

**STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE ON TRENT ARCHIVE
SERVICE**

**ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY
REVISED 2003**

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ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY

1. Introduction

The following Acquisitions and Disposals Policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts Commission's *Standard for Record Repositories* (third edition). The policy is provided as accompanying information to owners of documents and intending donors and depositors of archive collections and as guidance for staff. It underpins and supports the aims of the Joint Archive Service as detailed below.

We have a rich and diverse archival legacy inherited from past generations. Our responsibility is to ensure that this legacy is preserved and made as accessible as possible and that we make proper provision for the preservation of the archives created from the present day.

2. Service Aims

The aims of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service are:

- *To ensure that the archives of Staffordshire County Council and the City of Stoke on Trent are preserved for present and future use by their administrations and by the public, and to advise both authorities on archive issues*
- *To locate, collect and preserve irreplaceable archive collections relating to the past and present life and work of the people of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent and to preserve and make accessible the archives of the Diocese of Lichfield, thereby contributing to the national network of archive care*
- *To provide and promote high quality services to readers which enable and encourage the use of archive collections held by the Joint Archive Service*
- *To build formal and informal partnerships which promote the information, practical and heritage value of archives and which extend their use to the public*

3. Context

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service is a multi-repository service, serving the communities of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent. Its role is not confined to historical, academic or learning communities because archives can be a powerful tool in helping to foster a sense of community, continuity and belonging. They can stimulate an interest and enjoyment in learning about the past at all levels.

The Archive Service consists of:

Staffordshire Record Office, which is:

- approved by the Public Record Office as the agent of the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of specified classes of public records under the terms of the Public Records Acts 1958 & 1967
- recognised by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of manorial and tithe records
- designated by the Diocese of Lichfield as the repository for the deposit of Anglican parish records under the Parochial Register and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992)
- empowered under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 to acquire by deposit, gift or purchase other archive collections

Lichfield Record Office, which is:

- designated by the Diocese of Lichfield for the deposit of its archives
- approved by the Public Record Office as the agent of the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of specified classes of public records under the terms of the Public Records Acts, 1958 & 1967
- recognised by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of manorial and tithe records
- designated by the Diocese of Lichfield as a repository for the deposit of Anglican parish records from the Deanery of Lichfield and Tamworth under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992)
- empowered under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 to acquire by deposit, gift or purchase other archive collections

Stoke on Trent Archives , which is:

- approved by the Public Record Office as the agent of the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of specified classes of public records under the terms of the Public Records Acts, 1958 & 1967
- empowered under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 to acquire by deposit, gift or purchase other archive collections

Burton upon Trent Family and Local History Centre, which:

- does not acquire original archive collections but acquires and makes accessible copies of archive sources to support the study of family and local history in the Burton area.

The Joint Archive Service is jointly administered and funded by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council under the terms of a nine-year rolling term Joint Agreement for Archive Services with effect from 1st April 2000. The Joint Agreement provides for Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on

Trent City Council to discharge their various archive responsibilities through a Joint Committee.

4. Policy Statement

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service will seek to ensure that the acquisition of archive collections reflects the broadest range of the life and work of the people of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, past and present. The collecting activity of the Joint Archive Service aims to maintain existing audiences and to generate new audiences for the archival heritage of the County and the City.

Collections of archives are acquired and preserved for present and future use:

- through the statutory obligations and powers listed above
- by responding to all ad hoc approaches from owners of documents for the deposit or donation of collections
- through the Joint Archive Service Acquisitions Strategy
- through continuing and active outreach activity, including planned and ad hoc survey work and working with local organisations and communities where appropriate
- by occasional purchase by private treaty or at auction

5. Acquisition Statements

5.1 **Staffordshire Record Office** will seek to acquire archive collections relating to and emanating from the geographical area of the administrative County of Staffordshire as at 1st April 1997. These will include:

- the official archives of Staffordshire County Council and its predecessor authorities
- archives of other local authorities and their predecessors
- archives defined by the terms of the legislation in Section 2 of this Policy
- other archives including those of businesses, industrial and commercial organisations, nonconformist churches, organisations and institutions, families and estates, societies, trades unions and political parties

5.2 **Lichfield Record Office** will seek to acquire:

- the official archives of the Diocese of Lichfield
- and
- archive collections relating to and emanating from the City of Lichfield and the geographical area of the former County Borough of Burton upon Trent.

These will include:

- the official archives of Lichfield City and District Councils and of Burton County Borough and East Staffordshire District Councils and their predecessor authorities
- the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral
- archives defined by the terms of the legislation in Section 2 of this Policy
- other archives including those of businesses, industrial and commercial organisations, nonconformist churches, organisations and institutions, families and estates, societies, trades unions and political parties

5.3 **Stoke on Trent City Archives** will acquire archive collections relating to and emanating from the administrative area of the City of Stoke on Trent as at 1st April 1997. These will include:

- the official archives of Stoke on Trent City Council and its predecessor authorities
- archives including those of businesses, industrial and commercial organisations, nonconformist churches, organisations and institutions, families and estates, societies, trades unions and political parties
- books, pamphlets, newspapers and items in any other medium which will maintain as far as possible the comprehensive nature of Stoke on Trent's Pottery and Local Studies Collection.

5.4 **Burton upon Trent Family and Local History Centre** will acquire:

- copies of family history sources relating to Burton and the surrounding area
- copies of archive material relating to Burton upon Trent, as appropriate, to support the study of local history
- local studies collections as defined by the Staffordshire Local Studies Policy

6. Disposals

- 6.1 Subject to the overriding principle that the integrity of archive collections and groups of archives shall be maintained as far as possible, the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, in consultation with the owner of the collection, shall have the authority to transfer archive material to a more appropriate archive repository.
- 6.2 Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service will evaluate archive collections prior to donation or deposit and reserves the right to refuse, return or recommend the destruction of any material not deemed to be appropriate for permanent preservation. Such decisions will be documented.
- 6.3 The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archives Committee accepts the principle that documents in its ownership will not be sold.

7. Allocation and Ownership of Joint Archive Service Collections

- 7.1 Where a collection is offered to the Joint Archive Service, containing archives relating to both the County and the City, this will be placed in the repository which is considered to be most appropriate, taking into account all the circumstances of the collection. This will normally be in the area to which the greater proportion of archives in the collection relates, where the collection forms an additional and integral part of an existing deposited collection, or where the collection has a close association with an existing archive collection already held in that office.
- 7.2 In the case of archive collections, which have a wider geographical content than the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent, the Joint Archive Service will always seek to achieve mutual agreement with other interested archive services concerning the final place of deposit. The Joint Archive Service will seek to avoid the duplication of local resources between its own repositories, except where this duplication will significantly enhance the quality of service to the public.
- 7.3 Where a collection is purchased for the Joint Archive Service, funded by the Joint Service Acquisitions Fund, it will be placed in the repository, which is considered to be the most appropriate within the terms of the Acquisitions Policy. Such collections remain the property of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archives Committee. In the event of the termination of the Joint Agreement for archive services, any collection purchased by the Joint Archive Service will become the property of the authority, which is responsible for the service point at which the collection is held.

8. Definitions and Categories

- 8.1 In the context of this policy, archives are defined as:

“records which have been created by individuals or institutions in the course of their life or work in order to record an event or a transaction and which are worthy of permanent preservation because of their evidential, administrative or historical importance”.

The format of archives may be paper, parchment, electronic or other computer media, microform, photographic or audio tapes.

- 8.2 In the case of electronic and computer media and audio tapes, the long term preservation status of such materials is not yet proven. The Archive Service reserves the right to adopt suitable migration policies, if necessary in partnership with other archive bodies, which will ensure the readability and long term preservation of the information contained in such media.
- 8.3 Archive films are not normally accepted on deposit and will be referred to a specialist film archive.
- 8.4 Archive photographs, including photographic prints and /or glass or film negatives, will be acquired only if they form an integral part of an archive collection. The acquisition of whole or specialist collections of archive photographs will normally be referred to the Staffordshire Arts and Museums Service or the Potteries Museum, as appropriate.

- 8.5 Printed materials, including books, newspapers, pamphlets and magazines will not be acquired by the Staffordshire Record Office or the Lichfield Record Office. They will be acquired at Stoke on Trent Archives and Burton Family and Local History Centre as specified at 5.3 and 5.4
- 8.6 The Service will seek to acquire copies of documents held in other repositories if they relate closely to the existing holdings or to the acquisition policy of the Joint Archive Service.
- 8.7 Museum objects will not be accepted by the Joint Archive Service and will be re-directed to the Staffordshire Arts and Museums Service, the Potteries Museum or other museum, as appropriate. Where archive collections include objects, which are re-directed to museums, appropriate cross-referencing will be made between the relevant archive and the museum artefact(s) to which it relates.

9. Conditions of Acquisition

The Archive Service reserves the right to require a potential donor or depositor to provide proof of ownership and to refuse to accept a donation or deposit if this cannot be supplied.

10. Review

This Acquisitions and Disposals policy will be reviewed within five years. It is however a working document and, depending on local circumstances, may be subject to modification, before a formal review.

Updated July 2003