



Archives Management

Policy Statement

The Guelph Public Library Archives, hereafter the “Archives” is the repository for a collection of artifacts and archival materials that is representative of the history of the City of Guelph. The role and mission of the Archives is to acquire and preserve permanently valuable public and private records that establish, maintain and develop the community identity of Guelph and to make records in the care of the Archives available to the public.

Purpose

The purpose of the Archives Management policy is to outline the provisions for the management of archival records and items within the Guelph Public Library Archives through the acquisition, processing, preservation, promotion, and use of historical records.

Scope

This policy will apply to all staff in their dealings with the Archives. The policy will be enacted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate.

1 Definitions

1.1 Accession

The physical and legal addition of predominantly unpublished documentary material to an archive’s repository holdings.

1.2 Accruals

An addition to an existing archive or *fonds*. It describes the separate donations made by one person or governing body.

1.3 Appraisal

The process by which the Archivist or third party determines the administrative, legal, fiscal, historical, and long-term research value of records and selects records for retention in the archives.

1.4 Archival Arrangement

The process of organizing records with respect to their history and original order. The physical arrangement of the records stored in the archives does not reflect the archival arrangement of the same materials.

1.5 Deaccession

The process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings.

1.6 Description

The process of creating access points that allow individuals to search for records using a finding aid rather than handling the records themselves.

1.7 Fonds

A grouping of records, typically in relation to a shared creating body. These records may be further broken down into series which are based on a common topic or function.

1.8 Original Order

The principle of original order means that the order of the records established by the creator should be maintained by physical and/or intellectual means.

1.9 Provenance

The principle of provenance means that the records created, accumulated and/or maintained by an individual or organization must be represented together, distinguishable from the records of any other creator.

1.10 Rules of Archival Description

The archival standard in Canada promoted by the Canadian Council of Archives, the Association of Canadian Archivists, and the Archives Association of Ontario.

2 Mandate

- 2.1 The Archives is responsible for the appraisal, acquisition, preservation, and use of Library and Municipal records of permanent value and the private records of individuals and organizations that significantly contribute to understanding the people who lived, worked or had an impact on the City of Guelph. Emphasis is given to the acquisition of those items which will contribute to the knowledge of the social, civic, religious, economic, and cultural life of the past and present.
- 2.2 The Archives acquires, arranges and catalogues materials to professional archival standards and responds to research queries related to the holdings and provides document reproduction as appropriate.
- 2.3 The Archives will prioritize building and maintaining a collection that is representative of Guelph's diverse community.

3 Collection Development

3.1 City of Guelph Records

In agreement with the City of Guelph, the Archives will develop a formalized procedure within a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the annual identification and transfer of expired City records into the ownership of the Library for the purposes of the Archives. Such procedure shall include criteria that will guide the City in assessing the potential archival value of expired records.

3.2 Private Records

The Archives will obtain private and public collections, documents, records, minutes, correspondence and publications, photographs, maps, etc. created by individuals, families, businesses, community organizations, and any other parties, which fulfill the Archive's mandate.

4 Policies Guiding Selection

4.1 Municipal Obligations

In agreement with the City of Guelph and under the guidance of the MOU, the City may transfer additional Archival Records to the Library for archiving.

4.2 Responsibility for Materials Selection

Responsibility for the selection of archival materials is vested in the CEO who may delegate this function to the Archivist or other members of staff.

4.3 Intellectual Freedom

- a. Following the Guelph Public Library's *Materials Selection Policy*, the Archives accepts the Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries endorsed by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

- b. As a historical collection, it is necessary for the Archives to preserve material about the past and present that may include harmful and offensive wording, cultural references, and stereotypes.

5 Collection Management

5.1 Documentation

- a. The Archives must accurately and thoroughly document the collection to assess its value and significance. Documentation is essential for collection development, research, preservation, and interpretation. Documentation is the responsibility of the assigned staff.
- b. Documentation will include information in written, electronic, audio visual, or graphic form pertaining to the identity, locality, provenance, transfer of legal title and other related information regarding significance, function, description, and condition. When being integrated into the collection, each document must be described in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration. Any change in condition or treatment to an artifact will also be documented.
- c. Temporary or permanent change in the status of an artifact such as an outgoing loan, on exhibit, or deaccessioned must be documented.
- d. The Archives will use accepted and consistent standards, methods, and procedures to document the collection. Documentation must be maintained as a permanent record. This documentation itself is not usually considered part of the collection.
- e. Legal documents dealing with acquisitions should be kept in hard-copy form. All documentation should be maintained in a secure and stable environment.
- f. All records brought into archival custody will be arranged and described according to principles of provenance and original order, as followed by national and international archival standards. To further support accountability, as outlined in the ACA Code of Ethics, staff will create documentation of these processes and decisions.

5.2 Preservation

- a. The Archives is responsible for preserving its collection in perpetuity. This includes artifacts in storage, on exhibit, used for research, on loan, and in transit.
- b. All records brought into archival custody will be assessed, cleaned, repaired, and stored following proper conservation and preservation measures to protect records from damage or deterioration and to ensure their longevity. In some instances, staff may transfer information to another medium, such as a digital scanned copy, to provide access to the

contents of the records. In cases when it is determined that an item requires specialized care, the Library will determine feasible next steps.

- c. All staff and volunteers will be trained in proper and current methods of care and handling of the collection, as it pertains to their area of work.

5.3 Physical

To ensure the longevity of the archival holdings, the Archives must:

- a. Maintain the records in a suitable repository wherein temperature, relative humidity, lighting, and air quality are all controlled according to archival preservation standards;
- b. Promote the security of records against potential hazards such as fire, water damage, and theft;
- c. Promote responsible care and handling of the records at all times;
- d. Engage in active conservation treatment of records, when necessary, under the direction of the archivist; and
- e. Engage in reproduction of records by various means to preserve their evidence or reduce their care and handling.

5.4 Digital

To ensure the longevity of the digital archival holdings as well as its own digital records, the Archives must:

- a. Promote the active maintenance of records to guard against potential hazards such technological obsolescence, data corruption, and data loss;
- b. Promote responsible storage and security measures; and
- c. Ensure that data is migrated in its entirety in the case of the Library procuring new hardware or software.

6 Acquisitions

6.1 Material acquired by the Archives shall become the permanent property of the Archives, and therefore, Guelph Public Library. The Archives may accept historical material of any medium for which the Archives could safely store and conserve, including (but not limited to); textual records, photographs and other visual records; maps, plans and architectural records; and sound recording and oral history tapes. Records and/or materials must be original and authentic.

6.2 The decision to acquire will be based on whether it meets the mandate of the Archives. Additional considerations, such as copyright or donor restrictions, will apply on a case-by-case basis.

6.3 Method of Acquisitions

Material may come into the possession of the Archives through:

- a. Transfer – The Archives may acquire any records created by the City of Guelph in the course of business that are selected for permanent retention with enduring archival value.
- b. Donation – A donation or bequest may be accepted from any source, including a staff member. Donations will be accepted where ownership and copyright is, and can be, delegated to the Archives. Where ownership cannot be verified or proven, acceptance will be at the discretion of the CEO or delegate.
- c. “Gift in Kind” donation – In the case that a tax receipt is requested by the donor, the Archives will follow Guelph Public Library’s *Gift Acceptance Policy*.
- d. Purchase – Upon approval, artifacts may be purchased from any source.
- e. Exchange – The exchange of artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving a collection. Exchanges may be arranged with approval. Exchanges may be made provided that:
 - i. Both parties are in full agreement with the terms and conditions;
 - ii. Both the acquisition and the disposal of artifacts are documented for the permanent records; and
 - iii. The removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process.
- f. Found in the Collection – Objects that have been treated as artifacts over time, but for which acquisition documentation cannot be found, are designated “found in the collection.” These objects will be accessioned and documented if they meet the current mandate of the Archives.

6.4 Accessioning

- a. Every new acquisition, regardless of how it is obtained, shall be documented. Once completed, documentation shall be kept with the Deed of Gift form or Donation Agreement, if one was created.
- b. When the identity and contact information of the donor is known, the acquisition of items shall be acknowledged by letter. When necessary, the transfer of ownership of an item shall be documented through a Deed of Gift Form signed by the donor.

6.5 Deaccessioning

- a. The Archives may deaccession materials in its holdings in the case that an item:
 - i. Does not fall within the Archives mandate and objectives for the future of the collection;
 - ii. Is a duplicate, re-creation, or reproduction;
 - iii. Has been misidentified, or found to be a fake, forgery, or copy with no definable archival purpose;
 - iv. Is deteriorated or damaged to a point where it does not serve a useful purpose or poses a preservation threat to other elements of the collection;
 - v. Exceeds the Archives' capability to provide the conditions necessary for preservation or funding required for conservation;
 - vi. Constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to staff or public;
 - vii. Has unethical or illegal provenance;
 - viii. Has been requested for repatriation from their place of origin; or
 - ix. Is more appropriate to the collection of another library or museum.
- b. When an artifact is deaccessioned the Archives must ensure that:
 - i. The reasons for removal of the object from the collection must be thoroughly documented in accordance with professional standards and documentation;
 - ii. The Archives has clear title to the object or in the case of poorly or undocumented material, be able to demonstrate that it has made a serious, diligent, and documented investigation to determine ownership; and
 - iii. There are no legal restrictions that prohibit deaccessioning the artifact.
 - iv. Records will be maintained for all artifacts deaccessioned and will include the original record, the reason(s) for deaccessioning, and the method of disposition. Staff will prepare a Deaccessioning Report for the approval of the CEO.

6.6 Refusal of Potential Donations

- a. The available space and resources inform acquisition decisions at the Archives. The inability of the Archives to acquire based on space and resources is not a statement of the records' value or historical significance.
- b. The Archives may refuse records or documents that are subject to limitations on their use, reproduction, location, access, and disposal. However, limited periods of restrictions on access to all or part of an acquisition may be administered. Such restrictions to access will be consistent with access and privacy legislation. The Archives will not administer restrictions on access that:
 - i. Privilege or discriminate against certain groups;
 - ii. Are not consistent with access and privacy legislation; or
 - iii. Require researchers to seek the donor's permission to access donated records or documents.
- c. In the event of a refusal of a donation, the donor will be notified and have a period of 30 days, or such time mutually agreed upon, to retrieve the artifact. The Archives will not accept any responsibility for any artifact left at the Library for a period longer than the mutually agreed upon time. Following the lapse of the agreed time period after the notification of refusal, the artifact may be disposed of in any manner deemed suitable.

6.7 Income Tax Receipt and Appraisals

Donors seeking a charitable tax receipt for their donation will be responsible for paying for the monetary appraisal.

7 Public Access

- 7.1 The Archives will make archival material available to Library staff, City staff, and the public impartially, within the constraints of the conditions set out in this policy. Access to some records may be restricted by legislative requirements.
- 7.2 Records and collections of documents comprising the holdings of the Archives shall not circulate beyond the Archives unless removal of the records or documents is required as evidence in litigation or to support pressing operational needs of the City, or to preserve, store, reproduce, or temporarily display the material, subject to the approval of staff.
- 7.3 Limitations of Public Access to Archival Materials
 - a. Access to original materials in the Archives will be determined by a number of factors, including but not limited to:
 - i. Condition of the item;

- ii. Risk to the item;
 - iii. Existence of a digital surrogate;
 - iv. Location;
 - v. Security;
 - vi. Health and safety;
 - vii. Copyright;
 - viii. Intended use;
 - ix. Expertise of the researcher; and
 - x. Human and financial resources available.
- b. Access by the public to original materials in the Archives will be granted following a completion of the Appointment with the Archivist Form. All researchers will be required to abide by the rules and procedures outlined by Archives staff.

7.4 Research

- a. The Archives will fulfill research requests related to collection material. This may include:
- i. Creating or providing digital surrogates of archival records on request where possible;
 - ii. Answering research questions;
 - iii. Assisting researchers with technology during onsite visits; and
 - iv. Where approved, providing access to original materials at the Central Library.
- b. If no relevant material can be found in the Archives, staff will recommend alternate sources if available.

7.5 Copyright/ Reproductions

- a. It is the responsibility of Archives staff to:
- i. Facilitate reproduction of records for research purposes within bounds of Canadian copyright law;
 - ii. Abide by pertinent legislation with regards to access and privacy, specifically the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
 - iii. Respect the privacy of donors and their records when applicable and as stipulated in donation agreements.
- b. Copies of materials under the Archives' copyright are supplied for the purposes of the requester's private research. If publication is desired,

formal written permission must be approved. Staff reserves the right to prohibit reproductions should it be deemed harmful to the originals.

- c. Some materials in the Archives holding may not be owned by the Archives and in such cases, staff will advise of any requirements imposed by the copyright owner. The Archives relies on the Copyright Act's Fair Dealing section and other sections specifically to manage and provide access to materials in its holdings for which it does not own copyright or have a license.

7.6 Publication

- a. Intellectual access to the collection through records, images, and other information may be requested for publication, research, web sites, electronic media, display, promotional materials, personal use, media, films, and advertising. If approved for such use, the Archives will provide written approval.
- b. The Archives must be credited for any use of its collection with "Courtesy of Guelph Public Library Archives."

7.7 Privacy

- a. Access to some records may be restricted by donor or legislative requirements. The Archives adheres to the *Copyright Act, 1985* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Ontario), 1990*. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests must be submitted to the Guelph Public Library or City of Guelph.
- b. The Archives may, without a formal FOI request under MFIPPA, disclose personal information contained in archived City of Guelph records when that information meets one of the following criteria:
 - i. The personal information is greater than 100 years old;
 - ii. The personal information strictly relates to a known individual who has been deceased for greater than 30 years; or
 - iii. The personal information is being requested on compassionate grounds as established under MFIPPA where either of the above criteria have not been met.
- c. In accordance with Sec. 52(2) of the MFIPPA, records placed in the archives of an institution by or on behalf of a person or organization other than the institution are not subject to the access and privacy provisions of the Act.

8 Loaning

8.1 Outgoing Loans

- a. The Archives may lend artifacts to other institutions. However, loans are not normally made to individuals. The purpose of the loan must be consistent with the interests of the Archives and not pose undue risk to the artifact. Loans are made for an agreed upon period.
- b. Individuals within both the borrowing and lending institutions taking responsibility for the transaction must be authorized to do so. All loans from the Archives must be approved by the CEO or delegate.
- c. Outgoing loans must be fully documented. The documentation will include one copy of the signed loan form and information relating to value and condition. This record becomes a permanent record.
- d. The Archives reserves the right not to lend artifacts or other materials.

8.2 Incoming Loans

- a. The Archives may borrow artifacts from other institutions for exhibition, study, or other purposes consistent with the mandate of the Archives for a specified period.
- b. The Archives will provide the same standard of care and security for the objects on loan as it does for those in its collection. Treatment will not be undertaken on borrowed objects without prior written consent from the owner. Any treatments must be documented.
- c. When the Archives borrows material and exhibits from another institution, it will follow the procedures prescribed by the lending institution. When the Archives borrows material from institutions with no lending procedures or forms, it will follow the procedures of the Archives.

9 Related Documents

[Copyright Act, 1985](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990](#)

[OP-02 Material Selection Policy](#)

[OP-21 Gift Acceptance Policy](#)