through the cataloguing process see the relevant **Cataloguing Manuals**.

4.11. Finding aids

4.11.1. LBBD Archive recognises that uncatalogued collections are a barrier to access, and in turn strives to take a managed and sustainable approach when it comes to creating new and improving information about collections, and to make this information available to the widest possible audience.

4.11.2. A cataloguing audit has been carried out in order to identify what types of records, as well as specific collections, which should be regarded as being a high, medium and low priority when it comes to cataloguing. This cataloguing audit is updated as work is completed.

4.11.3. As mentioned above, staff and volunteers that use this specialist software system are provided with proper training. In addition, a number of cataloguing manuals have been developed to ensure that catalogues are created as consistently as possible. It is recognised that these guide should be used in conjunction with international standard for archival arrangement and description, known as ISAD(G).

4.11.4. The archive catalogue is not currently available online. The service does however contribute information about the collections on the council website and to other online gateways, notably the Archives Hub, Aim25, Access to Archives as well as social media sites, such as Facebook, Historypin and Flickr. Printed catalogues, research guides and information sheets are also made available in the Reading Room.

4.12. Publications

4.12.1. Information about our opening times, facilities, services, holdings and conditions of access can be found on our website, and details on how to use the reading room and collections on the open shelves are available in our printed **Brief Guide to the Archive and Local Studies Centre**.

4.12.2. Our events are publicised through the council online events calendar, and in the annual printed events leaflet produced and distributed by association with Valence House Museum.

4.12.3. News about the collection, usage of the collection and forthcoming events are also published in our quarterly e-newsletter. Printed copies of this newsletter are available in the reading room.

4.12.4. In addition, we publicise news about the collection, usage of the collections and forthcoming events via social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter.

4.13. Surveys

4.13.1. LBBD Archive ensures that it is meeting its targets and the needs of our users by monitoring on a monthly basis the number of users, the number of hours users spend in the reading room, the number of remote enquiries and the number of archive material requested. These statistics are compiled and analysed in our annual return to CIPFA.

4.13.2. We invite suggestions, comments and complaints from users about our services and communications through comment forms and talking to staff, which are passed on to and considered by Senior Management.

4.13.3. LBBD Archive participates in surveys of our personal visitors and distance enquiry users, as part of a national survey organised by the Public Services Quality Group. Wherever possible, the feedback from these surveys, together with suggestions, comments and complaints that we receive are acted upon to improve our service, and the changes made as a result are communicated to users and staff.

4.14. Outreach

4.14.1. LBBD Archive strives to raise awareness and broaden the usage of the collections our learning and outreach programme. It is also our aim to become a community hub for the people of Barking and Dagenham.

4.14.2. Users who visit the reading room can view regularly updated displays, which include original documents and rare books, in our exhibition case.

4.14.3. We are committed to developing a series of themed 'story boxes' containing original documents and other material, such as oral histories, photographs and newspaper cuttings, that users can browse in the reading room as part of the National Archives Explore Your Archive Campaign.

4.14.4. LBBD Archive is committed to developing and facilitating free talks, tours and workshops to help users make the most of our research facilities and collections.

4.14.5. The archive and local studies collections are used to develop school sessions at Valence House Museum. School groups are encouraged to visit the reading room to view original documents, printed books and maps as part of the sessions run by the Education Team.

4.14.6. LBBD Archive works closely with organisations, charities, community groups and artists involved in delivering projects funded by bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Creative Barking and Dagenham.

4.14.7. Further information on our approach to promoting our services and collections can be found in our **Access Plan**.

5. Implementation

5.1. This policy is to be made available to staff, volunteers and users online.

5.2. This policy should be used together with related policies, plans and procedures that make up LBBB Archive's Collections Management Framework.

6. Evaluation

6.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years to make sure it remains relevant to the work and services provided by LBBB Archive.

6.2. This policy will next be reviewed July 2020.

7. Feedback

7.1. If you wish to give us feedback on this policy, please email localstudies@lbbd.gov.uk.

Appendix A

Archive Legislation

The Local Government (Records) Act 1962, as amended to 2003, confers limited discretionary powers for local authorities to provide certain archives services. It states that ‘a local authority may do all such things as appear to it necessary or expedient for enabling adequate use to be made of records under its control’. The Act goes on to refer to allowing inspection and copying of records, preparing indexes and guides to them and publishing and exhibiting them. The Act refers solely to the service provision aspect of archive offices’ work, not to their stewardship obligations nor any wider responsibilities and functions. In addition the Act empowers them to acquire records of local significance over and above their own administrative records, care for them and make them available for study by the public.

The Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to ‘make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the council of any of their officers’. In 1999 the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now the Department for Communities and Local Government) issued guidance on the interpretation of the term ‘proper arrangements’. The guidance includes sections on the management of a local authority’s administrative records, whether kept on paper or in electronic form, and proper arrangements for those records which have enduring historical value and which should be kept by an established archive service.

Additional requirements with regard to access to information in records and archives, affecting local and regional authorities, have been imposed through the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations. These include a statutory right for the citizen of access to information, subject to certain exemptions and conditions.

Information taken from the website of the National Archives:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/other-archival-legislation/local-government-acts/> (Last accessed February 2015)

Appendix B

Closures under the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000

Records containing personal information about individuals are not routinely made available to the public by LBBD Archive under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Records affected by Data Protection are subject to restricted access for 100 years from the date of birth of the subject of the information. Where there are multiple subjects, for example a register, the following rules are applied:

- If the subjects are all known to be adults a minimum age of 16 is implied and the record is closed for 84 years.
- If the subjects are all known to be children a minimum age of 7 is implied and the record is closed for 93 years.
- If the subjects include babies or very young children, or if the subjects may be a mixture of adults, children and babies, the record is closed for 100 years.

Any records which contain personal information may be subject to these closures but the main classes of records affected are as follows:

- School admission and discharge registers are closed for 93 years from the last date in the register.
- School punishment books are closed for 93 years from the last date in the book.
- Hospital admissions and discharge registers may be closed for 84, 93 or 100 years depending on the specialism of the hospital.
- Maternity ward report books are closed for 100 years from the last date in the book.

LBBD Archive does not hold the sort of records, such as coroner, magistrates or county court records, which are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Some organisations and individuals that deposit collections with us request that their records are restricted for a set number of years. These collections are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Appendix C

Standards and Policies

Birmingham Archives and Heritage Collection: Access Policy (2011)

Cumbria Archive Service: Access Policy (2012)

Cumbria Archive Service: Collections Information (2014)

London Metropolitan Archives: Collections Access Policy (2014)

Nottinghamshire Archives: Access Policy (2009)

Somerset Heritage Service: Archives Statement and Public Access Policy (2004)

Wellcome Library: Access to Archives Policy (2010)

V&A: Collections Information and Access Policy (2012)

Appendix D

Definitions

Advocacy: the act of supporting, recommending and publicising the work undertaken by archives.

Ephemera: collectable items that were originally expected to be useful or popular for a short period of time.

Outreach: the act of reaching out to people and community groups who might not otherwise be aware of, or have access to the service, by offering services beyond conventional limits.

Preservation: a set of activities that aims to prolong the life of a record and relevant metadata, or enhance its value, or improve access to it through non-interventive means. This includes actions taken to influence records creators prior to selection and acquisition.

Rare book: a book that is distinguished by its early printing date, its limited issue, the special character of the edition or binding, or its historical interest.

Records: defined as including not only written records, but records conveying information by any means whatsoever. The information conveyed in records was created, received and maintained as documentation in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

Surrogate: a duplicate of an original document in whole or in part to preserve it and provide access to it.