

**CITY OF LONDON**

**Libraries, Archives and Guildhall Art  
Gallery Department**

**GUILDHALL LIBRARY MANUSCRIPTS  
AND  
LONDON METROPOLITAN ARCHIVES**

**Collections Policy**

# Archives Collections Policy

## VISION STATEMENT

**Guildhall Library Manuscripts and London Metropolitan Archives exist to collect records of London's rich past history and to find and collect records of London's vibrant and diverse present, which are selected, catalogued, stored and permanently preserved for the use and benefit of present and future generations.**

## POLICY

### 1. Origins and introduction

#### London Metropolitan Archives

The Greater London Record Office was formed in 1965, when the Greater London Council was set up, by uniting the record offices of the London County Council and the Middlesex County Council. Its Library was formerly a Reference Library for members of the London County Council. The Common Council of the City of London Corporation assumed responsibility for the service on 1 April 1986, upon the abolition of the Greater London Council, and the service changed its name to London Metropolitan Archives in 1995. It merged with the Corporation of London Records Office in 2003.

Guildhall Library Manuscripts began as a collection of individual manuscripts and small collections of City of London interest in 1828 when Guildhall Library was refounded. Since 1945 it has acted as the local record office for the City of London, the "Square Mile", excluding the records of the City of London Corporation.

The two record offices were amalgamated in 2007 and offer a professional and courteous service to depositors, donors and all enquirers. We seek to maintain contact with all our stakeholders and involve them in the development of our service. Our collections policy exists in tandem with access and interpretation, and preservation and conservation policies, also freely available.

### 2. Objectives

- (a) To take in and look after the records of London Local Government, including the City of London Corporation, the Greater London Council and its predecessors.
- (b) To receive by gift, deposit or purchase collections of original records (in all formats including electronic records), relating to the Greater London area (excluding the City of Westminster) or to the City of London, and to administer them under the relevant statutory authorities (see footnote)

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- (c) To maintain a specialist library relating to the collections of archival source material in the office and to the history of the Greater London area.
- (d) To acquire by gift, deposit or purchase graphic and audio visual materials in any appropriate format, which are of topographical or social significance to the Greater London area.
- (e) To catalogue and store all the collections under our care, and to make them available in our modern reading rooms in original or surrogate form for the benefit of everyone. To present the collections through a comprehensive electronic catalogue, and to make popular sources available in digital format.
- (f) To develop, maintain and apply a comprehensive preservation and conservation philosophy, following the Recommendations of BS 5454 and in keeping with best current practice nationally and internationally. To provide fully equipped conservation studios for the conservation of archives, maps, prints and books and audio-visual material.
- (g) To maintain a flexible and extensive service to users, including:
- An interpretation service, centred round a vibrant schools programme and extended to people of all ages and interests
  - Talks, tours and lectures to interested groups
  - Creative and expert exhibitions and displays at the offices and elsewhere
  - The compilation, editing and publishing, in hard copy or electronically, of catalogues of collections, information leaflets, maps and prints, facsimiles and guides to holdings and to the use of the collections
- (h) To operate a reprographic service producing high quality reproductions of documents in hard copy and/or electronic form.
- (i) To continue to meet *The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories*. To achieve a top star rating in the assessment of local authority archive services carried out by the inspection service of the National Archives, as we did in 2006 and 2007. The History of London Collection at Guildhall Library and London Metropolitan Archives is designated as an outstanding collection by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).
- (j) To catalogue all records, as soon as possible, in accordance with in-house cataloguing conventions and standards (which can be seen on request and are in accordance with ISAD(G), the agreed general international standard for archive description).  
Catalogued records will be made available to the public free of charge, within our usual opening hours. However, access to some records may be restricted owing to their state of repair or because they contain

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confidential information under the Data Protection Act or at depositors' request. Access to uncatalogued records will be offered, at our discretion.

## 3. **Collecting Policy**

- (a) To acquire by transfer or deposit, the records of the City of London Corporation and of official London-wide bodies.
- (b) To acquire by gift, deposit or purchase original records relating to a) the City of London or b) the Greater London area which are London-wide in significance, particularly those of:
- Anglican dioceses and parishes falling within the City of London or former counties of London and Middlesex, except those of the pre-1965 City of Westminster.
  - Non-Anglican religious bodies including Non-conformist, Jewish and Sikh institutions
  - Private institutions including livery companies, clubs, schools, societies, charities, professional associations, pressure groups and other organisations
  - Businesses
  - Individuals and institutions connected with or under the charge of the City of London Corporation
  - Families, estates and individuals
  - National institutions whose headquarters are based in London and which complement existing holdings
  - Records of ethnic and other minority communities which reflect the diversity of modern London, including collections from the Afro-Caribbean, Chinese and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered communities
- (c) To collect and preserve, according to statutory provision, and in agreement with The National Archives, the records of public bodies of London relevance, especially records of Courts, Health Authorities, Hospitals and Coroners Courts.
- (d) To acquire by gift, deposit or purchase a) maps, prints, drawings, watercolours, photographs, posters and other graphic items and b) audio visual materials including film, video and audio in analogue and digital formats, which are of topographical or social significance to the Greater London area.

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- (e) To collect books, monographs, periodicals and 'grey' literature relating to the archival holdings and to the history of the Greater London area.

## 4. Acquisitions, disposals and withdrawals policy

- (a) We will add to our holdings by responding to offers of archives from institutions, businesses and individuals, including additional deposits/gifts from existing depositors and donors, by actively seeking out archives which are at risk of loss, destruction or damage and by liaising with outside bodies.
- (b) Copies and transcripts are usually only acquired where the originals are not available; artefacts are not usually acquired. Both categories are only acquired if the copies or objects further our aims.
- (c) We shall, in agreement with owners and depositors, evaluate and select material worthy of permanent preservation. Rejected material will be returned, or destroyed in a confidential manner, as the donor or depositor prefers. If depositors request a closure period on their records, we need an ongoing high-level contact to consider users' applications to view such records. We shall transfer records to a more appropriate record repository, or advise the depositor as appropriate. We will not dispose of any records in our ownership by sale.
- (d) We expect deposits to be made on long-term loan. If depositors wish to withdraw their records less than 20 years after date of deposit, a fee will normally be levied which will reflect storage costs.

## 5. Charges

We prefer to accept collections as gifts, although deposits are taken. When a deposit is accepted, a charge will normally be made for packaging and cataloguing of the collection. Records presented as gifts will normally be maintained at our expense. However, if records require considerable expenditure on reconditioning, rebinding and repair, further negotiations about conservation costs may occur.

### **Our commitment:**

The City of London provides a unique and diverse range of services to the residents, businesses, workers and visitors in the City of London and beyond. We are committed to being proactive in providing services fairly to all our potential service users. Promoting equal opportunity for all is one of our core values.

Our policy is to treat all service users, and anyone else we come into contact with, equally and with dignity and respect and not to discriminate on grounds of age, disability status, employment status, ethnic or cultural origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual

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orientation, social background, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. We will recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

In partnership with our employees, our residential communities and stakeholders, we will work hard to meet our obligations under the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, codes of practice and good practice guidelines.

*Footnote: list of statutory authorities:*

*Law of Property Acts 1922-25; Public Records Act 1958 and 1967;*

*Parochial Registers and Records Measures 1929, 1978 and 1992;*

*London Government Act 1963; Local Government Acts 1972 and 1985;*

*Education Reform Act 1988; Manorial Documents Rules 1960; Tithe Act 1936*