

Wandsworth Heritage Service

Collection Policy for Archives

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the approach taken by the Heritage Service towards the archives in its care, including the professional standards that the service seeks to apply.
- 1.2 It is a broad statement of current policy and will therefore be reviewed as the circumstances of the service change. It complements other documents that detail procedures and specific activities of the service, e.g. terms of deposit, the Annual Quality and Performance Review and the service's action plan.
- 1.3 The wider local history collection includes books, pamphlets, local directories and newspapers, ephemera, published maps, an illustration collection and copy microfilm resources. Many of these items are now rare and valuable and benefit from the standards of care described below. However, this policy relates to the archive holdings of the service.

2 Archives

- 2.1 Archives are unique, of historical significance and worthy of permanent preservation. High standards of care are required for their storage and use.
- 2.2 Archives can be defined as records created or accumulated by organisations, businesses, families and individuals in the course of their daily activities, which are selected for retention for their historical value.
- 2.3 The archives in the Heritage Service collection fall into two categories:
 - 2.3.1 The archives of Wandsworth Council and predecessor local authorities (such as archives of Battersea, Wandsworth, Putney, Tooting, Clapham and Streatham parishes from 1500s-1900) for example:
 - Justices of the Peace, (Western half of the Brixton Hundred) Petty Sessions 1786-1869
 - Wandsworth District Board of Works from 1857
 - records created by the two Metropolitan Boroughs of Wandsworth and Battersea 1900-1965)
 - 2.3.2 Records collected from local businesses and organisations, families and individuals which document the broader history of the borough and complement official record for example:
 - Battersea Labour Party
 - Letters from the poet Edward Thomas
 - Recollections of Geoffrey Haines, Putney air-raid warden during World War II

Wandsworth Heritage Service

Collection Policy for Archives

- Battersea Cricket Club;
- Putney Literary and Debating Society

2.4 The online archive and library catalogues and indexes provide details of specific archive collections and local history books.

3 Acquisition

- 3.1 The Heritage Service seeks to document all aspects of the history and life of the present day London Borough of Wandsworth as administered by Wandsworth Council.
- 3.2 Archives are acquired through gift, deposit (on indefinite loan), transfer from Council departments or more rarely purchase. Archives may be any age and any format including paper and parchment manuscripts, printed, photograph, negative, microfilm, tape-recording, electronic format etc.
- 3.3 In the case of gift or donation, title is transferred to Wandsworth Council. With a deposit on permanent loan, ownership of the archives remains with the depositor on the understanding that their custody is transferred permanently to the Heritage Service in order to make them available for research and to preserve them. Further details can be found in the Heritage Service's Terms of Gift and Deposit.
- 3.4 Archives offered to the Heritage Service will be carefully appraised for their evidential and informational value and will be selected for permanent retention and preservation. Many records relating to Wandsworth are held by other repositories and the Heritage Service will acquire archives in liaison with other repositories where appropriate. For example, the Heritage Service does not collect parish registers because the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) is recognised as the Diocesan Record Office for this area. The LMA also hold the majority of Public Records for the Wandsworth area.
- 3.5 The Heritage Service has the archives of predecessor authorities to Wandsworth Council, including the records created by the former Metropolitan Boroughs of Wandsworth and Battersea which covered areas (Clapham and Streatham) no longer in the modern London Borough of Wandsworth. Other collections from private sources may also relate to these areas. However, the Heritage Service no longer collects archives relating purely to areas now within Lambeth's boundaries and will liaise with Lambeth Archives in cases where there is any question.
- 3.6 In the case of any dispute regarding the appropriate place of deposit or donation, the mediation of The National Archives (Archive Sector Development) will be sought.

Wandsworth Heritage Service

Collection Policy for Archives

- 3.7 The majority of new archives accepted into the collection are through unsolicited gifts. However, the Heritage Service seeks to identify and remedy weaknesses and gaps in its holdings and may, on occasion, take a more active approach, for example, through record surveys or targeted promotion.
- 3.8 The Heritage Service only accepts original material for the archives collection. Photocopies and facsimiles may be accepted for the local history files but original material is preferred and the Heritage Service reserves the right to dispose of these copies if accepted as part of a wider collection.

4 Documentation

- 4.1 The Heritage Service maintains complete and accurate accession records to provide a legal record of status and ownership.
- 4.2 The physical integrity of archives is maintained as far as possible. Groups of archives are not split up or mixed with local history library collections.
- 4.3 Archives are catalogued in accordance with relevant professional archive standards such as the International Standard of Archival Description (General) (ISAD(G)), International Council on Archives, 1994.
- 4.4 The Heritage Service produces finding aids, lists and catalogues, indexes and guides to make the archives easier to use and accessible to all. A copy of the catalogue will be sent to each depositor as appropriate.
- 4.5 Documentation of new and existing collections is prioritised in accordance with the Heritage Service's action plan.
- 4.6 The Heritage Service supplies details of new archive accessions to the National Register of Archives and contributes to national archive network projects as resources permit.

5 Storage

- 5.1 The Heritage Service aims to provide optimum storage conditions for the preservation of the archive collections. The Heritage Service works to implement professional best practice and is working towards the achievement of British Standard 5454:2000 and the TNA Standard for Record Repositories 2004.
- 5.2 Archives acquired from private sources are stored in conditions no less favourable than those provided for the archives of Wandsworth Council and predecessor authorities.