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LBBB Archive Appraisal 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 appraisal policy is to outline the principles and practices that guide the selection and disposal of collections held by the Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre (hereafter referred to as LBBB Archive).

2. Context

2.1. LBBB Archive exists to collect, preserve and made available records relating to the rich history and rapidly changing present of Barking and Dagenham, an often overlooked part of London, which was formerly part of Essex.

2.2. The process of selecting records of the highest archival value and removing any material that is duplicate, ephemeral or low informational value allows us to maximise storage space for archive collections of permanent historical value.

2.3. Appraisal is also necessary to maintain control over the proliferation of records that are created in the digital age, and to ensure that only the items most useful and relevant to research are retained.

2.4. The recording of information about appraisal, and especially disposal decisions is of vital importance following the passing of the Freedom of Information Act in 2000. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records, issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act states 'authorities need to have in place systems for managing appraisal and for recording the disposal decisions made'.

2.5. This policy been developed in accordance existing appraisal policies produced by other repositories, namely The National Archives Appraisal and London Metropolitan Archives. For a full list of policies used see **Appendix A**.

2.6. The terms used in this document are specific to this policy and are defined in **Appendix B**.

3. Aims

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

- To ensure that records selected for permanent preservations are of the highest archival value.
- To develop rational, consistent and cost effective appraisal methodology for records created by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and held at LBBB Archive.
- To provide rational and consistent decisions, valid over time, for all records of potential archival value produced by organisations and individuals whose collections are held at LBBB Archive.

- To destroy material that is duplicate, ephemeral or of low informational value confidentially, if not wanted by the original owner or depositor.
- To be aware of usage and potential future research trends and to assess these needs alongside our Collection Development Policy.
- To assess risk in all circumstances and make all appraisal decisions based on full analysis of available information.

4. Policy Statements

4.1. Definition

4.1.1. Appraisal is the process of selecting records of archival value for permanent preservation and identifying records that are duplicate, ephemeral or of low information value so that they can be destroyed.

4.1.2. Appraisal should be considered a positive and essential archival activity.

4.2. Scope

4.2.1. This policy applies to all collections stored and maintained by LBBB Archive. It includes records created by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and records of potential archival value produced by organisations and individuals with connections to Barking and Dagenham. For further information on our collecting remit see our **Collection Management and Development Policy**.

4.2.2. Our right to appraise will be negotiated and recorded in the deposit or gift agreement for each archive collections. Items may not be accepted for the collection without a completed and signed **Transfer Form** or **Declaration of Gift Form**.

4.2.3. This policy covers the appraisal of newly acquired records, and also considered the reappraisal of existing collections.

4.3. Process

4.3.1. Appraisal will always be carried out by qualified archival professionals under the supervision of the Borough Archivist.

4.3.2. The appraisal of new deposits and gifts will be carried out both before acquisition, and then during the cataloguing process. Where possible, staff will appraise a collection in situ before it is deposited or gifted to LBBB Archive. At this stage, staff will identify series of types of records that are not worthy of permanent preservation, and in doing so will avoid the unnecessary expense of taking unwanted material to LBBB Archive.

4.3.3. Appraising collections before they are acquired by the archive also provides an opportunity to identify and reject collections, or parts of collections, whose informational value duplicates other collections, or are not within the collecting remit of LBBB Archive.

4.3.4. Newly acquired collections will be appraised in more detail at file or item level during the cataloguing process.

4.3.5. Our right to appraise newly acquired collections is embedded in each deposit or gift agreement, which must be signed by the owners of the collection. After a collection has been appraised in more detail during the cataloguing process, owners of collections will be offered a choice between taking back items that are not deemed worthy of permanent preservation or the items will be sent for confidential destruction. We will not dispose of any records in our ownership by sale.

4.3.6. Two methods of appraisal will be used for existing collections depending on their size and complexity. Smaller collections may be appraised at file level. The value of records within large collections will be assessed at function, departmental or unit level rather than on a file by file basis.

4.3.7. All material for disposal will be dealt with confidentially. On rare occasions this material may be offered to other archive services, if owned by LBBB Archive. Deposited or gifted material will be offered back to depositor/donor unless this individual cannot be traced.

4.4. Principles

4.4.1. Appraisal will be carried out within the following legal framework:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

4.4.2. Appraisal for archival purposes concentrates largely on the historical value of a record. Historical value is informed by the evidential value (the way the record documents the history, structure and function of an organisation or the life and experiences of an individual) and informational value (the way the record informs research into places, people and subjects).

4.4.3. Records selected for permanent preservation should be those which show the significance of the history, structure, function or activities of an organisation, or the life and experiences of an individual. Items that are of the highest archival value are those which are most capable of documenting change, continuity and development over time, and of assisting historical interpretation of such changes.

4.4.4. Staff should therefore use the following criteria when appraising collections, and select items which give significant information regarding:

- The history or structure of the organisation, and the formulation, implementation and interpretation of any policies and procedures.
- Notable events or persons, but only when the records add significantly to what is already known.
- Developments or trends in political, economic, social and cultural history.
- Scientific, technological or medical research and development.
- Internal or external lists, guidelines or other finding aids.

4.4.5. Appraisers should additionally be aware of potential levels of interest from our core user groups, and where possible retain material which will add significantly to main research topics such as genealogy and local history.

4.4.6. Appraisers should consider keeping material which may not exactly conform to any established criteria, but which does have information which is of interest, or which may be presented in a lively or engaging way.

4.4.7. All routine or duplicate material should be systematically removed from the collection.

4.4.8. In some circumstances material may be suitable for permanent preservation by virtue of its suitability for audience development, which should be considered when appraising ephemeral material.

4.4.9. All disposal decisions made after deposit or gift of a collection should be recording the electronic catalogue at the appropriate level including the reason for disposal, which can include direct duplicate, duplicates information held elsewhere, not considered worthy of permanent preservation.

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

Standards and Policies

Hampshire Archives and Local Studies: Appraisal Policy (2010)

JISC: Guidance on Archival Appraisal (2007)

London Metropolitan Archives: Appraisal Policy (2013)

Surrey History Centre: Archive Appraisal Policy (2010)

The National Archives: Appraisal Policy (2012)

University of Manchester: Selection and Appraisal Policy (2014)

Queen Mary University: Archive Appraisal Policy (2014)

Appendix B

Definitions

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

Appraisal: appraisal is the process of selecting records of archival value for permanent preservation and identifying records that are duplicate, ephemeral or of low information value so that they can be destroyed.

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.