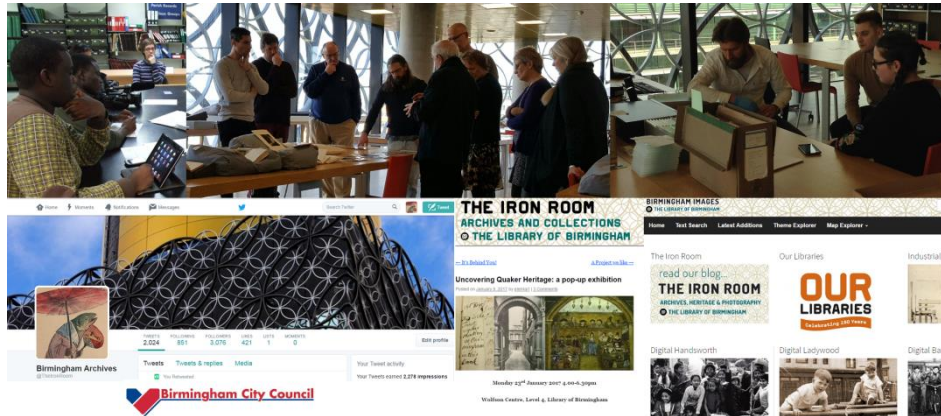


Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections Access Policy



Contents

Introduction	2
Aims of the Policy.....	3
Access at Birmingham Archives & Collections.....	3
Wolfson Centre for Archival Research.....	3
Membership	3
Appointments.....	3
Security	3
Physical access.....	4
Handling documents	4
Copying.....	4
Restrictions	5
Remote Access.....	5
Research Service.....	5
Online resources.....	5
Enquiry Service	6
Use of Social Media	6
Engagement	6
Reviewing user needs	7
Procedure for review	8
Appendix 1: Special Collections: items with restricted access	9

March 2017

Introduction

Birmingham Archives & Collections is the professional archives service for Birmingham City Council and maintains a repository for the storage and custody of its own records and any records deposited with it, and, which has the following statutory powers:

- to contain the official and public archives of the Council and has been appointed by the Lord Chancellor as the local place of deposit for certain classes of central government archives under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.
- is approved by the master of the rolls for the deposit of manorial and other documents.
- has been appointed by the Bishop of Birmingham as a Diocesan Record Office for diocesan and parochial records.
- is empowered under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 to accept privately owned records by way of donation, purchase, or deposit.

All records received are held for the benefit of the public.

Alongside the core activities of customer service and developing collections Archives & Collections at the Library of Birmingham makes important contributions to the city in areas such as skills and employability, community engagement, health and wellbeing, and tourism.

Archives & Collections can and do play an important role in communities and organisations to support and develop: Learning and skills, Health and wellbeing, Economic prosperity, and Creativity.

Archives & Collections enrich our understanding of the present through an appreciation of the past. They connect us to our families, our homes and the places where we live and work. They foster and promote a sense of place and community.

As the Archives & Collections Service for the City of Birmingham we are committed to making the unique and precious collections - written and digital, images, maps, film and other media – accessible and relevant to everyone.

Birmingham Archives & Collections continues to collect documents, in all forms, that will tell the story of today for people in the future.

To make this possible, we ensure that significant records, whether in traditional or digital format are:

- actively collected and described, are preserved for future generations, are accessible and set in a
- context that helps customers understand them, as well as fulfilling their valuable role in providing
- evidence for legal and other official purposes

Aims of the Policy

The purpose of this access policy is to demonstrate how Birmingham Archives & Collections provides access to its collections and services, both remotely and on-site, and to outline any restrictions that apply.

Access at Birmingham Archives & Collections

Archive collections are held for the benefit of the public, our stakeholders and the wider community. This includes, but is not restricted to, the taxpayers of the City of Birmingham; Birmingham City Council, its Councillors, Cabinet Members and employees; current and future researchers (private, academic and professional both nationally and internationally), and current and potential depositors.

Wolfson Centre for Archival Research

Access to our archive collections is free of charge and provided on site at the Library of Birmingham in a secure research area known as the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research. The Wolfson Centre is supervised by Birmingham Archives & Collections staff and always overseen by a Duty Archivist who provides advice and guidance on accessing collections and handling material.

Membership

Archives & Collections is a member of the County Archives Research Network (CARN) and all visitors to the Wolfson Centre must provide a CARN ticket, or appropriate identification for us to issue a ticket. Members of the public wishing to consult original archive material will be required to read a copy of the search room procedures when they join and sign a declaration to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 with respect to any personal data within the archives they consult. Researchers are required to sign the visitors' sheet on each visit and in so doing agree to abide by the rules of the service.

Appointments

Access to archival documents is by appointment only, with document requests taken in advance. Appointments can be made by e-mail, in person or over the telephone and are responded to by knowledgeable staff. We aim to respond to appointment requests within 7 calendar days. Details of the opening hours for the Wolfson Centre and how to make an appointment are given on the Library of Birmingham website.

Security

Access to Wolfson Centre, is through a staff controlled entry door. Bags and coats must be placed in the lockers provided. Customers sign in and out, and in so doing agree to abide by the procedures of the reading room. Documents served are counted in and out, or weighed in and out, and an audit trail is maintained via our document request slip system.

Physical access

The Wolfson Centre is on level 4 of the Library of Birmingham. This is accessible via lift, stairs and escalators. There are toilets, including a disabled toilet, outside of the Wolfson Centre and if visitors have any specific access requirements, they can contact Birmingham Archives & Collections who will make additional arrangements.

Library of Birmingham, including the Wolfson Centre, has been designed to be as easily accessible as possible for all visitors. The Library's design team were assisted by input from the Birmingham Access Committee, who were involved throughout the design process.

The Wolfson Centre is accessible to wheelchair users and staff are pro-active in assisting with carrying documents and equipment where users are not able.

Appointments are managed to ensure that users who require assistance, for example those needing carers, are catered for. This can include reducing the number of individual researchers on the day to facilitate an appropriate environment for users with specific needs and/or to accommodate support workers.

We have a hearing loop for people with auditory impairments. We have computers available in the department for assisting the visually impaired, and all computers have software which allows them to enlarge the images on the screen.

We promote collections as part 'Disability History Month' to raise awareness of the potential use of these archives, and aim to ensure that our collections are representative - see our Collections Development Policy.

For further key accessibility features at the Library of Birmingham see <http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/article/visiting/accessforall>.

Handling documents

A variety of document supports and weights are available for use in the Wolfson Centre. Staff will advise and monitor the handling of documents and intervene where necessary. Researchers will be required on occasion to use surrogate copies of items and the appropriate equipment for viewing will be provided where needed (for example microfilm readers). Guidance on handling documents is available in the Wolfson Centre, and handling is discussed with users.

Copying

Photography is permitted, subject to preservation and Copyright restrictions. A charge is levied for taking photographs in the Wolfson Centre and a photography form must be completed to demonstrate researchers agreeing to the terms of use of images. Birmingham Archives & Collections does not offer a remote copying service, however we can provide a small amount of photocopying for personal visitors, again depending on the condition and Copyright status of the item/s to be photocopied.

Restrictions

Birmingham Archives & Collections is bound by certain legal obligations, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and restrictions placed on them by depositors. These obligations necessitate that access to certain information within the archive material it holds is restricted. Such records may be designated as 'Closed (content)' marking them as unavailable for public consultation for a fixed time period. Certain items are also designated 'Closed (condition)' in which case they may be too physically degraded to be accessed. See the Collections Care and Conservation Policy for details. Where an item is not accessible, staff will explain the reasons why and provide either an alternative option where one exists, or provide guidance on how to apply for permission where appropriate.

For items of significant value or rarity, and where surrogates, or alternatives, do not exist, for example material from our Early & Fine Printing Collection, direct one-to-one supervision by a member of staff in consultation with the Conservator is necessary. Requests should be made in writing to Birmingham Archives & Collections, stating the specific research interest and exceptional reason(s) why access to the original is necessary. All requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and access will only be accommodated where both the reason and the service capacity permits. These items are periodically made available at special events which are advertised. Guidance on which items have restricted access is available from Archives & Collections. See Appendix 1 'Special Collections: items with restricted access'.

Remote Access

Research Service

Birmingham Archives & Collections provides a research service for records that fall under the scope of our Closed Records Research Service.

Written requests for information from closed archive material (other than personal data requested by the data subject) will be treated as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and dealt with through our Closed Records Research Service, which incurs a charge. See the Access to Closed Records Policy for details.

Requests for information from data subjects will be processed under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Online resources

We have an online catalogue which can be viewed remotely. We also have a continuing programme to make catalogues available online to enable users to identify the material they wish to look at in advance. Various resources can be accessed remotely as follows:

Our online catalogues:

<http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/>

<http://www.discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Our online galleries:

<http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/collections>

<http://www.birminghamimages.org.uk/>

<http://damsdeepzoom.shoothill.com/>

Our collections based blog:

<https://theironroom.wordpress.com/>

Our collections/project based websites:

<http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/>

<http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/article/archives/collections-alphabetical-list>

Subscription sites to which we subscribe:

<http://www.ancestryinstitution.com>

Guidance on how to access our service and select sources, including a list of useful websites, is available online through the Library of Birmingham website at:

www.libraryofbirmingham.com/archives.

Enquiry Service

Birmingham Archives & Collections offers a remote enquiry service and aims to respond to all enquiries, either by post, e-mail or telephone within 20 working days.

Through the enquiry service, we can provide advice regarding accessing sources, detailing online sources where applicable, guidance regarding catalogues and general service information.

Staff cannot carry out research on archive material that is already available for consultation in the reading room. See the Enquiries Policy for the scope of this service.

Use of Social Media

Birmingham Archives & Collections runs Twitter and a blog, both of which link to our Facebook page, and which follow the Birmingham City Council policy on the use of Social Media. We aim to promote our collections, events and news to reach a wider and remote audience. We further aim to support local events and organisations through promoting external stakeholders and inviting guest articles for publication on our blog.

Engagement

We actively support community groups and projects through targeted engagement activities. We encourage and support volunteer groups and individuals and the organisations they work with. We aim to encourage the use of archives by engaging in national initiatives such as the Explore Your Archive campaign, and in so doing promote the richness of our archives and support Birmingham City Council values.

Our engagement activities have been developed:

- To introduce new audiences to Archives & Collections and the library as a whole
- To demonstrate to Birmingham citizens what the service does and that it is theirs
- To highlight to academics and researchers material that may be of research interest to them
- To demonstrate to the citizens of Birmingham and beyond what is available to them, how relevant their heritage is to the historical development of the city of Birmingham, as well as nationally, so that they are encouraged to deposit further records and make use of existing collections
- To mitigate against the risk of reduced engagement with collections following staffing and budget cuts
- To generate income for collections development and further engagement activity
- To increase footfall to Library of Birmingham

Activities include:

- Pop-up and facilitated exhibitions
- Workshops both internally and externally run
- Talks/lectures
- Social media
- Blogs

For information on the provision of archive material for loans and exhibitions, see the Exhibition and Loan Policy.

Reviewing user needs

We periodically review user needs in a number of ways. We review online access to our catalogues as part of our Collections Development Policy. We periodically review our service leaflets, website and blog content to make them user friendly and to ensure relevant, accurate information is provided.

Archivists continually monitor use of the Wolfson Centre and respond to any procedural issues that arise. Appointments are dealt with in response to service needs such as level of staffing in order to ensure effective and efficient running of the Wolfson Centre.

The Archives Manager responds to comments received through the Council's 'Your Views' facility. We use feedback obtained from events/activities (e.g. workshops and pop-up exhibitions) when planning similar events. For social media, we gauge the popularity of content, themes and campaigns through analysis of site statistics, and can plan future activity based on this.

'Your Views' feedback form are available online here:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/305/customer_guide_-_your_views

These forms are also available on the premises, and can be submitted at any service area or event/activity.

Where changes are made to the service from a strategic level, we consult the public where appropriate using our social media channels and Birmingham City Council 'Be Heard' facility.

Birmingham Archives & Collections encourage collaborative working with local universities and organisations for the benefit of the service and our users.

We recognise that we need a more structured approach to the collection and analysis of data collected, and moving forward, we aim analyse and evaluate our current operation through quarterly stakeholder evaluation meetings. For 2017/18 we plan to introduce service specific feedback questionnaires (via our blog and in person) that we will review, with a view to producing a report that can be published via our blog and made available within the service area.

Procedure for review

This policy document requires review every two years. The next review date is March 2019, unless circumstances dictate.

Appendix 1: Special Collections: items with restricted access

Items which are restricted access include (but is not exclusive to) the following:

Audubon, The Birds of America, 1827-38, 4 volumes.

Audubon, The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America, 1845- 48, 3 volumes.

Caxton, Cordiale, 1479.

Goos, De Zee Atlas, 1668.

Jode, Speculum orbis terrarum (and) Speculum, geographicum totius Germaniae, 1578.

(Lafreri atlas), Geografia, published by A. Lafreri and C. Duchetti, c1580-1585.

Ortelius, Theatrum orbis terrarum, 1603.

Pfintzing, Teuerdanck, 1517.

Ptolemy, Cosmographia. Ulm, 1482.

Ptolemy, Geographia. Rome. 1508.

Ptolemy, Liber Geographiae. Venice, 1511.

Ptolemy, Geographia. Strassburg, 1513.

Saxton, Maps of Counties of England and Wales, 1575-79.

Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499.

Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, 1623, 1st folio.

Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, 1632, 2nd folio.

Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, 1663, 3rd folio.

Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, 1664.

Shakespeare, Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, 1685, 4th folio.

Shakespeare, Henry the Fifth, 1608 (1619) Pavier.

Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, 1600 (1619) Pavier.

Shakespeare, Whole Contention, (1619) Pavier (Henry VI pts 2 & 3).

Shakespeare, Whole Contention (1619) Pavier (Henry VI pt. 2).

Shakespeare, Othello, the Moor of Venice, c1765 (Mrs Siddons' working copy, annotated with letters by Fanny Kemble).

Wagenaer, The mariner's mirror, 1588.

We would not normally make this type of material available where there are other options for viewing online or in other surrogate forms, or where the content is widely available e.g. on the internet and/or copies held elsewhere.

Exceptional circumstances in which applications to view original material will be considered:

1. For research purposes where there is clear public and/or academic benefit, with specific reason/s why the original particularly needs to be seen. The researcher would require x2 academic references from recognised academic authorities.
2. Specific events/projects with dedicated budget allocation that enables the event to be managed and staffed appropriately.
3. Public open days where 'treasures' from the collections are made available to the public under secure and supervised conditions.