

## LOCAL STUDIES – COLLECTIONS POLICY

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<b>Date:</b>	15-01-2019	<b>Version No:</b>	<b>5</b>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Studies Collection of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is based at the Old Town Hall, Richmond and provides access to material relating to the history of the Borough and the individuals, organisations and businesses within it. It includes the collections previously held by the former boroughs of Barnes, Richmond and Twickenham. In Richmond there has been a dedicated Local Studies Librarian since 1985. The current Local Studies searchroom is named the Albert Barkas Room after the librarian of Richmond who started the collection in 1893. Mr Arthur Burrell started the Twickenham Local Studies Collection. He was Chairman of the Libraries Committee from 1925 to 1944 and was a notable local historian. The Richmond and Twickenham collections were combined at the Old Town Hall, Richmond in 2000.

1.1 Local Studies is administratively part of the Library Service, which falls within the Environment and Community Services Directorate of the Council.

#### 1.2 Local Studies Collection

1.2.1 As at November 2017 the Collection comprises approximately:

- 17,000 letterpress items (books and pamphlets)
- 24,000 photographs
- 3,500 slides

- 4,000 prints, watercolours and engravings
- 4,000 maps

1.2.2 The items cover all parts of the Borough of Richmond upon Thames and its immediate environs. The collection has been acquired from the records of the Council and its predecessors, by donation and to a lesser extent by purchase. There is a near-complete run on microfilm of the Richmond and Twickenham Times from its first publication in 1873 to December 2009, and copies of many other shorter-lived newspapers with local coverage.

1.2.3 Special collections include a unique collection of playbills for Richmond Theatre dating back to 1769.

1.2.4 A small amount of video material is held by London's Screen Archives on behalf of Local Studies.

### **1.3 Archives Collection**

1.3.1 The Archives Collection includes:

- Records of Richmond upon Thames and predecessor authorities
- Over 5,000 property deeds dating back to 1489
- 12,000 building plans
- Parish records (though not registers of baptisms, marriages and burials)
- Workhouse records
- Files of miscellaneous information, newspaper cuttings etc covering most of the roads and larger buildings, societies and famous former residents of the borough
- Collections of local historians
- Collections of local firms, societies, organisations and families

1.3.2 Much of the material in section 1.3.1 has yet to be catalogued. There is currently (2017) a twenty-year backlog of items awaiting cataloguing. (See section 6.2.) This is not unique to Richmond upon Thames.

## **2. STATEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims and objectives of the Local Studies Collection are as follows:

2.1 To collect and retain written, photographic and other records reflecting every aspect of the Borough's rich heritage.

2.2 To manage the collection in accordance with good library and archive practice.

2.3 To ensure that items are preserved and stored in accordance with the relevant government and professional standards.

2.4 To raise awareness of the collection among potential users and encourage

personal visits and access to online resources.

- 2.5 To enable as many users as possible to access the collections either by visiting us in person or by means of online resources.
- 2.6 To ensure that the collection is representative of all communities within the Borough, including those such as ethnic minorities that have historically been under-represented
- 2.7 To maintain and promote a professional enquiry service
- 2.8 To enhance the educational facilities for children and adults that are provided by the Borough
- 2.9 To seek incremental sources of funding to enhance the collection and enable it to be made more widely available
- 2.10 To work closely with other Council departments, Richmond Museum, Local History Societies, Family History Societies, other archives within the Borough (for example Richmond Park, Hampton Court and Kew Gardens) and the archive services of the adjoining London Boroughs
- 2.11 To strengthen links with the local community by providing opportunities for volunteering

### 3. ACQUISITION POLICY

- 3.1 The Local Studies Library & Archive collects published works and original records relevant to the history of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, defined by the Borough boundaries as created in 1965.
- 3.2 The Local Studies Library & Archive seeks to acquire original records through means of:
  - Internal transfer
  - Gift
  - Purchase, only in exceptional circumstances
- 3.3 For collections offered on permanent loan, please see section 5.1.
- 3.4 The Local Studies Library & Archive always welcomes, and is grateful for, offers of material. However, due to limited space and other factors, we cannot accept all offers.
- 3.5 On the condition that the records add to an understanding of the development of life within the area that coincides with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, the Local Studies Library & Archive seeks to acquire records that fall into the following categories:
  - Records created by the London Borough of Richmond upon

Thames, its predecessor authorities, and other authorities whose entire responsibilities have been transferred to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames or its predecessor authorities.

- Records created by organisations whose activities relate to life within the area that coincides with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. These may include, but are not limited to, businesses, charities, schools, hospitals, political organisations, societies and community groups.
- Records created by families and individuals who have lived or worked within the area that coincides with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

- 3.6 The Local Studies Library & Archive will only accept offers of material from organisations or individuals who appear to have the legitimate right to make such an offer.
- 3.7 The Local Studies Library & Archive will only accept offers of material on the understanding that all of the material will be made available to the public, subject to any agreed or required closure periods. All material held by the Local Studies Library & Archive is subject to Freedom of Information, Data Protection, and Intellectual Property Rights legislation.
- 3.8 In cases where donors request that a closure period be applied to their donations, their wishes will be respected unless these conflict with Freedom of Information or other applicable legislation.
- 3.9 The Local Studies Library & Archive will usually seek to preserve the integrity of a deposited set of records by keeping it together, however we reserve the right to separate the components of a deposit if it makes more archival sense to do so.
- 3.10 In all cases where the Local Studies Library & Archive is unable to accept a deposit, Local Studies staff will attempt to offer advice as to a more suitable place of deposit.
- 3.11 The Local Studies Library & Archive will not accept single items unless they complement sets of records we already hold, or add in a highly significant way to an understanding of the development of life within the area that coincides with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

### **3.12 Copies**

- 3.12.1 The Local Studies Library & Archive seeks to acquire original records, as opposed to copies of such records. This is because the informational, evidential, and experiential value of a copy, whether digital or hard-copy, is inevitably less than that of the original. In most cases, a copy will have no legal evidential value, diminished historical evidential value, and diminished or no experiential value.

3.12.2 The Local Studies Library & Archive will not accept copies unless the originals are at imminent risk of being destroyed or have already been destroyed, and their informational value is judged by professionally qualified Local Studies staff to add in a highly significant way to an understanding of the development of life within the area that coincides with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

### **3.13 Formats**

3.13.1 The Local Studies Library & Archive may choose to decline offers of material for which we do not have the necessary equipment to provide access, or expertise to preserve (e.g. VHS tapes).

3.13.2 The Local Studies Library & Archive will accept offers of digital records, but may decline digital formats that will be difficult to provide access to and preserve. The commitment of the Local Studies Library and Archive to digital preservation is detailed in section 8.

### **3.14 Other Archival Organisations**

3.14.1 In seeking to acquire records, the Local Studies Library & Archive will make every effort not to conflict with the collections policies of other organisations.

3.14.2 Where records are likely to also have relevance to the collections of other archival organisations, either within or external to the area of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, we will liaise with that organisation to determine the most suitable place of deposit.

3.14.3 The geographical area covered by our collection policy overlaps with those of the London Metropolitan Archives and the Surrey History Centre. Records that relate to the development of Greater London as a whole, or that relate to the development of the County of Middlesex as a whole should be offered to the London Metropolitan Archives. Records that relate to the development of the County of Surrey as a whole should be offered to the Surrey History Centre.

### **3.15 Artwork and Objects**

3.15.1 Paintings and other works of art should initially be offered to Orleans House Gallery or other relevant institution which is dedicated to the collection of artwork.

3.15.2 The Local Studies Library & Archive will not acquire non-document objects. These should be offered to the Museum of Richmond, the Twickenham Museum, or other relevant institution.

3.15.3 Where objects accompany a set of records, they will be offered to the Museum of Richmond, the Twickenham Museum, or other relevant institution

with the agreement of the depositor, or else offered back to the depositor.

### 3.16 Secondary documents

Where secondary documents, such as books or periodicals, accompany a set of primary records and are judged to add no value to the primary records, or to the local studies library collection, they will be offered to another relevant institution with the agreement of the depositor, or else offered back to the depositor.

## 4. ARCHIVAL SELECTION AND DEACCESSIONING POLICY

- 4.1 The Local Studies Library & Archive carries out a selection process to determine which records should be preserved permanently as part of its collections. Selection is carried out in two stages:
- Initial selection takes place at the point of deposit or shortly afterwards, in liaison with the depositor.
  - A second round of selection takes place during the cataloguing process; this stage is known as appraisal. Items not selected for permanent preservation during appraisal will be offered back to the depositor in the first instance.
- 4.2 During the selection process, the following items will not be kept by the Local Studies Library & Archive:
- Items that do not comply with the acquisition policy.
  - Items that duplicate information in existing holdings, or items that duplicate information within the set of records being deposited.
  - Items that are judged to add no value to the collection or to any other materials held at the Local Studies Library & Archive.
- 4.3 Items that are not kept by the Local Studies Library & Archive will be disposed of in the following ways:
- In the first instance, items will be offered back to the depositor. The alternative disposal methods listed below will only be used if the depositor does not wish to have the items returned to them.
  - Items will be offered to other archives or collecting institutions if the items meet the acquisition policies of those institutions better than they meet the acquisition policy of Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library and Archive.
  - Items that are not wanted by the depositor and cannot be given to another archive or collecting institution will be securely destroyed.
- 4.4 The Local Studies Library & Archive is committed to the permanent preservation of all records that it accepts through its two-stage selection process. The only circumstances under which we would ever dispose of previously appraised and catalogued records are:
- If it became apparent that the records would be more appropriate as part of the collection of another archival organisation, in which eventuality they would be transferred to that organisation.
  - If the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames or any of its successors

were to become unable to care for the records, in which eventuality they would be transferred to another archival organisation.

## 5. LOANS POLICY

### 5.1 Loans to the collection

5.1.1 Acceptance of individual items on loan for indefinite periods can cause administrative problems, and raise issues of responsibility for maintenance and conservation. Loans will therefore be accepted if they are for a specified period of time only and:

- a) If they are items required for specific temporary exhibitions (short term loans, up to one year); or
- b) If they are a specific collection of items or a single very important item which significantly enhances the existing collection (long term loans, one to five years with option for renewal); or
- c) If they are items belonging to companies, museums or organisations which are unable to transfer the ownership of the item.

5.1.2 The term 'permanent loan' has no legal meaning. Items will only be accepted on this basis if they are in category c) above and would otherwise be outright gifts.

### 5.2 Loans from the collection

Loans to other institutions will only be made on the condition that the borrower takes full responsibility, and bears the cost, for transport, insurance, security and, if necessary, conservation of the item(s) loaned. Loans will only be made to individuals in exceptional circumstances – for example to the originators of the material for indexing.

## 6. DOCUMENTATION POLICY

6.1 For purposes of study, audit, proof of ownership and legal admissibility the collection will be documented to the appropriate professional standards.

6.2 All items within the care of the Local Studies Collection will be fully recorded according to standard archival practice subject to the constraints on the service. This will include the circumstances and conditions of their acceptance / accession and such other information as is necessary to complement the object, in an appropriate, secure and permanent form capable of easy retrieval. Priority will be given to the most requested and heavily used collections. The archive has adopted the More Product, Less Process system in order to reduce backlogs and provide access to

archival collections as quickly as possible.

- 6.3 All books held in the Local Studies Library will be catalogued on the Library Service's current library management system used by (and thus visible to) all the libraries within the Borough.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to safeguard the confidentiality of sensitive data contained in the Local Studies Collection and to ensure compliance with data protection legislation.

## **7. CONSERVATION POLICY**

- 7.1 The Local Studies team will protect the items in the collection against physical deterioration whether in use, in store, or on loan elsewhere.
- 7.2 Local Studies staff do not have the training or the facilities to undertake specialist conservation work. Access to professional, skilled conservation services will therefore be obtained as required. Staff will make use of these services where necessary (subject to funding constraints) to ensure the welfare of items in the collection.

## **8. DIGITAL PRESERVATION POLICY**

- 8.1 Increasingly, organisations and individuals are creating records in born-digital format. If these records are not collected, the Local Studies collection will be diminished because it will not fully represent the life of the Borough and the communities within it.
- 8.2 The Local Studies Library and Archive will develop a strategy for collecting, managing and preserving the following born-digital records:
  - Born-digital records that have been created by the Council and have been selected for permanent retention under the Council's document retention policy.
  - Born-digital records that have been deposited by external organisations and individuals, which adhere to the acquisition policy detailed in section 3.
- 8.3 In order to develop a strategy for the management and preservation of born-digital records, the Local Studies Library and Archive will liaise with the Records Management team and consider ways of going forward.

## **9. ACCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **9.1 Access**

9.1.1 Direct public access to the Local Studies Collection will usually be in the searchroom on the second floor of the Old Town Hall, Richmond. The searchroom has twelve study places, three computers offering access to the internet and two reader printers for viewing and making copies from microfilm and fiche. Power sockets are also available for those using their own equipment. Most of the archival holdings are in onsite storage and can be retrieved quickly on request without the need for a formal ordering process. Some archival collections are stored in a remote storage facility and can be retrieved within 48 hours of ordering.

9.1.2 Experienced Local Studies staff are on hand in the searchroom to offer help and professional expertise in the use of Ancestry and other on line resources.

9.1.3 There is no disabled access to the searchroom but special arrangements can be made to allow wheelchair users to consult items in the first floor Reference Library. It would be helpful to have prior notice of this.

9.1.4 In order to make the items in the collection discoverable online, Local Studies staff will continue the programme of cataloguing and digitisation. Customers will be able to assess the resources held before visiting in person. To increase the range of materials in the collection available for remote access more items will be digitised for online display. Due to the volume of material and the cost digitisation will proceed slowly. It will eventually make many of our most popular items – photographs, for example – available online. Given the nature of the collection it is neither possible nor desirable to digitise everything.

## **9.2 Reprographics**

Local Studies staff will permit copies to be made of items in the collection wherever possible, subject to copyright laws. However, it may not be possible to photocopy or scan large or delicate items – the preservation of the items in our care must be the highest priority. An appropriate fee will be charged for all reprographics, including the use of personal digital cameras and scanners.

## **9.3 Education**

9.3.1 Local Studies will take an active role in heritage education within the Borough including hosting visits by school groups in conjunction with Richmond Museum. Wherever possible The Local Studies Library will seek to forge long-term links with local schools and maintain participation in the Borough's Family Learning scheme.

9.3.2 Local Studies staff will, as part of their Continuing Personal Development - subject to service requirements and funding constraints - attend external courses relevant to the promotion of local history.

9.3.3 Local Studies will run a week long activity for 9 to 14 year olds during the summer holidays, subject to funding

## 10. MARKETING POLICY

10.1 The Local Studies Team will continue to raise awareness of the service through promotion and publicity, most notably the annual Know Your Place heritage festival.

10.2 Local Studies staff will work closely with all relevant local and national organisations to actively promote interest in the Local Studies Library and its collections. The service will continue to promote collaborative working with local heritage partners during Know Your Place.

10.3 Forward planning for the Local Studies and Archive will be in line with corporate and Library Service policies and plans. Local Studies will market its services using the corporately approved Library Services branding.

## 11. VOLUNTEER POLICY

11.1 Local Studies will welcome volunteer support in line with the current corporate policies for volunteer recruitment and retention. In addition:

- Local Studies will ensure appropriate and safe working conditions and appropriate supervision, training and induction for each volunteer.
- Volunteers are only accepted at the discretion of the Local Studies Manager
- All volunteers sign an agreement form that confirms their conditions of service and outlines the expectations of both parties.
- An appropriate level of staff supervision is maintained
- Wherever possible tasks are given that align with the interests and experience of the individual volunteers
- It is recognised that managing the volunteer workforce effectively is a significant responsibility for permanent staff members.

### Document Version Control

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version no.</b>	<b>Issued By</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
10-02-2011	1 - 3	Richard Holmes	Drafting & formatting amendments
16-12-2011	4	Robert Jones	Formatted as policy template, stylistic changes.
21-12-2011	5	Jane Baxter and Richard Holmes	2.11; 3.3; 3.10; 4.3; 4.6; 6.2; 8.1; 8.2; 9.3
20-11-2018	6	Jane Baxter and Janine Stanford	Completely reviewed and updated

<b>Distribution List</b>		
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